

TRANSCRIPTIONS



T Joe Staley
Press Conference – January 7, 2020
San Francisco 49ers

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What does it mean for you to be back in this situation?

“Yeah, very exciting. Very exciting. Obviously, to be in this situation, haven't been here since 2013. Excited to get back in the playoffs, play meaningful football. Excited for the opportunity this week in a big game. Just excited. I don't really know what else to say, just excited for the opportunity.”

Did you at sometimes feel like it might not happen for you again?

“Maybe. I'd be lying to you if I said, 'No, I always believed.' But there were some dark years here in the franchise, it's been well written about and reported on. But once I met [head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] and [general manager] John [Lynch] and the vision they had for the franchise, I was pretty confident we were going to get there. I was just happy I was still feeling the way I felt, still had years left to play, was going to be able to see this through. Excited to be here, have this opportunity, go get it done.”

Did you have a timeframe once you met Kyle and John?

“No. You realize the position we were in, coming off a 2-14 year. Kind of wanted to completely rebuild the roster. You know it is going to take time, not going to be a one-off season. Just saw the guys they were bringing in, guys they were drafting. Everything they've been telling me since the day they got here has been true. Haven't lied to me or any of the players that have been in here. They've had a vision from day one. Been exciting to see them build this place.”

What do you tell the younger guys about playoff atmosphere, media coverage, heightened fan interest?

“This is the stuff that can get a little bit distracting, the media coverage, like you said, the heightened awareness of what we're doing. As far as performance on the field, that's what we've been doing the whole entire season. I think that is the big thing to stress to the guys. I haven't made any speeches. I don't think anyone is going to make any big speeches about doing what we've done the whole entire season and preparing the way we prepared every single day. That's what's going to prepare us through the playoffs, prepare us for the game on Saturday, hopefully going forward. We can control what we can control. That's the practice we have today, the preparation we put in. You don't have to put any extra pressure on yourself that it's the playoffs. You don't have to do something different. It's all about doing exactly what you've done the whole entire year. That's why I

think the habits and the routines that you build during the season are so important for opportunities like this. You don't have to reinvent the wheel at all.”

This is QB Jimmy Garoppolo’s first playoff start. What is it about him that makes you feel like this will just be another week for him?

“The way he's been the whole entire time he's been here. The thing I always come back to when asked about Jimmy, the thing I respect the most about him, the guys in the locker room respect the most about him, is his preparation and work ethic. You see a lot of talented guys coming into the NFL throughout the years, but what guys really respect is the preparation and work ethic that he puts in. He's been the same guy since he's been here, since day one. He's going to try to be the most prepared person he can be. He is going to practice the same way every single day. Just the stuff I was talking about in the last question, really prevalent with Jimmy. The way he prepares. He's not going to try to reinvent anything. He is not going to try to do anything different. He is going to be the same quarterback, the same person he's been for this franchise since he's been here.”

How do you see him prepare?

“Guy is always in the building, on the football field, asking questions, got different answers, talking to different people. Everything that you just see. You can tell the guy knows his playbook more than anything. On field doing stuff in practice, asking questions, asking the right questions. Very detailed in his preparation, knowing what to expect, visualizing all the different stuff. He's a guy that's been in here. One of the clichés, first guy in, last guy to leave. He exhibits that. It's not just a show, it's who he is.”

What has RB Raheem Mostert done behind the scenes to excel and make the most of what he's gotten?

“He's really taken advantage of his opportunity. I think what's been most exciting about his journey is the actual journey to where he is right now. I think it's that work ethic that he's displayed. He's never complained about his role. When he was a core special teams guy, he's going to be the best special teams guy we have on this team. When he was doing look squad running back for us, he was going to give us the best look squad he had. When his opportunity came up there to get a lot of substantial carries, he was going to do the best job he could. It was always about doing what he can do to help the team. That's a message for a lot of young guys. Not complaining about your role, what your role is currently, just try to be the best player you can be for the football team. You never know what's going to happen, what opportunities are going to arise. He's made the most of it.”

What do the Vikings present up front?

“The Vikings are very, very sound up front. They're a very sound defense. They have a lot of guys that have played in the system, played together for a long time. They know exactly where each other are going to be. It's really hard to get them out of position. So, it really just comes down to doing your techniques and your blocks. They have really talented players up front. [Minnesota Vikings DE] Danielle Hunter and [Minnesota Vikings DE] Everson Griffen have been a great edge pairing in the NFL for a long time. They both present unique challenges as far as tackles go. But, all across the board, you look at everybody, they're a very sound defense. They play well together.”

How would you convey WR Emmanuel Sanders' impact? It seems like he gave you an established receiver that you really needed when he came in.

“Yeah, he came in and he just did what was asked of him. He was exactly who he was. He was a big-play guy, plays with a lot of energy. He fit really seamlessly into this locker room. I think it was pretty easy for him because we had an established locker room. He didn't come in having to be a culture changer for anybody. He just kind of came in, fit into the offense, really seamlessly into the whole entire locker room. It has been a pleasure to have him on the team.”