



**Los Angeles Rams Transcripts - Defensive Coordinator
Raheem Morris, Offensive Coordinator Liam Coen -
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Defensive Coordinator Raheem Morris

(On the growth of DB Cobie Durant this season and over the past few weeks)

“Cobie was a lot of fun as you guys remember from training camp. Him and (DB) DK (Derion Kendrick), they kind of just burst on the scene being guys that could contribute this year, help us get back to what we wanted to do and all those types of roles. We started the season without our starters obviously, and then people got hurt in that Atlanta game. I don't know if you remember that or not, but Cobie came in, was the first one off the bench, went out there, got his first sack, got his first pick in a game, almost ran back for a touchdown and pulled his hamstring on the very next play. (He) had to miss some time coming back. It was something, but he missed some time and then that provided the opportunity for DK to step in. DK stepped in, played well a lot of the time there and did some really good things for us. Then Cobie came back ready, eased him back into the process, got some of our starters back, played those guys. Cobie got his next opportunity and he's done nothing but go out there and absolutely shine and show some of that brilliance that he showed in training camp. Some of the things he did in training camp, picking off the ball, covering the best wide out in the National Football League in (WR) Cooper Kupp, at

least last year, arguably, however you want to look at that, and all those things jumped into the scene. Then when he came in, we had no idea that he could play nickel, the star position, and he was able to go into the star position, really impress his coaches and do some of those things really well which was exciting knowing that he was (an) outside guy. He really bought into that system, really got into that role and owned it and now he's out there and he's just kind of been able to be flexible and move and move like a vet. He's grown every single week and learning from his guys and he's having fun with (DB) Jalen (Ramsey), and I think Jalen's having fun with him. Getting him to play around a little bit with some of his lineups, some of the things that he's doing. It's been fun."

(On if starting Jalen Ramsey, DB Troy Hill, and DB Cobie Durant allows more flexibility in coverage structures)

"It certainly does, but that's kind of the trait we look for. When we went out and got Cobie, I think the saying of the draft was he reminds me of Troy Hill. (He's) a smaller guy, quick make some plays, ball skills, things of that nature. When you say that, you're starting to see some of those plays come out, some of those things come out and some of the wherewithal of planning the system and doing some of those things which is great, and we love that. Those guys being interchangeable, it's probably more fun to be able to have the ability to move Jalen around, to be able to go play star, be able to play the boundary, be able to put a field, be able to follow a guy when those things are called upon. It has been absolutely outstanding and we got a lot of guys like that. DK doesn't go inside as much, but (DB) David Long (Jr.) certainly has the ability to go in there and has does some things like that. But this guy being the young draft pick this year, finding bright spots within the season and that's one of them."

(On DT Larrell Murchison and the reaction to the way he played last week)

"I'm glad you said his name because I would've struggled with it. No, Larrell Murchison went out there and it was fun. It was kind of exactly what we talked

about on Saturday morning when I go over my 98-yard drive and I just looked at him and I said, 'Hey man, nobody knows you. We barely know you. Go have fun, right? Let's go prove (Titans Head Coach Mike) Vrabel wrong,' I told him. I think made a joke that way. Nothing against Vrabel I just was taking a shot of the team we claimed him from, the team we got him off waiver from. It was a lot of fun for that young man and it was able to be expressed in his play and how he went out there and his ability to absolutely capture his teammates, and that's different. I give less credit to Larrell than I would give to the guys that embraced him and his ability to put him within their rooms and have the ability to go out there and find a guy to go have success. I love that. That is a sign of people knowing what we are about and that's the culture that's been built here, the standard that's been set with that ability."

(On how much an impact DT Aaron Donald has on the younger players even when he's not on the field)

"Aaron has an impact on any and everybody that's associated, affiliated, or around the Los Angeles Rams. His presence is felt when he comes to the building, the ability to want to be around him or to play up to that standard or the standard that's been set in that room, that 'dawg work' mentality that is so famously claimed by my guy (Defensive Line Coach) Eric Henderson. That room breeds that type of tolerance and it breeds that type of demanding of excellence, so to speak. When the guys go in there, it's certainly led through Aaron and it's certainly led through the coaches, but those guys got to live up to those standards and it's fun to watch just being around at individual (drills). You guys see it. I spend all my time at D-line individual because they're fun to be around and how they work and the stuff that they're able to do."

(On what makes Chargers QB Justin Herbert so difficult to defend and the challenges brought by Chargers RB Austin Ekeler in the pass game)

"Let's just talk about their offense period. They are explosive. He is the young

prototype-quarterback which everybody's looking for. (He) has the ability to use all his across the board reads as far as that system goes with the west coast being able to start on one side, work all the way across the board, go through the progression of the process. He's also able to buy time and make time with his feet. He's athletic enough to get out of the pocket, he's athletic enough to stay in the pocket. They can move the pocket with him with designed runs, they can move the pocket with him with un-designed things. He's a prototypical new type of guy that we're watching, we're loving, and we're starting to see that he's grown into. I've only had the experience to play him against him once when he was a rookie. Had a little bit of success that day against him and hopefully we can duplicate some of that success, but I've definitely seen him develop and grow to one of the guys that we all talk about in this league and what they want him to be. You get a chance to coach that type of guy, it's the reason everybody is looking to that team as the up-and-comers, right? Then you talk about the people around him and you can't say enough about Austin Ekeler. I'll start there first just because I don't know anybody that's been in the end zone more than him. His ability to get in the end zone, whether he's running or whether he's receiving, has been absolutely outstanding and he's fun to watch and he comes from that kind of bottom surface where nobody knew who he was. He definitely must wear that around on his sleeve or whatever the case may be because it looks like it when he plays. Then the receiving corps, you talk about (Chargers WR) Keenan (Allen) and those guys and what they're able to do. I've always had so much respect for Keenan and what he is and who he is as a player, his ability to win in in any situation. He's been in and out of the lineup and his ability to develop his guys. Like we talked about Aaron (Donald), you see those young guys, 1 (Chargers WR DeAndre Carter), 5 (Chargers WR Joshua Palmer), coming along and starting to do some of the things that he does and mimic some of his skillset. It is a really talented and definitely an offense you've got to definitely go prepare for and be ready to deal with, not even to mention they're stud on the outside 81 (Chargers WR Mike Williams).

(On getting 6.0 sacks against the Broncos and why they had such success)

“It was a great game plan by me (laughs). No, the guys went out and executed. They played hard. They did all the things that you want to do. To use a (Patriots Head Coach Bill) Belichick, ‘They did their job.’ They were able to rush together, they were able to rush as a unit. I was able to show that in our meetings this week and how that pays off for people. Every once in a while, you have a guy that makes an outstanding move, right? Just absolutely physically dominates a player and wins, and we've seen it a lot with Aaron (Donald), right? We've seen it in flashes last year with (Bills LB) Von (Miller), we've seen it before with (LB Leonard) Flo (Floyd). But when guys rush as a unit and people do exactly what they're taught to do, whether it's when we're doing our walkthrough structure or we're doing our practice structure, and then you get those guys in the game that execute those things and that talent, that's when stuff happens. We've talked about it before with turnovers, right? Where we had a week here we couldn't get a turnover. We talked about technique and opportunity meeting. Well, that's no different when it comes to getting sacks, right? There's technique, there's opportunity, there's execution. When those things meet, you get production on the quarterback.”

(On if this game is harder mentally because the Chargers are in the playoffs and the Rams aren't)

“It didn't get any harder until you just asked that question. Honestly, it's not about anyone else. I've kind of been on this theme the last couple of weeks anyway, but they're (inaudible) matter, right? Those people don't matter, who we play against. Some of those things are not in a disrespectful manner, it's more about it's about us the people that we're coaching and the ability to pour into these young guys and the ability to pour into some of our older guys. I'm having just as much fun coaching (LB) Bobby (Wagner) as I would if we were

on the playoff run because my message and my theme to these guys is, 'We're going to be relevant again and when we are, these are the things you want to think about when you're moving towards that direction and establishing your roles and what you're going to do to make us successful.' Everybody's looking at it. You've got (General Manager) Les (Snead) in his office. He's the genius behind it all, putting people together going to get me (former Buccaneers DT) Warren Sapp off the waiver wire, right? Then you've got (Head Coach) Sean McVay, he's evaluating guys and the talent and the people that's around us. Then you've got myself and our coaches all pouring into these players and that's fun. So go ahead and be all oh woe is me because we're not in the playoffs right now if you want to, but my direction is man, 'When I'm relevant again, you'll see.'"

(On if he thinks about potential head coaching opportunities with other teams)

"No, you know why? Because you can't do that to yourself, right? You become bitter, you become angry, you become aggressive about like, 'Oh woe is me I can't get a job in the National Football League.' That stuff happens. If you get requested to interview, you go put your best foot forward and you do the best job you can do. But let's think about this for a second, I am one of 32. I got the best job in National Football League and the people that I work with. I am very excited about that."

(On what he has seen from LB Ernest Jones this season)

"Ernest had the unfortunate and fortunate ability to play with Bobby (Wagner) right? Because Ernest, when we drafted him, like Cobie (Durant), he mimics Troy (Hill), Ernest we thought mimicked Bobby in Seattle and we thought he would bring us the stuff that Bobby's been able to bring to us this year. Now moving Ernest kind of out of that role and putting him into a different role, which we really didn't have established for him, but he's the best player to go do it."

You move him into that role, you let Bobby lead, you let Bobby teach. Hopefully he's handing him the torch at one point a la (former Lakers point guard) Magic Johnson to (Former Bulls forward) Michael Jordan kind of a deal. He's been able to go out there and play and get experience, and it's kind of changed who we are a little bit. A little bit more nickel, a little bit more two backer defenses. Some of those things have happened, some of it's been more of a learning curve for Ernest. But long story short, I think Ernest has gone out and given us exactly what he is: energy, physicality, brute toughness, the guy you want to put out there because he's above the neck mentally sharp. The guy's going to continue to get better throughout his career and I see nothing but greatness when that torch is passed and whenever it is passed for him moving to what Bobby's been able to bring to us and what they've been able to help each other with, if that makes sense.”

(On if there is any part of the defense that he is particularly proud of since taking over in 2021)

“I’ve kind of taken over for a bunch of really good football coaches, starting with (former NFL Coach) Wade (Phillips) then going to (Chargers Head Coach and Former Rams Defensive Coordinator) Brandon (Staley) and having the ability to add your little stuff to it to make it creative, to make it a little bit of yours. Then be able to also steal for some great coach that you're able to follow and be around and also still study. I’ve got so much respect for what Brandon did when he got here and to be able to come in here and learn the language of the other 50 people as opposed to making people learn some language that I was so driven on saying that it's been fun. And it's still that way. It's still malleable. It still has the ability to change and grow and do different things and have the ability to change what the look looks like whether it be a shell defense with vision or whether it be a crank defense when you're playing the San Francisco 49ers you’ve got to get in the box and stop and run. We can do whatever we want to do based on terms, words, the people that we have, the ability that we

got. Those things are fun to be around and it'll do nothing but get better with the people that's coming back, with the people that's here, the people that we're developing, and the guys that we got in the building are going out and searching for new talent.”

Offensive Coordinator Liam Coen

(On what RB Cam Akers has done right the past couple of weeks)

“Just kind of what I reiterated from last week, it's the attention to detail. You can see him, like I had mentioned from the week before, playing and being detailed without the ball in his hands, with his eyes in pass protection, with his check downs. When all those things are in alignment, typically good things happen for Cam. Usually when any player is like not very detailed or lacks a little detail in some things, their overall game is going to probably display some of those things. He has been locked in really for the last month or so of really just on it with his job, his responsibilities, being a pro. And then you can just kind of see him playing. You just really see him playing the game the way that we've gotten to see him play when he's at his highest performance. (I'm) really happy for him, just his demeanor, the way he's going about his business. (I'm) really happy for Cam and some of the success that he's been having recently.”

(On what he's seen from OT Rob Havenstein and how he's kept people together as the team captain)

“Consistency. Obviously, we had Whit (Former Rams OT Andrew Whitworth) last year who was more of that vocal leader. Rob has really been the type of guy that does it all by example. He comes to work every single day. He asks great questions in the meeting space, on the practice field. There is definitely not a more conscientious player on our offense than Rob Havenstein. It is the detail that he takes, the pride that he takes, it's stuff that we use as examples, not just up front. We can show our skill players his detail on fitting a block

because it might be something that a receiver might have to do or a tight end might have to do at some point in terms of fundamentals, technique, on your job. There's just nobody better. Rob doesn't feel like he needs to be anybody else but himself, which is really cool to see. He's very comfortable in his own skin. He knows kind of the type of leader that he is and the impact that he has on our younger players. One of the best guys in our locker room. (I'm) really happy for him.”

(On what he’s learned this season)

“Oh, that’s a great one. Sometimes you go through adversity or you come into a situation and it gets flipped on its head a little bit. You're always kind of prepared as a coach or as a player because you can always win or lose. You have a 50-50 chance each week. But it's the week and week out and some of the struggles that we have endured. But then you go in have the game like (QB) Baker (Mayfield) did against the Raiders, which a lot of us would agree that was unbelievable, almost miracle-esque. And then you go into a game like last week and score the most points that you've scored since arguably one of the best games in football history, the 2018 Kansas City game. So within the struggles in the adversity, this game is so much fun for nights like that Thursday night game, days like Sunday. It all puts it in perspective for you that it's really not always about the result, but the result of winning feels a lot better than losing. And you learn to adjust, adapt, and I think that's probably the biggest thing for us over the last couple weeks is truly adjusting to your personnel, doing what your guys are best at, and it really comes down to that. It's not really about the plays, it's about the players. And I think this season, more than any I've ever been a part of, is really showing that.”

(On what it was like for him and the staff to see everything come together after Sunday’s victory over the Denver Broncos)

“Yeah, even during, right? I mean we get the couple of the turnovers like, ‘Wait,

we played complimentary football!' That's really what stuck out. You're like, 'Oh my goodness, we got an interception and we scored two, three plays later.' It was like, whoa, it's a little different now. Unfortunately throughout the season, we just have not really put those things together. The defense gets a great stop or gets field position and we go backwards or we have to punt and it just is extremely deflating. We never really that. (We) obviously felt that way on this past Sunday. I think as a staff, especially on offense, things were going really well. The defense was getting the field position. Our players were playing their tails off. You never felt like as a staff, you were like, 'We need to make a play call. We need to truly come up with a play or call a play that is going to give us a spark or create an explosive.' A lot of the game was, I'm not minimizing the job Sean did, or we did as a staff, but it was very much in alignment with, let's just call what we are really confident with and our players know best. And you saw the execution level was higher. And so that was really cool to feel as a staff. We just never kind of felt, I guess anxious or pressing. And our players were the ones that we fed off of on Sunday, which was really cool."

(On if the Los Angeles Chargers defense is peaking and what he's seeing from them)

"Totally, obviously I have a ton of respect for (Los Angeles Chargers Head Coach) Brandon (Staley) and being here with him in 2020. They do some really good things from a structure standpoint. It is very similar to what he had done here, but he's also evolved and he's also kind of tweaked some things a little bit different than maybe even the structure we saw from 'E' (Denver Broncos Defensive Coordinator Ejiro Evero) last week. So it's a little bit different and they play their tails off. They can rush the passer, even though I know they've had some struggles they say rushing, but there's some pockets that are really getting dirty. They play their butts off and it's cool to see. It's what you would expect from Brandon, from those guys and they have some really good players. So I agree with the kind of point you're saying is like, they are peaking a little bit

on defense you can see. I think getting some guys back, things like that will really help. But it'll be a challenge but it's definitely one that we're looking forward to.”

(On how the decision-makers and game planners on the team carry the language they've been using towards the end of the season into the future)

“It's kind of like learning. You're learning from each experience and as coaches, your thought process is always to problem solve. It's our job to solve the problem, to put our players in the best position. Well, sometimes when you overdo that and you get the look that you're hoping for but you get sacked, or you think you're hunting up the exact beater and something bad happens, it's deflating. It's frustrating. Whereas when you just trust your plan, you trust the plays, you trust the players, and it might not be the perfect call, the perfect situation, but there's an element to these guys. They're pros, they're players, they've been doing this for a long time. It doesn't always have to be perfect. It's a very imperfect game that you want to try to create clarity and all that for, but I think it's that balance of, all right, let's make sure we have what we truly think can beat this defense in some schematic plays. But then let's just go in with what we know is sound against this structure and let our players just go play. I think it sometimes lets them have a little bit more creativity within their games and allow them to play a little bit more freely.”

(On what he remembers most about working with Brandon Staley)

“Details. (He's) extremely detail oriented, worked very hard, and what I always respected about Brandon was his knowledge of the offensive side of the ball. He played quarterback. He had coached on the offensive side I believe early in his career. And I also respected that he kind of came up in the ranks from division three, moved his way on up. He had a lot of respect for the game of football, a lot of respect for the players. And I always really enjoyed talking ball

with him in terms of his knowledge of the game, both offensively, defensively, some of the personnel conversations that we had. So those are the things that definitely stick out.”

(On Brandon Staley’s personality)

“He's just sharp, tight. He's a little bit more different than ‘Rah’ (Defensive Coordinator Raheem Morris), just different. Brandon had a way to get guys to buy in and embody his defense in a short period of time when he came here the first time and they bought into that system pretty quickly. And I think that's similar to Rob Havenstein, different than Whit, very different in that way, where Rah is different than Brandon is leading by example, truly more so the scheme he understood, the players bought in because it was working. I think that was probably the little bit of the difference there.”

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