

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – November 18, 2019
San Francisco 49ers**

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

Opening comments:

“Just recapping some of the injuries, guys, real similar situation compared to last week with [K] Robbie [Gould], [TE George] Kittle, same situation. We’ll see how the week progresses with them. [LB] Azeez [Al-Shaair], hopefully we can get him back out of the protocol on Wednesday. [RB Matt] Breida in the same situation, we’ll see how the week progresses with him. [DL] D.J. Jones, same thing. [WR] Emmanuel [Sanders], hopefully he’ll be a little bit better this week, but he’s in the same boat he started last week. The new injuries from the game: [DL] Dee Ford, hamstring strain, we’ll see how this week goes, not sure yet. [WR] Deebo [Samuel], shoulder. Same issue. [CB] K’Waun [Williams] left with a stinger, but he returned and he should be fine.”

Was Azeez, was he downgraded to out just because it was a short week and you couldn’t get through the entire protocol or did he have some sort of relapse?

“Yeah, no setback, just didn’t pass the physical test, I think, on Saturday. If you don’t do it Saturday, then there’s not an option on Sunday.”

Is there concern with Ford that that can be a multi-week situation?

“Yes. Yeah, anytime you have a hamstring strain, yeah, there is concern it could be a couple weeks.”

Do you guys need to make a move considering the lack of defensive end options you have?

“We might. We’ll see how it is, but I’m not for sure yet.”

George said after the game that he wanted to play. Can you say how close he was to getting consideration to be up?

“Close enough to not rule him out. That’s about it, though.”

When it comes to George, I mean obviously we asked about the MRI and you said there were some issues. What exactly was on the MRI? Was it an MCL issue? Can you guys disclose any of that information?

“No. I don’t want to get into exactly what was wrong with him. I can’t remember what the doctor’s said, but I know it was enough to keep most people out some time, which it has

for George. He's missed two games now and I know it will go down to the wire again this week. I'm holding out hope that this week will be different."

CB Emmanuel Moseley said he found out the day of on Sunday morning that he would start. What went into the decision of starting Moseley over CB Ahkello Witherspoon?

"Just that Ahkello wasn't able to get a full week of practice in. We weren't going to throw Ahkello out there without covering a receiver at full speed in about seven weeks unless he could get three full days of practice in. We walked through about 80-percent of our reps that week. We walked through on Wednesday and Friday and Thursday we had two full-speed practices. Without getting the right amount of practice time in, it really wasn't much of a decision."

Without obviously DL Ronald Blair III and possibly Ford for a little bit anyway, what is the plan for that kind of edge rushing spot?

"I mean, one of the guys in our building. We don't have it yet, we'll mix it around. We've got guys who can play inside, guys who can play outside, but it's one of the guys that you guys have seen already."

Any update on WR Jalen Hurd and if you might try to get him on the practice field this week?

"Yeah, that's not, I don't know if we've 100-percent ended that, but it has not been looking good, so that's kind of out of sight, out of mind for me right now. We might have more of an answer on that later in this week to just finalize that. I don't think we have officially yet, but--."

By finalize you mean IR?

"Yes, ultimately that he won't return. But yeah, I know it's been week-to-week here. We've been thinking about it and I'm not thinking about it right now."

With Deebo, obviously you needed someone to step up more without Kittle and Sanders to some extent. How much has it been that and also him just being a rookie and getting more comfortable as far as these last two games?

"Yeah, I think a little bit of everything. Deebo, you know, since the beginning, he had to start Week 1 for us at Tampa and the game has not been too big for Deebo at all. He's had to learn a lot on the run through each game, just the stamina it takes to play throughout an NFL game, how different those 65 plays are in the NFL compared to usually those 90 in college just down in and down out. Deebo gets better each week, he studies his game plan as hard as anyone in our building and I think he just gets more confidence with the more opportunities he gets. Just the physicality he's played with has been a lot for us to rely on, especially for a rookie throughout this time."

You saw that in college. In college you talked about how he looks like a running back once he gets the ball in his hands. Has he improved that part or is this kind of what you saw on tape?

“I think he continues to improve on that. I think he’s had to change his running style a little bit. In college, I think, he tried to reverse the field a lot and you don’t have to worry about pursuit as much in college, so you can make a little bit more plays going laterally before you go vertically. I think he tried to do that a lot in OTAs and stuff because he had been successful with it, but I think he’s started to learn how fast the game is and how fast the other 11 guys are out there. He’s gotten a lot better at not messing around, just getting vertical and getting right up the field.”

You mentioned yesterday against the Cardinals that they were loading the box and making it tough for you guys to run the ball. Seattle did something similar. How do you diagnose the inability to find a rhythm or the effectiveness of the rushing game?

“You know, we didn’t have a lot of great looks yesterday and when we did I thought we just had one guy short. When you don’t have a lot of good looks, when you do have a good opportunity, you better hit a long one. When we had our few opportunities at a long one, they ended up being about a two-yard gain. We just had one guy that didn’t get blocked or we just got tripped up, so when you have that, it can be pretty drastically bad. It was just kind of a situation where I definitely got away from it as a play caller. We started throwing the ball well. They started softening up a lot, which I think got our screen game going a lot. I think that was the first game that we really had to get away from the run or made the decision to get away from the run. It ended up working out for us.”

When you’re evaluating, working with QB Jimmy Garoppolo, looking at the good throws and then looking at the interceptions, how important is it to keep in perspective that, I think, it’s 670 career throws, that’s only about a season or a little bit more?

“I mean, I think that can be good for everybody else. We always think about that, but I mean it doesn’t mean, you don’t give guys excuses or anything. He doesn’t give it to me, either. We try to be hard on everything. You coach everything up, you grade it out, you tell him what he did good, what he did wrong. Jimmy’s very easy and fun to coach in that way. Jimmy’s a guy who doesn’t lie to himself. He keeps it real. He knows when he made a bad decision, he knows when he made a good play and that’s what gives a guy like that a chance to get better.”

Have there been any milestones with quarterbacks that you’ve worked with in the past, maybe a season? I remember Atlanta Falcons QB Matt Ryan saying after working with you for a year, he turned a corner. Is there anything you kind of look at as far as a milestone that way?

“I think definitely for the quarterback, I think all players, but especially for the quarterback. The more you can go through a whole season and go through the ups and downs of that, go through all the different game plans and how you react to things when things don’t work, how you change stuff up. I think when you go through that for a year, it helps a lot going into the second year. A quarterback more than most, but I think it’s the same with our O-Line, our tight ends, everybody.”

With the way the 53-man is right now and the guys who will be coming back who might be injured now, is there any reason to push either CB Jason Verrett or DL Kentavius Street up at some point?

“Yeah, there could be. Those are guys that are working hard to get back and if we definitely had an injury at a certain spot we’d probably make that decision sooner than later. But, they’re guys that regardless even if those injuries don’t happen, they’re guys who we want to get back out there practicing, guys that have worked to get back and we think will be healthy enough to and we’ll see if need be because of injuries, but it not I’d like to at least give them a chance to get back out to the practice field.”

Are you talking Street and Verrett?

“Yes.”

How does it look for them?

“They’re getting healthy. I think both of them are going to have an opportunity to do that. It’s not something we’d do right now, but definitely could be an option if we have any injuries at either of those positions.”

Those would be situations where you would see them practice for up to three weeks?

“Yes.”

And then you’d have to make a decision after that, but at least give your guys a chance to see them and if they could contribute?

“Yeah, once you activate them to go practice, you’ve only got three weeks. Just me thinking of it right now, the latest would probably be the 13th week or whether we call it the 14th week, whenever the last three games are would probably be the latest. If we lost someone at their specific spot it’d probably speed that process up.”

What is your overall assessment of the way Jimmy played yesterday?

“It would have been real tough to win that game without him. He was in some touch situations. We had a bunch of receivers going in and out of that game. Everyone knows we had to go do it without George. To not get much out of the run game too, he had to really carry us, especially in that second half, made a bunch of big plays. Definitely had two plays that were not good plays, especially there at the end when we’re going in. Both of them were in the red zone, both were on third down where you’ve got three-points you would think and we ended up turning it over. They were two ones that were real tough to swallow, but the defense went three-and-out right after it and to get the ball back to Jimmy and for him to take us all the way down like that, it was huge to see him play as well as he did, have a little bit of adversity and make it up.”

C/G Weston Richburg was very prominent on that WR Richie James Jr. catch and run. Weston was out ahead of that play, I think he was like 40 yards downfield or something like that. This raises the question, how has he been doing this year? It seems like he’s significantly better than he was a year ago?

“Yeah, Weston’s been having a hell of a year. I think he’s been doing real good in the run and pass game. It’s been nice to have him out there throughout this whole thing. I know he battled a lot throughout last year. I don’t know how many games he missed, I know at least one, but he played all last year pretty banged up, toughed it out for us. Went through some hard rehab, a hard surgery, didn’t get cleared until Week 1. He started out playing pretty good right away, but has gotten better week in and week out and has been exactly what we hoped for.”

Was there a certain aspect of it that was more difficult with that injury, playing with that injury last year?

“Yeah, I think anytime you have a rip in your quad and stuff and it leads into some of your knee issues, especially being the center and how low they play all game and having to block on some of these three, four nose guards and reach guys left and right. It definitely wears on you and makes it harder to practice and harder to get through games.”

What can you learn about your team that you don’t already know in the three-game stretch where you are going to go against teams that are all competing for first round Byes?

“Week in and week out you always find out stuff about your team. You find out about people. This week was a huge week right here, just being able to finish Arizona, finish that game the way it went with all the ups and downs. I thought it was very similar to the Seattle game and then these games coming ahead are going to be big too. We’ve got to go on the road for two weeks, back-to-back, which we did earlier this year. We’ve got a big game this week versus green bay. There’s lots of football here to play. Each game’s going to be huge so just trying to take it one week at a time and make sure we don’t look too far down the road because everyone’s in this it seems like right now. We’ve got to make sure we get stuff done this week.”

How’s LB Dre Greenlaw been the last couple weeks?

“I think he’s been real good. He made some huge plays versus Seattle. I think yesterday, their schemes, their quarterback and stuff kind of slows everyone down a little bit, but I thought our guys rallied to the ball a lot, I thought they made some good tackles, they eliminated most of the big plays. I don’t think we had a lot of splash plays. I don’t think you guys got to see a lot of big hits or turnovers or anything like that, but I thought Greenlaw was very solid and sound and made his tackles.”

Defense has obviously been statistically surging everywhere except for against the run. Was that something that you expected moving to the wide-nine this year, that you might drop off a little bit against the run defensively?

“No, I didn’t expect that. I think it depends what time of the year that was in. I don’t think we’ve handled the run as well here, I want to guess, over the last five weeks. I don’t think that was like that all the time. Sometimes you worry about focusing on other areas. I thought we did a lot better versus the run versus Arizona than we did the first time. You’ve always got to account for the quarterback pulling it. He got a bunch of yards off of that. I thought we handled their running backs a lot better. That was the plan going in. We thought we had a better plan to stop their running backs, but we knew by doing that we

were going to give up a number of yards to [Arizona Cardinals QB] Kyler [Murray], but we kept them out of the end zone enough.”

Each of the last three weeks you’ve kind of been put to the test from a game management perspective and how to manage it in the late stages of the fourth quarter and whatnot. How important do you think that’s going to be moving into a postseason push that you guys expect to have and being in some of these tight games in the late stages?

“It’s always important, its huge, both sides. It’s not just calling timeouts and stuff, just watching the clock, but also trying to figure out what the best way is to win the game. Whether it’s through offense, defense or special teams has to do a lot with what we are and what we’re going against. That’s always changing game-to-game, play-to-play and quarter-to-quarter.”

On that touchdown, the last one to RB Jeff Wilson Jr., did you know that they were going to cover zero beforehand? What may have tipped you off and did anything else jump out at you looking at it?

“No, you never know what they’re doing unless you’ve got someone stealing signals but we would never do that. No, you’ve got to have an option for everything, especially [Arizona Cardinals defensive coordinator] Vance [Joseph], who does that a lot, so you’ve always got to have an option for it. That’s not just a cover zero play, that’s a play that you can do versus everything, but when it is zero that is the cover zero option. It’s always a lot of pressure that is put on the O-Line, the quarterback and the running back. They all got it done, so it was real cool play to hit, a cool way of Jeff doing it. Especially with his first play in and it was a fun one to win the game on.”

How often do you guys get to run that defensive victory formation? I think DB D.J. Reed Jr. called it a bandit look. How often do you guys end up actually practicing that?

“We walk through it, it’s not something that we do full speed, but that was the dilemma there at the end. When we got the ball back and to call those runs, three runs plays knowing that they had three timeouts, for about two minutes there it was just us coaches debating ‘What’s the best chance for them to score? To block a field goal and return it for a touchdown or to do some type of lateral play for a touchdown because they’re only going to have one more play.’ That was a stressful debate for a couple of minutes that I’ve never had to debate before and we thought the lateral stuff would be a lower percentage so we took all our D-Linemen out, which [defensive line coach Kris] Kocurek was very upset with. [DL Nick] Bosa wanted to go in and try to get another sack. We put [S] Marcell [Harris] in, [CB] Ahkello [Witherspoon] and I think it was [DB] Tarvarius [Moore] to play the D-Line. They had some rules to it, so it definitely made it a little bit easier when they’ve got a guy like their quarterback out there they can lateral it back to because he’s tough to tackle.”

You said yesterday TE Ross Dwelley has become one of your better football players just overall on the year. How much has he elevated himself to the point that even

when George does come back, he can still be a key component of the offense as a second tight end?

“A lot. And he was doing that when George was here. He doesn’t get a bunch of the big passes and stuff. We always mess with him, he’s got the best four yards per catch average in the NFL right now. That’s why we went to him on third-and-three, it was like right at his spot. No, but Dwelley, the play he made versus Washington, I know he did that when Kittle was out there. I know he was doing it from the fullback position, but Dwelley is, he made some last year too. I want to say on the Thursday night game, some of the RPOs we hit him on a slant there in the red zone. Dwelley has had as sure of hands as anyone I’ve been around. You never know what coverages are going to dictate, but I know Dwelley is a guy the quarterback doesn’t mind going to any time. I know I’ve got a lot of confidence in him also.”

Can you take us through that Wilson play? I mean, it looked like both guys, Jimmy and Wilson had huge challenges on that play with the guy in Jimmy’s face and Jeff turned just as the ball was coming. How difficult is a play like that to hook up on and what impressed you most when you re-watched that?

“What impressed me most was just Jeff having the poise to do it without playing all game. He was the guy we definitely wanted in on the route, that’s the guy we practiced it with, but I actually kind of felt bad about putting him in that situation because that’s a lot of pressure to put on someone who hasn’t been out there every play. And to just throw someone in in that moment, I know he wants it definitely, but you want to know as a coach, are you doing the right thing because the other guys can run it also. And then watching Jeff get loose there in the huddle when they’re reviewing the play and stuff, that’s when I wasn’t sure if I was doing the right thing. But, to watch him go out there, he ran the route as good as he ever has in practice. You always want to run it off the WILL linebacker, but if the WILL linebacker blitzes, that means no one’s on you but that’s why the D-End is going to peel and then you’ve got to run the same route on the defensive end. It’s going to happen a lot faster because the defensive end is going to meet you four yards deep in the backfield as opposed to four yards past the line of scrimmage. He got that look, didn’t hesitate, set him perfect, and I thought the most impressive thing about it was how he caught it. I mean, it wasn’t the easiest catch. He came out of there right away and it caught him right in the back of his right eye. He was able to catch it and just run through the end zone. It was cool to watch his celebration. A lot of these guys have some pretty cool pre-determined celebrations, but as natural and happy of a celebration that I’ve seen, that you could tell he didn’t plan. It was fun to watch.”

How come you didn’t have RB Tevin Coleman in? Was that to deceive the defense too to have Jeff since they hadn’t seen him?

“I mean, Tevin has run that route a bunch for us this year, but Jeff’s just been running it real well the last few weeks. I know, you always kind of have an idea of what you’re going in with. We talked about this stuff on Saturday’s with the quarterbacks, with the coaches, and you put lots of guys in different routes. All of our guys can run a lot of the routes, but we decided we were going to go with Jeff when we got that route. I didn’t know I was going to call it until there was 30-seconds left in the game. It probably would have been better to ease him into it in the second quarter or something, but it came up there and

they were reviewing it so it gave us time to think about it and put him in. It gave him time to get loose and he made everyone look good.”

Did that feel at all like the end of the Steelers game where you guys needed a defensive stop and it was DL Arik Armstead both times and then you came back and had a game-winning touchdown and then got one more defensive stop?

“Yeah, it was real cool. Especially when, the biggest one to me was when the offense went down and we turned it over. I think there was like, I want to say there was 3:45 left or four minutes and that kind of took all the air out of everyone a little bit, it seemed like it. But, then for the defense to come right out and go three-and-out like that, and then the offense to go down and score, then the defense to get that turnover, ended up getting some points too, which is always fun. It was a bunch of highs and lows in that game and it was a little bit exhausting, but we enjoyed it.”

You clearly enjoyed Dwelley’s yards per catch, found it quite humorous obviously. He seems to not. He does not smile. Is that part of the reason you enjoy it so much?

“A little bit. It’s fun to mess with him. I mean, we respect the heck out of him, I said he was the best football player on our team yesterday, so I don’t mind messing with his average. He also had a 14-yarder called back, so that’s where he got messed up, or it was 10 yards, I’m not sure, but it’s better to keep his average down just so we keep him humbled. We don’t want him to get carried away.”