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QB Marcus Mariota

On being in a similar situation to last season but with a new system and teammates:

“You know, I really try to focus on keeping that mentality the same throughout. Really being in this position for the last seven years or so in my career, you never know when your number's gonna be called. So, I just try to treat every week like I'm the starter and I just kind of mentally prepare that way so that if it does happen, the transition's relatively easy. So, for me, nothing's specifically changed. I think we got a great group of guys that just are rallying around and supporting one another. It's never easy when your starting quarterback goes out. You know, everyone has to kind of lift up their game and guys are really believing in each other, and that's what counts.”

On overcoming the team current team injuries and playing strong offensively:

“It really just starts on first and second down. The more that we can be good and create manageable third downs, convert third downs, keep the ball, give our defense rest, and the more that we can get in the red zone and score, you know, obviously that's gonna be helpful. But really, there is a belief. There's a sense amongst these guys that regardless of where we're at or who's in and who's out, we believe in one another. And I really think that for us, our best is still in front of us and the more that we can continue to lean into that, I think we'll be happy with the results.”

On what helps him get the ball out so quickly and produce strong plays:

“I really think of myself as a point guard. The more that I can get these guys the ball, the play makers, especially faster, the more space they got, the more that they can do with it. I used to joke like they tackle the guy with the ball, so the more that I can get it out of my hand, by all means. But at the same token, it takes a lot, right? Your offensive line has to be able to hold our guys up front, the receivers. They gotta get open in that type of timing. So it takes a collective group effort, but for me, I've always tried to focus on getting these guys the ball.”

On remaining focused on the game amongst outside pressure:

“I really, I think I learned a lot about that last year. You know, stepping in some of those games, you feel like you have to kind of make a play and sometimes you overstress yourself and now you're making a mistake, you're fumbling the football, you're throwing a pick. So for me, I feel like I took a lot of that, I took a lot of those lessons and with what happened on the game on Sunday, and was able to kind of stay within myself, play the game that I know how to play, and it really kind of led to some success. So, the more that I can kind of focus on those types of things, not put the cape on as people say, and just allow everybody else in the offense to work for us, I think the better that I'll play and the better the position for our offense.”

On how different practice feels knowing he'll be starting in the upcoming game:

“I mean, it's definitely helpful. The reps, the actual being out there, taking the mental, so that's all real. As the backup, you're just kinda trying to envision it, you know, and if your number's called,

it's like, all right, you just kinda go off of instinct. To get the reps is very helpful. And so, the more that I can communicate through the week of like, hey, this I like or this I'm feeling good about. [It] kinda puts our guys into positions to be successful, and I think will help us out."

On how he's felt the team rally around him in support:

"It's really been since I've gotten here two years ago. It's the culture that DQ [Head Coach Dan Quinn]'s built. Like we talked about, everyone's kinda talked about the next man up and that type of belief, regardless if you're the starter or not, is something that's built within the culture. And I have felt that very early on and I'm very appreciative of it. It gives confidence not only to myself, but I think to everybody in the entire room, and really the locker room. So, feel confident. I feel good. I mean, guys, whether it's the support, whether it's [WR] Terry [McLaurin], whether it's [WR] Stef[on Diggs], 'Hey, I'm seeing this.' Or like, 'Hey, if you see this, this is what I'm expecting.' You know, talking to Bill [RB Jacory Croskey-Merritt] about like, hey, protection schemes and hey, you know, what do you like or how can I help you? Those are just several examples, but countless other ones as well from the locker room and I'm truly grateful for it."

On how the offensive scheme changes with him starting at QB:

"Well, I think at the same token, like, part of the backup role is you kinda fill that need, right? You're gonna like a lot of the stuff that Jay likes. There is a little bit of differences here and there, but kind of the role as the backup is when you get called upon, like, it's not a huge difference. And so, with what we're doing, I feel very confident in and the more that I can communicate, 'Hey, maybe this concept I don't like as much, maybe this concept is something that I've done before that I like', that type of communication will happen throughout the week and hopefully we'll put together a good plan."

On what he notices from the Seattle Seahawks defense:

"They fly around and they're always attacking the football. It's very evident on tape. Whether it's [Seattle Seahawks LB DeMarcus] Marcus [Lawrence], you know, whether it's [Seattle Seahawks S Julian] Love, whether it's [Seattle Seahawks CB Devon] Witherspoon, those guys are just always flying around the ball and like attacking it. And then they're just very disciplined. The scheme is always gonna be tough. I think that's pretty well known. But those guys make it come to life because of how they play and the type of attitude they come with."

On how he feels about starting after missing time in training camp:

"I feel good. It's funny because it's kind of happened the last couple years anyways [laugh]. I missed a bunch of camp last year, even my first year here. I had a peck deal that, I missed the first four weeks of the season. So, just part of it. And it's kind of the life of a backup. You just have to be ready when your number's called. And yeah, I feel good."

On getting on the same page with the wide receivers:

"I mean, a lot of it's just on the field, right? It's communicating. It's, 'Hey, [WR] Terry [McLaurin], what do you see on this?' or 'Hey Stef [WR Stefon Diggs], like what do you, how do you feel about this route?' or it's just that type of communication. And when you're around guys like that who have played a lot of football, that communication's really easy and those relationships are really easy. And so, obviously a lot of that stuff will transition to the game but the more that we can communicate amongst each other, I think will help us all out."

On the qualities it takes to be able to produce when needed:

“Well, I think you have to have a starter mentality throughout. You have to be able to humble yourself at the same token to be like, ‘Hey, what is Jada need the most?’ Or whoever the start is, ‘How can I help?’. And then also at the same token, be like, you gotta have the confidence and belief in yourself to be like, ‘All right, if my number's called, I can go out there and play’. So, it is kind of a happy medium, something that I've learned over the course of my career. We talked a little bit about it too. Like something that I even learned last year was like, I was coming in trying to just make a play and I was kind of putting on this Superman cape and like sometimes when you overstress yourself, you make a mistake. And I was kinda looking back on it and reflecting and I thought last week being able to come in and not overstress and just like, ‘Hey, just go and play within the system’. That was a big step for me because I think as a backup, you're like, ‘I gotta go make a play. I gotta try to help these teams win’. But at the same token, like the more that you can play within the system, it just kinda happens naturally. So regardless of whether you're the face of the franchise or a backup, like I think that mentality of a starter has to be profound and the more that you can prepare that way, the more likely you are when you step in to have success.”

On how QB Sam Hartman and QB Athan Kaliakmanis have helped him:

“It's really continuing to just communicate of like, ‘Hey, what are you guys seeing?’. You're not gonna be able to see everything. You're not gonna watch all the tape and see all the different looks. Like, ‘Hey, what did you see on tape? Is there something that we're not seeing?’. Communicating from that standpoint and then like specifically in games and in practice, like coming off the field, it's like, oh, did you see this or did you see that? So, the more that, that group we can continue to talk and communicate, I think the better it is for the starter.”