



Rams Defensive Coordinator Brandon Staley – Media Availability – January 12, 2021

(On if the same amount of time is spent preparing for Packers QB Aaron Rodgers as was with Buccaneers QB Tom Brady)

"Same amount of time is required to face this guy, because those two are very alike. You're talking about two of the great players to ever play that position. I think (Packers QB) Aaron (Rodgers) is probably going to win his third MVP this year, rightfully so. Being able to have an up close and personal seat, being in a division with him in Chicago, being able to play against them last year in Denver. Then really following him his whole journey, as a player in the NFL and in college going back to Cal, I just have so much respect for him. What he's accomplished. What he's meant to that team, being able to follow a legend like (QB) Brett Favre and then have the career of your own, that stands on its own. He's as good as it gets and (I'm) excited to compete Saturday."

(On pivoting from the Seattle game straight into interviewing for head coach openings)

"Just a busy day, but Sundays are always busy after a ball game. You just said it, took more time for those interviews, but had two really great visits with the Chargers and the Jets. Humbled, as I mentioned to you guys last time to be considered for a position like that in this league. An exciting opportunity to compete and meet with those teams. Then as soon as those interviews were over, you get right back to work on Green Bay. It was a busy day. It was a long day, but it was a good day."

(On the approach this week if DL Aaron Donald isn't available on Saturday)

"We have a deep group upfront. (Defensive Line Coach) Eric Henderson has done such a good job molding that group. I think you've seen the depth of that unit express itself just in that last game, in the last quarter and a half when Aaron went out, I think you saw guys make plays – (DL) Greg Gaines, (DL) A'Shawn Robinson, (DL) Morgan Fox, (DL) Sebastian Joseph-Day, (DL) Michael Brockers. So, that's a group that really, really excels as a group. Sometimes the strength of the group is just as important as anything, especially in a long season like this. We're hoping that 'AD' (DL Aaron Donald) can go. But those guys know what Aaron Donald means to our defense and that there's a high that they have to live up to. That we all have to live up to. I thought that they did that in that last quarter and a half."

(On what DL Michael Brockers' presence has meant)

"So much the intangible value of that guy on the team. It's something that you can never quantify. You have to see it to know it. When 'Brock' (Brockers) got to that game on Sunday, what it did for our locker room, and then when he got on that field, you just have to see it to know it and to believe it. It means so much to our team and to me personally when you come into a team as a first time defensive coordinator, who no one's ever heard of, to have a guy like that accept you and to believe in you and then to perform the way he has this year being a career year for him. He just means so much to me. I'm a huge Michael Brockers fan."

(On if pressuring Rodgers or covering the Green Bay receiver group is more challenging)

"That question sort of expresses why these weeks are so tough, because you got a lot of things to deal with. You've got to deal with him and certainly all his capabilities as a player. Just all the talent he has physically and then mentally all the experiences that he's had in all these big moments. He's got this inventory that just extends far deeper than most players. Then, he's got a really talented supporting cast. You don't put up the numbers that he's been able to put up without a really talented group of players. I think he would probably tell you that the way their offensive line has performed, two who are First-Team All-Pros, (OL) David Bakhtiari, who I just want to say I have so much respect for that guy being in the division and

competing against them every year. He's not playing, but man, what an amazing player that guy is and tip my cap to him and hopefully he gets back next season in a big way, because he's one of the elite players in the league. But their line has played extremely well in front of him. Then he's got a cast of receivers and backs that's really deep. We all know that (Packers WR) Davante Adams is one of the top players in the league. I mean, you guys are aware of his production and their chemistry and Davante has set a very high standard for a receiver in the league, let alone offensive player or any player. One of the premier guys in the league, in the entire league. Then they've grown up these younger receivers and then they've got a really deep running back corps. (Packers RB) Aaron Jones, (Packers RB) Jamaal Williams and then the new guy, (Packers RB) A.J. Dillon. They're just really deep, so they have a really deep offensive team and that's why you see them being able to stay balanced, productive, run and pass in all field zones – third-down, red area scoring. They're one of the elite offenses in the league.”

(On any specific moment where he realized the Rams defense was playing at a high level)

“It takes so much time to get to the point that we're at. It's been so much work and so much purposeful work in order to kind of operate, I think, how we are now. I think that's why we have created something special, is because we are doing it together. I think people have that sense of purpose for one another, which is what team sports is all about. I think when you see these guys, it doesn't matter who the guy is coming in the game and perform at a high level. You see the type of energy and the spirit that we play with, then you got a good thing. I'm talking about coaches and players, both sides of the ball, and that's what you need in order to compete at this level, this deep in the season, because it's not just going to be a couple of players or a couple of coaches that get it done. The best teams are the ones that win in the playoffs. We're hoping that we can keep it going.”

(On Rodgers' mobility)

“This guy's one of the elite movers at that position. I think that just as you get older, you get wiser. I just think he uses his legs more tactically now than he did when he was a younger player. He still has that athleticism to buy time to create late in the down, that's what makes him so challenging. When he moves, this guy is one of the most accurate throwers in the deep part of the field on the move in the history of this game. It's one thing to be mobile and to get out of trouble, but then to be as accurate as he is in the deep part of the field, it makes him that much more dangerous to defend. It's a real strength of his game.”

(On if CB Jalen Ramsey will travel with Adams in coverage)

“I like how you tried to sneak that one in there, it was smooth. We're still working through that right now. They present a lot of challenges formationally and how they operate. Davante is such a good player, but we're working through that.”

(On the strengths of Packers RB Aaron Jones)

“There are several. Great contact balance, tremendous vision, this guy can see can set up his blocks at a high level can create offense when there isn't any offense to create. He's got a gear that's, I think, deceptive, because this guy can really run. I think that he's a really good short-yardage, goal-line runner as well. I think that what separates you as a runner, is when you get into those scoring zones or in those 'Gotta have it' situations, can you get the tough yards? He can do all those things and he is a very capable pass catcher. Which truly makes you a complete back, is can you add value in the passing game and Aaron trusts him that way. Very good in the blitz pickup game as well. So, he's a very complete back. He has been for a long time a real key to their offense.”

(On Cornerbacks Coach Aubrey Pleasant working with CB Jalen Ramsey this season)

“As I mentioned last week, (Cornerbacks Coach) Aubrey Pleasant is one of the elite coaches in the league. I told you guys last week about the minority coaching situation in this league and that we've got three guys, Aubrey (Pleasant), (Safeties Coach) 'EJ' (Ejiro) Evero and Eric Henderson who are as good as you're going find. Aubrey, all you've got to do is ask (CB) Jalen Ramsey, ask (CB) Darious Williams, ask (CB) Troy Hill about their relationship with Aubrey. He's a tireless worker. He's a really talented communicator. He can see the game in all levels of the defense. Sometimes as a secondary guy, okay, do you just know the back end. He knows how the front and the back tie in together. He and 'EJ', they're a team back there and they're just a dynamic group of teachers. 'EJ' and Aubrey and Eric, those guys are all just teachers, leaders. Just

so thankful that we have them on our staff and I know that our DBs, you can just see how our guys have played together to see what Aubrey and 'EJ' and Eric have meant to all of our guys."

(On the advantage of having a 'shutdown' corner and how all the remaining playoff teams currently have one)

"Great points and so much respect for all those players. I think it changes the math in how you can approach a way of covering their eligible receivers. Traditionally, if you need to help a corner on a premium wide out, then there are going to be individual matchups elsewhere that affect the other players on your defense. When you have a corner like Jalen, it changes the math. Then, you know when you have a player that is as versatile as Jalen, where you can put him several different places within a formation, then it increases his value and the value that he creates for his teammates. I think that those guys you mentioned, those guys are all outstanding players, but you know, we feel like we have the best guy."

(On if he has had sleepless nights preparing for Rodgers)

"The sleepless thing, it actually could actually make you sleep longer, because you're so tired thinking about it. You know you could go that way too, that's happened to me too. You either lose sleep or you fall asleep right away because you're just so tired. So, it goes both ways. Guys like this, I think the physical ability of Aaron and his talent as a thrower, as a mover, all that I think is obvious to people. But I think that game within a game that makes this makes the truly elite quarterbacks special is how they beat you with their mind. He's got an incredible awareness of all 22 guys on the field. He's aware of your sideline. He's aware of the officials. He has full command over what's happening on the field and that's what truly makes him special. It's something that requires all of us working as a team in order to compete against him, because he does bring that element to the table. I think that's why he's one of the special players to play at that position."

(On if there was a specific moment in his career where he felt he made a breakthrough)

"I think as a competitor, you're always engineering yourself to be able to handle the moment that you're in. I think that it takes special focus to achieve at the highest level in whatever profession that you're in. But you have to have that focus to be able to maximize your ability. So, that's all it is, is just being fully present, being able to thrive in that moment. Trusting all the preparation and trusting all the investment that you have in your craft to be as good as you can be in that moment, whatever it is, whether it's a practice, a game, an interview, and that's the way I've always approached things like that."

(On Packers RBs Jamaal Williams, AJ Dillion, and Jones and the matchup between the defense and the Packers offense)

"With those backs, when you have three backs that, that can all do something a little bit different, I think it makes your offense that much more diverse and much more challenging to defend. I think what they try to establish with those guys is a physicality. When you have a fresh back in the game, that's running as hard as he can, because he knows that there's a guy that can come right in for him, I think that's an advantage that can wear defense down if the run games going. I think it gets the O-line going, when you have fresh backs in the game. The O-line, they love to run it, they love to come off the ball. So, they love fresh backs that are going to come in there and run hard. I think that those guys are all unique. I think they all do something different for that offense and I think it's a big key to why Aaron's having such a good year. Because when you have the true marriage of the run game and the pass game, it makes it that much easier to play the quarterback position. He doesn't need very much help, Aaron, but if he has it, watch out. I think that's why you've had an MVP caliber season again from him. Truly, a great group of runners. Then as for the matchup, this is why fans love the game, is to see matchups like this, to see two teams playing against each other. Their offense versus our defense, it's still a team game. It's not going to be one side of the ball versus the other, it's going to be the Rams versus the Packers and that's what makes football so amazing, is that it's the offense, defense and kicking game coming to the field in that game, in that moment and laying it on the line for however long the game goes. It's just a matchup I think we're all excited about because they have a really good coaching staff, a really good group of players, certainly in a great venue. It's going to be good for the game."