

November 25, 2022

Head Coach Ron Rivera

On why the team placed LB Cole Holcomb on the Reserve/Injured List:

"Well, just hasn't gotten better quicker, which we were hoping. So what we're gonna do is, he's gonna get a second opinion and we'll go from there."

On how the team will compensate for CB Benjamin St-Juste being out:

"Well, we'll have some moving parts, some guys that will be getting opportunities and we'll see how that works out."

On what he needs to see from DE Chase Young for him to play on Sunday:

"We'll have a good feel, I think this Sunday, see how he feels. He had a good day Wednesday, a very good day today. We'll see. I mean, it was pretty exciting on Wednesday. It really was, so we'll see."

On the players embracing the messages from the last two postgame speeches and on how much that played into him giving them the day off on Thanksgiving:

"It had a lot to do with it. Let's don't forget, we did work on Tuesday, okay. Just make sure everybody knows everything that we need to have for this week, we've gotten done. Our Tuesday became Wednesday. Wednesday became Thursday and Friday was a normal Friday. To me, the Friday is probably your most important practice. But to your point in your question, it had a lot to do with it. This is a group of guys that are working hard, doing things the right way and coming off of a stretch where you play a Monday night and then travel two-thirds across the country. A little something like that, they deserved it and they earned it. And so, in talking with some of the leadership, they thought that was kind of a neat experience. I've done it previously as a job well done type of thing for the guys and they really responded very well. That's what I'm anticipating here is that these guys will respond."

On if he had conversations with guys about what they did yesterday:

"It was kind of neat. You know, some guys talked about how it was the first time in a long time not having to worry about certain things on Thursday. And a couple guys took real good advantage. I was here early in the morning and we had several guys come in, get a workout as well as treatment. So that was kind of one of the things that you hope to see is that the guys that had responsibilities to take their responsibilities and they did. And that again, is part of why at some point it's about trusting them and believing in them. That's what I'm trying to get across to them."

On how will return punts with WR Dax Milne ruled out for Sunday:

"We have a few choices. I know you guys saw [WR] Alex [Erickson] out there catching the balls, and [WR] Jahan [Dotson] is most certainly one of the other guys. [CB] Danny [Johnson] is another guy that's been back there for us as well, so we have some options."

On his comfort level with TE Cole Turner:

"I'm very comfortable with him. I mean, like [TE] Armani [Rogers], he started out fast and unfortunately he

gets hurt, but he's got the skillset. He's got what you're looking for. But we anticipate [TE] Logan [Thomas] being fine. He was a little under the weather today, so we sent him home. In fact, I think we sent a few other guys home as well. [DE] James Smith-Williams was under the weather the other day. He's back today. But, if Cole [Turner] ends up being one of the guys that's out there, we're very comfortable with what he can do and his abilities. I think [TE] John [Bates] is fine as well. So those three guys should be ready to go."

On CB Christian Holmes and on the challenges that Atlanta WR Drake London's size presents:

"We do. There's some other things that we can do as well if that's concern. But, Drake [London] is a guy that we took a nice long look at going into the draft. Obviously Atlanta had the pick a couple picks before us, but when you look at matchups, those are things that you most certainly do think about just because of player size and abilities. But again, we got a lot of confidence in our guys. As far as Christian [Holmes] is concerned, he's a young man that just continually progresses. What's been kind of interesting is if you listen to it, people talk about guys that perform and produce on special teams, they have a knack for taking themselves to another level. This is a guy that's been practicing at another level lately, and we've noticed."

On if S Percy Butler has been getting better:

"You see Percy coming in on some of the three and four safety stuff that we've done. Again, these guys have really stepped up their game. They've done some really good things and they get noticed for it and you see them a lot more. So, giving opportunities is something that we most certainly do want to do."

On how he knows if the team is mentally in the right spot after an off day yesterday:

"Well, the big thing is a couple weeks ago the schedule was in flux going into the Monday night game and then coming out of it, the schedule was in flux. We did a couple things a little differently that week going into Houston, and the guys really responded. And talking with some of the players and the coordinators obviously, and just getting their feedback on us as coaches being able to get work done, they were all positive about it. And then talking to players, thinking that, 'Wow, you know what, getting a little extra time would be kind of a neat deal.' That's why I felt really positive about it because of the way they responded. I thought today's practice was good tempo, they were up-tempo, it was very efficient. They picked up pretty much where they had left off on Wednesday's practice. So, I feel pretty confident about these guys and their preparation."

On what he is looking for from the rookie players at this point in the season:

"Well, the neat thing and the unfortunate thing is, other than BRob [RB Brian Robinson Jr.], from where he started from -- the other guys really haven't had to play a lot just because of [WR] Jahan [Dotson] getting hurt as well. And us losing [DT] Phil [Mathis], but you want them to maintain, you want them to continue to be consistent. Another young man that's really kind of flashing off a lot has been JR [DT John Ridgeway]. He's a big physical guy that's really done a nice job. I think when you look at [TE] Armani [Rogers] as a young man that was having a very good year, unfortunately the injury bug caught up to him for a little bit and that kind of happens to rookies. They kind of hit a bit of a wall and so this may prevent our guys from hitting walls, you know? And because of that, that could be a good thing for us as we get further into the season, we'll have a lot of young guys that are ready to play."

On what he has seen from Dotson and on if he feels like Dotson has more chemistry with QB Carson Wentz compared to QB Taylor Heinicke:

"Well, I think the one thing really is we're not playing him as much first of all. But I also think you gotta give credit to what we're doing with [WR] Terry [McLaurin] and [WR] Curtis [Samuel] as being a really big part of it. [WR] Dyami [Brown] has done some nice things, so he's been rotating in there as well. [WR] Cam Sims has had a couple opportunities, [WR] Dax Milne has, so I think it's really just kind of getting Jahan back into

the mix more so than anything else. Because coming out of camp, going into the regular season, Jahan had a bigger role. I'll put it that way. So maybe it's an opportunity for us to find out how to get him fit back into what we're doing."

On WR Terry McLaurin getting the ball more:

A little bit of both. It's interesting because between him and Curtis [Samuel], you really see that position itself growing. That's been a really, really neat thing for us to watch. It's one of those things that if we can continue to run the ball doing things that we need to, there will be some guys that won't be targeted as much either. That's kind of that give and take of it all."

On DE Chase Young and his improvement:

"I think it's just the consistency of it right now. Now you see, first of all, he got more reps. Okay. That's a good sign. Big part of it too is about his conditioning. The nice thing was yesterday, when he got treatment, he wasn't as sore as he anticipated being. So that's another good sign. So there's, a lot of things that are adding up right now as he's continuing to work and hopefully we'll see how he is Sunday."

On the weather playing a factor on his status:

No, I mean it doesn't matter. He'll have to play in it at some point. If he doesn't play this week, he eventually will play and could be snowing too.

On the different defensive sets with the safeties:

"Well, I mean, one of the concerted efforts really is we feel those three guys when we used the three safety sets are probably our three best cover guys on the inside. But we also look at it, Bobby [McCain] fits the run exceptionally well. Kam Curl fits the run very well, so whether we're in Buffalo or we're in sub with that group out there, we get the same kind of safety fitting it. Some of the matchup stuff that you think about and rotating down a guy, if they have a bigger guy at the slot, the rotation could be going with the bigger safety in terms of who's rotating. And then the other two just stay back. The guy that's kind of got a little bit of both in him is [S Darrick Forrest] D-Foe. We've also seen one thing and that he's got tremendous range. I mean, he really does, he's done a nice job showing us that. So, we have to be aware of that. The four-safety stuff gives us an opportunity to add an extra DB down into the box that we feel fits to the run very well. And so, we don't feel like we're losing anything when we get to that point."

On S Bobby McCain:

"He's been really neat because you see them rely on him through his experience. The one thing that you know, they kill Bobby on is right now, they're getting on him about when he comes down, he has to turn around to talk to them now. And so they keep telling him 'man, you gonna turn around one time and they're gonna run the ball.' So they tell him and Bobby said, 'Okay, great. I'm not gonna, I'm just gonna wave my hands at you guys.' So they get a little of that going back and forth and it's kind of good."

On the redzone offense:

"I think it's really just the missed opportunities more than it's anything else. I think sometimes when you get down into that area and you miss that opportunity. On first down if you're not as good on it as you need to be, second and long makes it harder. And so we've gotta be better probably on our first play of that series."

On if the tight end depth plays a part in the redzone offense:

"I think that's a little bit of it because you know, to your point, last year Logan [Thomas] was a big part of it and then when he got hurt we really saw how tough it was without him. Cole [Turner] being hurt and now Armani [Rogers]. So now we really have had the continuity of that position because that is a big position in

the redzone force, especially in this offense.”

On WR Curtis Samuel and what he brings:

“Pretty much. A guy that brings a little bit of that out of him too is Terry. He and Terry have a great relationship from the time they were together in Ohio State. And I think the hard part for any time a guy gets hurt, especially a guy coming into a new situation, it's tough to get that confidence with your teammates, especially cuz you're hurt. And so, we really see his personality now that he's been playing. He's been playing very well for us. You see the acceptance; you see the guys just kind of connecting and that's part of who Curtis is. Curtis is a fun-loving guy just from my time being around him and noticing that, just how much he loves the game. I mean, he really truly does. It's one of those things that he can't wait to do the things that he does on the football field. He really enjoys it.”

On the loudest position group:

“Oh, the D line. Geez, that's probably the group. I know you guys have heard them in camp, when they get rolling they can roll pretty good. It's probably gonna get a little bit louder when 99 gets back on there.”

On if there are guys that surprise him with how loud they are:

“Yeah, there are. It's funny, like a guy like Kam Curl could probably turn it up another octa if you wanted to. I'm surprised by how quiet he is, how calm he is. He's a guy that I think could really take it up if he wanted to.”