



LOS ANGELES RAMS

TRANSCRIPTS: Rams Head Coach Sean McVay, Cowboys Head Coach Jason Garrett - Rams-Cowboys Media Availability - August 17, 2019

Rams Head Coach Sean McVay

(Opening Remarks)

"I really think starting out, what a great atmosphere and environment it was. The fans were awesome from the start to finish. Being here in general over the last couple of days has been a great experience for our organization and they certainly have made us feel welcome. It's a real credit to the fans, the people here and we're very thankful for the opportunity. Again, like anything else, it was a great learning opportunity. We'll look at this tape, we'll clean it up and we'll move forward."

(On LB Natrez Patrick and OLB Ogbonnika Okoronkwo making their presence felt)

"They have. (LB) Natrez (Patrick) has done a nice job. Really, we just transitioned him to outside linebacker a couple weeks ago almost by necessity as a result of (DL) Justin Lawler's injury and (OLB Trevon Young) 'T-Young' being banged up. He's really done a good job. I think (Outside Linebackers Coach) Chris Shula's been outstanding, in terms of helping him develop and progress quickly. Then, getting 'Obo' (OLB Ogbonnika Okoronkwo) out there, it's been great to see him. You see some of the flashes of why we liked him so much, why he was such a productive player at Oklahoma. He drew a couple holdings tonight and made his presence felt. Like we said, we'll look back at the film, but you definitely felt those guys and that was a positive for sure."

(On RB Darrell Henderson Jr.)

"I thought he did a good job. I thought, for the most part, he made some big-time catches, you could feel him in the pass game. Not a whole lot of space in the run game, but I think overall,

good ball security. I thought it was a step in the right direction where he was on the screws with his assignments. You could feel some of the things that we liked so much about him coming out of Memphis. You see the aggressive hands and you see some of the production as a receiver. It was an encouraging night. I thought (RB) John Kelly did a really nice job as well. He had some big time catches that he ended up creating afterwards to get us in some third-and-manageables on a second-and-long. He had some tough runs early on where he bounced it out on the perimeter on some of our downhill, direct runs. Both of those guys did a nice job tonight.”

(On if he could see the Rams coming back to Hawaii in the future)

“What I would say is the experience was outstanding just based on the reception from the people in Hawaii and how they made us feel. It’s always a product of, ‘Ok, how much would we be able to practice against the opponent?’ Us playing Dallas in the regular season poses some challenges, but we certainly feel like it was a great experience for our team, we loved being here, and the people certainly made us feel great. It was certainly a great experience.”

(On LB Dakota Allen’s performance)

“He did a great job. I think he’s another guy – he was injured in the offseason, you see just the play-making ability, the physicality when he was at Texas Tech, and those are some of the reasons we like him. I think (Assistant Head Coach/Linebackers Coach) Joe Barry does a really great job with him and he’s getting more and more comfortable with what we’re asking him to do, some of the adjustments that he’s got to do within the framework of our system, and it has been good to see (LB) Dakota (Allen). You see the physicality. When he arrives, he arrives violently, and he did a good job tonight.”

(On LB Micah Kiser not playing in the second half)

“He got banged up. He had something with his pec (pectoral muscle). We’ll have a little more information later on and we’ll figure that out and we’ll give you an update tomorrow for sure.”

(On if Kiser’s injury makes him more hesitant to play players in the preseason)

“Yeah. Part of the reason that you want to be careful, but you can’t go so overboard. With guys that have shown and established the fact that they can play significant snaps, we just felt with our team that was the approach we wanted to take. Football is a violent, physical game where injuries are inevitable, and you always have to be able to adjust and adapt accordingly. We’re hopeful that we’ll get some good information back on Micah. When you look at one of the guys that’s projected as a starter that’s actually participated, if you end up losing him, certainly I think you’d say, ‘Man, I wish I had handled that differently.’ But you’ve got to trust the decisions and

everything that we do is for a reason and what we think is in the best interest of the players. Sometimes these unfortunate things happen and if that is the case with him, we'll put our arms around him, we'll support him and he'll come back stronger. But we'll figure out exactly what's going on with him tomorrow."

(On S Marqui Christian)

"Playing the safety position, he's always had the athleticism, really, since we got here a couple of years ago. (He) made a big impact when he missed (former Rams LB) Mark Baron for the first few games of last year, and he did a nice job playing, really, an underneath dime linebacker. I think he's really done a great job under (Safeties) Coach (Ejiro) Evero's leadership of ascending as a safety. Getting more and more confident in the scheme, understands the nuances of the calls and the different things based on what an offense presents. I think his suddenness, his physicality and just an overall good football player that plays with a passion that ends up being contagious to his teammates. Marqui has been a really good bright spot for us."

(On how he would rate today's performance from his quarterbacks)

"I think (QB) Blake Bortles did a really good job tonight. I think he made some good throws in that first drive. I think the second drive when we ended up getting the sudden change, got the short field, he did a great job getting us down the field, then being able to finish with a touchdown pass. Blake (Bortles) did a great job got us in and out of the right run calls. I thought it was exactly what we wanted to accomplish for him. I thought when QB Brandon (Allen) came in, he had some really great bright spots. I thought the two-minute drive the end of the half, we made the third and six, off-schedule play he flush to his left he keeps the drive alive and we give ourselves a chance to kick a field goal. Brandon did a nice job with his opportunities and there is a couple things that I think you want back from a decision making stand-point. Really with John, did have a whole lot of opportunities. We kind of got ourselves in some bad down and distances as a result in self-inflicted wounds. You see the athleticism when we didn't move the spot with him a little bit, but I think it's hard to say really. He didn't have much of a chance to make anything happen just based on the way things played out. Like anything else we will go back and look at the tape. I think there is some things positively, that you can take away from all three of those guys and there is always going to be things that we can get better with."

(On what he liked with the offensive execution from tonight compared to last week's game)

"First half was good. The second half was really sloppy and not even close to the standard we

expect to operate at. I'm not talking about whether you end up scoring points, I'm talking about not beating yourself with things that take no talent. You've heard us talk about that before. Those are things that we've just got to do a better job with. You can say what you want with some younger players but we expect them to ascend quickly. They've got to do a good job of making sure that we get those things cleaned up and that's both coaches and players, collectively. In the first half I was really pleased with the touchdown, scoring drive, giving ourselves a chance to kick a field goal and I thought the two-minute at the end, when you get the ball back, number one thing, you don't want to put your defense back on to the field. To get ourselves in a position where we have a lot of confidence in (K) Greg (Zuerlein) that he's going to hit that kick more times than not. Those were the positive take-aways. We got a couple of runs going but most part the second half we have to get a lot better in all phases of the offense."

(On if the referees explained the result of his challenges on two pass interferences)

"A lot of it, really, we're trying to educate ourselves. I don't want anybody to think that I'm totally going crazy. The first two that we've thrown out, I would not have challenged those in a normal season if you're really thinking that. The third one that we actually threw out was the only one that if you said, 'It's a real game that counts, you're going to really put the flag on the field.' A lot of it is for educational purposes. On a bang bang-type play, how are they seeing it? I think they've done a good job of communicating to us the clear and obvious, the egregious plays. I thought the one that they overturned was a good example of that, based on when the defender arrived, different things like that. I think the one in Oakland last week and the first one (tonight), if they had overturned the first one I challenged tonight, I would have been mad at them. Those are more educational things than anything else and we're just using these opportunities to really gain that knowledge so then we can develop a plan that's smart for our team when these games count."

Cowboys Head Coach Jason Garrett (PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT)

(On what play stood out on the 97-yard drive and thoughts on the win)

"I don't know that one play stuck out to me. I think the drive stuck out to me, to get the ball in the minus-three and execute that coming out situation. Then, not like flip the field, but go down and score touchdown. I thought that was a really positive thing for our team. A good mix of run and pass, we made some plays in the passing game and cashed in on the running game when we got down in there close. Really good drive, really good start to the game."

(On his thoughts on RB Tony Pollard)

"I thought he did a good job running the football. When you're playing against (Defensive Coordinator) Wade Phillips, he's going to do everything he can to stop the run on early downs. It was going to be tough sledding for us, but I do think we found some creases there early on. Obviously, the touchdown run was big for us. (RB) Tony (Pollard) is very poised. He plays with maturity beyond his years and we're only a couple of preseason games into it and not a lot of plays into. It kind of follows with what we've seen in practice and just how he handles himself. So, again he's off to a good start. He's got a long way to go, but he's going about it the right way."

(On balancing different guys getting touches on offense)

"One of the premises that we have on offense is to attack a defense a lot of different ways. It starts with run-and-pass, you want to be balanced and if you can run the ball different ways and throw it to different guys, you become difficult to defend. I thought we did a good job of that throughout that drive. Really second week in a row I thought we've done a good job with that. Something to build on, I think the offense played 13 snaps, so I thought that was a good outing for them. Get back to work this next week and get ready for the next one."

(On TE Jason Witten coming through on third downs)

"He's come up a few times in my time with him. He's just one of those guys - incredibly reliable, got a great understanding of the game, very quarterback friendly. He comes up big in crunch time. He's done it over and over again throughout his career. It was good to see him out there, it was good to see him playing football, having fun playing football and getting a few snaps under his belt."

(On what went into the decision on quarterback snaps)

"Coming into the preseason, we wanted to make that a plan. So, we started with (QB Cooper Rush) 'Coop' as the two last week and tried to keep the reps somewhat equitable. He worked with the second group and (QB) Mike White worked with the third group and then we wanted to flip around this week. Each of those guys had a good week at practice. It wasn't like we were just giving it to Mike. He earned it, he did a good job on the practice field and earned that opportunity. Like last week, he did some good things in the game and there were some things that he's going to learn from. I thought Coop was comfortable in his time. Did a good job on the touchdown drive. Really just delivering different kinds of balls time and time again and ultimately the touchdown to (WR) Devin (Smith) was the big throw. Thought he handled himself

well. He's a little more experienced than Mike is right now and I think you're seeing that."

(On QB Dak Prescott going nine-for-nine and his contract situation)

"It is a small sample size and we're not going crazy about him being nine-for-nine. What he's done well though, is play well. He's played well at practice, he's played well at the preseason games. He's handling himself well. He's making good decisions, making good throws and that follows with how he prepares. There's all this talk of the business of the NFL. He hasn't gotten caught up in that at all. He comes to work every day, he's a tremendous example to his teammates about how to go about it. He leads by example, he leads with his performance. Thought tonight was a good night for him."

(On the atmosphere of Aloha Stadium and the opportunity it was for the team being in Hawaii)

"We thought it was a fantastic couple of days. The hospitality that we got here from everybody. Here in Oahu it has been just off the charts. We've been here for I guess 48 hours and a couple of really good experiences. So much fun to play here at Aloha Stadium. Great history and tradition. I was thinking about it when I was standing on the sidelines. Thinking about all the great players who have played here, like the best of the best have played here because they played the Pro-Bowl game here for a long, long time. There are experiences here, now we have an opportunity to do it. To play against the Rams, a great franchise, so it's been a really good couple of days. It was a fun experience for our team."

(On being surprised by the number of Cowboys fans in the stands being so far from Dallas)

"I wasn't really surprised just because we have such a big following across the country and across the world. People love football, but the Cowboy tradition has been strong for a long, long time all across our country. It was great as we're spending time here the last couple days to see the number of Cowboy fans that came up to us and certainly the presence here in the stadium was felt by all of us."

(On taking the team to visit Pearl Harbor and what the team got out of it)

"Hopefully they got a lot out of it. From my observation, they were into it and I'll tell you the story. We planned to do it earlier in the day on Friday. Have our meetings and our walk-thru and probably go there late morning and be back early afternoon to get the guys some time before our night meetings. For whatever reason, the logistics caused us to have to go a little bit later in the day, 2:45 p.m. I was a little concerned about that, getting off schedule and out of

routine for our guys the day before the game. I went to our leadership group and said, 'What do you guys think? I'd love to do this, but I don't want to up you guys in a bad situation preparing for this game the next day.' To a man, they said, "We have to go coach. Are you kidding me? That's our country's history. We need to go there, we need to be a part of that thing.' I think that was the attitude our whole team took. The people there do such a great job memorializing that very tragic incident in our country's history and the people who lost their lives there and its significance. Getting us into World War II and what happened the next four or five years. It was a really great day for us, it was a special day. I was really proud about how our team handled it."

Additional player and coach audio files from the Rams – Cowboys preseason game can be found at the link below.

<https://rams.1rmg.com/press-conference-audio/>