

A banner featuring a close-up of several American footballs with laces, set against a dark red background with a subtle pattern of white stars. The text "SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS" is in a gold, sans-serif font, and "TRANSCRIPTIONS" is in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

TRANSCRIPTIONS



Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – September 13, 2017
San Francisco 49ers
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You added a linebacker. Why go get somebody from outside the organization instead of having somebody who has been here?

“Well, the person who had been here had only been here for three days. We went out there, I don’t really get to see the guys this time of year, but tried to figure out the best guy that we thought could help us on special teams and hopefully get him ready to play linebacker. You’re still two injuries away from getting that person in, the fourth guy. But, we needed someone who we felt could learn to do that once the time came and could be our best player on special teams.”

You guys had, I think you had LB Elijah Lee in for a pre-draft visit. Was he somebody you were looking at in the sixth, seventh round as a possibility?

“Yeah, he was someone we were interested in through the draft. We had our eye on him, then our personnel department keeps an eye on them throughout preseason, guys that we targeted in the draft. Usually those are guys that when we go do it, that we put a lot of time into it with their college play.”

When you were putting your staff together and your defense, why did you want someone from the Seattle style and what about that did you find attractive?

“I think it’s a very sound scheme. It’s a very sound scheme that starts with stopping the run. Anytime your base defense is an eight-man front, it’s very gap oriented. It’s tough to run the ball against. You’re always outnumbered on offense unless you use the quarterback. So, your numbers are never there. Usually that gives you the best chance to stop the run. It forces you to throw. And when you have a sound scheme versus the run, but it’s very good in coverage, that eliminates big plays with their zone drops, they make you work all the way down the field. So, it’s extremely tough to get explosives on. It’s tough to go against. They make you work for everything and it’s something that you don’t have to reinvent the wheel every week. It’s something that if you just do over and over and over again, it’s hard not to get better at it.”

Did you reach that conclusion working with Atlanta Falcons head coach Dan Quinn in Atlanta or had you thought about that?

“I thought about it going against it over the years. When you sit as an offensive coach and you try to scheme it up and see where their holes are, the sounder it is, the harder that is to do. You always want the cheap easy ones. It makes it a lot easier. I think

teams that have had bend-but-don't-break types of defenses, I use that word, you go back to the Tampa days, that's where I started out my coach career with [former Tampa Bay defensive coordinator] Monte Kiffin's staff. I got a real good feel for that defense and the whole time I was there, they were number one in the NFL on defense and I think that's really where it started. Then going against this defense as an offensive coordinator, just trying to attack it, I think it's extremely similar to those Tampa Two, Monte Kiffin days. Tampa Two isn't their base, it's cover three, which is an eight-man front so it's tougher to run the ball against, but coverage-wise it plays out very similar to Tampa Two, which it's harder to get explosives and things like that. It's very similar to what my base is of defense growing up in this league and then getting a chance to go to Atlanta and be around it even more just made that stronger."

This might be a better question from defensive coordinator Robert Saleh, but how much Seattle film are you showing these guys on how to do this and how to incorporate this defense?

"I think that's something that you do, you do a ton when we first get here. I do it the same offensively. You show how it's supposed to look, how you've done things in the year's past. That's an advantage of me being a coordinator for other years, I have tons of tape of not just Atlanta, but Cleveland, Washington, Houston. There's really not an example that I don't have a clip on that if a player is struggling with that I can show him something from the past nine years to say, 'No, I've been in that position before. Someone I coached had this, this is how we handled it.' I think it's the same from a defensive standpoint. I know Robert's this is his first year being a coordinator, but being in the Jacksonville scheme, being in Seattle before that, he's got a lot of tape to show that too. But, once you get your own guys doing the tape and stuff like that then you start to build your own libraries and players definitely like watching themselves a lot more than other people. So, you try to build that and get that in. But, you never stop collecting and if there's a clip that can help a guy it's good to schemes that are very similar so there's more examples and reps that you can show people."

Seattle Seahawks head coach Pete Carroll today said, maybe half jokingly, he wasn't thrilled about general manager John Lynch being the GM here because he'd been in all these production meetings and bared his soul to him about this is how we do things in Seattle and all that. Can that be what John has picked up, not just from Seattle, but his experience talking to coaches and players over the years? Just have you found that at all to be beneficial, could it be beneficial like in a game or is it just about building philosophies?

"No, I think being around football, John was around football a ton when he played and then when he stopped he got to be around it a lot being an announcer. So, I think it's good for John to be around it, so he's testing himself every week, having to watch tape and do those things so you're training your eyes on what to look for. If he stopped playing and then just took seven years off or whatever it is and just jumped in this role, I think it'd be a lot hard for him. But, no I don't think there's any huge advantage to any top secrets of what people are doing."

So, you didn't have a Seahawks conversation with him, 'Hey, what did Pete tell you in 2012?'

"He told me they like cover three. I wrote it down. I took a note."

Does a talented defensive front limit what you can do or affect what you can do at all with play action?

"It affects what you can do in everything. I think sometimes that's one of the reasons for play action. If they know you're throwing, I don't care who you have when you go against that type of defensive front, they're going to get you. Especially, with that noise in their place and that's their biggest strength. So, they want to try to make you one dimensional, which an eight-man front and being outnumbered in the run game usually does. So, they're daring you to pass every play, but then guys drop into zones and you've got to check it down and balls get tipped and it's hard to check it down 10 plays in a row. Quarterback's got to be perfect, O-Line, everyone's got to be perfect. You've got to get into the runs, too. You have to try to keep them off balanced. There's a reason they've been one of the top defenses in the league for the last seven years or whatever it is. It starts with their front and it goes to how good their linebackers are, how good their secondary is and how well coached they are and how good their scheme is."

What kind of advice to give to QB Brian Hoyer other than that he has to play perfect?

"It's not that you have to play perfect. When you do get the opportunity, you've got to make it. You've got to realize that there's going to be times, I don't care who your team is, that you're not going to block them. When you don't, what happens? You can survive a sack. You prefer an incompleteness, but it's hard to survive a bunch of turnovers going against this team, especially down there. When it's not good, how bad is it? When you do get your opportunities, they can be blocked. I've seen them blocked a lot and when you do get that and you have the right deal and you've got a chance, do you make that play? Because you're not going to get it too many times in the game. It's very similar to last week going against Carolina. That was a tough front too. There's not many times I'm going to stand up here and tell you that we're not going against a tough defensive line. Most of them are, but especially these two weeks that we've had. You have to make your opportunities when they're there."

Have you made any changes on the offensive line or is that something you're still evaluating at this point?

"That's something we'll evaluate all three days. The same as I told you guys, I forget what day, Monday or Sunday, but we're working [OL] Laken [Tomlinson] in more. This is his second week here, so he's getting a little bit more reps. We'll see how he handles it and how it plays out."

Having watched that Carolina tape and the offensive line play, how much of that do you feel comfortable you can fix in house going up against another good defensive line? How much of that is just playing a good defensive line and again, sometimes guys are unblockable?

"It's both. It is what it is. That's the NFL and it's almost every week. It doesn't matter. Had the same issues in Atlanta last year when we played Carolina twice and Seattle twice. You guys can go watch those games, the quarterback is getting hit a lot. Guys aren't just blocking people all the time, but it's when you do have your opportunities, you offset that. When they do miss, you can't turn it over and change the game. If you do turn it over, you hope the defense rises up and stops them even if you put them in a bad position. There's going to be a lot of highs and lows throughout a game usually. It's very rare that everything just goes right. And the better the team you go against, the better you've got to be on offense and defense. No one's ever had a perfect game. So, bad things are going to happen. How bad are they and when they do, can someone else make a play and make some good things happen for us to counteract it?"

Speaking of those highs and lows, have you been able to identify anything on the film of that first game that can bring more highs than lows for the offensive line?

"Yeah, lots. We gave up a few opportunities to go down the field. I thought we went down the field versus the right looks, just didn't come down with the plays. I thought we had a bunch of good run looks early in the game where we got about, I think there were a few plays where we got about nine yards before the first person touched the guy. I knew that game was going to be rough. I've played against Carolina a lot, so you go in expecting that. You know it's not all going to be pretty. It's going to be ugly. I've never played Carolina when it hasn't been that way. But, you've got to come up with those plays and that's what gives you a chance to win and if you don't it's real tough to."

Speaking of the good plays, it seemed like those runs in particular were between the tackles and the outside zone runs were less successful. What were the break downs on those outside zone runs and have you considered de-emphasizing that play at all?

"No, not at all. Every inside zone run was versus a two-shell defense when they're one man short. So, we happened to get in the right play versus a two-safety defense when they are outnumbered. The eight-man fronts, if you get into those tight ones and you're outnumbered times two, if you do an outside zone, at least they have to honor the keeper, so you have the numbers. It depends on what type of front you're going against."

Why were those outside zone plays less successful in this game?

"Just the same reason any one is. You don't make the blocks. You don't get the hole. We did have an outside zone one that I thought we had everyone blocked and we just tripped going through the line. If we would have hit that one, it would have been a 30 yarder and then we would have really messed up your outside zone stats because the one we got would have been a gash, we just tripped. All the others weren't good ones. So, it looks like you're averaging .5 on the outside zones and it's just one play that changes it all for stats."

Is there any change in the DB Jimmie Ward's status this week?

"No, it's the same. He's still limited. We definitely are going to, he's going to get more today than he did last week. We're going to continue trying to up his reps. We'll see how

that goes today. I expect him to be better this week than he was last week, but he's definitely still limited. I hope to have him on Sunday."

How do you think S Jaquiski Tartt did?

"I thought Tartt did a real good job. He missed a tackle on our busted coverage that at least could have given them a chance to work for a field goal instead of getting that touchdown and he had that personal foul. But, besides those two plays I thought he played very well. He made a hell of a play on that pick and did some real good things for us."