

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – October 16, 2019
San Francisco 49ers**

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Opening comments:

“Injuries today: [DL D.J.] Jones didn’t practice with his hamstring, [WR] Deebo [Samuel] with his groin, [RB] Raheem Mostert with a knee sprain, [FB Kyle Juszczyk] Juice, [T Mike] McGlinchey, [T Joe] Staley, [CB Ahkello] Witherspoon still the same stuff, they didn’t practice, won’t play this week. [TE George] Kittle didn’t practice because of his groin, [CB] K’Waun [Williams] was limited with the hand, [DL] Dee Ford was limited with the same knee stuff and [DL DeForest Buckner] Buck had a vet day.”

A sprain or strain for Mostert?

“Sprain. He’s day-to-day.”

You talked Monday about the relationship between QB Jimmy Garoppolo and the offensive line, how there was a certain third-down play that made you realize that they’re getting better in communication. Can you elaborate a little bit on that?

“I mean, I think they’ve gotten a lot better using the snap count. You always want to use the snap count to slow down pass rushers, but when you mess it up, it sets you back. We did that a couple times earlier in the year at Tampa and then to be on the road and do it. We knew we needed to do it in that game to block some of those guys and they did a good job of it. I think they got us two free third downs in it. They did a real good job with that.”

What was the best part about coaching in Washington?

“Being able to work with my dad and be around some other good coaches.”

What was the worst part?

“Everything else. I liked a lot of the players, some good people.”

Regarding that, you’ve talked, your dad has talked about, I guess, specially the issue was with Baltimore Ravens QB Robert Griffin III and Washington Redskins owner Dan Snyder. Is there more juice for a game like this? I know you’ve faced the Redskins before since you left, but is there more juice just because of some of the disfunction there when you were there?

“No. Not at all. That was a while ago. I’ve been in three different buildings since. My dad’s retired, he’s good and we’ve accepted what we had to deal with there and we’ve moved on. We’ll watch other people deal with it.”

You’ve been a coordinator for a long time, but you’ve only been a head coach for three years. Is there any way that you’ve grown or evolved as a head coach since 2017?

“I mean, I’d hope so. I think everyone grows and evolves the more they do stuff. Going into my third year, I’ve gotten more reps of it. It was nice being able to call plays for a while before becoming a head coach, so I’ve been used to that, but learning how to balance it out, your week differently, stuff you do during the game. You can’t just sit there every time between series and 100-percent focus on offense. So, just being able to balance all that more, trying to see sometimes, it’s gotten easier for me over three years to see when it’s more important to go focus on fixing Xs and Os and when to kind of more focus on talking to people and making people right. I think that’s something I’ve gotten better at balancing out just with going through it more.”

Have you grown at being able to sort of take your ego out of the offense a little bit and make it more about the team, like Jimmy was talking about being more comfortable with complementary football and not having it all be about him?

“Yeah. I think, I mean I don’t know if it gets more comfortable with the ego, I think it gets more comfortable with your team. There’s so many different ways to win a game and you try to do that based off of the situation you’re in, who you’re playing against, what your personnel is. We’ve had to do that a number of different ways. I’ve had to do it a number of different ways as a coordinator before I got here, but then as a head coach when you’ve just got a better idea of what type of team you’re trying to build you do have a much better idea of what’s on the other side of the ball because you watch it a lot more. It does affect your play calling because you know how hard it’s going to be for the other team to score or how easy it’s going to be for the other team to score. That definitely changes your mindset when you have a lead or when you’re behind and where you think the game can go.”

At what point does that click in? At what point do you truly believe, you see examples of it, but how much sample size do you need to start believing in it?

“I mean, it starts with what you evaluate in the offseason with just what you have on paper. You’ve got a pretty good idea of when you’ve got a chance going into a season. You try to develop through OTAs and training camp and through the preseason and then basically when you’re staying healthy, you’ve got a pretty good idea. Then, they’ve got to go out and do it. Our guys have done that each week and they’ve been pretty consistent with it. Hopefully, we continue to get better, but I think we knew going into this year with some of the guys we added and the guys that we’ve had here for the years prior that we were going to be a lot better on defense and just hope to keep them healthy. You hope you’re right with what you see in practice every day, but they’ve continued to do it and it makes it easier and easier each week.”

How would you explain the juxtaposition that Jimmy's getting the ball out really fast, among the highest quarterbacks in the league, and you guys are also running play action at one of the highest rates in the league just given the fact that play action plays tend to be longer developing?

"I'm not sure. That's something we always try to do. We don't want to hold onto the ball long and the times that you do hold onto the ball long, you really hope the defense is playing run, because if not, it's very hard to ask the O-Line to block those guys and for the receivers to get open that fast. That's the philosophy we've always done or you at least try to do and I think we've done a better job of doing it this year, I guess."

Have you had time to review defensive coordinator Robert Saleh's reaction to the goal line stand and what are your thoughts?

"Yes, I have been sent all the memes and everything. It's what I expect. I mess with him all the time. That's his style. He has the cleanly shaven head every single day he talks to you guys, very tan, lifts a lot and knows what he's doing. He enjoys game day too. We always mess with him over it, but that's Saleh."

Do you ever have moments like that where you just completely black out?

"Yes. Yup. I'm not running around as much, but you probably can tell on my face when I do it. Sometimes I get fined for it and things like that. You try not to black out as a coach. Players do it too. I would mess with [CB Richard Sherman] Sherm. I think he's done it at the coin toss the last couple weeks. It happens to all of us."

There's been a lot of turnover with this team. A couple of the mainstays Staley and Buckner, it's kind of obvious why you would keep them. But, the jury was still kind of out on guys like DL Arik Armstead, DB Jimmie Ward and S Jaquiski Tartt. What led you guys to decide that they were worth building around and keeping here?

"It's just because we're with them every day. You get to see how they are in practice, you get to study them so you know how talented they are. You're around them as people. You mentioned defensive guys right there and I know I don't like going against them in practice. I look at defensive guys all year because that's who we're usually going against. You know those guys are good players. They've had some unfortunate injuries which I know people have gotten down on them for that and stuff. You're dealing with three people that we know well that it's not because they're not tough guys, they are as tough of guys as I've been around. You like to look at the injuries and try to tell if they're injury prone, what is it, but the guys, they've been some legit injuries that I think they've been unfortunate with. When they have been out there they've played at a high level. As long as they stay healthy, you'll continue to see that."

Back to Saleh real quick. What's his demeanor like when he's addressing the team, the defense, telling stories to them?

"Saleh, I mess with him and call him [Mahatma] Gandhi. Saleh is a peaceful giant. Saleh is very relaxed and peaceful. He's not like that very much, that's rare. He's not a guy who's going to MF anyone. He's a very good teacher, he speaks to everyone with a lot of regard, a lot of respect, but it's cool to see him like that because he's not always like that. He probably did black out and couldn't control it. When you do that it's very natural

because he's not putting on a show by any means because that's not really how he is. He's very relaxed, but there's more anger and energy in there saying it proves that it comes out in the heat of battle. I think the players like to watch it because I think we all know Saleh as a person and when he's like that you can tell how much fun he's having and he deserves to have fun."

It's not often that coordinators get postgame press conferences. Was that something that was run by you and if so why allow him to do that?

"Just because [vice president of communications] Bob [Lange] asked me when I was walking into the shower and it seemed like it made sense. I didn't even think that it would be such a big deal. I don't want to make a habit of it. I never talked at the podium and I did it for a long time. I'm glad no one allowed me to talk at the podium because there were a lot of games I did not want to go to the podium. It's not something I want you guys asking for if we have a bad game or a good game, but Bob just asked and it made sense. We had such a good game, it seemed like a lot of people wanted to talk to him so I said yes at the time."

You compared him to Gandhi. He also talks about extreme violence. He's also a big guy. He looks like a tough guy. Is there an alter ego there? Is there a second side to Robert Saleh?

"I think he knows how to coach defense. If you don't stress extreme violence it's tough to play football. He knows what it takes, but he just wears a bracelet on it, it's not like it's tatted on his face or anything. He's a nice guy, but no, he's a very good coach who knows how to get the most out of his players."

What does the tape tell you about Washington?

"It tells you they're capable of beating anyone. I know they just won their first game, but they have some good players in there. I know they have some good coaches. They've got a very tough D-Line, they've got some corners, they've got a good safety, they have some good O-Linemen. Everyone knows what [Washington Redskins RB] Adrian Peterson can do. It took New England a while to pull away from them. Washington's offense turned it over a number of times and New England couldn't capitalize. That's why they had them 9-7 at halftime and it wasn't until a few more turnovers and a few long runs that the score did get carried away. Anytime you go against some good players and good coaches, it doesn't matter what your record is, that ball bounces the wrong way, you don't come in ready to play your best game, they will humble you and beat anyone in this league."

Has Washington Redskins interim head coach Bill Callahan changed anything with that offense?

"I mean, it was just one week and they ran the ball a lot more, which you knew would be a goal of his. It's also a goal of a lot of people, too. I think the game played out that way for him. Bill has done this for a long time, a coach I have a ton of respect for. He knows how to run the ball, he knows how to throw the ball. You know he'll always try to do that to take pressure off people, which is what I think most coaches do. But, last week I think it all worked out for him well. They played very good team football."

Do you get the sense that they can try to do some of the things that the Rams did on that first drive against your defense?

“Yeah, definitely. I mean, they ran it right at us on that first drive and you know that’s what they’re watching and you know that’s what they’re going to try to do to us. It’s going to be a very hard-fought game, very physical, just like last week was. The run game, you’ve got to stop the run, which we didn’t do a great job of early, but we stopped them on third down which wouldn’t allow them to stick with the run. So, there’s a lot of ways to do that. We’ll see how it goes this week and how they play us, how we play, but it’s probably going to start with the run game.”

Do you always have meetings Wednesday to go over bad plays from the game before?

“No, I usually do it, it depends. I change it up a lot. Sometimes on Monday I do it. Sometimes it’s good, sometimes it’s bad, sometimes I’ll review some things on Wednesdays. I’m not, I do whatever I think I should do that day. Sometimes I’ll do it on Fridays. It just depends on where I think our team is at.”

Why did you have that today?

“Who told you? Alright, must have been Bob (laughter). I just did it today because I showed a lot of good things on Monday. We enjoyed the win and there was a lot of good things, but if you can watch that in a different light and you can find a lot of bad things, too. You know, it’s nice when people tell you how good you are and stuff and makes people, all human beings feel better. I mean, those are also the same people who are going to tell you how bad you are if that ball bounces the wrong way. You can watch that game in a different light and just see it’s three plays away from getting out of hand and going the other way. You always want to put that perspective back in players’ minds so you never relax. If you relax in this league, you will be humbled as quickly as you can imagine.”

The Jimmy throw that I wanted to ask you about from the Browns game, it was the first play of the touchdown drive in the second half, third down, deep out, and I kind of calculated it was like a 40-yard throw. I don’t think people really realize how tough of a throw that was. I’m wondering from your perspective, on plays like that, is that arm talent rare to be able to make that and are you factoring that in to call a play like that?

“Yeah. I mean, Jimmy has as good of arm talent as there is and you can see it on that play you’re talking about. It was a third and long, it was the only third down of that whole drive and it was a real good drive. It was nice because he threw it with some anticipation. Sometimes they’ll wait until they get out of their break, but we had some push in the pocket, he let it rip early, which makes you scared that the receiver’s going to drop it because right when he turns his head around it was right in WR [Marquise] Quise’s [Goodwin] hands. Quise made a hell of a catch and tiptoed in to get in the sidelines. I think it led to like an 86-yard drive. You know, that’s the type of ability Jimmy has. He can make any throw and that’s why we are glad he’s on our team.”

How would you describe the chemistry you're seeing between Jimmy and his offensive line now as of Sunday's game?

"I think there's, I think each week the chemistry on our team gets better and better and definitely with the offense, too, and the offensive line. They've had a lot of guys going in and out which has been a challenge starting a few weeks ago and those guys have rose to the challenge each week. It starts with the O-Line, but Jimmy's got to play well too for them to play well. He's got to get rid of the ball, go through the progressions very fast. The receiver's got to get open fast. Everyone knows when you lose, starting with Joe Staley and then you go to Mike McGlinchey and stuff, we lose Juice, our offense knows how important those guys are. Everyone knows everyone's got to pick it up. Guys don't just look in and see, like, how's [OL Justin] Skule going to do, how's [OL Daniel] Brunskill going to do. Our receivers are like, we've got to help them out, our running backs have to. We had [TE Ross] Dwelley come in to help out at fullback, the quarterback's got to step it up. I think it kind of makes everyone tighter when you go through some situations where you're not sure how guys are going to play because they've never been in there before and they do succeed and everyone helps them out doing it whatever way it takes, I think everyone gets a little tighter."