



LOS ANGELES RAMS

Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Media Availability – Dec. 9, 2019

(On how the team came out of Sunday's game against Seattle injury-wise)

"We came away pretty clean with the guys that did play – your typical bumps and bruises. I think (WR) Nsimba (Webster) got his hip banged up a little bit on one of (RB) Darrell (Henderson Jr.'s) kick returns. But, for the most part, we did come out healthy. Guys are feeling good. (T) Rob Havenstein's making really good progress – we'll see what that means in terms of his status, what does that mean for the line up front, all those things as the week progresses. (TE) Gerald (Everett) is making good progress with his knee. He'll still probably be out early on in the week. What does that mean for the actual game? We'll have a little bit better feel, again, as the week progresses."

(On finishing drives with touchdowns instead of field goals and what makes that happen beyond typical execution)

"It really is that – it's the execution. I thought in some instances, it's great plays by our players. We ended up hitting – for our first touchdown – you end up hitting (TE Tyler) Higbee down the right sideline. Kind of catch them (Seattle) in a substitution where they had 10 guys on the field and we end up being able to run that thing in off the left side where they're kind of short on the surface. (RB) Malcolm (Brown) did a good job, as did (T) Andrew (Whitworth) and (OL) Austin (Corbett) kind of clearing out the left side of the line to be able to punch that in. I can go through all of them where you really see, it's just about finishing drives, though. You're seeing some great individual efforts. I thought on the touchdown to (WR) Robert Woods, it was a great job by (QB) Jared (Goff) being able to recognize that thing, pop quickly, get the ball up and down on a rollout concept. The third touchdown in the two-minute situation – great execution by our players—out of a high-low on a hook player in one of their three-deep principles, (WR) Cooper (Kupp) flattened it off, Jared gave him a nice ball, good protection. To be able to finish it off, you talk about an outstanding run, one of the best stiff-arms I've ever seen by (RB) Todd (Gurley II). It's really just great execution in those plays and the nice thing is all of those were on, really – the touchdown pass to Cooper Kupp was on a third down – but, the other ones occurred on first or second down and that's a good thing for us."

(On if scoring touchdowns rather than field goals impacts both the offense and the defense)

"It does. I think the last couple of weeks have really represented playing team football, feeding off one another. Because, when you are able to operate with a lead, the defense played really well throughout the night. I love the way that we tightened up on that first drive when they made some plays and forced them to three (points). But, really, their overall execution was outstanding. When you are able to operate with a lead, now you force them – based on the nature of the game – to be a little bit more one dimensional. I think we've seen that kind of show up in the last couple weeks against two teams that have been playing really well. For us, it was a lot of good things – loved the energy from our team. Again, like we talked about it last week before the Arizona game, I thought the feel, the buzz in the air was a great atmosphere at the (Los Angeles Memorial) Coliseum. Our players were ready to go right away. You could see that show up when you watch the game film, even just being there. It was great to be able to see it and I love the way that we handled the adversity and now we use those two performances to build and know that, 'Hey, we've got to find a way to have a great week of preparation, get ready to go.' When kickoff comes in Dallas, it's got to be that same urgency and edge that we've had the last couple of weeks."

(On if the usage of '12 Personnel' or sets with two tight ends in the game was an evolution of the offense or based on the matchup)

"I'd say a little bit of both. I think (TE) Johnny Mundt has done a really nice job. Obviously, Tyler Higbee's been great the last couple weeks. Being able to play in our '11 personnel' package with Gerald being out and had a lot of production. Johnny Mundt is not unappreciated in our building. It's fun to hear how excited guys get when you watch him, what he's doing at the point of attack, the way he's been able to contribute. It is partly by the gameplan, but then it's also – I thought it was good because you can see we're a little bit fresher in some of those known-passing situations where our receivers are so important to us. If they're not having the pressure of playing every single snap, I think it does make you a little bit more sharp and crisp in some of those situations where you might be a little bit more inclined to throw the football. We're kind of working through it, we're figuring it out. It was something that helped us out last night and as we start to dive into Dallas, we'll figure out if that's part of the plan for this week."

(On if that was part of his repertoire in Washington with their two tight ends)

"We did. Like we've talked about before, it really goes back to...everybody has kind of a foundational operation, or philosophy that you want to operate with. It starts always with your players. You want to find creative ways to get your best guys involved, but then there is an element of, 'All right, what does that defense present? Then, how can you use things to try to put pressure on them based on what they present to you?' It is a little bit of a balance, but when you add some of the players that we did have in Washington, we did lean little bit heavier on some of those multiple tight end personnel groupings. This year, I think has represented a little bit more balance than what we've seen in years past. It's like anything else, you're kind of trying to adapt and evolve and figure it out the best way that we can. It's a week-to-week thing."

(On if the tight end situation is what has affected Kupp and WR Brandin Cooks' snap counts for the last couple of games or if it is depending on week-to-week)

"I think a lot of it is, 'What do we think is the best way to have a little bit of a balance on some of the early downs? What do we think is the best way in some instances to run the football?' It is also predicated on, 'All right what does this defense do and what does that mean in terms of some of the matchups that you want to create?' The last couple years, we've had...in a lot of instances what we've done out of '11' are really similar things that you do out of '12', '21' and '11' personnel because you've got such selfless receivers that are willing. We joke around about it, but I mean some of the blocks that we've asked (WR) Robert Woods to take part in or (WR) Josh Reynolds and (WR Cooper) Kupp, those guys are basically like fullbacks based on some of the concepts that we do run. While you appreciate their willingness to do all those things, over the course of a 16-game season and if you're fortunate to play afterwards, you do want to be mindful of the toll that that takes on them to try to keep them as fresh, as healthy as possible. Then, you get a chance to evaluate and see a player like (TE) Johnny Mundt step up and say, 'Maybe these are some things that we can have the defenses have to prepare for some different personnel groupings if we think it's the best thing for us to do.'"

(On OLB Dante Fowler Jr. reaching a career high 9.0 sacks following Sunday's game and what his contributions have been to the defense)

"It's been big. He's (OLB Dante Fowler Jr.) got a great energy. I keep mentioning it, but I think (Outside Linebackers Coach) Chris Shula's done a great job with that outside linebacker group as a whole. But, Dante, you could just see – he's always had the traits, the physicality, the explosiveness. You could see when he arrives on contact, you feel Dante's presence when you're just watching a game because of how explosive he is. I thought he did a great job of making some timely plays for us. He's really done that really throughout his season. I think that's why you see with three games remaining, he's had his best numbers to date. It's not exclusive to just the sacks either. He's making plays in the run game, he came underneath on a 'TE' stunt that we had and make a big play on one of their runs. He's doing a really nice job and I've been really happy for Dante."

(On the Cowboys offense and their offense performing well statistically)

"I think we're just in the early stages of that preparation. Just seeing them from afar and having a little bit of familiarity whether it be seeing just glimpses of what they've done or you're kind of watching around the league and then having played them last year. They've got great players, they've got sound schemes on both sides of the football. It is going to be a great challenge, but to really give you a true in-depth synopsis,

it would be mostly based on what I've seen from TV and things like that instead of really being able to dive into the film. You know they've got great players, they've got great coaches. I think in a lot of instances, I keep saying it, but the record is not indicative of what type of football team this is. They've played some really good teams, they've been in every game, they're playing really explosive on offense. You know their defense is very sound and (Cowboys Defensive Coordinator) Coach (Rod) Marinelli and (Cowboys Passing Game Coordinator and Defensive Backs Coach) Kris Richard do an excellent job."

(On what DE Michael Brockers' performance has looked like from his viewpoint)

"He's (DE Michael Brockers) been really solid. I think he's had one of his best years in the last few because he's playing as a complete player. He's rushing better, he's violent in the run, he's able to really do a great job of winning his individual matchups. I can't say enough about what a great job I think he's done as a leader. He's a vocal guy, he's got a great personality, a great demeanor. During the game, he's got a magnetic presence about himself. He's one of our captains and I've been really pleased with Michael Brockers. I think our D-line as a whole especially in this stretch that we've played really well defensively, you take out the game we won't talk about anymore (laughs). (Defensive Line Coach) Eric Henderson's been great for that group, (Assistant Defensive Line/Defensive Quality Control) Thad Bogardus, and you're seeing that show up. But, Michael and (DT) Aaron (Donald) – those guys have been some key leaders for us. I've been really pleased with what 'Brock' has done and I think that energy he brings every single day rubs off on guys and I've been pleased with him."

(On Higbee having the two biggest receiving games of his career and if he knew that was always in him)

"I think you had confidence in it. I think I probably should have got him in more opportunities before. He's done a great job. You talk about Michael Brockers in a lot of instances, I feel that same way about Tyler Higbee. He's a glue guy for this team. Everybody loves him, but the excitement that he brings, the type of energy that he has throughout the course of the game in terms of keeping guys upbeat, understanding what's going on, having a great feel – the complete player that he is. When you see a guy that's as willing to compete without the ball that does a great job when he has a ball, guys get excited. The teammates love that because you can see he's the epitome of a team player. Then when you see him get his opportunities, he's made big plays, catching balls down the field, creating after the catch. It hasn't been exclusive, you're seeing him make plays on third down, first and second down. I've been really pleased with him and he had another great night last night really in both phases. In a lot of the instances, it's like what we've always felt about him, but it's great for him to deliver on the opportunities and maximize it. Hopefully we'll continue to see that as we finish up this year."