



**Rams Defensive Coordinator Raheem Morris – Media Availability – February 11, 2021**

**(On is there pressure becoming the defensive coordinator for the number one ranked defense)**

“Our whole business kind of deals with pressure. I don't think it's pressure, I think it's more of an opportunity. Anytime you get a chance to join greatness, to be a part of a bunch of winning, like you guys have been able to do around here in the past - to be able to add onto that, to join a bunch of really good coaches and really good players, you're really just fired up more than pressured. It's an opportunity to be a part of greatness and it's certainly something that I'm going to relish.”

**(On is he going to adapt last year's defensive systems)**

“You kind of formulate the things that you do around your players. (Chargers Head Coach Brandon) Staley did a great job of doing things that his really good players could do. He did a great job of doing the things that the guys are capable of doing here. There'll be a lot of things that'll be similar. There's a lot of things that were similar from when (Former Defensive Coordinator) Wade (Phillips) was here. There are a lot of things that's similar from how Staley did it and it's based on the guys that you have. The guys that you have here are really talented, they're great players, and they look forward to playing the game the right way. I've been fortunate enough to watch them a little bit around here with the guys. Being able to get with these great coaches and being in these meetings has been exciting.”

**(On has he had the chance to touch base with any of the players)**

“You know all the guys just throughout the draft process. When you go through the draft process and you do the extensive stuff that we do in the NFL, you get a chance to evaluate, to look at, to be able to see a bunch of the guys. You get a chance, when you get the job, to be able to go back and look at the tape and look at what they've been able to do, from the guys that have played. Now being in the building, you can go watch practice and get really caught up to look at these guys. You've seen a couple of guys that have come around the building. I've been able to see some of those guys that come in the building for the injury stuff. I walk by them and you're able to say, “How are you doing?” I've been able to contact a couple of guys on the phone and that's been a really good thing just to get acclimated with the guys and let these guys know what we're here to do and how we want to do it. It's no secret here in LA that you guys are set up to win a championship and those guys know what the standard is, they know what we're going to try to do here.”

**(On is he going to do a three-or four-man front and how much tape has he been able to review)**

“When you go into your sub packages, which the league has kind of developed into you see a lot more four-down fronts. Whether you're talking about odd or even, whether you're talking about bringing different people in to do some different things, you're going to do all those things, you're going to have all those different types of packages. Obviously, you'll talk about who you are and what you are. We're going to look like a three-four base team, something that we tried to look like in Atlanta. But all those packages within the install, you want to put those things in a timely basis. (Head Coach) Sean's (McVay) going to do a great job of setting them up of how they go in, how we install a lot of things, how we get our stuff taught to our players and what's the best way to do those things to be detailed as possible, and all those things that we want to do. It should be great. It's been really fun to watch these guys and what they did last year. It's been really fun to watch these guys and how they install. It's been really fun to be around these coaches, to listen to these guys and all the great coaching points that they had with the stuff that we want to do. You know, the “Shulas” (Outside Linebackers Coach Chris Shula) of the world, the (Assistant Defensive Line Coach) Thad's (Bogardus) of the world, The ‘Hennys’ (Defensive Line Coach Eric Henderson) of the world,

(Safeties Coach) Ejiro (Evero) – these guys are doing such a great job of schooling me up and talking about some of the things they've done, I'm talking about some of the things that I've done, and it just helps that I have such a rapport with some of the guys from before and over the years and in general. Ejiro being a guy that worked with me and was able to work under me as an assistant. You know, a guy that worked here but is gone now (Lions Passing Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs) Aubrey Pleasant. Being around these guys and being able to get acclimated with the new guys, that way has really been helpful.”

**(On how his experiences in shaping young defensive players to become impact players influences the way he coaches)**

“At a very young age I was fortunate enough to be around the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Being around the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in those young years with (Former Tampa Bay Buccaneers Safety) John Lynch, who just went in the Hall of Fame, (Former Tampa Bay Buccaneers Linebacker) Derrick Brooks, (Former Tampa Bay Buccaneers Safety) Ronde Barber, (Former Tampa Bay Buccaneers Cornerback) Brian Kelly, (Former Tampa Bay Buccaneers Safety) Dwight Smith, (Former Tampa Bay Buccaneers Safety) Warren Sapp and (Former Tampa Bay Buccaneers Defensive End) Simeon Rice - just so many names that just developed into great players in this league, whether they were young, whether they were older, all the things that they were able to bring to the table just have been able to help me. You have to talk to these guys in different ways. You have to treat people in different ways. You have to do different things. You have to use different tactics. And just the last year, with the challenges that we have with zoom, you learn even more from that. Some of these guys love this zoom style of learning. Some of these guys like to know this stuff from their cell phone. Some of these guys like to sit at the home and be able to pick it up rather than being in the classroom, some of these guys like to get it on the field. So, you just develop it as it goes. You teach these guys the way they need to be taught. They have a lot of great players here. I can't wait to meet them all and pick up on all their particular learning styles, which I'm trying to get from the coaches now.”

**(On has it been easier fitting into the coaching staff since he's worked with Head Coach Sean McVay in the past)**

“I don't know, but just working with Sean - I think it's the culture that he's developed around here. Him and (General Manager) Les (Snead) have done a great job of developing the culture at the Rams to what they want to be and how they want to do it. It's been a lot of fun sitting in these meetings right now, talking about our team and hearing everybody within our program talk about our team, from our trainer to our strength coach, to just everybody across the board. Hearing all this information, all the things that we get from the guys, from our equipment room. Knowing how the cultures been built, knowing where we want to go and what we want to do just makes it an easier flow into this building, because it's so closely related to what we want to be and how we want to do it.”

**(On what the key characteristics of a good Defensive Coordinator)**

“First thing is the greatest coaches in this league are the best thieves. I've been able to steal from these guys from afar for a long time. So, to be able to be a part of it, you steal some of the greatest things that you can get from great coaches, like a Staley, the Vic Fangio system, whether you're talking about the Monte Kiffin Tampa Two, or the Tony Dungy Tampa Two, however you want to word it, wherever you want to go, and whichever great coach you want to bring about, it's all about those things. But at the end of the day, after the competitiveness, the toughness, the physicality, the hustle and the hit of the team, some of the core beliefs that are going to be a part of here. This is a fundamentally developed team. They did a great job of developing these guys fundamentally. Some, they went out and bought like a (CB) Jalen Ramsey, and he's a fundamentally sound, and an absolute competitor. He's an absolute dog. A guy who's going to go out there with toughness and be able to play. Then you have guys like (DL) Aaron Donald that they have been able to draft and acquire throughout the draft, to do some of the things that way, who've just developed into these great players. And then after you get a few great players, you get people around them who find out they're just better than what they even thought. They become better versions of themselves. Some of the coaches - and it's no secret that the Rams coaching staff has just been rated the way that it has been because of the things they've been able to do here and it starts with our leader Sean McVay.”

**(On who have been some of his influences during his time in the league)**

“You know again, you hate to go back, I keep talking about the Tampa days, but it was just fortunate for me to go there. When I first started at Tampa, I felt like it was the Harvard of football. I walked into a building where (Ole Miss Player Personnel Analyst) Monte Kiffin was a Defensive Coordinator. I walked into a building where (Steelers Head Coach) Mike Tomlin was the secondary coach, and I was able to assist him. (Packers Defensive Coordinator) Joe Barry, which you guys are very familiar with, was our linebacker coach. The D-line coach was (Las Vegas Raiders Defensive Line Coach) Rod Marinelli. Those guys all have something in common that I thought it was very unique. They were great communicators. Being a great communicator, they didn't all did it in their own different ways, their own different tones and you're able to steal from all those guys. You guys been around Joe Barry for the last couple of years and you know how well he communicates with his guys. You know how well he's able to communicate with the media. You know how well he's able to get his message across to his guys to go out there and perform at a high level. And one of the things that I got from Mike Tomlin is how to be able to talk to people, be direct, to be able to get those guys to go out there and be their best selves. We talked about it for a long time, about people being bus drivers, and when I came to the Rams, I got a chance to see a lot of groups and a lot of dynamics of people being bus drivers to lead this group to where they want to lead them and it's been awesome.”

**(On how he intends to use CB Jalen Ramsey and DL Aaron Donald)**

“You don't mess them up. Let's let these guys get going. Jalen is a great player. He's probably rare. He's unique. He can be a shutdown corner. You can move him inside. He can play at the nickel position. He's smart. You see his toughness oozing all over the tape. You see his competitive nature just all over the tape. You see the exciting plays. You see what he can be and his best version of himself at all times when he's out there in the field you. Him as a leader, you would love to see him just take that to another level. I can just see people wanting to follow him because of his style of play. Aaron Donald is just so much fun to watch. He's just a disruptor. He's a finisher. He's the guy that just gets things going, he leads by example, and you can just see it on the field. Nothing he does on the field is shocking. Right now, at this point, I'm just sitting here, and I'm just wowed, I'm amazed with some of the things he's able to do. You want to get him aligned up and find the ways to get him one-on-ones, but at the same time he's done such a great job of getting his teammates one-on-one and setting up the guys around him that you don't want to take away that part of his strength either.”

**(On how his experience as wide receivers coach influenced his coaching)**

“You know, I've always been nosy when it comes to offensive football. So, at a very young age I was able to sneak into (Raiders Head Coach) Jon Gruden's meetings when he was dealing with the quarterbacks. having his quarterback school. I've always been nosy being able to be around (49ers Head Coach) Kyle Shanahan, Sean McVay, (Packers Head Coach) Matt (LaFleur) and all these different boy geniuses that we have right now. I'm around lead dog catalyst, boy genius himself, being able to work for him again. But being around these guys and you talk offense, the different things that you want to do, you formulate how you want to play defense and what you want to do against these guys. Some of our calls now relate like that. Some of our calls sound like offensive calls, some of our alerts, some of our checks and balances - things that we do are all formulate based off your offensive analysis and some of the things that you've been able to do in the past and it only gets better. Going into an OTA day, which we hope to have this year, or going into a training camp, however it may look when you compete against your own, it only makes it more relevant in the competition and the trash talk that can go along with that. Sean is a great coach. I love being around him. I can't wait to be back around when we were on the field for the excitement and the competitive nature of how he is.”

**(On how he can put the defense in positions to have success)**

“It's me getting to know them. Those guys don't owe me anything. I think it's my job to come in and allow myself to be the best version of myself. That's the communicator. That's the guy that can be a confident to these guys. That's the guy that can get these guys lined up to be able to do the best things that they can do. That is my job. I think these guys have all shown a professionalism that has been at a high level. I want to be a part of this group. I don't have to be this group. I don't need to be the face of this group. I want to be a part of this group, but I want to be one of the reasons that we are very good. I want to be one of the reasons that we win a Super Bowl. I'm going to be one of the reasons that we're going to be great. These

guys have done it at high level. Like I mentioned before, we have some young, we have some old, we have some veterans, and we have some great players. I'm just excited to be a part of it."

**(On if he and Head Coach Sean McVay discussed coming to the Rams earlier and what made this the right moment to join the Rams)**

"When you're really good friends with the people that you're going to be friends with in this profession, those things are never really discussed. You know, because your focus is on winning wherever you are at the time. So in 2017, I was focusing on trying to get a win versus the Philadelphia Eagles and the last play of the game to advance me to the next round of the playoffs, right after we just beat the Rams, might I add, but that was my investment goals at those times. But whenever you get a chance to be around some of the great people and the great coaches in this profession, you jump on those opportunities and not just great, because there are people that you don't know are great, but when you get a chance to be around the great coaches and the great people of the profession that you know, and got personal relationships or and with, that's always a great opportunity for anyone, whether it's any profession, like I'm sure (LA Daily News writer) Kevin (Modesti), you would work for less papers, if you had a chance to work for somebody that you knew and you were emotionally invested for and want to win for and writing a better version for, but I had a great opportunity to come here and work with Sean, to be around these guys, (General Manager) Les Snead, to be around a bunch of the guys from the staff that I know, be around a bunch of these players that are just exciting to coach and it was a great opportunity for me to come to join the Rams and I am fortunate and excited to do it."

**(On his thoughts on the Rams defense last season and his priorities for the defensive free agents)**

"You know, some of the things that the Rams defense did just as well as anybody in the National Football League, and it's really important to our game. The most important position, right? They were able to affect all quarterbacks and these guys came out and they were able to mentally and physically affect quarterbacks. I think that was the biggest difference that happened last year, that allowed them to extend to a different greatness and when that happened, I think they got more confidence. I think the back end played with more confidence that allowed them to get after the ball. So, if you can affect the quarterback and get the ball like they were able to do, you're going to have good statistics. Now at the end of the day, ultimately nobody's really going to be happy with being the number one defense. We are here to win a championship, and I wasn't brought here to try to duplicate what they did last year. We were brought here to win and we're brought here to win a championship and I want to get that done for Sean. I want to get that done for this community. I want to get that done for you guys."

**(On meeting McVay for the first time and their history)**

"His had all answers since 2008. He's been a young man that you kind of knew. As soon as you met him, he lit up a room. He's got a commanding presence. We joke all the time about the guys that you're around that have got these commanding presences as soon as you walk in the room and, you know, you can feel, you can feel the type of people that should be head coaches that are going to be head coaches in this league. And you feel the leadership off of them, and you can feel everything about them. You can feel all the stuff that you want to know and how they're going to go get it done and that is him. Ever since we met and then having a chance to form and bond on the relationship that we got a chance to get, when we were in Washington together, we just went to a different level and then really, we just kind of grew together. I came off so many experiences being a head coach I was able to share with him. As we sat in my Tampa house, we would go visit each other, I would go visit him. We were to share all those experiences and bounce things off the wall, and to be able to talk about these things for years and how it would look and what it would look like when he got his opportunity, because you knew it was coming and those are all things you do in the off season. Those all things you do when you go on vacation together, those were all things you would do when you run across each other, when you're not trying to absolutely go out there and game plan and destroy each other. So, those are the things that we shared together. Those are the things that we'll continue to share, and those are the things that, we'll have those memories for a long time because it all came to fruition."

**(On connecting with McVay in the off season and how he decided to take the position)**

"Well, it wasn't about really getting connected this off season. We got fired from Atlanta and we were sitting around and we're trying to figure out if I was going to be the head coach of Atlanta or not. So, we played a

waiting game and then they picked Arthur Smith, who is a really good coach and I think is going to be great for those guys and what they're going to do moving forward. I thank Atlanta for having the opportunity to be able to do those 11 games this year. At the end of that, now it's time to go get a job and you're getting ready to set up and go for interviews for defensive coordinator positions. You're talking to different people, you're talking to a different one of your friends with the opportunities that could present themselves all across the league and then Sean McVay called me. Unfortunately, you guys just lost the game versus Green Bay. You come out of that game, (former Rams Defensive Coordinator/Chargers Head Coach Brandon) Staley then has the opportunity to interview with a couple of teams, he gets a head job. And so the opportunity came to go join Sean McVay, the LA Rams, Les Snead, our ownership and everything that's a part of this city and it was an opportunity I just didn't want to pass up. Then we talked about being able to link to people in this business that you have relationships with and you want to win for, and it certainly fits all those characteristics at a place that you want to build when you want to come here. I've heard nothing but great things about this media. I heard nothing but great things about this community. I heard nothing but great things about this team. I heard nothing but great things about how we're going to move forward and try and go get a Super Bowl ring."

**(On filling the remaining defensive coaching roles)**

"You know, the more you do in this business the more opinions you want to have in the room. Sean is definitely going to be a part of filling all the vacancies, myself included, and then all the other coaches on this staff. You've got really good people that are in place for a reason, and we have people in place in the business like this. They know what you're looking for from a culture standpoint, the people in the building that know what you're looking for from a football standpoint, there's players in this building that know what you're looking for from what they want to be coached like and how they want to be coached like standpoint. So, you use all that information, you go out and you find the best people to add to the staff and when you add those great people to the staff, you go out for nothing else, but to win a championship."

**(On if those vacancies have been filled yet)**

"That's a very good question. They have been filled and I don't even know if I can answer this question yet because I don't know if it's technically released yet by our organization. I will let those guys release all those things, but I will say this, there are a bunch of people in this building already that we know will be elevated, that can assume some of the roles that were left vacant and it's not on accident or it's not a mistake that that happened. It happens because some of these processes we just got finished talking about Lindsey with, they'd been doing this well before I got here, and they've done a great job of putting themselves in position to be able to fill those roles with internal people because of their onboarding process and we will continue to do those things and Sean's done a great job of leading that way for us and I'm fired up to be a part of it."

**(On pending free agents and how much of a say he will have in their future with the Rams)**

"Every single year, your team is going to be different. The people you coach are going to be different, the different people you're going to have are going to be different and your job as a coach to get the best ability from those players that you had when you end up having them. As far as who makes the decision on who's going to be here, I'm definitely going to have an opinion. I'm going to give my opinion. I'm going to tell all the people that need to hear my opinion, what they need to hear. Those people being the Les Sneads of the world, the Sean McVays of the world and whoever else in the organization that needs to hear or wants to hear those things. I am not the decision maker. There will be decision makers that are in process that we have to plan, each talking about Les Snead and talking about Sean McVay. They'll make those decisions on who we bring back based on whatever the reasons are, whether it be money, whether it be the new cap, whether their situations are and how you can bring people back. Have those players been great players for the Rams? There's no doubt. Would you like to have them all back? There's no question. Did they do a great job last year? You just told me they were number one in defense and they have been very good for a long time, of course. But those situations can change and always things would change every single year and that's how the NFL naturally works."

**(On what he is most looking forward to in terms of acclimating out here in LA)**

"Yeah, I'm trying not to wake up at 2:30 in the morning, is what I am trying to do. So, if we can just get past that moment, then I'm waking up at two o'clock in the morning and pacing around the hotel. I'm trying to figure out what to do at 2:30 in the morning because Starbucks is not open yet. I'm trying to figure out what

to do then, but if we can get past that phase and I can start sleeping in and get on a normal schedule, I generally like to be an early person anyway, but these days on the West Coast are pretty long. I've got to get acclimated to waking up and calling the people from the East Coast that you need to talk to. I've been yelled at numerous amounts of time by my Moms for not being able to talk to her within a timely fashion because by the time you're ready to call them, they were asleep. So, some of those things you got to get acclimated to, and just being out here on a long-term basis."

**(On his thoughts on the last hiring cycle and the lack of minority coaches)**

"I think it didn't really matter what my thoughts are. It really matters more about what the results should be and when you go out there and you get to talk about it and you bring awareness to it, I think that's just a great start. If we can start to bring the awareness and people get the opportunities. This year, I was fortunate enough to interview for two head coaching jobs. One being at the job that I was at with the Atlanta Falcons and one being with the Jacksonville Jaguars. You'd have to go ask those guys how we did and how I did, and some of those things, but it's not really my job to determine those things. It goes back to me giving my opinion and there being decision makers. The decision makers are going to make who they want to hire, and they're going to do those things and that's their job. And it's my job to figure out how to put myself in the best position to get one of those jobs. Is that something that leads me every day? No. Clearly what leads me, is winning the championship. Having an opportunity to come here, win a championship and not think about those things. Those kinds of things take care of themselves with winning."