



LOS ANGELES RAMS

Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Media Availability – Dec. 17, 2019

(Opening Remarks)

"Injury-wise, we haven't practiced yet today. We'll be all walk-thru and handle that the right way. (CB) Troy Hill, if we did have a normal practice, would not have been a participant. Same thing with (K) Greg Zuerlein. (QB) Jared (Goff's) thumb's feeling real good and (TE Gerald) Everett would've been limited."

(On if Goff would have been a full participant if the team had a regular practice on Tuesday)

"He would be. He's feeling good, checked off and he's ready to go."

(On if he anticipates Goff having to wear anything to support or protect his thumb)

"He had a nice little compression sleeve on that looked kind of goofy today, but I think he should be in good shape (laughs)."

(On how the team manages the kicking situation if Zuerlein cannot play on Saturday)

"We'll have some guys that have recently – we've got a couple names. 'Bones' (Special Teams Coordinator John Fassel) was on top of that right away when the situation came up. If we do feel like it's going to be something that we anticipate, 'Maybe he can go, maybe he can't', we might end up keeping somebody that's close by overnight. Or, we might end up having to sign somebody later on in the week if we make the determination that he isn't able to go. That's not what we expect, but we will have some guys coming in here on Thursday night."

(On if the team tells free agent kickers to stay active in anticipation of potentially being signed)

"Yeah, I think those guys that are those 'street free agents' that have most recently been with teams, I think they kind of know what the gig is. You never know when your number's going to be called. For us a couple years ago, (K) Sam Ficken, who's doing a nice job with the Jets, ended up filling in. There's been some guys that have been recently on teams that have kicked in games that you feel like there's enough guys that, if you had to, you could do it. Then, we can always just go for two (point conversions) every time. We had a similar situation a couple years ago. You can change up a lot of your tendencies on third down, too. You never know."

(On if he thinks Goff's thumb injury impacted his play in Week 15 against Dallas)

"I think he'd be better equipped to answer that. I think there were some things that – we've all got to play better. When that occurred, I think there's some things that – he definitely will be better moving forward, we expect him to be and I know he expects that of himself. I can't speak for him. I do know that any time that you do have an injury to your hand – in terms of how you're delivering the football, how you're gripping it, things like that – it is difficult and it changes a lot of things. But, he would be better equipped to answer that than I could."

(On if Goff will be able to take snaps from underneath the center on Saturday)

"He'll be able to do that. He'll be able to do everything. There's not going to be any limitations. Fortunately, it's like one of those deals where you get it banged and it's like anything else – probably scares you more than anything at first because it is such an irritating thing when you're trying to grip the ball. But, he's feeling

good and fortunately, there wasn't really anything other than just kind of hitting it on the helmet and a little bruise, I think."

(On what happened in the previous game against San Francisco that allowed Goff to only pass for 78 yards)

"They did a great job. They're a great defense, they're one of the top defenses in the league and they've got one of the better pass-defenses. Arguably, you just look at the numbers, they're up there in league history. They've done a great job. I think there's some things that we've got to do a better job of. We were able to get some runs off in that first drive, but all-in-all, when you look at it, they did a great job getting after us. There weren't really many positives other than those first seven plays on that first drive. (RB) Darrell (Henderson Jr.) had a couple big runs, but when you get stopped, when you're on the 6-inch yard line. and when you fumble the opening play coming out of the second half, it's tough to beat an excellent football team like this. Hopefully, we'll have a better showing, but we certainly know what a great challenge it will be, because of what a great job (49ers Defensive Coordinator) Robert Saleh does leading the way, and then all the great players that they have executing the scheme."

(On having RB Todd Gurley II for Saturday's game after he missed the first meeting between the two teams and what he expects from Gurley II)

"I think just playing like what we expect him (RB Todd Gurley II) to. Whenever his number is called, doing a good job of just being efficient, seeing things the right way, leveling things off, being able to create some stuff on his own, if that's what the look dictates, and being sound in protection. Just playing his position the right way snap in and snap out."

(On what role leaders on the field play in setting the tone for the game whether it's encouraging teammates or chewing out the team in a huddle and if he is satisfied that that is happening)

"Yeah, I trust our leadership. I think there's a lot of things that go on in the absence of coaches, in terms of the dialogue and the communication. When you have your players that have some ownership, that's always the most ideal situation, because they're the ones out there. I do believe that we've got a handful of guys that represent exactly what you want it to look like in terms of the command, the ownership that they have. But I think in a lot of instances, too, it's maintaining an even-keel, being poised. Then in a lot of instances, it's as simple as somebody making a play to kind of get that momentum back in our favor. You don't want to get down, you want to have guys, but a lot of that dialogue that exists between the players, I think that's special when it exists between those guys. Certainly, some of the things that help get out of a rut are when somebody creates something, or makes a big time play to try to shift that narrative and change the momentum in our favor. Those are some things that you look for in those instances."

(On Goff being in the position to motivate the team to get the game back going in favor of the Rams and it is hard to imagine someone as even-keel as Goff to play that role)

"Here's what I would say – you say that, I think that's a good thing. I think, No. 1, you've got to be yourself, because I think that resonates with your teammates and the people you work with more than anything else. I have gotten some good glimpses that I wouldn't have known otherwise when he's been mic'd up in the huddle, because there's only so much that you see, but when there's a communication that goes on and the dialogue in the huddle – the command, the ability to kind of reach and connect with guys. I think there's some pretty impressive things that are true to his personality that get what the intent is of kind of what you're asking done. I think as long as it's authentic and true to your personality, with some urgency and with a demanding approach that's solution-oriented like we talk about, I think guys respond to that. You've got to be yourself and there's different personalities that I think get the same response as long as it's real and authentic."

(On 49ers Head Coach Kyle Shanahan saying Goff is really good when the team is on and how it's imperative for the 49ers defense to put pressure on him and make him do things himself and if that's a criticism in any way or if it applies to every quarterback)

"I think that's like anything else, the more that you can try to get guys off their spot, apply pressure, move them, force the ball to come out of their hand quicker than maybe what they want. That's a consistent thing to try to apply pressure and make quarterbacks uncomfortable early in games. I know (49ers Head Coach)

Kyle (Shanahan) has a lot of respect for Jared and what he's done in this league. I haven't seen the quote, but I'm sure the way that he meant it was that like anything, you've got a great quarterback like (49ers QB Jimmy) Garoppolo, like Jared, like these other guys – the way that you can try to minimize how well they play, or minimize their impact on the game is to make them uncomfortable by getting in and applying pressure to them and limiting the time that routes have to develop and some of the concepts that they're running."

(On there being quarterbacks that have been able to overcome being uncomfortable with pressure)

"I would say this, there is different ways of being able to create off-schedule. I think you look at the way that (Patriots QB) Tom Brady has consistently done a great job creating off-schedule by his ability to move and manipulate within the framework of the pocket, might be a little bit different than some of these other guys, whether it's (Kansas City QB Patrick) Mahomes or (Packers QB Aaron) Rodgers. I think it's all about, 'All right, what is their skillset? How do they maximize their skillset when things do break down?' Certain guys have the ability to extend plays outside the pocket. But, then there's also an element of extending the play in the pocket by feeling, negotiating a rush, or having a great feel for where your quick-element throws are. All the great quarterbacks usually have a feel for that, whether you're a guy that's kind of breaking contain and running around. Those are things that I think you see consistent is having an awareness of where everybody's at, knowing where your quick-element throws are when things condense in the pocket and just having a natural feel while keeping your eyes down the field."

(On what he tells the team to stay motivated)

"Attack the day. I think we've got a lot of guys that love football – I love football, our coaches do. Really, you cherish these opportunities to go compete. You're only guaranteed 16 of them, we've got two left for sure. No matter how this thing shakes out, I think what we've talked about is you're not going to have any regrets as long as you go for it. You go compete to the best of your ability and I trust that's what we're going to do. At least, you're saying, maybe you give yourself a chance, but even if we (didn't) even had a chance of continuing to play afterwards, we've got an opportunity to go get our ninth win. Like I said the other day, there's a lot of prideful guys. When you love what you do and you love the people you're doing it with, you want to make sure you do right by them."