

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

TRANSCRIPTIONS



General Manager John Lynch
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San Francisco 49ers
[Media Center](#)

What did you experience or what did you learn in your days in Tampa that maybe you could apply or take away to your new position here in San Francisco?

“Well, I think a lot. You know, from the situation, the circumstances and also the people that I had the great fortune to be around. When I first got there we always talk about we were much more commonly referred to as the ‘Yucs.’ It wasn’t good. There was a culture of losing. The nice thing here, I don’t think there’s a culture of losing. There’s actually a culture of winning. They’ve had a couple of bad years and so it’s our job to get it back on top. I’ve been a part of how you do that and been right in the middle of it and I think that will prove invaluable. I think also being around people like [former NFL head coach] Tony Dungy, who in my mind one of the great things he did is just create a great vision as to how we were going to get ourselves out of it. There weren’t a whole lot of secrets. This is who we are. This is who we’re going to be. These are the type of people we’re looking for. When you do that I think good things happen. And so, I think in many ways that situation will help me.”

You came here with Denver Broncos executive vice president of football operations/general manager John Elway a couple of times to this. Did you start to realize how this works and what the job entails?

“You know, I came one time. There was one combine that I came to. Other years he had me do other projects, but one time I did come here. Some of it was a lot of sitting around in my room because they found out I guess then I was media. I never liked to call myself media, but I was media and they didn’t let me in those interview rooms and that’s really I think the most precious time you have here is the time with the players and the league put a kibosh on that. But, I also got to go and see the players work out. I think there’s a lot of value. I think a lot of people say you can watch it all on film. I always think in person’s better. So, that did give me a snapshot and made me a little more familiar with the surroundings once I got here.”

Did you talk to him? Is it close to how he described it?

“I did. Many times just through our friendship, he’s one of my better friends in the world. So, from that perspective long before I ever thought about doing this, I’ve chronicled it many times, but I believe it was on a Tuesday that I had my first discussions, by Sunday I was hired. But, he was one of the people I leaned on during that week and it wasn’t a lot of conversations, it was probably two, but he was as always great council to me. I’m

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very familiar with the situation and provided a lot of wisdom.”

What are your thoughts on the quarterback class of this draft?

“Yeah, I’m excited about it. I think there’s a lot of different opinions, as there always will be, but we had an opportunity last night we had an interview with [former University of Notre Dame QB] DeShone Kizer. This whole thing’s not about an interview, but if you were grading him on that alone he blew the doors off it. He’s an impressive young man. His film’s very impressive. I think the same can be said for [former University of Clemson QB] Deshaun Watson. You watch what he’s done just putting a team on his shoulders and taking down a great champion. And so, [former University of North Carolina QB Mitch] Trubisky, [former Texas Tech University QB Patrick] Mahomes, I think it’s a very talented draft class at that position, one we’re very excited about, those guys. And look, I don’t think you need to be too transparent to realize that’s a position we’re looking at. We don’t have any. And so, that’s a position that’s a big focal point of our preparation right now and this week’s a big part of that.”

University of Clemson head coach Dabo Swinney has compared Watson to former NBA player Michael Jordan. When you have a guy who’s 28-2, has played his best games against the toughest competition, won a championship, from a scouting standpoint how much more thought is there that this guy could be a once in a decade, franchise kind of guy?

“Well look, it’s all part of the equation and I love winners and he has that. He also has, from the brief interaction, before I was hired as the general manager of the 49ers I spent some time around him at the Super Bowl and there’s certain guys that just carry themselves differently and have a presence about them. I put him in that category. In the brief time, you can just see there’s a confidence, an aura that he carries himself with that’s pretty special.”

Is that quarterback position something that maybe you’ll double-dip a little bit and get one in free agency and draft one for the future?

“We’re looking at all options right now. We really are. And I think we have to. So, free agency is something that we’re examining a lot of guys. The draft, I just spoke about. Other options as well. So, both [head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] and I from the start, that’s one thing we’ve talked a lot about in our discussions. I’d love to tell you that strong safety, free safety, is that position you have to have and I believe it’s important, but the quarterback position is one you have to hit on and we’re looking to do that.”

Speak about safeties a little bit. Former University of Michigan DB Jabrill Peppers, where do you think he fits in this league?

“I haven’t figured that out, but I know it’s a fun film to watch. That’s what I’ll tell you. He’s electric and he’s a special player.”

As far as evaluating, do you feel like the quarterbacks, that you’ve got insight given that you were basically mirroring them during your playing career?

“Well, I think from a bunch of different perspectives. First of all, I grew up a quarterback. I went to Stanford as a quarterback. So, I think that always helped me as a player. It

helped me as a broadcaster. And as a broadcaster one of the great things you did every week is you did production meetings. Each and every week that meant sitting down with the quarterbacks. And so, that gave me a much better understanding of the DNA of the ones that are successful and maybe some of the shortcomings of the guys that haven't proven successful in this league. I think it gave me a great vantage point of that. I think you take all those experiences. We also have a head coach in Kyle that I think is masterful at getting the most out of his quarterbacks and this year was a great example of that."

Kyle said that you guys aren't breaking down the film with some of the quarterbacks and just getting to know them. What was the interview like with Kizer?

"I think those are sacred times in there. As I said, he was extremely impressive and I'll leave it at that. What was said and whatnot, we'll leave it at that. But, he's just a very impressive young man."

As far as the run game, what have you seen out of RB Carlos Hyde and do you think he can be a big part of the offense?

"One thing Kyle and I said from the start, the first thing we need to do is really study and get an inventory on what we have and the process for doing that we watched a lot of film together and Carlos was a guy we're very excited about. I think Kyle has an ability to maximize the skills of running backs both in the run game and the pass game and I think Carlos fits that mold and we think he's got a lot more. He's had nice film. We think he has a lot more in him and we're excited to try to pull that out of him."

I know you guys met with QB Colin Kaepernick and there are reports that he's going to hit free agency with that option. Are you still leaving that open that he could come back or have you guys decided that--?

"As I mentioned after that meeting, we had a real nice meeting and one thing that we talked to Colin about, having been a player, one thing I've always wanted in coaches I think any player is you want transparency, you want honesty. And so, that's what we were with Colin and he was back to us. So, there was a great understanding and I think we both agreed that under the current construct it wasn't going to work out. But, we said let's not close the door and we had some good jokes. Once he was gone, we weren't going to have anyone and so obviously yes as he hits free agency that's something that we'll keep our eyes open and we want him to keep us in mind as well. So, it's something that we left that door open in a very real and positive way."

Can you talk about former Stanford University RB Christian McCaffrey and that Stanford offense?

"I can tell you I have great affinity for Christian as just a guy who's done a lot for my school and their program. His parents, I've known them since a long time ago on the farm there at Stanford. And, they're special people and he's a special player. I'll leave it at that."

When you have guys coming from the spread offense in college football, how can you project some of the--?

“I think that’s one of the challenges we’re dealing with and this whole league’s dealing with. To be quite honest, it’s tough at times. For instance, with receivers, there’s not much of a route tree. They run a couple things. And that’s one of the challenges this whole league’s facing right now is that the football being played from the high school level to the college level is a different brand of football than they’re going to be asked to play. So, I think the word project is an apt one because that’s exactly what you’re doing. You’re projecting. You aren’t seeing a lot of the things they’re going to have to do. So, you have to come up with ways to try to do just that, project how they would fit doing this. And that’s a challenge for everyone.”

(Inaudible)

“Well, I can tell you that one of the great things about the relationship thus far with Kyle is he has a very focused and specific profile for what he wants at each position. And I think it’s as strong as any at the receiver position. And so, you can look at traits and those are things we’re looking at. Traits at how he does at certain things at each level of the routes and that’s one thing Kyle’s done a tremendous job of is developing a philosophy for what he’s looking for at each position. That’s not just offensively, that’s defensively as well. And I’ve been thoroughly impressed and that helps us a lot as a front office to know exactly what your head coach and his coaches are looking for.”

What do you see in Patrick Mahomes as a prospect?

“As I said, he’s a guy that the film’s pretty special. And so, he’s a fun guy to watch. We’re excited to watch more and learn more about him.”

Having studied your roster, is there an area that you see as a strength and maybe needs a little less immediate work on the current roster or position group?

“Yeah. I think one of the encouraging things, I think offensive lines are tough to build in this league and you turn on the film and there’s a lot of exciting things to see with an offensive line. Defensive line, I don’t think it’s as polished and honed, but there’s a lot of great potential there. And so, it’s our job to draw that out of them. We added another piece with [DT] Earl Mitchell there. And so, I’m excited about that. I’m a firm believer, even though I played in the backend and we’ve talked about quarterbacks, a lot of football to me it’s won and lost up front. And so, that makes me feel good that we feel pretty good about that. We need to get better, but I think we’re further along than a lot of teams are in this league at those two position groups.”

Seattle Seahawks general manager John Schneider mentioned yesterday that he used to pick your brain about safeties. What makes that position so hard to evaluate?

“You talk about learning things, that’s one thing I always appreciated about John Schneider. You’d be broadcasting a game and he would ask if he could meet you at a restaurant and he’d have a notebook and he’s taking notes. And so, you understand when you look at John Schneider and what he’s built in Seattle why he’s a tireless worker, he’s passionate about the game and yeah he did pick my brain but I think he did

pretty good with guys like [Seattle Seahawks S] Earl Thomas and [Seattle Seahawks S] Kam Chancellor without my help. I can't take credit for that."

Did you first start thinking about this position when you were playing, like saying "If I was running the team, I think former NFL head coach Mike Shanahan should go after this guy" or that type of thing?

"Yeah, Shanahan didn't listen much when I gave suggestions. I did. I was always a guy that drove my wife Linda crazy. You don't have many days off as a player and the draft weekend is a long weekend typically and I always would spend six, seven hours watching the draft, watching the fifth, sixth, seventh rounds and she'd be going, 'really?' and I'd say yeah. So, I didn't think about it like that, but I would try to do my own mock in the fourth round and it was something I just, I'm a football junkie and so that was something that interested me. I don't know if I really thought about someday I'm going to be doing this, but as I've said many times, when John gave me the opportunity to come in the building that got in my head a little bit, but really my heart and my focus was on being the best at where I currently was and that was as a broadcaster. By virtue of that I think that helped just continue to grow in my knowledge of the game and here we are."

In your experience that you were saying as a player, kind of theorizing about how you would handle approaching the draft, how is it different now that you're actually doing it compared to how you thought it was be when it was just for fun?

"Well, even though I was watching the draft, I wasn't going to the office at 5:30 and leaving at 9:00. I was just showing up and kind of picking it based on what I had heard. And so now, obviously much more in-depth look at the players because this is my job now and this is our job. Fortunately, I've got a lot of talented people around me and fortunately I'm really enjoying the process. Just like playing, I think the most positive thing about this, just like playing, it never felt like a job. This hasn't felt like a job. It's a monumental challenge, but it's been fun. I've had a blast in this last whatever it's been, a month or whatnot, going about that process."

Young quarterbacks that come out, most of them go through growing pains and those growing pains can carry over to the team as a whole. Coming into this, how do you evaluate that going young and we'll see how long that takes to develop versus adding somebody more established off the bat and getting the overall team perhaps going forward?

"Well, I think as we're planning, there's a number of different scenarios we're looking at and some of those include let's have a young guy and let's have an old guy to kind of be there with him. And so, those are all mixes you look at and they're dynamics that are realities in this league. We've got some great options at our disposal. A lot people look at it like, 'Oh my gosh you don't have any quarterbacks.' But, that also is somewhat liberating in that you can create this thing in that position that is so critical in the way that you want it. Now, we're restricted by who's available and whatnot, but I think we've got a lot of great options at our disposal. We've got the number two pick in the draft and that's not something people are usually happy about because it means you just went through a miserable season. Fortunately, I wasn't a part of that. I'm a part of it now and

the great thing is that we have the number two pick and a ton of options because of that at our disposal.”

You mentioned quick thoughts on Kizer and Mahomes and Watson. Can you do the same on Trubisky?

“Yeah, I got a note today from somebody over there he measured over six-two, so he made himself some money today, I promise you. But, you can see just like the other guys I talked about why people like him. He grows on you. The more you watch him, the more you like him.”

(Inaudible)

“Yeah, no doubt. It was a quick decision-making process, but a couple things came into play. Number one, the dynamics of where they were at, the fact that I like challenges. And it’s down right now, but I knew full well, I played at Stanford when they were in their heyday. I happened to have the opportunity to play for two coaches who had been a part of that in [former NFL head coach Dennis] Denny Green and [former Stanford and 49ers head coach] Bill Walsh, even further on with Mike Shanahan who had been a big part of the 49er way, the 49er standard. And so, that always meant a lot to me. Guys like [former 49ers DB] Ronnie Lott are idols of mine and so I know the way they played, the way they went about their business, this is an iconic organization, it’s fallen on some hard times and my attitude is how great it’s going to be when we get it back to where it should be.”

As a former guy who played in an NFL secondary for years, you’re scouting quarterbacks now. What’s that like for you? What do you look for in a quarterback? Is hand size important to you?

“It’s all important. I mean, that’s one thing that you learn at that position, everything’s important. As Kyle and I look at it, I think that’s been one of the great things is we sit down and look at film, I’ve got my perspective on how you judge a quarterback from a different perspective than his, and he’s got his. Now, they marry in many ways, but I think that’s been a great part of this relationship thus far. It doesn’t just stop with Kyle and I. There’s so many people and taking in so many different perspectives and thought processes as to what makes a great quarterback. Look, there’s some traits that we all know go into the makeup of a great quarterback. Kyle talked about it yesterday. How quick can you process information? I think that’s a critical factor at that position. I think the great ones do that extremely well. There’s obviously physical traits and those are obvious I think, but that’s been fascinating. It’s a fluid process and we’re having a blast attacking it.”

What do you think of the guys like former Louisiana State University RB Leonard Fournette and McCaffrey who skipped their bowl game?

“As a Stanford fan, I wasn’t a huge fan of that. We could’ve used him, but they did alright without him too. I think you understand their perspective, but don’t necessarily think it’s a positive thing for college football. This is such a team sport and when you step back from that, I know there’s people that I’ve talked to here that really bothers and I’m fortunate like with one of those players I happen to know the young man. And so, I

would never question his commitment to the team and all that, but other people will be. So, it's something that these kids, they're going to have to weigh that moving forward, but I think it will affect football going forward for many years to come."