

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – November 13, 2019
San Francisco 49ers**

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Opening comments:

“Injuries: [LB] Azeez [Al-Shaair] is still in the protocol, so he didn’t practice. [RB Matt] Breida did not practice with the ankle, [TE Garrett] Celek, limited, back, [DL Dee] Ford limited, quad. [K] Robbie [Gould] didn’t practice, quad. [DL] D.J. Jones, groin and he’ll be out this week. [TE] George [Kittle], knee and ankle, didn’t practice. [RB Raheem] Mostert, knee, limited. [WR Emmanuel] Sanders, ribs, didn’t practice. [T Joe] Staley had his surgery, and he will not play this week. He’ll probably be out a couple weeks. [TE] Levine [Toilolo], groin, limited. [CB] Ahkello [Witherspoon], foot and quad, he was limited. Go ahead.”

Is Celek limited because he’s still sore just coming back from PUP or did he have a relapse with his back?

“No, he didn’t have any relapse. Anytime we don’t do their usual number of reps compared to what they normally get, they’re limited.”

Will it be OL Justin Skule again at left tackle?

“Most likely.”

What did you like about or what were your impressions of the way he played during those six games with Staley out?

“I thought he did a very good job. He came in there and stepped it up right away. Did a good job in his first game and I thought he got better each week. We were happy with how he played and I’m glad we had a couple good backups through that.”

How close was DL Damontre Moore to making the 53-man squad back in August?

“He was real close. I know we all wanted him to. He had played well enough to, but we were pretty deep there, so he ended up being the odd man out.”

Any surprise that he’s still available here?

“Yeah, definitely with how well of a preseason he had. But it’s tough in this league, especially being a veteran when you don’t have practice squad eligibility. I guess it didn’t work out for him, but with the tape he put on, yeah, we were surprised and felt lucky he was still out there.”

Is there any danger or have you talked about the possibility that you might only have 46 or 45 healthy guys for Sunday's game?

"Yeah, I mean we almost had that last week, too, so it's been a few times this year that it's come close to that. It hasn't ended up being that way, so yeah, it's been close each week, though."

With roster spots so- I mean, there's no one on the 53-man at this point that you really want to get rid of. Would you entertain the possibility of suiting up 45 guys?

"Yeah, definitely. Yes, definitely. We were very close to doing that the last couple weeks. In order to bring in a new guy, you always have to cut someone and there's definitely not anyone we're trying to get rid of. Everyone in our building we believe can help us throughout this season, but those are some of the tough decisions you have to make, whether you take the risk of cutting someone, which you take the risk of not getting that guy back. And if you decide to go into a game with 45, it's just a gamble. It all could work out good if there's not an injury or something, but if one guy goes down in pregame warmups or on the first play of the game, then it's just a gamble that you don't know what the right answer is until after the game."

How do you think the locker room would've responded if you'd decided to not be aggressive on that last possession and play for a tie in overtime?

"When you say play for a tie, do you mean just take three knees?"

Or just run the ball three times.

"That's not necessarily playing for a tie. If we would've thought three runs were the best plays to go with, we would've done that. Just running, not trying to get yards and run the clock off, I think you know that answer. I'm pretty sure that we all know that answer. I would hope that everyone in the world would be pretty disappointed in that. No, when I look back at that, I wish we had the clock moving and we had incompletions and that could take it over. I should've just called a play that we didn't have an incompleteness on and would've kept the clock running. See how many different ways can I answer that?"

What do you remember about CB K'Waun Williams back when you knew him in Cleveland? Was that a big part of you guys bringing him in here in 2017?

"It was, one, that I definitely remember him well from that year and how good he was for us, but it was also the relationship [former San Francisco 49ers defensive backs coach and current co-defensive coordinator/secondary coach for Ohio State University] Jeff Hafley had with him. Hafley was there when I was in Cleveland, he was the DB coach there. Hafley recruited K'Waun out of high school so he's known him forever. He's the one who got K'Waun to come to our rookie tryout camp in Cleveland and it was a good rookie tryout camp. I remember we had [Chicago Bears WR] Taylor Gabriel make it as a tryout on offense and we had K'Waun make it on defense. It was cool to have two tryout guys this that year who both ended up being starters in Nickel situations. I knew how well he played for us and hadn't seen him for a couple years. I know he had injuries and he was out of the league for, I think, a year and then I remember Hafley telling us he was healthy. Once we found that out, we brought him in on a visit and signed him."

I know you guys initially signed him to a one-year deal and then pretty early in the first year, you gave him the extension. Was it apparent to you then that this was going to be one of the foundational pieces of the defense?

“Yes. Just seeing K’Waun as a rookie and how well he played in his first year in the league. He was a true starting Nickelback that year and played pretty good the next year when I was gone. I think he ended up getting hurt, but once we got him here and we saw he was healed and stuff we knew how good of a Nickelback we got and we felt fortunate to get him.”

What was the inspiration for the WR Marquise Goodwin punt coverage play?

“Just so you don’t get jammed as much so he can run. It’s a way to get him down the field. He’s behind 10 yards on it, but it’s very hard to bump a guy in that situation, so if you punt it up high you can almost guarantee a fair catch. We’ve don’t it a few times the last couple years.”

Do you remember how many times?

“I don’t.”

There was one against the Bears last year.

“That would probably be it. I don’t remember, but I know it wasn’t the first time we’ve done it.”

How long does it take to sync that up to make sure he’s staggered correctly so that he’s not ineligible or whatever?

“However long it takes, which would be a good question for [special teams coordinator Richard] Hightower, but we’ve worked on it long enough because he did a good job at it. We haven’t gotten an offsides on it yet. Wish we could give him a head start like Arena [Football] League and Canada [Football League] and stuff, he would be very unstoppable at that, but it’s a cool idea they had.”

Who came up with that idea? Was that his idea and does he have to ask you, ‘Hey I want to take one of your prominent receivers and put him on punt coverage’?

“No, not at all. We’ve got the guys up and there are definitely times where I’ll tell him no. It depends on what the depth is at a position and things like that. There are times where we pull Raheem off of special teams because, everyone knows he’s one of the best guys in the league, but it depends on the health of our backs and where we’re at in the game. That stuff, Hightower and I talk about that throughout the week and throughout the games.”

Because you played 70 minutes and it was a very physical game and a short week, do you adjust practice this week?

“Yeah, we just walked through today. We didn’t do anything full speed. So that was the first thing. We’ll probably do a number of things half speed tomorrow also. With the short week and we played a lot more plays than we usually do. It was a very physical game too. I’ll assess it again in the morning, but I’d be surprised if all the periods we have are full speed.”

With Emmanuel's injury, is it a little bit different for him, the urgency to get him back on the practice field given he hasn't been here for as long as the other guys?

"Yeah, just being here with Emmanuel over the last three weeks or whatever its been, Emmanuel can watch and learn. He knows what we're doing. He can come in meetings. He's proved he can learn that way. He picked it up the first week and had no mistakes. The second week after that he got ready for a Thursday night game and had as good of a game that we've had all year. I'm not worried about Emmanuel learning the stuff whether he practices or not, it's just if he can be healthy enough to go on Sunday."

Was he injured on the hit where they dislodged his helmet?

"I think so. I haven't asked him specifically but I think it was then. He came back for a few plays on it and tried to go, but I think the pain got way too much."

What did you learn about the Cardinals after getting the chance to face them once?

"A lot what we thought going in. They're a very good team, you know. Right when we had them, they were floating around the .500 record. You could see that they had been in every game and you can see on tape why they had been in every game. When you played them in person, we understood even more. They got a lot of speed out there. They got a talented on offense and defense. They got a very talented quarterback who's getting better and better. I see them as a good team now and they are only going to get better."

What's your impression of Arizona Cardinals head coach Kliff Kingsbury as a play designer and play caller?

"I haven't studied Kliff's offense too much this year, but I think he's done a hell of a job. Everyone knows the success he's had in college and then just coming to the NFL and still being able to implement that stuff. You can tell that he is studying around the league and mixing in other stuff and using his whole staff and everything. They spread out their speed very well. They use their quarterback very well. I've been very impressed with what Kliff's done so far."

WR Marquise Goodwin was only on the field for 10 offensive snaps. Was that a function of your play calling, your scheme, or was he injured at all? I mean, he wasn't on the injury report.

"He had an injury in the game. His arm was cramping up, he had a finger issue, so he was out for a few series. Then the way things were going in the game, you know, we just didn't rotate him back in much."

You guys had six receivers up, which is unusual, but what does WR Richie James Jr. need to do to maybe get more snaps?

"It depends on the week. We were only going to have five up that week but we ended up having some, what was it, Ahkello ended up not dressing so we went one extra with the receivers and one less at corner. That was the risk that we took, but it was have 45 up or not. We ended up getting 46 with having six receivers. We got Richie out there as punt returner. We planned all week because we thought we were going to have a situation at

DB, where Richie wasn't going to be in much on offense. When we sat Ahkello, then we just got him up for special teams and he was ready to go on offense."

Is Azeez symptom free?

"I think, yeah. I don't know the protocol of it exactly, but he had a very good day. All the steps are right on. I think to fully pass protocol it's like three of four days. We're 36 hours removed and he's as good as he can be right now."

The NFL is holding a workout for QB Colin Kaepernick in Atlanta on Saturday. Is it feasible for a West Coast team to have somebody go out for that? I mean, wouldn't your regional scout be at a college game?

"I would guess. I don't know. I don't know at all the schedule of our personnel guys. I mean, during the season, during their offseason, it's not their offseason but their main time is draft time, but yeah, they are all over the place. We got guys all over, so I'm sure that someone can be there. I don't think that would be too tough."

Will the 49ers have somebody there for that?

"I don't know. I would guess, but not something I've asked them yet."

What were you able to learn without George Kittle about what you need to maybe tinker with or adjustments you need to make offensively? There's no replacing him but just what have you been able to take away from the last game in that aspect?

"Kind of what we knew going in. You're going to have to get mileage other places. I mean, George does a lot for us, not just in the stats that you guys see in the yards and everything with catching the ball, but he is as big of a part of our run game as anyone also. You just need other guys to step it up. Anytime you lose your best player, you need guys in both phases to step it up. George you really miss on those check downs, guys playing zone and a normal guy gets seven yards and George has a chance to go 60 yards. You always miss that a little bit, kind of the explosive play you're not really expecting and he surprises everybody at. Always makes it tougher when you got to have 10 plays instead of three. You just need everyone to step it up and pick up the production he does."