



LOS ANGELES RAMS

Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Media Availability – September 20, 2018

(On DL Michael Brockers and C John Sullivan being held out of yesterday's practice)

"Yeah, it's more just maintenance with these guys. They were a little banged up from a physical game the other day. We want to do everything we can to get them feeling as good as possible for Sunday, but it's not anything that we expect to affect their ability and availability on Sunday. It's just more kind of being safe."

(On what he's seen from Chargers QB Philip Rivers and what has made him so successful)

"I think, really, going back to just watching him over the course of his career and then even going back to practicing against him a couple times last year, one of the things that you can feel when you're just there present with them is the command that he has. Certain guys, when you watch them, you can just see that the game is slowed down for them and that's how it feels like he operates. When he's at the line of scrimmage, the amount of information that he's able to absorb and then communicate, whether it via hand signals or certain things in the run game that he wants to get checked to. He's just got a great feel and an understanding for what it should look like as far as how the defense should disperse and being able to get to the right plays. Then, I think one of the things that's made him consistently really special is his ability to throw the deep ball with anticipation. You see him consistently, whether it's (WR Travis) Benjamin, some of their other receivers, he's consistently dropping balls over the top and hitting guys consistently in stride. He's got a great feel for the pocket, able to move and manipulate, change his arm slot and doesn't take a lot of sacks. Really, you see the production – I want to say it's nine seasons in a row that he's had over 4,000 yards passing. So, he's a great player. You can tell just the way he competes, he loves the game. As a coach you have nothing but respect for the way that he's carried himself and the way that he competes for his teammates."

(On if there is anything about WR Brandin Cooks' game that has surprised him since he's been a part of the team)

"I would say that we've been – I don't want to say surprised because we had so much confidence for him. I think he's been in some really good situations and then he's maximized those situations by playing productive and being able to demonstrate that he can really do everything. So, that's what he's done for us. I think if there's anything that you're – I don't know if surprised is the right word, but you just couldn't be more impressed with just the way that he carries himself consistently – the type of person he is, how important football is, how conscientious he is, how smart, receptive to all the little details and the nuances of things that we're asking on a week-to-week basis with the game plan. He's fit in extremely well with our team, with our receiving group and I think the way that he, (WR) Robert (Woods) and (WR) Cooper (Kupp) positively push each other, they've made each other better because of the way that they go about their business day in and day out and the standard that they've set."

(On how unique it is for all the offensive play makers to always be genuinely happy for each other's success)

"It's a special group and you certainly don't take it for granted. I think just the way that, like you just mentioned, the way they play for each other is something that as a coach, you couldn't be happier just to be able to be a part of it. That's a special thing. They play for each other. They enjoy it. They like to get the ball, but when you watch the way that these guys compete without the football, the way the linemen participate up front in the run and the pass game, it's fun. This is as special a group, in terms of just the

offense, that I've ever been around. They love football. They're smart, conscientious guys and it makes it really fun for us as a coaching staff to work with these guys."

(On if there's anything that he needed to say to RB Todd Gurley II after his performance against the Cardinals on Sunday)

"No, I think really, he's got a good feel. We always try to explain the intent of what we're trying to get done, but (RB) Todd (Gurley II) is an extremely smart, aware player. He knows. That's where the numbers can get misleading because you look at the amount of short yardage situations we had, you look at the amount of tight red zone runs and really when you look at it, the numbers are a little off. I think a main result is the early ones where I put us in some really bad spots. Then, the rest of them were against a really good, physical run defense where we're churning out good, productive deals where I want to say at the end of the first half we got the ball with four minutes left at the 30-yard line and you end up having to overcome some penalties, but a lot of runs in that situation. Then, they punch it in from fourth-and-one on the one (yard line) as time expires. So, there's a lot of things that go into it and that's why you don't want to get too caught up in some of the numbers. Each play is its own individual entity, if you will, and we really look at that and try to say, 'Are we efficient? Are we inefficient? What are the reasons for how we can be more productive?' Our players understand that, but we always try to explain it as well."

(On if he embraces the outside noise and expectations or if he shuts it out)

"I think it's easy because we've got a great opponent this week and really it's, 'What have you done for me lately?' You ask people how many teams were 2-0 last year and nobody could tell you because it's really not important because it doesn't matter right now. What's important is that we've got to get better every single day. We've got to do a great job of getting ready for an excellent football team. While I think there is a confidence and a belief and an expectation in terms of what guys think they're capable of doing, that humility that we talk about where they understand they've got to earn it every single day in order to put themselves in a position to play to the best of their ability against an excellent team on Sunday at one o'clock. That's the approach that we take. What's so nice about football is that really, there's something that you work towards. You've got those short-term goals every single week and with how competitive everything is – how good the coach is, how good the players are – you can't afford to really look at yourself and think that you're doing something because that's when you get humbled and that's when you get knocked in the mouth. Then, you end up not getting the goals that you want to try to accomplish. For us, it's just about that one day at a time mindset and mentality. While it does sound cliché, last year was one of the first teams I've ever been a part of where you kind of truly believe it and I think the players have bought in. They've taken the ownership on it and that's really the consistent approach with our process, our standards, every single day leading up to trying to be at our best on Sunday."

(On if he was very often on the offensive side of a team getting shut out)

"Yeah, actually I was. My first year as a coordinator in Washington, the Rams shut me out. So, surprised I still got hired (laughs). Those are tough things. Really, it's about how can you look at yourself critically, always trying to get better and what can you do to be part of the solution or to be more productive. That doesn't necessarily – it's consistent every single week whether you're productive or not. It's the process over the results, but certainly that was a very humbling day and one that you can't wait to get an opportunity to compete again."

(On favorite type of donut)

"Yeah, I like a nice donut with a little strawberry icing on it, but I'll never turn down a sweet. I like all types of donuts, but I think strawberry. He had a high school that took up his deal. (Defensive Coordinator Wade Phillips) showed me on Twitter. I guess a high school ended up getting donuts because they had a shutout as well. So, that's why he's the man."

(On if he has developed any type of relationship with Anthony Lynn being in L.A. together)

"You know what, I've known (Chargers Head) Coach (Anthony) Lynn just through the coaching circle. I've got a lot of respect for him. He's an excellent coach. Great teacher, great motivator. He played running back in the league and then he's had a lot of history being around some of the same coaches. So, in terms of just our offensive philosophy, being able to talk football. But, he's a great guy. He's done an excellent job. I think what says as much about his leadership as anything is being able to demonstrate that when things

didn't start out great last year, the ability to keep it together and then to fight back and to finish the way that they have. They've played really, really good football this year and really the way that they finished up. I think that's a credit to his leadership, the team's mental toughness and that's why we know this is an excellent football team that provides a great challenge for us on Sunday. It's something that we've got to be ready to go."