

TRANSCRIPTIONS



General Manager John Lynch and Head Coach Kyle Shanahan Press Conference – April 26, 2019 San Francisco 49ers

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General manager John Lynch Opening Comments:

JL: “I think a real productive day for the 49ers. We added two players that we think, I think a common theme in this draft for us is guys that combine speed and power and versatility. You know, I look at [DL] Nick [Bosa] and obviously he's an edge player, but has the ability to play the run and the pass and can play right, left, can beat you in a multitude of ways. I think when we saw [WR] Deebo Samuel, we saw a player we got real familiar with down at the Senior Bowl, but more than anything, you just turn this guy's game tape on and you see I think one of the elite competitors in college football this year that I saw. This guy, you're going to have to fight him and he's going to fight for yards. I think that type of play, we've talked about it before, is contagious. He's got real juice. He can catch the ball and break away. He's a thick guy. Not overly tall, you know, at 5-11 1/2, but I think he plays big. He's strong, but he's got juice to pull away from people and he can break tackles. Then [WR] Jalen Hurd, a guy who I think it's so important that your coaches have a vision for how you're going to use a player, and I think that's something that became crystal clear and is very exciting, the different ways in which we can use Jalen. That's our thoughts and [head coach] Kyle [Shanahan], unless you have any?”

KS: “Good.”

What's your vision of Jalen Hurd then?

KS: “I mean, he can do about everything. I mean, I think if he would have stayed a running back, I think he would have gotten drafted as an NFL running back. Today he got drafted as an NFL receiver, kind of. I believe if he tried to play tight end he would have gotten drafted as an NFL tight end. That's a pretty unique thing to have. I don't remember being able to say that about any player I've studied before. So, it's neat to be able to do that and he can help us out in a lot of different ways.”

Can he get open?

KS: “You've got to, to be able to play receiver or tight end.”

You've talked in the past about you don't draft guys just to go up and catch a jump ball.

KS: “Definitely.”

What tells you that he can improve his route running?

KS: "I think the stuff that, when you do have a certain size to you and you have very good hands, you don't have to be as open as other people are. But that's, we like people who can do both. I think, you know, he's played receiver for one year. He has the ability to continue to get more separation skills, but he can cut, especially with his size and hands. Good enough to go out there and beat nickel backs and corners. I think the neatest thing about him is at any time, you can put him in the backfield, too, and run a running play with him. You can run power. You can treat him like a running back, not just a receiver who occasionally goes back there, which I think's neat. I think he was close to 250 when he played running back at Tennessee. I think last year he was 230 as a receiver. You know, our tight ends are like that, too. We plan on him coming in and being a receiver and working with that group, putting him with [wide receivers coach] Wes [Welker] and [offensive quality control coach] Miles [Austin], but I don't think that's where it stops. We'll see how his body ends up being here over the years and while he does it, I also hope we can give him a few carries here and there."

Is he a former NFL RB Brandon Jacobs type of running back?

KS: "Yeah, I think similar. Brandon Jacobs, the old, the Giants guy? No, that guy is running back all the way. He's not like that. He's a normal running back with some size and height, but there's a reason he's playing receiver and we brought him here as a receiver. We like our backs. We didn't draft a running back. What we're trying to say is it's pretty neat when you have a guy who demands nickel defense on the field because he can beat a linebacker in coverages, but has the ability to go back and take a handoff here and there. It's kind of neat when you can be in 11-personnel on third down, and if you want, you can be in 21-personnel. It just depends on how you want to lineup and what the guys are capable of doing."

Did you expect to double down on receivers today or is that just kind of the way it played out?

JL: "You obviously don't know how things are going to fall, but these are two guys that we felt very good about. There's other players that we felt very good about as well. But, these were the targets and it worked out. So, we're extremely excited about that."

You said down the road, maybe Jalen, if his body changes. It sounds like you're open to maybe a switch to tight end down the road. You're keeping all options open?

KS: "Whatever the best advantage is. I mean, we drafted [former NFL TE] Niles Paul a number of years ago as a receiver, I think he was a sixth-round pick for us in Washington and he was a good receiver for us one year and we thought he could put on about 10 more pounds and he had the physicality to play tight end. He was good enough to make our team and play receiver, which meant he could beat corners. But, it was a lot neater when he put on 10 pounds and only had to worry about beating linebackers and safeties. We'll see where this goes. This guy, he's a bigger guy than Niles. He's as tough as Niles. He's got that skillset. The one difference is, we eventually put Niles at fullback. This guy could actually be put at running back, too. So it just allows a lot of versatility and it doesn't

really matter. It's how they treat him, whatever we call him and usually that's based off of is a WILL linebacker on him, a nickel back or a safety. It's neat to see how people treat him and I think that's how we'll use him."

JL: "I think Jalen, he made the position switch going to Baylor. When we spoke with him and when we saw him on film, he was actually under 230 this year trying to fit into that receiver mold. I think where Kyle is really good, get to your comfortable weight and we'll help you find that, and we actually believe that's a little higher. So, I think naturally, he's going to be a 230-pound-plus-type guy, and he'll find that right weight, whatever that is and that sweet spot will allow him to do all kind of things. We saw him as actually, sometimes a guy gets too light and you lose some of your power. It's fun to see where this can go."

KS: "What's neat, you can see a lot of guys who can fluctuate and go a bunch of different ways. What's neat is when you have a receiver who can fluctuate like that, but also it's the mentality to go play at running back or to play tight end. And it doesn't mean you want to put him there all day, but just to have the threat to do that. There's a lot of receivers who maybe could have the ability to do it, but it's very rare to have the ability and the mentality with it because playing running back is a lot different than playing receiver and it's a lot different than playing tight end and he's capable of doing it all and not too stressed out which one it's going to be because I think it will be a little bit of everything."

Both these guys dealt with some injury stuff throughout their career. Do their medical files give you any pause?

JL: "We've got good medicals on them. Jalen is dealing with a meniscus right now. He's come out of it. He's looked very good in his workouts. You know, when you look at Deebo, some lower leg things, but both of them we were comfortable with the medical and they are, I think all three of the guys we drafted thus far, aside from the speed and power, just very physical football players. So, the brand of football they play sometimes will lend to that. But, we are going to work with them to try to keep them all healthy and we really like those guys we got."

Is there a timetable for those guys coming back with their injuries?

JL: "Jalen's looked good. We had a private workout with him a week ago probably. He looks good. Whether he's ready in the very first rookie mini-camp or not, I think we'll monitor that and see exactly where he's at. He looked very good. But, we'll check that out. Deebo is ready to go, as is Nick."

Just to be clear, Jalen, you'll start him out at wide receiver and then see where that goes later?

KS: "Yeah, definitely. I probably said too much. I don't want to make the offensive weapon mistake and then every day you guys ask me, 'when are we going to see this?' He's a receiver. There's lots of neat things you can do with him. He's not going to tight end every other day. There's lots of possibilities with him and that's the type of guy we drafted, but we drafted a receiver today. What's neat about him is the stuff that we said. So, see how you guys, what you guys read into that."

You guys got some time around Deebo at Senior Bowl. Was there anything there that you picked up on immediately that really drew your interest?

JL: "Well first of all, I think a charisma. He's fun to be around. He kind of instantly was one of the guys -- and I think what you can do at Senior Bowl, it's my first opportunity being around it, you just have more of an opportunity to see who the guy really is. He's a guy that, he's done some returning but he was riding over with Hightower and the kickers and punters early. He loves football. He couldn't get enough of. He was over there catching punts early. He's a fun guy but he's also, when you watch him on that field, I think the thing that jumps out, just the fight, the grit, the toughness, and when you mix that with a guy who can get it and catch a slant and be gone, that's a pretty fun combination."

You probably don't love comparing players, but you had former 49ers WR Pierre Garçon at Z and then I think a lot of the guys talked about how angry he ran and I think people think the same thing about Deebo after the catch. Do you feel the same way and how important is what he does after the catch and evaluation?

KS: "Extremely important. He's got the speed and stuff as much as some of the top receivers in the drafts. He's got the hands to me that are as good as anyone's. But, what separated Deebo and Jalen, also, is we felt they were the two most physical players out of all the receivers in the draft. That's something that, you don't want to draft a receiver just because they are physical. But, when you can have the speed in 40 that Deebo does with his hands and the route running ability and the physicality. When you have Jalen's size, his physicality and the ability to move to some different positions. We did want to get some more physical players on the offense this year and adding those two guys, especially at a receiver position, when you can add two physical guys that are at a position, that's not always required to be physical, I think it can make your offense a lot more physical. O-linemen don't have a choice. They do it every play. Running backs have to do it every play. But you can make a difference when you add some guys like that at the receiver position."

The critique on him was that he's a little bit smaller. Some people thought he looked like a--?

KS: "Deebo?"

On Deebo, looked like a running back and the question is can he play on the outside? You guys obviously played him on the outside a lot at Senior Bowl. What did you see from him at that position?

KS: "Yeah, that's the stuff that throws me off the most with everyone saying that stuff. Playing on the outside, to me, has to do with being able to threaten guys on a go route and that has, to me, nothing to do with height. That has to do with how explosive you are and how fast you are, and you can run by people. That allows you to play outside the numbers, so people have to backup and then you can run every other route. Deebo, to me, is a big receiver. Look at his body. Look how he runs with the ball. It hurts for people to tackle him. It doesn't hurt him as bad. That's a physical receiver, to me, and a big guy and when you have the hands like that and you have the speed. We're not playing basketball. We're not just trying to throw alley-oops under the back board and post people

up and box them out and stuff. We want guys to separate, to get the ball in the hand and run. I think we've got two pretty big guys today."

There's so many receivers in this draft, especially on the second day, how long did it take you to kind of sort through that big group and kind of zero in on those two guys as guys that were at the top of your list?

KS: "It's a long process and it's a bunch of us. It starts with the scouts and everyone, who get much more of a head start than we do. Our first introduction is at Indy -- this year was at the Senior Bowl for a few guys, Deebo, Jalen was there for a day. He was hurt, but we got to hang out with him and get to know the guy. But, it changes throughout the whole time. Sometimes you'll watch a guy in a certain mood and then you watch him the next day and you don't feel the same. Usually the guys that aren't changing a bunch, you get stronger and stronger towards the draft, usually are the ones that you end up not making mistakes on and we set out this morning really hoping that these guys would be in these situations to fall to us and they were there. Everyone talked about a bunch of receivers in this draft but people talk about that a lot. Very rarely do I always agree with that. I think a lot of people do this, they might say there's 15 in there, but there's usually only three to like five that you like, and that's almost every position. Everyone has a certain thing that they want for their team and stuff and you hope those guys come at the right spot, so you always get a guy that you have a vision for. You're not just stockpiling people that have high draft grades."

Was it three to five for you this year or were there more--?

KS: "You're really trying to pinpoint me down. Yeah, there was three to five."

You have 11, I think, wide receivers now on the roster. Is that a competition you look forward to? Is that a position where you feel like you need to go into camp really having guys feel like they've got to earn their spot?

KS: "Yes, usually you take anywhere from 10 to 12 to camp because so many are out there and there's so many reps and there's always hamstring issues with how much these guys have to run, and usually six make your team. I've been on teams that have kept seven. I've been on teams that have kept five. But, what you don't want to do is be able to say who is going to make your team, when you look at OTAs just by the ability of the guys that you have and then injuries happen that give people opportunities, where you look at our roster now and there's definitely more than six NFL receivers, which is a really good problem to have. You hope you have to cut someone you don't want to cut who is going to go help another team, and the more you can start doing that, the more you know your organization is going to the right direction. That's why this draft, we feel is a little bit harder for us than these last two years, offensively and especially defensively where you're not just going to go draft a guy at any spot that you can say is going to make your team. You've got to make sure you've got a vision for him and that he can beat out the guys that you already have."

With that point being made, is there almost, is it almost kind of a benefit of having six picks were you not drafting 15 guys--?

JL: "No. We'd prefer 10."

KS: "That's never a benefit."

After you introduced Nick Bosa with his jersey and stuff and you left the room, were you curious to see how he would handle the media and were you satisfied with how he did it?

JL: "We had a job to do today, and that – but, we did have a chance to watch. I was real proud of him. I thought he handled it very well. I think he faced what he knew would be a tough room, and I thought he was very genuine, honest. Took accountability for some of the things maybe he wasn't the most proud of, and did so by being himself, and that's what we thought he'd do. We were proud of him for that."