



LOS ANGELES RAMS

Rams Defensive Coordinator Wade Phillips – Media Availability – January 25, 2019

(On how he was able to get so much pressure on Patriots QB Tom Brady in the AFC Championship game when he was the defensive coordinator for the Denver Broncos)

"Each team and each year is different. That was one of the great teams, really, the great defensive teams of all time. After they talked about comparing them to the '85 (Chicago) Bears, you know how good they were. Each game is different. Had teams that played against him and didn't do very well and that team did really well. You can't fool the great quarterbacks anyway. You have to outplay them. That's what that team was able to do. Let me tell you one thing about – I've been in the league a long time, I really think it starts at the top and I don't know how much people are talking about it, but (Owner/Chairman) Mr. (E. Stanley) Kroenke's done a great job with us. He's a tremendous owner. I know (Patriots Chairman and CEO) Mr. (Robert) Kraft is the same way. I think it starts at the top with class people like that, turn out great organizations. So, I just wanted to say something about both those guys because they've done – they're a part of the reason, certainly, that the teams are there."

(On if he's starting to feel like the Rams' defense is starting to anticipate what Brady and the Patriots can do on offense and how he expects and prepares for the unexpected)

"Yeah, they're really efficient in what they do. In the playoffs, they've got the leading quarterback, the leading receiver and the leading the running back in the playoffs so far. So, they've been tremendously efficient. They've got great Super Bowl experience. A quarterback – certainly, I think, the greatest playoff quarterback in history. He's got four MVPs. It's a tremendous challenge to play this offensive team that they have and their whole team, but especially their offense. It's a challenge, but we've started our process. We try to give them a gameplan, but it's a real challenge to fool a quarterback. I've said that about Brady the same way. You're not going to really fool those guys, you've got to play tremendous technique and play really well in what you do."

(On what it means for him and CB Aqib Talib to have this experience going to the Super Bowl again)

"You're close to a lot of your players, but I'm really close to (CB) Aqib (Talib). He's certainly helped me get a ring, which is important. But, the friendship part has been really special to me. I think, maybe, and it's not all money, but I think he came partly because I was here. That really means a lot to you as a coach – that somebody would like to play for you, or at least does to me."

(On if he expects any more 'drippin' scenes with him)

"(Laughs) I didn't know what that was last time until he put all his stuff on. So, I started buying all that. I'll get it all out when we get to the Super Bowl."

(On how difficult it makes a play to diagnose when offenses run the jetsweep, especially with how much Head Coach Sean McVay uses it)

"Yeah, he's utilized that with a lot of other subtle things that he does. That's why he's a great coach. He's able to give the defense problems and we saw it all in the OTAs and practices the last couple years because we compete against each other in practice. Anything you do, he's going to counter with something better. He's a tremendous coach. But, he's not only just an offensive coach, he's put this team together. They follow his lead and we're where we are because of him."

(On if he remembers when he started seeing the jet motion more)

"(Hall of Famer Harold Edward) 'Red' Grange didn't run much of them when he was playing. There's always something that kind of recycles. I don't know when it first came in, but I wish it hadn't – sometimes (laughs). Of course the (New England) Patriots utilize it also and every team now is going to copy the good teams."

(On DT Ndamukong Suh having good back-to-back games and why he seems to be peaking at this point)

"Yeah, (DT) Ndamukong (Suh) has not only had two good games, he's had two great back-to-back games. We're used to seeing him play well and have some big games. But, I think these last two have been his best and when he's at his best, he's hard to stop. I think just me getting used to what he needs to do and him getting used to what we want him to do has worked out and he's finally put it all together. I think he's a great talent and he's certainly showed it."

(On DT Aaron Donald not necessarily putting up the stats but influencing some of the things that other teams aren't ready for)

"Well, you look at the two teams we've played, who were great – well, I say great – but, they were great running teams, that neither one of them made 50 yards rushing. Suh and (DT Aaron) Donald and (DL Michael) Brockers are, really, responsible for that. Playing more of the running game when they needed to rather than rushing the passer every play and they were able to do that well."

(On how he has seen S John Johnson III grow and him bringing a lot of personality to the defense)

"Yeah, we've got a lot of personalities on our team, especially on our defense. But, (S) John Johnson (III), again, he makes a big play in the game and he's made a lot of tackles in the open field. He's a great tackler, I've said all along. I said it earlier in the year that he's going to get better and better and he did. He's gotten better and better in his coverage, gotten better and better in his feel for when to get tighter on zone coverage, when not to, when to time things on blitzes and so forth. So, he's gotten better and better this year. He's a really good football player."

(On having Super Bowl experience and what he likes about the two weeks prior to the game and also what he doesn't like)

"Well, he knows I don't think a whole lot, so that's why (laughs). I think any time you have two weeks off, you sometimes want to do so many things that the players – it's whatever the players can do and whatever you can teach them to do in a certain amount of time. Now, what we've done is – and he's done offensively – he's taught these things all the way through the season and so forth and able to just dial-up plays. The same thing defensively, we've taught these things throughout the season. We repeat things that we play during the season. Now, which things we play this game, will be a lot of some of the things we did, but we've done a whole lot of things throughout the year. So, it's up to us to hone in on what we need done and how we want the players to do it."

(On how much Donald has enabled Suh to shine in the playoffs and make big plays)

"You know, the last few games, certainly, all the protections have gone to Aaron. But, like I said, I think he's played tremendous run defense in this stretch, too. They haven't thrown it every down. He still puts pressure on the quarterback. He still had one of the greatest years – well, he had the greatest year of any defensive tackle in the league ever. I think he's really playing well. Whether he gets a sack or not every play, that doesn't define him, it's how he plays. Nobody can run the ball on his side and they have a tough time blocking him, so they try to get two or three guys on him, so that helps everybody. It helped (OLB) Dante Folwer (Jr.) too because he was one-on-one."

(On what he remembers from being an interim head coach with the Atlanta Falcons from 2002-2003)

"Yeah, I was with (Former Falcons Head) Coach (Dan) Reeves, which was one of the all-time – won over 200 games. So, I mean one of the great coaches. We went to Atlanta the first year. We went to the playoffs. We went to Green Bay and beat the Green Bay Packers in the playoffs – the first time in history Green Bay lost at home in the playoffs. The Green Bay Packers history, we beat them. That was a tremendous experience for us and (Former Falcons QB) Michael Vick ran a touchdown against the (Philadelphia) Eagles, but they called it back and we got beat the next game. The officials missed a call (laughs)."

(On what he sees from his perspective that makes it seem like Patriots Head Coach Bill Belichick can create teams that are so formidable year after year)

"He's a great coach. He's adapted with the times really well. He's changed with the times. I think you said it about me, I kept the same scheme over the years, but what he's been able to do – and he's a lot smarter than I am, so he's able to run a lot of different defenses and get those stops and stop what the other team does. That's what he does and that's what he's done for a long time. He's obviously a Hall of Fame coach and maybe the best coach of all time. Same with Brady – a Hall of Fame player, but he might be the best quarterback of all time. Those guys are certainly in those arguments. I can't say enough good things about him. He gets his team to play well. They change personnel a lot. You say Tom Brady, but they've had a lot of different players, a whole different offensive line, almost, than what we've played with Denver three years ago. They're still efficient. They play really well and don't make mistakes."

(On critics saying that Brady is out of his prime and after looking at film of Brady, what differences he's seen in Brady this season compared to when he's faced him in the past)

"Well, unfortunately for me, I get older, but Tom Brady doesn't (laughs). Besides the guy being a great player, I just have so much respect for him. He seems like such – now, I don't know him well – but, he has so much class, he says all the right things all the time – the right kind of guy. He's leading the league in passing in the playoffs and he's already won four MVP's, so I don't know if there's any critics of him. If there are, I'd like to critique them."

(On how much the game has changed since his first Super Bowl appearance 29 years ago)

"Well, yeah, my first Super Bowl – it wasn't leather helmets, now. But, we played against (Hall of Fame QB) Joe Montana and (Hall of Fame WR) Jerry Rice and that group, so we had a tough time in that ball game (laughs). They had a great team and they played really well. But, they were on the west coast offense, which is really, all these teams now are playing some form of (Former Head Coach) Bill Walsh's west coast stuff. So, some of that stuff is similar and when you play against Joe Montana, it's like playing against Tom Brady. I mean jeez, those guys were great. You know in the Super Bowl you're going to be playing against a great quarterback and a great team and we expect that."

(On his impressions of the play involving CB Nickell Robey-Coleman against the New Orleans Saints in the NFC Championship game and how he thinks Robey-Coleman has handled the aftermath)

"I think he's going to the Super Bowl, I know that, with me on the plane (laughs). He's handling it all right. All we do coaching-wise is, if a play is called, we usually get mad if it's against us, if we didn't think it was interference or we thought it was this or it was that. If a play is not called – we thought they were holding Aaron Donald, but they don't call it and you go the next play. So, that's the way the game has been played for a long time and that's the way it's played."