

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

TRANSCRIPTIONS



Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Conference Call – December 26, 2017
San Francisco 49ers
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How was your Christmas, and was that a workday for you guys or did you give the staff the day off?

“No, we all got the day off. It timed out perfect. It was nice. Got to stay at home and open presents and took the kids to see Jumanji. We had a good day.”

How did you guys come out of that game from a health standpoint?

“We came out pretty good. Just talked to [vice president of medical services & head athletic trainer Jeff Ferguson] Ferg here a little bit ago. We had [LB] Reuben, who got another stinger, he'll be limited this week with it, but he should be all right for Sunday. And [DB Adrian] Colbert had an AC sprain, he'll be limited also, but should be okay for Sunday too.”

Those guys obviously play a pretty violent game and they're not the biggest guys. And defensive coordinator Robert Saleh talked about that a little bit with Reuben, about maybe just getting the guy to the ground rather than trying to knock everybody out. Is that something you guys are concerned about going forward with those two guys?

“It's something we definitely have to look into, especially the amount that it's happened to both of them. That's one of the things that makes them best, how hard that they do hit. But, I think we're going to have to look into it a lot this season, based off techniques and things like that, if we could not lose what they do so great, but also put them in a better position to stay healthy.”

You've spoken about having seen QB Jimmy Garoppolo at Eastern Illinois and scouted him coming into the Draft. Were his improvisational skills apparent coming out of college or has that surprised you, pleasantly surprised you, these last few weeks?

“No, it has pleasantly surprised me. You saw it in college, but you see a lot of that from everyone in college. Also, they just ran a scheme where they got rid of the ball so fast, so you didn't get to see it as much as you'd like. Saw it a couple times in the few games that he played in New England, and since he's been here, he's been great with it. So it's been nice. We've got a number of three-man rushes in the red zone. When you get that, very rare are people open in rhythm. So it's going to go to off-schedule and he's done a real good job of creating a few down there and getting us some points.”

Going back to Reuben, is this at all related to the shoulder injury that he had and the surgery he had in the offseason?

“No. It's two completely different things. He tore a rotator cuff in college, and these are just stingers he's gotten on his shoulders.”

What can you say about the job that quarterbacks coach Rich Scangarello has done with Jimmy since he got here? I know he's spent most of the time with him since he arrived. How has he helped him progress and get ready to play and produce so quickly?

“Rich has been huge. Rich is a very hard worker, knows this stuff inside and out and he's been committed to catching Jimmy up. It's been a huge challenge for both of them having to catch up in the time of year that he was brought in. But, those guys haven't taken any time off, they've gone at it as hard as they possibly could, and I think that's why they've gotten better each week.”

You talked about the silver linings during that stretch where you lost those five games so closely. Do you think, you obviously don't want to start 0-9, but do you think the lessons that you've learned from earlier in the season have carried over these last few games?

“Yeah, I definitely believe so. I believe, it was hard when we went through it, but the fact that we were able to get through it and still find a way to get some wins here recently, I think it made our team stronger. When you go through some really hard things with each other and you make it through there, I feel you get stronger from that stuff. I think our team has gotten tighter through it, they've gotten stronger, and that's led to us starting to win a few games and having more confidence. I believe our team feels that they are tough enough mentally to get through anything.”

I know you talked about momentum going into the offseason, but how tangible is that? Obviously there are going to be nine months off between games. How do you take momentum into an offseason and use that constructively?

“I think it could be overrated. It also could be underrated at some times. It depends on the people you have and how they show up ready to go. If you end the season on a real positive note and you've got a group of guys that like reading their own press clippings and feeling good about themselves so they can relax, then that type of stuff will hurt you. If you have guys who aren't fazed by whether people say good things or bad things about you, it doesn't matter. You just work as hard as you can and do as good as you can every single day, then I think we'll be all right. We feel good about where things are ending right now. We think we're playing better. But, by no means have we arrived. We've got a long way to go, we better keep getting better. The guys will get healthy and get away here for a little bit. But, I plan when guys come back to phase one, they're coming back just as hungry, if not more hungry, ready to get this thing going.”

When you're looking at Los Angeles Rams QB Jared Goff, do you look mostly at this season's film, or do you look at all when he struggled last season?

“I mean, right now you only look at this year. You're trying to see what they're doing schematically, how they use him, how they play. I looked at him last season last year, but this year it's only right now.”

You had so many rookies contributing in Sunday's game, over the last month. Have you been cognizant of a rookie wall? Have you seen any evidence of these guys sort of struggling with the extra games that they're playing versus the college season?

“I thought I felt it a little bit earlier in the year. I don't feel it now. I think we've kind of gone through that, and I think those guys are playing as good as they've played all year. We've been playing with those guys throughout the year. You know, I thought, I think that rookie wall hits guys a little earlier than people expected, especially when you're playing early in the season. I think that's why our Bye week was so needed. I think that Bye week helped us get healthier, but I also think it helped a lot of the rookies just step back a little bit and come in and allow us focus on these last six games to finish up. I think they're playing as good as they've played all year right now.”

RB Matt Breida had one of his best games this weekend. How has he grown throughout this season and is he a candidate to be a starter next year?

“Yeah, I think Matt Breida has the ability to. He's gotten better throughout this year. He showed up in OTAs, rookie minicamp for us, ready to go right away. He's been extremely impressive since the first day he's gotten here. He's stayed that way all year. I think he's gotten better at running throughout the season. I think he's doing a better job right now of breaking some tackles. And I think he had one of his better games Sunday.”

What do you see out of Jared Goff and his improvement this year? What is it about that's happened to him that makes him so much better?

“I think they've gotten him a little more balanced attack where they're doing very good running the ball, they're doing very good passing the ball. You've got to defend a lot of different people and stop a lot of different guys that can make plays. They started out good that way early this year, and he's just gotten more confidence as it's gone, as you see in a lot of these guys. But, the way they've started out this year, I think, helped give him a little bit of boost. Each week he's gotten better from that and you can tell he's just playing with a lot of confidence. He's not hesitant to let it rip. He knows when to be aggressive. He knows when not to force it too. He's doing a much better job giving them some bigger plays, eliminating the turnovers, and really getting the ball into some of his playmaker's hands and letting them do a lot of the work.”

Did you know that K Robbie Gould was that fast?

“I did not know that. He works out here pretty hard and does everything all the guys do, but I did not realize he had that speed.”

Can you talk about Los Angeles Rams RB Todd Gurley II and his versatility and how to defend against that?

“He's as big a challenge that there is for anyone. I thought he was one of the better guys I've ever studied coming out of college. He looked that way his first year, definitely. I know he had a little setback last year. But, this year he looks like that exact same guy. He's physical enough to run you over. He's a big guy, but he's got track-type speed, and he's very smooth at getting in the right holes. He's a very natural runner to where he always goes to the gap that people are out of position, and when he hits it, he so naturally can hit it at full speed that if guys aren't closing, what could normally be a six-yard run for someone else, for him, it's an 80-yard run, and he's to the house fast.”

Obviously the Rams have had a big turnaround this year. From what you've seen, what do you think has been the key to that? Is it anything from what they did, whether it's personnel-wise last offseason or even into this season that you could maybe take and use as a blueprint as you head into this offseason?

“No, I don't think you really use it as a blueprint. They've accumulated a number of good players over the years. Their players have stayed healthy. I think they've made, they had the quarterback a couple years ago that they made the move for. They got him a few weapons this year. They have one of the best running backs in the NFL also. So, I think it helped them adding a couple guys to their offensive line. I think their offensive line has stayed healthy for the first time in a number of years. They've had those big-time playmakers on defense for a while, and now you've got everybody going in the same direction. I think the results aren't that surprising when you look at some of the people that they have on paper. Having [Los Angeles Rams head coach] Sean [McVay] in there running their scheme on offense helps a ton and having a very sound, proven scheme with what [Los Angeles Rams defensive coordinator] Wade [Phillips] does on defense, they've always been very good on special teams with what they do with [Los Angeles Rams special teams coordinator John] Fassel there, and they're extremely talented also. So, I don't think it's much of a surprise what they're doing.”

As a play caller, do you find yourself gaining a rhythm that maybe is a product of just the offense being more productive that maybe you weren't able to find earlier in the season?

“Yes, definitely. I talk about that a lot. The more you can stay out there, the more of a rhythm you can get into. The more that certain plays work that you convert on third down and you can put together some drives and not have a three-and-out, to me, that's when play calling starts to matter. You get to set things up and you have things that play off of each other. When you don't do well on third down or you have too many three-and-outs or you start off real bad to where you're behind, then you kind of lose your game-plan and you're not really running your scheme very much. I thought we've done a real good job recently of playing some complementary football in all three phases, eliminating turnovers, getting turnovers, and to me, doing much better on third down, which really allows us to run more of an offense.”

How do you prepare your offense to play against Los Angeles Rams DT Aaron Donald?

“Well, it's tough. You've got to try to game plan it as much as you can. When you are an inside player, it's not the easiest to always help him and stuff unless you want to put

your tight ends on some guys that are very tough to block by themselves also. So, he's going to have his. That's why he's one of the better players in the league. You've just got to make sure when he does, that you don't turn the ball over and you can find a way to counter him with a few plays that take advantage of the stuff he does best. But, he's a good player. You've got to understand that. He's going to have some good plays in the game. You've just got to make sure he doesn't completely change and dominate that game with turnovers.”

Jimmy was asked about his sidearm throw the other day. He said it was his baseball background coming through. He may have been joking, but is there something to be said about that, guys that do have a baseball background just being able to throw the ball in a number of different ways?

“I don't know. I know a lot of guys who played baseball who can't throw the ball like that. So, I think God has to give you that ability, first and foremost. I think you do see that, probably. I'm not the biggest baseball guy, but you do see it from shortstops and second basemen, especially when they're turning two. But, it's a little bit harder to do with the football, and a little bit harder to do when you're running to your left. So, there are not many people who can make that throw, but I'm glad we've got one of the guys who can.”

You've got some guys that are very excited, for good reason, about next year and to the point where RB Carlos Hyde, whether he was half joking or not, was predicting a Super Bowl. As a coach, do you welcome that, that type of enthusiasm or at some point do you maybe want to rein that in?

“Yeah, I definitely would want to rein that in. I haven't spoken to Carlos yet. Just from what I know of Carlos, I have a pretty good feeling that he was halfway joking. But, I haven't seen him yet. But, definitely that's not something that we want, because I don't believe that's the way you should think. You can't control what's going on next year. You only can worry about right now. I thought we had a good game on Sunday. We've got to make sure we focus on the Rams this week, or you could be humbled extremely fast. When it comes to this offseason, you're not sitting there focusing on Super Bowls and focusing on playoffs, you're focusing on how to be best person, best player, best coach you can be, whatever that is, and then everything else is just part of competing. But, when you start focusing on things like that and everything, you get humbled very fast.”