



**Los Angeles Rams Transcripts - Defensive Coordinator Raheem Morris, Offensive Coordinator Liam Coen, Defensive Tackle Aaron Donald - Thursday, November 17, 2022**

**Defensive Coordinator Raheem Morris**

**(On what the most frustrating part of the season has been so far)**

“Losing. When you get a couple losses in a row it's always frustrating, but it presents challenges for me. I find different ways to motivate myself and make people better. You know me pretty well by now, but I find different things to motivate, different things to do, different guys to motivate, different ways to push buttons on whoever it is just to get us going. Nobody cares if you get frustrated, but it's all about, for us, finding ways to get the next win and this is the next opportunity, so it's the next opportunity for us to get a win.”

**(On the decision to play DB David Long Jr. over rookie DB Derion Kendrick last week and if he thinks play at that position has been inconsistent at times this year)**

“I don't think David Long (Jr.) was inconsistent last week, I think he just got beat on a play. He got beat on a fourth down and two on a challenge opportunity, a situation we were kind of playing in dire need to get a stop there. We kind of played that way the whole second half. (We) didn't want to let them cross the

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50 (yard line), didn't want that thing to get to a two-score game, especially when we were able to cut it to a one score game, and you lose on a big time fourth and two. I think those are the chances you've got to take. I think both of those players got to help us down the stretch, I think they both got to play for us, I think they both will. I won a Super Bowl with David Long (Jr.), I'm in the process of doing that with DK (DB Derion Kendrick). We've got to get those guys ready to go and you've got to catch those guys up to speed and get those guys playing at a higher level all the time. I can't say they don't play at a high level, but you've got to get them playing at a higher level all the time. It's just like that with everybody. You balance it by catching your rookie up, learning from them, making them learn from those mistakes, doing the things that David Long can do that you know he can do because of the experience you have with him, and you find a way to make those things work in order to get you win.”

**(On the defense typically allowing field goals mostly allowing touchdowns last week and how he approaches the defense to respond to that)**

“Last week, they came out and they got the long drive on us and they scored the seven. Unfortunately, after that we got a turnover right there on the 30 (yard line) and it turned into 14 and that was disastrous. It's not the disaster to give up the touchdown, it's a disaster to lose the game as a team together right there and give it back. We talk about playing off each other and right there we needed something, a long drive to get three, something else to spark the team to allow us to go out there and be fired up. But we had this disaster strike right there at the end of the half, had to go inside the half and go regroup. I'm not necessarily trying to get three (points) either, you want to stop them all around, but you certainly want to hold them to three in the red zone, you certainly got hold up on your end of the bargain. We let that game slip away from us in the first half a little bit, was able to almost recapture it a little bit there in the second half getting that thing down to seven (points), and then the big play happened,

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and those things go dark, go south for you pretty quickly in this league. So that's what happened.”

**(On the amount of injuries the team has sustained and if discussions have been had about the amount of games the team played last season or if this is just bad luck)**

“That will be in the excuse business, so I'm going to stay out of that world. (Steelers Head Coach) Mike Tomlin used to tell me a long time ago, ‘I've got this bag in my office. You can go get one of those excuses at that bag, bring it back to me and tell me about it.’ We won't be in the excuse making business. Our job is to win football games and we've got to go out there and find a way to do that this week.”

**(On the challenges of playing a long season last year)**

“The challenges are obviously getting the team back healthy, getting the team back ready to go, finding a nice balance between rest and preparation, and apparently at this point right now, we haven't done a great job of that. But we still got time, and this has got to be the week. It's running out of time, but those are things you've got to do right now. You've got to get it going.”

**(On how he knows how to motivate different players)**

“It's not premeditated. I try to drive the guys based on what drives them. I try to motivate people based on what I think they need that day, just in general. For most of us it's competition. A lot of us are motivated through competitive natures and the things that we want to do out there in the field, whether it be practice. Sometimes you've got to motivate them within the classroom, sometimes you've got to stimulate them within one-on-one meetings and offsets here and there, and sometimes you've got to motivate coaches based on what they're doing really well. A lot of times it's easy go tell people what they're doing wrong, but sometimes it's good to go tell people what they're

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doing right, and a little bit of motivation is based and built off of that from a player and a coach standpoint.”

**(On DB Jalen Ramsey saying he taught him something he never knew before and if he could share what that was)**

“No, then it wouldn't be special. But in all seriousness, I did see that last week based on the 9,000 people that sent me that tweet. Obviously, it was (a) passionate talk from Jalen and obviously we got a chance to sit in our office and we were able to go over some things that he can do better. We were able to go over some things that I like to see him do moving forward, how he can challenge some things a little bit more for himself, and that's kind of the motivation that you talk about. Jalen wants to win in the worst way and the best way he can show it is when he comes to my office trying to figure out a different way to make us be better at the highest level. Those are the things that frustrate him and give him satisfaction to be able to come to the building each day as well. You can't let those guys get bored. You can't get tired of the mundane, you can't get tired of this process, you can't get tired of what we do. We all love what we do. This is definitely a privilege. To be able to sit in front of these great players and these great coaches and be able to motivate versus these great teams every single week is something I love and thrive for and like look forward to each single week no matter what the circumstances are.”

**(On after winning a Super Bowl if it gives more perspective on how hard it is and how much as to go right)**

“Here's a chance for me to brag, it is my second Super Bowl. No, I mean this league is nuts. Everybody but (Buccaneers QB) Tom Brady and (Patriots Head Coach) Bill Belichick are absolutely dying to get Super Bowls. It is the hardest thing in the world to do for us that's how we feel. I think we all want to go through those things and go through that. I'm not going to concede that it's over, I don't care what you guys say or write or whatever the case may be until

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it's over. But we're going to go out there and fight to get that thing done because that is the best feeling in the world. There's nothing like it. It's nothing like holding that Lombardi Trophy in front of millions, cussing in front of fans at parades, it is what it is sometimes."

**(On how much time is left for the Rams to turn the season around)**

"This is it. This is the week. People keep letting us in. Obviously, the schedule dictates how much time you got, obviously your division opponents dictate how much time you got. They win and we lose, there won't be much time, right? So it's all determined based on that. But for us, it's more than that. It's about us going to play and execute our game at the highest level that we can. We still haven't done it on defense, we still haven't done it as a team, and those are the things that have to motivate us. I'm motivated today about today's practice. I can't wait to get out and practice and get these guys to run around because again, it'll be the first time we get to run around at full speed after a loss and that's always the best feeling, the best way to flush yourself, that system, and get ready to go. It starts this week. We've got to take this long flight to New Orleans, wake up early in the morning, use all those excuses and go try to get us to win."

**(On what it is like on offense when you can run the ball really well and on defense when the opponent is running the ball well)**

"It is miserable on defense. When you're defensive is playing and they can't stop the run, that's a rough, long day, hard day to try to find a way to get a win, and usually you don't. On offense when it's happening, coaching the receivers is pretty frustrating, calming those guys down to let those guys know that they're not going to get a touch or their touches may be limited. But when you run the ball in football and you have the ability to do that, it always makes everything a little bit easier. I can think... you always make it reflect on all the people that I've been with but, 'You can't let the quarterback turn around and

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hand it off. That's the easiest way to get down the field, guys. That's easy. You've got to make them throw it. That's the hard way.' Just to break it down the simplest form of (former NFL defensive coordinator) Monte Kiffin. That's just what I always reflect on and how it goes, and it's the truth until this day. If you can turn around and hand the ball off from a quarterback standpoint, you can be a pretty good, effective, efficient offense. If you can't, it's going to be a harder, longer day, but you can still find ways to win and you can still find ways to stop them and get wins even if you can't stop the run by getting turnovers and doing things that you need to do in order to get that done.”

**(On Defensive Line Coach Eric Henderson being from New Orleans and if he has an impression of him)**

“I don't. He's only establishing 1983 from 'dawg work' as you guys know. Coach Henderson, we've been working together for a while. I got plenty of impressions of him. He does not have any censored invitations that I can give you, so we won't. But he's definitely going home, and we definitely want to get Coach Henderson a win in New Orleans because he deserves it. The amount of work he puts into it, talking about motivating those coaches and the people that you're around and being motivated by coaches, he's certainly one of those people that do that for me every single day.”

**(On if he saw the NFL having a historic rate of run plays coming this season)**

“That's kind of been almost coming for a couple years now. It's not just with this defense, it's with what's happening from college football, That's just the nature of what it's been. It's become more of a pass happy league and it's become pass happy driven to our league and it's moving up forward. Now it kind of goes backwards. When people try to stop the pass, you open up some of the run lanes and (49ers Head Coach) Kyle Shanahan and (Head Coach) Sean McVay and some of these young guys that were able to innovate those things and start

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the run game to come back, the (Former Rams RB) Todd Gurley's of the world and people we can remember bringing that run game back, and now you've got to figure out a way to stop that thing while still stopping this pass happy league. You knew that was coming. Being a part of this defense and being with Eric Henderson, he certainly prides himself in having the ability to do that with the guys up front so you could focus on the back end and stop those guys on the back end with the pass. All that stuff is the ever-changing game that we play called football. Every year you've got to be able to evolve, ask questions, talk to different people, learn every single day. When you stop wanting to do that, that's when it's probably time for you to go."

### **Offensive Coordinator Liam Coen**

#### **(On how they adjust to not having WR Cooper Kupp on offense)**

"Obviously a big loss in terms of a guy that's just done so many good things for this organization right now and was playing at a pretty high level. Obviously, a ton of production over the course of this year so far, that's got to be done by committee. It's got to be done by a group of guys that can take on this challenge in a way of an opportunity for them to come in and step up in a big-time spotlight and a big moment for us and their careers and our situation as an offense. Some guys need to step up, they will. It's going to be a big opportunity for some guys that are going to be able to play in a moment that they may not have been in before. But I do feel good about (WR) Brandon Powell, (WR) Ben Skowronek, (WR) Van Jefferson, (WR) Allen Robinson. Those guys coming in to make an impact and see what (WR) Lance McCutcheon, those guys, (WR) TuTu Atwell. We got a committee of guys that really need to step up and they're taking this thing very seriously to come and do that."

#### **(On how they adjusted to Cooper Kupp's past injury in 2018)**

"Yeah, (Former Rams WR) Josh Reynolds ended up stepping up in a big way

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that year and he was somebody who was our fourth at the time but he was really like a three B in a lot of ways, with the amount of production and time on task that we had with Josh. So (it's a) little bit different in the way that just a little bit more continuity at the time, (Former Rams WR) (Brandin) Cooks (Former Rams WR) Robert Woods, and Josh Reynolds had had with (Formers Rams QB) Jared (Goff) and some of the continuity that was built. So a little bit different, probably those three were the main stake. (Formers Rams WR) KhaDarel Hodge got involved that year a little bit as well. But it's truly going to be done by a number of different guys that are ready to step up."

**(On the difficulty of reassigning someone's responsibilities to a group when wanting to keep them in their 'toolkit' without making substitutions)**

"Oh yeah, extremely difficult. In terms of trying to be specific at times about what receivers or players are in the game at the right times. Then you'd like to be able to take advantage of tempo and going fast to either trap them in a defense that they're in, personnel grouping, momentum, all those things go into play when you're talking about tempo. It is difficult to do when you just have a bunch of different guys playing. Are we putting them in the position to be successful by going fast? Is that something that they a hundred percent know and are aware of all those plays that are on that menu? There are so many different things that go into changing personnel groupings, changing receivers, all those different things. It does limit you in a little bit of ways in terms of going fast."

**(On if Van Jefferson is ready to make that next leap on offense)**

"Totally, yes. I feel like it is a great (opportunity) op for Van. It was a great game for him to be able to come in. He's had a couple weeks of really getting his legs back he had building off the success of last game. I know it was in a different time, but to have Van have the success that he had in the end of that game the other day... When you really look at things in perspective and you lose the

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game, couldn't be more frustrated, couldn't be more down as a coach, I'm sure a lot of players were. Then you walk into Van Jefferson's locker and he is in tears. You're like, 'Man, he's bummed out about the game,' and you're like, 'No, actually he is really happy and proud of himself to be in the situation that he was in after what he's gone through and endured over the last couple months.' (It) really kind of puts things in perspective at times, especially in that moment where you just feel brutal, you feel awful. Then you're like looking at a guy who just can't help but hold back emotions for what he's been through. So really feel like this is going to be a great week for Van."

**(On what he saw from RB Kyren Williams during his first completed game)**

"Just his play demeanor. His play demeanor, his enthusiasm for the game, his involvement in the plan, his energy on the sidelines, his engagement, all those things that you look for from a veteran player he ends up kind of bringing in some ways. Now, does he need to clean some things up? Absolutely. Had a couple busts at the end of that game when he was in, had a couple mental errors when we were going fast on tempo and trying to get some things going. But he definitely brings a little bit of some juice and it's really his communication, his energy. He's a guy that over communicates things, which is great to have when one of those guys do that. So (he's) definitely mature beyond his years and needs to be a little bit more on the screws on a few things, but excited about him moving forward."

**(On why they didn't try to establish more of an effective run game during last week's game after showing signs of a strong run game on the first offensive drive)**

"A few things with the (QB Bryce) 'Perkins plan' that we had. They ended up kind of zero blitzing us on one of them that we ended up not being able to run the play. So they dictated a little bit of terms in terms of a few of the things that

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we were trying to activate with the 'Perkins plan' a few of those things that we needed to adjust on the fly for. Was it something that we were prepared to fix at halftime that was worth the time on task at the time? We thought we could continue to work our normal offense and run the football still throughout that, as opposed to using some of the 'Perkins plan' things that we had available just weren't really fitting for what they were doing. Did we get away from the run game too early and all that? Maybe we did, just the flow of the game. So, yeah. It's something that we need to improve on for sure."

**(On if this would be the week they would consider having three quarterbacks ready to play on Sunday)**

"Yeah, I think we're still trying to see about Matthew right now because we just didn't do too much yesterday from a physical standpoint. He had the mental. We were able to do some good things above the neck yesterday that all three of those guys were able to kind of get some of those (repetitions) reps in terms of the mental reps today, physically to be able to see those guys move around a little bit what we can handle physically and mentally from Matthew, (QB) John (Wolford) and (QB) Bryce (Perkins). So that's something that all three of those guys are available and ready to go. If you would ask them, they'd all be preparing as they're the starter in terms of the way that they handle their business anyway. (I'm) not sure on the full three right now. We do more the actives later on the week, but you can bet your butt Bryce will be ready to go if his number is called."

**(On how the offense becomes more efficient on early downs)**

"Yeah, it's the negatives. If you end up going negative or zero (yards), it's just tough to gain confidence running it, especially if you're running on first down or 'P and 10' and you go, you're now second and 10, well as a play caller and as an offense, sometimes you're like, 'Well we could have just thrown it and got to the same exact down to distance.' So you go back and forth on some of those

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things. You're going to hand it off or you're going to throw it. Matthew's pretty good and we got a couple receivers that need to continue to step up. But if you're going to throw it or you're going to hand the ball off and get zero. So, it's one of those things that in the flow of the game, you have to go with what's working and sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. I know that sounds pretty simple, but it is definitely something we want to continue to work on but we're also not going to bang our heads against the wall and run for zero."

### **Defensive Tackle Aaron Donald**

#### **(On how the team keeps going despite the season not going as planned)**

"You just got to keep playing. Just keep playing and trying to find a way to win. That's it."

#### **(On if he believes that things could change)**

"Just play. You just got to play. There's obviously a lot of things that aren't going our way. Nobody wants to be in this position, but we're here now. All we can do is keep playing."

#### **(On if it seems like everything that could go wrong has gone wrong)**

"Yeah, it isn't a good season. Obviously, we aren't getting it done, we aren't playing good enough as a team, so obviously you want to fix those things and try to find a way to win some games and stack something, but the only thing you can do now is control what you can control and just play the game."

#### **(On him playing his highest snap percentage since 2018)**

"Well, I didn't know that. We're getting a lot of snaps on defense anyways, so obviously if I feel like I need to take a blow, we get a good rotation. But obviously, there've been sometimes where turnovers and things like that...to a situation where it's important for me to be out there, I feel like. So, just playing."

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**(On being prepared to get on the field so frequently in “sudden changes”)**

“You just got to go out there, try to find a way to get the ball back and try to get the ball back to the offense as many times as we can and get them opportunities. It doesn’t matter what happens, we can get three and outs, we can make turnovers, make big plays to give a big spark. It’s a team effort at the end of the day, so we got to do more.”

**(On his relationship Run Game Coordinator and Defensive Line Coach Eric Henderson)**

“Obviously, I have a real good, close relationship with (Run Game Coordinator and Defensive Line Coach Eric) Henny (Henderson). (I have) a lot of love and respect from him as a person, as a coach. I think he was able to teach me and still teaches me a lot of things. One of my regimens I do every week is I sit down, and I talk to Henny about different schemes and different things that I can do to play better, and we've been like that for the past couple years, so over the time, we just grew a close relationship. I think he's a great, young coach and if not the best, one of the top defensive line coaches in the National Football League just from the things he's able to teach young guys, teach veteran guys, from technique things to be able to put us in certain positions to try to have success. He's a guy that's always working, always trying to find a way, never satisfied and that's one thing, we kind of got the same mindset towards a lot of things, so it's a lot of love and respect for Coach Henderson.”

**(On his first impression of Coach Henderson)**

“Yeah, over the phone, I couldn't understand what he was saying (laughs). ‘What? What did you say? Okay coach, alright, I’ll see you.’ Obviously getting to be around him and see his passion for the game, the way he went about it even from the drills to the film work, just when he talks about football,

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sometimes you got to be like, 'Coach, we got to do something,' because he gets in the mode real quick. It's been good to have him and be a part of building with him and having my career with him. The past couple years have been good, been great."

**(On if he could have envisioned the season going the way it has)**

"I don't think anybody did. Nobody expected to be in a position where you're 3-6 after coming off the season we had. But we're here now, there's nothing you could do but just continue to play and can try to control what you can control. Can't think about then because we're in the moment, we're here now, so just got to try to find a way to dig ourselves out of a hole."

**(On what losing WR Cooper Kupp means for the team now)**

"He's a big spark, not just to the offense, to this team. The type of person he is off the field, you never want injuries to happen, definitely to a guy like that. It's tough, we're definitely going to miss him a lot. It's going to be big shoes to fill, but my main focus is making sure that he's good mentally, able to do everything he can to get himself back healthy, spend time with his family to make sure he's good mentally. Prayers to him and nothing but love and respect for (WR Cooper) Coop (Kupp). One thing I did when I saw him in the locker room after the game, I just went in there and gave him a hug and told him I love him because I know it's tough, definitely with the season we're having and then getting injured, so just praying for him. We're going to miss him, but we're going to try to hold it down for him."

**(On what it's like for the defense when an offense is running the ball effectively)**

"Well, that's good. Once things like that happen, you kind of feed off of it as a team. Like when they're making big plays and they got things going, it gets you excited, it gets you pumped up on the sideline and a little bit more motivation to

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go out there and be like, 'This is going to be a day where all we got to do is keep feeding the ball, they're going to do what they need to do.' That's the best thing about this sport, when everybody's clicking, everybody's doing what they're supposed to do, (you're) able to feed off each other and that's when teams tend to have success. We just haven't been that team so far. Obviously, being at 3-6, we just got to continue to try to find a way to be productive, keep trying to find ways to be better and keep fighting."

**(On if it feels like there's an emotional gap when complementary football isn't being played)**

"Well, football's an emotional sport. It's a lot of ups, a lot of downs, a lot of adversity, a lot of things that go wrong, go well in the game that it can affect you in all types of ways, but only thing you can do is continue to try to fight, keep trying to play at a high level and do what you need to do and control what you can control."

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