

October 18, 2022

Head Coach Ron Rivera

On QB Carson Wentz:

"He did have surgery yesterday on his right hand. He's gonna be in L.A. for a couple of days. He's been doing rehab already and we'll get a little bit more update by the end of this week as far as he's concerned."

On who will start:

Yep, Taylor [Heinicke] will start. He'll be backed up by Sam [Howell].

On the spark Heinicke can provide:

"I think because of the familiarity and the things that we do, it'll be an easy transition for us. I think with Taylor too, there is always that ability to run the ball. He's got a little bit of that in him, so it'll be interesting. The things that we'll do certainly will match his skill set."

On CB William Jackson III:

"Well, just for the most part, he's continuing to, work with [Head Athletic Trainer] Al [Bellamy], do his rehab and stuff like that. And we'll go from there when we get to tomorrow."

On if he has any comment about the request a trade report:

"No."

On if he will play this week:

"Probably not. Like I said, he's working with Al right now."

On if he will play if he is healthy:

"We'll see. That's to be determined."

On if there is a thought that Carson playing through his injury made it worse:

"Not necessarily. I couldn't tell you that or not. I mean, he played heck of a game and he really did all things considered."

On if he will be placed on IR:

"That's influenced by the next few days. That's why he stayed. The doctors wanted him to stay, obviously, just so he could start the rehab process and then we'll get an assessment as to where he is at the end of the week."

On QB Jake Fromm:

"He's a guy that we've seen. We know a little bit about him. He was in a pretty good system when he was up in Buffalo, so he's a guy that we feel that, if we ever got into an extreme emergency, he's a guy we believe could learn and learn very quickly."

On areas of Taylor's game that have grown the last few months:

"I would think so. It's been interesting to watch him in the role that he's been in. He's been a guy that's been very helpful, not just to Carson, but to a lot of the young receivers and backs. I mean, he's a very knowledgeable guy. And again, as far as learning in the game and knowing the game, there's no concern there."

On what QB Taylor Heinicke learned from facing Green Bay last year:

"Well, for the most part, just the missed opportunities when I go back and look at that game, I mean, you know for what they do, they're very dynamic on offense obviously. Especially everything starts with the quarterback, then you look at them defensively and they're an opportunistic bunch. They got some tremendous athletes up front and one thing they do have is they do have a good core of defensive backs. And when you have opportunities, you know, you've got to take advantage of them."

On if there were any areas he honed on specifically regarding his scouting over the long break:

"Well, yeah there's some things that we felt pretty good about at this point and there's some things that we felt we need to take a look at. We did and we'll make some corrections obviously and some things that we feel we can do better we're going to work on."

On if QB Taylor Heinicke's familiarity with the scheme and mobility could be positive on third downs:

"I think a lot depends on the down and distance. We're playing against a team that in third and long is one of the best in the league. So one thing we can't do is we can't get into third and long, you know, we've got to have a little bit more success on first and second down."

On if there were any consideration of starting QB Sam Howell:

"No, the focus is Taylor [Heinicke]. I mean, we're still in a good situation still early in the year. We like what we've got in terms of the skill sets and in terms of our playmakers, you know, guys that we believe we can get the ball to. And don't want to put Sam in a situation like that this early in his career, you know, we feel he is a young man that as he grows and develops, he's got a chance."

On if there is any specific parts of his self-scout that he would like to see take a step forward:

"There are and there's some things that when we looked at 'em, we really feel that certain adjustments and use of certain players will give us an opportunity to improve those areas."

On where Howell is with his development:

"I think Sam is still learning in terms of what we do and how we do it and how we do it is, you know, that's the part that you've gotta get familiar with there. How we go through the progressions, stuff like that is all about learning and understanding and feeling in terms of knowing what to do in the offense itself."

On if they think Howell is on track:

"Oh, no, we think he's on track. We do, but Taylor [Heinicke] I think right now gives us the best opportunity to be successful."

On RB Brian Robinson Jr. being caught up to the team in terms of scheme and execution:

"I think Brian's come along very well, very nicely. You know, I think this past week was a good dose for him. It really was. I think in the second half I think we got a little bit of feel for what that one two punch can look like because we didn't have the ball as much as we would like in the first half. We didn't get an opportunity to really use Antonio [Gibson]. Got into the second half, early third quarter we got Antonio in and we saw what the mix gives you. We were running the ball up inside with Brian and then we went off tackle. Went outside with Antonio and we had some success and then Brian came back and got a little more success coming up inside with some physical runs, so, we got that sense. We put Antonio out in space a couple times through in the ball and he made a couple catches and runs with it so, we got what that mix can be and, and what it needs to be, to be honest. That was probably one of the things that it was really good to see as far as how we handled the second half."

On some of the advantages of a Thursday night game:

"Well, the issue obviously being is that, on a short week, you may have guys that won't be available if you play it on Sunday, they might be available. One thing that you always worry about is the repetitive injuries that could happen playing on a short week, but on the inverse, having those couple extra days letting these guys get out of here and get away from everything. We got back at four o'clock in the morning on Friday, and in talking with the coaches, we just felt that because it really wasn't gonna be any benefit for the players bringing 'em in later that afternoon that I decided when we landed, I was going to just cancel everything on Friday and not see them until it was time this week so, they got a little extra rest. We just had a practice, a pretty spirited practice. Thought the guys were in a good mood. I thought they moved around very quickly. The little extra rest I think is gonna do us some good. As far as the coaches were concerned to give us an opportunity to look at some things we feel we needed to take a look at and correct and work on. Also saw how we can use our guys a little bit better, be a little bit more efficient with some of our guys, so we used it to our benefit."

On the disparity between penalties on offensive and defensive players when it involves hard hits:

"The biggest thing I've learned, and I've turned on it to be honest. I get it that the most important position in the NFL is quarterback. I made the comment a couple weeks ago and I got in trouble for it, but the truth of the matter is, it is about quarterback. This league, if you have a quarterback and you're able to develop this and have that guy go, a lot of good things can happen. But as soon as you start losing guys because of injury and they're not available, you gotta protect them. But you gotta be able to protect them in the right way, the smart way. I mean, I know last week a couple penalties were called that got people excited, but the truth is you have to be smart with that position because it really is what drives the league."

On the NFL being built on great defenses:

"Yes, but you can play great defense without smacking around a quarterback. Without taking a shot and taking liberties to drive them into the ground. I mean, that's what's happened is because that position is so important and the opportunity to develop a quarterback within your scheme and have success is important. And I really do believe we get that now as a league and we understand how important that position is. But at the same time, if we're gonna call roughing the passer penalties, they've gotta be right on it. We've gotta be correct on it because if not, it could be very impactful and take away from the defense to your point. That is something that we have to be able to get corrected and get right. We as coaches, the Competition Committee, as we go back and I know it'll be a point of discussion this year for us in the offseason. We're gonna have to make sure we get that right for the sake of the game. Because the one thing you don't wanna do is you don't wanna take away from a defense that's playing really well and all of a sudden that happens and it turns out to be the wrong call. So, we've gotta be smart, we absolutely do. But at the same time, just

understand what we're trying to do and we're trying to put a good product on the field. That product, for the most part does revolve around having a quarterback that can help and play well and give you a chance to win. That's what we want, is we want competitive games. We want the closer the games to be, I think the better it is. And I believe that's the philosophy, or at least the stance that the league takes."

On the players having belief in QB Taylor Heinicke:

"Well, I think a big part of it comes from, you bring a guy in in 2020 and you throw him out there, and he has this, never die, never quit [mentality] and has some success. The guys rally around anybody that's gonna step up and compete and do the things that you need them to do. It's kind of that underdog story. I mean, it's a little bit of that too as well. So, it's kind of exciting and we'll see how it goes."

On if he has injury updates on T Sam Cosmi, TE Logan Thomas and WR Jahan Dotson:

"We'll find out when I go inside, to be honest with you. I mean, they worked on the side. They worked and had a very big load today and we wanna see how they are right now, and we'll see how they are tomorrow morning. That'll probably give us a better indicator. But they really did work 'em hard today. Again, with the idea of seeing how they react to everything in the morning. Then that gives us an idea as to whether they'll be available for practice or not. So, the first chance you guys will get to see them is when you come out to watch it tomorrow in warmups. You'll see where they are and you'll know if they're progressing or not for the most part."