



## LOS ANGELES RAMS

### Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Media Availability – November 12, 2018

#### **(Opening statement)**

"Unfortunately, it was a torn ACL for (WR) Cooper Kupp. As far as looking at that picture, we know that he tore his ACL. I haven't gotten with (Senior Director of Sports Medicine and Performance) Reggie (Scott) since the exact results of the MRI in terms of what else structurally inside, but we want to try to get that surgery as quickly as possible. Hopefully, within this week. It's a huge loss for our football team. He's such an important part of what we do and great football player, great person. It's tough, but fortunately, we've got guys that are ready to step up. (WR) Josh Reynolds has definitely demonstrated he's more than capable. He is a starting-caliber player and that's what we'll do moving forward. Other than that, we're fairly healthy going into Week 11 which is a credit to our training and our strength staff and guys' ability to take care of themselves."

#### **(On if he expects WR Robert Woods to fill Kupp's position and how the injury effected WRs Pharoh Cooper and Michael Thomas on IR)**

"Those are things that we're going to work through this week. As far (WR) Robert (Woods) assuming the role of the slot, we kind of move all of our receivers around the formation. But yeah, Robert will take over some of those different things that typically you see Cooper doing, but that's kind of what Robert's done all year. He's demonstrated that he can really do everything. He's so valuable and versatile as a football player and his knowledge of our offensive system enables him to really play anywhere from a receiver standpoint. So, he'll do that. Josh Reynolds has played a lot of good, quality football for us. He'll step into a larger role and then other guys will be asked to step up. How that affects some of those other guys, we haven't determined that yet, but those will be discussions we'll have moving forward."

#### **(On if he saw DT Aaron Donald go onto the field to confront a Seahawks player after the game and his reaction to it)**

"Yeah, I did see it. I love (DT) Aaron (Donald). We talked about it. We can't allow the emotions of the game to affect our responses and how we control different things. It's a fine line because there's some different things where if you feel like you're being threatened where guys are trying to do things intentionally to try to hurt you, that's never something that we condone. But, we always try to learn from these experiences and these are things that as I'm learning as I navigate through the first couple years as head coach, how do you make sure we always demonstrate – from some of our most important players like an Aaron – that these are learning opportunities that we can't allow the emotions of the game to affect our responses that could potentially hurt the team and something bad could've happened to him. We've got to avoid those situations. He'll learn from that. We'll all be better and these are things that we can all use to make sure that we do a better job of making sure that the standards, the expectations, how we want to respond with regards to our poise in some of these moments is indicative of the type of football team that we want to be moving forward. I trust that Aaron will do the same."

#### **(On if Donald's incident was part of the reason he was upset after the game and if when CB Marcus Peters threw the ball into the stands is in the same realm in terms of being disciplined)**

"There's a lot of different things that go on throughout the course of the game. I think it's a fine line and a lot of times it's kind of the common sense approach where we want to do things the right way. We want to make sure that we're demonstrating the integrity that we want to operate with, the character, the poise, the

confidence, but the staying connected. Not allowing the circumstances to affect our response. You hear us talk about mental toughness all the time, but good teams don't beat themselves. Some of those things that we can eliminate, we will. And I trust that our players will learn from that. It's not just the players. There's a lot of things that I can control better with regards to how I respond to certain things, whether it's my language, where my mom was upset with me about something that came up at the end of the game, but those are the kind of things that we'll all learn from. I think the most important thing is, when you look at something, if you say, 'Is that the type of football team, is that the type of response that we want to represent with how we want to operate moving forward?' All of our guys know what it looks like to do right and we'll continue to put our arm around guys and figure out a way to do it together and be better moving forward. Fortunately, you don't have to learn truly the hard way, but in a lot of instances, you lose games because of that when you're playing in those tight, back-and-forth games – a great, competitive football game that comes down to a couple plays. When we've got a chance to get off the grass or we've got a chance to have better field position and then that ends up being altered based on things that we can eliminate just by our poise, those are things that we've got to avoid."

**(On if he worries that other teams will see Sunday's reactions and will try to rile up some of his players)**

"No, I don't as long as we handle it the right way. I have full trust and confidence that we will. We'll make sure that we're aware of, 'Hey guys, if they think that's going to elicit a certain response, expect it again and let's make sure that we use our previous experiences as a chance to move forward in a positive manner.' I have full trust and confidence that we will do that and those are things that we talk about and we work through together and that's what we'll do this week."

**(On if WR Pharoah Cooper will be able to come back to practice soon)**

"Yeah, he's good. My understanding is, he looks physically good, he's moving around. He would physically be able to play right now. In terms of if we decide to activate him back, those are a couple things that we have to talk through with (General Manager) Les (Sneed), his staff, our coaching staff. We all know what a good football player (WR) Pharoah (Cooper) is and how important he's been to us. That's something that you can expect to have a little bit more clarity on that as the week progresses."

**(On how the defense can avoid allowing points in the first half)**

"I think, like we've talked about, and it gets monotonous and it's kind of the coach speak answer, but it's the truth – each play is its own entity. There's a lot of different reasons and there's some good things. You don't want to take away – when you're playing in the NFL, there's a lot of good things that the opponent is doing to result in some success that they're having, whether that be defenses against our offense, offenses against our defense or opposing special teams. These guys are elite players. This league is so competitive week-in and week-out, but I just think it's going back to the fundamentals, the technique – keeping the gap integrity, hitting blocks up front, making sure that we're not making things up, trust your teammates, trust the call and be able to execute the assignment to the best of our ability and know that there's going to be an element where sometimes they make some plays. But, in a lot of instances with the great football players that we do have, as long as we play together – all 11 on the same page – we trust that good things are going to happen moving forward. There's been a lot of instances and like you've pointed out, most importantly, when we had to have a stop, which has come up a handful of times this year, our defense has found a way to get it done. That's a real credit to those guys and their ability to continue to compete and that's important."

**(On how he weighs training in altitude compared to sleeping in their own beds and staying in that routine)**

"Yeah, it's a delicate balance, especially with just all the things that have gone on as of late, it's tough. What I think is great about our organization is, they're going to offer another charter coming out that if some of the families do want to come and be with these guys this week, that'll be something that will enable us to do that. That starts with great ownership that's willing to give us the resources with (Owner/Chairman) Stan (Kroenke), but then also (Executive Vice President of Football Operations/Chief Operating Officer) Kevin Demoff having the foresight to be able to even think through some of those things and that's an excellent job by those guys. Really, the start of it was ultimately about doing the best job we can getting ready for a football game. There's kind of two approaches where the Denver (Broncos) game, you go within the 24

hour period, so that you don't fully get acclimated. But what is better over time if you have the ability to do that is, go for that full week, get yourself acclimated so that you can handle playing in those elevated settings in a better way, in terms of just being able to handle it from a sports science role. Then, also, I think it really served us well last year when we went to Jacksonville before we played in London. Staying out there, kind of a way to connect with the team. Getting away a little bit. This instance, definitely provides a little bit different approach where your families are so important right now. But, it was a combination of those things. Then, we'll get a chance to have a little bit of a break and get away and then come back for those last five weeks. It was about the game first and then also, I think it's a good way to be able to kind of get away with the guys and kind of have another camp-type setting if you will."

**(On if there was a noticeable change in altitude during the game in Denver this season)**

"I don't think so. I think the players would be able to tell you better than me. I didn't get that sense. I think there was more conversation about how chilly it was that day, as opposed to adjusting and adapting to the altitude. It wasn't something that I noticed, but it's a lot easier sitting on the sideline just holding a sheet than running around like these guys. So, didn't get the sense that it affected us, but from (Director of Strength Training and Performance) Ted (Rath) and (Senior Director, Sports Medicine and Performance) Reggie (Scott), what they've kind of educated me on, having that week, if you said, 'How do you compare the two?' There's two specific approaches you want to take, within the 24 hours or you go for that full week and this one is a little bit better just based on the studies. If we had the ability to do that, that was something we wanted to do."

**(On TE Tyler Higbee and TE Gerald Everett being more involved as pass-catchers)**

"Yeah, I think they're deserving of the opportunities. We talk about making people defend all five eligible (receivers), so it's a little bit of both. Some of the structures that we've seen coverage-wise, you want to make sure that people are honoring all five eligibles. Most importantly, it's about getting those guys involved, them capitalizing on their opportunities that they're deserving of. (QB) Jared (Goff) has done a great job and when those guys numbers have been called – I mean you talk about some timely plays where, great touchdown catch on the second-and-one by (TE) Tyler Higbee, where it's a great, firm, back shoulder-type throw. Then (TE) Gerald Everett, two catches only on the stat sheet, but you talk about a big-time touchdown to get us going to start out the day. Then, that third-down was instrumental, where he ends up catching it. I think it was a third-and-three where he goes for five yards – those are big-time plays. Tyler made a nice play on the 'Halle Berry' audible that you guys saw there. Those guys are doing a good job."

**(On if he heard from Halle Berry)**

"No. I didn't, but I'm not on Twitter. I saw Jared's response. It's one of my favorite plays too, Halle."