

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

TRANSCRIPTIONS



Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – December 27, 2017
San Francisco 49ers
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The word from Los Angeles Rams head coach Sean McVay is they're going to rest some of their key guys. How does that impact how you guys prepare and what you expect to see on Sunday?

"Really doesn't change anything. You don't know exactly what players, so you don't game plan too differently because you're not sure who they're going to be. I definitely expect them to have some, especially with Sean saying that. But, for our mindset, that can't change anything."

Is that a bit of a bummer, just because that's a good team and you won't be able to play 'The Rams?'

"Yeah it is a little bit. I'd like them to have everyone out there. I think our guys would too. It is what it is and we've got to make sure that doesn't affect us. You've got to line up, play whoever you play. If you lose your edge at all, just as anything in this league, you'll get humbled very fast. We're just going to make sure that doesn't affect us."

Was Sunday as locked in as you've been this year in terms of a play-calling standpoint?

"I try to be locked in every week. I always feel I'm pretty locked in. It doesn't always resort to doing good all the time, but I'm always pretty locked in. Everything went well and there was a good flow in the game so it helped out for everybody."

Maybe in terms of having a feel for what you're calling, feeling that this guy is going to be open at this point, the next play we're calling this?

"Yeah I think it does. It has to do with sometimes what defenses you're playing and stuff like that. We knew we were going against a very good, sound defense. So, there are specific things that you had to do to open them up a little bit. Those still are a little harder than you would expect to do. So, you know when you're putting some guys in binds and if you get a couple things going, it opens up some other things. Because we were able to make some key third downs and be able to stick with the run a little bit, we were able to do that throughout the game."

How is the challenge that you're going to face this week different than what you've faced the last two weeks?

“Each week’s totally different. This week is based out of a 3-4. Their backers on the outside are different to where you don’t put your running backs on them all the time. The player that they have inside with [Los Angeles Rams DL] Aaron Donald is different than anyone you face any week. Much more heavy in their man coverage. But, they’re similar in terms of they don’t do a lot. [Los Angeles Rams defensive coordinator] Wade [Phillips] has always been pretty much the same on fronts and coverages. They’re sound and they make you line up and beat them.”

How has your game planning changed in the fifth start for QB Jimmy Garoppolo as opposed to his first one? What’s the biggest thing that you’ve been able to do as a head coach when you incorporate things?

“I think he gets more of a feel of what we’re doing and we start to get more of a feel of what he’s comfortable with. It kind of goes from there. You start to put a little bit more in of what you’ve had success with and it branches off. If you’ve had success with certain things, you can’t put in the exact same stuff because that’s all teams are practicing. You start to do some things off of that, but it’s allowed Jimmy to grow to where, ‘Hey remember this play versus Chicago and why it worked? We’re going to do something similar to that this week, but this is the adjustment we’re going to make.’ There’s a little more foundation for him in terms of not ‘Hey remember when we ran that in OTAs or training camp? This is what it’s going to be this week.’ It makes it easier to communicate and coach and have him envision it a little bit better. Then it just depends on who we’re playing.”

Do you look forward to this sort of developing into kind of long-term divisional rivalry with you and Sean both in your first years? You guys both having young up and coming quarterbacks. Is there value to you in having a long-term rival that you can sort of measure yourself against?

“I look at anybody in your division as you’re going to be pretty big rivals with wherever you are. Especially in the NFC West with the Rams and the Niners, it’s been that way for a while. The hard rivals end up being usually who the better teams in the division are. I hope that we’re up there as we get going. I know the Rams are there this year, so we’re excited to get to play them. Again, I wish they had all their guys going, we’ll see what happens, but hopefully that can build as we get going, that we’ll both be up there each year. And the more you do that, I think the Niners and Seahawks had that going for a while, we’ll see what teams start to do that now.”

After you faced them in Week 3, did you see them as the front runner for the NFC West and did you recognize Super Bowl traits in them back then?

“Definitely recognized Super Bowl traits. I know there’s a lot of good teams in the division. I know Arizona and Seattle had just as good a chance as anyone at the beginning of that year too. Going against that defense over the years, knowing some of the players they have on their D, knowing some of the players they have on their offense with the improvement and what they did to the O-Line, getting the system in that they did, knowing how top notch their special teams are, I think very easily you could see quickly that if they were able to stay healthy they were going to have as good a chance as anyone.”

LB Reuben Foster has overcome the major injury he came to the team with. But, he's had a lot of minor injuries along the way. How much of a concern are those to you?

"Similar to what I said a couple days ago. Any time a guy goes down a lot you always are concerned. Since he came back from the broken rib he hasn't missed any games. He has gotten banged up each week and the way he plays and the position he plays I know that's going to be a part of his whole career. How it has been so far just playing in college and stuff, that goes with playing that position and how he plays it. I think as Reuben gets older, takes care of his body week around and in the offseason too, I think it'll be nicer going into this offseason where he can come to OTAs and training camp much more prepared instead of trying to recover from a surgery. I think that could help too. He's had a hell of a year. Definitely not there yet, he's got a long way to go, but staying healthy would be a big part of it."

McVay got a lot of credit for being in the ear of Los Angeles Rams QB Jared Goff and getting to the line early. I know that is something that you've always done. Do you ever worry about that or think about that? Something that you've done that he's getting credit for.

"Not really, just because I've been doing it for a while. I promise you I wasn't the first person to do it, lots of people do that. When you do good you get a lot of attention for it. When you do bad you get a lot of negative attention. That just goes with the business. They've done a hell of a job there. Sean's done an unbelievable job with [Los Angeles Rams offensive coordinator] Matt LaFleur. I've got a lot of respect for their offense because it's very similar. I know a lot of what they're doing and they feel the same about us. We'll have some fun conversations about it in the offseason."

Jimmy mentioned not paying attention to the outside noise and things like that. How do you think he's handled success from your vantage point?

"He seems the same every day. So, I think that doesn't seem like just talk. I do believe that when he says it because he seems the same today being with him as he did five weeks ago when we got him. I think that's the key to everything. You find out a lot about people through adversity, but you also do through success. We've had some the last few weeks, got a lot of attention, way too much probably, but we've been happy with how we've been playing and hopefully can finish this up strong and that'll leave us excited going into next year."

What upside do you think he still has? He's only started six NFL games. Is there still more for him to do? And if so, what areas are those in?

"Just everything. Yeah, there's a lot more. That's just not just him, that's everybody. We've been playing good football. He's been playing very well. I think he's gotten better each week. But, by no means has anyone on our team arrived. We've got a lot of work to do. I know he's won all his games in, but very easily we could've lost a number of those games. As I'll say pretty much almost every day, you never stay the same, you get better or worse. So, we've got to keep going back to work and hopefully we'll be better this Sunday than we were last week."

When you say there's way too much attention, is that mainly because there's no playoffs at stake?

"Yeah. I know [RB] Carlos [Hyde] said it, but I heard the Super Bowl quote this week and things like that. I think Carlos was being a facetious on that, but you hear a lot about it. I just keep everything in perspective. We lost five games in a row this year by three points or less. That means we very easily could've won those. If we would've started out 5-1 who knows how everyone would've been talking. The reality is we wouldn't have been much different than we were as an 0-6 team. The ball's got to bounce a few ways and things can change very quickly for you. I look at these last five games similar. We're definitely playing better ball, it definitely takes a lot to win those games instead of finding ways to lose them by a small margin. But, I've been in this long enough to always keep perspective and understand that ball goes a lot of different ways. Sometimes a 10-6 team is not much different than a 5-11 team. It's just a couple plays here and there and who stays healthy."

You've spoken a lot about Jimmy. He seems to be really good with the off-schedule and really good when coverage drops, to find the open guy. Can you take advantage of that and can you have him do more at the line of scrimmage and have him determine what matchups he wants and those type of things? Is he that type of quarterback?

"We'll see as we go. He's done a good job of it so far. Everyone's different. Some guys want to be out there and control everything, and you've got to keep it very simple when it's like that so they can think a lot during the play. Some people want you to do a ton of stuff and help get people open and let them stay clear-minded and let it rip. We'll see as that goes. I've had a lot of fun with him in this month and we'll have a lot more fun this offseason really talking about that stuff and where we can go with this. But, you talk about the off-schedules, that's what's been great. I've struggled, not me personally, but you get some three-man rushes and stuff in the red zone and you've got eight guys against four, five if you scat your back out. Those aren't really good numbers. Especially to hit people in rhythm. I always sit there and right when I see that it's over I feel like the play's done, but Jimmy has proved wrong the last few weeks. That's been real fun for me, seeing no one open then knowing that maybe that's a good thing because he ends up getting someone open late. The off-schedule plays have been the best thing to me personally. But, I think there's huge upside there and a lot of things we can do."

Have you come up with scramble plays with your quarterbacks before or does that have to be organic between the quarterback and a receiver?

"I think it's organic. I've been tons of places and you try to coach them whatever rules I've learned or heard from people and studied. It works good and sounds nice, but then you watch it and pause it and say 'What about our rules here?' and you go 'Don't do them there. Don't do them there.' It's basically hard to have rules to something off-schedule and chaotic. The main thing we stress is guys just to keep working. Distribute the field and keep working. Never stop and just watch the play. The more you do it the better you get at it. I don't like practicing a lot or putting in plays that don't get people open so you have to worry about doing that. We've had a number of times in this last

month where he's made some off-schedule plays and the more it happens guys start to believe in it and the more guys start working to do it."

There have been a few plays over the last couple of weeks where is it a catch, is it not a catch in pivotal moments. You had one where you had a fumble recovery for a touchdown. Jaguars ended up getting it back and scoring a touchdown. Do you think the rule is clear as is? Would you like it to continue to be reworked and improved?

"Everyone would like it to be right so there's no grey area. You've got to have a solution to do it too and your solution can't open up another can of worms. I don't want everything being called completions now and everything's a fumble left and right. I get the dilemma, I think it frustrates everyone, but it's also a legitimate issue. That's why when you get in stuff close like that I don't think it's completely definitive. I think it could go either way. A lot of times in those situations, if it's a big turnover or a big play, whether I think we're right or wrong I just do it anyways because I do think there's a chance. Even if we don't think it's a fumble we know there's a chance it might be. If it was for a two-yard gain or difference you don't worry about it. But, when it has to do with getting the ball back or scoring seven points off of it, because of the way the rule is that it is confusing to people, to make the exact answer, to me if it's a big play, you gamble."

How did DL Solomon Thomas play on Sunday and what's been your assessment of just his rookie season?

"I think Solomon had one of his best games Sunday. He affected the game in the pass game and the run game, ran to the ball real hard. Just like most rookies, I think he's been up and down throughout the year. I thought he started off playing hard, started playing at his highest level right before his injury. I know the injury was frustrating for him, took him a little longer for him to come back. Once he did come back I thought he was a little bit rusty like they all are when they miss some time. I think these last three weeks he's gotten better each week and put together his best game last week and hopefully he finishes with his best game of the year this week."