

TRANSCRIPTIONS



T Joe Staley
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San Francisco 49ers

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You've seen 4-12, and now you see those helmets and that trophy. How does this happen in such a short period of time?

“I think it's the vision of [head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] and [general manager] John [Lynch] and what they have done here, building this roster. It's a completely new roster from when they first got here. Just having patience and seeing it all the way through, all the guys they brought in through free agency and the draft, guys they held on and believed in, and everybody just executing their vision. A lot of hard work and we're excited to be at this point right now.”

What about the culture? How much is that a part?

“It's a huge part. I think we talk about a lot of times, kind of as a cliché in the NFL, is it's a family. This is a really, really close locker room. It really is special. I've been a part of- my 13th NFL team, and every year is different and this one is really special as far as the camaraderie in the locker room. Guys are showing up to play every single week, coming to work every single day and looking to get better. It's a special bunch.”

Following up on that, I'm sure you remember the reports of dysfunction between Kyle and John. 13-3 doesn't say that now.

“I don't think anybody was actually thinking there was any dysfunction. It was probably just a story line at the time. Because I think people want to create that narrative but we never saw any of that. I think it was addressed on by them and there was never any of that here.”

What's the most impactful way that Kyle has influenced that culture you were just talking about?

“I think it's just the way he is. He keeps it loose. He relates really well to the players. He's a younger coach, but just also his knowledge and understanding of the game of football. He's a figurehead, he's obviously the head coach of the football team and the work and preparation that he puts in, you know, it gets other guys want to do the same thing. If a head coach is putting in all those hours, all that work into being the best he can be, that's what we have to do as players. So just his natural leadership style, the way he communicates from the day he's gotten here till now has been very consistent and he's been the same.”

He's talked often about how when he was a ball boy, all that stuff back in the day and a big Niners fan. Do you get the feeling it means more to him to not only be winning but doing it in this particular organization?

"I'm not sure. Maybe. You'd have to ask him about that. But what I do know about him is he eats, breathes, sleeps football. He's football obsessed. He's been football obsessed since he was born. That's just the kind of person he is. We see that every single day and it's cool that he's getting that."

This is obviously your fourth NFC Championship Game you'll be playing in. What do you tell the younger guys how to handle this moment?

"It's the same exact statement and stuff I said last week. You know, the playoffs might seem like it's a bigger deal and there's more eyes on you and a lot of this stuff creates maybe some anxiety in the younger players that haven't been there but it's the same exact game. It's the same exact thing. We're a special team and we just go out there and execute the game plan and have a great week of practice and all that other stuff we'll handle."

How has DL Nick Bosa's game evolved over the year?

"Yeah, kind of addressed that a lot this year. It was pretty immediate. It was probably the first or second day on the practice field, honestly, in training camp. Typically, there's some kind of, I don't know if it's evolution or whatever, but getting used to the NFL style of play and realizing that you can't just win with athleticism and understanding blocking schemes and hand usage and all the different nuances that go into rushing a passer in the NFL. He had that down. It was pretty evident that he was much further along than a typical rookie coming into the NFL and I kind of had the quote that I said last week was that it was kind of shocking about how silly he was able to make a lot of talented tackles look early, myself included. But now it's just who he is, and it's what we expect now."

When you think about it, you guys unintentionally traded a year of experience and reps of QB Jimmy Garoppolo for Nick Bosa, what kind of trade did that turnout to be for the 49ers?

"It turned out well, because we have him and he's a dynamic player and playmaker in the NFL. We're in this situation right now with one game left to play for a chance to go compete for a Super Bowl. We're excited about where we are right now. Excited to get on the practice field, too."

You overlapped with Green Bay Packers head coach Matt LaFleur at Central Michigan. Do you have any memories of those two?

"Not really. It was a long time ago. That was, what, 2004, my sophomore year at Central Michigan. They were both offensive and defensive graduate assistants there. They were great guys and I kind of kept in contact with them throughout their journey in the NFL, but no, I don't have any little nuances or stories."

Can you tell us about Jimmy and what he has brought to the team off the field, maybe a story or two that says something about him off the field?

“He's just a great guy. Everything that you see is who he is. He doesn't do anything for the cameras. He doesn't do anything, he doesn't have a fake persona that he shows up. He's a down-to-earth, genuine human being, very close to his family. He's one of those guys that's an all-around good human being, good dude, and same style of Kyle, just kind of eats, breathes, sleeps football. The preparation, all that stuff, is off the charts and you can't- I could go on and on about him. He's just an incredible leader, incredible player for us and excited he's on our team.”

For the fans' perspective, this is just a great rivalry, Packers and 49ers, but what's your sense of history of this great rivalry?

“We've had a lot of games and had some big games in the playoffs and whatnot. Seem to find each other all the time during the regular season, as well. A team that we are familiar with and we've had a lot of great battles with throughout the years, my playing career here. But you know, this is a completely new game and it's one game at a time. We are expecting their best and we are expecting to have a good, physical game on Sunday.”

There was a stretch in that Vikings game where T Mike McGlinchey had a couple plays, he gave up a sack, had that false start that he may have wanted back. What does it say about him that he was able to quarantine those things and be so impactful after that and he was able to turn the page and get back to the way he normally plays?

“That's just life as an NFL player. No one really plays a 100 percent clean game. It's all about just taking the next play and I thought he did a great job of going to the sidelines, regrouping and came back out and played a terrific game.”

You're the only first-round pick to throw a pass, catch a pass or you caught one last year?

“Oh, on accident.”

What does that say about the offense, that you've had that kind of success without using the high draft picks on the skill guys?

“I think we have very, very talented players. Coming into the NFL, it doesn't matter where you're drafted. Time and time again, we've seen that. It's all about the work you do here. We have incredibly talented players, if you go back through the draft classes in history, a lot of these guys would be top picks. As far as where you're drafted and brought in here, it's not relevant. It's just about the work you do once you're in here and that's a credit to the front office and coaching staff for identifying the players that we can bring in and win with, regardless of where they are picked.”