

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**General Manager John Lynch and Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – October 13, 2017
San Francisco 49ers
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Opening comments:

John Lynch: “So yesterday, [head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] and I had the opportunity to sit down with [LB] NaVorro Bowman and discuss some things after practice. And since then, we've been working in earnest to find a trade partner. We talked at length with NaVorro about the direction that each party wanted to go in. And that's what we left that meeting. Since then, we've been working in earnest to find that trade partner. We had a couple of things that, a couple teams that were very interested. Came very close to happening. Ultimately, we were working with NaVorro and his representation, Drew Rosenhaus, to try to get this thing across the finish line. We wanted NaVorro, we felt like he had earned the right to have some options and some choices that he deemed the right ones for him. In the end, he chose that he would rather look at all 31 teams and we granted his request there. So, we're going to go ahead and release NaVorro Bowman. Just a little context as to how this all came about; NaVorro spoke publicly about his frustration with the strategy that Kyle and his staff have put together to try to get the best out of NaVorro, in our minds, and have it be best for NaVorro and for our team. Drew spoke to me on Monday night and indicated his frustration on behalf of NaVorro and I told him that I had talked with Kyle and his staff and that we were convicted, that we felt like this was the best thing for him, which in response Drew communicated that if that's the case NaVorro would prefer to be traded. And so, we kind of let things, let everyone cool down there for a day or so. But, what it did, it started the conversation with Kyle and I on where we're going with this thing. And so, that was the plan. We feel like we're very close, if not this week, in the near future, to having [LB] Reuben Foster back. And that might even do his time even more. Ultimately, when Kyle and I came into this, we said we knew that we would have to make tough decisions, if they were in the best interests of our team. We felt like this was. We had a good, I think, honest and fruitful conversation with NaVorro. We left in a good place. We appreciate, and I spoke to [CEO] Jed York a little bit ago, he wanted to express on behalf of the York family how much we appreciate what NaVorro Bowman has done for this organization, long before we ever came and while we were here. He's given his heart and soul for this organization. And I know he's a fan favorite. So, this isn't going to be easy for the fans, but Kyle and I felt like it was in the best interest of our team and so we've acted accordingly.”

The other day you were saying you were convicted, and you were convicted in sticking with the plan with NaVorro to give him rest as he was doing and he wasn't pleased with that. Can you clarify that?

JL: "I think Kyle would be better on that. I mean, that's coaching decisions."

Kyle Shanahan: "Yeah, basically, that's what we told NaVorro. Players don't always agree with you. And it doesn't mean that we're right or we're wrong. But, we're going to always give our opinion and tell players what we think is best for our team. And NaVorro's getting more reps, and he was right at the top in reps as any linebacker in this league. And the scheme we play, being a little bit different than what he's done in the past, he's got to run a lot more, he's got to cover a lot more ground. And I didn't think, I thought it would help Bo out to play at a higher level if we took him out a couple of series throughout a game. I thought it would help save his legs more, give him the energy and the bursts that he needed to play in the scheme. And he respectfully disagreed. And I also respect that. And it's kind of what you expect from a competitor like Bo. But, I did tell him how I felt and I said that would be our plan going forward. Bo's been great to me. I've always had the utmost respect for him, just from film and playing against him, since I've been here to get to know him as a person. He's as cool as any guy I've been around. This wasn't an easy thing. It was nice to be able to sit and talk to Bo about all the stuff last night. I think he totally understood John and I's perspective and we totally understood his. And after hearing what Drew had told John and how if we weren't going to change that, that he would be interested in us looking into trading him, and then after we talked to Bo and asked him about it, definitely felt that was the best thing. Because it wasn't going to change my opinion on what we thought was best for him and the team. We were going to stick with that. With that being said, we tried to do what was best for him also and the team and give him a chance to move on. We thought we had those trade partners, but I think he was a little bit more interested in keeping it open for himself to be able to pick what team he wanted."

Kyle, just your impressions of him on the field through five games, it didn't seem that he had the agility or lateral quickness that he's had in the past?

KS: "I'd rather not compare him to the past. I thought he does a solid job. He had some games that were better than others. I think Bo would tell you guys pretty honestly, too. I think everyone knows he struggled a little bit versus the Rams, but I think everyone did with short rest and played a ton of plays, but I think he had a very good game versus Seattle and he did some good things for us. So, I think Bo can help another team and I hope he gets to a spot that he feels is a better situation for him. But, I can't, this isn't a fun decision and this is a decision that it's one that I would love to avoid and not have to make, because this is hard. And one thing I think John and I, when we got into this and one of the reasons that we wanted to come here was no matter what happened or no matter how hard something was, I wanted to be in a place where if we thought something was right and it was in the best interests of an organization and we were convicted of that, then we were going to make that decision and not worry about the things that might be hard. And once we fully talked and got to that point, then you've got to do what's right. That's I feel what I get paid to do. I feel that's what John gets paid to do. We strongly felt this would be the best decision for us right now and going forward."

And as not fun as this is, it's something that we believe will help us now and in the future."

In May you had a statement saying that the report that you were trying to trade NaVorro, or looking into that was completely false. You've already expressed some doubt about the veracity of that as far as your statement. Can you say again, were you looking to trade NaVorro in the offseason?

JL: "No, we weren't. I can tell you with complete confidence there. When Kyle and I were hired by Jed, it was understood, and we were hired with the understanding that we're the decision makers on the football side. Kyle and I had the power to do that. We are the decision makers. Neither one of us had a conversation with respect to Bo. Now, we also understand how this game works, and there's a lot of people who talk things, but that's one thing that I tried to dispel there. We were the only ones that could have made that decision. And so when you talk about shopping, I mean, I think we're the only two that could have shopped him. We did not shop him. We stand by that. It's the honest to God's truth and if you know us, that's who we are."

KS: "We're not ever going to sit up here and just lie. If we can't say something, we won't talk about it. But, the first time that we've ever shopped Bo ever at all was last night when we talked to him, what was it, 5:00, after we talked to him and we came to this conclusion, John and his staff got on the phone after and that's when it started last night."

You have a young, talented, defensive player, you're looking at a situation where you have potentially a disgruntled veteran. Was that also from your perspective maybe just making a clean break and letting some other guys step forward who may have felt a little suppressed with Bo?

JL: "Well, you use an interesting word, and Kyle did earlier, 'perspective.' I think it's something that gives me a unique perspective for everything I didn't have in terms of experience in this job, I've been exactly where NaVorro has been. It was actually with Kyle's dad. It was a very similar situation, where they were starting to pull me off the field. The plan was on third down I didn't feel like the people they were putting in front of me were better players than me. He tried to convince me it was in my best interest. Ultimately I went to [former NFL head coach] Mike [Shanahan] and said, as friends, I respect you too much. I don't want to be the guy that's coming in in a bad mood. I've never been that guy. And I want to preempt that. That didn't happen, but Bo was very honest with his feelings. And I will tell you, just so everyone's clear, at some point I think Drew came back and said, listen, he'll acquiesce, he'll come and publicly state that he's willing to live with whatever. But, having been through that myself, once you're there, mentally, people feel it in the building. And I think I truly do, and some people are going to question whether this is, but I truly do feel it's best for us and I truly do feel it's best for Bo, for him to go and have an opportunity somewhere where if someone brings him in, I will imagine they will have a role and that role will be easier. It's harder to do in the place you've been. It's just the way it is. And having lived through that, I think we were able to have a discussion last night, the three of us, and I told him, I've been exactly where you're at. And that's what contributes to my opinion that it's best for everyone."

So, he would be saying I'm willing to be a good soldier, keep my mouth shut?

JL: "That was from Drew later this morning and things. So, I think that was, I don't know all the circumstances, but I was able to tell Drew and he didn't fight it, that Drew, hey once we're to this point, we certainly feel and I feel that it's in everyone's best interest. It behooves everyone to move forward."

How much of a cap hit does the team take? I know it's not a business decision, but from what I understand close to 15 mill this year, is that--?

JL: "I don't know all the details. I don't know all those details. But it's something, again, with everything, we took everything into account. And having said that, we felt like it was the best decision for us."

Why is this move in the 49ers best interest?

JL: "It's in our best interests because what I just described. I think, first of all, Reuben Foster is closer to coming back. And we want him eventually to be our Mike linebacker. We wanted him to have that role. And so, he was already dealing with reduced reps. He was probably going to have those reps cut into a little more. And at that point there's other players we like. We like [LB] Brock Coyle. We like the way [LB] Ray-Ray Armstrong is playing, and [LB] Elijah Lee, and [LB] Mark Nzeocha, who we picked up off the practice squad from Dallas, these are all players we like and we're excited to see. And that's why we feel it's in our best interest."

Why didn't you make this move in the offseason when Foster was still healthy?

JL: "We weren't ready to yet. Bo was coming off an injury. You just don't know how that's going to go. We wanted to see where he could get in terms of how effective he could be. We felt like he made us better at the time. And now we feel this is in the best interest."

Reuben Foster had been playing at the WILL. Will he go back to the MIKE right now going forward?

KS: "That's where we plan for him to play. I can't say this week. I still can't say whether he's going to play or not this week. But our plan, he hasn't taken a ton there at MIKE. We've always worked him a little, but that's been Bo's spot. But, we do feel it's Reuben's natural spot. Once he's fully going and back in the flow of things, which I can't promise you that'll be this Sunday, but as soon as he is, that will be his spot."

(Inaudible)

KS: "It is, but it's something you don't want to drag out. Once you have that conversation and you're very up front with each other and very honest, it's always a tough conversation. But, when it's three people who both were able to keep it real with each other, understand both sides, I think Bo understood exactly what we were saying and where we were coming from. And we totally understood where he was coming from. I mean, for a player to have the career that Bo has and to have been this big to an organization that he has been and to tell someone that hey you're not going to play as much now, I mean I'd be disappointed if Bo felt differently. It's what's made him who he

is. I expected him to not like that. Just the same way he didn't like it when he was at the end of his career. And you expect that stuff. And once you get that and you hear what he wants, he knows what we want, it's not something you want to drag out and sit and try to get the best thing possible. We thought we had something pretty good. And we did. And really didn't work out the best way that Bo wanted. And so, we're not going to sit there and try to be greedy with anything. Especially with who we're dealing with. We've got too much respect to do that to him and we're going to give him the chance to go have 31 other decisions."

JL: "I can assure you that even though the short timeframe, we spoke to every team in the league. And it became very apparent the few that were interested. And we advanced it. And so, we felt like we had exhausted those resources and this was the best decision."

You're saying you did have a trade kind of lined up, but Bo didn't want to go there?

JL: "You know, that's an accurate depiction. I think there was something. Now, there were some technicalities. These trades are complex. So there were some technicalities, but that was a big part of it. Like I said, I think the idea of having 31 teams as options was more appealing to him. And like I said, we felt like he's earned that right."

Any idea how you're looking to fill the roster?

JL: "We have some ideas as to how we'll do it. I think you'll see some moves here in the next couple of days."

Just to clarify, you mentioned your last year in a similar situation. Was that '07 with the Broncos?

JL: "That was '08. It would have been my 16th year in the league. I was in camp with the Broncos. Mike and I went in, and I ended up later on going to New England for a few weeks but then called it a career."

You guys addressed the team this morning about it before you headed out to practice?

KS: "Yeah, I did. We usually have position meetings at 8:00, but I wanted to make sure the team heard from me first. I knew they would notice that Bo wasn't there, especially when it's a guy like NaVorro. I got the whole team together, explained to them similar to the stuff I'm telling you guys, the reasons I did. And I know not everyone can understand all the decisions that go into it. You just hope they respect what our intentions are and that no matter how hard it is we're going to do what we do what's best for this team. I know whenever you're talking to a group of guys that lost a brother in that way, a good friend to everybody. It's always a tough conversation. But, I think our team will, I think we've got a strong team and I think our guys will respond."