

49ers Mid-Day Clips – February 21, 2017

Local Media

49ers add former Pro Bowl LB Ryans to staff

By Eric Branch, San Francisco Chronicle

<http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/49ers-add-former-Pro-Bowl-LB-Ryans-to-staff-10948839.php>

New 49ers o-line coach has plenty of work ahead

By Matt Barrows, Sacramento Bee

<http://www.sacbee.com/sports/nfl/san-francisco-49ers/article134040859.html>

49ers hire John Benton as o-line coach, DeMeco Ryans as defensive assistant

By Matt Barrows, Sacramento Bee

<http://www.sacbee.com/sports/nfl/san-francisco-49ers/article134094444.html#storylink=cpy>

49ers announce more hires to Shanahan's staff

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

<http://www.csnbayarea.com/49ers/49ers-announce-more-hires-shanahans-staff>

Lynch: Armstead, Buckner, fit 49ers new defensive scheme

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

<http://www.csnbayarea.com/49ers/lynch-armstead-buckner-fit-49ers-new-defensive-scheme>

John Lynch: 49ers will be upfront with Kaepernick

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

<http://www.csnbayarea.com/49ers/john-lynch-49ers-will-be-front-kaepernick>

Source: 49ers make offer to free-agent cornerback Williams

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<http://www.csnbayarea.com/49ers/source-49ers-make-offer-free-agent-cornerback-williams>

Source: Benton agrees to become 49ers O-Line coach

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<http://www.csnbayarea.com/49ers/source-benton-agrees-become-49ers-o-line-coach>

Lynch consults with Millen about where things went wrong in Detroit

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

<http://www.csnbayarea.com/49ers/lynch-consults-millen-about-where-things-went-wrong-detroit>

49ers taking a look at defensive tackle Earl Mitchell

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

http://www.espn.com/blog/san-francisco-49ers/post/_id/23658/49ers-taking-a-look-at-defensive-tackle-earl-mitchell

Craving for competition drove John Lynch from booth to GM role

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

http://www.espn.com/blog/san-francisco-49ers/post/_id/23596/craving-for-competition-drove-john-lynch-from-booth-to-general-manager

49ers add DeMeco Ryans to coaching staff

By Josh Alper, ProFootballTalk.com

<http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2017/02/21/49ers-add-demeco-ryans-to-coaching-staff/>

Colin Kaepernick needs an agent fairly soon

By Mike Florio, ProFootballTalk.com

<http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2017/02/21/colin-kaepernick-needs-an-agent-fairly-soon/>

49ers hire John Benton as offensive line coach

By Josh Alper, ProFootballTalk.com

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John Lynch: DeForest Buckner, Arik Armstead will fit new defense well

By Josh Alper, ProFootballTalk.com

<http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2017/02/21/john-lynch-deforest-buckner-arik-armstead-will-fit-new-defense-well/>

National Media

Report: Cardinals have no interest in Jay Cutler

By Josh Alper, ProFootballTalk.com

<http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2017/02/21/report-cardinals-have-no-interest-in-jay-cutler/>

DT Earl Mitchell starting free agent tour in Seattle

By Bob Condotta, The Seattle Times

<http://www.seattletimes.com/sports/seahawks/dt-earl-mitchell-starting-free-agent-tour-in-seattle/>

DeSean Jackson: Going to Eagles would be a great story

By Josh Alper, ProFootballTalk.com

<http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2017/02/21/desean-jackson-going-to-eagles-would-be-a-great-story/>

LeGarrette Blount 'definitely' wants to return to Patriots

By Conor Orr, NFL.com

<http://www.nfl.com/news/story/0ap3000000786926/article/legarrette-blount-eager-to-stay-with-patriots>

Jimmy Garoppolo trying to stay 'level-headed' amid speculation

By Staff, ESPN.com

http://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/18732880/jimmy-garoppolo-new-england-patriots-taking-trade-rumors-stride

Lions hire ex-Texans offensive coordinator as defensive assistant

By Kyle Meinke, MLive.com

http://www.mlive.com/lions/index.ssf/2017/02/lions_hire_ex-texans_offensive.html#incart_river_index

Agent: Paul Soliai to be cut by Carolina Panthers Tuesday

By Jourdan Rodrigue, Charlotte Observer

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/sports/nfl/carolina-panthers/article134032194.html>

Local Clips – Full Version

49ers add former Pro Bowl LB Ryans to staff

By Eric Branch, San Francisco Chronicle

The 49ers have hired former Pro Bowl linebacker DeMeco Ryans, 32, as a defensive quality control coach.

Ryans was among seven new additions to the staff announced by the team. The group also includes offensive line coach John Benton, 53, who held the same title with the Dolphins (2014-15) and Texans (2006-13). Last year, Benton was the Jaguars assistant offensive line coach.

Both Benton and Ryans were with the Texans when 49ers head coach Kyle Shanahan was on Houston's staff from 2006-09.

Ryans was the 2006 Defensive Rookie of the Year and a two-time Pro Bowl pick during a 10-year career that ended in 2015 with the Eagles, with whom he played his final four seasons. He was the No. 33 pick in 2006.

The 49ers' other hires included: Daniel Bullocks (assistant defensive backs); Stan Kwan (assistant special teams); Vince Oghobaase (assistant defensive line); Adam Stenavich (assistant offensive line) and Michael Clay (strength and conditioning assistant).

New 49ers o-line coach has plenty of work ahead

By Matt Barrows, Sacramento Bee

The 49ers will have their fourth offensive line coach in as many years this season when John Benton's hiring becomes official. He takes over a unit that improved from 2015 when it was one of the worst in the NFL, but one that still gave up 47 sacks last year (third most in the NFL), is paper-thin as far as depth and needs plenty of attention. On Benton's to-do list:

Tackle heir: Left tackle Joe Staley remains the team's top offensive lineman, but his play fell off a bit last season -- he missed games due to injury for the first time in six seasons -- and he will be 33 when the new season begins. When Staley was injured, the 49ers had to tap left guard Zane Beadles to fill in. When center Daniel Kilgore also got hurt, Beadles went to center and rookie John Theus played left tackle. Theus is a possibility as a swing tackle, but the 49ers at some point must think about finding Staley's heir. When the draft began last year, they had three players circled for the No. 7 pick, defensive tackle DeForest Buckner and a pair of offensive tackles, Ronnie Stanley and Laremy Tunsil. (Stanly was taken sixth by Baltimore; Tunsil fell to 13th after video emerged of him using a bong while wearing a gas mask). In the past, the team has believed that Top 10 picks are meant for big-ticket items like quarterback, pass rushers and left tackles. Does the new regime share that thought, and is there a left tackle in this year's draft worthy of the No. 2 pick?

Skilled center: In an interview with MMQB last month, quarterback Brian Hoyer, who played for Kyle Shanahan in Cleveland in 2014, said there were a few things Shanahan needed to make his offense hum. One was a veteran center, and it's notable that the Falcons signed long-time veteran Alex Mack in free agency last year. The 49ers have a good center in Kilgore, but he's never stayed healthy for a full season since becoming a starter in 2014. His backup, Marcus Martin, has not been very stout and also has been injury prone in even a backup role. Undrafted Alex Balducci seemed to show promise in his first year after converting from the defensive line. He was a favorite of the 49ers after playing for both Chip Kelly and former defensive line coach Jerry Azzinaro at Oregon. Will Benton be as interested in the experiment?

Thin at guard: Despite drafting four interior offensive linemen in the first four rounds since 2012, the 49ers have little depth at guard. Beadles and last year's first-round pick, Joshua Garnett, are the starters. But the top backup in 2016, Andrew Tiller, is not signed for 2016 and another backup last year, fifth-round pick Fahn Cooper, is no longer with the team. Cooper ended the season on the practice squad and his contract expired. He is now a free agent who is expected to sign with another team. The 49ers have more pressing needs at other positions, but they will need to address their depth, or lack thereof, at some point during their rebuilding process.

49ers offensive linemen signed for 2017

C Alex Balducci

G Zane Beadles

T Trent Brown

G Andrew Gardner

G Joshua Garnett

C Daniel Kilgore

C Marcus Martin

OL Norman Price

T Joe Staley

T John Theus

49ers hire John Benton as o-line coach, DeMeco Ryans as defensive assistant

By Matt Barrows, Sacramento Bee

The 49ers on Tuesday officially made John Benton their new offensive line coach and added another six assistants, including former Pro Bowl linebacker DeMeco Ryans as a defensive quality control coach.

Ryans, 32, spent 10 seasons in the NFL after being drafted by the Houston Texans in the second round in 2006. He was with the Texans when 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan was an offensive assistant and when defensive coordinator Robert Saleh was a defensive assistant, including an assistant linebackers coach in 2009-10.

Ryans played for the Eagles in 2015, starting 13 games and finishing with 32 tackles, five pass break-ups and a forced fumble.

Benton, 53, spent the 2016 season as an assistant offensive line coach for the Jacksonville Jaguars. He joined the Jaguars after spending two seasons (2014-15) as the Dolphins' offensive line coach and eight years (2006-13) as the Texans' offensive line coach. Before that, he spent two seasons (2004-05) as the St. Louis Rams' offensive line coach.

The team also added Daniel Bullocks, 33, as assistant defensive backs coach; Michael Clay, 25 as an assistant strength and conditioning coach; Stan Kwan, 49, as assistant special teams coach; Vince Oghobaase, 30, as assistant defensive line coach and Adam Stenavich, 33, as assistant offensive line coach.

Stenavich spent the last two years as the offensive line coach at San Jose State. Clay, who is from San Jose, was part of Chip Kelly's staff a year ago in the role of assistant special teams coach.

Lynch: Armstead, Buckner, fit 49ers new defensive scheme

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

Trent Baalke's final two seasons as 49ers general manager brought defensive linemen to the organization with the club's top draft picks.

And, for that, new 49ers general manager John Lynch said he is grateful.

Arik Armstead and DeForest Buckner may have been chosen when the 49ers' base defensive alignment was a 3-4, but Lynch said the two Oregon products are versatile enough to thrive in the new system defensive coordinator Robert Saleh will install.

"I think they fit very well," Lynch said Tuesday on 95.7 The Game. "And that's one thing I think I want to make sure (to say) because I really believe it, I think Trent Baalke did a great job of getting guys that, yes, they were picked for one system, but I think they transition very well to our system."

Buckner appeared in 15 games as a rookie after Baalke selected him with the No. 7 overall pick. He ranked second in the NFL among defensive tackles with 73 tackles and was fourth among rookies with six sacks. Buckner was chosen to the All-Rookie team by the Pro Football Writers of America.

Armstead, selected with the 17th overall pick in 2015, recorded 2.5 sacks in eight games last season. He sustained a shoulder injury during training camp and finally underwent season-ending surgery in November.

Buckner and Armstead may be asked to play different positions but they will also be taught to play a different styles this season, Lynch promised.

"They were very much in a read-and-react posture last year," Lynch said. "I'm excited to cut them loose. When we say 'aggressive,' it doesn't mean that we're blitzing every play. It means we're getting off the ball. At the snap, we're taking the fight to them. And I think these are guys who fit what we're going to do very well. We're excited about it."

The 49ers last week hired defensive line coach Jeff Zgonina, who played 17 seasons in the league. Zgonina served the past four seasons as an assistant defensive line coach with Houston (2013-15) and the New York Giants (2016).

"They're going to be coached hard," Lynch said of the 49ers' defensive linemen. "They're going to be asked to sprint to the football, wherever it is. That doesn't just come natural. Those are habits that you have to pick up."

Every defensive player currently on the 49ers' roster was brought to the organization to play in a 3-4 defense. Lynch downplayed the practical importance of the team's defensive label because of extra defensive backs being deployed against three-receiver personnel groupings.

"Seventy- to 75-percent of this game now is played in sub or nickel," Lynch said. "At that point, that's kind of out the door. It's can you stop the run and, then, can you go get the guy throwing the football and bring him down? We think both of those guys have great potential to do that."

49ers announce more hires to Shanahan's staff

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

Kyle Shanahan put together some of the final pieces of his coaching staff on Tuesday.

The 49ers announced the hirings of seven coaches, including confirmation of John Benton as offensive line coach.

The team hired former NFL standout linebacker DeMeco Ryans as defensive quality control coach. He was a second-round selection of the Houston Texans in 2006 and spent 10 seasons in the league. He finished his career playing four seasons with the Philadelphia Eagles.

The 49ers also hired Daniel Bullocks as assistant defensive backs coach, Stan Kwan as assistant special teams, Vince Oghobaase as assistant defensive line, Adam Stenavich as assistant offensive line, and Michael Clay as strength and conditioning assistant.

Benton, 53, was hired away from the Broncos after being on the job for approximately a month. Benton served as Jacksonville's assistant offensive line coach last season. He worked the previous 13 seasons as offensive line coach with the St. Louis Rams (2003-05), Houston (2006-2013) and Miami (2014-15).

Benton and Shanahan worked together for four seasons with the Houston Texans.

Bullocks worked in the same role with the Jacksonville Jaguars last season. The Jaguars' linebackers coach last season, Robert Saleh, is the 49ers' new defensive coordinator. Bullocks appeared in 31 games in three NFL seasons with the Detroit Lions in 2006 and '08.

John Lynch: 49ers will be upfront with Kaepernick

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

The only promises new 49ers general manager John Lynch made quarterback Colin Kaepernick for this offseason are open communication and honesty.

Kaepernick has spent all six of his NFL seasons with the 49ers after being a second-round draft pick in 2011. He has started 58 of the 49ers' past 71 regular-season games.

Kaepernick has the contractual ability to opt out of his contract in March. If he does not, it seems likely the 49ers would release him – even if they want him back – to avoid being on the hook for his scheduled \$14.9 million pay for the 2017 season.

“The one thing we will do very well with Kap is we’ll communicate,” Lynch said Tuesday on 95.7 The Game. “And I think that’s very important for both sides. Like everything else, that process is well in the works. We’ll continue to do that and we’ll be very up-front with him, in terms of what we’re thinking and we’ll want to know what he’s thinking, as well.”

Lynch said he developed trust and a good rapport with Kaepernick during the time when the 49ers were among the top teams in the NFL. Lynch was a broadcaster for FOX-TV and had occasion to meet with Kaepernick multiple times during production meetings.

“Every time we talk about Kap, I think of the guy who was in the Super Bowl not too (long ago),” Lynch said. “Things happen in guys’ careers. Injuries happen. Different things happen.”

Kaepernick began last season as the backup to Blaine Gabbert. After regaining his starting role in Week 6, Kaepernick put together his best season since 2013 – his first full season as a starter.

Kaepernick completed 59.2 percent of his passes with 16 touchdowns and four interceptions. His passer rating was 90.7, and he added 468 yards rushing.

Lynch said he and coach Kyle Shanahan have been evaluating the players on the 49ers' roster. The other three quarterbacks on the roster – Gabbert, Christian Ponder and Thad Lewis – are not under contract for next season.

“Like we said we would – and like we told Kap we would – we’re assessing everything,” Lynch said. “Both Kyle and I believe wholeheartedly that position is the most-important position in football.

“From every side of this thing, we’re evaluating. And we’re continuing to watch the film. We’ll continue to work toward that until we have made a decision.”

Source: 49ers make offer to free-agent cornerback Williams

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

The 49ers are one of four teams to make a contract offer to free-agent cornerback K’Waun Williams, a league source told CSNBayArea.com on Tuesday.

Williams, 25, had an effective first two seasons as the Cleveland Browns’ nickel back under position coach Jeff Hafley, who was one of two assistant coaches to be retained on Kyle Shanahan’s staff.

Detroit, the New York Jets and Miami have also made contract offers, according to the source. Williams is scheduled to visit with the Minnesota Vikings on Wednesday.

Williams entered the NFL in 2014 as an undrafted free agent from Pittsburgh. Williams (5 foot 9, 183 pounds) played in 26 games in his first two seasons with 10 starts.

He reportedly fell out of favor with the new coaching staff due to a dispute about an ankle injury and a dispute over his availability to practice. Williams was suspended for two weeks during training camp.

The Browns waived Williams on Aug. 29. The Chicago Bears claimed Williams off waivers but he failed a physical. Williams did not see action last season due to bone spurs in his ankle.

Source: Benton agrees to become 49ers O-Line coach

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

New 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan secured one of the major remaining pieces of his coaching staff.

John Benton, 53, who coached the offensive line during Shanahan’s four seasons with the Houston Texans, on Tuesday agreed to terms to join the 49ers’ staff, a source told CSNBayArea.com.

The Broncos allowed Benton get out of his contract just one month after he joined Vance Joseph’s new staff as Denver’s assistant offensive line coach under line coach Jeff Davidson.

Benton served last season as Jacksonville’s assistant offensive line coach. He worked the previous 13 seasons as offensive line coach with the St. Louis Rams (2003-05), Houston (2006-2013) and Miami (2014-15).

Shanahan’s first job as an NFL offensive coordinator was in 2008 and ’09 with the Texans under head coach Gary Kubiak.

Benton was the line coach during those seasons. Shanahan and Benton spent a total of four seasons together on Houston's offensive staff. Shanahan coached wide receivers in 2006 and quarterbacks in 2007.

Benton was reportedly finalizing his contract on Monday, according to a report from Alex Marvez of The Sporting News and SiriusXM NFL Radio.

Benton takes over for Pat Flaherty, who served as offensive line coach under Chip Kelly. Flaherty is the new Jaguars offensive line coach. Chris Foerster coached the 49ers' offensive line in 2015 under Jim Tomsula, and Mike Solari served as the O-line coach under Jim Harbaugh.

Lynch consults with Millen about where things went wrong in Detroit

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

The critics of the 49ers' decision to hire John Lynch as general manager point to one failed instance of a player-turned-broadcaster becoming the top personnel executive.

The Detroit Lions compiled a 31-81 record in Matt Millen's seven seasons as general manager until he was fired after the 2007 season. The following season with a roster that was left in disarray from Millen's time with the organization, the Lions went 0-16.

Appearing Tuesday morning on 95.7 The Game, Lynch said he recently spoke to Millen about his experience.

"Matt Millen and I had a great conversation the other day," Lynch said. "I found it was very interesting to talk to him. He shared with me some of the things that he would've done differently. I think you can learn a little bit from everything and everyone, but ultimately you go to put your head down and go to work.

"We've put together a really, really quality team that I'm excited about. We're in full stride and working every day to knock down things on our list. It's a big list, and we're ambitious on how aggressive we want to attack that. But it's going very well."

Lynch hired Martin Mayhew as a senior personnel executive to serve as one of his top lieutenants. Mayhew became Lions general manager after Millen was fired. In Mayhew's eight seasons, Detroit posted a 47-81 record.

The 49ers were also able to hire Adam Peters away from the Denver Broncos to take on the role as vice president of player personnel. Broncos general manager John Elway, another of Lynch's invaluable resources, allowed Peters to get out of his contract to take on a larger role with the 49ers.

"John Elway was a guy I bounced things off," Lynch said. "He's been there. He's a good friend. I watched him kind of go through this in his own way. He is someone I've consulted with. You learn at a certain point that stops, because all of a sudden we're competing with each other."

Lynch also mentioned Hall of Fame coach Tony Dungy as a person with whom he has spoken during his transition from the broadcast booth, where he spent the previous eight years, to an NFL executive role.

49ers taking a look at defensive tackle Earl Mitchell

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

The NFL free-agent market doesn't open officially until March 9 with teams able to begin negotiating with players on March 7. Before we get to that time, though, teams are already in the process of releasing players to create salary-cap space.

Players who do get cut in the run-up to free agency don't have to wait to sign with another team, which means there's already a market of sorts developing. And the San Francisco 49ers are among the teams dipping their toes into those waters.

Miami released defensive tackle Earl Mitchell on Feb. 16, but it didn't take long for suitors to begin pursuing Mitchell. He visited Seattle on Monday and was to visit the 49ers on Tuesday.

Mitchell, on Wednesday, is scheduled to visit Denver and coach Vance Joseph, who was his defensive coordinator in Miami last season. He is scheduled to visit Atlanta later this week. The NFL Network first reported Mitchell's tour of teams over the weekend.

For the 49ers, Mitchell would make sense as a possible addition to their defensive line rotation. Under new defensive coordinator Robert Saleh, they are expected to transition to a 4-3 base defense. Though the 49ers have some defensive linemen in place, they are in the market for a run-stuffer after having the worst run defense in the league last season.

That's a role Mitchell could help fill, though he probably wouldn't be the only addition San Francisco would look to make upfront. The 6-foot-3, 310-pound Mitchell played 292 snaps in nine games with 18 tackles in 2016. In 100 games, he has 207 tackles, 5.5 sacks and a forced fumble while averaging 27.4 snaps per game.

With defensive tackle Glenn Dorsey set to become an unrestricted free agent, the 49ers are in need of a nose tackle capable of playing the zero or one-technique in their new-look defensive system. Mitchell also has some ties to the 49ers' new coaching staff, having played for new defensive line coach Jeff Zgonina when he was the assistant defensive line coach for Houston in 2013.

Craving for competition drove John Lynch from booth to GM role

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

About an hour after new San Francisco 49ers general manager John Lynch had taken part in his introductory news conference, he walked into the media room at Levi's Stadium for another round of questions with local writers.

Lynch had honestly and earnestly answered every question thrown his way, be it about his lack of experience running a personnel department, the division of power between him and coach Kyle Shanahan, or just about anything else. He'd done so with a smile and plenty of enthusiasm. As the conversation continued, Lynch was asked something a bit more difficult: Why?

As in why would a former player with a wife, four children and a good job as a color analyst for NFL games on Fox choose to leave for the high-pressure, results-driven business of being a general manager?

Lynch's answer began with a quip but ended with emotion as he choked back tears talking about being away from his family.

John Lynch has had to make sacrifices as he transitions to his new, high-profile job as the 49ers GM. AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez

"My wife keeps saying, 'Are you sure?'" Lynch said. "I said, 'Well, this has already started. We're in.' I've never been apart from my family, so it's been gut-wrenching already but -- sorry -- that's been tough."

For now, Lynch is living in a local hotel as he adjusts to his new job while his wife Linda and four children -- Jake, 17, Lindsay, 16, Lilly, 14, and Leah, 9 -- are finishing the school year in San Diego. Jake might stay there with Lynch's parents for his senior year, but the rest of the family will eventually relocate to the Bay Area. On weekends, Lynch travels to Southern California or his family comes to visit him.

It's just one of the many sacrifices Lynch has had to make in transitioning to his new, high-profile job after eight years in the broadcast booth. It also was one of the primary things Lynch and his family considered before the Niners surprised the football world by hiring him out of nowhere to help rebuild this once-proud franchise.

"As soon as we started having conversations, I knew that this was going to be a possibility, so the biggest thing was, 'Can I get my family on board?'" Lynch said. "Ultimately, we got there. At first my wife said, 'You go make this decision,' and I said, 'No, no, no, we have to make this decision.' I got them to the point where they were as excited as I was and pulled the trigger."

Lynch said that Denver Broncos general manager/executive vice president John Elway has been an adviser throughout this process (among others). When Elway retired from football, he threw himself into a variety of business ventures but eventually found his way back to football, first in the Arena League and now in his current role with the Broncos.

Like Elway and so many other former athletes, Lynch's post-football career simply didn't satisfy the competitive fire within him. It's a fire that Shanahan recognized still burns in Lynch when the subject of working together in San Francisco was first broached.

"What excited me so much about John is [that] John had a pretty good deal before coming here," Shanahan said. "I remember when he told me why he wanted to be a general manager, and he really missed someone winning and losing at the end of a game. He enjoyed doing the announcing and being a part of the NFL, but the fight to go through something with a group of guys and what we go through together, and it is not easy and it's a grind for everybody, but it is worth it. That's really what people who played, people who coached, those are the reasons when people get out of it, they miss it so much."

It's that same competitive persona that made taking this particular job appealing to Lynch. Although he had never been all-in on moving into personnel, he said he has had conversations with teams in the past about making that move. In the run-up to recent drafts, Elway has invited Lynch to help the scouting department.

"He used to always give me a hard time and kind of bust my chops: 'What are you really doing when you broadcast a game?'" Lynch said, laughing. "'What kind of impact are you having?' He was messing with me."

But Elway also gave Lynch opportunities to see what he was missing, first by asking him to watch tape of safety prospects and write reports. Lynch was a Pro Bowl safety with the Buccaneers and Broncos.

Then, Elway asked Lynch to sit in on some draft meetings. Then, Lynch attended the scouting combine in Indianapolis with the Broncos, participating in every aspect of the process except the interviews.

Seeing it up close gave Lynch a new perspective. Combining that with the need to have a result -- positive or negative -- to take home with him after games, Lynch saw himself making the leap.

"When you've got a guy who had as good of a life setup, with his job and where he was, and he wants to come be a GM for one reason, because he wants to be a part of that working to win again -- and that's how I think, too," Shanahan said. "There's a lot of stuff that goes on in this business, and it's a big-time business and I get that, but when it comes down to it, when you have the people who are working together to try to lead the organization the way they think is pretty simple: It's about football and really not much else."

49ers add DeMeco Ryans to coaching staff

By Josh Alper, ProFootballTalk.com

The 49ers announced seven more members of their coaching staff on Tuesday, including the previously reported addition of John Benton as their offensive line coach.

While Benton holds the most prominent role among Tuesday's announcements, he probably isn't the most recognizable name on the list. That honor would belong to longtime NFL linebacker DeMeco Ryans, who has moved into coaching and will be the defensive quality control coach for Kyle Shanahan this season.

Ryans last played with the Eagles in 2015, which was his fourth season in Philadelphia. The 2006 second-round pick was with the Texans before heading to Philly in 2012 and his time there overlapped with Shanahan's four years on Houston's offensive staff as well as defensive coordinator Robert Saleh's two years as the team's assistant linebackers coach.

Former Lions safety Daniel Bullocks has been hired as the assistant defensive backs coach while Vince Oghobaase will be the assistant defensive line coach. Assistant special teams coach Stan Kwan, assistant offensive line coach Adam Stenavich and strength and conditioning assistant Michael Clay round out Tuesday's hires.

Colin Kaepernick needs an agent fairly soon

By Mike Florio, ProFootballTalk.com

49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick recently parted ways with his agents. Per NFLPA records, he has yet to hire a replacement.

He'll need to move fairly soon. As Cam Inman of the Bay Area News Group recently pointed out, the window for opting out of his contract in San Francisco opens on March 2 and closes on March 7.

Apart from needing an agent to file the right paperwork to opt out on time (then again, former 49ers receiver Terrell Owens had an agent to file the proper paperwork and there still was a snafu), Kaepernick needs an agent to talk to other teams during the two-day window before free agency opens on March 9, because teams can't talk directly to players during that window — even if the players are self-represented.

Of course, it may not matter for Kaepernick; there's no indication that a land rush for his services will unfold when free agency opens, in part because some owners will view the potential fallout from embracing a player who engaged in a season-long National Anthem protest as making him radioactive, from a business standpoint.

Regardless of politics, the fact remains that NFL teams need to persuade fans to part ways with their money and time. With a certain percentage of the fan base automatically alienated by Kaepernick's arrival, some teams will look elsewhere when the time comes to add a quarterback, regardless of his past accomplishments, his current/future potential, and the ongoing effort by plenty of teams to upgrade at the position.

49ers hire John Benton as offensive line coach

By Josh Alper, ProFootballTalk.com

John Benton's stay with the Broncos was a short one.

Benton was hired as the assistant offensive line coach in Denver after Vance Joseph was named the Broncos' new head coach, but he won't be on Joseph's staff in 2017. Benton was granted permission to interview with the 49ers for their offensive line job and it apparently went well.

A day after Alex Marvez of Sporting News reported that Benton was finalizing a deal to join Kyle Shanahan's staff, Matt Maiocco of CSN Bay Area reports that the agreement is in place. The move reunites Shanahan and Benton, who coached the offensive line in Houston when Shanahan was the offensive coordinator of the Texans for four seasons.

Benton spent seven years with the Texans overall and has also coached the offensive line for the Rams and 49ers over the course of his career.

John Lynch: DeForest Buckner, Arik Armstead will fit new defense well

By Josh Alper, ProFootballTalk.com

The 49ers have settled on a new defensive coordinator and head coach Kyle Shanahan confirmed that Saleh will be shifting the defense to a 4-3 base similar to the ones being run in Seattle and Atlanta.

A new scheme will ask for different things of players returning from the 2016 season, including two of the team's three first-round picks in the last two years. DeForest Buckner and Arik Armstead were both selected to be defensive ends in the team's 3-4, but General Manager John Lynch thinks that his predecessor's picks will be able to find a home in their new scheme as well.

"I think they fit very well," Lynch said on 95.7 The Game, via CSNBayArea.com. "And that's one thing I think I want to make sure [to say] because I really believe it, I think Trent Baalke did a great job of getting guys that, yes, they were picked for one system, but I think they transition very well to our system."

Lynch said the two former Oregon Ducks were asked to read and react last season, but that will change to "taking the fight to them" with Saleh calling the shots. Given how much work he has to do with the 49ers personnel, Lynch would welcome being right about Armstead and Buckner thriving in their new roles.