

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**General Manager John Lynch and Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – April 25, 2019
San Francisco 49ers**

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General manager John Lynch Opening Comments:

JL: “We’re doing well and we’re very excited. [DL] Nick Bosa is a player who we have long coveted and grown in our appreciation probably every time we watch him, it gets better. We’re very pleased to have him part of our organization. I think he adds to a very talented group on the defensive line, is something that [head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] and I had as a priority when we got here. Two of the first things we talked about is finding our quarterback and finding the guys to knock him down. I think both in quality and quantity, we’ve improved drastically in that respect, and that’s just the start. It gives us a chance. Now we’ve got to go deliver there, and I think Nick really helps us in our ability to do that. With that, I’ll open it up for questions.”

Where did you focus most on when you were studying Nick? What area did you dive most into?

JL: “You know, I think the one thing, well when you’re watching players, certain things jump out right away. One thing, we talked a lot with [DL] Dee [Ford], that first step. Nick has a tremendous first step. He gains a ton of ground. It’s incredibly quick. But, I think a mix of speed and power, and then he’s an absolute technician with his hands. Kyle jokes a lot, it looks like he’s been, since three years old, been doing pass rush moves with his family, and he’s so proficient with it. [Former Ohio State defensive coordinator] Greg Schiano down at a visit, he was their D-Coordinator this year, and I think he captured what my eyes were seeing and our eyes were seeing better than anyone when he said in all his years of coaching, he’s never had a player whose hand and feet are married together better than Nick Bosa. So that’s what we see. He’s not only incredibly talented, powerful, fast, but he’s very efficient in the way he plays, and you put that together and you think you have a pretty special package.”

Do you see him as a three down player right off the bat or maybe just a pass rusher to start?

KS: “I see him as a three-down player. He’s got to come in and do it, but he plays the run well. His best strength is rushing the passer, but no he can play all three downs and play in all situations.”

You mentioned at the owners' meeting just the way former 49ers LB Aldon Smith and DL Justin Smith complemented each other. I'm not asking you to compare

them, but do you see him and Dee complementing each other well, and if so, in what way?

KS: "I do. We've had a number of good D-Linemen here since we've been here and there were some before, and I think it always gets confusing to people in how to use them and where to use them best, and I think this makes it a lot easier. We've had some guys with some versatility, but you always want to put guys in the spot that they're kind of born to do, and we have guys like [DL Arik] Armstead and [DL Solomon Thomas] Solly who can rush outside and are really good at playing the run outside, but they're the best at rushing the passer from the inside, just like [DL DeForest] Buckner is and stuff. And now we've got two guys in particular who excel in rushing from the edge, and that's Dee Ford and it's Bosa. It allows you to use the versatility a little bit better and put guys truly where they're at their best."

How long ago did you guys know that if Arizona Cardinals QB Kyler Murray went number one you'd take Bosa?

JL: "I think that's a good question. I think kind of the evolution of the process, two players really in our minds separated themselves from the pack, and it was Bosa and it was [New York Jets DL] Quinnen Williams, and those were the players, and I think ultimately we had those guys ranked extremely evenly. Then you kind of look at where your team has the biggest need, and while we would have been very happy with the former with Quinnen, Nick was just, we felt like that was a piece that we still could use, another edge guy. We had Dee on one end, and now we have that other end, and we can come at people in waves. When that happened, that final decision, it just kind of kept getting stronger and stronger. But, I'd say for weeks we've solidified on this pick."

Considering how he plays in such a similar defense to yours, did you guys watch Los Angeles Chargers DE Joey Bosa, a lot of tape of Joey Bosa in evaluating Nick?

JL: "You know, everyone is so keen to try to make a comparison between them. I think we just look at really good D-Linemen. We looked at Nick and all his strengths, and everybody wants to do comparisons, who's taller, who's faster, who's stronger. His brother is a very good player, but Nick is very prideful about being his own person, too, and while they're very close, they're also very competitive. That's another thing we loved, the more we got to learn about Nick. We're very enthused as you can tell to bring in a real quality player who we think is going to help us."

You didn't want to elaborate much about this on Monday, but you said he was a great teammate. Can you speak to what in your mind makes him a good teammate?

JL: "Yeah, I think the most indelible memory throughout this process with him, myself and [vice president of player personnel] Adam Peters went down on a day to watch Ohio State. They've got a ton of prospects, and we were at Rose Bowl practice. It was actually at the StubHub Center. They were practicing there. It was very fortuitous for us because Nick Bosa decided to show up at practice, and he was away from his team all year getting healthy, and this guy shows up in sunglasses and shorts and organically we watched this happen. The entire practice stopped, and every player, every coach, every student manager on that team stopped and embraced Nick Bosa. That spoke to me that here they are with [former Ohio State head coach] Urban Meyer who's a pretty intense coach, and

he just let it happen because it just happened very organically, and to watch those teammates, I think in a situation where they could have had some animosity for a guy who made a decision to leave his team to get ready for his next step in his career, in his professional career, instead they all were appreciative of a guy who they had a ton of respect for. We did a lot of talking to coaches. We did a lot of talking to Nick's teammates. What they'll tell you is he's one of the most beloved players that's ever been through there to the rest of his teammates, to the coaches and all that, and that speaks volumes to us."

We all know about the social media posts. As the guy who's working that locker room, how do you evaluate that and how did you evaluate how he might fit in with your players?

KS: "Just being around him. That's the most important thing for me. It's always great when you hear that his teammates like him, and what John witnessed is a very good story. We interviewed a number of people at Ohio State at the draft, and you're always going to ask them what do they think of their teammates and stuff and to hear all those guys actually speak about Nick the way they did was very encouraging. But, I'm always going to go off my own experience with a person, and I was very happy with the guy I got to spend some time with him. We got to go to dinner with him, spend a lot with. We always had the interview. You never get the full book when you hang out with someone just a couple times like that, but you spent a lot of talking to people. Our scouts have been looking at him for, probably not since high school, but the three and a half years he's been in college. So, feel great about what I've heard, and I feel great about what I've seen, and I think our players will be very excited to meet him and really love him as a person."

There's a report you guys are looking into trading Solomon Thomas. Is that accurate, and if so, where does that stand?

JL: "That's not accurate. We usually don't respond to every one of these rumors that happens in today's world. I had Solly up in my office today, and we just talked exactly where he is, and he's a big part of our team right now that we're extremely excited about moving forward with him. That's where we're at with Solly, and Kyle just mentioned, you put this puzzle together, and we want to be a group that stays fresh, that can close out halves, can close out third downs, can close out games, and I think our players last longer if there's a lot of them, and we feel like we, as I mentioned, have a lot of quality players, and Solly is a big part of that, so we're excited about Solly."

Obviously, your expectation is he's going to be playing for the Niners in 2019?

JL: "Absolutely."

Did you get much action in terms of calls on the number two pick, and if so, what did you consider? What went into that?

JL: "We had conversations going into the draft, and there were a lot of teams that said, hey, depending on how this thing breaks, we'd like to be able to give you a call. I think there was one call that happened, but it wasn't of interest. We were pretty locked in on what we were going to do, and we're always going to listen, but nothing really materialized."

Games aren't won on paper, but do you allow yourself to look forward to what you've got on the defensive line just with all that talent?

KS: "Very much so. Just as a coach the hardest thing to handle is going against a tough D-Line, and that's been our goal since we got here, to try to build it that way. We knew we had some good players to start with. We've added some players since we got here, and you always try to take the best guys available, and we've had a lot of guys that are good players that are very similar, and the two guys that we've added to the D-Line this year are kind of the two things that we were missing. We needed to get better in that area, and I think what we've already had will make those guys much better. So, I think we've got a chance to be difference makers on the defensive line, and that'll add to our linebackers, that'll add to our secondary and make our whole team better."

Is he healthy right now? Could he go right into a mini-camp?

JL: "He is. I guess we're the beneficiary of him taking the year. He's healthy. He's ready to go. We'll have a rookie mini-camp this coming weekend, and he'll be ready to roll."

After we talked to you Monday, there was a report, a social media thing about Bosa. It was a report that he liked a friend's Instagram post from 2014 when he was in high school and those posts had hashtags that were racist and homophobic. Were you guys aware of that, and if so, what was your reaction to that?

JL: "We were not aware of that particular post. As we do with all of our prospects, we do background checks and look at their social media. That's one part of it. We learned of that. That's not something that we like, but I think that a long time ago, and I think we choose to think more about what we've heard from people as to who the person really is, and I think Nick will speak to you all, and I think that we're going to give him a fresh start, and we'd hope that everybody would."

KS: "I feel the same. Seeing something like that, we didn't know, and then you see it and that is something that you don't want to see stuff like that. Then you see when it was from, it was from when he was 16 and for people to explain to me what liking something means and how you do that, I still don't totally know. I don't have Instagram or anything. So, I think it's not right, but it's also not the person that we've been around, and it's not the person that we believe he is, and it's not the person that we've been told he is by a lot of people that we do trust. I think we're pretty confident that he'll get here and show everyone else that's the same thing."

Did you have a direct conversation with him about any of this specifically, maybe not that one post, but that issue?

JL: "No, I didn't. Not this issue. I didn't feel the need to ever. I felt very good about the person, and I know it's come out in the last couple days, but we still feel very good about it."

Does his addition shift what you guys foresee for Arik Armstead, maybe more inside work for him?

KS: "Well, I think Armstead is the same situation as Solly. They're in very similar, they play extremely well in the running game on the edge. They can set those edges great. Tight ends and tackles struggle with them and they still are effective rushing the quarterback. But, both of those guys if you can put them in the most ideal spot for them possible, when you know the quarterback is throwing third-and-10, two-minute, whatever it is, you'd rather put them inside, which is also where Buck would always rather be. To have three guys in there so you can have a three-man rotation at two positions to where you have guys on the outside, it's sometimes hard to put Solly and Armstead inside when they're better than the guys on the outside. So that's kind of been the tough thing for us over these couple years, and the two things that we've done, one in free agency and one today, makes that a lot easier, and something that just as a coaching staff, and I know our players will be extremely excited about."

You've talked a lot about improving the defensive front, but the secondary also struggled pretty significantly last year. Do you see this as really helping the secondary and maybe just by the quarterback having to deal with pressure?

KS: "I mean, rushing, a pass rush hides a lot of things, just like a quarterback can hide a lot of things. That's where it all starts. If you don't have that pass rush, I don't care what corners you go get. No one can cover forever, and you can have guys who can get a lot of interceptions, but if that quarterback has forever to throw, it really doesn't matter. I think we've improved at linebacker, which will help our secondary, just it makes those zones harder to throw over, makes you play less man-to-man, and when you have a pass rush that can get there with four, you can play less man-to-man, have linebackers help you out in coverage, and you can defend the deep ball better."

What will your approach be with K Robbie Gould who wants a trade?

JL: "Yeah, you know, we placed a franchise tag on him. Robbie is not here with us. These are voluntary workouts right now. As I said the other day, Robbie is a guy who we respect in a big way for the way he's performed for us, for the teammate he's been, and we're hopeful that we can figure something out to keep him here for a long time. Robbie had his comments. We'll choose to deal directly with Robbie, not through the media in terms of the negotiations and all. But, we're hopeful we can find some resolution on this thing, and in the interim we know Robbie will be ready to play."

KS: "Yeah, we love having Robbie here. We understand that he doesn't want to live here long-term and he's made that clear to us, and we get that. But, we do have a franchise tag and he's that good of a kicker that he's worth franchising. So, unfortunately we know we're not going to have him long-term here. I think that's been pretty clear. No hard feelings about that. I do understand his reasons. But, pretty excited to have a good kicker this year."

Will you trade him?

KS: "No."

Do you expect to do any more work tonight? Think you're going to stay put, or are you keeping options open?

KS: "Well, the longer we're down here [president of 49ers enterprises and EVP of football operations] Paraag [Marathe] is probably, we've got to get up there before he trades our whole team away."

JL: "We don't have enough picks to be making a lot of trades, so I think we're going to be sticking with our picks."

KS: "You never know."