



Rams Head Coach Sean McVay – Media Availability – December 31, 2020

(On if DL Michael Brockers will miss Sunday’s game due to being placed on the Reserve/COVID-19 list)

“Yeah, that's the most likely scenario.”

(On was this the situation he was referring to yesterday when speaking to media)

“No. There's a lot of different things that are going on, a lot of different moving parts, but that's really what this year has entailed and having to handle it. I think the thing that's unfortunate is that guys like (DL) Michael (Brockers) and (WR) Cooper (Kupp), that are on the COVID list, that have really done everything right – that's what you just realize, that some of these things are out of your control. There are certain things that, not with those two, but maybe people have made decisions that are putting themselves at risk, but both of those guys have epitomized handling things the right way. That's what's really just unfortunate in such a big game and they're two key leaders. But they've been kind of involved from afar and I think their leadership, in their rooms and really with our team in general, has made us feel confident that the next people that will step up will do a nice job, really because of the way they pour into their teammates.”

(On if there is a possibility that other players could be placed on the Reserve/COVID-19 list due to contact tracing)

“I don't anticipate that. I'm kind of learning about this on the fly as we kind of navigate through the new experiences, day-in and day-out. But I do not expect anybody else to be a factor of this with where we're at right now.”

(On if he expected more of the team to test positive due to a national and regional surge)

“I mean, just the surge in the area and you realize, these guys do a lot of stuff as far as their prep work to prepare and to feel as good as possible for the game. I mean, it might be something as seamless as you have a masseuse and the masseuse might not realize they were exposed to something. And even if they tested, there's still a latency period. Then they might end up having it and they got their test and it said negative, so you feel good about getting a massage. There's a lot of different things and I think it's why it's flipped our world upside down. So, I think our guys have handled it. We want to educate our guys as much as we can and still enable them to be able to live their lives, but use the appropriate measures. I think these are two instances where they're certainly not at fault. It's just more of a victim of the circumstances more than anything.”

(On how practice went for QB John Wolford)

“He did a really nice job. He had great command, handled things really well. It was a step in the right direction.”

(On RB Cam Akers)

“He looked good moving around early on. He didn't participate in practice, but he was getting a workout in. You guys saw him on the early parts of the field, so he's feeling good. I certainly am not ready to rule my man (RB) Cam (Akers) out by any stretch.”

(On the process of onboarding QB Blake Bortles and his knowledge of the offense)

"He's good. He has a great recall. He's a really smart player that's had a lot of experiences in this league. Foundationally our information and our verbiage are very similar to what it was last year. So, he's come in and handled things really well. It's been great having (QB) Blake (Bortles) around."

(On if he needs Akers to practice Friday and Saturday in order for him to feel comfortable playing him on Sunday)

"You'd ideally like that, but I think with the amount of experience that he's gotten as of late, if you can have him in any capacity, you feel good about that. I do trust the way that he's preparing, and I know (Running Backs Coach) Thomas (Brown) is meeting with him and getting some above-the-neck mental reps. So, you'd like to be able to get him some physical reps, but I think the approach that we'll take this week will be use every moment that we have leading up to game time to make sure that you get him as healthy as possible and let's not put him at risk for any potential setbacks. So, if he is able to go, it'll be one of those deals that we'll find out on game day, but don't expect it to be any physical reps for him this week throughout the course of practice."

(On how important Sunday is to determine Akers availability)

"It's important. I mean, we have to move forward as if worst case, you don't have him. So that's where (RB) Malcolm (Brown), (RB) Xavier Jones, 'Ray' (RB Raymond Calais) - those guys are getting a lot of invaluable reps, but Cam is right out there. He's gotten a bunch of work, like I mentioned, especially after the bye week, the production kind of speaks for itself. Because of that experience that he's accumulated, you definitely don't minimize the importance of practice, especially for a younger player, but having him in any capacity, if he feels like he's able to go, that's going to be a good thing for the Rams."

(On what it's like to have a lack of control over situations around COVID)

"I mean, I think it's the epitome of controlling and worrying about the things that you can control and I think if you go in with the expectation and understanding that things can change at a moment's notice and you've got to have that flexibility, the guys have to adjust whether you're meeting virtually, whether you're missing practice reps. I mean, there's been a lot of different things that we've had to navigate through, but that's consistent with the other 31 teams as well. I just think that's a part of what this year entails and really just in general, you've got to be able to adjust and adapt whether it's injuries. Really for us, I mean, we've had different things out here outside of COVID. I mean, a lot of the practices that we're having down at SoFi (Stadium) have nothing to do with COVID, it's the dang weather out here, where it's so windy and before I jumped on this call, I'm maybe having to make adjustments for tomorrow because it's supposed to have 30 to 40 mile an hour winds for tomorrow. So, it's just a part of it. I just think you've got to be able to handle it accordingly and just seamlessly, keep it moving forward with what's important and those are the things that you can control in a year that has more uncontrollables than ever."

(On if contact tracing is ongoing)

"Yes, so what I would say is, when you look at the work that goes on behind the scenes, like if (Vice President, Sports Medicine and Performance) Reggie Scott got on here and explained to you guys the amount of work that goes on when you do end up having a positive, then you rerun it to confirm it's a positive, then you do a PCR test the next day, then you start having to interview people, then you use the Kinexon information to try to track that and then you get with the league and all that stuff. I mean, it is amazing what a great job the people behind the scenes have done to just help us even get this thing off. So, we are done with that, because that's immediately done and it's right after the fact, and that's where it's important to do it immediately, so that if there are those high contact traces, they're immediately removed from the ecosystem, to try to limit the exposure. And so, I kind of have been educated by Reggie, but the more I learn, the more I appreciate how many people are doing a bunch of great work behind the scenes to enable us to even get this thing off."

(On if he is surprised the league made it to Week 17 considering the pandemic)

"Yeah, it's a good question. I don't know if you want to say surprised, but I've just been impressed with the amount of work that's gone on. Especially, when you see, like I've mentioned before, how volatile it is when it hits. You've seen some of the other teams that have had really tough situations where it really gets through your building. But fortunately for us, the ones that we've had, while they've been tough, it hasn't been something that's monumental where it goes through a bunch of people at once. I think it is a real credit to

some of the protocols and I think the flexibility that's been ongoing by the league and all 32 teams. We've had to move a couple of games, but to not miss any. Now here we are in Week 17. It's amazing, it really is."

(On if he feels that the Rams have been affected less by COVID than many other teams)

"Well, I think we're always in the moment and kind of dealing with what's going on in the present. So, certainly you feel like it's gotten us pretty good right now. But, it's one of those deals, you've got to handle it. Guys will be asked to step up and there's something to be said for kind of bonding together and being strong in the face of adversity. Let's go compete to the best of our ability and not be afraid to see what happens if we put everything we've got into it."

(On if he has any plans for New Year's Eve)

"Yeah. Getting the red-zone plan ready to go so we can score some more points."

(On if he's happy to turn the page on 2020)

"You know, I just look at it as I have no life during the season, so, I'm getting ready for Week 17. Until you said it, I had no clue that it was the 31st and I'm looking down and it's New Year's Eve. You know what it is? It's a Thursday in our game-week preparation, trying to go get our 10th win. Let's go."

(On if he has a New Year's resolution)

"New year's resolution - start the year off with a win."