

August 18, 2009

Effort, intensity better on Tuesday

Stockstill wanting a complete practice

Athletic Communications

Stockstill on Tuesday Practice: "I thought our effort and intensity was a little better today but we still have not put an entire practice together the past few days. The second half was better than the first but we are still having too many concentration mistakes like jumping offsides and dropping balls. We also have a couple of wide receivers who need to pick up the pace. I think they have been reading too many press clippings and need to start coming to practice with more urgency."

McDonald Stepping Up: Last year at this time, [Sancho McDonald](#) was still under center as a quarterback for the Blue Raiders but things quickly changed with a simple reverse.

"He took a reverse in practice and he seemed pretty natural," said receivers coach Justin Watts. "We asked him if he would like to work some at receiver and the rest is history."

About the second week of fall camp, McDonald made the move permanent and he would not change a thing. As a true freshman, McDonald played in all 12 games and caught 26 passes for 308 yards and three touchdowns. In his final game, McDonald snared six passes for a career-best 98 yards.

After a tough spring where he battled a hamstring injury and lost confidence from his coaches, McDonald (6-3, 202) has come back this fall on a mission.

"He is really playing with confidence and a big reason is the fact he is healthy and stronger," added Watts. "The contact does not bother him and he is really starting to understand football and what we are doing on offense."

In nine days, McDonald has jumped up the depth chart to where he is running with the first unit at the X position.

"Sancho has improved the most in his blocking while bringing a more physical attitude," said Watts. "He really wants to impress Coach (Tony) Franklin because he did not play very well in the spring. Every day now he makes one or two catches that really makes you shake your head."

Defensive Coordinator Manny Diaz on the linebackers: "We are getting great senior leadership from [Danny Carmichael](#) and [Cam Robinson](#) has picked up where he left off in the spring so we feel real good about those guys. The next four in [Gorby Loreus](#), [Norman Washington](#), [Antwan Davis](#), and [Darin Davis](#), show flashes and improvement one day then take a step back another. We knew it would be this way and it will go on the entire year, which is why they all will play."

Defensive Coordinator Manny Diaz on the freshmen linebackers: "The four freshmen ([Craig Allen](#), [Roderic Blunt](#), [Justin Jones](#), [Stephen Roberts](#)) are so fun to coach. Not only are they great people but they all have a special talent, love to hit, and possess a great attitude. Our offense is tough to go against because of the tempo and they have responded well. We have brought them along slowly but are giving them more each day and they are doing a nice job with that.

"We really don't know about redshirting those guys. We will just let it play out. If they can help us win this year then they will play."

NEXT PRACTICE: The Blue Raiders will practice on Wednesday at 8:15 AM and again in the evening at 7:10 PM. Both workouts are closed to the public.

SEASON TICKETS: 1-888-YES-MTSU OR [GoBlueRaiders.com](#)



William Pratcher looks for running room during Tuesday's practice. ()

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