



Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Media Availability – September 5, 2020

(On if the team has signed any players and if they are able to share)

“We haven't yet. We just got off the practice field here pretty shortly ago and I'm going to get ready to connect with (General Manager) Les (Sneed) and talk about some of these other things. But what we'll probably look at is see what the waiver wire looks like and potentially be able to claim somebody from another club. And if we feel like nobody is of interest to us, then that's where we'll end up elevating somebody from our own practice squad that we anticipate tomorrow.”

(On if he feels elevating a player from the practice squad is more likely than adding a veteran free agent)

“I would say that we're open minded to all options. So really, we'll get a chance to look at all these teams' waiver wires, see who comes available. We always kind of knew that we were going to have that spot to give with what we did with (DT) A'Shawn Robinson. So, we kind of had that in our back pocket to at least have one spot. If there was somebody that we were interested in claiming and then we can always elevate somebody from our practice squad.”

(On how the kicking decision went and why HE chose k Samuel Sloman)

“You really talk about even throughout and I think when you look at just the way that these guys handled it – it's not the easiest to kick out here with the way that the winds end up swirling, but I thought it was really even throughout with (Kickers) Lirim (Hajrullahu), Austin (MacGinnis) and Sam (Sloman). I loved the way that they handled it. I thought they did a great job. It was really tight all the way through. Sam really just made a push these last couple of days and just the pop that he has in his leg. Some of the youth that he has and I also was impressed with just the mental toughness in these circumstances. You try to create pressure situations while also keeping guys confident. All three of those guys did a nice job, but it was, it certainly wasn't like a runaway easy decision. Sam was the guy that we felt best about. I think it was really a result of, he kind of played his best in the last couple of days and I liked the way that he handled some of the tough days, the way that he consistently responded as well.”

(On what he feels comfortable with as Sloman's range).

“I think we're still working through that and this'll be something that's ongoing. I think what's important for us too, is you want to make sure that you're putting him in situations to try to build confidence. In a lot of instances, that's where I've got to be smart and make sure I'm making good decisions and you try to always do that with your players, but to actually say there's a range. He's definitely has good range, but what you feel consistent about as opposed to when you're in some of those possible three-way situations where, hey, it's a short punt, it's a long field, or you go for it on fourth down, those will be things that we'll closely monitor and have a great plan going into each week.”

(On how he feels about the team overall)

“Yeah, I think we feel good. Because we went a little bit thinner at some spots when you look at only having three inside linebackers, but you've got five safeties. So, you could look at it, but we felt like this was reflective of some of our best 53 players. And there's a lot of guys that you'll see that hopefully we get back on the practice squad that we feel good about as well. It's a constant evaluation. I think the one thing that you guys know that maybe a lot of people don't is that this 53 is something that, hey, it's not like your roster is set and that's what it is for the entire year. You see a lot of flexibility towards the bottom half of the roster, especially with (special) teams, injuries and different things like that. When I say teams, I mean, special

teams. So those are things that we're looking at, but I do feel really good about the roster. I'm excited for us to compete against somebody else too. That's been the biggest challenge is, you know what you feel like with the team and the way that they compete against one another, but there's always a good gauge of other teams, whether it be through practice or preseason. But those will be the things that I'm really excited to be able to see, but I do feel good about our roster, feel really good about our draft class and some of the guys that we brought in. like I've mentioned (OLB) Leonard Floyd, a handful of times, but a lot of bright spots, a lot of things to be excited about

(On status update for OLB Terrell Lewis)

"I'm going to be able to give you guys true clarity on Wednesday. It's a knee situation and that's really where, when I'm understanding some of the things that we're trying to get back as far as the results, the test procedures that we've done, that's when I'll be able to have clarity for you guys. But he will be a guy that will definitely not be able to play against Dallas.

(On if he anticipates Lewis injury extending beyond week 1)

"Like I said, it is a complicated situation. You'll see when I am able to articulate what it is, we're still waiting on some possible results that come back to truly give it clarity. But what I will tell you is, unfortunately he will not be available for the Dallas game."

(On if there is any other player that will not be able to play)

"No, there's nobody else in that arena."

(On what are negatives and positives of having a youthful roster)

"I think we've got some guys that are young players, but they're mature football players even though they might be younger. We want to have smart, good football players that do the right thing. We do have a good mix. You look at certain spots and I think it's one of those deals that you start averaging the overall age of the roster, you could look at it that way. But I think the fair way to truly assess it is let's individually isolate each position group and talk about whether there's youth or whether there's experience. I think experiences really just playing time because you might have guys that have played a lot, but have they actually played meaningful snaps? Have they played in these games that that really count? When I talk about that, we have a young offensive line outside of (OL Andrew) Whitworth you could argue (OL Rob) Havenstein and (OL Austin) Blythe have accumulated a lot of experience. Those guys last year that were rookies that played a lot, I look at that experience as invaluable. It's not like they're going into their second year where they're just kind of reserve backup lineman that aren't getting on the grass and playing meaningful snaps. So, look at the experience that (OLs) David Edwards, that Bobby Evans, that Austin Corbett got. You look at Austin Blythe being able to play the center spot for a handful games towards the latter half and Whitworth is probably getting ready to accumulate as 20,000 snap this year."

(On what factored into the decision of cutting RB John Kelly)

"Yeah. (RB) John Kelly, he's done a nice job. I think it was more of a reflection of the depth of that group and (RB) Xavier Jones has done a really nice job. I think it was pretty clear cut who our top three backs have been. In a lot of these settings, especially, where we were working with some of our younger guys playing tackle at those scrimmages, I thought Xavier really shined. He's done a nice job at a lot of these practices under (Running Backs) Coach (Thomas) Brown's leadership and he earned himself a roster spot and John did a nice job. I told John that I definitely think he's capable of playing in this league and hopeful that somebody else picks him up."

(On how he will manage the practice squad and make sure they get enough reps to develop)

"I think the same way that you've done it in previous years. Their first role will be to give a great look to our guys that were counting on playing that given week. But there are some things that we try to create where you have some opportunities to still continue to run our plays, to be in all those meetings. So, it'll be very similar to what it's been in years past."

(On how far back he has to go to find film on Cowboys Defensive Coordinator Mike Nolan and how tough it will be not knowing what personnel you might see)

“Yeah, it's a good challenge. I think it is that perfect balance of making sure that you're looking at, okay, he's been in New Orleans been a coordinator, going back to Miami, to Atlanta. He's had a lot of experience where he's been running defenses and done an excellent job, but I think he's had a good influence. I think New Orleans is one of the better defenses that people don't talk about. And I know he had a huge impact on it. Coach Allen's done a great job, but I know since Coach Nolan got there too, there was a lot of things that it seems like he was pretty influential on. I think it's a little bit of everything, but it's also about what you said, being able to recognize, all right, what are the things that they are going to do? How are they using some of the personnel that they do have and that they acquired, especially on their edges and even inside up front on the D-line. It's about making sure that we do a good job of executing our plays and then be ready to adjust and adapt accordingly based on what they're going to activate early on.”

(On if he plans to add another kicker to the practice squad)

“As of right now, that's not our plan, but there is a possibility down the line, but as of right now, that will not be in our plans.”

(On if DL A'Shawn Robinson is still apart of the roster)

“So, what he'll do is, he was part of the original 53, then he'll revert to that IR, which will clear up that 53rd spot that I was talking about at the beginning.”

(On if he anticipated on having a young roster to start the season)

“I wouldn't say that. I think a lot of our decisions are reflective of what did we do here, so then how does that affect other things. Had you still had (former WR) Brandin Cooks, maybe you're less inclined to get (WR) Van Jefferson in the second round. Had you still had (former RB) Todd Gurley (II), maybe you're less inclined to get (RB) Cam Akers in the second round. If (former S) Eric Weddle doesn't retire, maybe you're less inclined to draft two safeties. So, I think it's all part of a big picture vision, but in a lot of instances, one decision does potentially affect the direction that you go with the others. I think all in all, you have a prototype and some decisions that we always collectively try to anticipate, not just for this season, but for the next of seasons and that's really kind of how it goes. To say that I could truly envision everything playing out the way that it has up to this point would be hard to say, but you feel really good about having clarity and direction along the way.”

(On how the last 48 hours have been informing players they didn't make the team and doing it with Hard Knocks cameras in his office)

“Yeah. I mean, it's always tough, you know, there's never a good way to deliver bad information. But we always try to be clear, open and honest and to the point. I will tell you this, these guys have been about as accommodating and they have a job to do, but that's the one thing is like, you just hate being on camera. It takes away your ability to truly be authentic and genuine. Those are private moments that you want to have. When they got these robo cameras set up, it's not an ideal thing to have to have difficult conversations. Now, what I will say these guys have done is, they've been respectful. Like I said, I understand they have a job to do, but it certainly is tough, but it's also a reflection. Like I was talking to (General Manager) Les (Snead) about it yesterday, and some of our coaches – the way these guys handled the tough information, I think is a real reflection of the quality of men that we bring in here. To be able to have the class and to be able to handle it and look you in the eye and do it the right way. You're just saying, ‘Man, I hope I would handle it the way that these guys did if I was on the other side of this conversation, having to receive some of these difficult conversations.’”

(On the potential of bringing back QB Bryce Perkins as a third quarterback)

“We do plan on doing that with (QB) Bryce (Perkins). He's a guy that we like, he's done a nice job. I think he's got a great way about himself. Obviously, the athleticism that you guys saw with what he did in college. Then, (QB) John Wolford has been a guy that we've had a lot of confidence in over the last couple of years. I would have had no problem with him playing in a game last year, either. We just happened to have a guy that had started and played a handful of games in (former QB) Blake Bortles. So, this was always our plan all along. It is really a reflection in the confidence in John Wolford as much as anything. I think if you asked any of our players, they would share in that confidence that we have in him.”

(On RB Darrell Henderson Jr.'s availability for the Dallas Game)

"He had a good workout today. He looked good. Like I said, with that hamstring, you want to continue to be as careful as possible, but the direction that he's trending is in a positive one. I haven't truly talked to (Vice President Sports Medicine and Performance) Reggie (Scott) yet, but if he's able to open up and he feels good about doing that, which I saw him running a couple routes towards the end of practice, that he was opening up, that that made me feel better about it. So, I'll probably be able to give you some more clarity on Wednesday, but I definitely am not ruling him out by any stretch."

(On if they developed or leaned on anymore analytical projections due to no preseason)

"That's a huge part of our evaluation process that Les and his group, some of our people do an excellent job, that is a big part of it. As far as once you get in our building, we have some things that you can measure with some of the strength and conditioning numbers and the GPS and all that stuff. But we're really evaluating football players. I think we did a good job of being able to create as many competitive opportunities, whether it be competitive situations in practice, one-on-ones, some of those types of drills. So, that's really the main thing. We're evaluating them as football players. There is a projection element to it, but that was the deciding factor is, who did we feel like were our best football players and what they put on tape consistently day in and day out when we were practicing."

(On his mood today versus the last day of camp and if it's because there's a sense of normalcy now)

"That's what it is. Then I was just dealing with a lot of different things and I had totally forgotten about doing media and my mind was in another place. I apologize. You recognize that I was being rude the other day. You know, normally I'm a cheery guy. I was pissed. I kind of came around though towards the latter half. I could feel I was being a mean guy."

(On his excitement level to have a unique preseason behind him)

"No, you're, you're exactly right. I'm very excited about the opportunity to compete against somebody else to really move towards putting together a game plan for an opponent that we have a tremendous amount of respect for, but we're excited. Our guys are confident. We know we've got to have a great week of work to be able to be peaking on the 13th. There's just so many things that are going on that are bigger than football, whether it be all the things that are going on socially, the Corona (COVID-19). So, those are the things that I think is more important than anything to make sure that you're navigating through and having that clarity of being able to move forward, but also not move past some of that stuff that is going to continue to remain an important part of how we just navigate through this season is where the challenges will be. But you're exactly right, that does give you some joy if you will, about moving forward."