



Rams LS Jake McQuaide– Media Availability – August 25, 2020

(On how training camp has been going)

"It's been different, but I think it's been good. I think one of the interesting things is that we have a little bit of a more veteran team, which I think has helped us kind of navigate through a lot of this stuff. So, it's kind of been different, but our coaches have done a great job of setting the schedule and ramping up. I know (Vice President, Sports Medicine & Performance) Reggie (Scott) was integral in the whole league, in setting the right path forward to make sure that football happens, because we all love this game and we want to make sure we have the season and not just start the season, we want to play the whole thing. So, we have the right guys calling our shots for our team and we are trying to do our best to win football games and prepare to win the Super Bowl. You know, it's a part of it. That's where we are at."

(On how the transition has been from Cowboys Special Teams Coordinator John Fassel to Special Teams Coordinator John Bonamego)

"It's been, actually, kind of cool. My rookie year I had a different coordinator, (Broncos Special Teams Coordinator) Tom McMahon and then I had 'Bones' (Cowboys Special Teams Coordinator John Fassel) for eight years. So, those relationships and those friendships and that trust isn't something that happens overnight. So, we've been working since we started getting together on these Zoom calls, to start building towards that. I think it's nice to have (P) Johnny (Hekker), have us two, have that relationship still, and then Tory Woodberry, who has now transitioned into our Special Teams Assistant, we're very familiar with him. We had respect for 'Bono' (Special Teams Coordinator John Bonamego) before he was our coach, just from a far. We've always had seen the way his teams played and you can see just the different techniques and the different things, whether or not teams are doing things the right way, and his guys always played the right way, they always played hard. So, I was obviously sad when 'Bones' moved on, he's a great friend of mine and a great coach. But, I was excited to get a new coach that I have a lot of respect for – anytime you get a new set of eyes on you, it's a great opportunity as a player to grow. I'm going into my 10th year and I still feel like I have a lot of space to get better. It's been a good experience to get somebody else's point of view."

(On impressions of the three kickers and their personalities)

"Well, all three are really good. They wouldn't be here if they weren't and I think you would be comfortable with any of the three going into the season. So, you know, each one of them, they have their own personalities, they're their own guy, but nothing crazy. Nobody is some crazy outside the box guy, they're all pretty normal guys, football guys. It's always an interesting dynamic, when obviously there's only one spot. They're only going to carry one kicker, and I think each of them have handled it very well. It's competition, and each one of them is handling it and we will see how it pans out, it's too early to tell, obviously."

(On the pressure of each kick due to the kicking competition)

"Yeah, for sure. Because you can have talent as a kicker and not be the best kicker. It's not necessarily the most talented guy that has the best percentage, but when it comes down to it, you're judged strictly on whether it went in or went out, not how pretty it looked, or how high or how far it would have been good from. It matters if it went through. You definitely feel that every single day there is that pressure, it's a mental game as much as it's a physical game. They all have the physical abilities to kick it as far as you need it and the mental side of it, they all have done very well so far.."

(On the small group that have been with the Rams from the relocation of the Rams to opening SoFi Stadium)

"It's a cool journey. I think it's rare, but I think the coolest part of it is the people that I've been lucky enough to be around, because everyone's path in this league is different. You can ask 10 different guys about their experience in the NFL and you'll get 10 different stories. I've been very fortunate and my family's been very fortunate, my wife and I, that we've been with the Rams and we've gotten to really have an extended family, because when you're away from family, it's hard, but the Rams people have kind of fit into that place for us. It's not necessarily the players, because the players, they come and go, and we've been lucky enough that Johnny has been for a long time with us and Greg was here for a long time with us. You know, with guys like (Vice President, Sports Medicine & Performance) Reggie (Scott) and (Director, Rehabilitation/ Assistant Athletic Trainer) Byron (Cunningham) and (Director, Sports Science/ Assistant Athletic Trainer) Tyler (Williams), like guys in the training staff, even (Senior Director, Football Communications) Artis (Twyman), those type of people, I've come to know them and know their families and it's cool to take that journey with them. It's fun. We were down there the other day, the last time we had been there, it was still a construction site. It's an amazing place. It's a shame that we can't have fans there yet, but it's going to be a heck of a home field advantage for the Rams."

(On one memory of relocation that sticks out to you the most)

"Oh, man. I don't know. I think it's a lot of things, like I found out, my buddy texted me while I was watching my high school basketball team play. It was Elder vs. Oak Hill, I was sitting in the stands at Oak Hills and I got a text from my buddy that said, 'Hey, you're moving to L.A.,' and I was like, 'Oh, okay. I guess we are moving to LA,' and I told my wife and then we came out here for that meeting you were talking about where they showed us the whole stadium and everything. My wife and I drove up to Oxnard, because that's where we were going to be training and we found a place. We lived with Johnny and his wife for three or four months. I had our daughter's first birthday up there and all the rookies over at our house. It was just like a lot of steps along the way to get us to where we are now. It's kind of more than a journey than just one individual thing. I really don't think it's really hit me that we're playing in that stadium this year. We played in that practice down there and it was just like, 'Man, this place is so nice,' but I think once we get there on the 13th, it will be like, 'All right, this is real.'"

(On past players not being here for SoFi Stadium)

"I don't think it's weird. I think that's just this business. You kind of get used to it, and it's weird because there's a human element, but you almost have to separate yourself from it and there's people that you will be friends with forever and there's other guys that you spend every day with them for two or three years and then you'll never see them ever again and that's just like the way it is. I'm excited for the guys that we do have here and I'm excited for the guys, a guy like (WR) Josh Reynolds, who I see as a guy who would kind of be in the same lane as like a (former Rams LB) Cory Littleton who came up through special teams and developed as a young player, and really trusted the process and now it's his time. He didn't come into the league to cover kicks, he came to play wide receiver and now because he's done everything the right way, he has the chance to really show what a great player he is, so that is what excites me. The negative part is that you do lose some friends and you lose people and you lose touch with people but to see young guys step into those roles, that's really cool. (RB) Malcolm (Brown)'s another guy, he's probably going to get more carries that (former Rams RB) Todd (Gurley II) is gone and Malcolm is just the guy that does everything right. He's always done everything right and when he's on the field, you're cheering for a guy who's like your brother, like, 'Oh, I hope Malcolm does really well,' and you hope that Josh does really well and all these guys, there's too many to name, but guys who came up the right way, the tough way, I have so much respect from them so that's kind of where I see that."

(On Bonamego's influence on the special teams unit)

"Well, it's one of the things that's cool about the NFL – at least for the people that I've played for – it's always a collaborative effort between the coaches and the players. It's not like what you think of when you think of like high school football where the coach says, 'You do it this way, and that's the way you do it.' The experience that I've had in the NFL is that the player on the field feels things differently and the coaches that are great understand that. It's easy to stand at the front of the room, with the clicker in your hand, rewind it 15 times in slow motion and say, 'You messed up here. You messed up there, you need to do this.' There is a place for that because they're trying to help you, but there is another side to it where it's

like, 'I'm on the field and it happens so much faster.' I think 'Bono' (Bonamego) fits that mold of it's collaborative – he's learning me, and he's learning (P) Johnny (Hekker), he's learning the kickers and what we do well. And when we do have a mistake, or when we, say, I'm snapping the ball and it's coming out right. Like, what am I doing wrong? He is learning what it looks like when I do it right and he can see what I'm doing that's wrong. It's not like, 'Hey, I want you to snap it this way because 'Mule' (LS Don Muhlbach) snapped it that way, Don Muhlbach, who was his snapper in Detroit – who I wish I could snap the ball like he does, but no one can. He's not going to say like, 'Hey, you have to do it this way.' It's like, 'OK, you do it this way when you're doing it great, let's make sure you do it that way all the time.' Like I said, I'm a big fan of his, so it's been good."

(On how much pressure he feels to ensure his snaps give the three kickers the best opportunity to make the roster)

"Yeah, it's frustrating sometimes because early in camp, especially when we don't have pads on or different tempos and stuff, it's just part of the growing pains. Especially when you're an older player. I can't show up to Day 1 of camp and be like perfect mid-season form. My body isn't going to do that and then still be good to go in December and January and February. So, it's a ramp-up period there usually. To me, it's been very much been like, 'You need to focus a little bit more, a little bit faster,' and we've been getting a ton of reps, which is automatic because we have three kickers. So, we're getting three times the number of snaps. So I knew that going into it that I was going to get a lot of field-goal snaps. It's the same as anything else – especially for a long-snapper – if you overthink it, you're going to let eight yards cost you your career. I've seen it done before and if you have a bad one, you talk to the guy afterward and you immediately take that responsibility for that one, tell Bono like, 'Hey, you know what?' We had one in the scrimmage with (K) Samuel (Sloman) and it was a left hash kick, it was a long kick, 50-something yarder, and there was a little bit of indecision on whether we were going to kick it from that spot or if it was a scripted kick. But, it was the end of a drive and (Head Coach) Sean (McVay) wanted it to be like the end of a drive, let's kick the field goal, like a game simulation. It was late communication and we get on to the ball and there's 10 seconds left on the play clock. So now, it's like a hurried operation, and the operation wasn't perfect and on a long kick it has to be perfect. You can get away with it on a PAT, but on a 50-something yarder, everything has to be clean and it wasn't. It was just like me and Johnny (Hekker) told Bono, we screwed him on that. That was 100 percent our fault, we just couldn't get out there and get set and Sean (McVay) will decide if he wants it from there or not. So, in that situation, you've got to own that, and you say that's on us."

(On whether they bought K Samuel Sloman a beer for that situation)

"(Laughs) yeah, you've got to do something. It's not good, but it usually evens out. Our operation hopefully is pretty good and then by now we're getting into the nitty gritty of it. This week is starting to transition to let's get ready for some real football. It's time to start tightening it up."