



Rams QB John Wolford – Media Availability – December 30, 2020

(On how to pronounce his name)

“John Wol-ford”

(On if he pronounce the L)

“Yeah. I think so, a little bit”

(On what the last three days have been like after finding out he was going to start in Week 17)

“A similar routine to what I normally take in prepping for a game. Obviously, it's a little bit different knowing that you're playing, but my approach the entire year has been to try and prepare like you're the starter, so not much has changed. I got a little jump on the game plan Monday, Tuesday and then rolling into Wednesday.”

(On how he is feeling at this point)

“I feel great. It's been a fun journey for me getting to this point. It's a lot of hard work and I'm confident in the time I've spent that has gotten me here and I'm confident in my capabilities as a player. So, I know I can spin it, I know I can make the throws, then mentally it's about making the right decisions, giving us the best chance to win. So, I'm confident going into this week. I'm glad that the teams rallying around me. It'll be fun.

(On has he been able to get any sleep)

“I feel good. I've been sleeping fine. The first night I found out, I slept a little bit less than normal, but I think sleep is super important. I read a book called “Why We sleep” (By Matthew Walker). You guys should read it if you haven't read it and if you're not avid sleepers. So, I'm always trying to get my sleep.”

(On has he imagined what his first NFL pass would be like since learning he would be starting)

“I mean, visualization is something that I've done before. Like you're hearing a good song on the radio or something and you visualize yourself making a play. I don't have a specific pass that stands out, but yeah that's happened before, nothing that comes to mind exactly.”

(On what he sees as his biggest challenge)

“Well, there's a lot of challenges that go into a game. I think the most important thing is you can't make the critical errors. I have got to put us in a position to win. We have a good defense and we can rely on them in some aspect. Then I start getting heated up, we can start moving the ball and score some points to win the game. So, every single play is a challenge in the NFL and it's about making the right decision and giving us the best chance to win.”

(On the challenges the Cardinals defense will present)

“They're a talented bunch on defense and across the board. So, being efficient with the ball, getting it out quick and progressing through my reads, those are all things that you see from the best quarterbacks in the league. Those are things that I try to emulate when I play. So, I understand that they have a good rush and I have to make those plays and not take sacks.”

(On the process of managing the scout team and still learning the offense)

“Essentially, on any given week, I'm prepping as if I was going to play like Jared is. So, there's not much extensive work that I put in trying to emulate other quarterbacks. Obviously, when we're playing a running

quarterback, they're telling me to scramble a little bit more, those types of things. I think it's great reps for me, we're going against a great defense every day. Just me seeing coverage, seeing how they move. And concepts are concepts. You can only space the field in so many different ways, right? There's a limited amount of space. So, just seeing how defense disperses, the openings, etc. are all good things that I think are going to help me when I play."

(On if scout team has changed how he sees the defense operate)

"I just think those reps, they accumulate, and they help you to process things faster. I think in the NFL, you see the best guys are doing those things. They're processing quickly. They understand where the ball should go, when it's cover-six, cover-four, or cover-one. And so that 10th of a second is the difference between success and failure, so I'm grateful for those reps."

(On does he view this as the biggest moment of his career)

"Up until this point, yeah, I think you could make that argument, a hundred percent. Biggest game. Your first NFL start, it's something you kind of dreamed about your entire life. So, it would be fair to say that, but I'm not going to get too caught up in the moment. I'm not going to be on social media. I'm not going to read all the headlines, whatever it may be. I'm just going to go about doing my job. If I put my head down and work to the best of my ability, at the end of the day whatever happens, I'll be able to sleep at night. I'm just looking forward to the opportunity and have a calm, level-headed mindset going into the game."

(On are there certain skills he feels he brings as a quarterback that QB Jared Goff doesn't)

"I think obviously, I'm a little bit more – I don't want to knock (QB) Jared's (Goff) athleticism, he's a great athlete, he's an NFL quarterback. – I think I am a little bit faster than him and can make a few more plays with my legs, but he's done a great job for us. He's been amazing to me and I have the utmost respect for how he's treated me. There are some horror stories with some NFL vets and with a new young guy coming in, but he's been great. So, I'm just nothing but grateful for his camaraderie and friendship."

(On how he would answer the question 'Who is John Wolford?')

"I think I'm a pretty normal guy. I came from a good family. I think I have a good sense of the fact that hard work works, I think I understand that, and it has to be intentful. But, it's hard to exactly say. I just think I'm a pretty normal guy who loves football and that's about it."

(On if this how he imagined his debut)

"I think you just have to be ready for whenever that opportunity comes. Obviously, you never want to wish ill on someone. I hate that Jared got hurt. But this is the scenario that it happened and it's Week 17. Every single week in the NFL is important. This one obviously has playoff implications, so maybe it has a heightened sense. I mean, I'm excited. Listen, it's a huge opportunity for me and I realize that. I'm just going to go about my business, prepare, and try to take advantage of it."

(On how close he was to working on Wall Street rather than playing in the NFL)

"I had a job lined up my junior year, going into my senior year. That recruiting process starts pretty early. Up until my junior year, I had not played well enough where the NFL seemed like a viable option. So, I was set on doing that. Then I had a great senior season and I talked to some scouts, talked to my family and it made sense. You can only go and play football once. I can go back and work a desk job later on in life. So, I told myself, 'I'm going to give it a year. I'm going to give everything I got.' And it's all worked out. I've had some good breaks. I realized there's a lot that goes into it, but I'm just grateful that I'm here and trying to take advantage of this next opportunity,"

(On how his process of being intentional on and off the field has led to this moment and his first start)

"I think there's only so many hours in a day and you have to try and take advantage of the time you do spend on your job. I just want everything I do to be intentful to maximize that efficiency. Whether that's watching film or whether it's lifting, I always want it to be intentful towards being the best quarterback that I can be. So that's kind of been my approach and there's a compounding effect to that if you're doing a good job. I'm always open to the notion that there's a better way to do something. I mean, there's better quarterbacks in the league and so just trying to find out what they're doing, how they're taking care of their

bodies mechanically, et cetera, et cetera. I'm always open to that. I'm always open to learning more scheme and I think that's kind of been my approach since I was smart enough to understand how it kind of works."

(On if he truly believed he would play in the NFL as high schooler)

"I think you probably - I mean, if you look at the percentages, they're unlikely. But as a kid, you have that dream. I always thought I could make it and maybe that was a little outlandish considering the percentages, but I did. And so, there's a lot of things that went into that. A lot of people that have helped me along the way and I'm here now. I've dreamed of this since I was a five-year-old, when I first put on a helmet. So, it's cool to see it kind of come to fruition. Then I have to perform on Sunday, that's my next step."

(On how Goff has helped him prepare for Sunday)

"He shot me a text saying, 'Hey, we have your back and anything you need, I got you.' So, he's been there. He was out at practice today. He's obviously been through this so many times and anything he sees, he's passing onto me. Whether it's a tip in coverage, a way we do something in the huddle, or how he uses the cadence. So, he's been nothing but helpful and I'm appreciative for that."

(On has he had any communication with former teammate and Broncos WR Kendall Hilton who was in similar circumstances against the Saints)

"I did not reach out to him when he found out he was starting, just because I figured 10,000 people probably did. He has not reached out to me and he probably figured the same thing. I have nothing but respect and admiration for him. We kind of had like a quarterback competition throughout our tenure at Wake and he's been great. He's a great friend and we'll touch base in the offseason."

(On what it's like knowing he may not have WR Cooper Kupp, RB Cam Akers and RB Darrell Henderson Jr. for Sundays game)

"Obviously those are great contributors to our team. I was kind of bummed when I found out about 'Coop' (WR Cooper Kupp), but that's not his fault and I don't want him to feel bad about it. We're going to have guys that are going to step up and make plays. Jared went down, I have to step up. Coop is out, (WR) Van (Jefferson) has to step up. So, there's a next-man up mentality that we all have and I'm confident in the guys that we have that are going to dress this weekend, that are going to go out and make plays for me. I feel good about it."

(On if he is aware his LinkedIn profile is still active)

"I do."

(On why he has a LinkedIn profile)

"I guess when I was a junior in college, I was like, 'I probably need to make this.' They actually probably advised us to make it. I probably made it when I was a freshman. I just never figured to deactivate it. If this Sunday goes well maybe, I'll just delete it."

(On if he sees other players that have NFL players listed in their LinkedIn bio)

"I do not. I do not go on LinkedIn that much anymore. So, I don't have a good answer for you there."