



LOS ANGELES RAMS

Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Conference Call – January 13, 2019

(On what he thinks about facing off with the New Orleans Saints in the NFC Championship Game)

"I think it's going to be a great challenge. Obviously, the Saints are a great football team. I think they're playing really well on all three phases right now. You know how explosive their offense is and then I think their defense is really hitting their stride. (Saints Defensive Coordinator) Dennis Allen has done an outstanding job with these guys. They play fast, they all play together, they're really sound. They mix in pressures (inaudible). It's going to be a great challenge, especially just having to deal with that atmosphere and that environment with those fans going crazy. But, we're certainly excited about another opportunity to go back there and see if we can come away with a win."

(On what carries over from the previous matchup in Week 9)

"There's been enough time where there's going to be a lot of film that we're studying from in between there, but any time that you go against an opponent, you can definitely be able to utilize some different things from that game to try to help yourself (inaudible) move forward. I thought it was a great example of they did a great job jumping out to a lead. We were able to come back. I think we showed some good mental toughness to be able to get it back to 35-35. At the end of the day, they made enough plays and they ended up being able to get it done at the end. We didn't make enough plays, but I think our guys learned from that game the right way. Hopefully, we'll be able to utilize those things as we move forward this week and hopefully have some more success out there."

(On how the team came out of Saturday's game from an injury standpoint and specifically with RB Todd Gurley II and his knee)

"He's good. (Inaudible) great job being able to get him back in there. He made a bunch of big time (inaudible) to contribute to the win. So, we came out clean on that front. What we feel fortunate about is that we're going into this game this late in the year about as healthy as you could ask. I think that's a credit to our players taking care of themselves, but also like you guys have heard us talk about, a great job by (Senior Director of Sports Medicine and Performance) Reggie (Scott) and his staff and (Director of Strength Training and Performance) Ted (Rath) and his staff as well."

(On how he approached yesterday's game in terms of how he wanted to utilize Gurley and RB C.J. Anderson)

"We knew that Todd was going to be able to go and we wanted to see how he was going to feel because, really, until you get out there and really test it and you're playing in some of those live-game atmospheres, you don't know exactly how it's going to respond. He felt good. I think we were able to run the football so well that we were able to get a lot of carries off. I thought the complement that they provided for each other was outstanding. The offensive line did a great job. It was somewhat similar to kind of what we anticipated, but a lot of it is predicated on how Todd was feeling, his ability to communicate that to (Running Backs Coach) Skip (Peete) and myself. I thought Skip did a great job having a good feel for it. It was also a good chance for Todd to not feel like he had to play every single snap as he was kind of getting his wind back as well, just having been off for that long."

(On if he felt like the defense was more disciplined specifically with gap responsibilities, defending the run and how crucial that will be when facing the Saints)

"Yes. I thought they did a great job. It was a big point of emphasis for us like we said after the game. (Defensive Coordinator) Wade (Phillips) and our defensive staff did a great job getting a good gameplan together and then ultimately the players executed. But, we did do a good job of – I thought we hit blocks up front really well. Guys won individual match ups, we pursued to the football. I thought we tackled well also because when you really look at it, (Cowboys RB Ezekiel Elliott) 'Zeke' is such a strong runner. He's so hard to bring down and I thought we arrived and you could feel our guys at the point of contact taking people down immediately. We were getting 11 hats to the football and that's exactly what we wanted. They did a great job. It's going to be a huge point of emphasis this week just really when you look at what the Saints are capable of. (Saints Head) Coach (Sean) Payton is one of the best and I have so much respect for him. You know he's going to get a great gameplan. They can beat you in both ways, they can run it or they can throw it. That's what really presents such a great challenge, because they've got a Hall of Fame quarterback and they got an elite running back, and they've got a great system."

(On what he saw from DT Ndamukong Suh and if him playing at the caliber that he did against Dallas takes the defense to the next level)

"No doubt, and I thought you definitely felt his presence. I thought he pursued the football outstanding. I thought he was able to get (inaudible) all night. I thought that affected some of the different things that they were talking about, so I thought he was outstanding in those early downs. When he's able to do that, it makes a huge difference. I thought he really came with a great focus and concentration this week and I think it showed up with the way that he was able to play. Anytime that you're getting that kind of production and even sometimes it might not show up on the stat sheet, but you just look at the way that he influenced and affected the game a lot of the ways that we talk about (DT) Aaron (Donald), I thought (DT Ndamukong) Suh did that last night and it was a big, big time performance by him."

(On how he thinks the loss in Week 9 against the Saints affected the team)

"I think, really like anything else, I don't think it changed anything with our team. I think it just gave us an opportunity to respond where we were 8-0 going into that game and we had our first loss. Really, it was something where, you just get a chance to kind of just test your resolve and see how you can respond. I thought we did a nice job bouncing back – you look back going against Seattle (Seahawks) and Kansas City (Chiefs) to be able to get big wins before our bye, I thought was great. But, any time that you really go – I think what you could really takeaway is, get a chance to play that opponent, but then also, getting a chance to feel what a tough atmosphere that is to play in where, I think there's a lot of times a fear of the unknown and now that we kind of know what to expect with a great crowd and how that's going to have to alter some of the different things that we'll do specific to offense – some of our communication, I think we can use that as a positive. But, we know it's going to be a great challenge."

(On how much of a difference CB Aqib Talib will make in the NFC Championship game after missing the last meeting against the Saints this season)

"Yeah, it's a big difference. I think just having him out there, his veteran presence – like we've talked about a lot, his ability to communicate, his ownership and his study throughout the course of the week – in terms of just his situational awareness, concept recognition and then most importantly, his ability to communicate. So, when you get your two guys out there on the edges, I think that will enable us to do some different things coverage wise – be a little bit more flexible where, (inaudible) wide receivers. What a great job (Saints WR) Michael Thomas did affecting that game just now and he's going to be a big focal point for us to be aware of where he's at. But, he's got a lot of ways that they can beat you, which is what makes them such a great offense."

(On his impression of the New Orleans Saints-Philadelphia Eagles game today)

"Yeah, I was really impressed with the way Philly started that game and then I was even more impressed, probably, with the ability for the Saints to kind of keep it together, weather the storm. I thought it was a really gutsy decision to go for it on fourth down, where they ended up getting a touchdown to get it to 14-7. Then, the Saints did a good job controlling the clock. They had some nice, long drives. But, Philly kept battling and then really, it came down to the wire where, you never know when it's a 20 – you know, they're up six points, Saints are up six and Philly is driving. They've got (inaudible) and convert. Then, if (Saints CB

Marshon) Lattimore doesn't make that pick, it'd be interesting to see because you know (Eagles QB) Nick Foles is going to have four downs. But, ultimately, the Saints got it done and that's what makes them a great team. They've consistently closed out games this year and that's why they're in the NFC Championship."

(On how exciting it is to be one game away from the Super Bowl)

"It's certainly exciting. It's a great opportunity for us. I think it's something that when you get a chance to play for one game away, that's exactly why you do all this hard work. To be able to see the people that you love and care about so much – having that success and sharing that with them is what's special about it. So, it's going to take a great week of preparation from us. We know how good of a team the Saints are and we have a lot of respect for them. But, we're going to go there and give it our best shot and compete to the best of our ability and see what happens."