

October 8, 2026

Defensive Coordinator Daronte Jones

On what it means to have S Nick Cross back on the field:

“Obviously Nick's a valuable piece to the defense and just to the team overall. His leadership and his ability to play, you know, fast and physical is always a huge get for us.”

On struggles in the defenses' second half game performance:

“You know, we've addressed that with our guys this week and just talking about our ability to sustain which comes with, you know, we say physical condition precedes all else. And so, with that being said, you may be asked or going into a game and say, ‘I'm only scheduled to play 25 snaps,’ and end up playing 40. We can't let that be a determining factor. We can't let things out of our control be a determining factor. So, our ability to respond, our ability to sustain not only success, but adversity as well is building the mental toughness for that. And so that's been the focus this week is just tapping into the mental toughness, however it may shape and not letting anything outside of what we can control affect our play. And then also focus. I think of focus, play in, play out, we talk about you don't have to be great and locked in for 70 plays, just have to be locked in and great or good for one play 70 times. And that way you can take one play at a time.”

On what he's seen from CB Trey Amos on his road to recovery:

“Yeah, Trey hasn't obviously, like you said, he hasn't practiced until this week, but he's always around, he's in meetings, he's working his butt off. He's been working like heck to get to this point. And so, mentally he's still been involved, very much involved in meetings. He's asking questions, which has been great for him. Now, naturally, you have to carry that from the meeting room to the practice field and then obviously on the game field. But I like where he's progressing and just in terms of the mental.”

On what he needs to see from CB Mike Sainristil and how Sainristil has handled a cut down in playing time:

“Mike's a pro. Mikey's been a pro with that and going into the game plan last week was a little different. It was more so, it wasn't like keeping him off. We went from a regular personnel, so our two, three linebackers against their 11 personnel on the early downs. And then when they got to G-Bot situations, we went to Big Nickel, which is when Mikey came onto the field. They just were in that 11 personnel early down more than that. And that's where [LB] Kain Madrano was there on those, on those situations. But Mikey, as a whole, he understands his consistency and just doing the routine things routinely. And he's working on that day in and day out. And he has a great attitude towards that approach.”

On how Head Coach Dan Quinn approaches the staff during tough situations:

“Wow, there's so many layers to that. You know, Dan's phenomenal in his attitude. I, you can tell that he's a true believer of attitude reflects leadership. And so, his ability to come to work with the

same energy, he's the same guy, he doesn't let the ebbs and flows of the season or game dictate how he approaches each day, and that's to win the day. And not only with the team, but just as his approach. And so, he comes in full of energy, ready to go, locked and loaded. And also tapping into staff development, our mental, our process, our ability to respond. And so, the way he approaches his day-to-day business, some guys you've been in this business, they're, you don't know what you're gonna get day to day. He's not one of those guys, and I can respect that and I appreciate that because he is what helps the staff and the players keep the energy going and stay in the course."

On how to maintain the objective of getting players to stay focused and determined 'on one play 70 times':

"Well, I think you got to preach it. You have to talk about it daily. You have to, one, recognize it, acknowledge when it's there and when it's not there. And so that way guys and ourselves can tap in and be like, 'Hey, we're in this space. All right, let's feel it. Let's accept it. Now how do we move on to it and build from that and own it?'. And so being aware of those moments when you may lack focus at times and lean on one another, your teammates can pull you, 'Hey, man, I need you here'. Or a guy coming up to you say, 'Hey, DJ, you know, let's lock it in. Let's get refocused, let's recalibrate'. I think you have to, it's a message that has to be constant, in this profession because mental toughness is not just in the football world, it's all over in any athletic realm and professional world, that, just that focus, that mindset of regardless of what happens with things that aren't in my control, how do I respond to that? And we've always heard the, the phrase, it's not what happens to you, it's how you respond to those things. And so, these are lessons that players, coaches can help bring into their homes with dealing with their loved ones, their kids. To your point, Dan will always, always say, you know, 'What advice would you give someone who's in your shoes?' You know what I mean? And we always see things from when we can tell others advice, but sometimes we need to have that same advice for ourselves as well."

On New York Giants QB Jameis Winston's pattern of giving up interceptions:

"Well, that same guy is also prone to making big plays [laugh]. So, and he's done that in his career, which is why obviously it's not a one-way street with Jameis. Jameis is a guy who, high risk, high reward, and because of his reward and the things and the plays that he's made in his profession is why he's still doing the things he's doing now and especially for the New York Giants and why they're where they are right now is because of a lot of him and providing those opportunities. And so, we can't be mindful of 'yeah, he's gonna turn the ball over'. He can also put four or five touchdowns on you in a heartbeat which I've experienced that back at the [Cincinnati] Bengals, back at the [Miami] Dolphins, and even with the [Minnesota] Vikings when he came in with the [New Orleans] Saints, when [New Orleans Saints QB] Derek Carr got injured. So, his strength is his ability to one snap and clear, and that's dangerous, for an opponent because whether it's a great play, he can move on. Whether it's a bad play, he can move on. And each play has a life and history of its own, and he's the true definition of that. And so, you gotta be mindful of that."

On improving the team's red zone defense:

"Yeah, I think it's just the details. Understanding how the field shrinks and it's about the situation we're in. And so, you can't play that same technique as you would on the minus 30 yard line. And so, I'd like to try to feel, we say you got 53 safeties behind you, which is the back line. So, the field shortens vertically, but then it widens horizontally. And so, understanding that and our guys gotta change their mindset and focus understand, 'hey, this is where I'm on the field, so my techniques and fundamentals have to change accordingly'."

On coming up with stops when working with a shorter range on the field:

“Yeah, obviously regardless of what happens or how you end there, you have to have the ability to respond. There's three phases in this game and Coach Q talks about complementary football all the time, and no one really details what that means. A lot of people think complementary is everything's going good, and that's not the case. It's, I told the players this, Monday, it's no different than a marriage, whether it's 50/50, sometimes it has to be 70/30. Sometimes it has to be 60/40. You gotta do what you have to, to get it going. And so, in that case, if we get the ball where we get the ball, we gotta stop 'em done. Our brothers need us for that situation, just like there's gonna come a time where we're gonna need them or we're gonna need special teams. And so, we all gotta pull our weight accordingly and keep them out of the end zone regardless and have them settle for a field goal. A field goal will be a win in that situation. But that's where, you know, our ability to change our mindset of what looks like a bad opportunity is really an opportunity for growth. And so, we're just hit the guys today in terms of just that whatever happens to you, you know, when you change the way you look at things, the things you look at start to change. And so, if I attack that field in terms of, ‘Oh, wow, here we go, you know, we're in a bad position’. No, attack it as this is a great opportunity for us to stand up and be there for our brothers.”

On New York Giants RB Cam Skattebo holding his own in pass protection affecting how he plans to attack the QB:

“Yeah, obviously Skattebo is physical in various ways, but it's just he's very physical on his blocking, you know, when he matches up, you see guys, he's pummeled some guys. So, we just showed our players today in terms of how we want to attack his blocking scheme and so forth and, or whoever that may be because they have different backs in that position. And so, you identify what he does well, some of the things he's struggling and we try to attack accordingly.”

On his familiarity with New York Giants QB J.J. McCarthy and planning in case he plays:

“Well, the familiarity with him is obviously his athletic ability, his legs and things that he can do. And he does have a heck of an arm. But that's probably where, not so much J.J., more so, [New York Giants Senior Offensive Coordinator] Greg Roman and what he's done for the run game there and his background with what he's did with [Baltimore Ravens QB] Lamar, when he had Lamar, what he had with [Los Angeles Chargers QB Justin] Herbert and just different people he's been around. So, you know, if J.J. comes in the game, obviously there's a package they have for him and it's probably gonna be red zone, I would imagine, somewhere around there or third down or some type of weighty down situation. And so, our guys just gotta stick to their technique and their assignment and just do their 1/11.”

On New York Giants TE Isaiah Likely and combatting TEs getting red zone success:

“Continue to point it out to the players make the corrections, show the awareness of where certain players are, certain looks, and gotta be dialed in. You gotta understand the situation of the game and how they're gonna attack and what we've put on tape. And so, it's a copycat league and so once you put something on tape, you gotta take it off. And so that's been the focus.”

On what he's seen from LB Frankie Luvu:

“The same juice, that he was, that he had early in the year. You felt that energy out there with him and Frankie has an ability to have guys, guys and bring guys with him, whether it's at practice and he huddles everyone up before we take the field, before we go to our defensive scout periods. It's just that level of leadership that you can feel his presence, and that's good for all players on the defense.”

On what he's seen from the secondary:

“Well, you hit the first one, which is the communication, pre-snap, post-snap, putting your communication on tape. We always say ‘the tape has no value’, right, when you're watching it. And so, how do we know what's being said is what, based off of the communication, the hand signals, the verbal and non-verbal that we see on tape. And so, we continue to stress that. We like the progress there with that. But then also just our eye placement, our disciplined eyes, technique and fundamentals, being good at the line of scrimmage, but also being clean at the top of the route, not using hands to pull, playing with your eyes and your feet, not your hands to limit those penalties down field because as you know it's a spot foul. And so those spot fouls can hurt you. So, we wanna not put ourselves in those situations. So, eyes and communication.”

On advice he would give to someone in his shoes:

“I would say, stay the course, keep pressing, emphasize the nuggets and the focus points and just go from there. Just continue to compartmentalize things and improvements or things that you need to improve on. I would say that.”