

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Defensive Coordinator Robert Saleh
Press Conference – August 21, 2019
San Francisco 49ers**

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Do you plan on playing LB Fred Warner and LB Kwon Alexander on Saturday?

“That’s the plan, to give them some game action.”

Did you pull them out in the last game?

“With Kwon, it’s always been the plan. With Fred, he’s taken a good amount of reps in the preseason, been practicing and all of that. Just taking care of them.”

It’s pretty impressive how fast Kwon’s come along in team drills over the last few weeks and not doing the offseason workouts. Is that surprising to you or is that exactly how it was planned to be?

“You know what, I give credit, one to him, with his work ethic, two to the performance staff and the plan that they’ve had for him, and everybody executing it. He’s come along well. He’s made great strides from his first day of practice until now, so I’m excited to get him out there and see what he does for his first game action.”

Do you just look to see in terms of what his range is and how far that’s come along?

“Yeah, that’s basically what I was getting on in the first day until the Denver week. The range, the speed, all of it, just his fluidity keeps getting better and better. Like I said, it’s no pressure for him to go and be great, an All-Pro in his first preseason action, it’s just go out there, get his game reps in and get back comfortable playing football.”

What is the curve going to be for DB Jimmie Ward when he gets back into the fold in team drills and in practice?

“For Jimmie, it’s no different than as if it was the first day of camp. So, he’s going to come in, he’s going to practice, he’s going to get his reps in and we’ll talk about the plan for him during the game during the week for game action, but just see where he’s at. But, I think mentally, he’ll be okay. He’s been in all the meetings, he’s been going through all of it, he’s been in individual, he’s been at all the walk-throughs, so it’ll be a quick adjustment for him.”

You guys have seen him play free safety before, but things are a little bit different now. How much do you need to see from him in order to make a determination about who’s going to be the starter at free safety?

“That’s a good question.”

Thanks.

“No, he’s just like everybody else, [head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] and [general manager] John [Lynch] and John’s staff did a great job putting together a really good roster in regards to depth and all that stuff. [DB Tarvarius] T-Moore has stepped up and done a great job and he’s earned the right to be part of the discussion. So, for Jimmie, he’s got to go show that he’s ready for action. Not saying that he needs to do it now, but over the next couple of weeks he just has to continue to accelerate the way we know that he will. We think very highly of Jimmie, so it’ll be good to see him out there over the next couple of weeks.”

What are you looking to see from this defense in terms of cohesion and how they’re coming together and their communication these last couple of weeks before the regular season starts?

“We always talk about there’s three things that we’re looking for when we look at tape. There’s effort, there’s technique and there’s violence, which is first and foremost, you’ve got control over all of them. And then from there, just the communication part of it, getting used to one another, talking to one another, constantly reminding each another, because it can get stagnant playing your own offense over and over and over again, especially ours where everything looks the same. You get lazy with regards to formation and indicator splits and all that stuff. Picking up that part over these last couple of weeks, going to Denver, having those practices, now being able to practice a little bit, showing a little bit of Kansas City, and then getting a chance with the Chargers. So, the communication part is the big thing. I think they’ve done a great job representing the style that we want with the speed, the effort, the violence and technique. The communication part, never, never stop that.”

What have you seen out of DL Kevin Givens?

“Undrafted rookie free agent. He’s been doing a nice job. He’s got a ways to go, but from where he’s come from, he’s been really good.”

S Jaquiski Tartt had a really good beginning of that game until he got a little shaken up. Can you talk about what you’ve seen out of him, growth-wise, in camp?

“So, Tartt had a nice first half. He showed well on man coverage on their first-round pick, did well in tackling, communicated well, showed good range, great patience in the run game to recognize some of those slide boots that they’ve got. So, he was in the right place and put himself in position to make good plays. So, he’s grown. For him, it’s just going to continue like he can be a great playmaker, he’s just got to go make them. For Tartt to continue again, same thing, get better with every single rep that he gets, whether it’s practice or game time. But, I thought he did a nice job.”

Is he practicing today?

“He is on a, I believe, a personal day.”

Do you expect DL Dee Ford to practice at all this week and what does he need to do to get back up to speed once he does practice?

“So, Dee Ford, just like the other guys that haven’t been able to go, there’s no rush for this, especially on a short week, the Monday night game on the road and then going again on the road Saturday. For Dee, it’s just again going and checking in with the performance staff, see where he’s at. If he’s able to, great. If not, there’s no pressing need. Again, it’s up to the performance staff and how that goes.”

Are you confident that the time that he has been on the field back in the spring and the little that he got here he’s picked everything up and he can plug back in when he’s back?

“Yeah, for sure. Dee Ford’s position here is less mentally taxing than what it was with the Chiefs.”

Go get the quarterback?

“Yeah, that’s right.”

With CB K’Waun Williams being injured, is there any thought to giving Jimmie Ward some time in the slot?

“You know what, that’s something you can talk about for sure, but nothing that’s come up yet.”

How do you view the slot position? I guess for starters, do you think K’Waun will be available Week 1 and regardless, how do you view that slot position?

“Well, it’s a very important position. Back in the day, teams were 70-percent base, the SAM linebacker was the important one. Now they’re 70-percent nickel, so that nickel is basically taking over that SAM spot. So, it’s very important. With K’Waun, there’s hope. We’ll see what happens. [CB Emmanuel] Moseley’s done a nice job stepping up in that spot also. [DB] D.J. Reed’s [Jr.] doing a nice job in there. So, we’re confident that we’ll have that position under control once the season starts.”

What are your thoughts on DL Solomon Thomas’ game Monday and how much do you envision him playing against Kansas City?

“Solomon, I thought he had a really, really nice game. One play I’m sure he wishes he had back, but he’s playing with very little indecision. He’s very decisive, he’s got good technique, he’s playing very fast and I like where he’s at mentally, I like where he’s at physically. He’ll take on the same load as everybody else here. Once we talk about it, don’t see any restrictions with regards to how much he’ll play for Kansas City. Again, we’ll meet on that later in the week. I really liked his game. I thought he did a nice job. He probably could’ve come away with two sacks. Some of the guys left him hanging on the rush with contain and all that stuff, but I thought he did a nice job.”