

CEO Jed York
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San Francisco 49ers
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You talked to head coach Chip Kelly on Thursday of the first week of the search.

“I can’t remember which day it was.”

Why didn’t you hire him then? What was the delay?

“I don’t know that I’d say there was a delay. We wanted to make sure that we finished our process. There were a lot of folks who we wanted to talk to. Obviously, some of the coaches were still in the playoffs. We didn’t want to cut the search short and I think it gave us an opportunity to continue to get to know Chip and obviously, it worked out for everybody very well.”

Were you ever close to offering the job to anybody else?

“No. The only person we offered the job to was Chip.”

You said he had a vision far above the others that interviewed. What was it about his vision that he sold you on that you liked?

“I think a lot of the things that we do here, and I think Chip talked about that in terms of sport science, we’ve been doing that for a long time. And Chip has said there’s notoriety about that for him, but they’re things that we’ve believed in for a long time. Obviously, offensive minded football. I don’t think that the offense is what I expect from it last year. It’s certainly not what our fans expect. I think Chip brings an innovative style to offense that is something that I think is synonymous with San Francisco 49er football. And obviously, having somebody like [senior personnel executive] Tom Gamble that both Chip and [general manager] Trent [Baalke] spoke of, that worked with Chip for two years. Not somebody that, you know, I knew him, I met him at a dinner, something like that, good guy. Literally, worked with him for two years. That’s something that really helped us know who Chip is as a person, know what he’s going to bring to the table every single day and all of those things combined, put him far ahead as the best candidate for us.”

Obviously, general managers and head coaches clash, it’s just inevitable.

“I’ve never seen that before.”

Will Tom have a role in that? Can Tom come in because he knows them both so well, can he broker some things?

“I’m not worried about that issue. I think you’re going to see partnership between Trent and Chip, and Tom’s going to be a big piece of it. Tom’s always been somebody that we’ve leaned on here, somebody that Chip did in Philadelphia for a few years and somebody that Trent has here. So, again, the more good people that you have in the building, the better the product on the field is going to be.”

There was a report from Bleacher Report reporter Jason Cole that former NFL head coach Mike Shanahan was strongly considered but the reason he wasn’t hired, one of the main reasons was because he did not want QB Colin Kaepernick on this team. Is that true and is Kaepernick a large reason why Chip Kelly is now the coach?

“I’m not going to talk about any reports that are out there, rumors. I don’t think that is really something that I’m here to do. In terms of Kap, and I think you heard both of them say, they like Kap. Chip likes Kap. Chip is somebody that has done a great job, I think, everywhere that he’s

been in developing quarterbacks. He likes [QB] Blaine [Gabbert]. If people want to ask us about where are we going with salary cap room and making decisions, we have the third most salary cap space in the National Football League as it is today. So, we're not in a bind to make a decision. We want to have as many good people on this roster as we possibly can."

There's been a lot of talk about some players were a bit disenchanting with Chip. A lot of those may have been guys who left the Eagles and were disgruntled. But, be that as it may, there seems to be a lot of smoke there. Is that something you had to investigate thoroughly and what was your conclusion?

"So, again, having Tom work there was a big thing for us. Knowing a lot of players that have played for Chip, some guys that have known Chip going from Hall of Famers to guys that were in the league for a cup of coffee, all the way across the board, I think there's a lot of positive feedback on Chip Kelly. And I think when you go back and look at the folks that worked with him at Oregon, nothing but positive things to say about him. So, again, I'm not concerned about that. I think Chip's work speaks for itself."

You've said 8-8 is not acceptable, obviously 5-11 was unacceptable. If Chip Kelly is 8-8 in his first year, is that unacceptable? Would you fire him?

"Chip's going to be here for a long time, period."

Did it bother you that you guys were the only team that interviewed him?

"I don't know who else he interviewed with. I don't really concern myself with who other people interview and what else is going on. I'm concerned about the San Francisco 49ers."

Your last interview process, you went through this and hired former head coach Jim Tomsula. What was different about this process? Did you think it had to be different?

"I don't know that necessarily the process was different. I think what we were looking for, it's nice to have somebody that had head coaching experience that was out there in Chip. Somebody we felt comfortable with that could come in and build a partnership with Trent. That's really what sold us on Chip Kelly."

There are a lot of similarities between Chip and University of Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh, not Tomsula. Came out of college, big splash his first year, Jim Harbaugh won a lot more, abrasive personality, has rubbed people the wrong way. Why is this one going to turn out differently than it did last time?

"And again, I think all the reasons that we just stated. I think the partnership between Chip and Trent, you're starting to see it build."

There was a partnership between Jim and Trent at the beginning right?

"I think there's a partnership with everybody. And again, what we're looking for is making sure we build this thing the right way. Making sure that this is a partnership that we can continue to get the 49ers back where we need to be and I have no doubt that we're going to get where we need to be."

Philadelphia owed him more than \$13 million dollars at the end after they fired him. Is it safe to say you guys are paying the majority of his salary the next two seasons or are you paying less than the majority? What does the offset generally look like?

"If Chip wants to talk about what his salary is, he can, but that's not my position."

Are you getting him for free? Are you paying him something?

"If Chip wants to talk about what his salary, he can."

Can I ask you a Super Bowl question?

“Sure.”

We’re less than a month away. With everything that’s going on out in the parking lot, is this all that you expected? Have you been surprised by the craziness?

“It literally happened the day after the season ended. It looks little bit different than we we’re used to but I’m excited about the Super Bowl. I think everything is going the right direction. [Super Bowl 50 Host Committee Chairman] Daniel Lurie and [Super Bowl 50 Host Committee CEO & President] Keith Bruce have done a great job getting everything ready in the city and I think the NFL has done an amazing job and our staff here getting this building ready to host on February 6th.”

What is the thing that impresses you most about your new coach?

“Again, I think it’s innovation. It’s understanding how to attack the game and I think he thinks about it in a different way, in a cerebral way where he will look at mistakes that he’s made. He’s willing to change. He’s willing to figure out how do we make ourselves the best we can possibly and he will leave no stone unturned.”

When, in the process of interviewing Chip, how many times did you guys meet? Did you guys meet with him and were you in most of those meetings?

“Twice in person. One in New Hampshire in his house, once here and then phone calls. So, Trent and I obviously met with everybody individually, depending on where it was and who it was, but individually. And then we’d follow up with either phone calls, and Tom Gamble was involved with some of those as well, in terms of phone calls as we were interviewing other people.”