

CFL Media Conference

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Mike O'Shea

Jeremiah Masoli

Orlando Steinauer

Matt Nichols

Winnipeg Blue Bombers & Hamilton
Tiger-Cats

Q. Returns are up considerably this year, you're always dealing with Speedy and some of the names you've had going this year. Just wondering from each of you, start with Orlando and then Blake, what you've seen the explanation for the return game, the more explosive returns picking up, might be something to do with the difference in blocking schemes, did I feel that block, or is it something that we're not seeing? Thanks.

ORLONDO STEINAUER: I'll go first here. I don't know if I can put my finger on it. I think there's some dynamic returners in the League. I think it is being officiated a little bit different throughout the league, and I think that's still being worked through a little bit. You know, credit the team. Credit dynamic returners for making plays and coming full circle again. I don't think that I have a direct answer as to why.

MIKE O'SHEA: I would echo the same sentiments. There are some returners that are just unbelievable out there. They take the field and they are a threat to score at any time. You don't need the perfect blocking scheme. I don't think there's really anything new in scheme. You're getting bodies on bodies but even then with some of these returners, you certainly don't need to be perfect. They can make a lot of guys right around them. That's the way I see it.

Q. Question for Coach O'Shea. Continuity is name of the game for you in Winnipeg and played a big factor for your success early in the year. Comparing this group in the locker room to some of your previous squads, what are some of the differences and is there a special vibe around this team? I know it's early but has there been any difference with this year's squad versus previous years?

MIKE O'SHEA: I'm not one to look back and try and compare from one year to the next. I thought we had a good football team last year in a good team environment. I think we've got a good football team



this year in a good team environment and I think we're still working on it. I think it's still early in the season. I don't think our guys know each other as well as they need to yes. We have some nice talent and I think we have added depth to our team.

But I don't really spend a lot of time trying to look back and see what the major differences are. I just know that the guys are spending a lot of time trying to become a team and they understand that that's a necessity and they believe in that and it's still a work-in-progress.

Q. Question for both coaches. You guys have a lot of history together, you were teammates, you coached together. Can you speak to what each guy was like as a teammate?

MIKE O'SHEA: Go ahead, Steiny.

ORLONDO STEINAUER: Yeah, I touched on this in the press conference earlier. Yeah, O'Sh doesn't like these type of things, but it would actually be a 20-minute talk to be honest with you but I'll try to sum it up here quickly. I think with O'Sh, the one thing that doesn't show up on the game film, on a three-hour Saturday, is the commitment to his preparation in the off-season; the time spent in the training room, not necessarily when he's injured, but just to be the best he can be to prolong his career. It's easy to see the second all-time leading tackler in the league. It's easy to point out the special team contributions.

But the pain he played through, the preparation that he did, just being the consummate teammate, keeping things loose, but also demanding the best out of people; it's one of those things that you can't coach into somebody, in my opinion. Was around him for 12 years, along with college and other things, and he is just one of those -- just one of those special players.

And I said it in the presser and I'll say it now that; I'm seeing a Winnipeg team that's taking on his identity and mindset. Took some timing, but with some better talent and some different buy-in and some more experience, I think that's the reflection of what you're seeing in Winnipeg currently.

MIKE O'SHEA: Time's up.

ORLONDO STEINAUER: I told you, he wouldn't like it.

MIKE O'SHEA: That's a little different Steiny than when you said I was a freak on Landsberg's show.

ORLONDO STEINAUER: That's the truth, too, though. It was good when you're like me.

MIKE O'SHEA: Is it my turn? Yeah, obviously playing in front of Steiny, he was the smartest guy on the field all the time. He was a deep thinker. I thought the game to levels that most players don't think the game. He had an ability to relate to all the guys on the field and find a way to get them to do what we needed them to do and perform, obviously, from the play aspect, all-star, three positions, which is unbelievable, could return. Could just do it all.

As a teammate, couldn't ask for a better guy to watch film at one in the morning or six in the morning with, because you knew you were going to get something accomplished and you were going to grow as a person. Most people that have been in the locker room with him have grown as a person, and -- which if you're going to say anything at the end of your career; if you're ever going to be remembered for anything, Steiny is going to remember all his teammates is helping them becoming better people, which is I think a phenomenal thing.

Q. He mentioned the way he sees your team -- do you see that yet with his team?

MIKE O'SHEA: It's not just the team on the field. I know he's got the ability to touch everybody in the organization from Bob young to the temporary cleaner that comes many. He's going to find a way to get them going in the right direction and it's evident on the football field, too. I think if you were to dig deeper organizationally, that's the kind of asset they have in Hamilton is a guy who is tremendously in tune with all people in the building and the organization, which is you know, incredible for any business.

Q. Super early in the season but people think about this game as a potential breakout preview. What do you think the matchup would mean if this is what it came down to at the end of the season?

ORLONDO STEINAUER: You can tell we are cut from the same cloth. I wouldn't even touch that right now. We are not even close to where we need to be. Fair question but I don't have a fair answer.

Q. For Orlando and Jeremiah. What has Brandon Banks done this year that has gotten him off to such a great start? I spoke to him earlier today and he said he's worked on his route running. Is there anything else to it?

ORLONDO STEINAUER: I'll go first and then I'll let Jeremiah speak to it. I just think that with Brandon, he does work. I think what doesn't go advertised very much is he goes very hard in practice and he doesn't stop practicing and he's committed to the team and I think the other thing with Brandon, he's gotten more opportunity than he has in the past. With some players, you give them more opportunities and they produce, and some not as much. Brandon is one of those players that's flourished with more opportunity.

JEREMIAH MASOLI: I'd say the same thing there, too, and just to add to that is just another year under his belt from last year, just more reps, seeing everything. I know he's feeling good about the offense and his role in it and as far as like what he has to do and he knows he has to execute and get open for everything that he has to do.

Q. If I could just go back to the first question from marshal, your guy, white head, not only -- and Speedy, they are not only both dynamic returners. They both look like they can receive the ball very well. Do you see similarities between the two? I've already talked to Orlando about this earlier in the day.

Mike O'Shea: Yeah, I think, you know, lucky is new to this league, so it would take a little bit more time before I would want to compare him to speedy. Obviously lucky, the physical attributes are fairly easy to see. Lucky's fast. He's got a good feel in terms of making guys miss, like speedy does. You know, like I said, I had to take Speedy -- he's been doing it for a while and you'd like Lucky to have a bigger body of work before you start drawing comparisons like that.

Q. The term game manager has been thrown around jokingly within your organization circle this year, but in terms of having that chip on your shoulder and obviously performing at a high level this year, can you talk about that term, what it means to you now in terms of motivation and a bit about the season you're having overall?

MATT NICHOLS: The term is not a motivation for me or anything. The chip-on-the-shoulder thing is definitely there. Always has been for me, small town, small college, the fight to get to where I am now, it's always been something now that's carried me through and something I'll always be a part of me. For me, joking about it and everything is more just, I look at -- when you join in, everyone all of the sudden kind of stops talking about it and it becomes a non-issue and that's kind of what happened. For me it was just getting better and growing as a person and as a quarterback and coming up with ways this off-season to mentally prepare myself to be a better mental state throughout

the course of the season and really have tools to not let outside stuff bother me and I feel like that's shown up for me in a big way this year and it's allowing me to just have fun and play my best football.

Q. Outside of Nichols and Harris, seems to be a different offensive focus -- producing on the field, is that one of the more difficult things to game plan against because of their variety of weaponry, or maybe you can provide some insight on the challenge in facing the Blue Bombers offense?

ORLONDO STEINAUER: They are playing confident first of all, they are playing together. I would term it as complimentary, balanced football, they have done a great job establishing the run game. I think they have jumped out on teams and have done a great job of keeping their foot on the pedal, so I think they have a great strong mindset, so it's more than just focusing in on two people because they have a nice complement. They do a good job of moving people around, but I think they have stayed completely balanced.