

December 5, 2022

Head Coach Ron Rivera

On playing Sunday Night Football:

“I was kind of hoping we would get Saturday. I mean, we have to travel all the way across country. 49ers are coming off of a Thursday game. It'd be nice to be able to be rested, but you play what they tell you to play. So we'll line up and play and see what happens.”

On the opportunity they have ahead:

“Well, I think this opportunity's awesome. I really do. First of all, it's the national stage. It is the big stage. One third of the US population is on the eastern seaboard so we know they'll all be tuned in. Secondly, it'd be awesome to have a great turnout. I think we're working towards that. We're trending in that direction. I'm pretty fired up for our guys. I really am just because we have guys that deserve some exposure. This is about as big a stage we've been on since the Monday night game or the Thursday night game we played. This is a great opponent for us. They matched us on Sunday and so, it's pretty cool. We're pretty even, so it'll be a fun night. I really do look forward to it.”

On QB Taylor Heinicke and evaluating his play on Sunday:

“Well, I'll tell you right now, I thought he had a lot more quality quarters than just the end of the game. I really do mean that too. I thought the first quarter was outstanding. There are a couple things in the second quarter I know he wish he has back, but I thought he did a couple things. Third quarter, he did struggle a little bit. It all wasn't just Taylor. He does what he does. He plays the way he plays. I just think you take the good with the bad. But I think that's true for a lot of quarterbacks. I don't think there's a whole bunch of guys that are out there that aren't making mistakes every now and then. I was pleased with the things he did and I was pleased with the way the guys played.”

On how much the Bye Week can help the injuries:

“Well, I think the extra time off is gonna help an awful lot. We got a number of guys that are gonna be on the list of our injury updates. When I get that at four o'clock I believe it is, that's when I have our meeting. So we'll get an opportunity to find out exactly where we are health wise with everybody. That'll be cool to see. I know that this week will be a good rest week for our players, an opportunity for them to take care of themselves, get themselves right, and see what happens as they prepare for this stretch of four games left to go.”

On if there is any temptation of going to QB Carson Wentz:

“Not necessarily. I think this is who we are. I mean, that's how we play. We're running the ball right now. Well, we're controlling the time of possession. We're keeping our defense fresh. There's some things obviously that could help. I think right now for where we are and who we are, I think we're in a good spot. I really do.”

On if it is still viewed as a week-to-week situation:

“Well, I feel comfortable with Taylor, but when Carson's activated, he will be the primary backup and we'll go from there.”

On developing the passing game:

“Practice. I mean, that's really the only thing we can do. Any opportunity we can to throw it in in the game we do. We try to throw it at the opportune moments, the right moments. That's really what the passing game should be. When you need to use it, use it. If it's part of the flow of the game, then it's part of the flow of the game. I think for the most part, that's the thing that helps us is that as we're running it takes a lot of the pressure off to have to throw it. We can throw it when we wanna throw it. We can use whatever action we want if we put ourselves in that position. I do know obviously that if if you are playing a high powered offense and they score early, you gotta be able to match it. And that's one of the things that we have to be able to do. I think we can, I think we have enough of the playmakers. If we get the balls in their hands, we can make plays.”

On keeping up with high powered offenses and the confidence he has in that:

“I think because of some of the stuff that we left on the table, left out on the field, I mean, I've said that before, it's how close we are. That gives you reason to be optimistic. If you sit down and get an opportunity to go through the tape and talk with somebody in the know as they sit there and talk about, oh, look at this opportunity here, this is something that could have happened. You know, when I watch tape, I try to figure out what the defensive coverage is and then I look at where I think the ball should go. And most of the time that's where we're headed. I'm seeing it like our guys are. Then as you see certain things that we miss, whether it's the throw is missed or the route could have been better or we just didn't have enough time with the protection, those are all things that we have to work on and hone up for that moment that when we do have to score, can we do it? I thought that drive, that that 92 yard drive, I thought at the end of the game to score the touchdown kind of shows what we can do if we can get the ball in the hands of the playmakers.”

On how he will evaluate in the bye week:

“I think the big thing is its an opportunity to take a look at some of the areas that we have not been as efficient. Whether its in some situations, some red zone stuff, some third down stuff perhaps, some short yardage stuff that we can take a really good long look at. For the coaches it'll be an opportunity to evaluate. But the best part more than anything else is a lot of the stuff has been looked at, like you said, and you know, as we get into it, it's really about who we're getting ready for next. We got the Giants obviously, and then after that, we've got three more games that are just as important, but we got to be ready for the Giants and I think that's where a lot of the time will be spent. We'll review a couple things, we'll talk about a few things and then we'll go from there.”

On playing C Nick Martin over G Wes Schweitzer at center:

“Well, part of it was due to the injury stuff that we had to deal with. So again, we got a whole week and a half to prepare. We can make that decision as we get closer.”

On DE Chase Young not playing because of the turf at MetLife Stadium:

“I think the biggest thing more so than anything else is that with the way we're playing right now and, and we're playing pretty well on the defensive front, the need to get him on the field hasn't been that you've got to have him out there, we need, it was a must. This is one of those things that because of our guys are playing well, we can get him back when he's 100% ready to roll. And that's the biggest thing. We don't want to put him out there when he is not ready and feeling it. I know he's close, I really do. And again, I think the big thing for him, more so anything else, is just continuing to do what he needs to do and we'll see how he is next week. But again, it's putting the guy out there when he's ready 100%, or as close to possible as it can

be. But I do know, again, we've been doing some pretty good things with the guys we have out there. Yesterday we had a couple of guys get nicked up as well and we'll see how they are in the next couple days, but I'm pretty optimistic going forward for next week."

On QB Jake Fromm:

"Oh, a tremendously smart football player. Young man's got a good feel for the game, good understanding of the X's and O's. He's got a good arm. He can make pretty much most of the throws, he's athletic, moves around, and his understanding and knowledge of the game is really good."

On if they are working on stopping running QB's like QB Daniel Jones:

"Yeah, we are. I thought the halftime adjustments were pretty good. Again, we pretty much gave up a couple hundred yards in the first half, and then in the second half we only gave up like 111 or something like that. 112 I think it was. And one of the things that obviously it's hard to defend the quarterback all the time, and that's the thing that we have to continue to work on, and I know we do. I know some of it sometimes and probably the biggest one, they got us when they came out and they looked like they were running some sort of screen and that kind of also was a fake off of one of the jet sweeps. And one of our guys in the middle got a little too nosy and left his responsibility and that was the big one, Daniel ripped off against us. And that's something that we have to be aware of even more so just because of the value of the quarterbacks running the ball. I think again, we made some good adjustments, came out in the second half and we limited that, but again, if we can just make sure we're good with it from the beginning, it will most certainly limit the impact that the quarterback running will have against us."

On what he needs to see from Young:

"Well, I think again as we go through it, just making sure he can put that leg in the ground with confidence and be able to protect himself when he has to. Be willing to stick it out in front to protect on a cut block or somebody coming down at his knee. I mean, those are all things that you have to get. But the biggest thing more so than anything else is because of this injury and because of the way the doctor has described it to us is the only real way for him to get any true work on this is now out on the field. And now that we're in the peak of the season, it's one of those things that you can't mimic what he's gonna get out there in the game. And so he's just gotta continue to work at it, build that confidence. I know one of the things is the severity of his injury wasn't divulged early, mostly because they didn't want it divulged. But as it got out there, I think people understand that this was more than just your normal knee injury. This involved a little bit more. And that's why I think the rehab has been a little bit more. And so he's really come a long way. He looks good and now it's just a matter of as he's ready to go, we'll get him out there."

On if Young has more physical limitations or on if he thinks it is more mental:

"I think it's just him being comfortable and again, continuing to work on that, continuing to build it up. Just because again, this was not just the normal ACL, there was a little bit more involved in it. That's one thing I think everybody has gotta understand. Not everybody is gonna come back in nine months, 10 months. This is one of those things. It takes a while, even when they do come back, you look at some of the guys that have come back and [New York Giants RB Saquon] Barkley's a great example. Young man came back from his knee last year and he was average. Now you take a look at him and he's more than average, he's pretty special. It's good to see him back on the football field playing that way. It takes more than just 12 months, 13 months, 14 months."

On if seeing the success that WRs Terry McLaurin, Curtis Samuel and Jahan Dotson had will impact the offensive game planning moving forward:

"Those are things that you do look at. I mean, it's one of those things that as Jahan has gotten back to where

he was when we first started this season and we're more comfortable with him now that he is back and he's gotten some more reps. Now all of a sudden he gets an opportunity to make some plays and we start to see that flash again, and we're now even more aware. The quarterback's now even more aware that there's more weapons than just handing the ball off or tossing the ball or throwing the ball to somebody. Now we're in a position where we can really spread it. And really like I said, you open up that gamebook and you see how many different people touched the ball. That's one of the strengths of this offense is that the more people that touch the ball, the more diversity you get in the offense, the more opportunities there are for you to be explosive."

On LB Cole Holcomb being shut down for the season and on the severity of the injury to C Tyler Larsen:

"Well, I know there was a level of concern last night. He's been evaluated, and they'll give me the report. But like I said, last night there was a level of concern and we'll see exactly where it is once we get an opportunity to visit with [head athletic trainer] Al [Bellamy] very shortly."

On RB Brian Robinson Jr. supporting gun violence prevention and on what it is like supporting a cause that has personally affected you:

"I think it's a very powerful thing because you can tell your story and BRob now has an opportunity not only to have the platform, but he has an opportunity to share a story that should make an impact with people in the community. Being somebody of his stature, I think he's got an opportunity to really share a very, very good message. There was an incident and somebody was talking about what went on and he was very profound about it and really said that people just gotta understand that this young man is a product of his environment and we gotta be able to help change that environment. And I thought, 'Man, alright I get it.' Because he said, 'I'm not mad at the young man because I understand that he's coming from a tough situation.' And that was so mature and it spoke volumes to me just because he's aware of the community's need for this being brought to the forefront so that it could be hopefully corrected."