

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

# TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Defensive Coordinator Robert Saleh  
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San Francisco 49ers  
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**I just looked at the listings and Jacksonville Jaguars RB Leonard Fournette's at 228. DL Sheldon Day yesterday told me there's no way he's under 250. Not in an insulting way, but 228, is that--?**

"He looks big on tape. I don't know his exact weight. I know he moves like he's 200 and he hits like he's 250. He's a really good complete back."

**Do you help at all this week the offensive side with any insights into the Jaguars defense?**

"[Head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] and his staff, they're coming from Atlanta who pretty much runs the same scheme too. They might ask a question or two, but I think they're pretty well aware of all the things that we do defensively and all the techniques that we teach. So, a question here and there, but they're not relying on me."

**How much credit do you take for the Jacksonville defense and the way you pushed them up?**

"I'm pumped up for those guys. There's so many people there that were there for the last three years. So, really excited to see those guys have the success that they're having. It's a tribute to guys like [Jacksonville Jaguars general manager] Dave Caldwell, [Jacksonville Jaguars director of player personnel] Chris Polian, [Los Angeles Chargers defensive coordinator] Gus Bradley and all them who were there from the beginning and tore that thing down and brought it back up to what it is. All the hard work that those guys have put in over the last four years, they're really starting to reap the benefits of their hard work. It's really cool to see it happen."

**Looking at their defense and how it's constructed, is that somewhat of a blueprint for you guys?**

"I don't know if you want to call it a method to the madness, but there is a clear vision of exactly what you're looking for with each spot. We went through it in Seattle with coach [Seattle Seahawks head coach Pete] Carroll. We went through it again in Jacksonville with coach Bradley and Dave Caldwell and all them. So, there is a vision. We like to think we have an idea. There is an element of luck to hit on some of those late guys. I'd like to say that the blueprint's already kind of been created. It's just maintaining your belief and conviction on what you see and know that works in the system and continue to build off that."

**What has Jacksonville Jaguars QB Blake Bortles been able to do well these last three games that maybe he wasn't beforehand when he was struggling a little bit?**

"It seems to me like Blake is playing with a tremendous amount of confidence. He's thrown darts. He looks very accurate, he's mobile, he's tall in the pocket, he looks lean and he looks in shape. He looks fantastic to be honest with you. I'm not trying to sugarcoat anything. He looks really, really good."

**You talk a lot about the rushing average and you guys are down to 3.8 now. These guys have run more than anybody in the NFL. Is your run defense looking at this as one of its ultimate tests?**

"Every week presents a new challenge. It's the number one run offense in all of football. It's not just because they run the ball over and over again and they have opportunities to run. I think they're sixth in yards per carry. They get after it in the run game. They're very physical in the run game. They don't try to trick you, which I respect a lot. You don't know exactly what they're going to do run-game wise, but they've got conviction in what they are in the run game and they line up and they try to move the pile on the line of scrimmage. So, I've got a lot of respect for the run game and what they've been doing."

**How's DL DeForest Buckner and his ankle?**

"He's moving along. Trainers have said that he looks good. So, we'll see how it goes later on in the week."

**The Jaguars use their big tall guy Jacksonville Jaguars DE Calais Campbell on the end. Was that ever contemplated with DeForest, putting him on that big end spot?**

"It was. There's a few guys, it depends on how you want to use it. Seattle uses [Seattle Seahawks DL] Michael Bennett. Jacksonville had brought in [DL] Red Bryant, [Pittsburgh Steelers DL] Tyson Alualu, Seattle also had Red Bryant for a minute when coach Bradley was there. There's different philosophies. You could with Buck. I think he's really proven to be a really dominant three-technique. I really do believe that. And so what we can do with that big end spot kind of frees us up to go get, I'm not trying to knock Calais because he is a freak athlete, but to get more of an athlete instead of just a pure run stopper. Not to say that Calais is just a run stopper obviously, he's just special."

**Is part of your process going to be in the offseason to evaluate maybe where he fits best and maybe experiment a little bit or create plans to experiment with Buckner on the edge or moving some other guys around similarly?**

"We'll always evaluate. If I were a betting man I'd say that Buck is a dominant three-technique and it'd be really hard to try to move him at this point. He lives in people's backfields. He's dominating in the run game. He's setting edges. And it makes it very hard. He doesn't get cut off, he's not slow footed, he's really, really good at that three-technique and he's just an imposing figure in there. He would have six or seven sacks this year if just luck of penalties and things that have happened to him over the course of the year. He, in my mind, has had great production. He's been dominant. He grades

out as our top D-Lineman almost every week. Where he is right now, if I were a betting man, I'd say he would not be a guy we would want to experiment with."

**How similar are Buckner and Campbell?**

"When you look at their body types, similar. From my understanding and what I've watched on tape Calais kind of has that country strength to him. Buckner has some good athleticism to him and he can get his hips flipped and all that stuff too. So, body-type wise they are very similar. Haven't really studied Calais enough to really give you a true answer, but just from the outside looking in and the little bit that I have seen it's going to be something that we will study to see if we can help Buck further develop and see if there are any just-likes that we can create for him so he can get that image in his mind."

**Jacksonville Jaguars CB A.J. Bouye was a guy who was in the division that you saw on the other side. What are your impressions of him? Do you remember when he was a free agent this offseason did you have any inclining to push for him to come here?**

"We studied it in free agency. I write up my report and give it to those guys. You'd like to have every single one of them. Kyle and [general manager] John [Lynch] and [vice president of player personnel] Adam [Peters] and [senior personnel executive] Martin Mayhew, they have a tremendous plan. They ask for our opinion, we give them our opinion and they do a great job with that they're seeing on tape. Whatever they saw in all that stuff, I'm 100-percent behind."

**Are you surprised at all at the success he's having this year?**

"No."

**Jacksonville Jaguars CB Jalen Ramsey is a versatile guy. Just that versatility, how useful is that in today's NFL with just the variance of passing games you'll see and the different types of targets that teams will throw out there?**

"The one thing that makes Jalen tick is his mindset. He is a freak athlete, he's got freakish length, he's got freakish size, but what makes him special is he's a flat dog on the football field and he doesn't play out of control. If you let him, he'll try to embarrass you. That's what I like most about the guy. There's a reason why he was a top-five pick. There's not many like him. He's got a chance to be special if he continues with that mindset."

**The Jaguars really have a good running game, but they've had some young receivers emerge recently. Their punt returner had a couple of touchdowns last week, Jacksonville Jaguars WR Jaydon Mickens. What have you seen from their weapons in the passing game?**

"You know what, [Jacksonville Jaguars offensive coordinator] Nate Hackett does a great job scheming up with regards to the passing game. I'm telling you, Blake is putting the ball where only his receivers can catch it. He's throwing the ball really, really well right now. His receivers are running really good routes. You watch that Houston game, guys were running wide open and Blake was hitting them in stride. It's been a combination of

the way coach Hackett has been calling his games and scheming up, a combination of how you can include the O-Line and the way that they've been protecting. And, Blake is standing back there playing with great confidence. It's a little bit of everything. They're young guys so there's not a lot of tape on them, but they're stepping up and they're answering the bell. They're very capable, obviously capable receivers. You never want to crown a rookie quite yet, but you can tell there's great potential within that group. "

**What is your assessment of how LB Brock Coyle has played since he became a starter?**

"Brock has been really good. I know he doesn't make the splash plays. It was really cool to see him get the ball out on Sunday on [Tennessee Titans TE] Delanie Walker, but he brings a level of consistency, communication and reliability to the defense that's vital in my mind. It's critical to be able to get the other 10 guys lined up, be comfortable within the checks, communicate what he sees. And so, he might not make the splash plays that people on the outside are looking at, but on the inside we have a great appreciation for the way he's been playing."

**You said that fumble was forced by Brock?**

"They're still arguing over it. I think the stat sheet gave it to Brock. I said it was a combination. It looked like Brock go the ball and Sheldon got the arm. A little combination, for sure."

**His first start against Washington he said the first half in particular was pretty rugged. This was coming right after Oakland Raiders LB NaVorro Bowman was released. A lot of things going on. Initially were you like 'Geez, this may not work out.' Regardless of that, how has he kind of settled down?**

"He's settled down. Standard reaction I guess. You put too much pressure on yourself and the only thing you can do is mess it up. That first half of the Washington game he made it bigger than it needed to be. When he got a chance to reset after the Dallas game, we played Dallas and [LB] Reuben [Foster] was back, he had a chance to reset from there and since then he's doing what he did throughout OTAs and training camp to build all that trust. He's not trying to be superhero. He's just being Brock Coyle, and Brock Coyle is a really good football player."

**Going back to training camp he knew the scheme better than anybody right away.**

"For sure, being in Seattle. He had great recall over everything. Sometimes when you get into the heat of the moment you put a lot more pressure on yourself than you need to. It takes repetition. And for him being able to sit back and reset has helped him immensely."

**The decisive play on defense, I think it was third-and-two, you guys had to get the stop, I couldn't tell who made the better play. I know Brock was in on it and DeForest you can't tell on the TV film, but he also seemed to have pushed two guys back into him. Can you kind of take me through--?**

"The play that Tennessee ran, it was the second time they ran it in the game. Earlier in the year we were having a problem with trap. Dallas kind of gashed us on trap. Since

then, our guys taken to and are very aware of when teams are going to run it. Trap is basically a quick-hitter on the three-technique, pulling guard, but the hardest job in my mind is on that A-gap linebacker because he's thinking power and he's got to get over the top when really he needs to trigger. Brock recognized it the way he did, Buck did a great job and completely blew the whole thing up. But, Brock triggered and pretty much put the seal on all the work that Buck did too. So, it was a combination, it really was a combination of both of them. Real hard for the backer to trigger, real hard for Buck to be able to blow it up the way he did and see it as fast as he did. It was a really, really cool play, especially with the play that they tried to run to get that first down."

**Are you expecting some similar stuff from Jacksonville given how efficient they are running?**

"I'm sure they'll have a couple of wrinkles in their scheme. I don't want to say it doesn't matter, the run game is all about mindset. It's one man's will against another's. If we're sound in our alignment, if we're sound with our key and we're sound with the way we execute and our gap integrity, we feel good about being able to fit the run game. From there it's tackling and getting off blocks."

**Are trap runs, do you need to be particularly ready to defend when you have an aggressive, penetrating--?**

"For sure. The big thing with Buck is he's been getting some good penetration. So, it's actually a compliment when teams are trying to trap you, they think you're a penetrator. So, it's a compliment to Buck in a way. A backhanded compliment I should say."

**Going into the offseason, do you think you need Reuben to change his body a little bit? I know last year he was obviously recovering from the surgery, but do you expect him to bulk up at all?**

"That's a tough question. I like our guys. I like where he's at right now. He looks fast, he looks fleet of foot. The guy just, I shouldn't say careless, I mean the guy just wants to kill people. So sometimes he kills himself for a play. I don't know if he's 240, 250, I think you're going to have the same result. He hits the daylights out of people. Every once in a while, he's going to get something where he might have to take a breather. It's been a while since I've seen someone who hits as hard as he does. I think after a full offseason where he can just build his body instead of having to rehab, eat right and do things the right way, I think he'll avoid some of those injuries as he gets smarter in the game. I don't know if bulk is going to help with what he does."

**He has an affinity for Cinnamon Toast Crunch. Might be difficult to get him to eat right.**

"I texted him the other day when I saw that come out. [Jacksonville Jaguars LB] Telvin Smith had an affinity, well he has one. It's his pregame meal. I was messing with him. I was like 'How are you going to play eating Cinnamon Toast Crunch.' He says 'That's my power.' Must be a good thing for linebackers, they should all do it."