

August 29, 2009

## Stockstill talks about camp, different positions

Today's practice marked the end of Fall camp

*Athletic Communications*

**FALL CAMP OFFICIALLY ENDED TODAY. GIVE US YOUR THOUGHTS ON YOUR FOURTH CAMP AS HEAD COACH OF THE BLUE RAIDERS.** I was very pleased. The maturity level of the guys really showed and they managed camp really well from a mental and physical standpoint. I liked the way we competed and the effort we practiced with. I was also very impressed with our signees. We took the pacifier out of their mouth the day they got on campus, coached them very hard, and they responded really well. There is a lot of substance to these guys and they are a fun group to coach and be around.

**HOW DID YOUR TEAM COME OUT OF CAMP INJURY-WISE?** We lost Mike Cannon on the first day with a torn ACL. There were some nicks and bruises throughout camp and a few ankle issues, but we came out of it relatively healthy. We are going to lose [Jeremy Michel](#) due to back surgery and his career looks like it is over. [Wesley Hale](#) hurt his other shoulder, will need to have it operated on, and all indications lead to his career being over as well. We also lost true freshman Jadarius Hamlin to a knee injury early in camp and he will not play. We don't want to diminish anybody's injury, but we came out of camp, with the exception to those three guys, relatively clean.

**THERE'S NO DOUBT OUR SCHOLARSHIP NUMBERS HAVE IMPROVED BUT THEY ARE STILL NOT WHERE YOU WANT THEM TO BE. TALK ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE AT THIS POINT IN YOUR SCHOLARSHIP PLAYERS.** We are in the best shape since I have been here, but we are not where we need to be. After next years recruiting class, we will have everything in place from a numbers standpoint though our numbers are better. The 25 freshmen we brought in have provided a lot of depth and great competition along the line. We started camp with around 80 and losing these three guys has knocked our numbers down a little, but it is still higher than it's ever been since we've been here. I am very encouraged and looking forward to the future.



Rick Stockstill completed his fourth preseason camp at Middle Tennessee and liked what he saw from his young team. ()

**THE OFFENSIVE LINE IS STILL YOUNG BUT ADDS A GOOD MIX OF EXPERIENCE AS THE UNIT RETURNS A COMBINED 99 STARTS. TALK ABOUT THEIR PROGRESS AND YOUR THOUGHTS AFTER CAMP.** I have been real pleased with our offensive line. There are a couple of guys we have challenged who really stand out. [Jamal Lewis](#) has had a very good camp and has really improved. [Brandon McLeroy](#) coming off his shoulder injury has been a solid player. Between those two we are good at left guard. [Mike Williams](#) is another who we have challenged to play with great effort in practice and like he has been coached from a technique and fundamental standpoint. He has really bought in and done a great job. [Mark Thompson](#), [Mark Fisher](#), and [Alex Stuart](#) have been very consistent at center, right guard, and tackle. So I have been very pleased with them, but we aren't very deep after losing [Jeremy Michel](#). [Colin Boss](#) and those guys have to play and [Evon Lettsome](#) will have to provide back up. [Chris Hawkins](#) is another guy who has really improved, had a nice camp, and will be able to provide some depth along the line.

**YOU HAD A NUMBER OF PLAYERS THAT HAD SOLID CAMPS AND YOU DON'T LIKE TO LEAVE ANYONE OUT BUT WILL YOU COMMENT ON THE MATURATION OF DWIGHT DASHER AND SANCHO MCDONALD?** Dwight has been very consistent. He is becoming a complete quarterback because he studies, pays attention, and listens. Coach Franklin has done a great job coaching him and Dwight is getting better and better everyday. He is doing a great job from a leadership standpoint, ball security standpoint, and running this offense. I have been very pleased with Dwight and if he continues to improve and work he will have the chance to be something special. It's the same with Sancho who has been a quarterback all of his life up until two weeks into camp last year. He was just learning the wide receiver position last year and then he was injured and couldn't go through spring ball. To his credit, he worked extremely hard this summer, had a great camp, and is extremely focused. Sancho has become a student of the game and is learning the nuances of becoming a wide receiver. So far, he has done really well.

**DEFENSIVELY, YOUR BIGGEST CONCERN GOING INTO CAMP WAS AT LINEBACKER. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE POSITION TODAY?** Linebacker is still a big concern. With question marks there I don't think we will fully know until the lights come on, we play some games, and see how these guys respond. [Danny Carmichael](#) has had a good camp. [Cam Robinson](#) is a lot more focused, paying attention to detail, and getting better everyday. [Darin Davis](#) and [Antwan Davis](#) are coming along and [Justin Jones](#) and [Stephen Roberts](#) are going to have a chance to get in the mix of things also.

**SENIOR BRANDON PERRY PROBABLY WON'T BE RECOGNIZED BY MANY BLUE RAIDER FANS AS HE DROPPED NEARLY 55 POUNDS IN THE OFFSEASON. CAN YOU TALK ABOUT HIS TURNAROUND AND WHAT IT MEANS TO THE TEAM?** I am proud of Brandon. We have talked to him about his weight since we got here. He has been a guy with great potential, but has never really performed because he couldn't control his weight and get in shape. He had a couple of foot injuries in his

career and we don't know if that was weight related or not. To me, he has finally made a commitment to himself and dedicated himself since the season has been over to change his body. I talk to the players all of the time about eating right and taking care of their body and he finally bought into it. Brandon has done a great job and is a better player today because of it. I'm proud of him and hope he can have a year he has been waiting for since his arrival.

**HAVE YOU FOUND A GOOD COMBINATION AT RUNNING BACK BEHIND PHILLIP TANNER?** Yes. Although, the guys behind Phillip have never played so we never know what is going to happen until the lights come on. We have found a great combination with the other three between Benny Cunningham, [Marquise Branton](#), and [D.D. Kyles](#). Each is different in his own way, does things better than the others, and one is a more situation-type player. Phillip is a guy who can play in the running game, passing game, and is good at protection. The other three aren't there yet; one may be good at running, one good at catching, and the other good with protection. Between these three guys we will have adequate backup.

**YOU WERE UP AND DOWN WITH YOUR RECEIVERS DURING CAMP. WHAT IS YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE GROUP ENTERING GAME ONE?** They have become more consistent in addition to their work ethic. Attention to detail and fundamentals of route running, blocking, and receiving really improved the last 6-10 days of camp. Things are on the up-swing and hopefully these guys can live up to the expectations everyone has for them.

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