THE WASHINGTON COMMANDERS
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Head Coach Dan Quinn

Opening Statement:
“All right. Let's get rolling on Friday. Give you some injury updates with the team. [DT Javon] Kinlaw will be out. We'll reassess where he is as we get to next week. The good news is that's the only player that will rule out [today]. We'll huddle up and finalize the roster as we get into tomorrow. I wanted to share an update on [Defensive Assistant] Coach Steve Wilks. He'll be on the sideline this week. As an addition, coaches, players, we've enjoyed connecting with him. His heavy lifting is normally Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. And when the schedule allows it, there'll be some times that he can come back for some games. This is one of those weeks. So just wanted to give you that update. And then as a team, we're really excited. For this op, division game at home, it's a big deal for us. So, two teams that always like to battle and we, let's kick this thing off. It's been a long enough wait.”

On what Wilks’ role will be during games:
“Just another set of eyes. It won't be something too significant because he won't be at every game. So, he'll be on the sideline. He'll give some information back as we get through the calls, going through the iPad. So, it's one of just another set of seasoned eyes that we'll have.”

On the progress he’s seen from WR Antonio Williams that’s made him confident enough to give him more snaps:
“Over the few weeks playing multiple positions, that's a challenge, you know, for any player, especially a first-year player. So, to settle in more at one spot that will help also. Get more playing time, more ops, just based on that alone. He's diligent, he's got good feel, how to play it in zone. The routes have to adjust for man to man. Those are like some of the subtle things that I see from him.”

On if he feels like this game is more important than others coming up:
“I don't try to go down that far. I know that sounds like super cliche-ish, but I love the biggest of it. Sometimes I'll widen the scope, like, ‘Hey, the next three games, a division, three in the conference.’ And then I kinda just bring it back into here because it doesn't do me a lot to go long, but I do, I'm excited, I would say more than anything to like prove the execution, the consistency, like as a competitor, that's what I'm looking for to prove that the whole game.”

On if communication amongst the team is where it needs to be:
“I'm closer to it. I wouldn't say that it's one of those ones, like, you're constantly chasing for a little bit better, a little bit more. And so it could be, if you and I were playing next to each other on the line, that communication, [G] Chris [Paul] to [T/G] Brandon [Coleman], it could be DBs, a hand signal that goes. So, I'm constantly pushing to see what's there. I often stick my head in the huddle. That's why I like running the scout teams to hear guys talk. So, we're closer to where I wanna get to.

But I wouldn't say one specific position, but I do feel like on a day like today, red zone, where the communication and defense is what I'm searching for on that day, that's what I'm hunting to hear. And so, to hear that, 'okay, that's what I'm wanting to see elevate'. It's a hard thing to put a stat on, but I know what it can sound like and feel like, and if I don't have it, oftentimes I'll do a play again just because of that alone."

On his most important role on game days:
"Well, number one, throughout the week I'm involved with the game plans offensively, defensively, and special teams. So, a lot of that goes on up until the day of. As it gets the game and how it rolls, I'm on, so I hear, I'll give some insights. And then if there's a specific situation that I want a coordinator or a player to know, I'll hit that. I try to give feedback to them about what I'm seeing. To the play callers, I'm seeing this, on the other side of it. So, what am I seeing from their defense? What am I seeing from that, you know, our opponent's offense? What could come back? So, I'm trying to give insights to what I think could be ahead."

On balancing giving his attention to both offense and defense as a defense-minded coach:
"Yep and the team side has always been something that I've had a connection with. For me, helping our offense, it's mostly on the defensive side or a play that causes significant trouble, 'Okay, let's put this in the openers.' Here's why I think this could be good against them. If we're looking at an opponent and they're playing, is this this or that? It's like, no, man, they just screwed that play up. Don't worry about that one. This is what we need to do to emphasize it. So, my job is to try to get rid of clutter to make sure the guys can go execute fast."

On if he wants the language of a certain play shortened or the responsibilities a player has to do to execute a play shortened in order to have more effective communication:
"Yep, both. I'll give you the first one. Sometimes it could be layers. So, it could have a call on offense or defense that has, 'If they do this, we'll do this. If they do this, we'll do this.' Sometimes we need someone that's just, 'This is how we're gonna go play.' And so that would be a volume thing to say, how many of those do we want checks that is a part of what we do and why I like our system. But there'll be times where I just want the guys to go play as fast and as decisively as we can. And the same thing on the offensive side. If you're always chasing a certain look, you could lose some aggressiveness or execution. So that's the balance. And so, some of it is volume, some of it is, I'd say, layers down to get the execution like you want."

On why they chose Wilks opposed to someone who has no obligations outside of the team:
"I thought the main part of the week would be the big piece. And so, it's pretty common in the NFL. I, myself have utilized it during Atlanta, Dallas. People, there we use some offensive coaches. [Former New England Patriots Senior Defensive Advisor] Ben McAdoo and [Dallas Cowboys Head Coach] Brian Schottenheimer were two that were like assisting in the early part of the week as a game plan goes. So, it's something that's pretty common and we talked to a number of good veteran coaches that we like. I wanted a connection to be easy and just give some top-down wisdom and that was all. But Steve's been a great candidate, he's a good teammate, so it's like one of those easy fits, good guy, good knowledge and like help on some specific things."

On if it is taking longer than he expected to see the results he wanted from Offensive Coordinator David Blough and Defensive Coordinator Daronte Jones' systems:
"Well, for sure, yeah, like six weeks is a long time. So, I know there's growing that takes place. And that's the kind of the fun part about coaching. It doesn't just stop. There's not like a time after six

games, like here's your diploma, like you're ready. So, it's more of how do you keep growing and going? And I like these coordinators a lot in terms of the communication, the collaboration. And so, to be where we are from a record standpoint, none of us are happy. But the process of leading up to it, of the practices, the communication, there's a lot of that that I am pleased with. And so that's the thing that we can control now. And then, now we gotta go prove that we can execute better. And we've shown a number of occasions where we can, but it hasn't been for the whole time. And that's been like the thing that I'm trying to hammer home the most."

On what leads to illegal shift penalties:
"So for instance, one that you might control with a cadence to, it's based on an alignment and we're the ones in control of that offensively, man, get the pause, get it set to go. The harder ones are like a change or a shift where people are moving based on a, a call that changes, but you still need that same process of like getting set. You might see a tight light, I gotta get wider for this play, the breathing to go to that. And so, in practice, the way we've tried to simulate that is take a beat, just so you can create the pause to go because shifts, motions, adjustments, it's part of the game. So how do you make sure those are the things that can just take a pause, get your foot set, and as the quarterback and you're checking, you're looking for something, you're not seeing a receiver out to your peripheral move his back foot. So, you can see when, 'hey, I'm going to empty, do I have it? Do I have it?'. Does that make sense? So, what we can do at practice is make sure there's the pause now [snap], you can go get it."

On the importance of being able to reset after hard moments in a game:
"It's for one, I think it's a huge part of the game. I guess definitely going to happen where there's gonna be a tough call, a tough break, a moment that you want back, and so how quickly do you get it? And so, it's, the origin of it kinda came, we had had some first halves that we really liked, but not some of the seconds. And so that's why in San Francisco, not to start but have the second half go like we wanted was part of that response that we were looking for. And as opposed to wanting it to be different, we try to take action on things and say, 'This is what we're gonna do about it'. So, you may see at practice, the entire defense on the sideline, taking the field, 'all right hey, this just happened. Now go play'. So, those are moments that we try to train him on. And in practice, I love when a difficult scenario comes up, put him into a tough spot and see how they respond because that's the main thing as opposed to a flag thrown at practice like, oh, that wasn't penalty. Like so what? Here you go. So, I mark it off, make the next play harder. And so just try to create like the training of adversity. So, it's like, yep, there it is and go from it. But the response is to something, it's gonna happen, how are we gonna answer?"

On if people miss out on highlighting DT Daron Payne's other strengths because they are focused on sack statistics:
"Yeah, it's a good question. I would say yeah, as you're getting through plays, how are you performing? What does that look like? What do you, what's your real strength? And you don't have to spend much time with Daron to know how strong he is especially inside with leverage to play. And so, it's almost like you can miss that part of the game if you're looking for something else. And I definitely value his strength inside, his power, and oftentimes that's where he wins on whether it's pass rush or TFLs. But some of the dirty work doesn't go in a stat, but you can definitely feel it."

On why he's been wearing his hat forward recently:
"Somebody asked me that at the game at San Francisco and I said, 'Oh, it was sunny [laughs].' It was like, it was hitting me in the face. I was like, 'What am I doing? Just put my hat on.' And the

same thing happened today. But I will be mindful I promise, as we get to Sunday, to be at my best. So, I usually wear my hat backwards most all the time. I wear a hat a lot. I'm not LL Cool J wearing it like back in the day, but I definitely wear a hat a lot [laugh]."

On his evaluation of Paul and Coleman so far this season:
"I think it's much like I've seen from team, there's parts, man, do I like it? And I've really felt that way from, I always feel that way about Chris and pass protection. Square in front, you feel the size, you feel the strength on the run game, getting to the second level, Brandon's speed to go to get to the next spot, I feel that. So, I'm just looking for the whole game. And if I can do that and get that consistency, that's an example of the entire team. And there's times that's like, 'That's it. That's exactly it'. And then there's other times to say that false start, that penalty, that thing that set us back, that's the inconsistency I'm looking to wipe out."

On his evaluation of DE Charles Omenihu so far this season:
"It's good to have him back and I'll tell you why. There's a level of football awareness that you get from Charles. Some of that's his experience, his knowledge of what excellent can look like, front-wise, that, the details. So, I like that he's somebody that is onto that in a significant way. You always feel, based on his arm length, him locking people out. And so, he's a better run defender than I was expecting based on his size. But I think a lot of it's due to leverage, smart, he can play and keep people away. So having him back's a big deal for us. He was definitely bothered first by an achilles, then to a groin. So, to see him both feeling good, that's a big deal for our pass rush."