THE WASHINGTON COMMANDERS
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PERFORMANCE CENTER

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Head Coach Dan Quinn

Opening Statement:
"Good to see everybody. I think I'd like to start off today just by a little bit of recap from the game and going back through it, the thing that I was probably most pleased about was seeing some of the complementary ball, especially in the fourth quarter come to life. There were instances of two-minute at the end of the half, leaving a small amount of time for the offense to go down to score. And then in the fourth quarter, a four-minute defensive stop to a two-minute offensive touchdown to a two-minute defensive stop. So those are always ones that, that's the clearest example that I can show you. I like the field position in punt with [P] Tress [Way]. I thought seeing [S] Percy [Burtler] and [S] T.O. [Tyler Owens] on the outside was big and I thought [LB] Kain [Medrano] did a nice job on the special teams side on the kickoff cover. And then big picture-wise, it's rare that almost at a true halfway point that you have this Mini Bye in a season. And we've been in about six close fights, and I thought that's the biggest margin for me that needs to change as we're starting this second half or second season this week coming up. So, we've been our toughest opponents in some of that in the first half of the season, and that changes now. And so, I liked seeing the resilience of our team and ready to get rolling. So, all that said, if you wanna kick it off, we'll get rolling."

On when RB Jacory Croskey-Merritt's 21-day window will be opened:
"Yeah, we haven't decided yet, but he's certainly trending in the right area. And so, I'll have some information we're gonna huddle up in the morning to see what that would look like. We're one further day back as we're pushing that for the week. But he's had a really good rehab phase and, in the week, and so, he's done a lot to put himself in a position to do that, but we haven't announced or made that decision yet."

On if having one game-winning drive can build confidence and momentum into other ones:
"Yeah, it's a good question. I think what it does is there's definitely belief that goes with it, and in that belief, you wanna say, like, 'All right, not, like, here we go again, but here we effing go.' This is the time that's about to go down and this worrying about what can happen as opposed to things that are negative. And so, to see that take place on the sideline I do think there's momentum that goes with that. We have to push that forward, but I do think that is something in a season that can carry forward. I don't think it is in the offseason, but in a season, I do think that is the case, yeah."

On if he's seeing the changes made during the bye week come to fruition defensively:
"I am. Yeah, I think that's the best way to say it. The layers of communication I feel are improved defensively. And over the last few weeks, I felt that continue on the way up. I like that the guys are attacking the ball and having chances for it. We're still giving up too many yards and some explosive plays in the secondary and, well, not in the secondary, on the defense, but specifically in the passing game. And that's the spot that's the last hurdle that I think to do because I like how

hard they're playing. I like the disguises. I like that [Defensive Coordinator] Daronte's [Jones] in and out of packages, but that would be the last step, and I feel like we're much closer to that, yes."

On what happened on New York Giants TE Isaiah Likely's 66-yard touchdown play and what S Nick Cross brings to the defense:
"I think it was a similar blitz in the first half and if you can remember [OLB] Odafe [Oweh] ended up getting the sack, you may have to go back and look at it, but Nick was the blitzer on it, and I think he spun out of his grasp and went to Odafe. And on that one, when you're blitzing, there's no time to hesitate on the second one. I thought he was almost so secure that blitzer picked up, I believe it was [LB] Frankie [Luvu] who was the blitzer inside. And so, he had a direct shot and it felt like he was hesitating, 'I don't wanna miss this again', as opposed to like, 'No, man, like this is a blitz and you have to go.' The coverage behind it was fire zone, which means it's three-under, three-deep. And if it's completed, that happens, but not to where like it's that close and they escape out. But on the pressure, I believe that's what took place. He's brought a lot to us, especially down by the line of scrimmage. Blitzing tackles for loss, being aggressive. He's a square and solid tackler. And so, whether it's a stop in a short yardage or a space tackle on a tight end, which are tough matches at times, those are just two of the things that I think he's, he's brought to the defense. And we missed it when he was out."

On if there is an update on C Lucas Patrick and him being in the concussion protocol:
"Yes. He is still in the protocol. So, I'll have an update hopefully for our next practice, but that's where we stand today."

On how C/G Nick Allegretti performed at center versus the New York Giants:
"Yeah, I thought, especially in the pass protection, I thought we were square and strong into that. That was gonna be one of the real indicators in this game. We had a sense they would pressure and they did. So, I thought that was one of the spots that I felt Nick sank his strength and his size inside"

On getting the back end of the defense prepared to play against Cincinnati Bengals WRs Ja'Marr Chase and Tee Higgins:
"Yeah. It's a challenge. It's a challenge for every defense. What I have seen, what I've liked is much better communication, from the group before the snap, after the snap, the disguises that go along with that, and we're tackling better. So those are a few of the things that I've seen to improve. In this game, it's gonna take extreme precision to make sure right leverage, right location, because these receivers and quarterback are capable of attacking a certain leverage if you're supposed to be outside and he can throw the inside breaking one, like, not good enough. And so that's usually what it comes down to of right leverage, right location, making plays on the ball. And it'll take us to play a really clean game in that sense against an excellent offense."

On limiting free space for the opposing team's tight ends:
"Quite honestly, there'll just be some coverages that we won't be able to play, you know? You just don't wanna be that vulnerable inside to them where they can. And that will be a challenge for sure. But that's part of us finding some things to tweak to move forward. And during this little bye, we kinda made a list of, all right, the exercise of stop, start, and continue. And so, for instance, the one you're talking about on the inside and low, what's the other adjustment? How else do we defend this? Because when you're getting out of a blitz and you're playing into zone, allowing that many yards to a tight end or anybody over the ball just isn't good enough. And so, those are small things

that deserve a lot of attention. And so, you're right on point with that. That's a major one to go, especially when you're giving insight outside. It doesn't mean a quarterback that can find the open receiver quickly, not what you want."

On if he's reflected on how the team has grown since the last time Washington played the Bengals:
"No, I haven't spent a lot of time on it. I certainly remember the first half didn't feel so good [laughs] with the aforementioned quarterback having a pretty big, strong night to go. But it did maybe accelerate some end of game moments that cause belief and what you can do in those moments about thinking what's going to happen good. It's a difficult throw that [QB] Jay [Daniels] makes to [WR] Terry [McLaurin], but it's one that we had belief in, and at that time, that was the right call to say, 'Hey man, go take your shot, show the belief.' And so that's what Jayden does and also is capable of and provides. And so, to get some of that the other night, I thought that was important for us. And so, yeah, I guess looking back on it that's probably a significant moment of when some of that started, because I believe that might have been game three or so. And so, we've won like a field goal contest prior, and so having a game to throw one at the end to go win it was big."

On what he believes TE Ben Sinnott did differently in his game performance versus the New York Giants and how to keep Sinnott's momentum going:
"Yeah, we definitely need to, number one to see the explosive plays, like, on the over routes where he can insert, and that's something that he does well in the run game as well of not just being in line but being off the ball. In the past, you've heard people use the term like 'HVAC', where he's moving and in motion and can go into that. And Ben has a lot of those qualities, but I was impressed by the downfield throws. I was also impressed by the downfield blocking. So, this was the best game he's played as a Commander. And we definitely wanna keep pushing that forward because I thought he brought a lot to our offense."

On changes the team needs to make heading into the second half of the season in order to have success:
"Yeah, for sure, that's an easy one. I think that's those margins, like I said being in like six one score games and to have just a couple of wins, one tie, and some losses in those, that's the blueprint. That's what is going to change here in this, I'll call it second half or second season. So, we'll work really hard to make sure those parts, we're able to deliver on that. But, seeing that at the end of the last game, I thought that's what I'm looking for, and I wanna see more of that where we can go nail those spots because we're gonna be in a lot of close games. That's our league, but that gives us the map of where we need to go, that's for sure."

On QB Sam Hartman being named the next Bachelor:
"One, I think it's really cool. You guys know Sam, and I'm happy and excited for everybody to see what an outstanding competitor and dude looks like. And so, those of us that know him, we love him and cool op for him. So, something that I thought was fitting and zero advice but it'll be competitive, I'll tell you that, because Sam Hartman is a competitor. So, I don't know what they'll do, but there'll be some competing going on in that show. That's where I'll leave it [laughs]."

On an injury update on T Laremy Tunsil and his return timeline:
"I can give you some updates. And he had a good last visit, so during the Giants week, he had the next visit with the doctor and they'll progress into the next phase, which is the beginning of the strength portion. So that's some good news. So, if you find yourself in the spots, he expected them

to be, I think that's good news. But as far as looking away weeks from now, I think that's too early to call with the exception of good progress and doctors are pleased and ready to begin the next phase. So, I think anytime you're dealing with something, you get onto the next spot then you're hitting the right things that you need to hit."

On seeing an improvement in the pressure the team allowed against the Giants and building on that momentum:
"It was an important piece. We felt that in the first game, it took almost near towards the end to really hit some plays that we could go. So, I thought Jayden in the front of that right there with him and the calls and checks to go. And I think that's important because whether that's New York or Cincinnati or whomever is next having the quickness to adapt and to adjust that was a big piece. And we thought that would be a big part of this game. We really did."

On if Daniels ripping bigger passes is due to him becoming more comfortable in the new offensive system and on how they plan to keep that up against Cincinnati:
"Yeah and I think it all can keep going through the practice as we're going. We've got some guys that can take shots down the field, and I think you saw one to [TE] Chig [Okonkwo] ended up being an interception, but seeing the ball go down the field to get a chance at an explosive, I thought that's the right call. And so, man, let's keep digging into that to make sure that we're testing not just everything laterally, but horizontally as well. And so vertically, excuse me, vertically as well. And when you do that, you'd be surprised that everybody gets a little deeper, there's more space to throw, and so the downfield portion is definitely something that we're focusing in on here on this second half for us, for sure."

On LB Leo Chenal's injury update:
"Let's start from the first part of it. He's back here and he's been in the building and it's actually brought like a significant lift to the team and to him being here. He was out of town for a while, he's back here. And so, just to spend some time with the man is honestly, like, a really good deal. Just when somebody's away, you're worried, and how are they doing? And so, to have him here, he can definitely provide a lift. As far as what the future holds, I think it's too early to call about what that looks like. He's a competitor and certainly wanting to go, but too early to say where it's at. The good news, he's here and he's doing well in this stage of things, which is more, honestly, just the recovery phase, but definitely a thumbs up on that."

On Medrano having limited snaps due to the depth in the linebacker room:
"Yeah, we'd like to get Kain some more. We had worked him into a base package where we worked four down linemen and him being the one in the Seattle [Seahawks] game. And I think that's still alive for us, for sure. But we have a lot of confidence in him, so he plays both positions and if called upon, we'd certainly be able to do that. And yeah, I would be in favor of even him, you know, some snaps here and there to feature him. One of his strengths is playing man-to-man and guarding. On third down, you can see his speed that shows up on special teams a lot. But no, he's definitely somebody that we're ready to lean in on, and I was pleased on the special team side of things. I thought he had a great punch out. I said, 'We got it.' And when we didn't recover it, I still loved the way that he went after the ball. It was the kickoff towards the end of the game."

On the team maintaining belief in the program contributing to the win against the Giants and using that belief for the game versus Cincinnati:
"Yes. And I did feel it. And it's not to say that in other games, there was a woe is me or, like, I kind

of used the phrase, I think, earlier like, ‘Here we go again.’ It was just the opposite of like, ‘Here we go. Like this is the next moment, the next opportunity.’ And I did feel that. It was very much palpable in the way that they had belief in one another, the situation that was gonna come next. So, I thought between the staff and the players, I liked them talking in those moments, what it's gonna look like next. I can vividly remember telling Daronte after the stop on defense by [LB] Sonny [Styles] ‘We're gonna get a score here. You'll get ready to go two-minute.’ And so that was, like, even me thinking, then this is what I want you to cover next. I can remember after the interception, like, saying to the offense, ‘We're gonna get you the ball back. It's gonna get right back to you. Get ready to go attack on the next phase.’ So, we were talking ahead of what is there. Belief definitely has a big part of it. And it is, you do need it, and you need to deliver, because at some point, you run out of it. And so, delivering in it is probably the next biggest step that you do. And so that was important for us to do that. I did feel that, thought they were not gonna leave the field without finding a way to get it done.”

On what DE Deatrich Wise provides to the team:
“First, off the field, he provides so much energy and life for others in terms of a support and that should not go unnoticed. It may not show up on the stat sheet, but it definitely, you feel it. And then he was a very big part of the third down stop. It felt like it was Braveheart, you know, ‘hold’, and here we are at the line of scrimmage. And so, he was very much in the front of that. In this game, he didn't play as much as he usually does, just based on how the Giants deployed offensively for the game. Sometimes we play him square and inside on some of the running downs, and so when called upon, he is one that is able to deliver that. And so, to see this road come back for him and be right in the middle of it all, it's pretty cool for us to see knowing the amount of support that he gives to everybody else. But he's square, he's tough, he's got very heavy hands, and in the run game, that's really where he can make a lot of his mark. But losing the other two is significant with [DT Javon] JK [Kinlaw] and [DT] Daron [Payne]. And so having a guy like Wise who has got the veteran experience, having [DT Jer’Zhan] J.Z. [Netwon] come back along with [DT Shy] Tuttle and [DT] Tim [Settle Sr.], that's a big deal. And so not every team has somebody waiting in the wing, so to speak. And so, it was right [and] was required just at the right time.”