

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – November 22, 2017
San Francisco 49ers
[Listen to Audio](#) | [Media Center](#)**

How was your Bye weekend?

“It was good. It was nice. Got a little rest, saw the family a lot, so it was nice to catch up. Ready to go back, finish this out strong.”

As you have your first, I guess, full practice today, who is going to be your starting quarterback?

“[QB] C.J. [Beathard]. I don’t see it much different than the other weeks that it’s been for you guys. I’m planning on starting C.J. this week. As always, we’ll see how practice goes, just like we would with any other position, but reps-wise and everything, we see it the same this week as it’s been.”

Do you plan to play QB Jimmy Garoppolo in the game or not necessarily?

“Whoever ends up starting, which right now we plan on that being C.J., I mean that’s who we’re going with. It’s not going to be like an experimental, get a guy a few reps and stuff. You go with the guy and you do whatever you can to win the game and you make changes with injuries if need be.”

How much is it the ability to keep growing with the offense with C.J.? Seattle Seahawks head coach Pete Carroll mentioned it, that he sees you expanding the offense now. Is that a big factor?

“Yeah, it’s huge with, not just with C.J., but just with 11 guys playing together. It happens. When you stay healthy throughout a whole year you’re able to grow a ton. Then as you get a little banged up, you’ve got to figure out how to just make it work. I think we’ve gone through that offensively and defensively. When you’re changing guys, you’re trying to get guys to play together, especially from an O-Line standpoint and then the receivers with the quarterback. It’s how guys move together. It’s not just one-on-one football. We’ve had C.J. in there for some time, he’s getting more used to it and I’m getting more used to him. The players are getting more used to him around him. It’s been nice to add a few things each week for him and see some of his different skill sets that has been different from the past.”

How is his thumb?

“Better. It’s not healed, but it’s better.”

General manager John Lynch said yesterday that obviously the CBA restricted exactly how much time Jimmy could be here, but he met with quarterbacks coach Rich Scangarello and yourself, one-on-one. What was the purpose or what did you guys try to accomplish during those three days that he was here?

“Just to try to give him more of a foundation of learning instead of just memorizing. I think when you come in in the middle of a game plan week, coaches never have the game plan fully done. You do all Monday, you’ve got to review the whole tape. You start the game plan Monday night. It takes you most of Tuesday and you’re never fully done with the base of the game plan until Wednesday. So, then he’s trying to learn Wednesday, Thursday, Friday just to give him a chance to function on Sunday. So, it’s a lot of memorizing on how to get through it. When you get some time off and he’s not having to get a game plan to play, we get to spend a few days showing him OTA installation, how we build everyone up. ‘Hey, we taught you this, which is last week, but this was something off of six different things that started back in June and this is where it started and this is where it led to the next week, to the next week, and this is why we call it this now.’ And, that does make sense. But, if you tell him all of that stuff on a Wednesday during the season, it makes no sense. To me, I try to compare football a little bit to, I struggled in all foreign languages big time because I didn’t consistently work in school and I would cram the night before and I could do that with most classes. I could not cram learning Spanish the night before. You have to kind of understand it and be able to talk. I see football the same way. You can’t just cram a bunch of words in and memorize it and go out and understand it all. It takes time to understand how they all flow together, and when you can sit back and relax a little bit and the pressure is not on you to get ready for a game and you can just talk ball and watch film together and show him the foundational stuff, that’s to me, where you learn.”

Did C.J. earn another start with his play against the Giants or is Jimmy just not quite ready yet?

“It’s both. Jimmy gets more and more ready each week. Is Jimmy going to be the best he can? To me, that’s impossible. He just hasn’t been here long enough and I think he’ll get an opportunity to be better each week. I don’t think we’re going to see Jimmy’s best football, to be fair to him, until next year because that’s what guys need. But, C.J. did play his best football last week, which definitely, to me, made the decision easier. It wasn’t just C.J., but the offense around him, everyone together. I thought that those group of 11 guys, when they were out there, they had their best game. And that was important for C.J. It was also important for our team. I did go into the weekend and all week and into Monday considering Jimmy. But, definitely, the way that game went, I knew it was going to make it easier for me to stick with what we’ve been doing because I think we made a stride in that way and I don’t think it’s totally right for Jimmy, C.J., the entire team or organization just to change that right away.”

Do you consider what the offensive line might be thinking? Here’s C.J., he’s learning the offense, you’re growing, and then if you go with Jimmy, then you have to go back a little bit and maybe if you’re a player on the offense you’re thinking, ‘I don’t want to go back. I want to keep growing.’ And, they seem to like C.J. a lot. Is that a factor?

“Yes, it’s all a factor. They like C.J. a lot. They like Jimmy a lot. We’ve got two good people who work real hard and who are both talented. I keep saying, it’s a good situation. That’s why I also can’t sit up here and tell you it’s reason A, B, or C. Everything goes into it and that’s why you try to look at each day, look at each game, look at each practice. You think of all the positions and it’s a process. It’s a weird process that I haven’t been in before. I’ve never traded for a quarterback in the middle of the year, one that you would like to play. But, it’s something that we’re going through and there’s not a book on how to do it. So, you try to make the right decision each week and I take all of those things into account.”

Having to kind of work backwards, where you’re putting the fundamentals in after you put that in, how much more now that he has the fundamentals can you maybe accelerate what you can do with him in the game plan?

“It’s not as much accelerating it in the game plan. It’s that he has a better chance of understanding it, why he’s saying these words. When they break the huddle and the receiver says, ‘Hey, what’d you say? I didn’t hear that last one.’ He couldn’t actually tell him what he meant instead of what was that word again, and say a word that means nothing to him. They get up there and he knows where they end up, that’s been our goal on each Sunday, but just the amount of verbiage and the people who move and the different checks and everything, it’s truly just understanding it. Everything we put into a game plan, he can do, but it’s a lot of memorization stuff and it’s just how to give a guy a chance to play his best. That’s why I know that’s going to take some time regardless of how hard he works or anything.”

A lot of NFL coaches would have taken this up until gameday just as a competitive advantage. Why announce to us your intentions at this point?

“One, it’d be exhausting to talk about this everyday with you guys. Two, I don’t see it as a competitive advantage. If one guy was a totally different quarterback than the other, and they are both different, but if one guy is a complete option quarterback and does all this stuff and the other guy can’t move at all, then that’s something you keep a secret. It’s two totally different offenses. But, I think you’ve got two guys who have similar traits and they are going to do some things a little better than the other, but you’ve got similar traits and that’s why I don’t see a huge advantage.”

How many reps will Jimmy take with the first team offense today?

“It depends on the plays and stuff, but I know on Monday, it was 50-50. On Monday, it was 50-50. It wasn’t even necessarily going against Seattle. We’re fortunate because when we go against our own defense, it’s similar scheme-wise. But, it was just 50-50 with everybody. So, he got his most work on Monday. Now we’ll go back to our usual schedule. Our periods changed, but probably in a 10-play period, he gets about two to three reps.”

**Whether Jimmy starts two games or four games or five games, whatever, is the size of his sample, can that change how you go into the offseason? I mean, you’ve talked about how you feel pretty comfortable with what you know of him--
?**

“Yeah, that’s why I don’t feel, just working with the guy every day and knowing what he’s capable of, studying him throughout college and the times he has played in the NFL, I know the game’s not too big for him. I know he doesn’t mind contact. I know he has all the talent. I know just working with him that he’s a very smart guy and he’s capable of doing it all. So, to me, when he goes in and plays this year, it’s fun because you get to see it. You get some tape on it. It’s more you get to talk. But, in terms of judging someone to how it goes, that’s why I don’t feel much of a pressure. You don’t want to completely judge a guy when he’s put in not the best situation with being so behind on this stuff. If he does get the opportunity to go in, which I think he eventually will, it’s more just to give him a chance and give him some playing time.”

I have a non-quarterback question. T Joe Staley, in the offseason he was a big fan of yours. Much has been made that he played with a broken face. He compared that win to an NFC Championship win a few years ago. The fact that he as a locker room leader has so clearly been invested in this rebuild, is that, in what ways maybe has that helped you as a head coach?

“I think it helps a ton. Anytime one of your, players respect guys who have done it in this league and played a while. They always respect those guys. It starts to get smaller as those guys can’t play as well. But, Staley still can. So, the fact that he’s one of our best players, that he’s had such a good career, and that it’s still important to him, that is huge. You’ve got a lot of young guys who don’t know, they haven’t been through it and everyone is a product of their environment so you watch to see how people handle situations. When you’ve got a guy like Joe, that’s what was so impressive to me with him playing, because when it comes to a broken bone in your eye, only he knows if he can play or not. That’s not something that you can tell and I don’t think anyone would have questioned him at all if he didn’t play in that game, at all. He was adamant that he could and I think that was pretty cool to have a veteran who’s played that long and no one is going to change their opinion of him and to still go play, I think that does, as a coach, you can get up there and talk every single day, but people can see that. When you’ve got a veteran who doesn’t have to do something and you see how important it is to him, I think that rookies say, ‘Hey, that’s how you make it in this league. That’s how important it has to be to me too.’”

You have a few rookies that are hurt like TE George Kittle, WR Trent Taylor, and DL Solomon Thomas. Are they going to be up this week do you know?

“I hope so. I’m expecting them to. They were all pretty limited on Monday. They’re going to be limited today. I could tell the week off really helped them. I don’t think they would have been able to play last week. But, they’re practicing today, they’re just still limited. I’m hoping they’ll go.”

DB Adrian Colbert, does he have a chance at all?

“Very small chance. Very small chance. We haven’t ruled him out yet. We’ll see. He’d have to practice a little bit this week, but I’m not feeling too optimistic about that.”

That would be DB Antone Exum Jr. who starts?

“Yeah, we’ve got Exum and [DB Dexter] McCoil. So, we’ll see how we end up using those two.”

Would CB Leon Hall be able to--?

“Possibly. That’s the huge value of Leon, that Leon has played nickel, he’s played outside corner and he’s played the safety position in his career. So, he has been a very important guy for us because he allows you some versatility when things go wrong.”

John Lynch was saying that he really liked how Colbert played last week. Were you pretty excited too when you reviewed what he did?

“Yeah, very. I think you could see it live on the field I’m sure like all you guys could. Then when you watch the tape, it looked just as good if not better. He played reckless in a good way, flew around, doesn’t hesitate, doesn’t flinch, was very aggressive and plays with a passion that you can tell he’s out there enjoying playing and it was fun to watch. That’s why he’s got a chance to really help us.”

What was C.J.’s reaction when you told him he’d be starting this week?

“I don’t know because I didn’t really tell him. I’m sure he could put it together by how reps are going. If I thought he was real worried about it and waiting, I would have called him and told him, but I think it’s pretty relaxed between us all.”

WR Kendrick Bourne, I was talking to him about his skill set, his route running and he said, ‘My 40 time wasn’t good,’ but he thought you guys were really impressed with his cone drill and his quickness. Is that something when you evaluate him as a receiver, you would say is a strength?

“Yeah, definitely. What we look for in receivers, we look for guys who can separate and there’s lots of different ways to do it. Some people can separate because of their 40 time, some people can separate because of their size, some can do it because of agility. Kendrick has a little bit of it all. He’s not elite speed by any means, but he’s a very good separator. That’s why we’ve kept him around here because we know he has the ability to beat man-to-man coverage. Still got a long way to go, a lot to learn, but I was really happy for him how he came through for us on third down a couple weeks ago and gave us a chance to win that game. And, had some success out there and hopefully that continues to give him confidence.”

They often call third down the quarterback’s down. Is it in a way the receiver’s down as well because the receiver has to have the smarts to kind of find those pockets in the defense like that?

“Definitely. In zone coverage, I’d say it’s the quarterback’s down and the O-Line’s to give them time to go through a progression and find the hole in the defense. Then when it’s man-to-man, the guy’s got to get open. If you can’t beat man-to-man in this league, the tight end can be a blocker, but as a receiver if you can’t beat man-to-man you’re not going to play very long.”