

# TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Defensive Coordinator Robert Saleh  
Press Conference – November 27, 2019  
San Francisco 49ers**

[Listen to Audio](#) | [Media Center](#)

**Much sleep for you this week?**

“Yeah, well, not really, but yeah at the same time. I’ve got a bunch of sick babies at home, so they’re keeping us up. It’s okay, they’ll live.”

**Having gone against Baltimore Ravens offensive coordinator Greg Roman’s offenses before when you were on Seattle’s staff, is there any carryover or are you too far removed and is the personnel too different?**

“It’s a little bit of everything. I think he’s evolved greatly. It’s a much different system than what he had with [former QB Colin] Kaepernick. It was much easier to identify when they were doing things. I think he’s done a fantastic job evolving that system to where you have to play honest. There’s really nothing on tape that tells you what they’re doing, you just have to play good, sound, fundamental defense and bring your big-boy pads because it’s going to be physical.”

**We often see the defensive end on the read-option crashing down towards the tailback. Does that player have the option to go after either or is he coached to kind of go inside on those plays?**

“Depends on the call. Some calls, he’s taking it. Some calls, he’s not. Sometimes, he’s a quarterback player, sometimes he’s the dive player. It all depends on the call.”

**This has something to do with Seattle Seahawks QB Russell Wilson and Arizona Cardinals QB Kyler Murray being pretty good quarterbacks just in general, but they’re the most elusive guys you’ve faced this season. They’ve easily had the most success against your defense. I guess it makes sense, if guys can get away from a good pass rush, they might have more success. Do you look at those games against them and say, “Hey, we were doing things wrong” or is that just because those guys can make plays?**

“You can look at it, I’ll throw the caveat in there that Russell needed 16 drives to do what he did in the overtime period, but I thought in regulation we were doing pretty well, but anyway, you’re right. You always go back and look to what worked, what didn’t, how you can get better. So, you’re always trying to evolve. And then of course, this scheme is much different than those two. They’re completely different schemes. The whole idea of when he’s a passer, to me, stays the same, with respect to your rush lines, but with

regards to the run game and how they use him is much different than the way they do Kyler and Russell.”

**How is S Jaquiski Tartt at being in the box and playing that read-option and then also still having the pass-coverage responsibilities?**

“He’s good. He’s got good instincts. The more he’s down there, the better he’s gotten in terms of feel, understanding his run fit, understanding his reads and being able to key in on the tailback and making sure that he can feel the line and all that stuff. He’s gotten a lot better at it over the course of his career and he’s going to need to be even better this week.”

**What you just said a second ago about Baltimore Ravens QB Lamar Jackson and head coach Kyle Shanahan described him as a running back as opposed to the other two quarterbacks that they want to kind of get rid of the ball and get down eventually when they open the field. Is that the big difference with him when he’s out in the open?**

“When he’s scrambling, yeah, I think he’s more looking to create his explosive downfield with his legs where a guy like Russell, Kyler, they’ll try to throw it first. The kid’s a really good quarterback. I think his arm is very underrated. He’s pretty dynamic. For sure mindset-wise, you get a feel that he’d rather run the ball when he’s scrambling than throw it.”

**The talk of how dynamic and explosive he is, they brought in Baltimore Ravens RB Mark Ingram II, 220-pounder, those tight ends. How tough is it to match up against an explosive runner at the quarterback and then also that power run game that they’re able to kind of mix in?**

“That’s a lot of the challenge is that they are a downhill, power running football team. Then you implement the read-zone stuff that is kind of designed to spread you out and do all that stuff. He’s got a good system going, so it’s going to be a good challenge. They’re a physical bunch. We’ve got to bring it to them.”

**Is that one of those where if you go light to try to cheat for extra speed, you’ll get steamrolled?**

“Yeah, if you create space, absolutely. They’re so big, they’re so powerful. They’re falling forward and doing all that stuff, so when you look at that, just trying to play within the discipline of the defense and make sure you’re doing a good job matching that physicality so you can get full pad so you’re not trying to make an arm tackle and reaching at people. It’ll be good.”

**Is this the most unique offense you’ve ever had to prepare for? From a sense that they’re outside the box with a lot of stuff?**

“Yeah, he had some stuff in Buffalo, but not to this degree where it’s just play after play after play. I guess you could say it’s pretty unique. It’s a tremendous challenge and everyone’s pretty excited about it. It’ll be fun. It’s going to be, I’m telling you, I’m excited to get out there. It’s going to be a fun game.”

**Does their aggressiveness in terms of going for it on fourth down change how you have to approach third down?**

“Depends on where you are on the field, situation and all that. It could. Down and distance, all those different things come into play. We actually, tonight’s the night we do our heavy third down stuff. So, I’ll be able to answer that tomorrow, but it’s Thanksgiving, so.”

**You guys have been really good on fourth down this year in those types of situations. What can you pinpoint to why?**

“Usually it’s a run down. If you’re trying to pinpoint what an offense does really well, you’re trying to stop it, whether they throw the ball, run the ball, it could be balanced, but you’re just trying to put guys in position to be able to go make a play in those situations. Our guys do a really good job of understanding situations, understand what’s being asked of them so they can play their technique and do all those things. On those fourth-and-one, third-and-one, got to have its, our guys do a really nice job creating knockback up front, getting to the ball carrier and if it’s pass, being disciplined in coverage so they’ve got their eyes on their luggage, playing good, fundamental defense and doing all that stuff. It’s really just designing a specific thing to help versus all the different things that teams might do.”

**On that fourth down against Green Bay, you got to put DL D.J. Jones and DL Sheldon Day in. Was that timeout kind of a blessing from the sky there that they called?**

“Yeah, it was. Initially, we got stuck because we thought they were going no-huddle right there. We were fine, we had the defense, we had the structure and all that. We were going to play, we were in good shape, but us being able to get those two guys out there was a big benefit, because D.J. is actually the one who made that stop.”

**Against a team like this, how important is that nose tackle? Is that even more important in a game like this?**

“No, I think everyone is. Because of what they do and all their downhill stuff, the four-down linemen, the edge setting presence that we have, the nose, the three, your linebackers flowing, they’re all in this together. It’s that front seven, the corners playing disciplined, the middle-third player making sure he’s not giving up easy go balls or post shots and all that stuff. Everyone’s just got to be disciplined, clean with their eyes and go play football and just play sound football. Don’t chase ghosts, just play sound football and just rally to the ball.”

**What makes Baltimore Ravens G Marshal Yanda unique?**

“He plays very angry to me. I enjoy that out of an offensive lineman. They’ve got a couple guys that play angry as heck. For me looking at it, it’s actually enjoyable to watch.”

**Who else is angry?**

“That [Baltimore Ravens TE Nick Boyle] 86, he seems angry. I like him. That was my college football number, too, so I like him already. They’ve got a couple of guys, the backs run hard, the receivers block. They do a really nice job. Greg’s doing a great job getting those guys coached up.”

**Do you coach angry?**

“Teach with excitement.”

**It looks like there’s a pretty good chance that it might rain on Sunday. How much does that make your job tougher going against a team the runs the ball as much as they do and does that experience against the Redskins help at all?**

“I think they’re field-turf, right? I don’t think it’s going to be the same muddy, slop fest.”

**I think it’s grass now.**

“Is it grass now? Okay, didn’t know that. Might help, I don’t know (laughter). Maybe they’ll slip and fall a little bit. I don’t look at all that stuff because you’ve still got to get your feet in the ground, you’ve still got to go play football. The passing game might not be as effective like it was, similar to what happened in Washington, but it doesn’t matter. This team is a run-first team and we’ve got to stop the run.”

**Who’s playing Lamar on scout team this week?**

“I think we’ve got [WR] Richie James [Jr.] out there. I think. I’ve got to check.”

**You said it was exciting for these guys. What about this makes it so exciting? Another chance to prove just how dominant this team has been all season?**

“It’s another championship opportunity. It’s another opportunity to just keep, we always talk about when you step between the white lines, you’re always trying to do your personal best, but you’re reminding the world how great you are also. It doesn’t matter the opponent, it doesn’t matter who they are. You’re out there to do your absolute best and you’ll make the great ones look normal and you’ll make the bad ones, even though there are really no bad teams in the NFL, but you’ll embarrass the bad ones. That’s the objective is that you line up across from your opponent and it doesn’t matter who they are. You’re giving them your absolute greatest punch. It’s another great challenge. We’re going all the way out east on a holiday weekend and we’re playing a really good football team. It’s another challenge to show how great we are. That’s the challenge.”

**You used the phrase, “Don’t chase ghosts.” You have a very athletic, fast defense. It’s also young. Is it susceptible to chasing ghosts?**

“No, it’s just when they’ve got all these jet sweeps and it’s very similar to what our offense does. There’s a lot of moving parts and if you’re chasing the moving parts and not focusing, just keep the main thing the main thing and be good with your keys and trust that if you just play with your fundamentals, you play with your coverage and you fit things based on what you see, you’ll land where the ball lands. That’s the most important thing. Don’t chase things because you think you think something’s happening. Play disciplined, play your rules. The ball will come to you.”