

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – January 13, 2020
San Francisco 49ers**

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Opening comments:

“Good morning, guys. Nothing new to report from after the game with injuries, so go ahead.”

How does that make you feel?

“Good, much better than usual.”

So, RB Raheem Mostert is going to be fine this week?

“Yeah, he’ll be good. Nothing should affect him for practice on Wednesday.”

It looked like QB Jimmy Garoppolo got hit with his ankle or knee on that second series. You had a timeout. Were you concerned with his health at that point?

“I wasn’t, because I didn’t see it. I found out because I was upset with him for being a little bit late to the next play, then I realized that he was hurting. I was told after the game. But, he was fine. He was a little banged up on that play, but nothing after the game. It wore off and he’s good to go now.”

You emphasized 30 runs, that was, for the team, I guess, 30 runs. Was that, I’m sure it was mostly specific to the opponent, but is that something in your mind also, generally, about games?

“Yeah, always. Usually teams that lose didn’t run the ball that much, and usually when you win, you run the ball more. But, it’s a lot more complicated than that. It’s hard to get runs like that called, but when you’re going against a real good defense like we knew Minnesota was or is, we know we’re a good defense, also. When you go against two good defenses, the team that’s able to run the ball, usually you put your team in the least amount of risky situations. You knew that would be the plan for both teams. That’s kind of been the plan all year for both teams. Very rarely are you going to see two teams run over 30 times. That’s why usually the team who plays the best team football is able to do that. That’s why that’s not just up to the offense. To me, the defense has to cause some three-and-outs, which they did. Special teams has to play very well and the offense has to do good throwing the ball, also, on third down so you can keep calling those runs. I think we got all three of those things and that’s why we were able to get a lot more than 30.”

The only two negative runs you had were the kneels and the longest run you had was 11 yards. Have you ever had a game where it just seemed like you were kind of four, five, six at a time like that?

“No. I mean, you do, but then you’ve got to, not when you score points. Usually, if you don’t have an explosive run, it’s hard to score a lot of points. So, if you would’ve told me that before the game, I wouldn’t have thought we got so many runs in. I would’ve thought we had to throw to get some points. I thought that was the neat thing about just how the whole team played. That was the tough thing about Minnesota’s defense. They hadn’t been giving up many explosives in the run or pass game. They were a little susceptible to giving up some four-yard runs, some five-yard runs, which nobody wants, but the way those safeties came down and everything, it was extremely hard to get an explosive run. That’s why they did a heck of a job all game not allowing us to get one. We had a chance on just a few, but they were such good tacklers, they got us down there. That’s why third down was so important. We did decent on third down and our defense did really well on third down, so we kept getting opportunities.”

How do you view that November game against the Packers or how do you use it this week? I guess from a preparation standpoint, there are going to be schematic things you look at, but I would assume you’re also expecting a very different type of Packers team that you’re going to play on Sunday?

“Yeah, we know it’ll be different. That game got away from them early and that’s definitely not the team we’re going to see this week. Everyone knows how good Green Bay is, how good their coaching staff is, how good their players are, how good their quarterback is. I don’t think they’ve lost a game since then. I think that game really holds zero relevance to what’s going to happen this Sunday.”

Have you gone through that game and looked at where things could’ve gone with little mistakes? Are there any teaching points in that one?

“I’ll probably find some. I haven’t gone through it hard, yet. I’m still doing the Minnesota stuff and we’re going to meet with our players right after this and keep talking about Minnesota for a couple more hours. Then, we’ll get them out of here and we’ll spend the next day and a half all on Green Bay. When they come in on Wednesday, I’ll address Green Bay with them.”

It just seems natural that after you have your way with a team like that and then you face them just a couple months later, you kind of take it for granted. What’s going to be your teaching point to the guys this week?

“Don’t be that stupid. That’s not real. This is about Sunday’s game. I could give a thousand stories of things like that, parts and plenty of games from my history that I’ve been a part of. I remember losing to Carolina 37-0 when they were 13-0 and we had to play them two weeks later and then we beat them at Atlanta and they ended up being 15-1 that year. There’s so many stories like that and this is the NFL. The game before never matters like that. There’s four teams left and it’s four very, very good teams. It’s going to be a hard game for all of us. Also, our players, the type of guys they are, the way they’ve been all year, I’m not concerned about that. They’ll have to answer that question, I’m sure, a lot, but I don’t think that’ll be a worry for our players, which means it won’t be for me.”

Even though you haven't started dissecting Green Bay yet, off the top of your head, what jumps out as things they might be doing differently now versus the last time you played?

"Nothing, really, because I haven't dissected them yet. I watched it on TV last night like everyone else and I'm going to hop into this after I'm done with our players. They do what they do and we do what we do. We all run our schemes and have our foundations of what we do. You can't reinvent the wheel in a certain week or you're putting your players in a bad position. Everyone's going to have wrinkles. We're going to have some wrinkles, they're going to have some wrinkles. Lots of teams play each other twice in the year. If it would've been the other team, it would've been the third time we played a team. This happens a lot, and it's going to be a tough game for both teams. I'm excited to go get started on it."

Green Bay Packers WR Davante Adams is the main guy you've got to stop in that offense and everyone knows that, but he's still tough to stop. What makes him such a challenge?

"That he's very good at beating man coverage. When guys that are hard to cover because of their quickness, their feet, their size and their hands, it's tough in the zone. They've got a good quarterback who gets the ball in the right spot. Davante's definitely their best guy beating man-to-man, but they've got a bunch of guys who can do it, too."

How has CB K'Waun Williams played in that role this year? We've talked about how he's had a pretty good year, but how do you see him matching up there?

"I think K'Waun can match up with anyone in this league. I think he's done a great job all year. I thought last week, I thought he took his game to another level. I thought he had a great game on Saturday and I expect him to do the same this week."

Three years ago, you were also preparing for the Packers in an NFC Championship game. That went very well. I assume you want to skip the stomach flu this time around? What are your memories of trying to prepare while you were sick that week?

"It was different. I remember having to do, that Friday night I had to do an interview for a defensive coordinator, which I didn't want to have to do because usually my Friday's are resting, but I had to interview a defensive coordinator for this job and then later that night I started getting sick and just spent the whole night getting the flu. It was rough, but fortunately, I was just a coach, not a player. So, once the game started, I sat in my chair all game, very relaxed, dressed warm and just called plays. It was more of a story just because I was pretty sick, but that doesn't affect play callers very much. We're not the ones who have got to go out there and run all game."

Speaking of defensive coordinators, when did you hear that defensive coordinator Robert Saleh wasn't going to get the Cleveland Browns job and what was your reaction to that?

"I was pumped. I heard on my way in to work, so I was extremely excited. I definitely have some empathy for Saleh. I know anyone who goes through that process and stuff, we're

all competitive and you want to win and you want to get that opportunity and stuff, but for Saleh, every year we keep him we'll be very fortunate. Saleh's going to be a head coach in this league. He could've been one this year. Most likely, he'll be one next year. He's going to have the right opportunity come around for him, it's just a matter of time. I'm just very happy that we're going to be able to have him going into next year."

Did you allow yourself to think about if you had to replace him, how hard would that have been?

"It would've been very hard. There's definitely guys on our staff who I've got a lot of confidence in and stuff, but it's always in the back of your head, but I've got a lot of other stuff on my mind right now that they're definitely in front of that, so that was something that I kind of put in a box and tied it up and put it away. I thought we would deal with that when the season ended. Now I'm glad I don't have to deal with it. Maybe we'll talk next year about that."

How did DL Dee Ford emerge from the game, hamstring-wise?

"He did good. It should be the same deal for him this week. No setbacks, so hopefully he will take a step forward. Regardless, he played at a high level for us and was very impactful when he was in there."

Describe the fan noise this year compared to last and what difference that makes.

"This year? It's a pretty big difference. The fan noise is as big of a difference as probably our team is, also. They've gotten a lot louder as we've gotten better. I thought they've been loud and great all year. I didn't think it could get much louder, but it definitely was on Saturday. It was unbelievable when we went out there for pregame. Just to hear how loud it was in pregame, which is unusual anywhere you go. I think we've been loud all year. At the line of scrimmage, they were loud when [Minnesota Vikings QB] Kirk [Cousins] was in the huddle trying to call his plays. I can tell whenever they are touching their ears, whether they are affecting guys in the huddle or not, and he was doing it all game. It was just unbelievable. Usually driving in you see a lot of jerseys on the other team. You always see them in the stadium. I thought it was unbelievable our guys didn't sell any tickets to Minnesota people either because all I saw in the stands was red. It was very noticeable and it gave us a special feeling."

After the game, some of the Vikings people expressed that they thought that DL Nick Bosa's block on Minnesota Vikings OL Brian O'Neill was a cheap shot. After watching that, what did you see on that play?

"I think people say cheap shot when someone gets hit violently, and to me, the word cheap shot means your intent is to try and hurt someone. I don't think he's thinking about that at all. That's a normal block in football for a long time. The guy wasn't completely out of the play, he was a guy who could have made the tackle and Bosa went and hit him. That's a rule, you can't do that now, you can't hit a guy in that position. We call it a hit-by. You've basically got to set a screen which means let him hit you, and just take it. That's part of this game and that's what you've got to do and that's what we'll coach him up on what to do because you will get a penalty for that. To say it's a cheap

shot, to me, means you're trying to hurt someone and stuff. I mean, I know that wasn't the case."

Will CB Emmanuel Moseley start on Sunday?

"I've got a pretty good idea, but I'm going to tell those guys first, before you guys. I'm sure you guys will have a good idea by Wednesday."

What was your evaluation of QB Jimmy Garoppolo's interception? Was it a bad decision or a bad throw or a combination of both?

"Just a bad decision. It was zone coverage, we had no one to affect 54, their hook player who was just a little too deep. Jimmy thought he could get it over him. The guy made a good play and sometimes he's just got to check down or go a different direction."

What do you think about the success of young coaches?

"I think everything you've got to look at individually. [Green Bay Packers Head Coach] Matt [LaFleur] is a good coach and he's on a good team with a good quarterback. I think they have stayed fairly healthy and that's what you expect to happen. I don't think much has to do with age, I think it has to do with people and opportunities. There's a lot of older coaches who are real good in this league. There's a lot of younger coaches and now that I'm 40, I consider myself a decent older coach, but these young guys are doing alright too."

What was the difference in RB Tevin Coleman's performance last week? He was more productive.

"Tevin's ran hard for us all year. I know he had much better results yesterday, or Saturday. I think a lot of it had to do with the opportunities he got. He got more opportunities. He was running real hard. Usually it's hard to average, even where he did, four yards a carry and we don't get an explosive. It just shows how physical each run was. The most impressive thing, I thought, about that game was every time we did get one yard or block it for one yard, we got about three and a half yards. He hit it hard, kept going all day. All the 10 guys out there were extremely physical. None of our guys are built like the biggest backs, but Tevin definitely ran like a big back. I think their defense felt that."

How did LB Kwon Alexander do?

"I thought Kwon did a real good job. I knew he was going to be fired up to get out there. I'm always nervous for guys when they are that excited to get out there and they haven't played in a while. You knew he was going to run around and hit. He also did a good job of not making mistakes. He kept his poise on the field. You can feel his speed out there. I thought he made a number of plays on the screens and stuff and even when he didn't, just making backs come to a complete stop and having to change their course where then the pursuit of the rest of our defense can get him. It ends up being a three-yard gain where it would have been eight. That all adds up to third down."

Is that the way you want to continue to use him or is there a ramping up process for him?

“We’ll look at it each week. We’ll see how this week in practice goes. Kwon is a guy we like out there. Right now, there is one game left and if we win this then we have one more. There’s two possible games and the more time, the better it allows him to heal. We will see how he is this week.”

Can you quantify the impact beyond just the tackles and what you’re talking of on Xs and Os? I know he’s a really positive guy and he talks about the positive energy. He doesn’t even use the word ‘good.’ How do you view that? Do you see that permeating in the locker room and on the field?

“Yeah I do. I think I see exactly what you guys see. It’s extremely real with Kwon. He’s like that every second and our guys gravitate to him. I think just the same way fans feel about him, that’s how we feel about him. Kwon is ride or die in everything he does for this football team. He will go out there, he plays that way when he’s healthy, he plays that way when he’s hurt. He talks that way. He lives football. That’s why his football character is one of the highest I’ve been around. That’s just his character as a man, to me, is just that way too.”

TE George Kittle’s blocking, obviously his dad was an offensive lineman at Iowa and he did plenty of blocking in college. When he was a rookie did he come to you relatively polished as far as his technique in that area or has he made significant improvements as a blocker as well?

“He was a good blocker coming out of Iowa, especially the way they run the ball and the style of runs they do. So, it was nice to give him a head start on it. He was good when he got there, but I think he’s also gotten a lot better. An hour before practice every day you can always hear the sleds outside because [tight ends/assistant coach] Jon Embree takes those tight ends out every single day and they hit sleds every day to where eventually I’m like hey dude you don’t need to do it anymore. But, he does. That’s what he believes in and I’ve seen the results. I mean, those guys only get better, they don’t get worse in anything. They play through injuries, they’re extremely reliable and very talented. Kittle, everyone knows what he’s done in the pass game, but he has never once in three years came up to me during a game and said hey I need this route or hey we’ve got to do this. He’s never once came up to me about a pass play, but he comes up to me about every seven plays about what time of run play we need to do, who we need to allow him to hit, things like that. It makes it very fun to call plays for him.”

Do you get a sense of regional uplifting that a football victory such as Saturday can do for the Bay Area?

“Yeah, I do just because that stuff does it for me too. Not just as a coach, but as a fan. I love sports, when I watch the Warriors do good here for the two years I was here prior to this year, that uplifts me. I love sports and I love what sports does for people so I think anytime you have a team that has a chance to be in the situation that we’re in, where the Warriors have been in a lot, sports are great. It gives everyone a break from stuff. You always want to support your home team and I’m glad that we’re giving them something to be proud of this year.”

Back to Kittle's blocking, could you describe how valuable it is to your running game specially where a tight end can move a defensive end, somebody as good as Minnesota Vikings DE Everson Griffen like Kittle did on Saturday?

"Yeah, if you're tight end can't block the outside defensive ends, it's extremely hard to run outside zone and Kittle can do that whether they're head up on him, which we call six-technique or if they can do that with their head up outside on him which we call a nine-technique. That's very rare. He does it well and the guys behind him do it pretty good too and it's very hard to get guys who can do it who also can help you in the pass game."

Going back away when you said you were pumped that Saleh didn't get the job, did you express that sentiment to him and how did he respond to your glee that he didn't get the job?

"He knows me well enough to know how I am, but I'm definitely excited he didn't get it and that's not just for selfish reasons because I care a lot about this organization too. So, it definitely helps me, but it helps this whole organization and I think it will help Saleh in the long run. Like I said, he's going to be a head coach, he just needs the right opportunity and he's going to keep getting better and better too."

How does it help in the long run?

"So he can be in California for another year. It really helps him save money, the insurance."

Was there concern that he would have taken more of your assistants with him to Cleveland if he had gotten that job?

"There's always a concern, always. I know we've got a lot of good coaches on our staff and we've been fortunate enough to keep them around here. But, yeah that would have been a concern, that would have been a tough part on our relationship. I would have never talked to him again if he did that [laughter]."

Have you gotten any requests for other guys on your staff?

"No, I haven't yet."

K Robbie Gould's had kind of a strange year, he had the contract thing in the offseason then he got hurt. How do you think he handled those challenges and when did he start looking like himself again?

"I'm not going to answer the offseason part. I'm just joking. Robbie and I were all good once we got back here. Robbie's been great. Robbie's going to fight for everything he can. Robbie can sometimes be a tough guy to deal with which is why I always joke that's why he's one of the best at what he does. I don't ever want that to leave with him. He fought hard this offseason just like he fights on the field. Once he got here, it's all good. I know he started out a little bit slow, which some were on him, some was on other things and then he had that rough injury. To battle back, get back here the way he's kicked since he's been back, it's been pretty much how it's been since he's been here and been what we expect too."

Tevin before Saturday, the last five, six regular season game has about five carries a game. I realize you ran 47 times and that had something to do with it, but was that game-plan specific to him getting 20-plus carries or was it the flow of the game?

“No. I mean, we gave [RB Matt] Breida the first carry. We thought Raheem and Tevin would get the bulk of him, with Raheem probably getting more like it has been the last few weeks. Then Raheem’s calf cramped up a little bit so he missed a series and Tevin did really good on that series, really good. So, we kept him in for another series and he did really well and then by the time the third one came, there was no point to put Raheem back in with his calf cramping. Tevin ended up banging up his elbow a little bit so we put Breida in, but no it just worked out that way. That’s what’s really neat about our backs, all of them at different times have been the best player on the field throughout this year and I mean Raheem his calf is cramping probably because he went in and made an unbelievable play as a gunner on special teams, got that turnover. That’s just part of it. Guys are helping out every way they can. I mean, I even say that, I should have said after the game, I didn’t know about it, but even [CB] Ahkello [Witherspoon], for Ahkello to get replaced by Emmanuel early in that game, he handled it great. He went right up to [special teams coordinator Richard] Hightower, which Hightower told me yesterday, went up to him and was like ‘Hey, coach pulled me they’re going with E-Man, but I’m good. Make sure you give me all E-Man’s reps, everything he has on special teams. I want to do whatever I can to help. He needs his energy. You put me in on special teams.’ It’s just that type of attitude where you haven’t had to call many people in to say that. Our guys are just, they have a lot of love for each other all across the board. You’ve got everyone out there doing whatever they can to try to get this one on Sunday and hopefully one after that.”