

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – October 21, 2019
San Francisco 49ers**

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Opening comments:

“Same ones from the game, [WR Marquise] Goodwin and [RB Matt] Breida. They returned, no issues today, and then all the same existing injuries.”

So, they’re not in the protocol?

“No.”

Goodwin was cleared yesterday?

“Yeah, he was cleared, he was good enough. He passed the concussion deal, but he was hurting a little bit on the sidelines and just the type of game it was. [WR Kendrick] Bourne was more of our mudder, so he went in and handled the rain pretty good. So, we just stuck with it.”

It seems like Goodwin has gotten hurt a couple of times close to the line of scrimmage over the last couple of years. Is that just unavoidable from a coaching standpoint? Is there not much you can do?

“Yeah, you always want guys to avoid contact going over the middle, especially when the ball’s not in his hands. Guys do try to reroute people over the middle a lot, so it happens. They’re not supposed to be able to do that right there, but it does happen. It’s harder to avoid stuff when, I call Quise, he’s like a crotch-rocket ninja going through there. It’s a little harder for guys moving that fast to avoid things, so I think it is tougher with Quise on that. That’s one of his best talents, too.”

What are you able to take from a game after evaluating it, just given the conditions were what they were?

“I mean, it’s not that fun to, the scheme and game plan and stuff for both sides kind of just completely goes out and you just, you watch the effort, and just the guys trying to grind it out through some pretty bad, it was as bad of conditions as I’ve been in. I’ve been in some colder games, some snow games and stuff, but none that have just really rained that much from beginning to end, especially on that type of field. You just evaluate the effort, how hard guys played. And that was one of the big things I was saying to them at halftime is that in a game like this whoever wants it more is the team who finds a way to win. When we get on that plane, hopefully we can watch the silent tape and it’ll be obvious

who wants it more. And our guys played hard. You could see it on the tape and I think that's what you could see after the game, too."

There were a lot of striking pictures that came out of the game. The slide, but also the OL Mike Person with all the mud. Has that been making the rounds?

"Yeah, [general manager] John [Lynch] showed me that on the plane last night. It was a cool picture. I can't believe how good cameras are these days, but yeah, there were lots of cool stuff."

Were you close? I think that happened right after the interception return when all of your linemen were just sliding out of bounds making that tackle. Were you close to that?

"I can't remember. I was probably too blacked out out of anger. But yeah, those guys get by us a lot. You get used to avoiding them. I'm yet to get injured on one of those, but a lot of coaches have gone down, so you better be paying attention."

There was a report that came out over the weekend that you guys were actively in the market potentially trading for a receiver. I know you're always looking to improve your team anyway you can, but how much urgency do you feel at that position in particular to make an improvement?

"I mean, I think less than we've had in the last couple of years because I do see that there are guys in our building that I do think the answers are here. It was tough not having [WR] Deebo [Samuel] last week, Quise being a little banged up. We'll get both of those two back. The guys we have, I still think can continue to get better. We're still holding out hopes, too, for [WR] Jalen [Hurd] and [WR] Trent Taylor that they can heal up and hopefully return later this year. Always looking to improve, though, like you said, but I do like the guys we have here."

What was the genesis of the idea to give your dad a game ball? He wasn't there, was he?

"No, and that was something I planned on doing for a while. I just, the reason I told the guys is because I was just very appreciative of them. Those conditions and stuff, you can use it as an excuse, but since we won I can at least bring it up that it is tough to go out there. It was our first 10 a.m. kickoff game this year and the weather, coming into that stadium like that and ended up having six starters out. It had a lot of excuses to not go out there and play as hard as they did, but the way they played, I was just very appreciative of that. The effort that they gave allowed me to do something that I've wanted to do for a while."

Did you talk to your dad last night?

"Uh huh. Yeah."

What was that conversation like?

"It was actually just text because I had to get on the plane and I don't like talking in front of other people. So, I just sent a text and it was good."

It was an excited text?

“Yeah, I think I didn’t have to talk to him to know that he was excited. He didn’t have to talk to me to know I was excited. We knew it would feel good if we could get that done.”

How is the running back rotation working out for you so far and is it important to you to have guys with similar skillsets as opposed to guys who have differing skillsets that might complement each other?

“Not totally. To me, you just try to get the best guys available in every aspect and then you try to use their traits accordingly, whatever gives them the best chance to be successful. We’ve tried to do that. Our guys are similar in the fact that they all can run. [RB] Jeff [Wilson Jr.] probably being the slowest one out of those guys, but that’s just because he doesn’t run 4.3. He had the fastest GPS miles-per-hour time on an offensive play. I think Bourne was second, so we know who our mudders are. They all have a little bit different styles and the same with receivers and things like that. But, you always try to get the best possible and then just use it however you need to.”

Do you still expect to get CB Ahkello Witherspoon back this week?

“Not as much as I did last week. I was hoping for it. Had a little bit of a setback last week, not big, but I think it’ll be pushing it this week. There’s still an outside chance, but not as much as I felt last week.”

After watching the tape, what did you see on QB Jimmy Garoppolo’s interception?

“Same thing. We didn’t hold the safety long enough and the safety made a good play over there. When you do, I still want [WR] Dante [Pettis] to break that up, worst case scenario, I always say the worst-case scenario is an offensive PI, try to never allow an interception. He ran a good route, beat the guy hard, we just had to hold the safety a little bit longer.”

What about T Joe Staley? What’s his prognosis? He was working out on the field a little bit in pregame yesterday.

“I think he’s going to try to get out there and practice a little bit this week. We’ll see how it goes over these next two days. Just talking to him, I think these next two days are big and we’ll see how he feels on Wednesday. I do think there’s an outside chance, but hopefully we can get him out on the practice field a little bit this week to where if he feels good and everything then he can go. But if not, at least he gets a little bit of work in because it’s going to be hard to get a real practice in the following week because of the Thursday night game versus Arizona.”

Obviously yesterday being a very unique set of circumstances concerning the weather and what not, and obviously a very low scoring game, but you guys have won knock down drag out games, you guys have blown teams out, you’re finding ways to win in multiple facets. What does that say just about the strides you guys have taken as a cohesive unit this season?

“I think it says a lot. That’s why I was so appreciative of the guys yesterday because I did think there were a lot of weird little circumstances that made that game very tough and gave guys a chance to kind of let up and not have the same mentality that we have had for the five weeks prior. Especially after a huge win the week before. I always think it’s

human nature just to ease up a little bit and our guys did the opposite. I think it says we've got the right guys and we've got guys that love football. It's very important too that they don't use injuries as an excuse, they don't use any of those type of elements. They just work, they play very hard together. You can tell that they enjoy each other. I've always felt the tighter your team is, the harder you'll play and I think that's been evident so far."

What did you learn about your defense in these six weeks? There's been a lot of attention on the defense line and the secondary being much better. Then yesterday the linebackers, with LB Kwon Alexander making that big play.

"We've learned that they have a chance to be as good as we thought they could be. We saw them this offseason and from an offensive perspective we knew how hard it was to go against and practice every day. From just looking at it on paper, we knew we had a chance to have a pretty good pass rush with the D-Line with the guys that we added this year after the guys we already had. And some things that we've just continued to get better at schematically, just playing with these guys for a while. We went into this year hoping we could be like what we've been so far. I think we are still continuing to get better. I thought we had a better game this week than last week. It's kind of tough to go off with that weather, but the guys played very well and it's got to continue."

With Staley and T Mike McGlinchey, how much does the way OL Justin Skule and OL Daniel Brunskill played factor into how quickly you guys feel you need to get them back?

"Not at all. When doctors say that they're healthy and they can't risk themselves and the player feels like he can go and then they look like it in practice then there's no decision to be made. You don't save those type of things. This league is too hard and you're going to get your best players out there if they're healthy enough."

I think DL Jullian Taylor only played six snaps, but it seemed that he had a really big impact on those six. Was it that way on tape, too?

"Definitely, that fourth-and-one was as impactful of a play as there was in the game. [DL] [Ronald] Ronnie Blair [III] made a good play on that too, the whole defense did. What he did in that jam front versus the center, how he got around there, didn't fall and got that back in the backfield was a very impressive play. Probably would've got out there more, we just got off the field pretty fast."

When did you find out there would be a torrential downpour in D.C.?

"They had been telling me that it was 50-percent for a few days and I don't pay attention to that stuff much because there's nothing you can do about it. But, then I started paying a lot more attention to it Saturday night. Then when I heard it raining all night, waking up I didn't feel that great about it and then got to the stadium and knew exactly what type of game it was going to be like. Hoped our guys were ready to play physical and play tough."

Did you try to account for it and work around it in your game plan or is that the kind of thing you just can't really plan for?

"No, you have to. I mean, every type of, you better have that in mind on every single play. Is this guy capable of having the footing to run this route? Is the quarterback capable of

throwing it? There's a lot of things. It's not the most fun game to call. There's a lot of variables that you've got to think about that you're trying to win it, but you're also trying not to lose it on every play because it's both teams. The ball is very tough to deal with in the kicking game and passing game, and in the running game it's hard to block people when you can't get your feet in the ground."

You talked last week about players getting better with more reps and assistant coaches getting better. In what ways do you think you're better now 38 games, almost halfway through your third season as a head coach?

"I think I said something like this a week ago, but I'm just more used to all the different stuff you have to do. I mean, I was a coordinator for a while and everyone is a creature of habit. I knew my routine as a coordinator for the nine years I did it. You come here and you're still trying to run an offense and call plays and stuff, so you want to do everything that's worked for you in that same way. You realize you can't as a head coach, you've got to do other stuff. You've got to work with all different types of people and I think I've gotten a lot better at just organizing it better, knowing what I need to do myself, what I need other people to do. Stuff that I used to want to be very good at on a Wednesday, to try to relax on that a little bit and realize as long as I'm good at it on Sunday, it doesn't matter I can figure this out Saturday night, or something like that. So, just prioritizing more. You've still got to learn, do all the same stuff, but you get a lot more used to the better ways to do it that can relax yourself and other people and make you better."

Do you think you interact with the players better?

"No, I feel like I've always interacted with them pretty well. I think we have more fun being 6-0 over 0-8. I don't think I've changed much in that way."

Are there ways you've grown and adjusted as a coordinator this year? It seems you've really adjusted your scheme to work around a lot of different injuries and situations.

"I feel like I've been in a lot of similar situations and had to go through that stuff before. That's just part of the job as a coordinator. I think what's been different this year is being a coordinator and thinking as a coordinator for the way we've been playing defense. I don't think I've been on too many teams with a top-10 defense, and we are definitely playing better than a top-10. We are playing like a top defense. When you do have that type of situation, and every time I try to call plays I'm always just trying to win the game, whatever I think is right. Very rarely are you thinking about the defense dominating someone in my past like I have this year."

It's early in the week, but do you have any Carolina Panthers QB Kyle Allen impressions yet?

"No, I don't. I'm getting on it right now when you guys are done, after two more questions. But no, I'm aware. I've seen his highlights on TV, I'm aware of his record and I know he's been doing a hell of a job. Excited to get to the tape."

Not to dismiss the six teams you've played, but when you look at the portion of the schedule coming up over the next six or seven weeks, is there a sense that you're entering a stretch where the team will need to elevate its play?

"You have to regardless of who you're playing. I mean, you get better or you get worse, you don't stay the same. As this year goes, it gets harder and harder and we've got to make sure as it gets harder we have to get better if we want to meet our own expectations."

Do you plan to get LS Kyle Nelson back this week?

"Yes, hoping to get him back. I know we get a week, we get a roster extension for a week, but we should have him in here this week and then decide what to do for Sunday."