

# TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Defensive Coordinator Robert Saleh  
Press Conference – August 26, 2019  
San Francisco 49ers**

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**How much of what we saw in the preseason is what you guys are going to be carrying into the regular season?**

“For us, our third down stuff is where it gets a little bit more exotic for us. Even from a year ago, we get a lot more creative on third down. First and second down there are still going to be some nuances and all that stuff that teams haven’t seen, but I’d like to think third down we’re a little bit more exotic than what normal teams who run our system are.”

**Is it a matter of just kind of tightening things up and just making sure everybody’s playing faster?**

“Everything for us is about detail in your assignment and execution. Repetition, it takes 10,000 reps to be great at something so just doing it over and over and over again. With regards to that, just making sure that we’re aligned properly in regards to disguise, making sure things don’t look the same and being able to execute to the best of our ability.”

**What led to the decision to have DB Jimmie Ward play two positions despite just participating in a few practices?**

“So, Jimmie, I’ll always talk about getting our best 11 on the football field and Jimmie is probably one of our best cover guys just in general. He’s a really good asset. If he can stay healthy, people will see how special he is as a football player. But again, it was one of those things where [CB] K’Waun Williams is still up in the air for Week 1 and [CB] [Emmanuel] Moseley’s been doing a good job and we just want to make sure we have options for Week 1. It doesn’t say anything for Week 1, but for us it creates opportunity for other guys to step in at that position.”

**You mentioned Moseley doing a good job. How has he developed since he’s been here?**

“You know, he’s undrafted, he’s got a chip on his shoulder. He plays hard, he plays physical. He’s good in coverage, he’s very smart, does things exactly the way you want it done. So, real happy with the way he’s been progressing. He still has a big week ahead of him, but other than that he’s been doing well.”

**What were you guys able to get from DL Dee Ford today?**

“I’ve got to go back and look at it. We were mostly individual so from my understanding he was full-go in individual so I’ll see how he looked on tape.”

**How has he been in general, his mood, given that he hasn't really been able to practice or play?**

"He's been good. He's rehabbed. He's very confident. He's excited to get back with the guys so he's been a very positive figure in the building. He hasn't had any setbacks so he's just been progressing and he's excited to get out there."

**He seems like a very charismatic, amusing guy. How would you describe Dee's personality?**

"Same, yeah he is, he's a new father. It's amazing for some of these guys when they become dads, I didn't know him beforehand, but they have a different why in their lives so they just see things differently. But, he's a very positive, energetic, I don't want to say happy-go-lucky, but he's great to have."

**What'd you see from LB Kwon Alexander in comparing him to what he looked like before his injury?**

"Kwon, from the first day of training camp until now, he is really coming along. His legs are getting underneath him. I love his style of football. He understands how to play football and how to get off blocks, how to play within space, his energy that he brings. He has, like I said, tremendous football IQ. I'm excited about the direction he's going in and he looks like he's going to be ready to roll in terms of top-level performance by the time Week 1 rolls around."

**Does his mobility and instinct look the same as it did from film before his injury?**

"If it's different, I can't tell. He made a couple of, he put a couple of O-Linemen on skates, one on a screen, one on the reverse early in the game and he just looked like he had good range, good tracking. He didn't get tested too much vertically, but out on practice during training camp he has and he hasn't shown any limitations."

**What was the breakdown on the long touchdown in the first quarter where DL Solomon Thomas was in coverage? Was he expecting more help aside from the safety over the top or was it just as simple as a missed tackle?**

"You guys don't like Solomon on a running back? (laughing) No, it's preseason, we're trying some stuff out. That could happen. With our system, when you're trying to bring five, when you're trying to bring six, when you're trying to bring overloads, somebody has to account for the back and usually it's going to be a defensive end. Otherwise you're just rushing four all the time or it's just a simple five-man pressure that's not very hard for offenses to pick up. So, you've got to be able to get creative and the more creative you get the more you expose your linemen to coverage. On that particular play, that is not what we want. I'm glad it happened because it created a secondary check that we can get to and all that stuff. But it happened, I'm glad it happened. I'm not glad it happened, but you'd still like for us to get it down and get to the next play but it was a great learning experience for everybody."

**Is that where Dee Ford usually would be in that scenario?**

"Yeah"

**How is he in coverage? How has he been in coverage over the years?**

“He’s been really good in coverage. I think he had over 1,000 snaps at Kansas City and he’s not rushing the passer every time. There’s about 600 times where he’s dropping back in coverage. So, he’s got great range, he’s got great speed. He’s got great awareness of what he’s being asked to do. Not that we’re going to make a living out of dropping him. He is going to be one of our best pass rushers, but like I said, if you’re trying to get creative and to create free runners and blitzes, you are not going to be able to do it just by rushing one extra guy. You are going to have to create overloads, you have to bring more than they can block and when you do that you expose your ends to coverage.”

**Just to clarify, Solomon should not have been covering that guy, there should have been an adjustment made?**

“No, that’s his peel. He’s, we call him a peel rusher, so that is his coverage. The overall design of the play, not what we want which is what I was referring to with Solomon being, basically him peeling with the quarterback being able to step into his throw is not something we want. So, no, we don’t want that happening.”

**I understand you don’t want that, but how do you the next time that call happens on that play, what should it be?**

“I don’t want to get into the scheme part of it. That particular play concept we’ve gotten a lot of mileage on over the past two years. We’re number two in the NFL in short yardage, and that call is the lead call for us. But, that one stretched out to third-and-three, which is a completely different game when you’re talking about football. So, I’m not going to talk about the check and the stuff that we can get through, but it brought great awareness to everybody.”

**Are you guys pleasantly surprised by DL Damontre Moore this training camp?**

“He’s been playing his butt off. Like I said, he’s a new dad, so it’s amazing how the mind triggers when you’ve got a new why in life. It’s the ultimate goal for every human, I think, is to always know what your why is and why you’re doing things. He’s relentless, he’s been practicing with a relentless nature and I’m excited for him getting this second shot at the NFL. He’s making the most of it and he’s got another big week ahead of him.”

**You guys released him early in the offseason and then brought him back. What was going on in that interim?**

“So, he was released because of the amount of injuries, as you guys know, from OTAs, so we had to steal from somebody, which ended up being the defensive line. In the process of him getting cut, and he had a baby, I’m sure he was still staying in shape and we brought him back. Since he’s come back, he has not wasted this opportunity. He’s been going for it and you love to see it out of a guy, too.”

**How would you classify the summer for DB Adrian Colbert?**

“So, Adrian, he wasn’t fully back in OTAs with regard to his injury. He had a really good 40 days off where he was able to rehab it more and get back. I know we haven’t had a lot of opportunity to see him. Shoot, we got, what, two snaps of him on defense during game

action against Dallas, but he was starting to show up in terms of what he put back on tape and all that stuff as a rookie. Would love to see him get out there here in this fourth preseason game to show people how far he's come, but again, it's just him getting healthy, being healthy enough to be able to take that next step."

**Is there any way to kind of quantify the talent that you see on this roster right now where it looks like there's an opportunity or a chance that you guys will be having to make tough decisions at every level of the defense on guys who could end up in the league elsewhere?**

"[Head coach] Kyle [Shanahan], [general manager] John [Lynch] [vice president of player personnel] Adam Peters, [vice president of player personnel] Martin Mayhew and that staff, they've done a great job building the depth of the roster. There are going to be tough decisions, not just on defense, but offense, too, and that's a testament to the work that coaches and scouts do together, having a great understanding of what schemes we're running, so that way we can pinpoint exactly what we need, both offensively, defensively and special teams. I think what you see results-wise is we've got a lot of guys that fit what we do and we do feel good about our depth. Tough decisions are going to have to be made."

**A week or two ago, you said you weren't quite ready to say anything about LB Azeez Al-Shaair, being a rookie and all that stuff. Can you comment on him now?**

"I still feel the same. He's undrafted, he didn't get OTAs, so he's still behind mentally in terms of playbook stuff. I shouldn't say behind, he's still playing catch-up. There's still subtle nuances and details that come into that MIKE linebacker spot. I have a process that players should go through, you get your call, you get your alignment, you get your key, which is you place your eyes where they need to be and you execute the defense. He's still catching up to the alignment part, and if you're still trying to play catch-up to alignment, you're going to be playing catch-up with your keys, which leads you to play catch-up with your execution. When he's aligned, his eyes are right and all that stuff, he looks pretty good, but there's still a lot of things with regards to the many different looks, plays, formations that offenses can give him with regards to all the different defenses we run where he needs to get on it from a precision standpoint to be able to take his game to another level."

**Right now, heading into this least preseason game, how clear or muddy is the picture for you just in terms of the guys you are going to have to cut?**

"Is murky a word? Like, kind of clear but murky? It's exciting, because the D-Line, linebacker room and DB room are all fighting in a good way. It's a great debate going on, because it's a good problem, but a problem. Guys on this roster are really going for it and they're playing their butts off and they're doing everything they can to earn a spot on the roster. So, that's all you can ask for. Again, I go back to Kyle, John and his staff and what they've been able to do over these last three years in bringing in the right men, the right people and the right fits so that way we can have these discussions."