

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Defensive Coordinator Robert Saleh
Press Conference – August 24, 2017
San Francisco 49ers**

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How was DB Jimmie Ward’s first day back on the practice field?

“It was good. Get him out there working. It was good to see him. He moves around just like he was moving around just like he did in OTAs.”

What was his workload?

“It was individual. Going through, just getting lathered up and all that stuff. So, hopefully we get a little bit more work in today.”

How much could you kind of work with him just on the mental side of stuff? What kind of things were you doing with him during the time when he wasn’t able to practice?

“[Defensive backs coach] Coach [Jeff] Hafley was working with him individually to make sure that he was up to speed, from that regard. Jimmie, credit to him, he took it upon himself to make sure that he was putting in the extra work from a mental standpoint to get ready.”

What’s the hardest thing he has to learn before the season begins? What’s the hardest aspect of his job?

“Playing middle-third safety is a very instinctual position. You’ve got to be able to see it. To me, the hardest part is being able to track and tackle. Coming out of the middle hole, when the defense gets creased and it’s him and the back one on one. That’s the hardest tackle in football in my opinion. Those are the reps that he hasn’t gotten. Because, even when we’re not live every one of those reps are so important to those guys. To put themselves through that mental strain of every rep being a tackling rep. That, to me, is going to be the hardest part. To make sure that his angles, and his angles in pursuit are perfect. But, as far as the instinctual part, understanding offense and where he needs to be. I think he’ll be smooth in transition.”

You don’t expect to play him on Sunday night do you?

“We haven’t talked about that yet.”

When do you expect to talk about it?

“Sometime this week when [head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] is ready.”

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You guys signed DL Sen'Derrick Marks, a three-technique. Is that where he's going to be playing?

"Yeah, he's a three. Just like the rest of the guys, he's here to compete. You know, he's had a good past. He's a good football player. We're just trying to work him into shape. He hasn't been through OTAs, training camp and all that stuff. But, give him a chance to play these next two games and see what he's got."

Has NT Quinton Dial played that position at all in the offseason and training camp?

"He's been swinging between three and nose. Q-Dial has done a very good job also. We have a good problem. We have a lot of good, quality depth on the defensive line. So, we're just trying to sort it out to see which ones give us the best chance to win."

What has it been about LB Eli Harold that has allowed him to be in the running for that starting SAM spot?

"Eli's very athletic. I mean, they're both built the same. If you're looking at Eli and [LB] Ahmad [Brooks], they're very athletic, they're both very strong, they both love the game. So, it's a good problem. You've got two very good football players. That thing's not even close to done yet. But, having another person who can add value to that position has been a bonus. So for Eli, his athleticism, his violence, his love for the game, that's all been an exciting part for him."

How has LB NaVorro Bowman transitioned to this new scheme on defense? Are we going to see something that we haven't seen out of him before?

"God, the guy gets like 150 tackles in his sleep. When you're dealing with a guy like NaVorro, instinctually they find the ball, they make tackles, they get PBUs, it's what they do. I think he'd be a fit for any scheme."

What have you seen from DL Tank Carradine and what do you like about him? When we spoke with you last time you said he was a dominant edge setter. Aside from that, just talk about his pass rush? Can you see him playing inside as a three-technique?

"He might get some opportunities. I think he's damn near an elite six-technique. To be able to create pocket push from an edge, I think that's where his home is. There's no shame in that, I think he's pretty freaking good at it. That's where Tank's strength is. Will he get some inside rush? Yes. He had some success with it with Denver. But, as a six, dominating tight ends and being able to transition from run thought to pass on first and second down, I don't know if you'll find much better than that in the league."

Are you committed to playing Bowman on all three downs during the season or have you considered platooning him as more of a pass coverage specialist like LB Ray-Ray Armstrong on third downs?

"I don't want to close out anything, in terms of even between Bowman and [LB Reuben] Foster. It doesn't matter. We're going to put on the best 11 players to give us a chance matchup-wise to make sure that we're in a position to be successful on game day. So, if it means putting an extra DB, if it means putting in two extra DBs, if it means taking out

a D-Lineman. Whatever it is we have to do to put ourselves in position to be successful, based on the matchups that we're facing we'll take care of it as a staff."

What have you seen from Bowman in coverage specifically so far?

"He's been good. He has no deficiencies. Bowman's looked really, really good. Both coverage-wise, he still has his range. He's got good quicks in and out of his breaks. So, I'm really not worried about all that stuff. But, at the same time, you're looking at a guy like all these tight ends that are around now. You're looking at [Seattle Seahawks TE] Jimmy Graham, [Carolina Panthers TE] Greg Olsen, [New England Patriots TE Rob] Gronkowski, and there's matchup problems. So, how you're going to handle those matchup problems will always be a discussion. I do think they can easily cover them, between him and Foster. They can easily cover a tight end. You always have those discussions to make sure that you're doing what's best for the organization."

Are you kind of just peeking ahead in a couple weeks when you guys face a back like Carolina Panthers RB Christian McCaffrey coming out the backfield, would that fall more on Reuben Foster to cover the back coming out?

"Haven't thought about it."

You've got in this upcoming game Minnesota Vikings RB Dalvin Cook. I assume that that gives you a nice warmup for things that you're going to see during the regular season?

"For us, I know we're going through the run through and all that stuff. The game plan stuff is still more about us than it is about the opponent. Dalvin is a good back. He does have some really cool traits that we're going to have to deal with that are similar to some of the backs that we'll see early in the season. So, from that regard, we have not game planned that part of it. But, to see how we match up in zone and man and all that stuff, it'll be a good evaluation, a good test for us."

Will the substitution patterns that you used during the first half of Sunday's game be similar to the substitution patterns you use during the regular season? Is it going to be a dress rehearsal in that sense?

"It changes week to week."