



## LOS ANGELES RAMS

### **Rams Defensive Coordinator Wade Phillips – Media Availability – October 25, 2018**

#### **(Opening remarks)**

"Let me see what are you going to ask...about (Packers QB) Aaron Rodgers and how you're going to stop him? It's obviously a big task, the guy's a great player. Unfortunately for us, he got a week to rest, so he should be pretty close to full speed is what we're hearing. The great ones, you try to slow them down. Certainly, you don't shut them out, but we've got to play really good pass defense, got to have a rush and all the things it takes. If you can disguise some things on him, even though he's a tremendous quarterback, it helps some. Like all the great ones, they can make plays off schedule and that's the key with him. He's going to throw the quick passes that he knows are there and he's going to do them really well. Then if it's off schedule, he's one of the best, if not the best, maybe of all time – moving around and throwing. He's thrown Hail Mary's for touchdowns. He's thrown every scramble pass you can think of for big plays. They do a great job with their receivers in that if it is off schedule, if they're not throwing it on time, that they keep running their routes and then we've got to keep coverages. We call it plaster. Everybody calls it plaster, on the guy who wants the ball to be thrown in the normal amount of time – if you're in zone or man, you've got to get close to the guy you have and stay with him the whole time. That's where they excel. So, that's something we have to work on."

#### **(On his thoughts on DT Aaron Donald's 4.0 sacks against the 49ers last week)**

"You don't see those kinds of games very often by a defensive player who dominates the game like that. Lucky to be around some great ones and they've done it every once in a while and it's a tremendous accomplishment. Obviously, it helps your team so much. It lifts your team when he's making all kinds of plays like that."

#### **(On building a box around Seahawks QB Russell Wilson and if that's the same plan for the Packers game)**

"Yeah, he's similar in that, he will run with the ball if it's open and can make long yardage, he does that too. But like (Seahawks QB) Russell (Wilson), he's looking down the field all the time. He's tremendous at moving around and throwing the ball and making plays. Now, he's not always running out of the pocket. He'll just hang in the pocket a long, long time sometimes for people to come open. I can say it's a tremendous challenge."

#### **(On what he saw at practice last week that allowed the players to play well against the 49ers)**

"Well, I mean you work every week to try to get better. We talked about (CB) Troy (Hill) the week before and then he had a really good game. He played really well. It's guys coming out and playing well. Part of it is through practice, certainly. Preparation is a key thing to getting ready. The game itself is obviously the most important. Then, not letting them score is what we try to do."

#### **(On what offenses are doing to make changes to the inside linebacker position)**

"Yeah, they spread the game out so much that people have to move out into space more than they did. You could have the big middle linebacker that wasn't a cover guy at all. Now, it's almost the opposite. They can get your middle linebacker out of there and put him one-on-one with somebody in certain occasions, and the passing game is so important. Scoring's up. Passing's up. The more athletic guys you have in coverage, helps as far as the linebacker's concerned. Probably, just completely. They have safeties playing linebacker now – guys that can cover. That's it."

**(On if that trend at linebacker has helped LB Cory Littleton)**

"No, they had a two-back running team last week. So, he's still got to play the run strong. three-four MIKE is a little different than a 4-3, old time 4-3 MIKE. But, because you have the noseguard in front of you and you have (DL Michael) Brockers and (DT Ndamukong) Suh and (DT Aaron) Donald in front of you, that helps a lot."

**(On how LB Mark Barron has been progressing)**

"Yeah, (LB) Mark (Barron) felt better than he's felt after a game, I think. That's a positive thing. We'll see. He can play every down if he's healthy. He's that kind of player, which you'd like to have. But, we'll progress him in more and more and just take it easy, but make sure if he's ready to play in certain situations, we can put him in."

**(On his evaluation of S John Johnson III so far this season)**

"Yeah, he's a good, young player. That's what he is. Last year, he did a tremendous job tackling. He's a really good tackler. Now, we're seeing some interceptions too. Smart guy. Plays hard. Athletic and has all the tools and utilizes them. He's gotten better and better. Last year, I thought he was a really good player last year."

**(On if he's noticed any trends over the past year and a half where more offensive systems try to spread defenses out)**

"Well, somewhat, but it's more execution. They've got better players. They've got better receivers. They've got guys that run routes better. People are coaching them really well, I know that, which you expect in pro football. I think just the skill level has gone up and the quarterbacks – even the young ones – we've seen that, even with our guy. The young quarterbacks have played better and better. Usually, they come into the league and they don't do anything for a good while. Now, even the young quarterbacks are playing well. I told you last week, (49ers QB) C.J. Beathard – they had made over 400 yards two weeks in a row. So, teams are executing well."