

49ers Clips – February 7, 2017

Local Media

5 Things to Know about 49ers HC Kyle Shanahan

By Joe Fann, 49ers.com

<http://www.49ers.com/news/article-2/5-Things-to-Know-about-49ers-HC-Kyle-Shanahan/67485b09-edf9-4304-b6f2-7c069871a98e>

It's official: 49ers announce hiring of Kyle Shanahan

By Eric Branch, San Francisco Chronicle

<http://www.sfchronicle.com/49ers/article/It-s-official-49ers-announce-hiring-of-Kyle-10912733.php>

49ers indeed hire Kyle Shanahan after Super Bowl collapse

By Cam Inman, San Jose Mercury News

<http://www.mercurynews.com/2017/02/06/49ers-indeed-hire-kyle-shanahan-after-super-bowl-collapse/>

49ers name Kyle Shanahan as head coach

By Matt Kawahara, Sacramento Bee

<http://www.sacbee.com/sports/nfl/san-francisco-49ers/article131135159.html>

IT'S OFFICIAL: 49ERS HIRE KYLE SHANAHAN AS HEAD COACH

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

<http://www.csnbayarea.com/49ers/its-official-49ers-hire-kyle-shanahan-head-coach>

Kyle Shanahan takes 49ers head-coach job now that Falcons out

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

http://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/18631915/kyle-shanahan-officially-takes-san-francisco-49ers-head-coach-job

Plenty of work ahead for 49ers' Kyle Shanahan, John Lynch

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

http://www.espn.com/blog/san-francisco-49ers/post/_id/23256/plenty-of-work-ahead-for-49ers-kyle-shanahan-john-lynch

49ers must continue to practice patience with Kyle Shanahan

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

http://www.espn.com/blog/san-francisco-49ers/post/_id/22960/49ers-must-continue-to-practice-patience-with-kyle-shanahan

Official: 49ers hire Kyle Shanahan as head coach

By Chris Biderman, TheNinersWire.com

<http://ninerswire.usatoday.com/2017/02/06/official-49ers-hire-kyle-shanahan-as-head-coach/>

49ers officially hire Kyle Shanahan

By Zac Jackson, ProFootballTalk.com

<http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2017/02/06/49ers-officially-hire-kyle-shanahan/>

Report: Shanahan targeting Saleh, Henderson as co-defensive coordinators

By Zac Jackson, ProFootballTalk.com

<http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2017/02/06/report-shanahan-targeting-saleh-henderson-as-co-defensive-coordinators/>

Kyle Shanahan named head coach of 49ers

By Nick Shook, NFL.com

<http://www.nfl.com/news/story/0ap3000000784087/article/kyle-shanahan-named-head-coach-of-49ers>

49ers officially hire Kyle Shanahan as new head coach

By Josh Dubow, Associated Press

<http://pro32.ap.org/article/49ers-officially-hire-kyle-shanahan-new-head-coach>

National Media

The LA Rams and 5 keys to their 2017 offseason

By Rich Hammond, Los Angeles Daily News

<http://www.dailynews.com/sports/20170206/the-la-rams-and-5-keys-to-their-2017-offseason>

Bills hire Gill Byrd as defensive backs coach

By Vic Carucci, Buffalo News

<http://buffalonews.com/2017/02/06/bills-hire-byrd-defensive-backs-coach/>

Jets claim troubled DL Mike Pennel off waivers, source confirms

By Connor Hughes, Newark Star-Ledger

http://www.nj.com/jets/index.ssf/2017/02/jets_claim_dl_mike_pennel_off_waivers_per_report.html#incart_river_index

Raiders' Aldon Smith: 'I'm back, and there's nobody who can stop me'

By Jimmy Durkin, Bay Area News Group

<http://www.eastbaytimes.com/2017/02/06/raiders-aldon-smith-im-back-and-theres-nobody-who-can-stop-me/>

Bill Belichick: 'We never felt the game was out of reach'

By Dan Ventura, Boston Herald

http://www.bostonherald.com/sports/patriots/2017/02/bill_belichick_we_never_felt_the_game_was_out_of_reach

Local Clips – Full Version

5 Things to Know about 49ers HC Kyle Shanahan

By Joe Fann, 49ers.com

The wait is over. Kyle Shanahan will be the next head coach of the San Francisco 49ers. The team made the news official on Monday to hire the former offensive coordinator of the Atlanta Falcons.

Here are five things every 49ers Faithful should know about their new head coach.

1. The man can coach some offense

In Shanahan's nine seasons as an offensive coordinator, he's produced a top-10 offense in six of them. The Falcons scored nearly 34 points per game in 2016 to lead the NFL. Matt Ryan flourished into the NFL's top MVP candidate with 4,944 passing yards and 38 touchdowns to just seven interceptions.

In the divisional round of the playoffs, Shanahan's offense carved up the vaunted Seattle Seahawks defense for 36 points and 422 total yards. The Falcons followed up that performance with 493 total yards in a 44-21 blowout of the Green Bay Packers in the NFC Championship Game. Shanahan is widely regarded as one of the top offensive minds in the NFL and was recently named the NFL's Assistant Coach of the Year for the 2016 season.

"I studied every potential X's and O's play and issue possible," Shanahan said back in 2006 to the Denver Post. "I spent my whole life working on that. My goal was that any question a player could have about anything on the field, I'd be able to answer it."

2. He's been a surging coach for a decade

Shanahan is becoming a first-time head coach at 37-years-old, but he's carried a "boy wonder" tag for a while. Back in 2006, Shanahan became the league's youngest position coach at age 26 as the wide receivers coach for the Houston Texans. Two years later in 2008, the Texans promoted Shanahan to OC to make him the NFL's youngest coordinator at 28.

He's since been the offensive coordinator for Washington from 2010-13, the Cleveland Browns in 2014 and then for the Falcons for two seasons beginning in 2015. Before helping Ryan turn into an MVP-caliber quarterback, Shanahan is credited with turning Matt Schaub into a Pro Bowler and Robert Griffin III into the 2012 Offensive Rookie of the Year.

3. Football is family

Kyle's father, Mike Shanahan, hoisted two Lombardi Trophies as the head coach of the Denver Broncos. The two worked together in Washington for four years with Mike as the head coach and Kyle as his OC.

Mike also has a connection to the Bay Area as he served as the 49ers offensive coordinator from 1992-94.

It's impressive lineage, and there's no doubt that Kyle is eager to build his own legacy in San Francisco.

4. He's learned from the best

Beyond his father, Kyle Shanahan has served as an understudy to two other Super Bowl-winning head coaches. He worked for Jon Gruden as an offensive quality control coordinator with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers before joining forces with Gary Kubiak in Houston. Gruden and Kubiak are two of the most well respected coaches of the past two decades. Although Shanahan didn't win a ring at either stop, he knows what it's like to be a part of a championship culture.

5. He played Division I football

Shanahan walked on at Duke as a wide receiver in 1998 before transferring to Texas. From 2001-02, Shanahan caught 14 passes for 127 yards with the Longhorns. He immediately began his coaching career as a graduate assistant for UCLA in 2003. Shanahan only spent one year in the college ranks before making the jump to the NFL with the Bucs in 2004.

It's official: 49ers announce hiring of Kyle Shanahan

By Eric Branch, San Francisco Chronicle

Less than 24 hours after he finished runner-up, Falcons offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan officially joined an also-ran Monday.

On the heels of a devastating loss to the Patriots in Super Bowl LI, Shanahan was hired as the 20th head coach in 49ers' history. The difference between his employers is stark. Including the playoffs, the Falcons won 13 games this season, or five more than the 49ers have tallied since December 2014.

Shanahan will be tasked with restoring the luster of a franchise that's won five Super Bowls, the last 22 years ago when his father, Mike, was the 49ers' offensive coordinator.

Shanahan, 37, who once served as a 49ers ball boy, referenced his connection to the dynasty days. He also gave a nod to novice general manager John Lynch, a captain on the Buccaneers team that beat the Raiders in the 2003 Super Bowl.

"As a young man, I had the unique benefit of being exposed to the storied history of the San Francisco 49ers firsthand," Shanahan said. "From that exposure, I developed great respect for those who created a world-class, championship standard. As this team begins the task of reestablishing that standard, I could not ask for a better partner than John Lynch. He is a man who certainly has personal knowledge of what championship organizations look like."

The official announcement was something of a formality. Shanahan has clearly been the 49ers' incoming head coach, but hadn't been able to sign a contract until the Falcons' season ended. Shanahan, Lynch and CEO Jed York are expected to address the media at an introductory news conference Wednesday or Thursday.

The 49ers reportedly signed both Shanahan and Lynch to six-year contracts. The lengthy deals might have been necessary to hire them given the franchise's recent instability: Shanahan is the 49ers' fourth head coach in the past 26 months.

York hinted he would get out of their way and let the new duo begin the heavy lifting.

"The future of this franchise will be constructed from their vision," York said. "And we look forward to watching them work together for years to come as they instill the culture necessary to consistently compete for championships."

As The Chronicle first reported, Patriots offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels was the 49ers' top head-coach target, but they shifted their focus to Shanahan when McDaniels withdrew from consideration Jan. 16.

And Shanahan's offensive acumen suggests he could turn out to be a nice consolation prize.

In 2016, Atlanta scored the eighth-most points (540), led the NFL in yards per play (6.7) and league MVP Matt Ryan had the fifth-highest passer rating (117.1) and 13th-best yards-per-attempt average (9.3) in NFL history.

Shanahan has spent the past nine seasons of his 13-year NFL career as an offensive coordinator and his offenses have ranked among the league's top 10 on six occasions. At 28, he was the youngest offensive coordinator in NFL history with the Texans in 2008 and quickly made his mark.

In 2009, Texans quarterback Matt Schaub had a career-best season in which he led the NFL in passing yards (4,770). In 2012, in the third of Shanahan's four seasons with Washington, Robert Griffin III had one of the best rookie years by a quarterback in league history.

"As an offensive mind, I think he stands alone in the National Football League, as evidenced by the explosive and record-setting offense in Atlanta," Lynch said. "Though he grew up around coaching, what has most impressed me about Kyle is that he's become his own man in the profession. Our philosophies on football and our visions for leading the 49ers back to being a championship team align in every way."

Shanahan is expected to have control of the 53-man roster. And his background could prove useful as he attempts to remodel an offense that's ranked 31st in the NFL the past two seasons and hasn't ranked among the NFL's top 10 in yards or points since 2003. With Colin Kaepernick expected to opt out of his deal, the 49ers probably won't have a signal-caller under contract when free agency begins in March.

As a result, the 49ers could have a young quarterback learn under Shanahan, the league's second-youngest head coach who might have aged considerably this past weekend.

On Sunday, the Falcons squandered a 25-point, third-quarter lead in their 34-28 overtime loss to the Patriots, and Shanahan's aggressive late-game, play-calling was a popular postgame topic.

"It got tight," ESPN analyst Trent Dilfer said on air. "Now they had to play the game they were a little uncomfortable with because (the Patriots) started to come back. And they relied on that mantra of 'Just stay aggressive. Just stay aggressive.' When actually wisdom, and discernment, and calmness and being conservative is what would have won them the game."

Said ESPN analyst Steve Young of a fourth-quarter sack of Ryan that helped push the Falcons out of field-goal range: "I can't tell you how inexcusable that is. That cannot happen. The ball has got to come out. The play-calling cannot put it into a deep drop. Those are things that lose Super Bowls."

With the 49ers, it's possible the rookie head coach will be surrounded with high-level assistants inexperienced in their roles.

According to national reports, their defensive-coordinator targets have included Patriots linebackers coach Brian Flores, 35, former Jaguars linebackers coach Robert Saleh, 38, and Falcons defensive passing game coordinator Jerome Henderson, 41. The 49ers are considering Saleh and Henderson as co-defensive coordinators, the Sporting News reported. None of the candidates have been a defensive coordinator in the NFL.

They 49ers also expected to hire Bears assistant special-team coach Richard Hightower, 36, as their special-teams coordinator, which would be Hightower's first season in that role.

"I am very excited to dedicate myself to the process that lies ahead," Shanahan said. "The first step in that process is identifying talented individuals who love the game of football as much as John and I do — coaches, players and staff."

49ers indeed hire Kyle Shanahan after Super Bowl collapse

By Cam Inman, San Jose Mercury News

It took 36 days but the 49ers finally have a new coach: Kyle Shanahan.

Shanahan's official hiring Monday could not come, per league rules, until after he coached in the Super Bowl.

Acting one last time as the Atlanta Falcons offensive coordinator, Shanahan's unit could not build on a 28-3 lead nor kill enough time before losing 34-28 in overtime Sunday to the New England Patriots.

"It is truly an honor to be named head coach of the San Francisco 49ers, one of the marquee franchises in all of sports," Shanahan said in a statement issued by the 49ers. "I must thank Jed and the York family for entrusting me with this great privilege and tremendous opportunity. I would also like to express my gratitude to Arthur Blank, Dan Quinn and the Atlanta Falcons organization for their support and the experience of a lifetime."

"This is a very exciting day for the San Francisco 49ers and our fans," 49ers CEO Jed York said in the same statement. "Throughout this process, we learned many things about Kyle that convinced us he is the perfect coach to lead this team."

"Over the years, he has proven to be one of the brightest minds in the game of football and his recent success speaks for itself," York added. "Kyle's leadership has brought the best out of his players at every phase of his career and we look forward to watching him build a talented staff to accomplish the same with our players."

Shanahan, a first-time head coach, received a six-year contract, the same length awarded to new general manager John Lynch on Jan. 29, according to multiple reports. Shanahan's immediate two predecessors, Jim Tomsula and Chip Kelly, each were fired one year into their respective four-year contracts.

"As a young man, I had the unique benefit of being exposed to the storied history of the San Francisco 49ers firsthand," said Shanahan, who was a ballboy during the 1994 season while his dad, Mike, served as the 49ers offensive coordinator. "From that exposure, I developed great respect for those who created a world-class, championship standard."

Shanahan, 37, is expected to be formally introduced at a Santa Clara press conference later this week, perhaps not until Wednesday or Thursday. He is the 20th coach in 49ers history, and their fourth in four years following the departures of Jim Harbaugh, Tomsula and Kelly.

Lynch, also in the team-issued statement, praised how "very fortunate" the 49ers are to hire Shanahan.

"As an offensive mind, I think he stands alone in the National Football League, as evidenced by the explosive and record-setting offense in Atlanta," Lynch said. "Though he grew up around coaching, what has most impressed me about Kyle is that he's become his own man in the profession. Our philosophies on football and our visions for leading the 49ers back to being a championship team align in every way. I am thrilled to have Kyle Shanahan on board."

The Lynch-Shanahan union came to fruition as the 49ers' GM/coach search dragged on amid interviews with multiple candidates across the nation. Lynch, in his previous role as a Fox Sports analyst, called the Falcons' playoff-opening win Jan. 14 over reigning NFC West-champion Seattle, and Lynch then approached Shanahan about forming the GM/coach combination that is now a reality.

"As this team begins the task of reestablishing that standard, I could not ask for a better partner than John Lynch," Shanahan added. "He is a man who certainly has personal knowledge of what championship organizations look like. John and I look forward to establishing a strong culture that will serve as our foundation for constructing this team."

Shanahan said the 49ers' next step is to fill out his coaching staff and identify players "who work hard and are dedicated to doing things the right way, always in the best interest of the team. Most importantly, we want to give our fans a team they can be proud of on and off the field."

Sunday night, Shanahan faced reporters in Houston and tried to explain what went wrong in Super Bowl LI.

"You look at everything," Shanahan said, according to Denver's 9News.com. "... Wish we could have ran more plays, but ... you give the ball back to Tom Brady too much, that's usually what happens."

Patriots coach Bill Belichick said at Monday's press conference: "We think Kyle did a tremendous job with that offense all year and certainly last night, right from the first play with the toss-crack and the play-action passes. That's a good, very-well coached football team with some very skilled players."

Upon taking a 28-3 lead with 8:31 left in the third quarter, the Falcons had only four running plays (for 10 yards) in their remaining four possessions. More devastating were three sacks, two holding penalties and a lost fumble, that coming on a third-and-1 sack with 8:24 remaining. Another run, for minus-1 yard, was nullified by a holding penalty.

"I thought we got a little bit stale a little bit," Shanahan said.

Center Alex Mack said about the fourth-quarter sack: "That hurt, yeah. We wanted to score points, but I think our OC (Shanahan) has a lot of faith in us to perform our job. It's disappointing not to be able to accomplish that."

Former 49ers quarterback Steve Young, appearing on ESPN's postgame show, tore into Shanahan's play-calling, specifically having Ryan take deep drops in the pocket that led to costly sacks. "I can't tell you how inexcusable that is," Young said. "That cannot happen. The ball has got to come out. The play-calling cannot put it into a deep drop. Those are things that lose Super Bowls."

Quarterback Matt Ryan defended Shanahan's play-calling after the game and refused to say things went too conservative. "Kyle did a good job for us tonight and we had some opportunities to make plays," Ryan said. "We just missed on a couple of things and just made a few mistakes and ultimately when you're playing a really good football team like New England, those mistakes ended up costing us."

Shanahan will be going from the worst collapse in Super Bowl history to a 49ers franchise coming off arguably its worst-ever season.

The 49ers posted a 2-14 record — matching the low-water marks of 1978, 1979 and 2004 — and they also lost a franchise-record 13 consecutive games between Weeks 2-15. Not only did Kelly get fired but so did general manager Trent Baalke, who was replaced last Sunday by John Lynch, a former star safety-turned-broadcaster with no front-office experience.

Shanahan spent the past nine seasons as an offensive coordinator, first doing so with the Houston Texans in 2008 as the NFL's youngest-ever in that role. He went on to work under his father, Mike, in Washington (2010-13), spent one season in Cleveland (2014) and then flourished in Atlanta the past two seasons with Falcons coach Dan Quinn and this year's MVP-winning quarterback, Matt Ryan.

While this is Kyle Shanahan's first head-coaching job, his father served in that capacity for 20 years with the Los Angeles Raiders, Denver Broncos and Washington. Mike Shanahan was the 49ers' offensive coordinator during the 1994 season, when they won the franchise's fifth and last Super Bowl.

Kyle Shanahan was the second coach interviewed by 49ers executives Jed York and Paraag Marathe. That search that included sitdowns with candidates who became coaches elsewhere: Anthony Lynn (Los Angeles Chargers) Sean McVay (Los Angeles Rams) and Sean McDermott (Buffalo Bills).

Josh McDaniels, the New England Patriots offensive coordinator, withdrew from consideration Jan. 16, making Shanahan the 49ers' odds-on favorite if he wasn't already. Shanahan further became entrenched as the presumptive coach once former Raiders coach Tom Cable, the Seattle Seahawks offensive line coach, pulled out of the race Jan. 17.

The 49ers had their follow-up interview with Shanahan on Jan. 27-28, when he sat in on interviews with the GM finalists, those being Lynch, the Minnesota Vikings' George Paton and the Arizona Cardinals' Terry McDonough.

* * *

Age of 49ers coaches when hired

Kyle Shanahan (2017-): 37

Chip Kelly (2016): 52

Jim Tomsula (2015): 46

Jim Harbaugh (2011-14): 47

Mike Singletary (2008-10): 49

Mike Nolan (2005-08): 45

Dennis Erickson (2003-05): 55

Steve Mariucci (1997-02): 41

George Seifert (1989-96): 49

Bill Walsh (1979-88): 47

Fred O'Connor (1978): 39

Pete McCulley (1978): 46

Ken Meyer (1977): 55

Monte Clark (1976): 38

Dick Nolan (1968-75): 35

Jack Christiansen (1963-67): 34

Red Hickey (1959-63): 41

Frankie Albert (1956-68): 35

Norman Strader (1955): 54

Buck Shaw (1946-54): 46

49ers name Kyle Shanahan as head coach

By Matt Kawahara, Sacramento Bee

The 49ers locked the next major piece of their offseason makeover into place Monday, naming Atlanta Falcons offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan as their head coach.

The move was expected but had to wait until after Super Bowl LI, which Atlanta lost in devastating fashion to the New England Patriots on Sunday. Shanahan now can turn his attention to the 49ers, who hope the first-time head coach can help them rebuild following one of the worst seasons in franchise history.

"This is a very exciting day for the San Francisco 49ers and our fans," team CEO Jed York said in a statement. "Throughout this process, we learned many things about Kyle that convinced us he is the perfect coach to lead this team.

"Over the years, he has proven to be one of the brightest minds in the game of football, and his recent success speaks for itself. Kyle's leadership has brought the best out of his players at every phase of his career, and we look forward to watching him build a talented staff to accomplish the same with our players."

Shanahan, 37, becomes the 20th head coach in 49ers history and their fourth in four seasons, replacing Chip Kelly, who was fired last month following a 2-14 finish. Shanahan is part of an infusion of new blood, as the 49ers last week hired Fox broadcaster John Lynch, 45, as their general manager and Adam Peters, 37, from the Denver Broncos' scouting department to be their vice president of player personnel.

The 49ers' courtship of Lynch started with a referral from Shanahan, so the two already have a rapport. Like Lynch, Shanahan reportedly received a six-year deal from the 49ers despite never having been a head coach.

"As an offensive mind," Lynch said of Shanahan in a statement, "I think he stands alone in the National Football League, as evidenced by the explosive and record-setting offense in Atlanta.

"Though he grew up around coaching, what has most impressed me about Kyle is that he's become his own man in the profession. Our philosophies on football and our visions for the leading the 49ers back to being a championship team align in every way."

Shanahan spent the past nine seasons as an NFL offensive coordinator. This season, the Falcons led the league in points per game (33.8), were second in yards per game (415.8) and produced the MVP in quarterback Matt Ryan. Shanahan was named the Assistant Coach of the Year by the Pro Football Writers of America and The Associated Press.

His tenure, though, ended bitterly Sunday as the Falcons blew a 28-3 third-quarter lead in a 34-28 overtime loss to the Patriots, with Shanahan coming under fire for several late decisions.

With Atlanta leading 28-12 in the fourth quarter, Shanahan called a pass on third and 1 that resulted in a sack and Ryan fumble that New England converted into a touchdown. Deep in Patriots territory on their next drive, the Falcons threw on three consecutive plays instead of running the ball to drain the clock, with a holding penalty backing them out of field-goal range.

Among the analysts who criticized Shanahan's play calling, former 49ers quarterback Steve Young called the use of deep drops at that juncture of the game "inexcusable."

Shanahan now faces decisions regarding his coaching staff and roster with the 49ers. He is expected to be formally introduced at a news conference this week at Levi's Stadium.

"As a young man, I had the unique benefit of being exposed to the storied history of the San Francisco 49ers firsthand," Shanahan, a one-time 49ers ballboy, said in a statement Monday. "From that exposure, I developed great respect for those who created a world-class-championship standard.

"As this team begins the task of re-establishing that standard, I could not ask for a better partner than John Lynch. He is a man who certainly has personal knowledge of what championship organizations look like. John and I look forward to establishing a strong culture that will serve as our foundation for constructing this team."

Two names emerged in national reports over the weekend as potential candidates for the 49ers' defensive coordinator job: Patriots linebackers coach Brian Flores and former Jacksonville Jaguars linebackers coach Robert Saleh, who worked with Shanahan as a fellow assistant coach with the Houston Texans from 2006 to 2009.

Saleh spent the past three seasons in Jacksonville under head coach Gus Bradley, whom the 49ers pursued before he took the defensive coordinator job with the Los Angeles Chargers. The 49ers set a franchise record last season for rushing yards allowed (2,654) and finished last in the league in points (30.0) and total yards (406.4) allowed per game.

It remains to be seen whether Shanahan will hire any fellow Falcons assistants, though ESPN reported last weekend that one of their quarterbacks could follow Shanahan to San Francisco from Atlanta.

Matt Schaub, 35, the Falcons' backup this season, will be an unrestricted free agent and has a history with Shanahan, including making the Pro Bowl in 2009 in Houston with Shanahan as his coordinator.

The 49ers' quarterback situation is in flux with three players set to become free agents and Colin Kaepernick, their lone quarterback signed for next season, reportedly intending to opt out of his contract and test free agency, according to ESPN's Adam Schefter.

Shanahan, whose hiring ended a five-week head-coaching search by the 49ers, inherits his ties to the organization from his father, Mike, the 49ers' offensive coordinator from 1992 to 1994.

IT'S OFFICIAL: 49ERS HIRE KYLE SHANAHAN AS HEAD COACH

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

The 49ers on Monday afternoon officially hired head coach Kyle Shanahan, the team announced.

He becomes the organization's fourth head coach in four seasons. Shanahan figures to be around for a while, as the 49ers awarded the former Atlanta Falcons offensive coordinator with a six-year contract, the same length of the deal the team extended to new general manager John Lynch.

"Throughout this process, we learned many things about Kyle that convinced us he is the perfect coach to lead this team," 49ers CEO Jed York said in a statement. "Over the years, he has proven to be one of the brightest minds in the game of football and his recent success speaks for itself. Kyle's leadership has brought the best out of his players at every phase of his career and we look forward to watching him build a talented staff to accomplish the same with our players.

"Kyle and John are top-tier, football men with outstanding pedigrees who join the organization with a tremendous amount of respect for each other. The future of this franchise will be constructed from their vision, and we look forward to watching them work together for years to come as they instill the culture necessary to consistently compete for championships."

Shanahan, 37, who served the past two seasons as offensive coordinator with the Atlanta Falcons, becomes the 20th head coach in 49ers history and the fourth-youngest to assume the post with the franchise.

"As a young man, I had the unique benefit of being exposed to the storied history of the San Francisco 49ers firsthand," said Shanahan, whose father, Mike, was offensive coordinator of the team's last Super Bowl champion.

"From that exposure, I developed great respect for those who created a world-class, championship standard. As this team begins the task of reestablishing that standard, I could not ask for a better partner than John Lynch. He is a man who certainly has personal knowledge of what championship organizations look like. John and I look forward to establishing a strong culture that will serve as our foundation for constructing this team."

His tenure with the Falcons ended in disappointing fashion Sunday with a 34-28 loss to the New England Patriots in Super Bowl 51 in Houston. The Patriots rallied from a 28-3 deficit late in the third quarter to force overtime. The Falcons' offense never touched the ball in overtime.

York traveled to Houston late in the week and was in attendance for the game. The sides met and finalized the details of his contract on Monday. Shanahan will be formally introduced during a press conference at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara later in the week, the club announced.

"The San Francisco 49ers are very fortunate to be able to bring in a coach of the caliber of Kyle Shanahan," Lynch said in a statement. "As an offensive mind, I think he stands alone in the National Football League, as evidenced by the explosive and record-setting offense in Atlanta."

Shanahan is the second coach in 49ers history who was hired after being a coordinator on a Super Bowl team. In 1989, the 49ers promoted defensive coordinator George Seifert after Bill Walsh stepped down following the team's victory over Cincinnati in Super Bowl XXIII.

The hiring of Shanahan finalized a deal that appeared to be in place for more than two weeks. When the 49ers were allowed to "interview" Shanahan for a second time on the weekend before Super Bowl week, he met with three general manager candidates and signed off on Lynch to serve as the team's top football executive.

"I get that it's new to him," Shanahan said last week at the Super Bowl. "But if I'm going to bet on anybody, I'm going to bet on John Lynch. He'll have to learn some stuff as he goes, just like we all do, but you're going for the person. John Lynch has succeeded in everything, and that excites me about him."

"The people who know him know how special of a guy the 49ers got."

During his one week on the job, Lynch has been busy getting in contact with candidates to serve on Shanahan's coaching staff. The team is expected to fill most of the major coaching positions within days.

On Friday, Lynch told CSNBayArea.com, "Next week could be a fun week, in terms of a lot of movement."

Shortly after the 49ers finished the season with a 2-14 record, including a franchise-worst 13-game losing streak, York announced the firings of coach Chip Kelly and general manager Trent Baalke.

Shanahan has spent the past nine years as an NFL offensive coordinator with Houston, Washington, Cleveland and, for the past two seasons on Dan Quinn's staff with the Falcons.

He is the son of former NFL head coach Mike Shanahan, a two-time Super Bowl-winning coach of the Denver Broncos who interviewed for the 49ers' head-coaching job last year.

Mike Shanahan will not be expected to have an official role within the 49ers organization, Kyle Shanahan told CSNBayArea.com during Super Bowl week.

"I always anticipate asking my dad for advice and stuff like that, just like anybody would in their profession if their dad had done the same thing and been successful at it," Kyle Shanahan said. "But as far as him working in the building and doing stuff like that, that's definitely not been in the discussions. My dad's basically retired."

The Super Bowl concluded an impressive season for the Falcons' offense. Shanahan was named NFL Assistant Coach of the Year in voting conducted by the Pro Football Writers of America and the Associated Press.

"It's been awesome to watch him and watch him grow (in previous seasons) from afar," said Falcons backup quarterback Matt Schaub, who had his best production in 2009 with Shanahan as the Houston Texans' coordinator.

"I've kept in touch with him over all the years. I've seen him evolve and how his offense has grown. He really understands how to attack defenses, how to attack coverages and utilize personnel."

Schaub, 35, figures to be in the mix to come to the 49ers as a free agent in March.

Colin Kaepernick is expected to opt out of his contract in March to become an unrestricted free agent. If Kaepernick does not opt out, the 49ers would be expected to release him to get off the hook for his scheduled \$14.9 million pay for the 2017 season. Blaine Gabbert, Christian Ponder and Thad Lewis are also scheduled for free agency.

The 49ers interviewed six individuals for the head-coaching job, including New England offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels and Seattle offensive line coach Tom Cable.

Three other early candidates ended up getting hired for head-coaching jobs elsewhere: Anthony Lynn (Los Angeles Chargers), Sean McVay (Los Angeles Rams) and Sean McDermott (Buffalo).

On Jan. 16, McDaniels announced his decision to remain with the Patriots. Two days later, Cable removed his name from contention for the job when it became apparent the 49ers were focused on landing Shanahan, sources told CSNBayArea.com.

After Shanahan was remaining as the only candidate for the job, he constructed a game plan in the NFC Championship game in which the Falcons converted on 10 of 13 third-down opportunities in a 44-21 victory over the Green Bay Packers.

A week earlier, Atlanta rolled up 422 yards and converted 50 percent of third-down opportunities in a 36-20 over the Seattle Seahawks.

The Falcons, who earned a first-round bye in the playoffs as NFC South champions with an 11-5 record, had the highest-scoring offense in the league at 33.8 points per game and set a franchise record in total yards, averaging 415.8 yards per game.

Quarterback Matt Ryan put together an MVP season in his ninth year in the NFL. Ryan posted career-bests with 38 touchdown passes, seven interceptions and a league-leading passer rating of 117.1.

Shanahan was considered among the top head-coaching prospects, and the 49ers waited for as long as it took.

"I can recognize, not only why he's a candidate, but why he's a good candidate based on his experience as a play-caller," Quinn told the Bay Area media prior to a December game against the 49ers. "Prior to connecting here, I saw firsthand how good he is and his ability to attack."

“For people to look, I think it’s warranted. If someone did speak to him, I know they’d come away very impressed.”

One source with knowledge of the 49ers’ coaching search described Shanahan as “fearless” as a play-caller. That quality might have backfired in the Super Bowl. Leading 28-20 with four minutes remaining, the Falcons could have put the game out of reach with a field goal.

But with the ball on the New England 23, Ryan was sacked for a 12-yard loss on second and 11. Still in field-goal range, a holding penalty on another pass attempt on third down pushed the Falcons back to the 45-yard line. The Patriots took over and drove 91 yards for the touchdown to force overtime. New England won the coin toss to begin overtime and scored the winning touchdown on the only drive of the extra period.

“There’s a lot of fear in everybody, it’s just a matter of how you react to it,” Shanahan said last week. “You can’t worry about the results. You have to focus on the process, work as hard as you can and prepare. You got to do what you believe in, and what you believe in is what you’ve come to through hard work and studying. When you believe in something, you got to go with it and live with the results.”

The Falcons ran only 46 offensive plays in Super Bowl 51 but averaged 7.5 yards per play against the Patriots, who owned the No. 1 defense in the league during the regular season.

“We certainly had difficulty with them,” Patriots coach Bill Belichick said Monday morning. “I think Kyle did a tremendous job with that offense all year and certainly last night right from the first play with a toss-crack (Devonta Freeman’s 37-yard run) and their play-action passes. That’s a very well-coached football team with some very skilled players.”

Shanahan’s offenses have ranked in the top 10 in total yards six times, including four of the past five years. And one of his best seasons might have been during his one year in Cleveland, when the Browns ranked 23rd in the NFL.

In 2014, the Cleveland Browns posted a 7-6 record with journeyman quarterback Brian Hoyer enjoying a career year. Hoyer led the NFL with an average of 13.7 yards per completion.

After firing Kelly and Baalke, York promised to give the top two individuals in the team’s football structure autonomy and support to execute a complete rebuild.

“I think it’s very important that we reestablish a championship culture,” York said on Jan. 2. “We need to make sure that we move forward and find the right head coach and general manager, two guys that can work together and reestablish the level that we all expect and want for the San Francisco 49ers.”

York appears to be flexible in devising the structure of the decision-making atop the 49ers. A source told CSNBayArea.com Shanahan did not insist on total control over the free agency, trade, the draft and determining the 53-player roster. But Shanahan is likely to have a strong voice while working with Lynch and new vice president of player personnel Adam Peters.

Kelly became the second coach in a row the 49ers fired after just one season. Jim Tomsula was fired immediately following the team’s final game of the 2015 season after compiling a 5-11 record.

In 2014, Jim Harbaugh and the 49ers announced a “mutual parting” amid inner-organization turmoil after the 49ers finished with an 8-8 record. Harbaugh led the 49ers to three consecutive appearances in the NFC Championship game in his first three seasons, including a trip to Super Bowl XLVII.

Kelly was hired a year ago to invigorate an offense with his innovative mind and fast-paced, no-huddle system. But the 49ers’ offense continued to struggle mightily. The 49ers ranked 31st in the NFL with just 308.1 yards of total offense per game. The team’s passing game was last in the NFL.

Meanwhile, the Falcons – with a much-better collection of offensive players, of course – finished first in the league in passing and fifth in rushing to rank No. 1 overall.

“I’ve never been around a guy who’s as impressive in the run game as the pass game,” Falcons quarterback coach Matt LaFleur told CSNBayArea.com.

“Usually, you have your specialty. You’re a passing guy or a run-game guy. He is off the charts in both areas, and I think that’s what makes him so special. It really helps him as he calls a game. He knows how things tie together.”

Kyle Shanahan takes 49ers head-coach job now that Falcons out

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

SANTA CLARA, Calif. -- It required time and patience, but the San Francisco 49ers finally got their man.

The Niners announced Monday that they have officially hired Atlanta offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan to be their head coach. The deal is expected to run for six years, matching the contract the 49ers gave new general manager John Lynch. Shanahan becomes the team's fourth coach in as many years, replacing Chip Kelly, who followed Jim Tomsula and Jim Harbaugh.

For Shanahan, becoming a head coach is the realization of a dream.

"As a young man, I had the unique benefit of being exposed to the storied history of the San Francisco 49ers firsthand," Shanahan said in a statement. "From that exposure, I developed great respect for those who created a world-class, championship standard. As this team begins the task of re-establishing that standard, I could not ask for a better partner than John Lynch. He is a man who certainly has personal knowledge of what championship organizations look like. John and I look forward to establishing a strong culture that will serve as our foundation for constructing this team."

In the process, the Niners became the last of the six teams with head-coach openings to make a hire. It was a deal 36 days in the making.

The 49ers fired Kelly on Jan. 1 and first interviewed Shanahan on Jan. 6 while the Falcons were enjoying a bye week for the wild-card round. The Niners interviewed him again during the bye week before the Super Bowl, also talking to Lynch and two other general manager candidates in the process.

But the Niners couldn't hire Shanahan until his season ended. That happened Sunday when the Falcons lost in devastating fashion to the New England Patriots in Super Bowl LI. Atlanta blew a 25-point second-half lead, with Shanahan's playcalling late in the game coming under scrutiny.

"It's not really the run-pass ratio that I look at," Shanahan told reporters of his decision to keep throwing after getting into field goal range late in the fourth quarter. "It's you stay on the field and you run your offense. We went three-and-out two times, which was huge. I think we had second-and-1 on both of those. To not convert on second-and-1 and then third, it was tough. That's why we let them get back into the game."

San Francisco moved swiftly after Atlanta lost to meet with Shanahan and finalize a contract that had been expected since New England offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels removed himself from consideration on Jan. 16.

"As an offensive mind, I think he stands alone in the National Football League, as evidenced by the explosive and record-setting offense in Atlanta," Lynch said. "Though he grew up around coaching, what has most impressed me about Kyle is that he's become his own man in the profession. Our philosophies

on football and our visions for leading the 49ers back to being a championship team align in every way. I am thrilled to have Kyle Shanahan on board."

While the 49ers waited for Shanahan, they watched as all of their other candidates took jobs elsewhere or pulled out of the hunt. The Los Angeles Rams hired Sean McVay, the Los Angeles Chargers chose Anthony Lynn, and the Buffalo Bills reeled in Sean McDermott. When McDaniels stepped aside and the Niners focused their attention on Shanahan, Seattle assistant head coach Tom Cable also opted out.

Shanahan was one of the most coveted coaching candidates in the league this offseason, interviewing with Denver and Jacksonville and having a meeting with the Rams postponed because of weather. All three teams hired coaches before Shanahan was eligible to agree to a deal.

At 37, Shanahan becomes the second-youngest coach in the NFL; only the 31-year old McVay is younger. But Shanahan's experience belies his youth.

Shanahan was the youngest position coach in the NFL in 2006 when he coached receivers for the Houston Texans, and two years later he was promoted to become the youngest offensive coordinator in the league.

In the time since, Shanahan has spent nine years as a coordinator, with stops in Houston, Cleveland, Washington and Atlanta. In six of those nine seasons, Shanahan has called plays for an offense that finished in the top nine in the league in yards per game.

Shanahan's finest work came this season when Atlanta led the league in points scored (540) and yards per play (6.7) and was second in yards per game (415.8). That performance earned Shanahan the Pro Football Writers of America's Assistant Coach of the Year award, and quarterback Matt Ryan won the league MVP award.

While Shanahan has never coached in San Francisco, he's no stranger to the organization. His father Mike was the offensive coordinator for the Niners from 1992 to 1994, pressing the buttons of an offense that led the franchise to its most recent Super Bowl triumph in 1994 before becoming the head coach of the Denver Broncos.

Speaking to NFL Network before Saturday's NFL honors show, 49ers CEO Jed York couldn't name Shanahan because of league tampering rules, but York said he was rooting for the Falcons and made it clear what he expects of Shanahan and Lynch in their new roles.

"I hate the term rebuilding because it gives people a built-in excuse," York said. "What we're trying to do is re-establish our culture, and we want to be at a championship level. John Lynch brings that. You can certainly guess as to who the new head coach is going to be, but we certainly believe that the new head coach will bring a legacy of the 49ers, a legacy of great football knowledge, and those two should be able to work together in a way that we should have a long run of success. That, to me, is the biggest thing. I don't care about going from 2-14 to whatever the record is this year. I care about 20 years from now when we look back, what did we do together, what did we accomplish over that period of time."

Plenty of work ahead for 49ers' Kyle Shanahan, John Lynch

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

SANTA CLARA, Calif. -- True to form, New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick took a moment in his Monday news conference to point out that his franchise is now working from a disadvantage and must try to catch up to the rest of the league in planning for the 2017 season.

"As great as today is, in all honesty, we're five weeks behind 30 teams in the league in preparing for the 2017 season," Belichick said.

The statement drew chuckles from the audience, considering Belichick and the Patriots had just won their fifth Super Bowl in epic comeback fashion. But Belichick is correct. Many teams around the league have already begun planning for free agency and the NFL draft. And though the Patriots' personnel department has certainly been doing its share of preparation, the coaching staff was game planning.

Still, the trade-off of five weeks of studying potential draftees and free agents for a Super Bowl victory is one the rest of the league would happily make. Which brings us to the San Francisco 49ers.

The Niners' season ended with most of the NFL's, on Jan. 1 (after a 2-14 season), and they have spent the past month searching for and waiting to hire general manager John Lynch and coach Kyle Shanahan. Although the Niners' personnel department has been making the rounds on the college all-star circuit, that task was made more difficult by the lack of direction from a coach and general manager.

What's worse, they don't have the benefit of a Lombardi Trophy to make the extra hours of playing catch-up go faster. That isn't to say the 49ers should regret doing what they did. What it does mean is there's a whole lot of work in front of Shanahan and Lynch as they begin the process of rebuilding the 49ers.

"I am very excited to dedicate myself to the process that lies ahead," Shanahan said in a statement Monday. "The first step in that process is identifying talented individuals who love the game of football as much as John and I do -- coaches, players and staff. We are looking for individuals who work hard and are dedicated to doing things the right way, always in the best interest of the team. Most importantly, we want to give our fans a team they can be proud of on and off the field."

There are plenty of tasks, both big and small, ahead for Shanahan & Co., but for now, here's a look at the three most pressing issues they must address:

1. Hire a staff

Because it wasn't exactly a well-kept secret that he would become the 49ers' coach, Shanahan had some time to ponder what his coaching staff might look like. In fact, it's safe to assume he floated some names to the Niners and Lynch at their second interview in Atlanta, allowing them to begin working through the appropriate channels.

Expect Shanahan to start putting his staff in place this week and to potentially get most of it done by the end of the week. Chances are there will be some holdovers, with outside linebackers coach Jason Tarver, secondary coach Jeff Hafley and running backs coach Tom Rathman expected to return in some capacity.

Perhaps of most importance will be what happens at defensive coordinator. Shanahan is known for his offensive background, and the Niners had the worst defense in the league in a number of categories last season. FoxSports.com reported Sunday that Patriots linebackers coach Brian Flores could be in the mix for the job, NFL Network mentioned Chargers linebackers coach Robert Saleh, and the Sporting News offered Falcons defensive passing game coordinator Jerome Henderson as an option. Jim O'Neil, who was the Niners' defensive coordinator in 2016, worked with Shanahan in Cleveland.

As for the personnel department, Lynch already hired Adam Peters as his vice president of player personnel, but other changes could be in the offing.

Regardless, with a first-time head coach and a first-time general manager, hiring top-notch coaches and talent evaluators will be of the utmost importance in the days and weeks to come.

2. Prepare for free agency and the trade market with an eye on a quarterback

When all is said and done, the Niners figure to have upward of \$80 million in salary-cap space when the new league year begins in March. They're going to need it, given the roster holes that need to be filled.

First and foremost, Shanahan will have to figure out what direction he wants to go at quarterback. Colin Kaepernick is still expected to opt out of his contract, which would leave the team with no signal-callers under contract for 2017.

One of Shanahan's career hallmarks has been his ability to get the most out of his quarterbacks. ESPN's Adam Schefter reported over the weekend that Shanahan would like to bring veteran Matt Schaub with him to San Francisco. Schaub would be a good mentor for whomever else the Niners bring in because of his knowledge of Shanahan's system.

The Niners have also been connected to Washington's Kirk Cousins and New England's Jimmy Garoppolo in possible trade scenarios, and Chicago's Jay Cutler has been mentioned as a possibility. The next few weeks will offer Shanahan a chance to gauge the quarterback market and what it will cost to land a top target -- and find the best fit.

3. Look toward the draft

Like most decision-makers, Shanahan and Lynch will want to put much of their attention on building through the draft. The good news for them is they have the No. 2 overall pick in this year's selection process. They'll have to start diving into college tape right away.

The NFL scouting combine is set to begin at the end of the month, and college pro days will follow. Perhaps the team will opt for a quarterback there, but in what's expected to be a class without a clear-cut top option at the position, the Niners will have to do a lot of homework on anyone they might consider.

49ers must continue to practice patience with Kyle Shanahan

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

SANTA CLARA, Calif. -- Patience finally paid off for the San Francisco 49ers as they hired Atlanta Falcons offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan as head coach Monday.

History and hindsight might one day offer a different view, but in the here and now, the Niners' willingness to wait appears to have landed them one of the best and most qualified coaches in this hiring cycle.

At least that's the view of general manager John Lynch, the man who will work with Shanahan to rebuild the Niners.

"He was the catch of this head coaching cycle," Lynch said. "It's one of the best years I've seen a coordinator have. But, when I talked to [Falcons quarterback] Matt Ryan and the players on this team, they spoke of the leadership and the presence that Kyle had in front of that room. I think that in this league, again, I get to see a very global outlook of the league and there's a lot of really good coordinators, but there's some that really separate themselves. I just thought Kyle, he really did that this year. He has impressed me for a long time. This year he put it all together. And it wasn't just calling plays. It was setting up plays and he was doing things and as soon as I got in front of him and saw the other part, his philosophies and how they marry with mine and all those things it just got me really excited."

There were plenty of twists and turns in Shanahan's pursuit and head-scratching moments along the way, but the process isn't nearly as important as the 49ers pulling it off and what happens next.

In surveying the landscape of available head coaching candidates, this year's group didn't come with much sizzle. Before teams even began firing their previous coaches, Shanahan and New England's Josh McDaniels were the two names that moved the needle most in league circles.

So, how did the Niners, without the benefit of a stacked roster, a franchise quarterback or any kind of recent stability at the position, find a way to get Shanahan? Simply put, they were willing to wait. In total, they waited 36 days between the firing of Chip Kelly and the hiring of Shanahan.

A lot happened in the meantime in a process that was far from perfect. Although Niners CEO Jed York said he had no preconceived plan for hiring a general manager or a coach first, the Niners ended up putting all of their eggs in the Shanahan basket after McDaniels backed out in mid-January. McDaniels, who was believed to be the team's top choice, withdrew his name after the Niners failed to interview New England executive Nick Caserio for the open general manager job.

Despite the curveballs -- three of their candidates took other head coaching jobs and two more pulled out of the running -- the Niners finished with Shanahan. He was the only coach available who combined a longtime NFL pedigree with an extensive history of success as a coordinator at multiple stops with multiple quarterbacks and an element of exuberant youth that should allow him to relate to a young roster.

Of course, Shanahan has plenty to prove as a head coach. It's a job he has never held and many great coordinators have gone on to flop as head coaches. The combination of a pay raise and paranoia has seen many a first-time coach get caught up in the minutiae instead of focusing on what matters. There will be growing pains along the way; one needs only to see the Falcons' fourth-quarter playcalling in their devastating Super Bowl collapse for evidence.

But Shanahan looks like the type of first-time coach who can have success, provided he's given time and resources to see through a plan for rebuilding the 49ers and doesn't get caught up in internal power struggles.

Ryan, who struggled with Shanahan in 2015, turned into the league MVP in 2016 and sees the characteristics of a successful leader in him.

"Obviously, I'm a big proponent," Ryan told Atlanta reporters last week. "Kyle will do a great job if he does get the opportunity. I think he'll be an excellent head coach. ... Whenever he does get his opportunity, he'll do a great job."

Shanahan has spent the past nine years as an offensive coordinator with stops in Houston, Cleveland, Washington and Atlanta. In six of those nine seasons, Shanahan has called the plays for an offense that finished in the top nine in the league in yards per game.

All of that coalesced this season when Atlanta led the league in points scored (540) and yards per play (6.7) and was second in yards per game (415.8). As the maestro of that offense, Shanahan was named the NFL's Assistant Coach of the Year.

Shanahan has the added benefit of father Mike, who won two Super Bowls as Denver's coach, as a sounding board when things get difficult. And things will get difficult at some point as Shanahan feels his way through his first head coaching job with a first-time general manager alongside.

In San Francisco, Shanahan won't have access to a roster loaded with the likes of Ryan, receivers Julio Jones, Mohamed Sanu and Taylor Gabriel or running backs like Devonta Freeman and Tevin Coleman.

It's going to take time to rebuild, something York has said he recognizes and a big reason why Shanahan and Lynch were reportedly given unprecedented six-year contracts. Of course, long-term contracts didn't mean much for previous coaches Jim Tomsula and Kelly.

"We're going to continue to do everything that we can to get better," York said in early January. "They're going to have a very, very long leash in terms of making decisions. There are no sacred cows here. Whether that's in the personnel department, on the coaching staff, in the locker room. They need to be able to re-establish a championship culture."

To have a chance to do that, Shanahan is going to need York & Co. to practice the same patience with him that it took to land him.

49ers officially hire Kyle Shanahan

By Zac Jackson, ProFootballTalk.com

The 49ers have officially announced the hiring of Kyle Shanahan as their new head coach.

Shanahan has 13 years of NFL experience and was most recently offensive coordinator of the Falcons. He previously was offensive coordinator for the Browns, Texans and Redskins. The 49ers spoke to Shanahan at their first available chance last month and again in later January, but he couldn't officially be hired until after the Super Bowl.

In 2016 Shanahan was Associated Press Assistant Coach of the Year, Coordinator of the Year by The Sporting News and Assistant Coach of the Year by the Pro Football Writers of America.

The 49ers will formally introduce Shanahan, the 20th head coach in franchise history and third in the last three seasons, later this week.

"It is truly an honor to be named head coach of the San Francisco 49ers, one of the marquee franchises in all of sports," Shanahan said in the team's release on the hiring. "I must thank Jed and the York family for entrusting me with this great privilege and tremendous opportunity. I would also like to express my gratitude to Arthur Blank, Dan Quinn and the Atlanta Falcons organization for their support and the experience of a lifetime."

Report: Shanahan targeting Saleh, Henderson as co-defensive coordinators

By Zac Jackson, ProFootballTalk.com

New 49ers head coach Kyle Shanahan will target Robert Saleh and Jerome Henderson as co-defensive coordinators on his first staff, Alex Marvez of The Sporting News reported Monday.

Saleh spent the last three seasons as linebackers coach with the Jaguars. He's been linked to the same job with the Chargers, where ex-Jaguars coach Gus Bradley is the new defensive coordinator, but a co-coordinator's job with the 49ers would be a promotion.

Henderson spent last season on the Falcons' staff with Shanahan. A former NFL defensive back, Henderson spent four seasons as the Cowboys' secondary coach prior to joining the Falcons.

Shanahan's hiring was made official on Monday, though he's had essentially two weeks to at least contact potential assistant coaches. He'll be formally introduced by the 49ers later in the week.

Marvez also reported that Jon Embree (tight ends), Jeff Hafley (defensive backs), Mike McDaniel (wide receivers) and Jason Tarver (linebackers) will also be targeted by Shanahan to join the 49ers' staff.

Kyle Shanahan named head coach of 49ers

By Nick Shook, NFL.com

It's been one of the worst-kept secrets in the coaching news cycle of the offseason, but thanks to Atlanta's appearance in Super Bowl LI, it had to officially remain in a state of limbo.

Now the wait is finally over.

Kyle Shanahan has been named the head coach of the San Francisco 49ers, the team announced.

Shanahan joins forces with recently hired general manager and potential future Hall of Famer John Lynch, who once played safety for Shanahan's father, Mike, in Denver. NFL Network Insider Ian Rapoport reported Shanahan and Lynch are each on board on six-year contracts. The plan is for Shanahan to have control over the 53-man roster, while Lynch will control the other facets of the organization, Rapoport added.

Fresh off a crushing loss and inexplicable avoidance of the run with a lead late in the Super Bowl, Shanahan's star was brighter a week ago. But that doesn't take away from his unit's performance in Atlanta in 2016. The Falcons' offense's 33.8 points-per-game average produced an assistant coach of the year honor for Shanahan, a Most Valuable Player award for quarterback Matt Ryan, and an NFC title for Atlanta.

Shanahan was in charge of a unit that also broke franchise records in total yards per game (415.8) and yards per play (6.7), and created impact players in Tevin Coleman and Taylor Gabriel, along with usual stars Julio Jones and Devonta Freeman. Atlanta's offense became feared by most of the league thanks to its unpredictability, which was driven by a utilization of a multitude of targets. It wasn't uncommon for Shanahan's offense to complete passes to 10 or 11 different targets in a game.

Those types of numbers and the on-field transformation of the Falcons before the league's collective eyes made Shanahan a prime candidate for a Niners team that had one of the league's worst offenses (31st overall in yards per game, ahead of only the offensively inept Rams).

Shanahan and Lynch have quite a task ahead of them in Santa Clara. The Niners have a roster lacking much in terms of high-level talent and an uncertain situation at quarterback. San Francisco came one unexpected comeback win over the Rams away from securing the first overall pick in the 2017 draft, instead settling for the second pick, thanks to that late-season victory. There are a multitude of voids to fill, and with Shanahan's run-first offensive scheme, the focus might turn to the trenches, quarterback and the running back position (which already features Carlos Hyde) before expanding outward.

Rapoport reported Monday that atop Shanahan's wish list is Redskins quarterback Kirk Cousins, who is approaching free agency but is again a candidate for the franchise tag.

One point to build upon in terms of roster construction and marriage with scheme is the return of tight end Vance McDonald, who signed an extension before seeing his season end early due to injury. The athletic pass-catcher showed flashes of becoming a reliable, versatile tight end as part of a unit that will undoubtedly look to him often while the Niners attempt to shore up the receiving corps (which was led by Jeremy Kerley, who is now an unrestricted free agent).

The best news: San Francisco has the second-most projected salary-cap space in 2017 at \$80.8 million, according to OverTheCap.com. That's plenty of room to work for Lynch and Shanahan.

49ers officially hire Kyle Shanahan as new head coach

By Josh Dubow, Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) — The San Francisco 49ers officially hired Atlanta offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan as their new head coach on Monday, more than a month after firing Chip Kelly after just one season.

The 49ers settled on Shanahan a couple weeks ago but had to wait until after the Falcons played in the Super Bowl to sign him to a contract. Shanahan will be formally introduced at a news conference later this week.

Shanahan is the son of two-time Super Bowl winning head coach Mike Shanahan, who also won a title as offensive coordinator in San Francisco in 1994. The younger Shanahan served as a ball boy then but now will be tasked along with new general manager John Lynch with rebuilding a team that just matched the worst record in franchise history with a 2-14 mark, leading to the dismissal of Kelly and general manager Trent Baalke.

"As a young man, I had the unique benefit of being exposed to the storied history of the San Francisco 49ers firsthand," Shanahan said in a statement. "From that exposure, I developed great respect for those who created a world-class, championship standard. As this team begins the task of re-establishing that standard, I could not ask for a better partner than John Lynch. He is a man who certainly has personal knowledge of what championship organizations look like. John and I look forward to establishing a strong culture that will serve as our foundation for constructing this team."

Shanahan won the AP award as the top assistant coach in the NFL this season when he helped the Falcons post a league-high 33.8 points per game in the regular season and return to the Super Bowl for the second time in franchise history.

That ended in disappointment after Atlanta blew a 28-3 lead to New England and lost 34-28 in overtime. Shanahan came under criticism for his play-calling in the fourth quarter.

He called a deep drop back on a third-and-1 that led to a sack and fumble that sparked the Patriots comeback and then with Atlanta in field-goal range to make it a two-possession game late, Shanahan again passed up on the opportunity to run, leading to a sack and a holding penalty.

Those were rare blots on an otherwise stellar season as a play-caller that led Lynch to call him the "catch" of the head coaching cycle. San Francisco was the last of six teams to hire a coach this offseason.

"As an offensive mind, I think he stands alone in the National Football League, as evidenced by the explosive and record-setting offense in Atlanta," Lynch said. "Though he grew up around coaching, what has most impressed me about Kyle is that he's become his own man in the profession. Our philosophies on football and our visions for leading the 49ers back to being a championship team align in every way. I am thrilled to have Kyle Shanahan on board."

The 37-year-old Shanahan becomes the third youngest coach in franchise history. Jack Christiansen was 34 when he was hired in 1963 and Frankie Albert was 36 when he coached his first game in 1956.

Shanahan got his first NFL job as an offensive quality control coach in Tampa Bay in 2004. He also served as an offensive coordinator in Houston, Washington and Cleveland before arriving in Atlanta last season.

It was clear that Shanahan was the choice for the 49ers when he was the only candidate to get a second interview and the team hired Lynch as general manager after a recommendation from Shanahan.

"Throughout this process, we learned many things about Kyle that convinced us he is the perfect coach to lead this team," CEO Jed York said. "Over the years, he has proven to be one of the brightest minds in the game of football and his recent success speaks for itself. Kyle's leadership has brought the best out of his players at every phase of his career and we look forward to watching him build a talented staff to accomplish the same with our players."

After making three straight trips to the NFC title game and one Super Bowl appearance under coach Jim Harbaugh from 2011-13, the Niners' fortunes have fallen in recent years.

Harbaugh was let go after an 8-8 season in 2014 in part because of conflicts with Baalke and then Jim Tomsula and Kelly each had one-year tenures as coach.