

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

TRANSCRIPTIONS



Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – April 10, 2017
San Francisco 49ers
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Was everybody you expected here?

“Yeah. Everyone was here. So, it was 100-percent. I was excited about that.”

And what was the first message to the team when you got them together?

“There was a bunch. We just had to get to know each other a little bit. I tried to tell them a little bit more about myself, kind of my expectations for stuff, the way I go about working and kind of how I saw everyone else to go about working. Introduced the whole coaching staff and really laid the foundation for what we’re going to be doing here over the next month or so throughout our three phases of the offseason.”

Is the draft board done?

“No. The draft board’s always going. We’re going through a whole process right now. The last two weeks or the last week, we’ve been doing offensive guys throughout the day and now we’re just starting to get into the defensive guys. We go back and pair them together. You bring different guys in there with position coaches, now pairing them up with the scouts and with [general manager] John [Lynch] and his group upstairs. So, we’re still hearing everything, going through it all and that will be an ongoing process all the way up until draft day.”

Late last week, there was a report of former 49ers CB Tramaine Brock getting arrested and less than four hours after that report, he was released. What did you guys do? What was the conversation like within the organization between when you found out about it to the point of him being released?

“We heard about it on Friday. It was a tough situation because it’s a big deal and you don’t have all of the information. My first time going through it, I found out how hard it is to kind of get all the information. So, we spent most of the day trying to figure out all the information you can, as much as you can get, and you never do get all of it, but there was enough there that we felt it was the decision we had to make and move on from.”

Is this sending a message to the guys about what’s going to be expected from a San Francisco 49er?

“No. I would never say, you’re dealing with people’s lives, so I’d never want to use a situation as sending a message. It’s just us trying to do the right thing, whatever that is. I think each situation’s different and you’ve got to look into every situation, gather all the

BOB LANGE

Vice President
of Football Communications
Bob@49ers.com

DAN BECKLER

Director
of Football Communications
Dan@49ers.com

MIKE CHASANOFF

Senior Manager
of Football Communications
Mike.Chasanoff@49ers.com

PETER VOLMUT

Football Communications
Assistant
Peter.Volmut@49ers.com

information that you can. When you do, you try as hard as you can to make the right decision and I think that's what I felt we did."

In a similar vein, there's some guys coming in the draft that have situations in their past. Are you guys approaching that with, are you grouping them together and saying, 'These guys are off our board,' or is it a situation by situation basis? How are you approaching that?

"Yeah. I don't really look at any absolutes. I think every situation is its own situation. So, you've got to look into everything, you've got to talk to the people, find out what happened, and not all the time you can get all the information which is what makes it tough, but you can't just lump those all into the same category. You've got to talk to people when you're dealing with people's lives and you've got to get to the bottom of the truth and then go from there."

Did you talk with Tramaine before you released him?

"I didn't personally. John did."

When something like that happens, with the draft coming up, does that affect maybe how you approach filling that void?

"Not really. You've got to make sure that it doesn't just as a coach and a personnel department. You look into everybody. You want to make sure you're taking the best players and the guys you think are the best and you don't want that to be skewed in any way. I can't lie to where if there's a guy we had tied with someone and it was dead even and then you looked at the position of need more. We did lose a good player in this league who is a starting corner and would help this team out. So, you look into that and it can change when there's a tie maybe at something, but going into this draft, I don't look at any position as more important than the other. We're trying to improve at every single position on our team and we were doing that at corner before this happened and now we're definitely still doing it after."

Can you lay out just what a day is like? I know you only have a certain amount of time you can be with guys, but here in Phase 1, just what you're hoping to get out of every day?

"Phase 1 is more, you know we get four hours with each guy. Half that time's pretty much to strength and conditioning. We send them with [head strength & conditioning coach] Ray Wright and his staff. About half the time they're doing stuff running. We're not allowed to be on the field with them. So, they're doing that out there and then the other half they're doing in the weight room. After that, we get about an hour and half with them of meeting time from an offensive and defensive standpoint and then our special teams coach gets about half an hour with them and then you're done with them. So, you do that through Phase 1, so the biggest emphasis is strength and conditioning and half of it meeting room time, and then when you get to Phase 2, it's kind of the same schedule but we're allowed to be on the field with them. So, we cut that meeting time in half and we do half of the coaching stuff on the field and then spend about 50 minutes of meeting time as opposed to an hour and a half."

When you wanted a defense and a defensive coordinator, did you have a particular defense that you wanted in mind and is the defense that you chose the one that's hardest to gameplan for?

"Hardest to gameplan for is usually the one with the best players that you can't block and then that combined with a good scheme makes it very impossible. So, I just wanted a very sound defense that was built and predicated around stopping the run, that was very consistent, just having some familiarity with this type of defense being in Atlanta that originated in Seattle, I knew the ins and outs of it. I knew how sound it was and the foundation you have for players and it all started with stopping the run. So, that was really why I wanted to find a scheme and someone who could coach that scheme that had to do with the similarities to what we had in Atlanta."

What about the offense? Has it changed, obviously it has from Atlanta, but are you tailoring it now to WR Pierre Garçon, to RB Carlos Hyde, have you made those types of tweaks to your playbook?

"Yeah. Everything's in the playbook that you need. It depends what plays you call more. You start to see how your players are, what formations you can use to put them in the right spots. Everybody's system, you can do whatever you want with it, it's how you tie it together. That's what the offseason's for. That's what going through these OTAs and mini-camp's will be for all the way into training camp and these preseason games. It's what do our guys do best, trying to push them and teach them some new stuff, get them out of their comfort zone a little, but when it's all said and done, giving them practice that when we get to Week 1, you're making sure you give them the best chance to be successful. So, that's always evolving."

How do you balance finding players in the draft? Do you look for the best possible player and then say, 'OK, we'll tailor our scheme around him,' or do you look for players that fit your scheme? How do you balance those things?

"I think players to fit your scheme, to me, is a little overrated. Usually a really good football player is a good football player in every scheme. I think you can get a little more into specifics when it comes to maybe the quarterback, maybe the offensive line. But, a receiver is a receiver, a running back's a running back, a tight end's a tight end, for the most part O-Linemen are O-Linemen, but if you're going to be asking them to do a certain type of run the majority of the time as opposed to another, sometimes it does fit a little different body size or guys who can run a little bit more than the other. And same with the quarterback. If you bring in a quarterback who is the best when he's a dual-threat and can do all those type of things, that affects an entire offense. That doesn't just affect one guy. That's a huge commitment to your entire team. So, when you bring in someone like that when you're going to have to tinker the offense to fit one player, you've got to know you're tinkering every single person on that offense too. So, when it comes to the quarterback and some O-Linemen, you look into that a little bit more. After that, I think it's all pretty overrated."

How's LB NaVorro Bowman looking considering the injury he was coming off of? Where's he at going into this offseason program?

"I believe he's going to be cleared when we get going on the field. I know that's something him and [vice president of medical services/head athletic trainer Jeff Ferguson] Fergy are still working out. Right now, he was in the weight room doing the testing and stuff. We can't go out on the field with him yet, but when that time comes, I think two weeks from now at mini-camp, might have a better answer for you."

Going back to what you mentioned in the question before about certain quarterbacks, is that one of the reasons why maybe former 49ers QB Colin Kaepernick isn't a fit because you'd have to really switch your offense to fit his skill?

"Yeah. I think just the experience of doing that type of stuff, you don't just run stuff and think you're going to be good at it right away. You've got to commit to it and work at it year round, and it's all the positions. When all your quarterbacks have different ways to be successful, which I've been in situations like that and you try to prepare them best, it does take a toll on your offense. What are you trying to get good at? You can't practice everything. You can't be great at everything. You've kind of got to commit to something and do it over and over and over again and once the type of running game or drop-back game, you're going to commit to one quarterback is completely different than the other, then that does affect your team. That's why I think it can be harder when those type of guys are going through competitions and stuff and like that because even though you're trying to find the best guy, by trying to be fair to those quarterbacks you're also being unfair to a team. You don't really know what direction you're going. So, if you have your pick of the best world, you'd like those guys to be somewhat similar, not just because that's how you want the quarterbacks, just because of the work you're doing for the rest of the guys on the roster."

What do you like about RB Tim Hightower and RB DuJuan Harris?

"Mainly, that they've both been around and they're pros. I think they understand how this league works. I think they're both self-made men who have worked for everything they have and they get the urgency of this league. I think when you have guys who come in and understand how this league is and they understand it's a job, you know you're going to get their best, you know they're going to work as hard as they can. They're good players, they're tough players, they do everything they can do be successful and I think that stuff rubs off on a group."

To follow that up, because you look at Hightower, LB Malcolm Smith, some of the guys you brought in, was that kind of the mold of player you wanted to bring in making this transition?

"Both. You want to bring in guys first who can help you. So, every one of those guys, just from a talent standpoint and what they can do, we felt can help us. But, you also want to bring in high-character guys. Guys who do it the right way. You're trying to build a culture here. You're trying to put your stamp on things and really show the standard of what you want. I'll always talk about, coaches can talk until they're blue in the face about what they want and what they want their standard to be, but it's all just coach talk and it's not really real until the players do that. When the players hold each other accountable, when the players have a certain standard that they go to whenever a guy

is slacking that the players get on that guy before the coach does, that's when you have something special. So, we're trying to bring in guys who do fit that standard because if you don't, it's probably not going to be the place for you."

How many of the quarterbacks in this draft do you expect to or want to meet with before draft day?

"I'm not sure of that exact number. I met with a number of them in Indy. I've met with a number of them over the past few weeks, a number of them with phone calls. You do each guy differently. I don't take the same system with each person. There's some guys you can watch on tape and you just talk to them on the phone and you feel you've got a great feel for them or you watch them on tape and you remember the time you spent with them at Indy and you feel good about it. There's some guys you feel that you've got to meet, you've got to see something. Just maybe one little thing that you're looking for. So, there's lots of different things that go into each person. It could change every year for me. Sometimes I don't feel like I need to see anybody. I can see what I would want on tape or I can see what I don't want on tape and you're good to go. But, every guy's different."

So, do you know how many will be coming through the doors here?

"I'm not sure how many we've got coming in. I know there's a number of them."

Do you have a meeting with Clemson University QB Deshaun Watson today?

"I believe that is today, yes. No, I think it's tomorrow. You might know better than me. Tomorrow morning."

And did you already meet with University of North Carolina QB Mitchell Trubisky?

"Yes I did."

How did that go?

"It went really good. I enjoyed it. Met with him at the combine too and then got to spend a little bit more time with him last week."

Are you more inclined to keep DB Jimmie Ward at cornerback now?

"I don't know. I know he's capable of doing both. It's something we're starting to work at today. The good thing about Jimmie is he's capable of doing both which is a credit to him. In fairness to him, I want to make sure we put him at the best spot that is his best position and I don't think we have that answer yet. The good thing about him is he can help our team in either way. We think he can play at a high level at both positions, but that's something that's going to have to do with how he ends up showing us in practice and how our roster ends up panning out."

How's his shoulder?

"From what I've heard it's been solid. I think he's been cleared, I think. I'm not set on all that because we're not doing anything for a couple more weeks anyways, but I'm pretty sure he's cleared and he'll be ready to go."

Is that going to play a factor in what position he plays?

"No."

Have you have a chance to get a first impression of Carlos Hyde since he's gotten here, whether what kind of shape he's in or--?

"I haven't gotten a chance yet just because the only time I really met with everyone today was just like I'm talking to you guys now. There was a lot more people in here when I did it and then we broke up all into our training and then our position meetings. I think we'll get a little bit more into it tomorrow once we get our testing over where we can at least watch some of what they're doing on the conditioning and everything. But again, we can't be out there on the field with them yet. It's just meeting rooms and stuff like that. I think we'll have a much better idea once we get to that first mini-camp."

Is NaVorro best suited in your mind for MIKE or are you considering switching him to one of the other spots?

"I think that would be more of a question for [defensive coordinator] Robert Saleh, who's sitting there pumped up to answer that. I personally don't think it matters to me personally. You've got to ask the defensive guru, but I think they're both pretty interchangeable. I think NaVorro can play both of them and play at a high level at both."

Anyone in particular you are looking forward to at the local pro day?

"No. No one in particular. You find some diamonds in the rough when you do things like that. I've done them over a number of years. You never know exactly all the names who are going to come, but when you get a big group of guys, there's a lot of times you can notice things about people that you didn't see on tape. So, it's always a fun thing to do and the more guys you get there, the better chance you have of finding someone."