

**Pool Reporter Interview with Referee John Parry**  
**Conducted by Sam Farmer, Los Angeles Times**

**Sam Farmer:** Can you explain the in the grasp call at the end of the first half?

**John Parry:** Yes. From my view the quarterback's progress had stopped moving forward. There were hands around him and another defender was coming, so we went in the grasp to protect the quarterback.

**Sam Farmer:** Were you concerned about the quarterback's safety at that point?

**John Parry:** In the grasp is designed to protect the quarterback.

**Sam Farmer:** Was his progress stopped?

**John Parry:** He was no longer moving forward.

**Sam Farmer:** Was he controlled or fully in the grasp of a defensive player?

**John Parry:** Hands around the quarterback from my view.

## **Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Rams vs. Cowboys Postgame – January 12, 2019**

### **(Opening remarks)**

"Really, I just thought offense, defense, special teams were outstanding from the jump. So much respect for (Cowboys Head) Coach (Jason) Garrett and the Cowboys. That's a really, really tough, good football team – a lot of great players, great coaches. So, that's a big-time win for us. I thought the key was being able to hold them to 50 yards and being able to rush for over 270 (yards) tonight. We knew it was going to be a physical game. I thought (RB) C.J. (Anderson) and (RB) Todd (Gurley II) both were outstanding. I thought the offensive line was great from the start. (DT) Aaron (Donald) continued to make big-time plays at the right moments and really, that kind of personifies our team. Being able to get some key stops to close out the game. It's a step in the right direction and then we'll see who we play next week tomorrow."

### **(On what it means to him to get his first playoff win as a head coach)**

"It means a lot for this team. I think that's kind of what's special about it is to be able to see guys have that success and then be a part of it and be able to share it with them. That's what's so special about football. Talking about a guy like (T) Andrew Whitworth's been playing as long as he has. To see him play at the level that he played at tonight and then to be able to get his first playoff win with these guys – his teammates that I know he cares so much about and loves these guys. Now, we've got a big game next week that we'll get ready for starting tomorrow."

### **(On the Rams being a running team and if he thinks they showed that in tonight's game)**

"I think that was a big part of what we wanted to be able to do and our guys were creating great movement. We were getting efficient runs on early downs, so you're able to get consecutive ones off. When we had to throw it, I thought (QB) Jared (Goff) made some big-time throws. Guys came up in the clutch. I thought we protected really well when we did decide to throw it as well. You want to be able to be a balanced offense and we were fortunate throughout the year to be able to have some success running it or throwing it, based on what we felt like was the best way to attack. We had so much respect for this defense going in. It was a big challenge. I thought (Run Game Coordinator) Coach (Aaron) Kromer and the offensive line and our offensive coaching staff just getting a great gameplan together and then ultimately, the players executing was special."

### **(On the Cowboys defense stopping the Seattle Seahawks' run game last week and how remarkable it was to rush for 270 yards against Dallas tonight)**

"It's a big-time deal because, obviously, Seattle (Seahawks) led the league in rushing. They're a great rush offense – very committed to it. But, we were able to do a couple different things tonight where, our players made the plays. That's a great defense and tonight, our guys executed at a really high level. What else can you say but just great job by our players tonight."

### **(On going for it on fourth-and-one at the goal line when they were only winning by eight points)**

"I think, really, when you think about what our team is, we always talk about attacking success and never fearing failure. I think that really just personifies our team mindset and mentality. We wanted to come out here and play fearless tonight. We felt good about the opportunity to be able to try to punch that in from where we were at. C.J. did a great job leveling that thing off and the players delivered. But, that's kind of been what's kind of helped us get to where we're at this year – is that aggressive mindset, but being smart about it. We had confidence that if we didn't convert, our defense has them pinned back on the minus one (yard line). But, our guys did a great job getting some push and then C.J. put his foot in the ground and leveled off. That was big – to be able to go up right there two scores."

### **(On the sequence where the Cowboys had two three-and-outs and the Rams responding with two touchdowns)**

"That was a big sequence right there. I thought we were able to really control the game for the most part by being so efficient running the football – getting consecutive runs off. Any time that you have 48 carries, the clock's going to run. Really, we were able to keep their offense off the field. They did a great job being able to match and score a touchdown on their first drive – made a big-time play. But then, I thought our defense tightened down and they played really well tonight."

**(On QB Jared Goff's run on third-and-seven)**

"That was awesome. Yeah, really, great decision by him. We had a little bootleg right there. They were in a man coverage principal. (Cowboys LB) Sean Lee did a nice job covering (TE) Tyler Higbee fast to the flat and Jared Goff showed his athleticism tonight. So, that was a big-time deal, to be able to convert with his legs, stay in-bounds, keep the clock moving and then being able to have a couple more runs where C.J. closed it out was outstanding. It was great to not have to put our defense back out on the field. Jared's third-down conversion with his legs was huge."

**(On the dynamic with RBs Todd Gurley II and C.J. Anderson and the pressure they put on defenses considering they play with different styles)**

"I think C.J.'s done a great job since he's gotten here and then, obviously, we know what a special player Todd is. We thought it was going to be able to be a nice complement. If you told me that it was going to work out as well as it did tonight, I don't know that I would've said that, but the guys did a great job. I think they are a nice complement to each other. C.J. leveled some things off and it was good just to get Todd back. You could see, when he put his foot in the ground for that 35-yard touchdown run, that looked like the guy that we're accustomed to seeing. I think just getting his wind underneath them, not having played for so long, he was able to get a bunch of work – did a great job, was instrumental in the win tonight. But, those guys both did a great job and (Running Backs Coach) Skip Peete getting those guys ready – what else can you say about him but, what a great job he's done, really, throughout the whole year."

**(On having two fourth-down plays within five minutes of each other – including the play where the Rams stopped Dallas from possibly tying the game and the Rams' fourth-down conversion that led to a scoring drive, which extended their lead by two scores – and the positive momentum that ensued after both fourth downs)**

"Yeah, it was big-time. I thought us to be able to punch it in from the 1-yard line on fourth-and-1 was big. Then, even earlier in the game when Jared had the sneak on the fourth down-and-1. We had some big conversions in some tight situations and the defense had some big stops, like they have really throughout the whole year. That again, was a big-time contribution to us winning that football game tonight."

**(On beating themselves in last season's playoff loss and arguably doing the same on the beginning of the game, but then settling down and turning it around)**

"That was big. I thought we moved the football down the field really well in that first drive and then on the third down, they brought a 'double-A' internal pressure. It was a bad play-call. I didn't put our players in a good situation, so then we ended up having to settle for a field goal. Then, we thought we had the touchdown on the next drive when we end up throwing it on the first down. They did a good job forcing that out of (WR) Brandin's (Cooks) hands and then we weren't able to convert there. So, you're starting to think, 'Man, we've got to start punching these in, converting these field goals. We've got to score touchdowns once we get into the red zone, especially as we're able to sustain some drives. But, thought the guys kept their poise – they kept it together defensively. They tightened up offensively. We did a great job. Those guys did an outstanding job. So, that does creep into your mind, but I thought as the game progressed, the way that we finished and the way that we played after those, was a great job by the offense."

**(On what made the Rams defense so good at defending the run tonight)**

"Well, I think it was a great plan by (Defensive Coordinator) Wade (Phillips) and our defensive staff and then I thought the players executed. (Cowboys RB Ezekiel Elliot) 'Zeke' is such a great football player. They've got great linemen. They've got a great scheme with the way they can attack you and then obviously, (Cowboys QB) Dak (Prescott) can beat you with his legs as well. So, there were some different things that we did compared to what we had done maybe the last month that I think was helpful. But, ultimately, it's the plan from the coaches and then the players' ability to be able to execute it and they showed up in a big way."

**(On what it was about Anderson that made him so confident in him and that Anderson would have such a big workload in a game as important as tonight's)**

"Well, the way he's played the last two weeks – and I think, really, over the course of his career. He's a guy that's played in big-time games. You know that no moment is too big for him. This is a guy that's had a big-time role and a Super Bowl champion team. He's just got a great feel for the game. I think he did a great

job again tonight. Was really just impressed with him from the jump – the way that he was able to come in, I guess it would be about a month ago now, and how quickly he was able to pick things up. Really smart, cerebral player and does a great job putting his pads down, finishing falling forward. He's got a great feel to be able to put his foot in the ground tonight a handful of times when they over-pursued. Again, another 100-yard night for C.J. Anderson. So, that's three in a row for him."

## Rams QB Jared Goff – Rams-Cowboys Postgame – January 12, 2019

### **(On how good it feels to win against a team that many thought were bigger and more physical than them)**

"It feels great, just running the ball the way we did. Two 100-yard rushers. It's rare and it starts up front with those five guys up front. They played their tails off and then (RB) Todd (Gurley II) and (RB) C.J. (Anderson) followed. Whenever you run the ball like that, it takes a lot of pressure off the passing game and allows us to control the clock."

### **(On how satisfying it is to win a playoff game now compared to where the team was two years ago)**

"Yeah, it feels good. It feels good. And it really just feels good to do it with the people we have. Two years ago, or one year ago, is whatever it was. To be able to do it with this group, to do it with these people, these coaches and be able to pull off a win at home – playoff win – is big and it's fun. It's exciting and hopefully we can get a couple more."

### **(On what it's like to win a playoff game)**

"It feels good. We won. We've got another game and are in the final four and guaranteed ourselves a spot. It's exciting. You look forward to these moments all year and being able to get a chance to play in a game like this and play well and come out on top is always what you dream about. We've got hopefully a couple more."

### **(On how much confidence the team has in Anderson right now)**

"A whole lot, man. He's been running his tail off and doing everything right. I think the last two weeks without Todd, he showed what he can do. Then, this week, having both of them is special and it gives you a real dual-threat of backs and different backs. Todd is obviously what Todd is – in my opinion the best back in the league and can do so many things. Then, C.J. comes in and knows his role and knows what we need him to do and protects and does all that stuff right. It's just been a really good combo."

### **(On if he felt more comfortable in the playoffs this year having gone through it last year)**

"Yes, but not because of that game. I feel more comfortable because of having another year of football. That game was a year ago and it was 20 games into my career, rather than 36 or 37, whatever it is now. Just getting experience, getting experience in big moments, big games helps. Felt really comfortable though. Definitely more comfortable than last year."

### **(On how big it is to not get sacked and how the offensive line is blocking for two 100-yard rushers)**

"Yeah, that's what I was saying in the locker room a minute ago. I was trying to think of a moment when I got hit – maybe once when I threw it. No sacks and then the way we ran the ball. When those guys are doing that up front, you've got a chance. They've been our catalyst all year and continue to be and are playing well right now."

### **(On what was going through his mind when he took off on the third-down run)**

"First of all, wanted to stay in bounds. Wanted to try to pick up the first down. If I didn't have the opportunity to I was going to get down and try to use some clock. They got depth and I felt a lane and (TE) Tyler (Higbee) blocked it in there and just kind of spun inside and got down."

### **(On what changed for the offense in the second quarter)**

"Well, our defense is playing well. They were getting stops and then we were moving the ball on offense. Finding completions and running the ball well and just moving the ball down the field. Finishing drives with points is always good, even if it was a field goal those first two times. Just getting on the board, getting points, getting into a rhythm is always good."

### **(On how it feels to be one win away from the Super Bowl and how they don't let that engulf them this week)**

"Yeah, you can't. This was a big game and next week will be a big game as well. Honestly, for us, it's just another game. It's a big game. We're in the final four. Like you said, one win away from the Super Bowl. We're going to enjoy it, enjoy the moment, prepare our (expletive) off and do everything we can."

**(On what it was like to have Gurley back)**

"Incredible. I mean you saw it. He was great. He was himself and you could see how fresh he was. I think, again, with C.J. in there, you can see how fresh they can both be when they're both going. Todd is so special – such a special player, person, teammate. Any time he's healthy and playing it's an advantage for us."

**(On what Head Coach Sean McVay has done to help the team get to this point)**

"He's done a bunch of stuff. Just everything. He's the head coach and has done everything from a culture standpoint. I think implementing that culture when he first got here and then hiring the right coaches, the right people and keeping everyone accountable. Keeping himself accountable. The way he leads is special. It's something I've never seen before. His ability to relate to guys – from (T) Andrew Whitworth to myself to Todd and across the board and at the same time be that leader, be the voice that we need and be the accountability voice. It's huge. Can't thank him enough."

**(On what it's like to get Whitworth his first career playoff win)**

"Huge, huge. I was so excited for him. That's something we kind of talked about through last year when we lost and then coming through this year. We need to get him his first win. We needed to get him his first playoff win. He's been in – I think this is eight or nine (playoff games) for him now. It's incredible. It makes it all worth it seeing his face after the game. I know he's not satisfied with one though. I know he wants a couple more and so do we all. We'll be ready."

**(On if there's a possibility that Gurley's injury and time to rest was a blessing in disguise)**

"Yeah. I don't think you ever want someone to be injured, but giving him that rest was huge. Being able to give him that rest and still win two games is huge. You could see how fresh he was tonight and how ready to go he was. He wanted more, he wanted more and C.J. was spelling him pretty good. But, he did a good job, man. He's one of my favorite teammates of all time and he's a great dude. Expect him to be good to go next week as well."

**(On if not throwing deep as much was a result of what Dallas' defense was showing him)**

"Yeah, I think so and I think just the way we were running the ball. As a quarterback, and I think the way Sean feels about it as well, is when you're run the ball that way and our defense is playing that way, you don't need to necessarily be so aggressive. There's some sort of strategy that goes along with that. I'd say that's probably the reason, along with they're a good defense. They do a lot of good things in the secondary and up front with their pass rush. Our ability to counteract that with our run game and getting the ball out quick was our plan and it worked."

**(On if he'll watch the Eagles-Saints game tomorrow and how he will handle it)**

"Depending on what our schedule is tomorrow. I'd love to watch it, but if we're in meetings I won't be watching it (laughs)."

**Rams RB Todd Gurley II – Rams-Cowboys Postgame – January 12, 2019**

**(On how he feels)**

"I'm good."

**(On how his body physically feels)**

"I feel good."

**(On what it feels like to win a playoff game)**

"It feels good. Feels good."

**(On if it feels really good to win a playoff game)**

"Real, real, real good. Great, actually. But, this ain't shit. We still got one more. Keep winning, got to keep winning."

**(On RB C.J. Anderson and himself becoming the first pair of running backs in franchise history to go over 100 yards each in a playoff game and what the approach was coming into the game)**

"No approach. O-line did a great job, they opened up holes and we just stuck with the run."

**(On it being said that Dallas was the more physical team and how it felt to be able to be the more physical team and how it feels to be one game away from the Super Bowl)**

"It feels good. We were the one with the first-round bye they weren't so, I tell you that. It felt good man."

**(On if it was somewhat of a blessing in disguise in the sense that he got to rest over the last couple of weeks and how he looked really fresh today)**

"They do a pretty good job of taking care of us so, no matter if I was playing or not I would have been fresh either way."

**(On what it means to him to get his first playoff win)**

"It means a lot. I'm really not trying to think about it honestly, but it's a good feeling."

**(On why he's trying to not think about it)**

"It is what it is, this game is over with. On to the next."

**(On if he'll watch tomorrow's NFC divisional round game or if he just wants to know when it's all said and done with)**

"Yeah, I'll watch the game. Ain't got nothing else to do (laughs). So, I'm definitely going to watch the game."

**(On if he can talk about his touchdown)**

"The Red Sea parted, and I ran. Those guys did a great job, Coach called a great play. Everybody did their job. I mean, all I had to do is just cut one time and just run."

**(On when the offensive line plays well and what that does for his confidence and the confidence of the entire offense)**

"I mean when we dominate at the line of scrimmage, nine times out of 10, we're going to win. Those guys have been doing it all year. We didn't become a top-tier running back, leading the league in rushing – I didn't do it by myself, I did it because of those guys. Just being with those guys everyday, being in meetings with them, (Run Game Coordinator Aaron Kromer) coach Kromer. It just makes everything so much easier for us. They always give the running backs the credit but you see what those guys did today, you see who led this team to a victory."

**(On the addition of Anderson to the team and what that does for him in the long run and being able to give him breaks)**

"I guess it was a good thing I got hurt (laughs). (RB) C.J. (Anderson) got me, was able to come in and was able to do his thing. I mean he's been doing his thing his whole career. The last three weeks been phenomenal, 100 yards each time, so we just going to keep it going."

**(On if he said anything to LT Andrew Whitworth since it was his first career playoff win)**

"No, coach did though. He gave him a game ball."

**(On his offensive coaches and how they've had such a great offense play calling)**

"Just complementary football. Defense does such a great job of stopping the offense and putting us in great field position. Like I said, it starts with controlling the line of scrimmage. Obviously, you want to have that balance between run and pass, whichever is working for us. Some game (Rams QB Jared Goff) J.G.'s going to light it up, some games the run game in going to be there and then some games it's going to be both. So it's just trying to find that balance. But (Rams Head) Coach (Sean) McVay's been a great coach, obviously. He's been able to make the playoffs his first two years coaching. You got guys like (Running backs) Coach (Skip) Peete, Coach (Kromer) 'Krom', (Assistant Offensive Line Coach) Andy (Dickerson), (Offensive Quality Control) Zak (Kromer), (Pass Game Coordinator) Shane (Waldron), I mean all those guys. Credit to everybody, I mean not even all the guys on the field. But it starts with the coaches and then we just follow their lead and go from there."

**(On the drastic change from the team two years ago to the team they are now and how they got to this point)**

"Oh yeah, that's just how the league goes. You're not going to have a great year every year unless you're the Patriots (laughs). But that's the beauty of it for a guy like (LT) Andrew Whitworth that's been in the league 13 years and this is his first playoff win. You can't describe that. Just being in the league the first couple of years, not making the playoffs and then you got a guy like Andrew, like I said, that never made the playoffs and then you got rookies that's on the team making the playoffs. So it's definitely a blessing because we could be at the house chillin' and partying like everybody else right now, but we're still playing and that's what we want to do. That's the ultimate goal."

**(On if watching Whitworth accomplish his first playoff win make him appreciate it a little bit more)**

"I've always appreciated him, man. Most guys in my position, I've been winning my whole life. So, when you're in the NFL, you're not going to win every game. The chances of that are slim to none so you just got to be able learn how to take those wins and those losses and just be able to get better each week and just bounce back from that. Like I said, just do one week at a time. That's what we try to do, try not to think about it. Did that in the past and that didn't end up well. So just going back to not trying to really think about the playoff win and just put this behind us. Obviously, we got to watch film and see what we got to get better at but just take it day-by-day and just keep trying to get better."

**(On how having a bye week helped with being able to self-scout and prepare for this week)**

"Bye weeks help, especially if it's another team playing. I don't know how they felt, but who wouldn't want to have a week off instead of play? We had the right approach. (Senior Director of Sports Medicine and Performance) Reggie (Scott), (Director of Strength Training and Performance) Ted (Rath), they had a great plan for us -- and Coach (McVay). We didn't treat it as a bye week. We treated it as a prep week. I didn't practice, but we had a padded practice and we were able to get stuff done. We weren't just, just slumping around and not getting stuff done. We were working on the fundamentals of our offense, making sure we were focusing on the little things. Obviously, that helped us get the win today."

**(On how his mentality was fine-tuned from last year's playoff game)**

"I don't even, honestly, remember last year. I just know this is a new year. We were able to just come in, lock in. You could just tell. Just looking at (CB Aqib) Talib today -- him and (CB Marcus) Peters. It's just like, 'This is it.' This is the reason we traded for you. This is the reason we traded for Peters. This is the reason we signed (CB) Sam Shields, we signed (DT Ndamukong) Suh, to be in this position like this. Obviously, every team is Super Bowl or bust. That's why we -- (General Manager) Les (Sneed) and Coach -- made all those offseason decisions. We were able to come together as a team and just keep finding ways to win."

**(On if he can allow himself to think about how the next win could catapult the team into the Super Bowl and if he can use it as motivation next week)**

"Definitely, different strokes for different folks. However, you want to look at it, as long as you come in next Sunday and give it your all. The chance is slim to none. Like, to be able to even play for a Super Bowl is crazy, man. It is crazy. I can't even really explain it right now. It's just like when my boys say when I talk to them. I go to the Super Bowl and I just talk to those guys. Talked to (Eagles WR) Nelson (Agholor) last year, (former Patriots WR) Malcolm Mitchell and it's just like, 'Man, how does it feel?' It's a good feeling and we're just getting a glimpse of that feeling. Definitely something you've got to think about because it's so close. But, we know what we've got to do as a team and as players and coaches to get that win to be able to go there."

**Rams RB C.J. Anderson – Rams-Cowboys Postgame – January 12, 2019**

**(On how satisfying it was to run through the Cowboys defense today)**

"It was just fun. Big boys played really great up front. Me and (RB) Todd (Gurley II) just tried to pick the right spots. Like I said, when Todd wants a rest, you just try to not miss a beat."

**(On what has allowed him to fit in so well with Gurley)**

"I just think our game is a lot different from each other. Obviously, he's one of the best running backs in the league. Just trying to make my snaps count. It's good to see how we complement each other and try to keep defenses off balance as much as we can."

**(On if he could have imagined being in this spot a month ago)**

"It's how you handle things. For myself, I just always kept my head down and kept pushing. I always believed in my ability and what I could do. It's not like I haven't been in these positions before. It's not like I haven't been a 1,200-plus yard back, all-purpose – or a 1,000-yard back in this league, a Pro Bowl back in this league. I've always found a way to hold my own no matter what. I'd describe it like that."

**Rams WR Brandin Cooks – Rams-Cowboys Postgame – January 12, 2019**

**(On Head Coach Sean McVay being the youngest coach to win a playoff game and the entire coaching staff)**

“You talk about a guy like that, he’s so special. Words can’t even explain the type of guy that he is and what he brings to this team and the rest of the coaching staff. The confidence that he has in us the players speaks wonders for sure.”

**(On his thoughts heading into the next game and being one win away from the Super Bowl)**

“First of all, find out who we play, but just take it one day at a time just like we did this week. Play situational football, be detailed, and just play our game.”

**(On if he felt like the offense got back on track tonight and looking like how they did earlier in the season)**

“Yeah, it’s just one of those things. We didn’t beat ourselves. Not too many mental mistakes. I think when you do that you set yourself up to be successful.”

**(On how he feels on the offensive line)**

“We don’t talk about them enough. The way that they come to work every single day and what they do out there on that field. They are the driving force to this offense and it shows on games like this.”

**Rams T Andrew Whitworth – Rams-Cowboys Postgame – January 12, 2019**

**(On how satisfying it is as an offensive guy to have a successful running attack against what was arguably the best run defense in the league)**

“You know what, I feel like we think we can run the football on anybody. We were confident coming into this game that we could do it. It took a team effort. Hats off to (Run Game Coordinator) Coach (Aaron) Kromer, (Head Coach) Sean (McVay), and all the offensive staff with the plan, and then guys going out and executing it.”

**(On how it feels getting his first playoff win)**

“It’s great, but you know what, I feel like this team has potential for more than that. So it’s a great feeling and I’m happy to have it, but I didn’t try to get to the playoffs to just win a playoff game. I’m trying to win a Super Bowl. That’s the only focus and now we are one step closer.”

**(On if there is difference in player confidence this year compared to last year)**

“No, not really. I think we just executed. I thought last year we didn’t execute very well at all. It was probably our worst game we played all season from an execution standpoint. This year that was in Chicago. I think in some ways it’s benefited us to get that game out of the way, and to kind of have a recheck, and say, ‘Alright, how do we build ourselves back into what we really started this season?’ I feel like we are on that path.”

**Rams DT Ndamukong Suh – Rams-Cowboys Postgame – January 12, 2019**

**(On the play he made on fourth-and-one yard to go)**

“It was just a bang-bang play. I saw what they wanted to do, played off the center and tried to close up the gap. My hands were tied, so I guess I went head first. It was a bang-bang play.”

**(On the defensive plan to stop Cowboys RB Ezekiel Elliott)**

“It was a goal for us. We understood that teams felt they could run the ball on us, a big emphasis for them. I watched a previous playoff game against Seattle. He was obviously dominant and probably one of the reasons why they won that game. Our focus was to shut him down and obviously get after the passer.”

**(On his thoughts about this coaching staff and the entire team)**

“(Head Coach) Sean (McVay) is great. I came here for a reason. The great feelings that I had with him when I sat down for my visit and all that stuff is coming to fruition, so it’s up to us to go out there and execute. Our coaching staff as well as Sean. Our whole defensive staff comes up with great game plans. We just have to go out there and execute. We do that, and we’ll be successful.”

**(On the environment out tonight and what it felt like to get a playoff win for LA)**

“The environment was great. We appreciate all our fans. Hopefully we get another home game here soon, we’ll have to watch tomorrow. They did a tremendous job, they were nice and loud and we appreciated that. A lot of fun.”

**Rams Aqib Talib – Rams-Cowboys Postgame Availability – January 12, 2019**

**(On the defense stepping up to hold Ezekiel Elliott to less than 50 yards rushing)**

“We put emphasis on it this week. Of course it was a lot of talk in the media but we just said, ‘Man, it’s postseason. Nothing else matters but this game.’ We prepared for it. Wade (Phillips) did a good job of getting us ready and setting ourselves up to succeed and that’s what we did.”

**(On the offense being able to control the ball and keep the defense off the field in the first half)**

“It was great. Seeing that one-two punch, back-and-forth run game, it was clock work. Sean (McVay) dialed it up, the offensive line did their job, and the running backs ran the ball hard.”

**(On the confidence the run game gives them going into next weekend’s NFC Championship game)**

“That’s the key. We know that January football is about running the ball and playing defense. Everybody knows that. You look at all the past Super Bowl Champions, that’s what it’s about so that’s what we put emphasis on, that’s what all four teams next week are going to put emphasis on. It’s who ever comes out and executes the best.”

**(On the fourth and one stop in the fourth quarter and what that meant to the defense)**

“It was huge, a key point in the game and a huge stop for us. And a great job by our offense. It’s times in a game like that that where the momentum kind of shifts and it went in our favor.”

## **Rams S John Johnson III– Rams-Cowboys Postgame Availability – January 12, 2019**

### **(On what gave them the confidence defensively that they were going to be able to stop the run)**

“We’ve been flashing all year. We’ve been playing well all year it was just time to play great and I think we did that today. We had a few mistakes that we got gashed on but we can get those fixed. For the most part we played well. It’s been there all year we just had to limit the mistakes.”

### **(On what it does for the defense when the offense is running the ball effectively)**

“We have the most confidence in the world in our offense. That last drive, we knew we were going to get a first down. We were ready to go on the field, but I kind of knew they would get a first down, a couple first downs. As a defense, that just gives us the drive to go out there and prove them right as well because they have confidence in us too.”

### **(On what was going through his mind on the fourth down play in the fourth quarter and what it felt like to get a stop)**

“We’ve been standing up in crunch time, big moments all year. It was kind of routine and hopefully we can carry it on into these later games.”

### **(On being one game away from the Super Bowl)**

“The next game is the biggest game, that’s the Championship game. People don’t understand that that’s a huge game as well. We’re locked in on that and once we get there, we can focus on the biggest game.”

**Rams DT Aaron Donald – Rams-Cowboys Postgame Availability – January 12, 2019**

**(On what made the defense so good against the run today)**

“We did our job. Stayed gap sound, got out there and made plays. That’s what it’s about.”

**(On how tired he was of the narrative that the defense couldn’t defend the run)**

“We just did our job. We didn’t worry about anything else. We just played out football. It’s playoff football, win or go home and we know that, we knew what we had to do. The most important thing is that we won. We get to play next week so we have to get ready for that.”

**(On how big the fourth and one stop was at the beginning of the fourth quarter)**

“It was really big for us. Anytime you can change the momentum and switch the momentum like that, make a fourth down stop and put the offense back on the field, that’s what it’s about.”

**(On being one game away from the Super Bowl)**

“One game, we just have to keep working, stay focused, get ready, see who we play next week, and get ready to go.”

**(On if guys from the team last year talked a lot about the playoffs coming into this game)**

“No, it’s a new year so no one really spoke on it we just knew what we had to do this year. We needed to play mistake-free football, play as a team, finish strong and we did that.”

**(On the energy in the building tonight)**

“It was loud. It kept us in there and when we needed them to get loud they were loud for us. That helped us a lot.”

## **Cowboys Head Coach Jason Garrett– Rams-Cowboys Postgame – Jan. 12, 2019**

### **(On what the issue with the Cowboys run defense was)**

“We just did not do a good enough job defending the run, obviously. They’re a physical football team. I think there’s a little bit of a misperception about how the Rams play offensive football. It starts with the run. They do an outstanding job week-in and week-out, and we just didn’t do a good enough job controlling the line of scrimmage, winning our gaps and tackling. Unfortunately for us, they were able to run the ball consistently throughout the ball game. They controlled the pace and the tempo of the game really because of that.”

### **(On the Cowboys’ struggles running the ball)**

“They were committed to stopping our run. They had a lot of people around the line of scrimmage and that’s what they were going to do. When we were in three wide receiver sets, they were staying in base defense and they just wanted to stop the run. That gave us some opportunities in the passing game that we were able to take advantage of. Obviously, we’re at our best when we’re balanced and we’re throwing it and running it, but they were committed to stopping the run and we had to run them out of that and at times they do a good job of that.”

### **(On if he would have liked to have run the ball with Cowboys QB Dak Prescott more in this game)**

“Yeah again, we’ve talked about this a lot during the year. A number of those plays get called and sometimes they become handoffs in the game. It’s been a big part of what we do and we’ll continue to use that as we go forward. Not every game is he going to get a ton of carries based on what the defense is playing.”

### **(On the failed fourth-and-one attempt in the fourth quarter)**

“It’s been a signature play for us. We’ve been very successful over the years with that idea – double-teamed at the point of attack and giving (Cowboys RB Ezekiel) ‘Zeke’ (Elliott) a chance to make the yard. He’s done that time and time again throughout his career and they did a good job stopping us on that one.”

### **(On his message to his team after this loss)**

“I’m incredibly proud of our football team. You talk about mental toughness and physical toughness, they demonstrated that the whole year. A young football team that grew a lot over the course of 16 games and a couple of games in the playoffs. I think we learned from our experiences. I think we grew. I think we became a more hardened football team. I think a lot of young guys grew up and they grew up together and those are really positive things that we can build on. The Rams were a better team than we were today. They were. I don’t question our effort, our toughness, our fight. Those guys put it all out there and it inspires me. The hair stands up on the back of my neck when I talk about them and think about them, everything they put out there. It’s something else. I love the group of guys we have. They care about each other, they love each other, they love this game, they go about it the right way – all things that we can build on for the future.”

### **(On why it was difficult to get Cowboys WR Amari Cooper going throughout the game)**

“At times (Cowboys WR) Amari (Cooper) did a really good job. Obviously, on the first drive he had a big touchdown for us and came back a few other times throughout the game. He’s a good football player. We like to get him involved. I thought (Cowboys WR) Michael Gallup did a lot of good things in the ball game as well. We’re at our best when we spread the ball around. Each of those guys, they’re a big part of what we did in the passing game.”

### **(On what needs to happen for the Cowboys to get past this point in the playoffs)**

“We just have to grow as a team in all areas. We have to get better on offense, better on defense, better in the kicking game. We have to continue to create competitive situations with our personnel on our roster so we can grow, and we have to learn from our experiences. A lot of different experiences this year that we’ll grow from, we’ll develop from. The early-season inconsistency that we had that we grew out of and played significantly better over the last half of the season. Having the playoff win last week is something that we’ll benefit from and having the disappointment today is something that we’re going to benefit from. You have to remember these feelings, when you stand in these locker rooms. When you have disappointment, it has to continue to drive you and we have the kind of guys who that will. It’ll be fuel for us going forward.”

**(On if he saw anything matchup-wise that suggested his defense would struggle as much as they did against the run)**

“Again, they’re a good football team. They won 13 games. That doesn’t happen by accident. They’ve done a very good job running the football all year long and that was going to be a challenge for us. Again, we just didn’t do a good enough job in that area. It’s been one of the strengths of our defense all year long. Trying to make teams one-dimensional, that’s an objective that we have and we didn’t do that tonight. We’ll look at the tape and we’ll learn from this experience and get better.”

**(On if QB Jared Goff was the last player he would expect to run to convert the Rams third-and-seven on the final drive)**

“Yeah, there are some different things that you have to be ready for. Obviously, they want to run the ball in that situation to work some clock or force us to use a time out, so you’re ready for the runs to the backs, you’re ready for the naked with the quarterback, maybe you’re ready for a quick screen. They did a good job just capturing the edge. He was able to make that yardage and obviously end the game at that point.”

**(On how formidable the Rams running game is with the addition of RB C.J. Anderson)**

“Yeah, (RB) C.J. (Anderson) is a hell of a football player and has been in this league. He’s done an excellent job wherever he’s been and you add him to a duo with (RB) Todd Gurley (II), that’s a big-time tandem in the backfield that they have. They do an excellent job with their scheme, they do an excellent job with their offensive linemen blocking and obviously the runners are damn good running the football. Hats off to them. They did a great job. They did a better job than we did tonight and congratulate the Rams for the year they’ve had and going onto the next round.”

**(On what the Rams did to slow down the Cowboys running game)**

“Yeah, we addressed that earlier. They were committed to stopping the run and they were going to have a lot of guys around the line of scrimmage. Even when we were in three wide receiver sets they were staying in base. They were committed to stopping our running game and we had to be able to throw them out of that defense. At times we did. The big plays we got in the passing game were a result of that. (Cowboys WR) Amari (Cooper) on the touchdown early on got a good matchup against that safety, so that’s part of how these games go. If they’re committed to taking one thing away, you’ve got to beat them in another area. At times they did a good job of that tonight.”

**(On the Cowboys not staying in their base defense)**

“Yeah, again there are a lot of different things that we did to attempt to slow them down, whether it’s personnel or scheme or movement up front, a lot of different things that we tried, but they did a good job. They did a good job up front controlling the line of scrimmage and running the football.”

**(On Cowboys WR Michael Gallup’s development throughout the season)**

“Yeah, (WR) Michael (Gallup) has done an excellent job – a young player who played a lot of snaps for us. You said it, he grew over the course of the season. He had some challenging situations that he had to deal with off the field and really handled that well and then certainly he grew with the opportunities he had to play and built on the good stuff, learned from some of the challenging things on the field and just got better and better and better. He was a big part of what we did tonight.”

**(On when he finality of the season will hit him)**

“Well, you just put it all out there. Fortunate to be one-of-eight teams playing this weekend and we feel good about where we came this year and the growth and development of a young football team. We had no plan for any meeting tomorrow. We had a plan to get ready to go play in the NFC Championship game. You have to regroup when you come in the locker room when you lose and you move forward. Again, we’ll go back and we’ll watch this tape, we’ll learn from this experience, we’ll remember this feeling, we’ll be better for it.”

**(On what he is most proud of when he reflects on his team this season)**

“The mental toughness that we demonstrated individually and collectively. Challenging times really throughout, had to overcome a lot of different things, a lot of young players learning how to play at this level, and at every turn they just handled things the right way. They grew and they got closer and they just care

so much about each other and they really love each other. They love this game and they handle it the right way.”

**(On if he feels like his team competed adequately enough or if trailing 23-7 was just a matter of execution by the Rams)**

“Yeah, I thought we competed really hard and really well today. To come back from that adversity in this ball game – they did a good job running the football and driving the ball against us and they got ahead. We couldn’t answer it well enough offensively, but this team doesn’t blink. The mental toughness and the effort and the will of this football team (was) readily apparent tonight as it has been all year long. We did a great job giving ourselves a hell of a chance at the end of the ball game to make it one score and come back and tie it and unfortunately it didn’t work out for us.”

**(On the role that Cowboys QB Dak Prescott played in bringing the team back from behind)**

“Yeah, he’s something else. He is something else. He’s a great football player, a great leader. Just the way he goes about any situation since I met him has just been inspirational in so many ways. Scratch, claw, fight, battle, somehow, some way he’s going to give our team a chance and he certainly did, unfortunately we weren’t able to do enough.”

## **Cowboys QB Dak Prescott – Rams-Cowboys Postgame – January 12, 2018**

### **(On why the team struggled on third-down in the second half, especially considering they had been doing so well all season and if there's anything specific he can point to as the cause)**

"Not anything I can pinpoint right now. I wish I could. I wish we could've done the game, obviously, to try and fix that and avoid going 1-for-10, as you said. But you can't win games, especially games like this, crucial games like this, when you have that stat on third down. It's important to keep drives going. It keeps the defense well rested, it keeps us on the field and allows us to have a chance to score, and when you don't do that, it's hard."

### **(On what made the Rams' defense successful since the first half of the game)**

"Yeah, I mean you just said it. They did a good job upfront, just with their fronts playing base front, the big guys that they have. You have to credit this team we played. The guys that they have upfront, the guys that they have on their defense, just their whole team. They did a good job."

### **(On the emotions from this season coming to the end and at this spot in the playoffs again)**

"Yeah, I mean, it's hard to right now at this moment. It's been a great season, obviously. All the ups, all the downs, the team that we had that were 3-5, and being counted out by everyone. But, 'backs against the wall' mentality, the way we were able to fight, just to get to where we are right now. It's inspiring and incredible, all the men on this team. I'm proud of this team, but anytime you lose – especially when you know the team that we have, and as close as we felt we were – it's not a good feeling."

### **(On if he feels like they missed a huge opportunity)**

"Yeah, as I just said, we had a good team. And when you know you have a good team like this and you feel so confident about the team you have, the defense that we have. Yeah, definitely, as simple as that, we missed an opportunity and you don't know when you'll get them back."

### **(On seeing the defense give up 200 rushing yards and the struggle that the Cowboys' defense faced tonight)**

"I've always got my defense's back, no matter what. I understand that was a struggle today. I think that they would all say that the same, but they've had our back all year long when we struggled. When we fell from putting up points, or putting up points to keep us in the game, they were the ones that always had our back, and kept us in the game and giving us a chance to win all year long. So I mean, I'd ride with those guys any day of the week."

### **(On if this game felt like some earlier games in the season where they fell behind early and had to give it all they had in the end to get back into the game)**

"No, I don't think that's exactly correct. Yeah, we kind of fell back early in this game, but we were able to get back into it. The defense made a stop there in the third quarter. We were able to make it a touchdown game. We just didn't get it done on the fourth down. I think that really changed the game right there. You get that, we're still running the ball, we're throwing the ball, we're doing everything, and it's not, 'Hey, we've got to drop back and throw it every single time.' So, we just weren't able to execute when we needed to, and it hurt."

### **(On if he would have liked to run the ball more)**

"I've always said this, I just kind of let that come to me. It's not something I go into the game, saying, 'I've got to run 10 times to do this or to do that.' But yeah, I let that happen."

### **(On what he saw on the fourth-and-1 when the Rams defense stopped them)**

"Yeah, I mean definitely. It's something we have to go back and look on film. I can't tell you right now why we didn't convert that, but as I'm going to give credit to that defense, and then just list it to this team making a stop when they needed to, and getting us off the field."

### **(On what the refs told him about the sack)**

"They didn't tell me anything. I didn't actually necessarily know that, I was going to see at the time, so I wasn't sure what exactly happened. I kind of thought the whistle had blown because it was one of their

guys, and he was saving me. And so, I wasn't sure until I came off, seeing our coaches confused, and then talking to (Quarterbacks Coach) Kellen (Moore), and then figuring out then that it was (T) La'el (Collins)."

**(On if he knew that play was the Rams or his own teammate)**

"No, like I said I didn't know what was happening at that moment. So, no."

**(On where the team goes from here)**

"We're a young team. We have a lot of guys that have the right makeup to make sure that we get back here, and to hopefully get passed this round. But, what sucks is you've just been in that locker room, just my short three years in the league, understanding that the team's not always going to be the same. You're going to lose guys and guys are going to be gone, sometimes coaches. And, that's the unfortunate part about it. So, right now it's just about enjoying this time, I guess, with these guys and with this team. Then it's moving forward, and getting back to this point and getting past this point."

**(On what it's like to know the season is over)**

"It just means I have to get back to it again come February, simple as that. It's not anything you can do over - I can't change anything now. It's just about getting better and making sure that I become a better player, and making sure the people around me become a better player. We're going to turn the page and do that good pretty soon."

**(On if this is a lesson in how important it is to have home-field advantage)**

"No, not at all. I mean, we just let an opportunity slip. I don't think this has anything to do with the home-field advantage or not. I credit Cowboy Nation, just the way that they came out and supported here tonight. I don't think home-field advantage was really a factor for them in winning this game. They just executed when we didn't, and they were the better team tonight, simple as that."

**(On what his thoughts are on the season being over)**

"That's the NFL. I think all but one team that happens to, so that's the NFL."

## **Cowboys RB Ezekiel Elliott – Rams-Cowboys Postgame – January 12, 2019**

### **(On his reflection on the season)**

"I'm very proud of this team, we dealt with a lot of adversity this season. I think we did a great job handling it starting out 3-5 (record) nobody really thought that we would be here. Came back and won eight out of nine games. You know, we came up short today, but I'm proud of these guys we fought all season, we fought until that clock hit zero I am just proud of this team."

### **(On coming up short on fourth-and-one)**

"They dominated us up front, we didn't get any movement. They beat us up front and we didn't get any movement that's it."

### **(On him going against the Rams defense)**

"We played against a really good front. You guys kept asking me about stats and 5.1 yards per carry all week and I told you guys that it's playoff football, none of that (expletive) matters. They came out, they played better than us."

**Cowboys LB Leighton Vander Esch – Rams-Cowboys Postgame – January 12, 2019**

**(On how surprising it was to not be able to stop the Rams rushing attack)**

“They’re a good football team and they outplayed us today. When you have two good football teams, you’ve got to bring A-game every single game. They just outplayed us.”

**(On how tough this loss was)**

“Really tough.”

**(On how difficult it was stop Rams RBs Todd Gurley II & C.J. Anderson)**

“You’ve got to give it up to those guys. Those are two good runners out on the field. You’ve got to give it up to them. They ran their butts off today and they made more plays than us.”

**(On if the Rams running for 273 rushing yards was more on what the Rams did or what the Cowboys didn’t do)**

“They got theirs, but I think in a sense, we kind of beat ourselves. It is what it is.”

**(On if he saw anything in the film that showed the Rams could run the ball that effectively)**

“Nope. We just had to be confident in our keys and fit the run. We had to make them one dimensional and we didn’t.”

## **Cowboys DE Tyrone Crawford – Rams-Cowboys Postgame – January 12, 2019**

### **(On how difficult this loss was)**

“It was just as difficult as I remember. I’ve been here before. We got in a close game and didn’t get it done. We didn’t play our style of football defensively and I didn’t think that would happen. We should’ve played a lot better on defense. We didn’t and it’s unfortunate.”

### **(On if the Rams out-muscled them with their running game)**

“I don’t think they out-muscled us. I think it was a combination of things. Some things we just weren’t ready for on the field. Our coaches got us equipped for a lot of things. And throughout the week our preparation was good and I thought we were going to come into this game better than we did. We messed some things up and we just didn’t play our style of ball. We needed to get up field more, run to the ball and hit. We weren’t doing that as well as we usually do.”

### **(On what elements of the run game you weren’t ready for)**

“Just different things. We tried to prepare for the tempo and that was a little different. But, I’m not going to make any excuses. It is what it is. We didn’t play our style of football. We didn’t do what we were supposed to do out there on defense and we got beat.”

**Cowboys CB Byron Jones – Rams-Cowboys Postgame – January 12, 2019**

**(On what the Rams did to be able to run the football that effectively)**

“It’s tough to know exactly what happened until you look at the film, but they had two really good running backs. Guys that know how to finish forward. It was tough for us to get that rush defense going. If you can stop the run, you can’t win.”

**(On if he saw anything in the film that showed the Rams could run the ball that effectively)**

“There was no indication that they would be this effective and to be able to run the football like that on us. All year we’ve been really good in our front seven and our defensive backs were tackling. But today we just didn’t show up.”

**(On how surprising the game was)**

“It hurts. It’s not surprising. You know that any team you play in the NFL, especially this time of year, they’re going to be good. And if you don’t bring your A-game, you’re going to lose the game. The L.A. Rams showed up and they were the better team today.”