



LOS ANGELES RAMS

Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Media Availability – February 5, 2019

(On if he has had a chance to reflect on the game since Sunday and how he's processing it)

"Yes. I think initially you're so disappointed and you never forget that moment because what I think was special about this group is not necessarily for anybody individually, but you want to see the other people have that success. You want to see the players, the coaches that you care so much about. But then when you get a chance to step back and you reflect on it, you know, I think the one thing that says as much about this team as anything, that you couldn't figure out if you had one, is the way that they responded. It kind of continues to embody what you see. Guys caring about one another, staying connected. I think if anything when you look at people, like we've talked about, that are successful in life, it's people that have the ability to overcome adversity. And if you can't handle getting gut-punched and responding, this business probably isn't for you. That's the only way that I know how to respond as a coach. I know our coaching staff feels that way. I know our players feel that way and that's what's powerful. We'll take a little bit of time, but the motivation to continue to get better, to fall in love with that process of one day at a time, getting better, learning from your mistakes, that's what drives you. I think sometimes if things are always easy you never really get a chance to be tested and find out and that's the only mindset and mentality that, really, I have been raised with and the people that I'm fortunate enough to be around, with our coaches and players, have and I think you kind of take on that identity. It's a resilient mindset and it's one of gratitude for what these players and these coaches have done this year, but also the unfinished element of it will just continue to drive you in the right way as you move forward."

(On watching the film and if anything stood out to him about how the game unfolded)

"Yes, it felt pretty similar to what we thought. I think a credit to the Patriots, they did a great job, and then there were some things, that like anything else – whether it was myself or just things that you can control as a coach – you certainly want back. I think the players too would say there's a couple things that they wish they would have done differently. But, the best part about it is we lose as a team and everybody stays together with that. Whether you win or you lose, there's always a self-reflection in terms of what can you do within the framework of your role to do better, to put your players in better positions? That game is exactly like the rest of them in terms of that. I would say in terms of kind of the way that we process it or the way that it seemed, it was what we had thought just right afterwards in terms of kind of what we had had a feel for throughout the game."

(On after watching film and having time to process is there any insight he has for why RB Todd Gurley II's production was down in the final two games)

"In reality when you really look at it, we had gone in knowing that we wanted to be able to have kind of a shared load between he and (RB) C.J. (Anderson). The amount of attempts that we had just rushing the ball in the last couple of games was a little bit different. Specific to the game the other night, (RB) Todd (Gurley II) gets into a little bit of a rhythm or it seems like when we'd have a good positive run then something would inevitably occur to set us back. And then when you're not efficient on third downs, we just didn't get a lot of attempts off. So that really ended up being a big result of what ended up happening where neither Todd nor C.J. got involved because they did some different things – nothing we didn't expect. But I think when you go a five-yard run, we were having efficient runs but then you have a couple penalties to set yourself back, where now you're second-and-10 and you're not converting on some third down-and-shorts. We didn't get the amount of plays off and didn't really have any drive continuity where we're punting more

than we did and that's a big result of why those opportunities were limited for him and then just going into the game the way that we had thought."

(On what goes into the decision of how Gurley and Anderson will split playing time)

"I think they were both just in a really good rhythm. I think the ideal scenario that we had gone into the playoffs with was what you saw in Dallas where it was both of those guys getting involved. When we had that approach and then you're limited with the amount of carries that you end up getting off or the way that a game plays out that's just kind of what the result was. It was something where we knew we wanted to get both those guys involved. Every game, like we said, whether it's play-calls, decision makings, when it doesn't work out the way you want, there's always that element of second guessing. But I think when you look at just the overall work that a player of Todd's caliber got, it was in large part due to the fact that we had gone into the game saying we wanted to get both those guys involved and then as a result of us not being quite as efficient or being able to convert on those third downs, it just limits those (opportunities)."

(On if Gurley is expected to undergo any knee procedures now that the season is over)

"No. We haven't talked about any of those things right now. I'll get a chance to sit down with (Senior Director of Sports Medicine and Performance) Reggie (Scott) and we'll discuss that. But as far as I'm concerned and as far as I know, that isn't the case where we're planning to do anything like that."

(On how RB Todd Gurley II is feeling emotionally)

"I think, if anything, been so pleased with the way that (RB) Todd's (Gurley II) handled some disappointing things, really, for our team. Whether it be after that game – and the thing that I think is special about a Todd Gurley is when you look at specifically after the NFC Championship, a lot wants to be made about, 'Okay, Todd, you didn't get the opportunities' – things like that and all he did was just draw back to it's about the team. That's what's special about this football teams and guys like Todd. He's been great. In our interactions, I think as an elite competitor like he is, there's a disappointment that we didn't get it done. But, I think he's embodied and he's really demonstrated that mental toughness and the character that you want from your players when things don't always go the way that you exactly want, specific to some of the individual things. He's handled it like a stud and like a guy that you would want. I've been extremely impressed with him. I think that says as much about the human being Todd Gurley, which is what's more impressive to me at the end of the day and have been very pleased with our interactions and how he's handled that."

(On if every player goes through an exit physical and if Gurley did one today)

"Yeah, they do. As far as I know, absolutely everybody goes through that. I haven't had a chance to meet with (Senior Director, Sports Medicine and Performance) Reggie (Scott) yet, in terms of kind of following up with how all those things went. But, that's the standard operating procedure and Todd took part in that."

(On former Rams Quarterbacks Coach Zac Taylor becoming the Cincinnati Bengals head coach)

"So, to start out, (Former Rams QB Coach) Zac (Taylor), really happy for Zac. He's a guy that – I didn't really know Zac too well. I've kind of been, like you guys hear me say, a fan of coaching and I remember just watching the way that he handled when he took over in an interim role when Dan Campbell became the head coach for the (Miami) Dolphins and watching the way that Zac took over that offense, led it. Just the way that he handled it from afar, you were really impressed. We both share the same agent with Bob LaMonte. So, when I got a chance to get here, he was somebody that we had reached out to and he was really overqualified for the position, but you just wanted to get great coaches in your building. Then, getting a chance to be around him, he's been nothing short of really impressive. He's got a great command of the room. He's a great communicator. He's got a quiet confidence about himself that, when you're just around somebody like him, you say, 'That guy, he's an impressive human being'. He's very secure in himself. I think he'll do a great job as a leader of that organization and he's really smart. He had a lot of great input with regards to some of the gameplan – things that we did this year. He's got a mastery of the quarterback position. I know if you talk to (QB) Jared (Goff), (QB) Sean (Mannion) or (QB) Brandon Allen, those guys speak the world of him, in terms of just his ability to get the most out of them. So, he's going to do a great job in Cincinnati and that's a big loss for us."

(On what the Rams will do with the quarterbacks coach position and pending free agents next season)

"As far as what we're going to do moving forward, those are things that we're still filtering through. The thing that's amazing is, when you do go this late into the season, which is certainly a blessing, we're really far behind with a lot of the things that typically take place.

Whether that be filling out those positions and even addressing some things like the free agents that are coming up where, you know the value that those players have – when you talk about what (OLB) Dante Fowler (Jr.) has brought to our team. What (DT) Ndamukong Suh's done and what (S) Lamarcus Joyner has meant to the Rams organization over the last handful of years. So, all very important parts of why we were able to have success last year. But, really, this being the first day that we're in the office kind of getting some of those things, whether it be coaches, whether it be players, in terms of some of those free agents and how we want to address those things. Those are our first priorities. But, those are things that we're going through and filtering through and those are going to be big things that we're handling right after this press conference."

(On if Taylor asked permission to speak with any current coaches on staff or if he's expecting to have any coaches join Taylor in Cincinnati)

"Zac and I have talked about that. That wasn't something that he anticipated. There might be a couple other people outside the framework of coaches that he might want to see if they can be a part of that organization, but those are things that we'll deal with right after this as well. But, as far as the coaches, I said, 'You stay away from all our coaches (laughs).'"

(On if he still feels that he'll never be able to get over Sunday's outcome)

"When I say get over it, I think probably a more appropriate word would be you won't forget it. Get over it – you've got to move on and you get over it, but you don't allow it to hijack your ability to move forward is basically the best way to put it. That's where I'm at now and that's where we'll continue to be at. To say that you're not disappointed and you wanted to do more with what you can control, yeah, but I feel that way after every single game whether we win or lose. The other night it didn't work out, but I think, like anything else, if you use it for the right fuel and you make sure that every opportunity – whether you win or lose – is something that you can learn from and you can get better if you're able to look inwardly and say, 'Okay, what can I do, whether it be decision-making, being more decisive, handling the ebbs and flows of the games, some of the things that you can do specific to schematics as a play-caller.' That's a great challenge and that's what you love. It's a never-ending process of getting better. By no means do I think that you have it all figured out. That's what's the beauty of this game is that there's a lot of people that are involved in it that are intrinsically motivated to get better – most importantly, for your players and for the people that you work with. That's why you do it is to see you be a part of helping them get better. That's the motivation. Yeah, I'll get over it, but you won't forget it."

(On how the Atlanta police officer who watched over him during Super Bowl week was one of his high school coaches and how cool of an experience that was)

"It was awesome. It was great. Danny Stephens is a special person to me. He was one of my high school coaches and we were able to develop a special relationship even going back to where he was really coaching the defensive line. I wasn't directly involved with him, but we had a special relationship that existed. We've kept in touch throughout the course of the years. He's someone that's really dear to me. Then, I think immediately just being around the team, a lot of the players could feel why he's a special person – got a great way about himself. He's got a charisma and a personality and then he's got some great stories to be able to share from his experiences. But, to have people that are around be able to share in an opportunity like that was special. Love Danny Stephens and very thankful for what he did for us this past week."

(On if he will have any conversations with T Andrew Whitworth regarding how much longer he potentially wants to play)

"Absolutely. (T) Andrew (Whitworth) is a player that – got a special relationship with him. I think that's something where he's certainly earned the right to be able to make that decision. He was playing pretty good football still. So, I think he's going to be able to talk with Melissa (Whitworth) and his family and see what's best for them. He and I spoke yesterday about it. He's crazy – he's on the bike at the facility, he's

getting some exercise. I said, 'You're sicker than I am, I think (laughs).' So, I'll get a chance to talk to Andrew today. Our dialogue will be ongoing. I think, really, he's earned the right and the respect to be able to have a little bit of time to make the decision, if he doesn't have a clarity if he wants to be back or not. I know that there's a lot of people that are hoping that he does, but if not, I don't think you can say anything but what a phenomenal career and what an even more impressive person this guy is being around him. So, I will talk with him. I think we'll have a better understanding, whether it's a week or however much time he needs with he and his family to kind of get some clarity on that issue."

(On if he will take any time off or if he just keeps going all the way through)

"We will. That's a good question. I think what we'll have when we get back from the (NFL Scouting) Combine is a little bit (of an) accelerated schedule with regards to our scheme evaluation, things like that. But what we'll try to do this week is address our own players in terms of the write-ups, where we feel like we're at and then how that affects the way that we move forward with re-signing our free agents or letting them test the waters. Then, you look at your other avenues to be able to acquire players and fill out your roster. You take care of the coaches. Like you mentioned, we've got a couple spots that we've got to be able to fill. So, this week will serve as a chance where last year you get a couple weeks off and then you come back and you're really working during this time. We'll take this week to really kind of get a lot of things done and then we'll give the coaches a couple weeks off before we go to the Combine. So, I think we all need it a little bit"

(Closing statement)

"Thanks guys. Appreciate you guys this year and everything you do. Been nothing but pleasant to deal with and that means a lot. Love it here and you guys are big part of it, so thank you."