



## LOS ANGELES RAMS

### Rams Run Game Coordinator Aaron Kromer – Media Availability – November 28, 2018

#### **(On how the offensive line is feeling coming off the bye)**

"After 11 weeks of solid football and no breaks, we've done everything we can with some of the veteran players on the offensive line, specifically (T Andrew) Whitworth and (G Rodger) Saffold (III) and (C John) Sullivan of making sure that they're rested and ready for the game. Because the No. 1 thing, they know how to do it and what to do, and they've done it long enough that they get a little bit of practice in and they're ready for the game. But still, the toll of just playing week after week and having such a late bye week, I think that was big for them to have this week off and get their joints back and not do a lot. You can see it, even just in a walk-thru today and we bounced around a little bit the other day as well, on Monday. They just feel better, so hopefully that shows up on tape."

#### **(On how big it is to have the continuity in the offensive line remaining healthy and playing each game)**

"Well, it's like anything. Any time you have continuity in a job or in life or in football, you get used to the person you're working with or living with, or trying to solve goals together and you understand the reactions and responses of the way things will work. So, you can know ahead of time, a guy's weakness or a guy's strength and overcome it. When you have continuity, it helps. Now, when you don't have it, you have to overcome it. No one's going to wait for you, so you've got to keep it going. But at the same time, it's been very beneficial to us."

#### **(On OL Austin Blythe's success with the Rams and earning a starting spot, and if it's something he envisioned in him)**

"Well like I said before, I thought No. 1, for our front office and (General Manager) Les (Snead) and the guys to find a guy like (OL) Austin Blythe, who was just released – not traded, not drafted – released by the Indianapolis Colts and we pick him up because they see his talent. The only game he actually played in there was the Jacksonville Jaguars and he played guard. The whole time we thought our vision for him would be, 'Hey, you could play guard, but we'd like you to be the backup center,' because we needed it at the time last year when we picked him up. So, we trained him as hard as we could to play center and a little bit of guard. When this guard opportunity showed its face in training camp and we knew that he would be playing guard, that's when we really knew we had something. He gained more and more confidence, obviously, playing against our defense in practice and the talent that we have on the d-line and having some success. It helped his confidence to play well in the season and it's just been rolling since then."

#### **(On what happens in that situation where a guy like Blythe slips through the cracks either by getting drafted or getting cut by a team)**

"A lot of times a draft is, you're trying to pigeonhole a guy into a certain spot or you're going on size and speed and testing at the combine. Sometimes guys mature late. He's not the biggest guy in the world, but he's plenty big enough. He's a guy that's very talented with good hip strength, good quickness and good awareness of football things, so he's had a lot of success."

#### **(On Bears OLB Khalil Mack and what kind of challenge he presents for an offensive line)**

"A great challenge. I hate to talk about next week, but as long as you ask, I will. It's a great challenge because you can't expect to not have help as a tackle blocking (Bears OLB) Khalil Mack – whether you're sliding to him, whether you're getting help prior to the snap with a receiver or a tight end or a halfback hitting him before the ball, before they go out for a route. You can't let a guy like that take control of the game, especially in big situations. I think a lot of times, people lose the point – they help the tackle, they help the tackle and then it's the big play of the game and they don't help the tackle and they wonder

why Khalil Mack beats him. That's when those guys shine – when they get one-on-one situations and that's where you have to be smart and constantly, it's not a case where you can just say, 'Hey, go block him all day, we're going to drop back and pass.'"

**(On how rookies T Joseph Noteboom and C Brian Allen are progressing)**

"They got a little backup time earlier in the season and they did well. I think (C) Brian (Allen) is really learning a lot from Sullivan. Brian Allen is really paying close attention to a veteran center – the tricks of the trade, how to study, how to learn, those kinds of things. I think his growth from training camp till now has been a vast improvement, just in the knowledge of how to study a football game and how to get ready for a game. That's half the battle – knowing what to expect. (T) Joe Noteboom has moved around to four different spots every day in practice – plays left tackle, right tackle, both guards – and getting a real good feel of how this thing works. So, we feel good about both of them."

**(On having exposure to the Patriots' scheme during his coaching tenure with the Buffalo Bills and how the Lions' defensive front now is similar to what he recalls from the past)**

"Well, without over-exaggerating how exactly the same it is, it's exactly the same (laughs). When you go back to, even back when I coached with New Orleans (Saints) in 2009 and we played them on Monday night – it's the same style of defense. Obviously, they have to tweak it to the personnel they have, but they're going to make sure they set the edge. It goes all the way back to (Former Patriots Head Coach) Bill Parcells and the style of defense. It's a very solid, strong defense up front. They're going to make sure they're only giving up two-point-something yards per carry on the last few games. So, they're doing a great job against the run and then they just try to push the pocket and mush you into the quarterback so you're in the way of the throw. So, you can see those same principles showing up. If they didn't have the Lion on their head, you'd think you're playing the Patriots with the style. I don't mean that in disrespect to (Lions Head) Coach (Matt) Patricia, he's a phenomenal coach, but when you do something at an organization that makes you great, you're going to take that whatever made you great into the new organization to try to make that organization great. As you sit here in the world that I live in of that front seven guys or eight guys, it's very similar to a way New England plays it."

**(On what challenge the Lions' defensive front presents for RB Todd Gurley II given their style of play)**

"Their goal is to make sure you don't get outside. So, you have to try to manipulate as many ways as you can to try to get there. Like any defense, you're trying to use their rules against them to gain yards."