



LOS ANGELES RAMS

Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Media Availability – January 9, 2019

(On RB Todd Gurley II)

"He's feeling good. He's going to practice. We're going to follow a normal routine as when he's been going this season. He didn't have any soreness from yesterday and he's going to take part in practice. He was out there for the walk-thru this morning. So, very good news on that front. He got a kick out of joking with me that he was real sore today. I didn't think it was that funny (laughs)."

(On how S Lamarcus Joyner is feeling)

"He's doing good. He's made good progress. I think that bye week served him really well, especially even just getting him a chance to really recover missing the last game of the season. He's feeling good. He's in good spirits and we're expecting him to be full speed and ready to roll."

(On if he ever jokes with Defensive Coordinator Wade Phillips about going against the Cowboys)

"Well, (Defensive Coordinator) Wade's (Phillips) got a lot of experience with a lot of different places like he likes to joke about. I think you look at the experience and the success that he had as a head coach there. I know there's a lot of people that mean a lot to him in that building. He speaks very highly of (Cowboys Head) Coach (Jason) Garrett. He talks about the relationship that he had with (Cowboys Owner/President/General Manager) Mr. (Jerry) Jones and how much he enjoyed that. So, I think he had a lot of great memories there. When we were fortunate enough to come away with the win going there last year, I know that meant something to him. Every game means a lot, but I think when you have a history with an organization, it might mean a little something more just because of the people that you're going against. Wade's got that with a lot of different experiences that he's had which is why he's such a great coach. I think you're going to be hard-pressed to find somebody that's come across Wade Phillips that has nothing but great things to say about him. But, I know he wants to win this one as much as any, especially with it being the divisional round. It's a big-time one for us."

(On how excited he is to have the duo of Gurley and RB C.J. Anderson)

"Yeah, it's good. I think, really, what (RB) C.J. (Anderson) has been able to do coming on a few weeks ago in such a short amount of time has been really impressive. I think it's a credit to his approach, some of the situations that he's been in and just being a pro. He's had great production. I think he's got a great understanding of what we're trying to get done. You've seen the production that Todd's had over the last handful of years – really, from the start of his career since he's gotten into this league. So, to be able to have two very productive backs that you feel really confident in is a blessing for our team. We're certainly looking forward to getting Todd back though."

(On if he would like to see the defense improve against the run against the Cowboys and do some things that they haven't throughout an entire game all season)

"Well, I think we know that that's going to be a big point of emphasis. Obviously, you always want to be able to stop the run, but there's certain games that you go into it with maybe a different approach. What are the keys for us to be able to get it done and win the football game as a team? They do a lot of really good things, but certainly running the football is a big point of emphasis for them, especially with the running back that they do have, the (offensive) linemen. They've got a quarterback that can create with his legs as well. It's a great challenge. You want to see us play very sound, but I think it's about playing efficient football. I

think a lot of times, too, the stats can be a little bit misleading based on – I'd be interested to see, 'Alright, in those crunch-time moments or depending upon what's the intent of the call.' Everything is so specific, but to say that we don't want to stop the run, that wouldn't be accurate. We want to play gap sound. We want to be able to fit blocks up front, but there are certain intents behind different calls where we might be trying to stop something if you're a little bit looser with the box. You might leave yourself susceptible to different things. But, it's going to be a great challenge stopping the run and that's definitely going to be a point of emphasis for us this week for sure."

(On if there are any cons to having had the first-round bye week)

"I think, really, you could look at it where if you want to maintain your rhythm and your routine and being able to play. It's been a couple weeks off, but I think the players would say that the rest is definitely the best way to go. Getting as healthy as possible for us where we're about as healthy as you could ask to be going into the Divisional Round. So, I know we've certainly looked at it as a positive. It's been a good chance for guys to kind of get refreshed, rejuvenated. There's a good buzz in the building this week building into Saturday night."

(On WR Brandin Cooks' stats being down in recent weeks and how he views that)

"I think a lot of it - you look at it, he had two touchdowns against (San Francisco 49ers) San Fran – we had some short fields. So, specific to maybe some of the yardage, but two of those catches that he had were touchdowns. He had a huge third down-and-10 catch. I think the Arizona (Cardinals) game dictated where we were running it a large portion of the time. He had a couple carries that were big time for us on the jet sweeps. So, I think it's really about finding ways to make sure we get these guys involved, but whatever the point of attack is or what are we specifically trying to get done, sometimes the receivers might not get opportunities when we're actually not throwing it quite as much. But, you've seen them get involved as runners. I think (WR) Brandin (Cooks) has played really well this whole season and sometimes the numbers can be a little bit misleading, but he's doing a great job. You certainly want to get guys like him involved as much as possible, though, absolutely."

(On if there are places where he has seen WR Josh Reynolds step forward after being more involved lately)

"I just think the level of detail that he's playing with. I think he's got an innate understanding of what we're trying to get done. You always hear us talk about the ownership of, what we're trying to get done, the intent of the play. I think the more experience that you're able to gain, especially when you're a smart, conscientious player like (WR) Josh (Reynolds), I think you're going to get better. He's certainly done that. He's made some big time plays, too. You just look at – he's got great length. I think he's got great body control for a player of his size and then you see him compete in the run game. He's digging out safeties and run support, allowing our backs to be able to bounce it on crack-replaced corners in the run game when some people are in some single-high structures. So, Josh has really gotten better. I think (Wide Receivers Coach) Eric Yarber's done a great job helping him develop. He's done an excellent job learning from some of the veterans that we have. I think he's demonstrated why we feel so strongly about him and why we believe he's a starting receiver in this league without a doubt."

(On QB Jared Goff being a good deep ball thrower, but when he struggles if it's because of defenses' taking away those long plays and how crucial that is for him to get into a rhythm)

"Yeah, I think it is. I think it starts with, a lot of times, the play selection. Making sure that you're getting some of those opportunity-type throws versus the right looks. There's been a lot of instances where I put him in some bad situations, where you're playing some deep structures where they're topping down things and there's really not a whole lot of answers. That's more kind of on the play selection than anything else. But, I think we want to be smart down-in and down-out - take what defense gives us. I think that's what he's done a nice job of the last handful of weeks - just playing the quarterback position at an efficient level. We talk about it all the time, those consistent decisions down-in and down-out and that might be specific to how we're running the football. He had a zone read touchdown a couple weeks ago against the Cardinals. I don't know if you guys noticed that from about six inches out. He predetermined that pull all the way. But, no, I think he's done a good job and I think a lot of that is a result of not putting him in bad situations, like I think I have on some of those instances that you're referring to."

(On Goff not being even-keeled on the golf course and if he's ever witnessed that)

"You know what, I have not witnessed this. That's the first time I've heard that. You know what though, the thing about Jared is he's got a great even-keeled demeanor. But, there's a fiery competitor in there that I don't think a lot of people maybe realize. He's got a way about it where he goes about it in a way that's just communicating with his teammates. But, make no mistake about it, there's an urgency that he has when he's out there competing and I think people feel that. He picks and chooses the right spots because it's just real. It's authentic and genuine when it does come out and when he gets like that, it kind of makes everybody say, 'All right, here we go,' because when he's doing it, it's for the right reasons as opposed to maybe I might do it a little too often."

(On if there is any notable spot that he remembers Goff showing urgency)

"I think it's stuff that, really, I wouldn't have gotten exposed to it unless you see some of the NFL mic'd up stuff, where you almost forget about when you're mic'd and you get a little bit of an inside look on some of the communication that occurs within the framework of the huddle. Those are things that are pretty unique because we don't ever see that as coaches. It gives you a greater appreciation and that's why it's so important for the players to have that ownership because the amount of communication, the amount of things that take place within the framework of that huddle on the field when the coaches are on the sideline, it's so valuable, it's so important. I think it gives you a glimpse of why his teammates love him so much. I think the guys here feel that way and then you go back to even when he was drafted No. 1 overall, watching the response of his college teammates, you can't fake that. The guys that you're playing with, they know if it's real or not and I think that says as much about Jared as anything else."