

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

# TRANSCRIPTIONS



**General Manager John Lynch  
Press Conference – April 24, 2017  
San Francisco 49ers**  
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**Opening statement:**

“Welcome to where we’ve been spending our lives here for the last couple of months. This is an exciting week for me and everybody involved with this organization, everybody in this league. It’s the culmination of, for me, when I was hired right before the Super Bowl, we immediately went to work. Really, the first thing that we did when I was in, I think after Super Bowl, that next week scouts were in and we really started this process. It had been started by scouts long before. I’m real proud of the process. I think as you look at our process, it included a collaboration of a lot of different disciplines. Number one, me just trusting my instincts and where my eye gravitates towards. Obviously, [vice president of player personnel] Adam Peters’ involvement, having been a college scouting director and very involved in the process with the Denver Broncos, him going back to the New England Patriots, we brought in ideas from there and then of course [head coach] Kyle [Shanahan], bringing in what he’s comfortable with from the various places he’s been and sometimes dating back to what he saw his dad do at the Denver Broncos and we really melded that into our philosophy. We’ve relied a lot on our scouts who’ve done exhaustive work on these guys. We’ve also included our coaching staff. I felt like it was critical in our first year to include our coaching staff in the evaluation process to properly evaluate these players but also so our scouts and our front office got a great feel for exactly what we’re looking for at the various positions. So, I’m proud of the process. I’m proud of the discipline. There’s a lot of people and a lot of assumptions being made. I feel real confident that those are exactly that, assumptions, because nothing has left this building. It’s that time of year. I’m aware of that and so there’s going to be a lot more from Monday until it’s go-time on Thursday. I’m really excited. I’ve always prided myself on preparation as a player, as a broadcaster, just in life in general and I can say that we and I feel real, real good about that preparation. Also know that it’s going to remain fluid and we’ll be working right up until our first pick and all the way through.”

**You said you feel confident that nothing has left this building. Obviously there are plenty of reports about who you like and just this morning NFL Network said you’re strongly considering a quarterback. Where is that stuff coming from if you think it’s not leaking out of here?**

“Well, I use the word assumptions. It’s what people do. They try to gather, but I know that, I don’t know obviously, but like I said I think the discipline out of this building’s been

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excellent. And so, I think that's what they are, they're assumptions rather than, I think in each situation it says sources. I don't know who those sources are because there's only a few people that know and so we feel real good about that."

**You have a minicamp this week. How much will that sort of help you sharpen, hone your draft board?**

"We have a good understanding of where we are and what we're looking for. But, I think you're allowed this with a new regime and we were going to take advantage of it. In terms of just getting a look real quick, and whether that will change our mind on anything, but you would hate not to give guys an opportunity to go show what they are doing before you went out and did that. So, we'll use it for what it's worth. I don't know how much value. I think more than anything our coaches are just really excited to get guys out on the field, so we'll use it as such. We've got a couple players in here on a tryout basis and so we're happy for that, to see if we can add some things. But, we'll evaluate but continue to work on the draft process as well."

**Have any of the trade talks intensified to the point where something might happen soon or it might be more of a draft day situation?**

"I can tell you with number two, there have been calls. There's been interest. But, I think nothing specific. It's coveted. When you have a pick that high, I think that's natural. Again, my first time doing this, but we have received calls and I can tell you that we feel really good about where we're at with the number two pick in terms of us narrowing down options and feeling really good about where we're at. But, I've been very transparent from the beginning that we'll listen. I think that will always be the case and it certainly is. We're going to listen right up until draft day, but otherwise we're going to pick a player at two that we feel is a cornerstone for this franchise for years to come and we'll be very passionate about that pick and what that player can do for us moving forward."

**Do you have it narrowed down to about two, three guys that you're settled on?**

"I would say that's fair. I think the, what I'm real proud of the process is that it probably started much bigger than that. I think we tried to create an environment that's collaborative, where people can be confident in sharing their opinions, and we had strong opinions, and they didn't always agree, but we've gotten to a point where there's consensus. Ultimately, it will be Kyle and I together making those decisions and that's kind of where we are this week."

**Would you consider taking a quarterback at two?**

"Yeah. I think we've stated from the beginning that a franchise quarterback is something we believe is essential to winning in this league. We hope that [QB Brian] Hoyer and [QB Matt] Barkley come in, and they were both brought in for a reason, but we feel like we'll continue, always continue, to try to improve ourselves at that position. And so, I think the answer is yes."

**How hard is it for you, you talk about trading down and there's some teams that are interested, how fearful are you to trade too far down that you might miss out on your targeted two or three players that you're looking into?**

"Well, I think a lot of things can be construed a number of different ways. What we've said, and the truth of the matter is, we're willing to listen. But, like I just told you, we're very comfortable that we can get to the point where there's a direction we can go where we'll be ecstatic and we'll be passionate about that player."

**Is CB Rashard Robinson a penciled in starter heading into the draft?**

"We believe in competition. We believe that all these guys have got to come show us. Tomorrow will be that first opportunity for him. They obviously, some guys like that have some film out there. But, this is a new regime and all these guys, one of the things that Kyle has been very clear in pointing out to them, is that everyone is competing. I think that's no different for him."

**With this draft, here in this free agency period, would you consider not drafting a position knowing that a player could hit free agency next year that you might try to go after then? Or is that too much of a risk, if a player is going to be hitting free agency, is it too much of a risk knowing that they could get hurt or something like that?**

"Yeah, I think in a general sense, you take everything. I think one thing I've learned on the process, there is so much that goes into every decision that you make. There's so many different factors that you're weighing. And so, you take everything into account, things like that, and then ultimately you make the best decision that you can possibly make given all the circumstances. I think, one of the things we set out to do and I think the volume spoke to this that we had in free agency, is that we set out with a goal of filling some places where we felt like we had holes, so that we didn't have to. We could really, I think people get in trouble as I've seen over years and you study is when they reach because they have needs. And, when you're 2-14, you're going to have a lot of needs. We addressed some of those in free agency, but there's still a lot of holes on this roster and we're hoping to come out of this draft with a nucleus of players that are going to represent the type of players we feel can get us back to being a team that's competing for championships on a consistent basis."

**This organization has publicly stated before that character is very, very important, winning with class is the phrase. How much is that guiding your whittling of the selection? Are recent developments of some of the top prospects affecting your choices?**

"Yeah, that will always be a guiding principle. I think one of the things we really have done a good job is kind of forcing ourselves, we've gone through a lot of exercises to really put down on paper, to articulate what it is that we're striving for, what it is we're looking for, what that 49er-way as we hope to reestablish I, how you do that. And I think the one thing to know is, and I've learned from playing and from this process, is a lot of people have issues just like a lot of people in life have issues. So, if you're looking for a bunch of choir boys, it's not going to happen. It'd be hard to fill a team, but we believe in football character. Do they love football? Are they dependable? Are they accountable?"

Those type of things. And so, I think each circumstance, each player, deserves and will get looked at in a unique and thorough way and that's what we'll do there."

**You've never been immersed in this process as deeply as you are this year. What's been the steepest part of the learning curve for you?**

"Probably that you're looking for perfect, you're looking for assurance. You're looking for someone who fits every one of those criteria. It doesn't happen, it's not reality. I'm sure there were a lot of questions about me when I came in the league, but you try to grow comfortable. So, I think that everyone thinks it's easy, you can go find them, they are out there. And they are out there. You just have to work exhaustively and I think that's been the biggest challenge. That's also what makes it fun. You work really hard to try to take all the risk and reward into account and that's our job. If we do it well, we'll be successful. If not, we'll struggle to be. I like at least the process. That's what we've focused on. I think we feel very positively about the process we've gone through to arrive at that."

**In that same vein, how valuable have Adam Peters and senior personnel executive Martin Mayhew been?**

"They've been awesome. Those were great hires. I felt when we were able to secure them, and I can tell you as we sit here along with Kyle throughout these meetings, they've both been invaluable to me and they will continue to be. That won't stop at this draft. I brought them in here for a reason. We brought them in here for a reason and each in their own way have just been, I wouldn't have wanted to go through this without them. So, I'm very thankful to them and they'll play a big role in this thing as well."

**Did Adam bring scouting reports from Denver? How did the scouting system work? Did you merge some of former 49ers general manager Trent Baalke's stuff? I'm just curious how that worked.**

"Yeah, so when we first brought scouts in right after the Super Bowl we were kind of working off the old grading system. But, what helped was the grading system that they use in Denver, which kind of derived from one that was developed in New England, was also one that Kyle was familiar with in Atlanta because [Atlanta Falcons general manager] Thomas Dimitroff had been in New England. So, it was a natural fit to move to that. So, in these last three weeks of draft meetings we moved over to that grading scale. That's the answer there. That always helps that there's, but I think also, having some different backgrounds has been, I feel, I've always been someone who thinks you should listen to multiple opinions and we've been very collaborative. I believe in strong opinions. Someone once told me, 'strong opinions, weakly held.' So, are you open to different thoughts and someone makes you think, but ultimately someone's got to make decisions."

**So, people were standing on the table and it was getting crazy?**

"I don't know about standing on the table, but so to speak, yeah. People had strong opinions and stood up for guys and I think it was really good. That's part of the job. Behind those screens is our board. Up on this, digitally, they've got a beautiful room in here, the John McVay Draft Room. Our board is finished, if you looked behind there

there's still 'watch more' on certain segments of that board and so we'll continue to that as the week's gone on. But, most of the work is done."

**Are you guys going to have this room open for cameras on draft day? Not for our cameras, but like an NFL Network type. That's something that hasn't been the case the last five years, so--?**

49ers vice president of communications Bob Lange: "We've had the camera. NFL Network has had a camera and they go on when we go on the clock. Whether they use it or not is up to them."

**Given that it's your first, I know you've been in some draft rooms before with executive vice president of football operations/GM John Elway, but the whole comprehensive scouting process. I'm curious to hear how you've analyzed the different levels of play and styles of play in each conference around the country. For example, the ACC, SEC, has been popular in the past. You're a Pac-12 guy, or a Pac-10 guy. The Big 10. Stylistically, what do you see?**

"I know there's a lot of good players in the Southeastern Conference. I figured that one out. I mean, the obvious, there's good players everywhere and that's the fun part of this process. The real fun part of it is when you're watching a tight end from Ashland, who's a really good player and those things are fun. The problem is those aren't secrets anymore. I think in today's world you think you've got a diamond in the rough and then you find out other people know about him as well. I think that's tougher and tougher. That's been fascinating to me. Stylistically, I do think one of the themes, and I've said this before, I think where Kyle has been excellent and his staff, for instance, spread football is throughout this country right now in the football world at the lower levels, high school and college. So, oftentimes you truly are making projections because you aren't seeing receivers run routes that you're going to see them run at the next level. So, what they've done is come in and said, 'These are the athletic traits. Can they get themselves in this position? Do you see this on tape?' And, that's a really valuable way of being able to project more accurately, because you just simply aren't going to see it, so you've got to find other ways and that's been very effective for us."

**Is there a theme to the official 30 that you brought in here? Were you mostly looking at younger guys because you had questions about them and wanted to learn more whereas a senior you've got more tape to go off of?**

"Yeah, I think a lot of people bring in on the 30 people that they had questions about. Maybe character or a specific issue. That's not what we did. Ours was kind of a compilation of things. Sometimes, we just wanted to feel a guy's presence one more time. We saw him at the combine, but 15 minutes, does that give you enough time to really get the feel of a person? When you bring them in for a visit, your coaches have an opportunity to sit down, watch film. We get an opportunity, lots of times in the draft meetings, we'd be here and Kyle and I would leave and go in there for 10 minutes and sit down with the player. And I think those interactions, just the more you can see and feel these players, I think the more valuable it is and ultimately, you're still guessing a little bit, but you get a better feel on people."

**You've gone through that process when you're doing television, you're doing production meetings, you're sitting down one-on-one with a guy and things like that. Did that help you in terms of diagnosing even how a guy operates?**

"I think one thing I learned [NFL Network reporter] Steve [Wyche], when you're working with highly driven, successful people, quarterbacks, head coaches, I never wanted in the broadcast world to waste their time. So, you better come in prepared and you better know the type of questions that people find stimulating and the type of questions that, I've always believed you ask a dumb question, you're going to get a dumb answer and you're going to get a dumb response. And so, I never try to do that. I think from that sense, it really helped me. It helped me just, I believe in preparation to be great at anything. You better put your work in and I worked really hard at that. So, I watched a ton of film on every side of the football as well and even though it's through a difference lens, I think it was extremely helpful. It also gave me kind of a global outlook on the league. The one thing I would tell you, I hadn't watched as much college football because I was so focused on my NFL job other than watching a team up north here that I have a great affinity for. I've watched them a lot when possible. So, this was just more about diving into the film. And at some point, we've got just under 200 players on our draft board, that we see as draftable players on our board. We've been exhaustive. I've been exhaustive. My family's not here. They're down in San Diego finishing school. So, I've been spending a lot of time in here and it was needed this year because I had a lot of catch-up to do. I can tell you that just last night I finally got to the point, I always knew as a player like, 'OK. I'm ready.' That moment was yesterday for me where I said, 'OK. I'm ready. I'm ready to go on this thing.' That's a good feeling."

**Regarding you can't get all choir boys; obviously you have to take some risks with character. At some point, maybe this is a dumb question, but would you be more apt to maybe take those risks later down the road and try to establish a locker room culture with guys you know are going to be your type of guys, at least in your first year?**

"Yeah, I think that's not a dumb question, [San Francisco Chronicle reporter] Eric [Branch]. I think that's part of growing this nucleus of players that kind of fit and embody what we're all about because I think the more players you have, and I think free agency for us was trying to develop that some on the limited knowledge that we had. Get rid of some people that we didn't feel, sometimes were more talented, but we didn't feel embodied what we wanted to be all about and bring in people that do represent that and I think what I've found is when you have a locker room that is strong, maybe you can bring some people in that have seven of the 10 qualities but three of them aren't there. When you surround them with great examples of what you're looking for and that's a lot more doable. Are we there yet? No. We're not there yet. So, I think that's fair that in the future we'd feel much better about doing that. That's what we're striving for. But, I think even then, you always want to stay true to what you're about. And when you do that, I think the organizations in this league that have done that are successful."

**You mentioned Tampa Bay and former NFL head coach Tony Dungy and what he said initially. You knew a guy like former Tampa Bay Buccaneers LB Derrick Brooks and former NFL RB Warrick Dunn. Sorry to single a guy out, but former**

**NFL DT Warren Sapp, there were issues. He fell down the draft board. People may not look at him in the same light as a Derrick Brooks, but does he have what you would term football character or did he have football character?**

“I can tell you this about Warren Sapp is that that guy loved football. I never wanted to play without him. My job was a lot harder when I played without him. He was dependable. Those are the type of things. While he’s had some issues, one of the things Kyle talks about a lot is protect the team, and I felt that most of the time Warren protected the team. No one’s perfect. I think that’s an example. He’s a great friend. So, I think very highly of him. Never been short for opinions as we just learned with [Texas A&M DE] Myles Garrett.”

**You talk about the character of the locker room and being able to absorb certain things. You added some high-character guys like WR Pierre Garçon and RB Tim Hightower. Do you think if you brought in a young quarterback, especially a guy who had to play, that you have a locker room of character who can help support a guy when he goes through the highs and lows?**

“You know, I do. Pierre’s a great example. Pierre’s not a big rah-rah guy. He’s not a guy who’s going to give speeches before the game. But, you turn on the film and his type of play is contagious. He fights for extra yards. He plays with great physicality. He’s productive. Those were the type of guys we were looking for. So, not only could you bring in at the quarterback position, can you bring in players anywhere. I’ve always found that those types of players, that’s contagious to your entire team, to your culture. And so, that’s what we’ve been striving to do and we’ll continue to do so.”

**In talking about pass rushers, specifically looking at measurables, certain teams favor certain measurables. So, some teams favor the 10-yard split. Others, the three-cone drill. When you look at players out of this upcoming draft, there’s players like Tennessee DE Derek Barnett, but he ran a 6.96 three-cone drill which is better than Oakland Raiders DE Khalil Mack who ran a 7.8. How much emphasis do you take into account the explosiveness off the line of scrimmage with the three-cone drill as opposed to the 10-yard split?**

“You take all of that into account. You really do. I think you look at Derek Barnett, one skill he has is he’s got a tremendous get-off and that’s important. It really is. You take a look, I think people give analytics and research and development a bad name, but really what it helps you do is kind of define, OK, people who have been successful at this position, here’s the characteristics they’ve shared. So, that’s helpful to me. I think you’re a fool if you don’t look at some of that. So, that’s been part of the process as well. I’ve heard someone say we’re an analytics driven team. That’s not true, but we’ve got a group back here that I think are hardworking, really intelligent people. I think we’d be foolish not to include them. It hasn’t been a huge part, but they have played a role. It’s just like that, are we missing something? Is there anybody that we’re missing? Is there something that we’ve overlooked? So, it’s another way to cross-check yourself.”

**Have you guys made a decision on DB Jimmie Ward and his fifth-year option?**

“No, we haven’t yet. So, that doesn’t speak to any confidence or lack thereof that we have. Just to be perfectly honest, we obviously have to conduct business, but we’ve

been pretty focused in here and free agency and we'll get to a lot of that stuff. I've been saying that on a lot of things. 'I'll get to that after the draft.'"

**Is it a necessity to add a young quarterback to this roster at some point in the draft?**

"I would not say that. We've got two. Kyle typically likes going to camp with two. That's in an ideal world if you have the right guys. But, there's no absolutes there either."

**Going back to Jimmie. You've had a couple weeks with Jimmie in the classroom. Do you have any direction at all about what you're going to do with him specifically?**

"I think we're going to work him at both spots, but we would like to give him an opportunity to see if, we feel like there's a match with his skills and what he can do to the free safety position that we're going to have in this system. Like anyone else, he'll compete. But, we want to give him that opportunity. I don't think just because some other things that have transpired and there's a need at corner, we're going to deviate from that plan. We want to give him that opportunity and I think that's the plan right now, to work him a little at both. In this camp, starting tomorrow, he'll have that opportunity."

**Head coach, GM, Owner, who gets the tie break vote?**

"It's a good question. It's one that we forced ourselves to talk about and discuss. I'm not trying to cop out, but it's going to be collective. Kyle and I made a commitment early on that we're going to come into this thing and we figured out our own way to have our tie breaker. It's not something that we've just kind of put aside and come Thursday night like, 'What do you want to do?' 'I don't know. What do you want to do?' We've got a plan. I can tell you that."

**This being your first time in charge, is there any danger of being too safe in your picks because you don't have the established reputation that other guys might have?**

"That's one thing that frankly I grew real comfortable as I started to get involved, and the process happened quick, but when I started to admire Kyle, I always felt like a great quality, you can't play scared. I think in life and I think in this league in particular, you've got to play smart but you can't play scared. And so, I hope that's a quality that you'll see from us that we're never going to do things because they're safe. We'll try to do things because they're smart, they're well thought out. But, I think if you're doing things because you're scared, you're already behind the eight-ball. So, I think when you think of Kyle Shanahan, at least me, I think of someone who's smart and intelligent but aggressive and that's how we want to act in this draft as well."

**You mentioned the school a couple miles up the road. There's a prospect from there bopping around the top-five. Can you admit or deny you'd be overtly biased to a Stanford man?**

"You know, sometimes you have to recuse yourself and make sure other people are seeing it like you are. And so, I think they've got a number of good players. We all have our allegiances. Kyle's a Texas guy. Adam's a UCLA Bruin. Martin's a Florida State guy."



[chief executive officer] Jed's [York] a Notre Dame guy. So, we've got a lot of people that have their allegiances, but we also know that whenever you make decisions, you've got to have the organizations, a real smart man in this league told me at the beginning of this that if every decision you make, you say, 'Is this what's best for our organization?', you'll do a great job. And so, I think that's something that you keep in mind with situations like that, and others."

**How in-tune do you stay with what the Browns are doing because there's been reports back and forth the last few days with what they want to do at one? How confident are you in knowing what they might be doing?**

"Well, I think you prepare for every scenario and the reality is this entire draft, we're going to be right behind them in most situations and other teams are going to be right behind us. So, that's what's going to be fun. I remember when I spent time with the Broncos, one of the most fun things, and it's also a really valuable exercise we'll start tomorrow and later today, is actually going through mocks. Different people draw different names and you go through those things. So, those exercises are invaluable. You take a lot of mocks that are averages of where guys are supposed to go. You do all that. You start putting yourself in scenarios and we'll be doing that the rest of this week."

**You used to do mocks, you said. You haven't done any yet on your own for fun?**

"Oh, yeah. I've been doing a lot. I've been putting myself in a lot of scenarios."

**Are some mocks more valuable than others? Which mocks are the ones that you're really going to focus on?**

"Well, I think all of them because I think what you want is, one thing I think sometimes we scoff at these people and assumptions that are being made, but I know there's a lot of people that talk to a lot of people in this league and there's people in my role who go to people for information. So, those aren't completely misguided. So, you get a general sense by looking at all of them and obviously, the ones that have shown to be reputable. You kind of take averages there. I'll tell you one thing, not to give guys plugs but like [NFL Network analyst] Mike Mayock, that sucker, every pro day I was at, he was at. He's out there doing the work. Probably someone who's showing up and doing the work, you tend to listen to guys like that a little more."

**Do you do a dress rehearsal on the clock this week?**

"Yeah. We'll put ourselves in that situation as we do scenarios. We'll also do it with trade scenarios that might arise. So, I think that's one thing you learn as a player and coaches are very accustomed to, you try and walk through everything. This won't be any different. We haven't done it yet."

**The trade scenario you mentioned, we didn't talk much about that today. That gets into a whole different because you've talked about player eval. Then you get into playing poker?**

"Right."

**So, how much is that part of your training?**

“I think there’s some reality to that, but I think, one of my mentors in this game is Tony Dungy and I think he always felt like those things were a little overrated and if you just be transparent, sometimes that’s the best poker you can play. People would be like ‘Is this guy for real?’ That’s what I’ll try to do. Again, I’ll always keep the best interest of this team, but there’s not going to be a whole lot of shenanigans coming from us and that’s how we have operated in our first couple of months and that’s how we plan to operate moving forward.”