

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

# TRANSCRIPTIONS



**General Manager John Lynch and Head Coach Kyle Shanahan  
Press Conference – July 27, 2017  
San Francisco 49ers  
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**First off, is everybody here? What is DL Solomon Thomas' contract situation?**

John Lynch: “Yeah, we’re still working on that. There’s been a lot of productive conversations here in the last couple of days. Just left some of those, and we’re hopeful that we can get this done in the necessary time. I think, I’m aware from experience as a player, and we all are in the business of football, that deadlines typically get these things done and we’re drawing close to that. And, like I said, hopeful that we can continue to make progress and tie this thing up so Solomon can be here with his teammates.”

**Obviously you want him to be here, but how more important is it to be here at this point?**

Kyle Shanahan: “Yeah, it all adds up, each day. You want him there right away. I’m pretty confident that we will get it done, but it’s part of the business. It’s something that you’ve got to deal with a little bit every year. That doesn’t always happen, but I think everyone who’s been in the business has been through it. You totally understand it and I think Solomon wants to be here as bad as anyone. I know we want him here as bad as anyone and I’m confident we will get it done, but can’t worry about it too much. I think it will end up being alright.”

**How is LB Reuben Foster's shoulder?**

KS: “It’s been good. He’s cleared to go. We’re excited to get him out there. We’re going to go a couple days without pads, which is league rules. But, the third day of practice you’re allowed full pads and we expect him to be out there like everyone else.”

**Do you think that anybody will start on PUP?**

KS: “As of now, before we came in here, we’re good to go. We’re pretty fortunate. I haven’t had many times in my career where we’ve gone and had no one on PUP, but that’s what it’s looking like right now.”

**With so many things, new personnel, new roster, all of that, is there such a thing as a first priority to establish in this first training camp?**

KS: “I really feel like that was very important in OTAs to really establish how we want them to practice, the tempo, the way we work, the way we ran, just the way you conducted practice. The physicality, when to be physical, when to lay off each other. We

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showed clips everyday of what was good, what was not good. That's really what the offseason was for. I think the guys have a real good idea of how we practice now, which excites us because now going into camp, there's two things in camp, first of all as a coach you really think about Week 1, preparing our guys up to that spot. And, after Week 1, what's the other stuff that you're going to prepare them for to lead them throughout the year. But, also you think about what's going to be our final 53 man roster? If you're only thinking about Week 1, it's kind of hard to put all those players in the position to make the right evaluations for John and myself. So, you kind of go back and forth, thinking about Week 1, preparing your guys, but it's also, 'Hey, we've got to put some of these twos, these threes, some guys that we don't know if are for sure going to solidify themselves as ones, you've got to put them in a position that gives us a chance to evaluate them so we feel when the time comes we have the best 53 possible.'

**What do you feel is going to be the most challenging aspect of training camp? I guess toughest drill that you're going to put them through?**

KS: "Blitz pickup drills are always usually the most physical because they're one-on-one, right at each other and it's something you've got to see guys do. And, we haven't seen it yet. Especially the one-on-one pass drills too. There's some times guys you think are going to be your best players in OTAs and then you put the pads on and it looks a little bit different. You're not sure if they're going to make the team. So, we've got a real good idea of where our team was coming off OTAs, but that really, it gives you an idea, but you really don't know until the pads come on. We're not going to do many live tackling drills taking guys to the ground. The last time I did a live tackling drill, we used to do it once a year, it was goal line and two years in a row we lost a guy to a season-ending injury for five goal line reps and it's something we'll try to avoid, but we'll be physical. We'll stay up, we'll thud people, we'll do that, but we're going to try to not take anyone to the ground until whatever day our preseason games are."

**Is there anything that now that you're a head coach that you always wanted to do in training camp, whether it's a drill or something during camp that you always wanted to put in?**

KS: "There's not really one thing that would stick out that would interest you guys, but it's nice to go through the schedule day-by-day. Just what time you want to start at, how you want to do the meetings, when you want to talk as a team, when you want to talk as positions, when you want to get the group together and just to go through that from beginning to end. We've mapped out our practices, how long they're going to be, what days we have off. We have that all the way up to Week 1. As far as exactly what we're going to do period to period, we usually go about 10 days deep into that because you have an idea of the foundation of the drills and stuff you want to do, but then you like to evaluate those 10 days and see what your team needs most. You don't always have that answer before you watch the tape, and that's something that I like going in because I'm used to places I've been to where you have to decide in June exactly what you're going to be doing at the end of August and I don't know exactly what our team needs at the end of August. I'll tell you that probably halfway through August and those are kind of the things I'm excited about to where we have it mapped out to where we have a plan

where we can build a foundation, but we also, we're going to see what we need. We're going to see what battles we need to need to know how to make up this 53 man roster and we'll set up a practice to make sure John and his staff and our coaches and stuff can evaluate that."

**How different is it going to be this year, instead of two cuts when going 90 to 53, you have that one cut right after the fourth preseason game? Does that change preparation, how you approach that?**

KS: "Yeah, it makes it a lot easier. That last week, trying to keep guys healthy, also trying not to risk guys getting hurt that you know were in a game four days before that and they're also going to be in a game nine days after that. So, you want to protect guys going into that fourth game, but sometimes it's hard to even field a team. Now that we have the 90 guys, that takes away a lot of issues that we stress about. I think every special teams coach in the NFL is going to be a lot more excited. That's usually a huge challenge for them. It just makes it a lot easier."

JL: "The one thing I would add to that, that Kyle and I have talked a little bit about, in addition to helping us get through that fourth preseason game, it's opportunity for guys. You never know. Kyle's dad used to always tell the story about [former Denver Broncos RB] Terrell Davis, who's going into the Hall of Fame here in another week or so. He showed his where over in Japan running down on a kickoff and that used to be a great training camp story. So, it's another opportunity for that many more guys to be around for one more game and you just never know. So, I think it's a good move for the league, good for everyone."

**Are you guys expecting some tough cuts of some veteran guys and who has final say over the 53?**

KS: "That's something that we'll all definitely be doing together. When you look at the final 53 man roster, I always say, when I came here and stuff, I've said all the time that your goal as a personnel department and organization is to build a team where you have to cut a guy who can play in the NFL, who can really help. It's hard to do, because you don't like to get rid of players that you know can go help other teams. I do think we're at a position where we have some depth at some spots and we're going to have some tough decisions to make and it's a very good problem to have and look forward to doing that. You don't want to try and make those decisions too early. Usually they play themselves out, whether it's injuries or whether it's one guy just rising up to the occasion. But, I think we've got that at a few positions where they're going to make us have some tough decisions."

**You've got some guys, potential starters, that are entering the last year of their contracts. Guys like S Eric Reid and RB Carlos Hyde said earlier in the offseason that you hadn't had those discussions. Have you guys had any of those discussions or are you maybe looking at training camp as a chance to evaluate and as an opportunity to learn more about those guys before those discussions?**

JL: "Yeah, I would say that we're always having internal discussions, Kyle and myself and our staffs. And, we really try to be forward thinking looking out, not just this year,

but three to five years and saying, 'Okay, let's look at the construct of our roster.' But, our priority was let's provide competition at each and every position. And so, that's why we were so active this year to go out and to be able to really judge this and judge those guys in particular. There's going to be a little more urgency with some of them, but we're going to let this play out a little bit and see how they fit with what we want to do. We have some ideas, but there's nothing like going and actually doing it. So, we're excited for that, as are those players."

**A lot of your job is completed, at least the main part of it stocking the 90-man roster. As training camp gets going, through training camp, what do you envision as your role in helping Kyle and his staff or just how do you kind of envision yourself going through this training camp?**

JL: "I think you hit it, [NBC Sports Bay Area reporter] Matt [Maiocco]. I think at this point I just try to be there for Kyle and his staff for whatever they need. Things are fluid during training camp, we're always looking. We're looking throughout the league. We always want to try to improve ourselves as a team and when we have an opportunity to do that, we need to be ready. So, we're constantly looking, scouring the league, seeing what's out there, being proactive on things, throwing ideas at Kyle and his staff and working on a lot of other projects. While we've been here a few months, we jumped right into free agency. We jumped into the draft. So, now we're doing things like really setting the structure of our organization the way we want it. So, there's a lot of work to be done. So, believe me, I'm not looking for things to do."

**We all know what the record was last year, but now that you've gotten a chance to see guys closer and look at the roster a little bit, would you say, 'Oh my gosh we have so much work to do,' or 'This is a better team than the record showed last year?'**

KS: "I think everyone believes that. Last season, obviously they struggled with the record. They struggled with a lot of injuries, which makes it extremely tough for any team. And when you see them at the end of the year, there's a lot of guys out there that weren't even on the team in the beginning of the year because of injuries. So, the offseason, the opportunities we had to improve our team, we were very happy with how it went and we felt we did as good of a job as possible. So, with that being said we feel we have. Now you've got to go out and do it. You've got to stay healthy. You've got to get guys to practice. You can't turn the ball over. You can be a lot closer in games and you can make one bad decision and you can still lose it. You hope you do things right and you do things right, and yeah you improve your record. But, a lot of factors go into that. The thing I think about the most is, the opportunities that we had to improve ourselves so far, did we do the best we could? And, I feel that we have. You just try to continue doing that every opportunity you have. That's why when you guys ask John about training camp with most of his job being over so far, I think what he said is right, that I expect any time someone gets cut, John and his staff, they've been looking at him a ton. Is he better than someone on our roster? Does this guy look better than a guy on our team has looked for the last five practices? Can we make that adjustment? Those are things you've got to count on from the personnel department and you're always trying to improve. I think we've done that in every facet and it really never stops."

**You guys have signed several players who have played for you in the past. Do you think that having guys like QB Brian Hoyer and WR Pierre Garçon on the team in the spring sort of accelerated everything for the rest of the group and you're starting training camp with some good momentum?**

KS: "I think it does to a degree, especially when it's a quarterback who's started or has played in it for at least a year. You look at phase one and things like that, we're not even allowed to go out on the field with them, so if no one out there has ever even heard anything on the field, what a coach said. It's kind of hard for those guys to go out and work out with each other. When you have your quarterback out there who at least has an idea and has been through it, he can help guys. So, it moves it along a little bit faster, but it all ends up the same. I don't think just because on a new staff at the end of training camp, they're going to be like, 'Oh, they're way ahead,' because they had four guys or whatever the number is that they played sometime in the past. It's all going to end up in the same spot. It might make it a little bit easier those first few days and things."

**Obviously, former QB Colin Kaepernick opted out of his contract, but once he opted out, did you consider bringing him back? Was that a thought process and why didn't you bring him back?**

KS: "I thought with Colin and any quarterback situation it was where do you want to go with your scheme, where do you want to go with your roster? I looked at it solely into where I wanted to go with the offensive scheme. I think Colin's had a lot of success in this league and I think he still can have success, but you've got to commit to a certain type of scheme that gives him the best chance to succeed. I think when we knew we didn't want to fully bring him in as the starter, I thought it was a big commitment to make for a guy that I wasn't sure was going to be the starter and that's really more what you look at. People say, 'Why don't you just do what a guy is good at when he comes in,' well the guy is only good if you've been practicing the other 10 guys on offense at that too. That's something that makes it very hard when all your quarterbacks need a little bit different scheme to be successful. It doesn't allow your O-Line to be consistent at what they're working at and things like that. When we got a chance to get Brian and then we got [QB] Matt [Barkley] and then ended up getting [QB] C.J. [Beathard] in the draft and getting [QB] Nick [Mullens] in free agency, we've got a skillset of quarterbacks where I think in order to give them a chance to be successful our offense is going to be somewhat similar with all of them and that makes it a little bit easier on the rest of the guys."

**Perhaps you've heard Atlanta Falcons QB Matt Ryan had some comments. I've got a two-part question for you as far as he talked about the timing and the play calling. One, is it valid, and two, now that you're a head coach and also the play caller, do you have to be cognizant of being on top of it even more than you had because you've got so many other responsibilities this year in addition to play calling?**

KS: "Yeah of course. Any play caller that you talk to that's usually one of the most important things and something I pride myself on a lot, is how quick can you get a play call into a quarterback. And the quicker you do the more comfortable it is, not just for

him but the entire offense. They're not panicked, they're being able to move to the line. And with me as a coordinator personally, I try almost every situation to get it in as fast as possible. And I can be honest, there's sometimes I do better than others. There are sometimes I don't do it as good. There's sometimes I do it real good. That's something that we all work at and one thing I can say about our two years in Atlanta that I was happy with and happy with the whole entire offense that we were the only team in the NFL that went two straight years without one delay of game. I've never done that in my entire career and I don't think many other teams have. There were times we did better than others, but what I was really proud of those guys on offense, which is a lot of credit to Matt and the rest of the guys, that regardless when we did get it in, two years straight without a delay of game and being the only team to even do that one year I think was a pretty impressive task. We did a good job of that as a whole."

**Is there any way you could give your quarterback, how much leeway will you give Brian to change the call and what's the process for that?**

KS: "Yeah, there's two different types of systems and I think people make a huge deal about it, but some people get right up to the line and they don't ever move. They have a play call that's premier versus specific coverage. They don't have as many hot routes built in. They have guys blocking in and they are all deep routes. So, if you don't get the right looks you have to check and audible. That's stuff you guys see [former NFL QB] Peyton Manning do every single play of his career. It's stuff you've seen Matt do a lot of his career. Then there's the type of systems that you have certain plays designed where if it's not the premier look you have another answer. You're supposed to go to the guy on the backside. There's a quick route right there. There's a guy in the flat. There's some type of other answer. It depends on how you build your system. There's no right or wrong answer. Both have their pluses and minuses. I believe in playing fast and not having to get up there and sit at the line forever and have to look at all these things and get yourself into the perfect play. As a play caller, I always try to call the perfect play, which doesn't happen all the time. If it's not the perfect play, there's usually four other options that you've got to adjust to and either get an incompleteness or get a smaller gain. But, it's not, 'Hey, if I don't call the perfect play, you check and get us into the perfect play.' I've been in systems like that and it's just what your opinion is and there's really no right answer, but I was pretty happy with how our system worked in Atlanta and I've been confident with players playing fast and not putting so much pressure on them to fix every play that the coordinator calls. I like to put a little more on myself and I want them when I do call a bad play, we'll give you an answer. Just get rid of it and go right there."

**In other words, so if the audible is built into--?**

KS: "There's certain plays in a game, we don't have as many of them as other people where, 'Hey, all these guys are blocking. You don't have any quick answer versus these three looks that they've shown on tape. So if you get there and it's these three looks they've shown on tape, we've got to audible to this. However, usually those plays in our system, I just call two plays and I say if you get that look change it to the other play. So, just depends how you do it."

**At running back, do you prefer a bell cow or would you ride a hot hand if someone had a good game?**

KS: "Yeah, either way. I've done it both ways. We split up [Atlanta Falcons RB] Tevin [Coleman] and [Atlanta Falcons RB] DeVonta [Freeman], I thought, real well in Atlanta. I've had [Dallas Cowboys RB] Alfred Morris, who was our bell cow in Washington and we just ran him. It just depends on your roster. I don't think there's a right or wrong answer. It depends who you have and what's the best way to use those guys."

**Are you trying to find that answer?**

KS: "Yeah, that's what we're trying to do. That's why I'm glad that we get a training camp and we get to put some pads on. Even though we don't get two practices a day, we still get one and hopefully we'll find that out over the next month."

**Just for clarity on Reuben, when the pads come on is he going to be thrown right into the--?**

KS: "Yes."

**And where do you think he's at in terms of mentally, his understanding of the defense after missing the whole team drills during the offseason?**

KS: "I think he's at as good of a spot as he can be just from speaking and talking and having an understanding. What was real impressive with Reuben, which you don't always see from guys coming right out of college is to be able to sit in these long meetings and just watch stuff on the board and know you're not going to go out there and practice that day. Lots of guys, especially coming out of college, have a hard time staying awake. They can't really focus as long and especially when they know they're not playing that day. Reuben was very good the opposite way. He was into it. He surprised me with his knowledge of the defense, how much he paid attention, not just his position but the overall scheme. I think he's in as good of a spot as you could be without stepping on the field. Yeah, you've got to step out on the field and react and not think and that will take reps, and it'll take time, but as far as on the board and everything, he's been extremely impressive."

**With Reuben, are you guys going to use the SK shoulder pads?**

KS: "What are those?"

**Is he going to wear any special shoulder pads?**

KS: "I'm not sure. That would be a [equipment manager Jay Brunetti] Jay-Bird question, our equipment manager. Hopefully, if they help I hope he does."

**You guys obviously weren't here the last few years, but it seems like there's been things that have hung over this organization. Do you feel like or get a sense that things are starting to get back to football?**

JL: "Yeah, I think that's the case around this league. Training camp is always the most exciting time for teams because it's symbolic of this thing kicking off. You've put so much work into an offseason, now it starts to count. Now it gets real. But, I do think there's an eagerness that we feel, a real positive energy, that Kyle and his staff, I think,

have done a tremendous job of building and getting these guys engaged. Challenging them mentally and physically, these guys are excited to play. I think we've got a great feel as a team. The players that will sit here later today in our first meeting are fully aware that the offseason is just that, just an offseason. Now it counts. Now things get real, as I said. I think they're ready for that and I know Kyle and I certainly are."

**Did Reuben stay here for most of the offseason and did he spend time (inaudible)?**

JL: "Yeah, excited is an understatement. He's chomping at the bit. We told you about how we almost had to have a leash on him to keep him out of drills and all of that. We've said, and you guys see us, we start smiling when we talk about the guy because there's so much to like about him and I think we've only grown to appreciate that more since he's been in the building. He's got an excitement that's infectious. I think the one thing, as Kyle kind of alluded to, is his knowledge for the game. We saw it on film, he's a smart football player. But, now you get to sit him in a room and talk to [linebackers coach] Johnny Holland and [defensive quality control coach] DeMeco [Ryans] and the guys that sit in there with him and that's what they speak to, his intelligence his knowledge. He's an alpha dog, he wants to lead. He's ready, he's eager and we are certainly excited to watch him play."

**Were you concerned at all after the draft the rumbling I think around the league was his shoulder was a mess? Did you ever have thoughts of going back and saying are we sure he's ready?**

JL: "I would say that we pride ourselves on doing all our due diligence, not afterwards but before we make decisions and we had done exhaustive research on Reuben Foster in a lot of different areas. Medically was one area. We feel great about our doctors, about our medical program here. Our trainer [vice president of medical services/head athletic trainer] Jeff Ferguson is as good as there is in the league. Our doctors, Dr. [Tim] McAdams, a world renowned, Stanford name behind him, all that. We challenged him numerous times and he couldn't speak to what other people were seeing, but from his observation, the shoulder was good and what's even better is, I think it was yesterday, Reuben went and got that final ultrasound, that final test and text from Dr. McAdams that he's fully cleared and no limitations. We're excited about that."

KS: "How I felt about that whole deal too, I heard all the same stuff and everyone was like, 'Aren't you worried he's going to get hurt?' I was proud of our doctors for putting themselves out there and giving their honest opinions of what they felt. And they feel it is healed and it's going to be good. I respect them for doing that because they went against the norm on that and that's not always easy. But, I think worst case scenario, what if he does come back and gets hit and hurts his shoulder again? What made me excited was I thought we acquired him the right way the way we got him. If he does come back and his shoulder is hurt, we'd have to do re-surgery and it might hurt him in his first year. But, we're also talking a shoulder and not a knee. That would be disappointing not having him the first year, but that's not something that I feel would affect his playing career. You'd have to redo his shoulder, which means you'd miss time but it's not like, 'How's he going to come back from this knee surgery,' or anything like



that. I'm pretty confident when it's a shoulder injury that if it doesn't heal the right way or something was done wrong and you have to redo the surgery, yeah it's time but it's not going to affect the guy we saw on tape."

**Just to clarify, are there two or three non-padded practices before you're in pads?**

KS: "Two."

**Who in the preseason has an opportunity to see which players fit your scheme best or not only tweak your scheme to fit the strengths of the players that happen to flash?**

KS: "I do that in practice mainly. That's what we do just trying to get to know our players starting in the offseason minicamps and phase two even. More preseason games is to see who the game is not too big for. A lot of guys can look real good in practice and they get into that game and it's a different story. There's a guy that you think is ready to make this team and play in the NFL, then you see him in a preseason game with the pressure on a little bit and then you realize he's a practice squad player. Those are the type of things that you can't always get from practice and that we really look forward to the games to find out and help us, when guys are neck and neck, we see it all the time, we want to see who performs better in that game. Those are the things that help us decide the best way to get down to that 53."

**About that live hitting in practice, how hard is it make those decisions?**

KS: "I don't think it's hard at all because, we do hit, we just don't want to dive and take people to the ground. When two people meet each other like this it's going to be as physical as anything. I don't know, the rules aren't the same now, but half the people in the league haven't even worn pads in their pants for a long time and that's because they hit here unless you go low and things like that. Most people know how to tackle. You don't need to teach them how to tackle in this league and if you're not going to hit you're not going to go out there and do it, you're not going to be on the team. You thud up, you hit people hard, you just don't take to the ground because that's where the injuries happen and when you get into the game all the places I've been it's really never been an issue."

JL: "I would add there, I think it's eased by the fact, I think one of Kyle's strengths that really fits in line with the history of this place, [Hall of Fame 49ers head coach] Bill Walsh was known for it, noted for it, you have to learn how to practice and he stressed that a lot in the offseason. I was really excited to see the speed in which we practiced. When you can make things as close to game conditions as possible, obviously there's no pads, but we teach tackling. The fundamentals are taught on this staff and we do it at an incredibly high rate of speed and so that helps ease that transition and I think helps you project, but there is always that unknown. We used to call it, One Buck All Americans. Certain guys shine in these offseason practices and you get out here and it just doesn't happen for whatever reason. That's part of this deal and why you're even more intrigued to put the pads on and see who responds."

KS: "I've always had a hard time, not as much with the defensive guys because when you see a guy thud up, you can see that a guy can hit at a guy. He doesn't have to wrap him and take him to the ground. My question is, I think the running back broke that tackle in practice but you don't really know until the game and you want to see who can run through these tackles and who is ripping through them and getting the extra yards after contact and when you block it for one yard, who is getting three yards in the game. Those are the things that you don't truly know until it's full go."

**Do you guys have a conditioning test today or tomorrow?**

KS: "Today."

**Did you have it yet?**

KS: "No, it's at 1:30."

**Has anybody shown up that's in great shape or in exceptionally bad?**

KS: "I haven't got all the weights because they haven't all come in yet. But, I'm very excited with how our team worked when we were here and I'm very excited how the guys were when we were away. There were guys up here a lot when we haven't been here. Just looking at some of the guys just out my window walking around, I thought a lot of guys looked pretty good when they left, but guys, their bodies look different from afar just me looking at them. I think our guys are ready to go."

JL: "I would say Kyle bulked up in a real positive way. He got up in the 190s, where he needs to be. Now I challenge keeping him there."

**What position group are you most excited to see?**

JL: "I think the answer is all of them. In terms of, I'm trying to think excitement, I think we're all excited about the situation that through additions and from what we already had at the defensive line position, we think we could have a unit that can really be a strength of this team in an area where it's so important. But, you go down every position and there's something we're intrigued about. The defensive back room is something, again, we think is a strength, but there's some newness there. So, that's got to all come to fruition. You hear Kyle talk about running backs and how they are going to respond, one guy as I'm talking through this, [RB] Carlos Hyde, I ran into him in the hall and he looks tremendous. He really has dedicated himself. He's changed his body type this offseason and that to me at the least bit shows a commitment. There's those stories, but we're excited to see this whole thing as we take the next step."

**You brought in a lot of front seven players when rebuilding the defense. LB Malcolm Smith, LB Elvis Dumervil, drafted DL Solomon Thomas and Reuben Foster. Was that kind of by design in building a defense inside out rather than outside in?**

JL: "Well, what we really did is take a look, we evaluated what we had. We went back and exhausted ourselves to really see, okay take inventory what we had and we found some neat areas and we wanted to do that prior to the draft so we could go pick the best players. Then I think we felt like we had done that but then all of a sudden some

players became available that we were really excited about that we felt that we could even add too. Some of it by design, some of it circumstance, what was available to us and what we were excited about at the time. But, I can tell you that we're excited about that whole entire unit."

**(Inaudible)**

JL: "Yeah, I'm concerned right now. I wish this were done. I think it should be done and I'm disappointed with myself in a certain way that it's not, but I think I'm also learning that this is part of the business, part of the game and so as I said, I'm encouraged and I'm hopeful that we can get it done and we'll see. We've got a couple hours."