



Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Media Availability – December 23, 2020

(On injury updates)

"There's a good chance for (OLB) Terrell (Lewis) this week. If we were to practice today, (OL) Rob Havenstein is the only one that would have been limited. I already kind of ruled (RB) Cam (Akers) out for this week with his ankle. Then (DL) Aaron (Donald) would have had a veteran rest day. Other than that, we're in pretty good shape at this point in the season for what we know is a real big game this week."

(On OL Rob Havenstein's situation and how he feels about him for Sunday)

"I feel good. Rob is a war daddy. He pushes through. I mean, when you watch what those offensive linemen go through week-in and week-out, it's what optimizes what's right about those guys, because of the way they grind through things and just the things that they do and then the risks they put their bodies. They put their body in harm's way every single snap for the team. Rob Havenstein has done a great job, he's played at a really high level and I know he'll be ready to go this week."

(On covering the Seahawks receivers this Sunday)

"They do a good job of getting a variety of playmakers involved. Then you look at it since they've gotten (RB Chris) Carson and (RB Carlos) Hyde back, they've really done a nice job of balancing it out where they're making you honor the run and the pass. Obviously (Seahawks QB) Russell (Wilson) does such a great job of making you defend all five eligibles. So, whether it's (TE Jacob) Hollister, (TE Will) Dissly, when it was (TE Greg) Olsen earlier in the year, but everybody knows what a threat (WR DK) Metcalf and (WR Tyler) Lockett are, but being able to get Carson back in the mix and Hyde has really been a big difference and you can see how well they've been playing, really all year, but now you add the fact that they can run the football so efficiently, they can beat you in a variety of ways."

(On how he likes the team's response coming off Sunday)

"I like it. I mean, these guys always respond the right way. They handled today the right way. Whether we had won or whether we lost, it's about being consistent, being able to put it behind you, learn from it and moving forward. Sometimes those tough losses with the right teams can come at a moment where you can create a sense of urgency that's required and certainly this week is a big game for us."

(On if he addressed openly on how they can make the playoffs)

"Yeah. We talk about those things. Absolutely."

(On the schedule for the remainder of the week and practicing at SoFi Stadium tomorrow)

"Yeah, it is about the wind and really to meet in the tent, as well. So, we're going all virtual and then we'll practice over at SoFi (Stadium). Then what we'll do on Friday, is we'll start a little bit later, let the players and the coaches be with their families, especially with the younger kids and we'll start the day at 11:00 o'clock and we'll really try to accelerate our installs and kind of get the majority of the game plan installed before Friday, just knowing all the different things that go on. That family stuff always comes first and they'll be with them on Friday morning, then they'll come in, we'll wrap up the game planning and then we'll travel on Saturday."

(On why practice was closed today)

"Practice was closed because we were doing you a favor if you saw how windy it was outside."

(On evaluating QB Jared Goff's performance in playoff clinching scenarios)

"I mean, you want to go through all the games? I mean, going back to the first game, when you end up having a chance, I mean, really when you look at it, the third to last game, we knew we had to beat Seattle at their place. I thought we played really well as a team and then you ultimately clinched the division at Tennessee in Week 16 and I thought he played really well. He ended up driving us down the field. He hit (WR) Cooper Kupp on a corner route for a touchdown that ended up clinching the game and a big time throw on third down. Then you look at the next season, he played really well in a lot of big-time games. We were able to clinch the division at Detroit, and that was again, another good team win, but I thought he had some really big-time games that got us to that moment. We look at it as in the (2018) season, really starting after we had that two game losing streak, really, when you go from Arizona and you finish up with San Francisco, you've really got to be able to win those games and I thought he played really well in those games. It was reflective of getting us to two seed and earning a bye. So, he's done really well. Last year was a little bit different, because we were kind of behind the eight ball with the way that the season went. He gave us a chance. I thought he did a lot of really good things on the Saturday night game against the 49ers where we just came up short. Then I liked the way that he really finished the last month of the season last year. So, he's played well in those games. He's played in a lot of big-time games and certainly this is a big-time one. Really anytime you get a chance to play a great division opponent like the Seahawks, Coach Carroll and their team, they're always ready to go. They do such a great job in all three phases and we're excited about that opportunity that we have this week."

(On the need for the team to collectively come through on situations and how much that comes down to Goff)

"Well, it is always a team game, but in a lot of instances the quarterback has the ball in his hands and some of those things, are you doing your part and it might work out and then sometimes, if you still do your part, it might not work out. So, that's why I think football is the greatest team sport, because of the amount of times you touch the football, that quarterback spot is instrumental, especially when you're talking about getting a last-minute drive or finding a way to come away with points, whether it's a touchdown or a field goal in those two-minute situations. That's always a reflection of the team, but certainly the quarterback has as much influence as anybody."

(On how much he has reiterated during the week the importance of goals and how everything is still up for grabs)

"We've got great veteran leadership and our guys know what's at stake. We didn't get it done. We make no excuses and we've got to be able to move forward accordingly, but to be in this position is a credit to a lot of the good things that have gone on, but also some of the things where we've hurt ourselves but for us to say, 'Hey, we've got a chance to go to Seattle, get a division win against a great opponent and then worry about what we can potentially accomplish next week.' That's a big-time deal and to be playing relevant games in December is always what you strive for and that's where we're at."

(On the possibility of having a playoff game at home without fans)

"I would say it is definitely different, just the home field advantage in the absence of fans. But for us, it's the cliché, but it's true. All we are worried about is the Seattle Seahawks this week, trying to go get our 10th win, and then what's after that. We do know that if we end up winning, we ensure ourselves a playoff spot and we give ourselves a chance to play in the postseason. Whether we earn an opportunity to play a postseason game, period, at home or away, all those things are to be determined based on how we handle the next couple of weeks. The only thing that we can do is have a great week of preparation and make sure we bounce back the right way against a tough opponent this week."

(On Former Rams Assistant Coach Jedd Fisch getting hired by The University of Arizona)

"I was really happy for (The University of Arizona Head Coach) Jedd (Fisch). I got a chance to speak with him yesterday. Great coach, great communicator. He'll do an excellent job. He's a relentless worker. He has great attention to detail, really smart and can really bring people together. I think people will like what they see at Arizona and we'll see if they get going a little bit. I'm excited for Coach Fisch."

(On the differences he sees from the Seahawks from Week 10 to now)

"I think it was kind of what I was talking about at the beginning. You just talk about the influence of adding those running backs. Neither one of those guys were healthy and they are big time additions. I've always thought (Seahawks RB Chris) Carson is one of the more underrated players in this league. I mean he's physical, tough, he has great play energy and good contact balance. (Seahawks RB) Carlos Hyde has played really good football for them as well, and he's had a lot of success in this league. So, I think anytime that you're a really good offense, which they clearly are – Russell's done an outstanding job. He's always been a great competitor, a great player, but to be able to have the two ways that he can beat you, whether it be the run or the pass and make you pay in a variety of ways, is something that's always really difficult to defend. I think you're really starting to see that each of the last few weeks, really since we played them. Getting those runners back and how they've run the football has definitely made them even more of a challenge than they already were as a great offense."

(On why they've been so successful when competing against the Seahawks)

"I don't know that it's that. I mean, all the games pretty much come down to the wire. This is a great team. What (Head) Coach (Pete) Carroll has done, the longer that I do this, not that it's been that long, the more appreciation I've gained for the consistency at which they operate and what he does as a head coach. You see the identity show up and they always kind of find a way. I just have tremendous respect for him, but I don't know that we have any sort of secret sauce. We're going to go try to see if we can get a win this week and know what a great challenge it's going to be. They're playing really good the last few weeks and we'll see on Sunday if we can bring it the right way and rebound from what was the disappointing result and performance last Sunday."

(On has he noticed any improvements from the Seahawks defense)

"I think when you look at it the big thing is, just specifically from a personnel standpoint, being able to add (Seahawks DE Carlos) Dunlap up front and then having (Seahawks SS) Jamal Adams healthy, I think they're really getting a good feel for how to maximize both those guys skill sets. You still see (Seahawks LB) Bobby Wagner and (Seahawks LB) K.J. Wright play at a really high level. I've always thought (Seahawks SS Quandre) Diggs was a more underrated player and getting (Seahawks CB Shaquill) Griffin back at the corner makes a difference. But I think what they're settling into, really as a team, which is why they're playing so well, is finding that identity as you get late into December. They're turning the ball over. They're playing really good defense. Since we've played them, they've played really well. I know the numbers were what they were early on, but all that matters is how you're playing right now and they're playing as well as any defense in the league. They are pressuring a little bit more, but I think that's a reflection of picking and choosing their spots. You still see some of the same things that have made this one of the best defenses over the last handful of years. I think it's a great job by (Defensive Coordinator) Coach (Ken) Norton and Coach Carroll. Then I think, really being able to see some of those pieces they've added settle in with some of the continuity that they've already had has made a big difference. That is something that's not to be underappreciated, being able to play alongside one another. You get Dunlap in the middle of the year and then Adams was kind of in and out of the lineup, but he's definitely an impact player. We're looking forward to the challenge against these guys."

(On if he feels the leagues defenses have gotten better over the season)

"I think what's also helpful is you have enough inventory to kind of figure out what's the team's identity. So, kind of what you're trying to defend and you've got a little bit early on. And then, having that continuity, being able to get comfortable playing alongside one another, finding out what is your identity. So, I can't speak for the other teams, but I know what I'm seeing on tape from the Seahawks is a really tough defense that has found their identity and they're playing at a really high level over the last six games since we played them for sure."

(On if he have any memories of interactions with Carroll in 1995-96 when Carroll was coaching at San Francisco with his grandfather Former 49ers Vice President/ Director of Football John McVay)

"No, I didn't have any interaction. I just know from conversations with my grandpa (Former 49ers Vice President/ Director of Football John McVay), how highly he thought of Coach Carroll. Coach Carroll has always been great to me in the interactions that we've had. I just remembered (Former 49ers WR) Jerry Rice and (Former 49ers QB) Steve Young back then and (Former 49ers CB) Deion Sanders running around in '94 winning Defensive Player of the Year. I did not get a chance to see Coach Carroll then, but I do know

my grandfather holds Coach Carroll in an extremely high regard. I know how much respect and how much he appreciates the way Pete has treated him and also treated me. Coach Carroll was a great coach, great man."