

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**DL DeForest Buckner
Press Conference – January 24, 2020
San Francisco 49ers**

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To go through this journey with DL Arik Armstead alongside from your college days, his mom posted a picture of you guys here at the Pac-12 Championship. Can you reflect on what that's been like to work alongside each other?

“It's been awesome. Coming in as a rookie already having one of my good friends and college roommates on the team already, who's been in a similar position as me, getting drafted in the first round and being the team's first pick the year before, and really helping me transition into the locker room and having a guy to really bounce ideas off of throughout the year. It's been really beneficial for me, and it's been fun, especially this year. All the hard times, we had a lot of good times at Oregon, and we went through a rough patch here the past couple of years. To finally have this year, everything happening the right way and getting here to the “big dance,” it's been a hell of a ride.”

Defensive coordinator Robert Saleh talked about how defensive line coach Kris Kocurek makes everything black and white as opposed to gray for you guys. Can you explain what that exactly means, where you can get speed faster?

“He won't sugar coat anything, you know what I mean. If you mess up, he'll let you know. If you do something better, he'll let you know. If you do something really well, he'll let you know. There's no in between. He doesn't sugar coat anything. That's what you really want in a coach. If you're a player and you can take criticism and strive to get better each and every day, he's the type of coach you want because he'll tell you how it is. Having that relationship is really good with a player and a coach.”

How have you seen Robert Saleh evolve over the past few years as a coordinator?

“Saleh, man, he's just confident in his play calling. He's a really good coach with listening to player's ideas and everything, and honestly, listening to him and putting it into the game plan. He's one of those coaches that's a real big, approachable guy and he'll hear things out and bounce ideas off of you. I mean, like Saleh, man, he's one of the best coaches here. Just like all of our coaches, the whole entire coaching staff, all of them are approachable and you can really talk to them about anything. Whether it's on the field, off the field, and that's the kind of chemistry that we have in this organization.”

Your defense has had a terrific season. It seems like the few times you've been really challenged is when you've gone against a quarterback who can move and

run. What have you learned in those four or five games, and how do you feel you're equipped to deal with that type of attack?

“The whole thing is really just rushing coverage, you know what I mean. We all know [Kansas City Chiefs QB] Patrick Mahomes has an arm, and he's one hell of a talent and he's got speed on the outside that he can make those throws to. We just need to play really good coverage, limit the explosives and really do a good job rushing up front with containing him within the pocket and really bringing pressure early.”

Are your assignments from defensive line coach Kris Kocurek more black and white as well, not just his criticism, but what his job is for you? Is it more black and white?

“Yeah, definitely. You go through the game plan. You go through different plays that you learn throughout the entire year and you play a certain position and this is your job. Each and every single play. Defensive ends in the run game set the edge and if you're on the back side, close. Inside, if you can't follow step, you've got to attack shoulders. It's really, like you said, it's black and white. He'll tell you the assignment, what you need to do and you need to go out there and execute.”

Certainly back to getting the pressure on early, do you feel like it's more necessary in this game because Mahomes isn't known to have a ton of pressure in his face early on? Does it make it more an emphasis in this game against him to see if he'll maybe tap out at the end?

“Yeah, definitely. As a defensive line, you need to go and attack all day and once you put out the run and you start pass rushing, you want to consistently put pressure in his face, whether it's just pressure up the middle, off the edge, getting hit and also getting sacks. So, you just want to make him uncomfortable. You don't want to have him back there because a quarterback like him, when he has time to throw, he'll make you pay. We just need to do a really good job rushing as a unit.”

Head coach Kyle Shanahan's run blocking scheme has gotten more exotic as he's been here for three years. Have you noticed that when you're practicing against them?

“A little, yeah. Early on in the year, just our own alignments, changing up alignments and everything, he had to change up his own blocking schemes. Sometimes when we had those battles between the offense and the defense throughout training camp, it was starting to go back and forth. At first, you know what I mean, we were kind of, especially as a defense, dominating at first and then started getting back and forth, and then who was winning the day? It's definitely cool to see his blocking schemes and also, as a defensive player on this team, going out there and watching the O-Line, the whole entire offense go to work and run the ball over the field, it's great to see.”