

January 2, 2023

Head Coach Ron Rivera

On the quarterback for Week 18:

“Well, it's the same as all the other positions. We're going to continue to evaluate and look at things. I mean, guys, I'm not going to tell you anything about what we're gonna do until it's time, just so you guys know that. I'm meeting with the coaches at later today and we'll discuss all those things as a group and then we'll make a decision. I'll make a decision when it's time and appropriate.”

On if not being in the playoffs changes the approach for this game:

“Well, we're playing to win. I mean, that's the bottom line. That's how I feel about it. The truth of the matter is that's how we approached yesterday. It was all about winning. So much so for myself personally, that I know I made a, a little bit of a gaffe yesterday, not realizing that we could get knocked out of the playoffs. But to be honest with you, I never thought we would lose. I mean, I was anticipating winning. I was anticipating getting our game flexed to Sunday at 8:30. So, everybody had to play and then everybody had to watch us because Dallas might have something riding on it as well. So that was the way I looked at it. That was my mentality. It wasn't about losing, it was about winning. So, that's how we're approached this game. We're going to play it to win.”

On if there were some things with QB Carson Wentz that he was a little bit more optimistic on:

“I was looking for the spark. I mean, we were 0-2-1 in the last three games. And the way he performed in that last quarter against San Francisco, I mean, I was feeling pretty comfortable with him, pretty confident that he'd come out and would be able to do that again. And then, quite honestly, after the drive to end the half, I felt pretty good about us coming out. I mean, I didn't expect it to play out the way it did. I really didn't. Just based on what I saw last week, I really thought that we would get a little bit of a spark.”

On the absence of S Kam Curl and CB Benjamin St-Juste:

“Well, it's tough on those guys cause there's certain things that you want to do and certain ways that we place certain other things in the game. I mean, there's some situational stuff that we had to alter. We tried to replace Kam by committee and having different guys play the positions that he did. We played a linebacker at that buffalo position. We played some DBs at the other position that we use them in the box. I don't know it was one of those things. It was by committee and I think it might have slowed Jack [Del Rio] down a little bit because they'd been very creative with the things that they'd been able to do using Kam's ability. And then with Benjamin, not having the top corner out there it does stress you a little bit. But again, I do think Danny [Johnson] came in and played some pretty solid football as well. But maybe some of the things that Jack wanted to do schematically, it might've probably slowed him down.”

On if he regrets starting QB Carson Wentz:

“No, because to me it was always about winning and that it was in our hands. I mean, we controlled our destiny basically and that's the truth of the matter. Being zero two and one in the last three games was probably a thing that really pushed me more than anything else. And that's what I looked at. And as I said, coming off of the last quarter of the 49 er game, I was relatively optimistic in terms of dealing with what Carson could do. I thought we could run the ball. I think we could have run the ball a little bit better even though we did run it well. And I think that could have helped us a little bit more. But again, it's the decision that was made because I felt we needed a little something, after going that stretch of three games zero two and one.”

On his message to the fan base going into the last game of the season:

“Well, we appreciate everything they've done. It's Dallas week. We're going to go out and play our best football this time of year and we're playing to win. I mean that's all there is to it.”

On spots of progression through his time as the Head Coach:

“Well, I think some of the things that we've done defensively. I think that's a big step in the right direction more so than anything else. I think we've got a good core, good nucleus of young players, surrounded by a few veteran guys that can help lead us going forward. That's what I look, I think we've got that. I mean, you look at our skill positions, I think wide receiver and running back are two really good skill positions for us right now with some young players that are going to just get better with time. I think defensively we know what the defensive line is about. I think those guys have really kind of come together and have really bought into the way [Defensive Coordinator] Jack [Del Rio] and the defensive staff use them.

I think we've found our through the middle guys in terms of our safeties. I think [LB] Jamin [Davis] has come along well. If we can get [LB] Cole [Holcomb] back out healthy, I think that that group can be a good tandem of linebackers and DB's. So I think we're trending in the right direction. As I said though, I think it is really about the young nucleus of players that we have. A lot of homegrown guys are here to be able to handle and deal with it. That's probably the biggest thing that I'm looking forward to is the development growth of that group.”

On how the coach-centric philosophy has gone for him:

“I think the biggest thing that's been the toughest thing right now is really being able to solidify the QB1 spot. I mean that's something that we're continuing working. I believe Ben said that this off season, he'll be helping us to look for the QB1. And that's the thing that we gotta do. I was asked that question about eight, nine weeks ago what's the difference? Well, that's the one position that we've gotta solidify going forward more so than anything else.”

On what changed after the bye week:

“There are a few things. I got a few ideas, but that's something that when we get a chance to really sit down and evaluate and go through and talk about, we most certainly will discuss.”

On if he has full leeway to make changes with potential ownership changes occurring:

“I think so, but at the end of the year, once we get done, I will most certainly be sitting down with

ownership as it is and have the discussion about this, about the organization, and the direction and what we will be able to do going forward.”

On if there are reasons other than the QB situation why the team fell short of the playoffs:

“I think part of it too is we really didn't get our footing is to the style that we wanted to play until we got all the pieces back on the field and then it started to come. That's the thing that, that I've said before, we kind of showed our hand in in training camp what we wanted to do and how we wanted to do it. And being able to run the ball and be that kind of team would be to our benefit. And when we had that nice stretch, that nice run, that was one of the big positives that we had. Unfortunately we weren't able to sustain that down this stretch these last few weeks.”

On the lessons he learned about solving the QB problem:

“Well, I think the biggest thing coming here and, and, and holding Pat for the most part with, the quarterbacks that were here when we got here. And then the second year, you know, trying to put everything else in place and, and bring a veteran guy in. And unfortunately, he got hurt in the first game. I think this year, looking at it, trying to find the right free agent for us, I think that was one of the things that we felt we could do. Unfortunately, that didn't work right now and we'll see, I mean, as I said, we'll get an opportunity to sit down, talk about it and evaluate it as a staff next week once it's all said and done.”

On if he worries that the decision to start QB Carson Wentz sat poorly with the team:

“No, I don't. I think I made my feelings and my reasoning pretty clear to a lot of people and I'd like to think that if there was a disagreement or a difference of opinion, that it would be cool that guys could come and talk to me about that. But you know, again, as I said, I did what I thought was going to help us get a little bit of a spark and get an opportunity to win and get into the playoffs.”