THE WASHINGTON COMMANDERS
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Defensive Coordinator Daronte Jones

On DT Javon Kinlaw and DT Daron Payne likely being out for the season and what they plan to do with the d-line:
"Yeah, obviously, you know, JK and D Payne are huge misses for us and it's gonna be hard to replace those guys individually, so it's gonna take the entire room. And not only just the entire room, just the guys in the front seven as a whole, to kinda just do their 1/11th and it's gonna take a collective effort to be honest with you. But, you know, our details and fundamentals have to really come to life because of that."

On planning against a play caller like Los Angeles Rams Head Coach Sean McVay:
"Yeah. I mean, our ability to be lined up quick, fast, and hurry having our feet set, getting our communication out as quick as possible, limiting some of those layers so that we can just play fast."

On how difficult it will be playing against LA Rams WR Puka Nacua:
"Oh, obviously, they do a great job the way they move him, the way they utilize him. He's in the run game because he's physical, as you know, and not only that, they give him the ball in so many places on the football field, you have to know where he is at all times. And, he's really dangerous once he has the ball in his hands. So sometimes getting him the ball quicker allows him to become more of the running back after the ball, after he's caught the ball. So our guys having the awareness of where he is and then just having the ability to just swarm and hunt."

On CB Trey Amos being back and having more of a diverse defense
"I think if you compare Trey to the first game back with the 49ers until last week, it was really the same grouping for the most part. You know, it allowed us to play both two man, two corner defenses and three corner defenses. And so having him get his feet under him a little bit helps in that way. But in terms of, we didn't move him around or lock him on anybody in particular, I don't believe."

On Amos being back for many snaps and how he's helped:
"Oh, obviously it helps. Yeah, it helps. And just some more consistency and it provides a level of stability for the defense."

On what makes LA Rams offense and QB Matthew Stafford a difficult matchup:
"Like it was mentioned earlier, he gets the ball out so fast, so quick. He's seen a lot of defenses in his years. Obviously, he's coming off of an MVP year and so, a guy like Matthew Stafford and then just also Sean McVay and what he's done for the league in terms of the coaching tree that he's produced around the league and the guys. So obviously, there's a foundation there. There's a

protection scheme there. There's obviously a philosophy that allows the blitz to sometimes not be as successful because of the way Matthew Stafford sees the game."

On if he's starting to see the vision he had for the pass rush:
"Yeah, looking at last week, kind of give you a snapshot of when guys are in unison working together with the pass rush, whether it's a four-man, five man, being detailed in our paths, you can kind of see how that can open up some of those things for other guys. And you never know who's gonna make the play or who may come to life, but as long as we're doing those things consistently, there is some shining light to be seen on that."

On how much it helps having S Nick Cross back:
"Obviously he's another piece back there. Being able to put him down closer to the box, it gives us some versatility to play some different packages where there's a big nickel where he's closer to the line of scrimmage or in the deep part of the zones. That definitely helps us with some versatility that way. So, it was good to use them that way and it was good to kinda open up the package defensively. So, he helped out tremendously with that."

On LB Frankie Luvu being back and how he's fit into his game plan:
"Communication for us, you know, someone there who's over communicating with the backend as well. He's communicating with the front, making sure guys are getting lined up, making sure the movements are where we needed to be. And, just that veteran presence can kinda get guys to calm down a little bit and if there's some type of momentum on the offensive side, you know, he has the ability to say, 'Hey guys, calm down. Let's get back to the basics.' And just, the guys tend to rally around him. He's a great leader that way."

On DT Byron Cowart and DT Charles Omenihu:
"Well, they both provided something differently for us, but it was a kind of a different energy out there. Talking with CO, you know, having that ability to have some pass rush on the interior definitely showed up. And I mean, his long arms, I mean, he can touch the floor from here. So, I mean, another stout player. He's strong at the point of attack. He provided some energy for us and just another big body in there for us. So it was good."

On Defensive Assistant Steven Wilks' action during the games and what he brings:
"Everything that we thought. Everything that we thought in terms of all the vast of knowledge that he has, the experience. You probably saw him where he was located with the back end and stuff like that. So, that definitely helped because now it could take some things off of me where I can kind of focus on the next call and different things like that. And so, it was good. It was good to use his experience. It was good to say, 'Hey, coach, you know, what are you thinking about this? Thinking about this, what do you think?' Just kind of throwing some different ideas. So it was good. It was a good experience to have there on the sideline.

On if he's worked with Wilks before:
"No, but we go back years, back before he became a coordinator. Yeah, we go back."

On what he's seen from LB Sonny Styles so far:
"Just a constant development with him. I think if you saw the game last week, you could see in terms of how more comfortable he's feeling in the pass game and getting to his drops with urgency. And so just kind of continue to build on that. You know, that's a big frame in those windows and

you can see how that can change the trajectory of the throw because he's so long in that window. So, that's been helping and I think he's starting to understand how he can affect the throwing lanes when he's getting to those spaces."

On incorporating OLB K'Lavon Chaisson into his system:
"Before even about the player, I'm gonna talk about the person, because the one person that has kind of been surprising in terms of the energy that he brings day in, day out, especially at practice. He's the one guy that, let's say if he's out for the day or he's taking a vet day, you can feel the juice go down a little bit. He brings the juice, which was surprising to us, was very surprising to us. So that's the same guy you see on the football field. Him getting going early, getting activated into the rush plan is huge for us. Allowing him to have some rushes. We also may see him dropping the coverage. He has a little versatility to his game, and so the more that we can tap into that, I think the better we'll be."

On Chaisson, OLB Dorance Armstrong and OLB Odafe Oweh being a powerful three:
"Yeah, it was definitely a snapshot of what we can be when we're all working together. And, now it's just about the consistency of it, you know? It's not just about the one game. It's can we now stack days, stack days at practices, stack games, stack reps and just build that consistency throughout so that now it's not just a one and done type of deal. It's something that's a standard now in that room."

On facing Seattle Seahawks WR Jaxon Smith-Njigba early in the season and feeling more prepared to face Nacua this Sunday:
"Yeah, obviously, I would say premium awareness is key to that. Understanding how when you don't have sight or don't know where the premium of the best player on the field is, how that can damage the defense and how that can hurt you in terms of getting off the field. So our premium awareness has to be at an all-time high. We have to communicate that pre-snap. You know, every man who could be in coverage has to know where he is, not just a secondary. It could be linebackers, it could be edges dropping. The lessons learned from the Seattle game, late in the game when JSN got active, really, we can't allow that to happen this game."

On the benefit of having a cornerback follow a premium player like Nacua across the field:
"They move Puka so many different places. Having some experience playing against him a couple years ago, tried that and they're jetting him across left and right. They're inserting him in through the line of scrimmage, and so you have a corner trying to track that. It becomes difficult because now he's in a space that he's not used to. He's gotta fit the run, and he's not a linebacker and you wanna keep certain guys out of that. So, hats off to McVey and how they use him because they know that can limit some people from doing that and following him around in early down situations."

On getting pressure on a quarterback like Stafford:
"Well, I'm sure a lot of defenses have tried that to speed him up, so to speak, but he's already sped up. I mean, the one thing about Stafford is his ability, you know, he has the no-look passes. He understands. He has a clock in his head, and so everything has to be calculated when you wanna send pressure, when you don't, when you wanna have the front, when you wanna have the illusion of it. So, it becomes more of a chess match in that light, more so just having blitzes just to say, just for the sake of blitzing."

On if they have a specific plan when facing a strong offense like the Rams:
“No, we try to focus on us and I think if we're focused on us and our philosophy and that starts with us upfront, you know, that's building the wall in the run game. And so whether, and they run the ball very, very well, as you know, but we like to pride ourselves on building the wall up front, utilizing the front seven to do those things. I think that's kind of shown up for the most part through the season. That's just a philosophy that we have and everything else builds around that. Sometimes when the team is running the ball down your throat, it becomes very demoralizing. So we wanna make sure at least try to take that away from any opponent, not just the Rams.”