



Los Angeles Rams vs. Carolina Panthers
Transcripts - Rams Head Coach Sean McVay,
Rams QB Matthew Stafford, Panthers
Interim Head Coach Steve Wilks, Panthers
QB PJ Walker - October 16, 2022

Rams Head Coach Sean McVay

(Opening Remarks)

“Okay guys, great job by our group finding a way to get it done. Another example of being able to overcome adversity, whether it was injuries, or really kind of putting ourselves in a hole going down 10-7. But (I) thought a lot of guys got involved. I thought the defense was outstanding, special teams was solid and coaches did a great job getting these guys ready to go. It was good to be able to get to 3-3. A lot of stuff that we can really look at over the bye to try to figure out... we'll get some bodies back. But today was a good day for the Rams.”

(On what he saw from WR Allen Robinson II in the game)

“I think he just made the plays. He got some opportunities, there was some chances based on some of those coverages. I thought really his play action catch over the middle to start that one drive was really what kind of got us going a little bit. I was happy for Allen, being able to go five catches on six targets

was a good thing. Another big red zone scoring touchdown for him on a fade. I thought the one down the right sideline, on the third down where he went up and got it. Those are the things that we've seen, and we got to just continue to give him those types of opportunities like you guys have asked.”

(On the offensive line and OT Joe Noteboom going down during the game)

“I mean it's unbelievable, isn't it? I mean I feel sick for Joe Noteboom. But what a stud, (OT) (Alaric) AJ Jackson was to pivot from right guard to left tackle. He was outstanding all day. (OG) Oday Aboushi, I just met this guy a couple weeks ago and he is playing the whole game, doing a great job. (OT) Bobby Evans has played right guard, he's played right tackle, he's playing left guard, he's played left tackle before. He did a good job. (OG) Jeremiah Kolone, going from police academy a couple years ago, and he started at center. (OT) Rob Havenstein did a great job steadying that group. So I was proud of them. I was happy for those guys. That really is a better way of articulating it. I thought they were key and critical for our success, and really to be able to get so many different guys involved in the running game. I thought all three of our (running) backs did a nice job. I thought it was good to be able to get the receivers involved. There's definitely a lot of things that we can clean up, but I was proud of this team. It'll be a good way to be able to try to build some momentum, get some guys back healthy and see what we can do to try to play better football after this.”

(On what 'clicked' in the second half offensively)

“I think really just kind of like what we've talked about, it's the simple answer. But it really is about just staying on track. You're efficient with some early downs. I thought (QB) Matthew (Stafford) did a great job with some of the play action in the movement game on some of those early downs. (I) thought our screen game was pretty effective. I thought the one to (WR) Cooper (Kupp) on

the third and long was a big one, where you got 22-yards. It was good to be able to get (RB) Ronnie Rivers involved, got (RB) Malcolm (Brown) involved in the screen game. So those are things that are going to be key and critical, really for any good offense to be able to stay ahead of the sticks where you're not in some of those third and longs. We can't have delays. We can't have some of those false starts. Those are the things that good teams don't do that. We got to continue to clean that up. I'm not pleased with that, but I was pleased with a lot of other stuff.”

(On WR Ben Skowronek’s first career touchdown and first career carry)

“Guys playing for each other. It was awesome to just be able to see the selflessness of this group. I think is what's right about this group. (We) continue to grow and (WR) Brandon Powell was like, ‘Why didn't I get that look on that play earlier in the game?’ So I said ‘Ben lulled them to sleep.’ It was a great job by Allen Robinson at the point of attack.”

(On the update with RB Cam Akers)

“I would say I'll probably be able to have a better answer for you on that tomorrow when we end up connecting. There's nothing changed since I talked to you guys on Friday as it relates to that situation. Then with the other stuff, kind of one and the same. My focus and concentration was on figuring out how do we win this game as a team. Guys did a great job with that. It'll be good to get them in here tomorrow, get them away for a couple days, allow the coaches to really be able to kind of dive into it, anticipate some of the guys that we're getting back. Then look into some of those things if we feel like that's best for the Rams moving forward.”

(On what the defense did during the game)

“They've been awesome. I mean really, to allow three points, to be able to come away with... I think it was such a great illustration of making him snap it

one more time. (Carolina Panthers RB) (Christian) McCaffrey makes a great play down in the red area, or down the right sideline. Our defense just made him snap it one more time. You get them to a third down. (LB) Ernest Jones does a good job of being selfless and tipping it to (DB) Nick Scott right there. But that was a big time stop. Then I thought our guys being able to get enough push to get to a third and manageable in a four-minute situation. Then Cooper, ended up being able to convert so we can take a few knees to be able to end it. So, a lot of good examples of some good complimentary football. I'm excited because there's a lot of stuff that we can improve on. But for the guys to be able to find a way to 3-3, in spite of all the different things that we've worked through. I was happy for the response, especially after the last couple weeks have been not up to our standards as we all know.”

(On if the bye week is something he circles on his calendar and knows will make a big difference for the team)

“Yes. The answer is, I'm looking forward to getting some of these guys back. But what I also think has been really good, is that it's allowed us to develop depth that you wouldn't be forced to do otherwise. Guys are playing, they're gaining confidence, they're gaining that experience that will be key and critical because we've seen, you just never know. Injuries are an inevitable part of this game, and you hate it for guys because that's what kills me, is just watching the amount of work that gets put into it and how quickly just a little thing can kind of take it away from them. But that is something that we've looked at, while also trying to be present, if that answers your question.”

(On what he saw from the wide receivers involved in the running game)

“Yeah, I think it depends on if some of the looks dictated. But today was one of those days where the guys did a great job. (I) thought those were really just an extension of the run game. It's not really like a specialty that's a part of it. There's a lot of things that we've done, as you guys have seen over the last

couple years, and to be able to give it to any one of our receivers as you guys saw, is something that makes people honor that and you have to legitimately be accountable for it.”

(On an update with Joe Noteboom’s injury)

“I haven’t. The initial thoughts are it might be his Achilles. I hate that for Joe. He’s worked so hard. He’s done so many good things. But if that is the case, I’ll have clarity for you guys tomorrow.”

Rams Quarterback Matthew Stafford

(On the Los Angeles Rams offensive line’s performance after shuffling players around)

“Yeah, obviously, [we] had to move some things around there when (OT) Joe (Joe Noteboom) went down, but I thought those guys did a really nice job. That’s a tough spot to be in, a bunch of people moving spots and it starts with communication. Those guys did a better job of that today and [I’m] just proud of them. [They] did a nice job protecting me. We did a nice job getting the ball in the perimeter for some runs and scored some points.”

(On how scoring early built momentum and what the halftime adjustments were)

“Yeah, I mean, it’s frustrating when you feel like you should have more points than you do maybe in the first half, and [we] had some opportunities. The one drive we had in the first half for a touchdown, we were overcoming all sorts of stuff, third-and-longs, crazy third-and-longs, guys making great plays to get first downs. That’s tough, and even though with that drive, I was like, ‘Man, we got to make it easier on ourselves. Try to stay ahead of the chains a little bit better than we did.’ And in the first half we were able to do that in the second half we got some chunk plays in the pass game, which was great. Some nice runs,

obviously, (WR) Sko (Ben Skowronek) with the touchdown run was great, and then (RB) Darrell (Henderson) as well. So, I thought (Head Coach) Sean (McVay) did an unbelievable job mixing it today, especially with all the things going on up front, moving parts. So, it was a nice game.”

(On his touchdown pass to WR Allen Robinson)

“Yeah, I mean, out of the corner of my eye saw they tried to quick jam him and once he beat that, then I was just trying to put it up into a good spot. He had a size advantage to start, and I was happy to see him go up and make that play. It was a great play. I thought he played great today. [I gave] him some opportunities on some stuff, third down down the sideline was a great catch. He did a great job on a play action where we were trying to get it down the field, kind of working in [the] underneath window with me, with a catch and run. Had another nice catch on an in breaker on a third down conversion. They tried to show us man, played mask Tampa and he sat over the ball, was a nice job and was able to dot it on them. So, he did a lot of good stuff today in the past game. I was happy for him.”

(On what made the offense click in the third quarter)

“Yeah, I mean it's, it's all just execution and tempo and all of it. We do our job over and over again it looks pretty good. If there's breakdowns here and there, you can sometimes overcome those, sometimes you can't. And I thought there for a couple [of] drives we did a really nice job of just executing on a really consistent basis. Obviously getting some chunks help. It's tough to go 16 plays and score a touchdown in the NFL so it was nice to get some five play eighty-yard drives or whatever it was, something like that, and put it in.”

(On what it's like for him as a quarterback when the passing game starts to click)

“Yeah, it's great. That's what it's all about playing this position, being able to

trust the guys up front, trust the guys on the back end to get open and in the timing and rhythm of the play and be able to put the ball in some good spots. And our guys did a really nice job. There's obviously plays out there I want back and opportunities to maybe stretch it down the field that I could have taken. But, at the end of the day, it was nice to get a win and continue to get better.”

(On how this game sets them up coming out of the bye week)

“I'm not looking too far ahead to be honest with you. Going to do everything I can to try and get myself feeling as good as I can physically over the next week to 10 days, whatever it is, until we get back after it again and just take it day by day. This game today is another example of you just never know what's going to happen. Our left tackle goes out in the game and we got to move guys around so you can't look too far ahead. Obviously that kind of spurt that we had in execution and good play on offense, we got to continue to do more of it. It's never going to happen for all four quarters every drive in the NFL. I don't want to say never, but tough to get done. If we can do that more consistently and play off of our defense a little bit, who played great again today, that'd be nice.”

(On WR Ben Skowronek's touchdown run, and the threat of wide receivers as ball carries in this offense)

“It's great. You try to make a defense defend every blade of grass and sometimes that's throwing it over their heads, sometimes that's running the screen. Other times it's running around the edge, run it down the middle, whatever it is. We try to give the defense a lot to look at. I thought Sean did an outstanding job of calling the game for us and setting those guys up in great opportunities, and then guys executed it. Allen (Robinson) did a great job on that push cracking the safety. They were kicking the safety down and running the nickel back to play the post player all day so it was a nice job of him recognizing that push cracking and then (WR) Sko (Ben Skowronek) doing the rest.”

(On the balance with taking risks as an offense and taking care of the football)

“Yeah, that was not an aggressive play today, you know? I feel like a lot of them have not been this season and that's a frustrating part for me. I never want those to happen, but we're running two five-yard routes and they covered it down nice, lost my back in the protection, knew I lost my back and playing a cover two behind it. So it was a tough, tough down. (I) wish I would've just maybe dirtred it at somebody's foot and I'm trying to get a little something going. But yeah, it's frustrating. It's something I don't I want to do, there's no question about that. It was definitely in my thought, was not an over aggressive thing. It was a tough play that happens in this game and got to move on from it.”

(On the growth of G Jeremiah Kolone on the interior of the offensive line)

“Yeah, I think he did a nice job. Every time he goes out there, I think he gets a little bit better. He gets more comfortable. He is doing a better job communicating, which is great. At that center position, it's the physical part of getting connected on double teams and pass protecting one-on-one when you get a nose and all that kind of stuff. But really the biggest thing is how do you communicate down the line with the guys and how do you get everybody started on the right page and doing all that kind of stuff and he's continuing to grow and getting better at that. It's not an easy thing. It's a difficult thing and just happy for him and to see his progress.”

Carolina Panthers Interim Head Coach Steve Wilks

(On injuries sustained in the game)

“(QB PJ Walker) was cleared in the concussion protocol but he did not return

because of the neck. On (CB CJ) Henderson, he is in the concussion protocol. (LB Cory) Littleton has a groin. (CB Donte) Jackson, he has an ankle. And then at the end of the game, (DE Henry) Anderson had an elbow.”

(Opening remarks)

“I want to first start out by saying that I'm extremely proud of the men in that locker room. It was a very difficult situation this week and they found a way to circle the wagons, come together and have a great week of practice, but we didn't get the results that we wanted today. There's a lot of things that we can build on and a lot of things that we can correct. The most important thing is that we have to understand as a team is that we got a lot of football left. We get to start with our division opponents again, Tampa Bay, is coming to town. With that I will take your questions.”

(On what happened with WR Robbie Anderson at the end of the game)

“It was a sideline-type situation that I felt like I wanted to try to get him in at the moment and that's something that we'll discuss as we further get into the week.”

(On how WR Robbie Anderson was acting at practice this week)

“All the guys were all in. Everybody was all in. Everybody was focused. As I stated before, we had a great week of practice.”

(On the offensive strategy for this game)

“When you look at the turnaround that we had this week, and then you're talking about a guy that's coming in that wasn't starting, so I wanted to make sure that we number one, established the run game and I thought we did a great job in that in the first half. When you look at the time of possession, we were good. We just got out of control the second half, so I thought we executed the game plan the first half.”

(On being a head coach again)

“To be honest, it really wasn't something I was thinking about. I was just really trying to get my guys really in the best position to be successful today. So again, I'm never looking at it about being me, it's about the team.”

(On the fight between WR Robbie Anderson and Receivers Coach Joe Dailey)

“Well, I'm going to say this, no one is bigger than the team and I'm not going to focus and put a lot of tension on one individual. We can talk about the game, we can talk about situations within the game, we can talk about the things we're going to do moving forward, but I'm not putting a lot of energy into one individual.”

(On losing the lead in the second half)

“I think the biggest thing for us, offensively and defensively, we didn't do a great job on third down. Number one, we've got to get off the field on third down. They had a couple of third and longs that we didn't execute. They were able to convert. Then offensively, we just have to convert. So that's when you saw the shift in the swing right there with time of possession (in) the second and half.”

(On being aggressive at the end of the first half)

“I think that's just the key. I didn't want to be aggressive at that point in time. (Offensive Coordinator) Ben (McAdoo) and I talked about it. I felt like we were in a good rhythm from the standpoint of what we were doing as far as running the ball. I didn't want to put PJ in a situation where we started having to get aggressive, spread it out. If you guys recall a couple of weeks ago, with the pick-six right before halftime, so I was really trying to manage the game at that time.”

(On the injuries to the defense)

“Well, we’ve got to see exactly where we are tomorrow just from an injury report standpoint and get other guys ready to play. Hopefully, we can get some guys back this week and hopefully the injuries aren't as serious.”

(On if Baker Mayfield or Sam Darnold could be ready to play next week)

“I couldn't really mention or say intelligently exactly what that's going to entail, so I need to figure out exactly what's going happen tomorrow with the reports.”

(On if Baker Mayfield is progressing in his recovery)

“We wanted to make sure...he had a great workout, as I mentioned to you guys, but when we looked at the MRI, there were still some things there, so we wanted to protect him by putting him in the boot and just try to give him a couple of days off his ankle.”

(On if Baker Mayfield has a ligament tear)

“The MRI still showed some damage. Yes, it did.”

(On how tough of a situation was it for a young quarterback like the Panthers had today to go up against a Super Bowl team)

“I thought he handled it well. Again, we were trying to help him in the things that we were trying to do for us, just trying to manage the game, establish the line of scrimmage, run the ball, going back again not trying to be too aggressive until we had to, which, when the game somewhat got out of hand, we had to open it up a little bit.”

(On if he envisions Robbie Anderson being a part of the team in the offense)

“Well, right now, everybody's being evaluated, as well as myself. So, we’ve got to figure out what's going to be the right chemistry to put out on the field

offensively, defensively, and most importantly, as coaches, we've got to come up with the right game plan."

(On what his message was to the guys in the locker room after the game)

"I committed guys, number one, for being men. I thought they did a tremendous job dealing with the circumstances this week. We thought we had a great week of practice, but we just didn't get the results that we wanted today. Looking for those guys to challenge themselves again, come out this week ready to go, divisional opponent coming into town and we got a lot of football left. That's what I told them."

(On what he saw from today's game that he looks to build on)

"Well, number one, our identity, which we somewhat established a little bit today on the offensive side of the ball. We got to be able to run the ball. We got to be able to shorten the game a little bit, control the clock. And then defensively right here, we just have to find a way to get off the field on the third down and create a little bit more pressure on the quarterback."

(On how can he get other players involved in the offense)

"I think we can we just have to look at it as coaches. Again, based on what we wanted to do and establish the run game, try to get out of the perimeter a little bit with the screens. I thought we had several looks at times we executed, and at times we didn't. So, we just have to figure out each week what the opponent is trying to do and once again, put the guy in the best position to be successful."

(On how he is going to allocate his energy for the evaluation of the team)

"Well, number one, we're going to evaluate the tape. We got a long flight going back, so we'll look at the tape and figure out exactly what we did well and look at the things we need to correct. We're pushing meetings back tomorrow since we're getting in so late. And then, once we get in there, we're going to just

challenge the guys to get better.”

(On what he felt the team did well)

“First half, initially we did a great job, once again, establishing the identity of what we wanted to do which was run the football. So, I commended the guys up front. That was our plan all week and I felt like we executed that.

Defensively, we stopped the run early. We just have to find a way to get off the field on third down.”

(On how the defense stopped us on third down the first two series and then it just went downhill from there)

“Yeah, we created a few negative plays on first and second down. We got them in third and long, and when you get guys in third and long... third and 12, third and 14, we’ve got to get off the field.”

(On how he gets having a good week in practice to translate to the game)

“It’s just execution. I know one thing for sure, having a good week of practice gives you a chance and if you don’t have a good week of practice, you’re going screw up even more. I’m going to continue to challenge these guys to come to work each and every day. We’re going to create that mentality on Wednesday, still putting the pads on, being physical, being tough and everything we do starts up front.”

(On what he does to keep the defense from getting tired when they are on the field for so long)

“It comes down to them, somebody making a play and finding a way to get off the field. As you saw with D-jack (Donte Jackson) coming up with that interception and scoring on defense. So there are some positive things that we give defensively. We just have to continue to try to build on those and create more opportunities.”

(On if he has had any conversations with Robbie Anderson since he left the field)

“No, I have not.”

(On if he plans to have a conversation with Robbie Anderson)

“Yes, I’ll have a conversation with him and then several other players as we just recap and talk about the game.”

(On if he’s okay with wide receivers Coach Joe Dailey)

“I’m okay with all of the coaches.”

Panthers QB PJ Walker

(On how his neck is feeling)

“I’m good. I had a little sore neck soreness in my neck before the game even started so they were just being cautious about it.”

(On if he was evaluated for a concussion)

“I was and I passed everything.”

(On what went well during the game and what were their challenges)

“I thought we ran the ball well early. We just have to convert on third down and be more efficient on third down. That’s really the key really is us converting on third down. We got into some third and manageables, but we got a little backed up on some third and longs as well. So just got to find ways to convert on third downs so we can keep the drives moving, keep the defense off the field a little bit.”

(On the Panthers establishing a run and their game plan moving forward)

“It was part of the game plan. We just have to go back and watch the tapes too, see what we have do to correct it and move to the next week.”

(On how the morale is in the locker room)

“I think everyone's in good spirits, and I know we have a lot of football left still. A division game coming up this week. I think everybody's looking forward to that and getting back on the field next Sunday.”

(On if trade speculation is affecting the team right)

“I'm not even sure about that and I'm not really paying more attention to it. Guys on the team don't pay much attention to it either.”

(On what happened with WR Robbie Anderson on the sideline)

“I didn't see what happened.”

(On if there was an issue in the game with Robbie Anderson during the game)

“No. Me and Robbie were fine the whole game.”

(On how the team is in good spirits)

“We are just trying to figure out how to get it rolling. We know once we get one, we have to be able to establish to be able to find a way to get more than just one in a row then we'll get two then three. We have to be able to get going. It's a confidence thing with a lot of guys in the locker room. We just have to figure out a way to bounce back from these tough losses. I know it gets repetitive coming up here and talking about a lost week in and week out but, when it turns, I think we'll be good.”

(On how he instills confidence after a tough loss)

“You have to go back out there on Monday, and you have to go back to work.”

You have to find a way to figure it out, find a way to get a win. The approach isn't going to change. I thought we had a hell of a week of practice, and I thought we did some really good things in practice, but we came out short today.”

(On what this week was like for him)

“Yes. After Monday the situation was the situation. A lot of guys got away for a day and came back to work Wednesday ready to go. You just felt the energy in the building a little bit. You felt the guys ready to go. We just have to find a way to put a four-quarter game together. We put together two good quarters, but you have to find a way to put all four together and just go out there and have a good win.”

(On how it felt with Coach Wilks on the sideline)

“It felt good. The energy felt good. Everything felt really good. He does a good job getting the guys ready to go play and things like that. We just have to find ways to go get wins for him. Same way we have to go find ways to get wins for us.”

(On how it was competing against the Super Bowl winning defense early in his career)

“It was cool. I thought they did some really good things. They had a couple of coverages on third down that we didn't have an answer at one point, but we ended up figuring it out. So once we figured it out, it was good, but we just have to find ways to have answers for everything. That's including me trying to get to the right play. So, if I see something, I have to be able to get to it.”

(On how QB Baker Mayfield was towards him leading up to the game)

“He was really, really, good and really talkative, a lot of communication. He asked me what I liked on the sideline and things like that. He stayed in good

talks throughout the game and just trying to find ways to just get plays rolling, trying to find things that I like to do that could help our offense.”

(On how he is preparing mentally to start the next few games)

“I continue to just go out there and battle every day. I have a chip on my shoulder regardless, whether the situation or not, but for me it's just to go out there and be competitive and go out there and put together two good, three good days of practice and show my consistency out there. Show that I can go out there and lead the team to wins.”

(On what he saw today that gives him the feeling that this can be righted)

“Yeah, it'll still be good. We show some flashes of really good things on offense out there and we just have to find ways to just keep it rolling. I just said we have to put together four quarters of really good football. We did a good job in two. Have to find a way to get an end zone as well. We only put up three points as an offense, that's unacceptable and I'll take full responsibility for that. So, I just have to go out there and be more consistent out there and move the ball up and down the field the same way I did coming out at the start of the game.”

--RAMS--
