

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – October 9, 2019
San Francisco 49ers**

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Opening comments:

“Same thing with [T] Joe Staley, [CB] Ahkello [Witherspoon], and [FB Kyle Juszczyk] Juice you guys know from yesterday. [DL] Dee Ford was limited today with his knee and then you guys saw the new one with [T] Mike McGlinchey. McGlinchey is getting his knee scoped. He’s going to be out 4-6 weeks.”

Is that an injury that occurred during the game?

“Yes, yeah. It happened in two plays. I think it started in one and then got worse on another.”

With such an integral piece of your running game in Kyle Juszczyk missing now, how do you address someone to fill that gap? Obviously, his blocking techniques and his pass-catching ability too, like he is such an integral part of your offense, especially in the running game.

“I mean, you don’t replaced Kyle. He’s kind of one of a kind at fullback. We still use a fullback, and you do that with tight ends also. I mean, you motion them in there and do stuff, but no one is going to fully replace him. We’ve just got to do some different things and adjust.”

What’s the plan for replacing McGlinchey?

“We didn’t sign any. Oh, I thought you were talking about Kyle. [OL Daniel] Brunskill will be up, next guy up and we’ve got him and [T] Sam Young on the roster, so we’ve got those guys left. We will get them out there and going. Brunskill has got in a little bit, a few plays in the last two weeks. At least he’s gone in there a little bit. Had a real good preseason, so I know he will go in and do a good job.”

So, it’ll be Brunskill at right tackle and OL Justin Skule at left?

“Yes.”

Are you guys feeling any more urgency now to maybe make a trade?

“I mean, you always feel the same. Things got to be available without being held ransom. You’ve got to be able to make smart decisions and if there was a smart decision out there we would definitely look into it. We look into it all, but it doesn’t seem like many are available right now.”

General manager John Lynch has said something similar. Is Washington Redskins T Trent Williams really not available? I mean, have teams been kind of stonewalled when they inquired about him?

"We're not allowed to talk about that, right? I mean, I think we hear the same things you guys are hearing. It doesn't look like there's much movement there."

What's there to know about Brunskill? What kind of player is he? How do you feel about him stepping in?

"I feel very similar to how we do about Skule. He's a guy who got to play in the AAF this year. That's where [vice president of player personnel] Adam [Peters] and the guys upstairs found him. I didn't know much about him until he got here in OTAs and training camp. Got to see him then and I became a believer in him. He was number 61 for a while for me and then he became Brunskill because he was low on the radar as it started out, but he earned his spot on this team. He did a real good job. That's why he was on the team. That's why he wasn't on practice squad and when he got in there for one play versus Pittsburgh and did a hell of a job, got to play a little bit two nights ago versus Cleveland, very similar to Skule in that the game is not too big for him, he's very efficient, he's a smart player. He will get the job done and he will be ready for the challenge on third down."

How critical had Juszczyk been to the success of your run game in the first four games?

"He's very critical. I mean, he is a big part of that. He's just as important as those running backs are."

With CB Richard Sherman's experience, can he play an enhanced role for you guys particularly against a team with three great receivers? Is he an extension of the coaching staff in some respects?

"Yes, I think anytime you have very good players that have been playing for a while it's because they are definitely very talented, but it's also because of what's upstairs. I mean, they know a lot of football, they've seen a lot of football, they're smart, they know pass patterns, their recollection of plays they've been beat on is very well. I think Sherm is at the top of that aspect of that part of the game."

There was a report that you guys worked out seven fullbacks. Did that happen yesterday and do you have any plans to sign any of them?

"No. No plans to sign any. We looked at them. You've got to be, I mean, we are one down for 4-6 weeks and we don't have one, but tight ends can do that stuff too just like a lot of teams do. He's not designated a fullback only, but you've got to do that in case you have other injuries."

TE Ross Dwelley talked a lot about the tight ends play that fullback position effectively. Do you expect to see him slide in that role a lot?

"Yes, he would be the next man up. That's what we use [TE George] Kittle on too though. It's not necessarily all the exact same, but that is what most teams do. Not many teams

have a fullback on their roster, but you motion a tight end back there and he is a fullback. We will do that or motion one of our receivers back there to play fullback.”

You guys had former NT Earl Mitchell back there a couple years ago. Are there any defensive tackles that you might use?

“[DL] Sheldon [Day] was ready for our goal line package and stuff and he’s always a backup fullback for us in case need be. Might have a hard time with the pass routes, but he can do the goal line stuff. He says he can do the pass routes, I believe him.”

What’s going to be the key to maintaining your success on the ground game without Kyle Juszczyk the next few weeks?

“I mean, Kyle is definitely one of our best players, but it takes all the guys. We have been playing very physical, I think, in these four games. We can’t lose that at all. No matter who has been out there guys have brought it on every play. No matter who’s run the ball, they try to get more yards than what’s blocked for. It starts with the effort of the whole team and when you have effort, usually good things happen. It’s not always going to be clean and stuff. The more you can get the ball, the better you can do on third down, the more we can stay with the run as a team and calling the game, the more you’ll get those stats. But, everything goes into that.”

Are you going to make a lot of schematic adjustments or do you feel like it’s going to be a pretty seamless transition?

“I mean, yeah of course. When you lose real good players, both of your tackles and your fullback you’ve always got to make adjustments. But, you’re not going to reinvent the wheel either. You’ve got to go out and play football and just try your hardest to put them in a position that gives them the best chance to be successful.”

McGlinchey hadn’t missed a game, I don’t think, ever in his football career before this. How difficult was it to tell him, or how much push back did you get from him and did he try to play through it?

“Yes, I think that’s why I wasn’t quite as worried about it when I talked to you guys Monday night. He didn’t take himself out, he was limping a little bit which he does a lot in games because those guys are linemen and that does happen. As long as there’s no bad damage, they’re usually alright, but he kept up with it. I remember seeing him doing it. I took him out personally. Just telling me he didn’t want to go out because he didn’t think he was that hurt. He didn’t feel like he was that much after the game, but the energy goes down a little bit, how amped up you are, he came in the next morning it was hurt a little bit more and when they checked it out it was a surprise to him and a surprise to all of us.”

How has he played this year to this point?

“Mike’s done a good job. I mean, he’s had some more challenges than he had last year, but Mike has done a good job. He had a tough matchup versus Pittsburgh where he missed a couple, which you guys documented. But, Mike’s done a real good job, he’s one of the main reasons we are running the ball so well.”

Will you have to make any move on the 53 man, because you already have on the 46 man the guy who would move up, so do you feel the need to do anything?

“Not right now. In order to do it because no one has gone on IR we would have to cut someone. We haven’t done that yet and I don’t see us doing that this week.”

What did you see on the tape from special teams especially with the long snapper? It seemed like a couple problems there on Monday.

“Yeah, on the field I thought it seemed like there were a few more. Just after getting in and watching the tape, I thought there was definitely one snap that he could’ve done better on, but I thought it was only one snap.”

This is a short week for you and meanwhile Los Angeles Rams head coach Sean McVay, defensive coordinator Wade Phillips and their staff have extra days to prepare. Do you go into this game feeling like you’re at a strategic disadvantage?

“I mean, it is what it is. You always want more days, not just for a coach to prepare, but also for the players to rest. This is how it was last year after Green Bay, so sometimes that can hurt yourself, too, though. Sometimes you get too many days to prepare and you’re a little bit rusty, you overdo it, so it works both ways. Normally, you’d like more time.”

Do you expect the Rams to bring extra wrinkles that they might not ordinarily because they have that extra time?

“You never know. You’ve got to be ready for everything. They’re always going to have, Sean and Wade, are always going to have a few wrinkles each game, but they believe in what they believe in and they’re not going to reinvent the wheel and try to stray too far away from what they do well. They’ve got a good team. They don’t have to make much stuff up. They’re going to be rested. We’re going to go in there, they’re going to be ready to go and it’s going to be a good game.”

I know you’re not a doctor, but fair to say that it’s cartilage damage that’s being corrected in there?

“Neither of us are doctors. He got it scoped.”

So probably cartilage?

“I would think so.”

Do you know what part of the play that happened on?

“No, I think it started with one of, the around that [WR] Deebo [Samuel] had where he bumped into him and the defender and I think he got rolled up about a quarter later, so it was one of those two. You could ask him, though.”

He had a PRP injection in the offseason. Is it the same knee?

“I’m not sure if it’s the same knee. The thing that he had in the offseason is something he’s had since college, so that’s a normal thing for him, something he was used to. This is a different thing.”

Not connected?

"Not connected, yeah. They fell on his legs awkwardly and it was an unfortunate injury."

WR Richie James Jr. seemed to have a challenging night returning. He kind of hesitated, let a couple go that he probably should have caught. Did you talk to him about that? What was his--?

"I haven't personally. I know they covered in the special teams meeting today. They're ones, I mean, you've got to catch it. It changes field position too much. I know there was one real tough one that was way, I don't know if it was the first one, there was one that was way too short. We didn't expect him to catch it, but the other ones he should've. Ones he'd like to have back, definitely. He's got to catch those. First left-footed punter, that's always a little bit awkward, but he's done it before. He's done it in practice when we bring those guys in. Did end up having a good punt return in there at the end, but yeah, we need him to catch those."

Is it reassuring at all to know that despite the fact that you're losing these tackles and Juszczyk that you're going to get these guys back for basically that long stretch at the end of the season, especially with your IR guys as well?

"Yeah, well I mean, always when you get bad news, you want to turn it into some good news, so glad they're coming back in 4-6 weeks. You're always upset when you lose guys, any guy, especially those guys, but then, at least we're not losing them for the year. We've got a decent record right now and got to keep it going. Hopefully when they come back, they're a part of something."

Did he already have his knee scoped?

"No, tomorrow. Yeah, tomorrow."

What challenges do the Rams present?

"They have challenges all over. They're a very good team, they've got a very good special teams, a very good defense, very good offense. Their offense has been one of the best, if not the best, here for the last two years, going on a third year. They've been very good at running the ball, very good at throwing the ball. Their defense, they've given up some yards, some points and stuff, but they're an opportunistic defense with very good players, smart coaches and they can create turnovers. Haven't got as much as they've had in the past, but it's a matter of time. They've got a very good team and it's not a surprise why they were in the Super Bowl last year."

What's your early assessment of DL Nick Bosa? Has he been everything you had hoped he would be?

"Yeah, he's right on track. We know he had a little bit of a late start with the injury. He's played good in every game, though, even though he's been limited. Last week was kind of the first time versus Cleveland that he really got to go and play a full game and more plays than just a limited role. It was a better result, so hopefully that continues to get better. I know he got out of it healthy and he's been what we've hoped for so far."

Is he healthier and more explosive than he was--?

“Yeah, definitely. You could see that in practice, just being able to get through the practice the whole week and not having the setbacks. Always when you have an ankle, each week just some little thing happens just here and there. I think he went the whole week last week not having it and when you see that, you just see each day it get a little better and better. They’re always better on Sunday, too. Or Monday.”

Losing another offensive tackle sort of puts the focus back on Justin Skule a little bit. How has he been generally in his two starts and has there been any particular part of his game that you’ve been impressed with?

“I mean, I think he’s been real good in his two starts. The first game, the biggest negative was just those penalties and he cleaned all of those up last week. He had a huge challenge in who he was going against. He definitely held his own. It’s a huge team effort, too. When you play well as a team, you don’t put those guys in as big of a predicament having to block drop back passing every play. So, when you can get the turnovers on defense, when you can run the ball well on offense and if you can get a lead, it does help those guys out a lot. Third down is third down, usually. When you do that, you’ve got to step it up. I know our first drive of the third quarter versus Cleveland was probably our best drive of the day. It was eight plays, I think 90 yards, but the third play was third-and-6 and Skule had a big block one on one. We had an out route to [WR Marquise] Quise [Goodwin] that got us the first down and that allowed us to go the rest of the way. If you don’t make that block on third down, you don’t get that drive.”

On that drive, it ended with a touchdown pass to Kittle and it seemed like Cleveland Browns DE Myles Garrett got a nice pass rush on Skule, but that ball was out before he got there. Is that a way that you, the play caller, can adjust to not having your two top tackles, just faster?

“It always helps when people are open faster. You can get rid of it before they get there. It’s not always easy, but yeah, the quicker you can get rid of the ball, the more it frustrates those guys and that’s why you try to mix it up so the defense doesn’t know what’s coming. If you become one dimensional, it’s a lot harder to block those guys and it’s a lot harder to get people open.”

I know you’ve been hard on your receivers the last few months. Is there extra emphasis or pressure, whatever, on them this week from you given that you might not be able to run the ball 40 times?

“No, I just expect them to do their job whatever’s needed and they’ve been doing that. I know we had two drops yesterday, but those guys, the way they competed in the run game, the way they competed in the pass game, they kept us on the field in third down. I know we had one third down that they didn’t where it got knocked out, but no, I want them to just keep getting better each week. You go into every game hoping to run the ball like that. It rarely works out that way. You balance both of that out and the receivers have a huge, they get a huge credit in what we’ve been doing in the run game. You can’t run the ball as well as we’ve been doing if the receivers aren’t blocking like that. But, those guys are getting better in the pass game and you never know what game, what quarter, but we’re definitely going to have to win a game throwing the ball also some time.”