



## LOS ANGELES RAMS

### Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Media Availability – November 7, 2019

**(On if there are any updates on WR Brandin Cooks)**

“He’s meeting with the doctors right now. He was traveling out there yesterday and today he has his appointment, so probably in the middle of that right now.”

**(On if concussion protocol is in place because Cooks hasn’t had a chance to practice)**

“Correct. If this wasn’t something that he hadn’t had another one prior to this year – and just some of the background with just some of the history that he’s had with this – he would be passing all of the things, from my understanding, that you’d typically go about. Because of the nature of this, because we want to really find out what’s going on with this happening twice this year, once last year and then the previous season when he was in New England. I think more than anything, it’s just getting some clarity just because of the number of these that have occurred.”

**(On LB Bryce Hager’s status)**

“His shoulder, it’s been really up and down. Sometimes it responds the right way. When you deal with some of these nerve things, it’s something that can be really challenging – unpredictable. I think it’s something that he’s doing everything he can. The doctors are doing a great job of trying to just keep him feeling in a good place. It’s one of those deals that it’s kind of been an unpredictable thing. I would say that most likely the direction that we will go will probably to place (LB) Bryce (Hager) on IR. I want to make sure that we’ve got all the information necessary. I know he’s been frustrated, it’s been hard for him, he’s been battling through trying to get this thing right, and it’s just been really fidgety.”

**(On if Hager was able to return and play on special teams against the 49ers)**

“He was. That was really a credit to him and his toughness, but he’s pushing through and he was doing some things where it was more of a reflection of his selflessness. He’s probably in a position where...it actually felt good that game. Where it’s like, ‘All right, it’s not bothering me as much. I’m not quite full strength to be able to compete at the inside linebacker spot snap in and snap out, but I feel like I can still contribute on special teams.’ Then it will be good for a couple of days and then, it kind of goes back. That’s where, more than anything, you just need to give it some time to heal. That’s the frustrating thing during the season for him and for us because you’d love to have Bryce.”

**(On how he thinks Steelers LB Mark Barron fits into their scheme)**

“He’s done a great job, they ask a lot of him. They’re blitzing him. He’s got some responsibilities in coverage, he’s got a great feel. He’s a great player that he was for us the last couple of years. You see the toughness, you see the range, you see the athleticism – all the things that made him a top-tier pick. I love (Steelers LB) Mark Barron in terms of what he stands for, then, watching the way that he overcame. You talk about a guy fighting through some adversity and where his body was hurting, and to just do whatever he can to get out on the field. Then when he straps up and goes and competes, he takes it to another level. He’s done a good job. It’s going to be a really good challenge. Hopefully, he continues having a good season after this week. I love Mark Barron and I’m always happy to see him doing well.”

**(On how important it is to match up against the Steelers physicality)**

"I think so. That's what they are. They're a very tough, physical football team. It starts with the offensive line up front, the defensive line and they do a great job. You can see that's been a philosophy in terms of how they want to operate, what are the types of bodies that they're looking for? They've been able to have some continuity specifically on the defensive end from a scheme standpoint. (Steelers Head) Coach (Mike) Tomlin's leadership in that, but then you look at under (Steelers Defensive Coordinator) Coach (Keith) Butler now. They've got a very clear-cut mold of what they're looking for and you can see it show up. When you talk about the typical Pittsburgh Steelers teams when you flip this tape on all three phases, that's what you're seeing and it's a compliment to them."

**(On what are some things he has to be cognizant of when facing a receiver like Steelers WR JuJu Smith-Schuster)**

"I think really everything. They do a good job moving him around and he's not limited in anything that he can do. He's got great run after the catch, he's got great aggressive hands, he can separate underneath, he can create the big plays, he can win the 50-50 ball. You see why his production has been what it is in the first couple years. I can remember a couple years ago when we had him out here working out for such a young player just in terms of his age, very mature, strong, powerful. He's got all those traits. You feel like alright he might not be that burner, but he runs away from everybody. He's got great game speed and it's really just a challenge for our defense as a whole to know where he is at all times and make sure that he's accounted for because as soon as you just slip up a little bit, he makes you pay and makes a big play that ends up changing the narrative of the game."

**(On if Smith-Schuster's workout with the Rams was a private pre-draft workout)**

"It was one of those local day workouts because he had played at 'SC' (University of Southern California). He was impressive and just how receptive he was to some of the feedback. I can even remember just watching his situational awareness where he caught a ball on a four-minute situation in a hitch, and could of scored, but he had the presence – like we've seen Todd (Gurley II) do in years past of going down because really they were going to be able to run the clock out. Those are the kind of things that you don't have to talk to him at all. You just watch and you say, 'This is a smart football player that gets it. He's an elite competitor and he's tough.' He's tough as hell and it's a great challenge, looking forward to it."

**(On if he feels this game will set the tone for how the second half of the season will go)**

"I think every game does right now. You've got eight games left for sure. We've played eight and that's where we've got to be. The narrative is written every single week and we talk about that. We've got the ability to write our story, and this is chapter nine. We're guaranteed 16 chapters, but every week continues to get more important as you hopefully take care of your business. Like I've said, and you're not just saying it, what we can control is trying to get a win. Whether we do or whether we don't means that you've got to get ready for the next week with the same focus and concentration. So much is to be determined over these next eight weeks just in this league alone based on teams playing one another, stuff like that. You drive yourself crazy going through all the scenarios because the only we can do is try and find a way to get our sixth win and go 1-0 this week. If we do that, then we continue to be relevant in those conversations that then maybe you talk about when it's the last game and you actually say, 'Alright we're trying to go 1-0' and that's what this means if we do that."