

TRANSCRIPTIONS



WR Emmanuel Sanders
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San Francisco 49ers
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You and T Joe Staley, your lockers are right next door to each other. What have you learned about him over the past couple months?

“I love being locker buddies with Joe. With the basketball going on in there, he lets me sit by his locker so I don't get hit by a basketball. I told all my teammates, ‘I feel like the only way I'm going on IR is if I take a basketball to my head or something.’ Those guys shoot all the time. It's a good luck charm. I kind of scoot over into Joe's locker. He will see me at his locker. I try to get up and he says, ‘No, you're good, you're good, you're good.’ That shows you what kind of guy he is. He's a great teammate. I enjoy playing with him. When I first got here, he was battling so many injuries. He came back, then had the hand. He's the definition of resilient. To have a long career like he's had, it's been extraordinary. He's a guy that, I'm 10 years in the league, but I look up to because I want to be where he's at some point in my career. What a great guy.”

You played 17 games this season. How much did this Bye mean to you?

“It meant a lot. It meant a lot. A lot more than I thought it would have meant in how I feel today. If you would have asked me two weeks ago, I was like, ‘What's going on with my body?’ Certain things were just aching. My ankles were sore. My big toe was sore. Just everything. Now here I am, I had the little Bye, had the opportunity to get a break. Last week was really just jogging through a lot of stuff, now my body feels good and ready to go. It was definitely tough. I've seen a lot of things on Twitter saying if the NFL wants to change the season to 17 games, they should ask me, and I'd say no. My body was hurting and I needed that break.”

How does the locker room feel to you? Is it loose, tightening up?

“I think it's loose. When you've got guys like [WR] Kendrick [Bourne] walking around the locker room dancing, blasting music, doing all kind of dance moves, it's kind of hard to not be loose. Even this morning, he was in the locker room dancing around, him and [WR] Deebo Samuel, all the rest of the young guys. I looked over at [CB Richard] Sherman, ‘Man, these guys keep us young, man.’ Guys like that are good for the ecosystem of this team. Guys like me and Sherm are good for the playoff experience to let them understand the magnitude of what we need to accomplish. I think we've got a well-balanced team.”

How much does your playoff experience, obviously you had a good run with the

Broncos, finishing here in the Super Bowl, how much can you lean on that as you go on?

“You know what, if you asked me what does the playoff experience mean, I think it just comes naturally. I think the entire time since I got here, this team has been paying attention to the details. I can't sit back and say, ‘Okay, this is the time for us to lock in.’ I feel like we've been locked in all season, ever since I got here. When I talk about playoff experience, I say, ‘Don't do too much.’ I feel like when a lot of people get in the playoffs, they think they've got to do more, they've got to do more. At the end of the day, you're in the playoffs, you've already been winning games. Just remain who you are. I think it's kind of like what you were saying about staying loose. Those young guys, be who you are, dance. If you dance, dance. Whatever you were doing during the season, continue to continuously do that. That's going to help. I feel like a lot of people are going to overdo it, overthink it, which, in turn, can be a bad thing.”

Is that something you have to talk to QB Jimmy Garoppolo about this week?

“No, I don't have to talk to Jimmy about that. Two Super Bowl rings, that guy's got. He knows. He knows what it takes to go all the way and win it all. He's seen the preparation from one of the greatest quarterbacks of all time. At the end of the day, he understands the process.”

The Broncos and the 49ers had those joint practices in training camp. Did you get the idea or have the idea the 49ers could get this far?

“Yeah, I remember after when we practiced against this defense for the first time, they kind of shut us out that first practice. I remember calling the team up and telling them, ‘That was embarrassing.’ I didn't know they were going to be the defense that they are now. But I knew that we couldn't move the ball on them the first day of practice. The second day we were able to. I think the altitude kind of got to them a little bit, which I was happy about. Yeah, I remember coming out and just seeing the team, being like, ‘Man, these dudes are huge.’ You look at [DL DeForest] Buckner, [DL] Arik [Armstead], these guys. Man, are they tackles? They're interior D-Linemen. The corners, Sherman, 6'3" corners. Everybody is big. I noticed that right off the bat.”

Since then, how much have Deebo and Kendrick progressed?

“I didn't really see them too much. I was going against the defense, and they were on a totally different field. Truthfully, I didn't even know who those guys were. I didn't really know too much about them until I got here. Just to see Deebo and KB, how these guys practice, how they run through the ball, run after the catch, I was just like, ‘You know what, let me try to fit in with these guys.’ One thing about this league, you can be in Year 10, you can take a guy at Year One, if you don't think you can learn from a guy in Year One, you're not going to make it too long in this league. I feel like everybody can learn something from somebody. When I first got here, I saw these guys running to the ball, running after a catch. I said, ‘Let me go and talk to them, ask him how he does it.’ If you watch Kendrick Bourne run through the football, even when you go to games and there are a lot of guys in this league, I've been in this league a long time, they don't run to the football like that. He has exceptional hands. Deebo, the way he runs after a catch, that's something I try to pick up off those guys.”

In retrospect, how crucial was it for you to be in Denver Broncos offensive coordinator Rich Scangarello's offense for a little while?

“I think it was really crucial. When I was about to get traded, I was hearing rumors about the Saints, to the Patriots, the 49ers. I said, for me the easiest transition would be here because a lot of the terminology, a lot of the plays, I've already done that in OTAs. I've already put in months and months of preparation. When I got here, it was just an easy transition. It ended up working out.”