



LOS ANGELES RAMS

Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Media Availability – August 23, 2018

(On if he's eager to see his starters in action)

"Yeah, we are. We're excited about it. I know the guys are. We kind of went through something similar to what would be an in-season Friday today. Guys moved around, got some red-zone work in a couple kind of jog-thru periods at the end. So, it'll be good. We're looking forward to it."

(On if there are any players who will be held out of the game)

"Yeah, for-sure guys are (T Andrew) Whitworth, (C John) Sullivan and (RB Todd) Gurley (II). No Gurley."

(On the thinking behind the decision not to play RB Todd Gurley II)

"Well, we've done a little bit different approach in terms of working him out just with some things going on just in his lower half. Just getting him up to speed in the way that we've kind of felt like to get him at his best for September 10. Just the workload that we gave him, we haven't really set him up like you would in a normal game week. So, the focus was on – just because some other things going on, we felt like that was the best plan, get him ready for that Oakland game feeling as good as possible."

(On if there are any concerns that Gurley could start the regular season slower without any preseason reps)

"You try as much as you can to mimic and emulate those things in practice, but there's certainly nothing like getting truly tackled. I think you've got to weigh those decisions. You definitely don't want to take away from the value of the preseason, so I don't want that to be misunderstood by any stretch. But, that risk-reward and then also kind of being mindful of getting (RB) Todd (Gurley II) as fresh as possible. I think that's one of the things last year that enabled him to sustain and really get stronger as the season progressed, was what a good job he did taking care of himself, being mindful of just kind of his maintenance program throughout the course of the year – especially with all of his touches. We feel like this is going to put him on that track and that was more important to us. You try to get him as much good work as you can. There's nothing like truly playing football. I totally agree and understand that, but that was kind of what we felt like – all things being considered – was going to be the best approach with him."

(On what it says about the younger offensive linemen that are going to play)

"Yeah, it says that you feel good about these guys. There's a couple things with some things that still might occur leading up to this game. (T) Rob (Havenstein) got a little tweak in his ankle. Whether he plays or not will affect some things potentially. But, it says that we've got confidence. I think you guys have heard us say it over and over, (Run Game Coordinator) Aaron Kromer has done a really good job developing, especially these young linemen. You look at (C) Brian Allen and (T) Joe Noteboom specifically. Obviously, we've talked a lot about the progression of (C) Austin Blythe who's been with us and you just see what a good player he's become that really can play any one of those three interior spots. So, we feel really good about the depth that Coach Kromer has developed, really with (Offensive Quality Control Coach) Zak (Kromer) and (Assistant Offensive Line Coach) Andy (Dickerson) as well. It's been a credit to those guys and the players for being receptive to it."

(On if Aaron Kromer has a voice in the evaluation and selection of potential draft picks)

"Absolutely. Yeah, I think that's one of the things you feel really good about is the ability for our personnel and coaching staffs to work together to find out, 'Alright, what are the guys looking for from a coaching standpoint?' I think (Run Game Coordinator) Coach (Aaron) Kromer does a great job painting that picture. (General Manager) Les (Snead) and his staff did an excellent job of kind of being able to group some of these linemen that really fit the specific traits and characteristics that he's looking for in terms of guys that, 'What are the traits you're looking for for guys that can protect? What are the traits you're looking for for the way that we want to run the football?' He has a huge voice and it's definitely a good collaboration with personnel and with our coaching staff."

(On if TE Gerald Everett is on target to play on Saturday)

"He's not, no. He's a guy that maybe for New Orleans. I think probably most realistic is for that Oakland (Raiders) game. So, it's always tricky with a shoulder injury. You want to be smart about it and kind of how you balance getting a guy back in there, but then not risking a setback. The ultimate goal is Oakland, but it would be ideal if you could get him a little bit of work against New Orleans as well."

(On if he's 100 percent certain on the decision to play QB Jared Goff on Saturday)

"No. No."

(On if Goff will play)

"We'll find out. There's a lot of things going into it. So, like we talked about these guys up front, that has an affect on what we end up doing. So, to say that we've decided that yet wouldn't be true."

(On any concern if Goff would start the regular season slower if he doesn't play in the preseason)

"It's the same. I think you've got to weigh a lot of different things. We're playing a lot of football out here. The way that we would operate if he does play is not going to be anything close to the way that we'll operate in a normal game anyways. So, there's a lot of things that – like I've told you – self-admittedly, this isn't like an easy answer because there's a lot of layers to it. I think those guys would want to play. But, we're not game planning, we're not doing things that are consistent with our normal approach. So, that's where the struggle occurs – especially given the fact that you're resting some linemen and then our other tackle is potentially not going to be healthy. So, (T) Rob's (Havenstein) availability will definitely have an impact on what we do."

(On if there's anything that has changed since he last said Goff could play on Saturday)

"Yeah, when (T) Rob (Havenstein) tweaked his ankle, that definitely potentially alters it – especially when you're talking about any team in general, but specifically an excellent defense when you're looking at guys like (DE J.J.) Watt, (DE/OLB Jadeveon) Clowney. I know (OLB Whitney) Mercilus has been banged up a little bit, but I wouldn't feel great about going against those guys without our line. But, we'll see what happens. We'll see (laughs)."