



## LOS ANGELES RAMS

### Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Conference Call – January 6, 2019

#### **(On his reaction to playing the Dallas Cowboys)**

"Well, we knew that, whichever one of the three that we were going to play is going to be a great a game and it's going to be a really tough opponent. Obviously, Dallas (Cowboys) is that. Just kind of starting to get familiar with these guys. But, when you put the tape on, you see really impressive – in all three phases. I think they're very well coached. They've got a lot of team speed. They're physical on both fronts. (Cowboys Head) Coach (Jason) Garrett does an excellent job. These guys have been playing really good football throughout the year. I think they're battle-tested and it's going to be a really tough challenge for us."

#### **(On if he had any preference playing a team they've already faced this season or a team they haven't)**

"No. I mean there's pros and cons to both. Whether we've played them – they're familiar with us, we're familiar with them or we haven't played them since Week 4 last year. They've obviously got a lot of things that they've done differently – there's some different personnel. So, either way, there's pros and cons. But, we knew we were going to play a really good football team and that's exactly what Dallas is."

#### **(On where he watched the Philadelphia Eagles verse the Chicago Bears game and how he viewed the ending result)**

"I was in my office. I had it on the TV while I was studying some film. Kind of looking at ourselves, kind of making sure we're on the screws with some of the things that we've done. Then, once you have some finality to that game, then you immediately, really, start to dive in to Dallas. Our coaches have done a great job kind of getting some groundwork laid where, obviously after yesterday's game, we knew it was going to be either Dallas or Chicago, so there were the cutups in a lot of different things from a preparation standpoint ready to go. Now, we'll kind of start the early phases of that. But, there were some things that we were going to do regardless of the opponent on both sides. Now, we can really start to finalize our early down-and-distance gameplan and really dive in to it tomorrow as well."

#### **(On how he approached the final field goal in the Eagles-Bears game and what he was thinking during it)**

"Yeah, I feel like I'm more nervous watching games as a fan than I am when we're involved in them. I could appreciate just the high caliber of ball back and forth. A lot of good situations that came up – I thought Chicago did some really good things and then I thought (Philadelphia Eagles) 'Philly' continued to show an unbelievable amount of resilience and making enough plays to get it done. But, same thing last night watching the Dallas-Seattle (Seahawks) game, you're just seeing a lot of high-caliber football. We're excited to be able to play next week."

#### **(On the latest of RB Todd Gurley II)**

"(RB) Todd's (Gurley II) good. He's feeling good. He took part in kind of our – we had a little bit of a walk-thru/jog-thru today and he's been in good spirits. So, I would anticipate that he'll be ready to practice and be good to go this week."

#### **(On the latest of S Lamarcus Joyner)**

"Yeah, same thing. I think both those guys having had that last week off to give themselves another extra week to really get themselves feeling healthy and really, the bye week as well. So, we anticipate those guys

being full participants when we get back on Tuesday. Tomorrow will represent like a normal in-season Tuesday – the players will be off. Then, we'll move everything up a day for what you guys are accustomed to on a normal Sunday game considering we're playing on Saturday."

**(On what he thinks of Cowboys QB Dak Prescott, RB Ezekiel Elliot and the Cowboys defense)**

"I think, first of all when you look at (RB Ezekiel Elliot) 'Zeke', I think he's similar to Todd – one of the most complete backs in the league, extremely productive. I think he's got the ability to go through you or go around you with speed. He's gotten a lot more involved in the pass game this year. I think he's truly a complete back and you could see that a lot of what they do is predicated on just him getting a bunch of touches. Then, I think (Cowboys QB) Dak Prescott's an incredible competitor. When you talk about the QB draw on the third-and-long (in the Wild Card game), what a gutsy effort. Even going back to when he played 'Philly', I was just really impressed with his ability to – really, they put the game on his back and he threw for a bunch of yards and had an unbelievable amount of completions. So, I think you're talking about two elite competitors that are at their best in those crunch-time moments. Their production speaks for itself and you could see their teammates believe in them. Then, when you watch their defense, unbelievable team speed on all three levels. I think (Cowboys Defensive Coordinator) Coach (Rod) Marinelli does such a great job with that defensive front. Lot of movements, lot of ability to create pressure with a four-man rush. Extremely impressed with their inside linebackers with speed from (Cowboys LB Leighton) Vander Esch and (Cowboys LB) Jaylon Smith looks awesome. Playing with some suddenness, some urgency. I think they're very sound on the back end. (Cowboys CB) Byron Jones playing corner, where he's kind of moved around throughout the course of his career going back and forth between safety and corner – he's really playing at a high level. Then, you can see their safeties with (Cowboys S Jeff) Heath and (Cowboys S Xavier) Woods have been really productive players. (Cowboys LB) Sean Lee, I don't know how healthy he'll be, but he's always been a guy – just from having been in that division – that I think is incredible. Then, you see why (Cowboys DE) Demarcus Lawrence is on the franchise tag, because he's an elite rusher and you certainly feel his presence. They're a great defense and extremely well-coached. Really sound. Similar to kind of what we said about Chicago, you earn every single yard against great defenses like this and that's exactly what this defense presents."

**(On if he has heard from any of his players about the matchup with the Cowboys)**

"A bunch of the guys texted, just because of what kind of back-and-forth game it was. I know we were all excited to just figure out who we're playing. We all have a lot of respect for both the Bears and the Cowboys, but I think just getting the finality on knowing who we're going to be playing on Saturday at 5:15 p.m. (PT), guys are excited about that. We know it's going to be a great challenge. But yeah, there was a bunch of guys that texted, 'Let's go. Let's get this thing rolling.' They're excited about the opportunity to compete."

**(On the Cowboys receiving corps)**

"(Cowboys WR) Tavon (Austin) did a great job – had some great punt returns, made some plays in the pass game. I know for him, coming back where he had been – he had the injury that held him out, I want to say, around nine games. But, (Cowboys WR) Amari Cooper has definitely given them a spark. He's wired to separate. He's made a bunch of big-time plays for them. Another productive night for him. I hated to see that for (Cowboys WR) Allen Hurns, any time that you just see a guy have an injury like that it just makes you sick. I feel so bad for him, especially on a good play that he was able to make. (Cowboys WR Michael) Gallup's had some opportunities where he makes a big red zone touchdown last night. But, you could see, Amari Cooper has brought a big spark to them. Tavon has definitely got the ability to beat you in a variety of ways. Like we said, their tight end, the young tight end has gotten involved. He had a bunch of – he had three touchdowns against the (New York) Giants. But, certainly Amari has been a big boost to that offense and somebody that a lot of their pass game has run through and his production has been very apparent for them."

**(On how much he thinks last season's playoff experience will help them this year)**

"I think it helps. I think any time that you're able to draw on experiences, it's helpful. But, every year is a new year. I think just the atmosphere in terms of just where everything is ramped up a little bit. I think the players could probably speak to that a little bit better than I could, but I know that the level or urgency is just naturally picked because of the finality if you don't get the result that you want that it's over. Guys will attack success this week with an enthusiasm. It's going to be fun. We're looking forward to it. But I definitely think,

like anything, I think last year can definitely serve us well, especially for some of our younger players. I know for me, kind of the same deal being in the first year in that role last year. Hopefully, that experience will be able to benefit us as we get another opportunity, another crack at the playoffs."

**(On if the preparation process remains the same this year or if he will make some changes in terms of the way they prepare and if Quarterbacks Coach Zac Taylor and Pass Game Coordinator Shane Waldron completed the head coaching interviews they had scheduled and their feedback from those meetings)**

"So, the first part. We'll be consistent with our rhythm and our routine as far as the way that we prepare for a game. There's always some tweaks and different things like that, but I think it's important to keep that normal rhythm and routine that our players are accustomed to and what they've had a lot of success doing. So, that won't change. Then, as far as for (Pass Game Coordinator) Shane (Waldron) and (Quarterbacks Coach) Zac (Taylor), both those guys – Zac had three and Shane had one. Those guys, I think they did a great job preparing. I wasn't there, but I know they both felt good about the rapport and the dialogue that they were able to have in those interviews. I know it was a great experience for them and I would be shocked if they didn't come off really well and do an outstanding job just based on my knowledge of these guys and what I would've anticipated. Now they're ready to go and they're fully focused on getting us ready for the Cowboys this week."