

49ers Clips – January 12, 2017

Local Media

What the Media, Others are Saying about the 49ers GM/HC Search

By Staff, 49ers.com

<http://www.49ers.com/news/article-2/What-the-Media-Others-are-Saying-about-the-49ers-GMHC-Search/5d9b5502-46ed-4987-a036-5d8c8a5e7eb0>

Will Deshaun Watson be 49ers' No. 2 after making Clemson No. 1?

By Eric Branch, San Francisco Chronicle

<http://www.sfchronicle.com/49ers/article/Will-DeShaun-Watson-be-49ers-No-2-after-10851604.php>

49ers CB Robinson sustained sprained ankle

By Eric Branch, San Francisco Chronicle

<http://www.sfchronicle.com/49ers/article/49ers-CB-Robinson-sustained-sprained-ankle-10851930.php>

49ERS CANDIDATE SHANAHAN: INTERVIEWS NOT A DISTRACTION FROM PLAYOFFS

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

<http://www.csnbayarea.com/49ers/49ers-candidate-shanahan-interviews-not-distraction-playoffs>

49ers likely to land head coach with offensive background

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

http://www.espn.com/blog/san-francisco-49ers/post/_id/22780/49ers-likely-to-land-head-coach-with-offensive-background

Biggest 2017 draft needs for every NFL team

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

http://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/page/32for32x170112b/biggest-2017-draft-needs-every-nfl-team

Cardinals' Terry McDonough to interview for 49ers GM job on Friday morning

By Josh Weinfuss, ESPN.com

http://www.espn.com/blog/arizona-cardinals/post/_id/24333/cardinals-terry-mcdonough-to-interview-for-49ers-gm-job-on-friday-morning

49ers in good spot as coaching landscape shifts

By Chris Biderman, TheNinersWire.com

<http://ninerswire.usatoday.com/2017/01/11/49ers-in-a-good-spot-as-coaching-landscape-shifts/>

National Media

Seahawks might need to make good use of Jimmy Graham in red zone Saturday against Atlanta

By Bob Condotta, The Seattle Times

<http://www.seattletimes.com/sports/seahawks/seahawks-might-need-to-make-good-use-of-jimmy-graham-in-red-zone-saturday-against-atlanta/>

Rams talk with Sean McVay again — will they name a coach Thursday?

By Gary Klein, Los Angeles Times

<http://www.latimes.com/sports/rams/la-sp-rams-coach-search-20170111-story.html>

Can Arizona Cardinals count on Tyrann Mathieu in 2017?

By Kent Somers, The Arizona Republic

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/sports/nfl/cardinals/2017/01/11/can-arizona-cardinals-count-tyrann-mathieu-2017/96448878/>

Sources: Chargers plan to announce move from San Diego to Los Angeles

By Adam Scheffer, ESPN.com

http://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/18455802/chargers-expected-announce-move-san-diego-los-angeles

NFL exec says Raiders making “impressive” progress toward move to Las Vegas

By Jerry McDonald, Bay Area News Group

<http://www.eastbaytimes.com/2017/01/11/raiders-move-to-las-vegas-discussed-at-meeting-club-has-yet-to-file-for-relocation/>

With Sean McDermott’s departure, Carolina Panthers will promote Steve Wilks for seamless transition

By Joseph Person, Charlotte Observer

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/sports/nfl/carolina-panthers/article125987884.html>

Local Clips – Full Version

What the Media, Others are Saying about the 49ers GM/HC Search

By Staff, 49ers.com

It's been a week and a half since the San Francisco 49ers embarked on their search for a new general manager and head coach. As it stands, the team has interviewed six GM candidates and five more candidates for head coach.

Here's the list for GM: Eliot Wolf, Brian Gutekunst, George Paton, Jimmy Raye III, Brandon Beane and Louis Riddick.

And for head coach: Anthony Lynn, Kyle Shanahan, Josh McDaniels, Sean McVay and Sean McDermott.

As of Wednesday morning, you can take McDermott off of the list as the Carolina Panthers defensive coordinator has been announced as the next head coach of the Buffalo Bills. The remaining four coaches and six NFL execs are all still on the table to fill the vacancies within the 49ers organization.

Everyone from members of the media to former members of the 49ers organization have weighed in on the search. Here's some of what's been said.

MMQB's Peter King on the state of the hiring process:

"I've heard good things about the 49ers in their interviews. Why? Because they're willing to import a coach who would be in charge of reinventing the culture in San Francisco. And they're willing to be patient. By patient, I mean willing to give a long-term contract to a coach, listen to his recommendation for GM, and sell the locals that this is going to be a significant rebuild. Smart. There's no other way to do it and to have a chance."

Former 49ers head coach Mike Nolan on the team's chief strategy officer and EVP of football operations Paraag Marathe:

"I think Paraag, personally, I think he's one of the best at the job he does ... as far as the cap and contracts and really putting together all the information -- I'm just telling you, the son-of-a-gun is good.

"I have absolutely zero questions in my mind how good he is. But the two of them have to put their heads together and pick the right guy."

NFL Network's Mike Silver on the crop of candidates for the openings:

"Lots of good candidates in the mix for these jobs."

MMQB's Albert Breer on McDaniels:

"McDaniels has had the inside track, and my understanding is that he preferred the Niners' situation to the other two he interviewed for, because this is a from-the-ground-up situation. No bad contracts, pick your own QB, high draft picks."

San Francisco's Hall-of-Fame quarterback Steve Young on McDaniels (via KNBR):

"I'm on for that one. Absolutely. ... That one meets the criteria.

"The idea that we're gonna take someone from the Patriots is almost like full circle for who we were. I like the symmetry of that one."

Bleacher Report's Jason Cole on what he's hearing:

"Increasing talk that Josh McDaniels and Louis Riddick are actually tied to each other for a coach/GM pairing with 49ers being the spot."

USA Today's Tom Pelissero on the 49ers finding candidates within championship cultures:

"If you're rooting for York to hire his new brain trust and then get out of the way, which you can bet is his preference, you should at least take it as a good sign the 49ers search is focused on people who have been around cultures that work and know what it's all supposed to look like. It's also apparent the 49ers' preference is to find a tandem with a pre-existing relationship (though not necessarily with one team) who respect one another and are confident they can work together."

Will Deshaun Watson be 49ers' No. 2 after making Clemson No. 1?

By Eric Branch, San Francisco Chronicle

Deshaun Watson and his team are No. 1, so the 49ers should take him at No. 2.

That has become a hugely popular sentiment — at least on social media — since the Clemson quarterback's super- performance in Monday night's 35-31 national title-game slaying of top-ranked Alabama.

The quarterback-starved 49ers have the second pick in the draft and Watson looked the part of franchise savior en route to saving Clemson from a second straight title-game loss to the Tide.

Against the nation's nastiest defense, a group teeming with NFL talent, Watson displayed toughness, poise and dual-threat skills. He accounted for 463 yards and four touchdowns in a performance he capped by erasing a 10-point fourth-quarter deficit with three final-quarter touchdown drives. His final college pass: a 2-yard, game-winner with one second left.

With Texas A&M defensive end Myles Garrett emerging as the likely No. 1 pick by the Browns, the exclamation point on Watson's college career launched a torrent of tweets, the general idea being: The 49ers have to take Watson at No. 2!

However, former NFL quarterback Chris Simms, ex-NFL scout John Middlekauff and CBS Sports draft analyst Rob Rang aren't part of the chorus, mostly because of Watson's lack of refinement as a pocket passer.

Simms, a five-year NFL veteran who will serve as a draft analyst for Bleacher Report, has yet to immerse himself in video of Watson, who is listed at 6-foot-3 and 215 pounds. Simms' initial impressions: Watson has the strength to throw under pressure, the presence to command a team ... and moments when he wasn't as captivating as he was Monday.

Watson threw 30 interceptions in his final two seasons, including 17 in 2016.

"He's thrown the ball really well in the big games that I've seen," Simms said. "But I've also seen games in the middle of the year over the last two years where I go, 'Damn, I'm not sure he's throwing a spiral and his ball is over the place.' So that's why I will reserve judgment."

Watson's career completion percentage (67.4) is impressive, but Middlekauff, an Eagles scout from 2010 through '13, wonders about all the throws he didn't make. Watson had 434 career rushing attempts and some came on scrambles after he prematurely left the pocket. It's an issue that has followed 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick throughout his six-year career.

“Can he have a natural pocket presence?” said Middlekauff, now a Bay Area sports-media personality. “I saw a couple of times (Monday) night, where there’s the rush and, instead of sliding like most true pocket quarterbacks, Deshaun starts running.

“And Kaepernick does that a lot. And it just screws up your protection and it leads to a lot of sacks. And every once in a while, it leads to some really incredible ESPN highlight play, but maybe nine out of 10 times, it’s a debacle. I don’t think there’s any formula for whether you can coach that out of a guy. ... I think every player is different. You could tell me Deshaun Watson plays the same way in five years, or he gradually develops better pocket presence.”

Middlekauff views Watson as a second-round talent, although Middlekauff recognizes Watson is highly unlikely to be around when the 49ers pick at No. 34. And he’s admittedly wowed by Watson’s intangibles. On Monday, Watson soared over an Alabama defender on a nearly successful dive into the end zone, and he quickly got up after a hellacious hit sent him twirling, helicopter-like, to the turf. An NFL scout told Middlekauff that he has given Watson an “A-plus” grade for character.

“The intangibles stuff, on and off the field, he’s got it,” Middlekauff said. “The will to win? He was diving around like John Elway in the Super Bowl. Everyone saw it. It was pretty eye-opening. He just refused to let his team lose. ... That command of the offense in the two-minute situation was impressive. He just led them down the field.”

Rang is among those who hasn’t viewed this as a strong quarterback draft, but the importance of the position means Watson, North Carolina’s Mitch Trubisky and Notre Dame’s DeShone Kizer are likely to be high-end picks.

He ranks Trubisky and Kizer ahead of Watson, whom he projects to be selected at No. 6 by the Jets in his latest mock draft.

His selection for the 49ers at No. 2: Trubisky.

Rang thinks Trubisky and Kizer are “more traditional pocket-style passers. At the same time, Watson’s dual-threat ability, as well as the poise he’s shown consistently in big games, is really tantalizing. Depending on what the new coaching staff with the 49ers looks like, I think he absolutely could be in play for them.”

In other words, stay tuned.

Watson made a statement Monday and many more will be made about him in the lengthy run-up to April’s draft.

49ers CB Robinson sustained sprained ankle

By Eric Branch, San Francisco Chronicle

Niners rookie cornerback Rashard Robinson, who was carted to the locker room during a season-ending loss to the Seahawks on Jan. 1, sustained a sprained ankle and is expected to be ready for the start of the offseason program in April.

Robinson left the locker room on crutches, but avoided a serious injury after he was hurt while defending Doug Baldwin on the wide receiver’s 41-yard catch in the second quarter.

Robinson, a fourth-round pick, was one of the few bright spots on the NFL’s 32nd-ranked defense. He had 28 tackles, eight pass breakups and a game-sealing interception in a 22-21 win at Los Angeles on Dec. 24. Robinson, who made six starts as a rookie, will likely compete for a starting spot in 2017.

49ERS CANDIDATE SHANAHAN: INTERVIEWS NOT A DISTRACTION FROM PLAYOFFS

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

Atlanta Falcons offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan went through his round of head-coaching interviews over the weekend and went straight back to work.

He said he has not given those jobs any additional attention, as the Falcons prepare for their NFC divisional-round playoff game Saturday against the Seattle Seahawks.

The 49ers interviewed Shanahan on Friday in Atlanta. He also interviewed with Jacksonville and Denver – two teams that have subsequently filled their head-coaching vacancies. A scheduled interview with the Los Angeles Rams was postponed due to weather conditions that prevented Rams officials from traveling to meet Shanahan.

When asked Wednesday during his weekly press conference about juggling the interviews with the preparations for a playoff game, Shanahan said he was not at all distracted.

“That was easy,” Shanahan said. “The easiest part is when you get the bye week and you get that extra time off – we got Friday and Saturday off as a coaching staff.

“I just dedicated the two off days to the interviews. I got to do three of them and really haven’t done one thing in that area or talked to anybody in that area since Saturday afternoon.”

Shanahan, 37, said he was not clear on when he is again allowed to speak to teams about any jobs.

“I’m not even sure exactly what the rules are,” Shanahan said. “I haven’t been too worried about it because it’s not an option for my anyways. We’re totally locked into this game this weekend. There’s really zero else on our minds.”

The 49ers would not be allowed to speak with Shanahan again until the Falcons are eliminated from the playoffs. If Atlanta advances to the Super Bowl, the 49ers could meet with him any time after the NFC Championship through the Sunday preceding the Super Bowl.

Shanahan is considered a strong candidate for the 49ers’ job. He is the son of former NFL head coach Mike Shanahan, who won Super Bowls with the Denver Broncos after the 1997 and ’98 seasons. Mike Shanahan interviewed for the 49ers’ opening last year when Chip Kelly was hired.

The Falcons, the No. 2 seed in the NFC playoffs, set the franchise record for points scored in a season in the first quarter of their Dec. 19 game against the 49ers. Under Shanahan’s direction, Atlanta quarterback Matt Ryan had the best season of his nine-year career with 38 touchdowns, seven interceptions and a league-best passer rating of 117.1.

49ers likely to land head coach with offensive background

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

SANTA CLARA, Calif. -- The NFL coaching carousel is still spinning but it's beginning to slow down a bit.

Earlier this week, the Jacksonville Jaguars announced that Doug Marrone would be taking over full time after finishing the season with the interim tag. On Wednesday, the Denver Broncos formally chose Miami Dolphins defensive coordinator Vance Joseph as their coach. The Buffalo Bills followed by doing the same with Carolina Panthers defensive coordinator Sean McDermott.

So, what does all of that mean for the San Francisco 49ers in their quest to replace Chip Kelly? Well, CEO Jed York spent Wednesday taking a breather from his whirlwind coach and general manager search to take part in league meetings in New York City. York was supposed to return to the interview trail Thursday by meeting with Joseph but obviously that won't happen now.

McDermott interviewed with the Niners earlier this week but reached an agreement with the Bills on Wednesday.

As it stands, there's one thing that seems to have crystallized in the 49ers search for a head coach: whoever they hire will come from an offensive background. That was probably to be expected anyway but McDermott and Joseph were the only candidates on their list with the bulk of their coaching experience on defense.

And with Joseph off the board, the Niners now have just one more interview in the first round of discussions to take care of in the form of Seattle offensive line coach Tom Cable. Cable is tentatively scheduled to meet with San Francisco on Sunday. From there, the expectation is that the Niners could pick two or three finalists and head into a second round of interviews, perhaps in conjunction with finalists for the general manager position.

Of the seven coaches the 49ers have expressed interest in or interviewed so far, there are five remaining: Buffalo Bills interim coach Anthony Lynn, Atlanta Falcons offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan, New England Patriots offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels, Washington Redskins offensive coordinator Sean McVay and Cable.

Because of league rules, the Niners have to navigate how and when they can interview McDaniels, Shanahan and Cable while their teams are still in the playoffs. It's something York and Co. are dealing with as the postseason evolves.

"Obviously, for better or for worse, I know some of the candidates," York said. "I've certainly interviewed some of the candidates in previous years. We've got an opportunity to, you know, the rules of the NFL, the how you can interview people, we obviously can't interview anybody that is in the playoffs until the second week, you can interview teams with a bye the first week, but you have to go to them, and then anybody that's out of the playoffs you can interview essentially whenever. So, it would be nice to be able to have a methodical way to go through and build the way you want, but some of this is these are the curveballs that exist in the NFL, so we need to make sure that we sit down and talk to the right people at the right times when they're available."

While McDaniels and Shanahan have interviewed, they wouldn't be eligible for a second session until their teams are either eliminated from the playoffs or the bye week between the conference championship game and the Super Bowl. Cable is only eligible to interview after the divisional round since the Seahawks participated in wild-card weekend but the timing for a second interview would be the same as for McDaniels and Shanahan. None of the three could be hired until their season ends though it's possible an agreement could be reached as Atlanta did with Dan Quinn before Seattle's season ended two years ago.

Although the 49ers haven't tipped their hand about who might be in the lead, the sense from the beginning is that McDaniels would be the most appealing candidate. McDaniels would have a clean slate in San Francisco and the Niners expressed interest in him previously. Once thought to be the favorite to land in Denver, Shanahan would also be an intriguing addition considering his work and success with multiple quarterbacks and offenses. McVay has interviewed well and has already earned a second interview with the Los Angeles Rams.

Regardless of who they choose, the likelihood of the 49ers hiring an offensive coach has to be appealing considering how that offense has performed of late. Since 2014, the Niners rank 31st in the NFL in yards per game (315.8) and 30th in offensive points scored per game (17.17).

Biggest 2017 draft needs for every NFL team

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

San Francisco 49ers

Quarterback

The 49ers have pressing needs at several important positions, so they shouldn't be obligated to take a quarterback with their first pick -- but they will need to take one somewhere early unless they can somehow find a starter in free agency or via trade. Colin Kaepernick is expected to opt out of his contract, which would leave the Niners with no signal-callers under team control for 2017. They need bodies at the position, but a true franchise quarterback would expedite what looks like a long and daunting rebuild.

Cardinals' Terry McDonough to interview for 49ers GM job on Friday morning

By Josh Weinfuss, ESPN.com

TEMPE, Ariz. -- Arizona Cardinals vice president of player personnel Terry McDonough has an interview scheduled with the San Francisco 49ers for Friday morning for their general manager vacancy, ESPN has confirmed.

CSNBayArea.com first reported the Niners' plan to interview McDonough.

If McDonough gets hired by the 49ers, his career would have come full circle.

He broke into NFL scouting as an intern with the Niners in 1989. San Francisco went 14-2 that season and won Super Bowl XXIV. That kick started a scouting career in the NFL that completed its 25th season in 2016.

McDonough recently completed his fourth season with the Cardinals, including his third as the team's vice president for player personnel. As the person who oversees both the professional and collegiate personnel departments, as well as assisting with player contracts, McDonough has helped the Cardinals go 41-22-1 since 2013.

McDonough's first full-time job in the NFL was as the southeast area scout for the Cleveland Browns. Four years later he moved with the franchise to Baltimore and eventually became the team's eastern college supervisor for three years. The Ravens won Super Bowl XXXV while McDonough was on staff.

In 2003, McDonough was hired by the Jacksonville Jaguars and was promoted to their director of player personnel in 2009.

He joined Arizona in 2013 as the Cardinals' Eastern Regional Scout and was promoted a year later when Jason Licht left the Cardinals to be the Tampa Bay Buccaneers' general manager.

49ers in good spot as coaching landscape shifts

By Chris Biderman, TheNinersWire.com

Doug Marrone, Vance Joseph and Sean McDermott weren't coaching candidates that would have fired up the 49ers' disgruntled fan base.

Looking at the coaching landscape as of Wednesday, with three vacancies remaining after the offseason started with six, San Francisco is in a good spot.

Still available are offensive coordinators Kyle Shanahan, Sean McVay and Josh McDaniels, commonly regarded as the top candidates even before the Jaguars, Broncos and Bills filled their vacancies.

On Wednesday, Buffalo hired McDermott and Joseph was hired by Denver. Jacksonville tapped Marrone on Monday.

The 49ers, Rams and Chargers are the only openings left. And San Diego has made it clear by their interviews they are looking for a defensive-minded coach after parting with offensive-oriented Mike McCoy.

That means San Francisco is facing the possibility of picking between three promising offensive minds looking to fill two vacancies. Both are in the NFC West, with Los Angeles still in the market for Jeff Fisher's replacement.

It appears CEO Jed York is after an offensive mind to harken the days of Bill Walsh when the 49ers were at their peak – and to develop the next franchise quarterback. Five of the seven known candidates for the job have offensive backgrounds.

McDermott and Joseph's hires don't change York's landscape much. Marrone went 15-17 in two seasons with the Bills and never appeared like the type of splashy candidate San Francisco was looking for.

The issue facing the 49ers while they search for their new coach and general manager: timing.

McVay, 30, can be hired at any time – and took a second interview with the Rams Wednesday after coming off well in an interview with San Francisco on Monday. There's been no word of a second 49ers interview.

But it's more complicated when it comes to Shanahan and McDaniels. Both are still in the playoffs and can't be hired until their respective seasons are over. New England hosts the Texans and the Falcons host Seattle in the divisional round Saturday.

Once their teams are eliminated, they can engage in second interviews and get hired. If the the Patriots and/or Falcons reach the Super Bowl, the 49ers won't be able to meet with McDaniels and/or Shanahan until the bye week later this month preceding the game.

Then, San Francisco wouldn't officially be able to make a hire until after the Super Bowl, meaning we could be a month away from the new coach's introduction (however, it's likely the news of 49ers' next coach would leak out well beforehand).

The MMQB's Albert Breer reported this week McDaniels has a "fantastic shot" at landing with the 49ers after his interview Saturday. ESPN analyst Louis Riddick appears to be the most like GM pairing if McDaniels was the choice. The two have been speaking for more than a year possibly about pairing together.

Additionally, it's been reported by multiple outlets that McDaniels' preferred coaching job is San Francisco's if he elects to leave the Patriots this offseason. The appeal is the clean slate including the No. 2 pick in the NFL draft, some \$87 million in expected cap space and the freedom to choose a quarterback.

Things have been decidedly more quiet on the Shanahan front after he interviewed Friday.

He was linked to the Broncos' opening before Joseph was hired Wednesday. After all, Shanahan's father, Mike, won two Super Bowls as the coach there. He was also the 49ers' offensive coordinator in 1993 and 1994, when they won the Super Bowl.

Instead of Shanahan the Younger, Broncos GM John Elway went with Joseph, who was most recently the Dolphins defensive coordinator.

Weather in Atlanta over the weekend prevented the Rams from meeting with Shanahan for their initial interview. Los Angeles is still expected to meet with Shanahan, but the timing is still to be determined.

The 49ers also have a meeting scheduled with Seahawks offensive line coach Tom Cable, who seems like a long shot given his history of domestic violence allegations. He was also accused of breaking an assistant's jaw while coaching the Raiders. Bills interim coach Anthony Lynn – also a long shot – was interviewed last week.

On the general manager front, San Francisco interviewed Riddick Tuesday. It was reported Monday by NFL Media that Packers executives Eliot Wolf and Brian Gutekunst were the favorites to land San Francisco's general manager vacancy. In that scenario, the 49ers could go with Shanahan or McVay, if he isn't hired by Los Angeles.

The 49ers' other GM candidates are Minnesota assistant GM George Paton, Colts vice president of football operations Jimmy Raye III, Panther assistant GM Brandon Beane, Cardinals executive Terry McDonough and Seahawks executives Trent Kirchner and Scott Fitterer.

Paton was interviewed Friday, Ray Sunday and Beane Monday. Interviews with Kirchner and Fitterer are expected to happen Sunday, according to a report from CSN Bay Area. McDonough's has not been scheduled.

Kansas City assistant GM Chris Ballard was blocked by the Chiefs for interviewing for the position last week. Patriots director of player personnel Nick Caserio declined an interview over the weekend. It was reported he was advised to "steer clear" of the opening.