

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – September 16, 2019
San Francisco 49ers**

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Any update on T Joe Staley’s knee injury?

“Same, I think, from last night. Same what I told you guys and we’ll probably expect about six to eight weeks.”

Is there any plan on brining any tackles in to work out or anything?

“Yeah, I think we will later this week, probably work some guys out. But yeah, we’re not set on anything yet.”

How did T Justin Skule do?

“When he came in, he did a good job. We were mainly running the ball at that time, but it was good to get him in a real NFL game, especially since he’s going to be playing a lot next week.”

What have you seen from him just since he’s been here?

“Just the game’s not too big for him. That’s what we liked a lot about him, being a four-year starter in the SEC at Vanderbilt. He got to play against a lot of good players always throughout an entire game. He played the whole game pretty well. Wasn’t always a ton of great highlight-tape plays, but he’s a guy the game wasn’t too big for and helped his team win.”

You and general manager John Lynch have been aggressive throughout the tenure here looking at options. Are you going to be aggressive, you think, looking at what is out there for left tackle?

“Yeah, always. We would love to if there were options. You look at anything that’s possible. I don’t think there’s a ton of great options out there that are possible.”

You’re 2-0, two road wins, do you feel different about this team having done that or is this what you thought you were going to be?

“I mean, we expected to be, but I’ve been in this league long enough that I know no matter what you expect, it’s had. It’s very hard to win in this league versus whoever you play. We knew we had a better team going into this year. I think we played like it in two games. What I was really happy is we found a way to win an ugly game that first game, which we haven’t done too much around here. Yesterday was a little bit different, everything kind of just clicked in all three phases, so that was fun to be a part of. But no, by no means do

I feel, I never feel great. We're 2-0, we're going to have a real tough team this week, got a number of injuries we've got to deal with and make some adjustments this week because of it. The season's just getting started."

Obviously, you've been on the road for so long, but to get the win you had, to go 2-0 and the flight back home, what was that like?

"It was fun. It was real fun. We had a pretty bad delay, so it took us a while to get onto the plane. It took a while to refuel coming from Chicago, but when we got on there, it was a good time. Usually you get on there and fall asleep, but not this time. We stayed up pretty late, now that we're East Coast guys, we know how to stay up later. Being back it definitely, being away for 10 days, it would've been a much sadder feeling coming back here being gone that long if you came back losing those games. To come back 2-0, it made it a lot more fun."

Is there a sense of urgency to maybe make an addition at left tackle or do you feel confident enough in Skule that you can give him at least this game before the Bye and then maybe reevaluate after he puts some stuff on tape?

"I mean, you're always doing that stuff as coaches. When you go to your final roster of 53, I mean, at every single position, whoever's on it, you're looking at all options out there to see. If that's the case with Skule on the final 53 and we're trying to see who's better at that time two weeks ago. We kept Skule because we thought he was the best available. That doesn't change now. I think Skule's going to get a lot better throughout his career, but we kept him on this team because he can help us win now. Unfortunately, he's going to get thrown into that right now. We were hoping it wouldn't happen that way, but he'll step it up and we've also got [OL Daniel] Brunskill also who can play the position, so we'll practice both of them throughout this week. We'll see how it unfolds on Sunday."

I know you said it was unlikely yesterday, but 24 hours later, is there any more thought about moving T Mike McGlinchey to the left side or are you still liking him at the right tackle?

"No, I don't see a difference. [Denver Broncos OLB] Von Miller always rushes on our right side, so I think there's movies named after the left side and stuff like that, but once you get past that then I don't see much of a difference."

How does Skule block in the run game? It seems like he fits your scheme well.

"Yeah, he does a good job. He's very efficient in what he does. He's still, I mean, he's getting better at it each week. Those are the types of guys I do like as O-Linemen. O-Line is a grimy game. There's lots of stuff that they have to do and it's fun when they pancake people and get noticed for that, but usually guys get noticed when they whiff on people and the quarterback gets hit or they hit the back four yards deep in the backfield. It's about getting on your man. The more he can, the more reps he gets, the more he can play. I believe he's got the type of mind and the talent to get better."

Will you have to help him in pass-pro in ways that you wouldn't have to help a great player like Joe Staley?

“I mean, you’re always, when you put a rookie out there, especially someone going into his first game, you’ve always got to think of how to help them. But that’s, it depends on who you’re going against, also. There’s plenty of weeks you help McGlinchey and plenty of weeks you help Staley. There’s some good rushers in this league, so I’ve been with a lot of good tackles. Having [Washington Redskins T] Trent Williams in Washington and [former Cleveland Browns T] Joe Thomas in Cleveland and Staley here, there’s still times you’ve got to help those guys also.”

What about DL Dee Ford? Is it the same injury that he dealt with in August in terms of the knee?

“Yes, yep, the same area. Quad, knee area. He’s still hurting today. We’ll see how he is for practice on Wednesday. I don’t have anything new to update today, but practice will definitely be in question for Wednesday.”

Anything else crop up injury-wise?

“No, there’s some wear and tear, but nothing to where I’d tell you guys that guys are going to be out for Wednesday. We’ll see how they come back then. I’ll have a better update for you guys then.”

On the broadcast, they said that you guys told them that RB Matt Breida is your best running back?

“Who’s that?”

The broadcast.

“Those guys shared all of my secrets, huh? No, they were asking why he’s not in much. Why he’s not in all the time because he looks like a really good runner. I just said, yeah, he has some plays where he looks like the best running back, because he is very efficient in what he does. He always hits the right hole and that’s why he was hard to get off the field last year, even when he wasn’t always 100-percent. Breida’s also as tough as any running back I’ve been around, but it’s also very important to keep him fresh. He was able to play with us a lot last year, but Matt, just like anybody, the more he gets worn down, the harder it is to play up to his full ability. That’s why we do try to spell him, try not to keep him in there every single down, because we believe it’ll help him, which helps the offense in the long run.”

With RB Jeff Wilson Jr. getting the two scores yesterday, was that just kind of how the game went or does he give you something down by the goal line that maybe the other guys didn’t?

“Yeah, I mean, we don’t mind the other guys going in there. We try to spell them out and keep them fresh. We usually try to do that with two guys, but we wanted to get Jeff in the game, and we definitely planned on when we got closer to there, doing it. You’ve got to try to set something before the game and help [running backs coach] Bobby [Turner Jr.] with the substitutions and things like that. I wouldn’t say he’s our designated red-zone back, but that was how we planned going into the game and he did a good job with it. We tried to do that when we got down there.”

Has RB Raheem Mostert taken his game to another level? He's always been fast, but it seems like he's really finishing runs.

"Yeah, I think that everyone started to see that last year versus Green Bay. You get that week before where he had a fumble, which we were on him pretty hard for, because he had done it a couple times, and we were down on some guys with some guys getting hurt and banged up. I know [former 49ers RB] Alfred [Morris] wasn't totally healthy that way, that game, and we put Raheem in. He started breaking tackles that game and did some really good things for a couple weeks and then he got hurt, which then he went away until this year. I know Raheem going into this offseason, I think he showed us and everyone else that he can make those plays, but I think he also showed himself. I know going into this offseason, he had a lot more confidence because he always thought he could do it, but he actually went in and did it for a few games. His opportunities didn't come right away, but when [RB] Tevin [Coleman] got hurt, since he went in versus Tampa and what he did yesterday, it was exactly, to me, how he left off versus Green Bay."

Did you guys give LB Kwon Alexander the game ball again?

"No."

He had one in his locker.

"Did he? He's been carrying that game ball around since we gave it to him. It was actually, if everyone appreciated it that much than we would give it to guys a lot more."

It looked like you were in nickel defense almost the whole time. Was that strictly based on their personnel or did you want to play nickel?

"No, based off their personnel. They went three receivers so much so we usually match people."

How encouraged were you by WR Deebo Samuel's play at wide receiver and what do you think about the wide receiver corps through two games?

"To me, I'll always say you're getting better or worse. I think they took a huge step forward this week. I thought they played very well, especially in the run game, all of them. They blocked extremely hard and were one of the reasons we got our running backs to the corners and not always just the safeties. Deebo, I thought, did some really good things when he got the ball in his hand and I also thought he ran some of his best routes that he's done, especially that first play of the third quarter. I thought that was the best route that he's had since he's been here. Even the one that he dropped was a really good route. He dropped the ball, which he's got to finish, but I was encouraged by his route. But, I thought all the guys took a step in the right directions. I was really happy with them."

The tackling's been a lot better through two games this year than last year. Do you attribute that to better personnel or something you guys did in the offseason?

"Hopefully we get better at coaching it and then hopefully the players, we added some players who are pretty good at it. I think we've had a lot more than just one guy at the ball too. I think it's tough for anyone just to tackle a guy one-on-one. I think we've had a lot more guys flying around, getting to the ball, playing a little bit more aggressive and getting guys down. It's been encouraging, but it's not like we were tackling in practice or anything."

You've got to constantly talk about it and harp on it and you've got to make sure you've got the right guys."

How did DL Nick Bosa come out of that game just in terms of his health?

"He came out healthy. Healthier than the week before. Sometimes when you come back with a high ankle sprain you always get a few setbacks in those games. I know he did versus Tampa, but he didn't complain of any yesterday. Didn't play as much. We were playing him less on purpose and then we took out most of our starters there in the fourth quarter. I think it worked out well. He was able to affect the game and get out healthier than he did the week before."

If DL Dee Ford were not to play on Sunday, would you like to keep the rotation the same and have Bosa in sub-package and third down or would you increase his workload?

"I don't think that would have to do with Dee. I think that would more have to do with his health. We're going to give him whatever he can handle and if we feel he's good enough to go and it's not risking him for anything, then we'll play him as much as possible."

I know you don't base anything on what the chatter is, but QB Jimmy Garoppolo obviously there was conversation even after last week about not playing well or could be playing better. After this week, is there any conversation with him, even before, about what you might be thinking about his play and what you expect from him moving forward?

"No, not much. I don't try to make a big deal with him the first week. You go over the plans and you coach him up and we did the same thing today when we watched the stuff. I think it was good for him when you talk about the chatter and stuff. I think it was good for him to have some success because that always takes a little pressure off. Everyone, whether you try to ignore it or not, you hear that stuff. I think it's good that he did go out there and have some success so that he can take that off his back a little bit and relax and just go through his process of just trying to improve each week. We all know what he's coming back from. He did struggle at times the first week, but he had some good plays too and yesterday he had a really good day, but there were also some plays he missed. By no means was it perfect so that's just, you look at each play as its own and you get through the whole tape and I think he was happy with the result, but hopefully he's not satisfied."

With Pittsburgh Steelers QB Ben Roethlisberger, obviously it's a completely different game and how different will they be without Ben?

"I'm still trying to get to them, once you guys let me get out of here. Anytime they don't have Ben, that's a huge deal. Ben's one of the best quarterbacks of our generation so I know that's got to be a huge blow for them. But, I know [Pittsburgh Steelers QB Mason] Rudolph will be ready. He'll step in. They've always had a good scheme. They know what they're doing and they've got some other payers out there too. By no means is, it's still the NFL, it's going to be a very tough game. Anytime you lose a guy like Ben Roethlisberger, everyone knows how good he is and I still think he's underrated. It's a big blow for them."

That first touchdown to WR Marquise Goodwin, I noticed FB Kyle Juszczyk had to come across the formation after the fake. How tough of a block, pass block is that?

“It’s tough, especially to do it from the I formation. That’s what’s nice about Juice, he’s got a lot more fluidity than a lot of other full backs. He can be in the I in a three-point, go to the strong side, not run into the quarterback, come back across like he’s doing a slide and then stop and block which allows Jimmy to pull up and look for Marquise trying to sneak out the back side.”

Have you a chance to solidify the Baltimore, New Orleans travel? Do you definitely know if you’re going to stay there?

“Yes, I mean that’s definitely the plan. Our travel guys have just got to come through.”

Do you want to stay near New Orleans I would guess?

“Yeah, I don’t really care where we stay just as long it’s the East Coast time. That’s pretty much the only thing to me that would matter. I know it was a big deal, we didn’t want to stay in Florida after the Tampa game because we didn’t want to be in the heat all week. Even though the humidity and heat followed us to Youngstown, but it shouldn’t be as big of an issue in December so I think we’ll give more options. We’ll see what [director of team logistics Steve Riss] Riss and [team logistics manager Mike] Slap come up with.”

Do you think this team is thinking it’s good?

“Yeah, I think our team has been feeling that since OTAs. If you don’t you’re in trouble. I think you go into every season believing you’re good. It has been different this year than the last couple years because guys, they can see the guys next to him. We have some better players and the guys who have been here have gotten better. Guys could feel that early on in OTAs, which gives you some confidence. Definitely had it in training camp and you try to develop that confidence in the preseason. But, that to me is what was so important about that win versus Tampa. You want to do believe, you think it’s true, but you’ve got to find ways to win some of those ugly ones and that’s why I thought that Tampa one was a huge win and guys believe it, the more they do that. They carried it into the next week and that game went, yesterday, as good as any game, as good as any game that I’ve been a part of. That only gives confidence, but it doesn’t make anything easier. Things only get harder and we’re going to have a huge matchup this week.”

Yesterday was the most locked in this team has been in a long time. Do you feel that staying in Youngstown was an important team building activity? What do you think you got out of staying in Youngstown?

“I don’t know. We had one of our best games, so that doesn’t mean we’re going to go to Youngstown every single week from here on out, but Youngstown was great. For the last two years we’ve felt how our team feels sometimes on those early kickoffs on Sundays even when we have gone on Friday and that is really about the earliest you can go. You want to have this option on another East Coast game, but when you do have two back-to-backs at least we had that option and I heard how they had done it in the past. If someone would have asked me that the first year when I got here, I would have been like, no way that would tire our team out, that’s too much. It did feel like that at times when we were there, but I definitely felt like we felt different when we woke up Sunday, we felt like

East Coasters and we were for 10 days. Now, we've got to get used to being back on the West Coast, but as I've learned it's not as big of an adjustment."

On that trip, potential trip to the Eastern time zone in early December, is that a conversation you've already had with the leadership council and if so, what was their reaction to that?

"I haven't had it with them yet. I don't think I totally have to. I think they know how it went and I think they understand. I think everyone has different opinions and I think no one will argue with the fact that it does make sense."