

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – September 23, 2019
San Francisco 49ers**

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Opening comments:

“[CB Ahkello] Witherspoon’s the same guy, same with injuries from last night. He’s got a foot sprain. It’s going to be some time with him. We are still waiting on another opinion from a foot specialist. It’s going to be some time.”

How long did they say about?

“At least a month.”

What does that do for you guys as far as trying to get through without him?

“We’ve got [DB] D.J. Reed [Jr.] who can play corner, we’ve got [CB] Emmanuel [Moseley] and we’ve also got [CB Jason] Verrett. We’ve got three guys who can do it. We know [DB] Jimmie [Ward] can also play corner. We’ve got other guys on this team who can play it so it’ll be next man up.”

Do you look to the trade market?

“Yeah, always. We always look at the trade market and we’ll continue to, but it’s got to make sense for us.”

And when you say making sense, what are we talking about as far as things have to make sense?

“How much does it help the team right now and how much does it help the organization going forward. You always think of now, but you also think of years in advance too and how it affects salary caps, draft picks, things like that. The risk-reward on everything.”

Is that something that as a head coach you look at more than you would as a position coach?

“Definitely. Yeah, definitely.”

What about Jason Verrett? He was in and then he was quickly out of the game. Does that have any bearing on his status moving forward?

“No, it doesn’t have any bearing on his status. We’ve been wanting to get Jason out there, it’s been a while since he played. He had a healthy week of practice so we had a package in the game for him that we hadn’t used up to that time and then when Spoon went out, it just made sense to get him in there. I know he had the PI, which he kind of got left alone

on that post, we usually have a safety in the middle field there so he got in a tough position and got the PI. I said in the press conference that I thought it was a double move. It wasn't a double move. The quarterback just looked the other way and he just got a little bit too relaxed when the quarterback wasn't looking his way. Then he came back and the guy snuck down the sidelines. So, he hadn't played a lot of football and especially after those two plays we wanted to get E-Man in who had played a lot more this year."

How do you move forward as far as determining who your right cornerback is going to be for the Browns game?

"It'll be all about practice. We have a number of guys who are candidates for it. E-Man would be the lead guy right now with how he finished that game and came in and what he's done for us this whole year. But, we'll give all the other guys a chance too with these practices we'll have before Cleveland."

How do you do that with limited reps?

"Just evaluate how they're moving, how they go, how they're working in the game plan. We've seen all of them pretty well so we have a pretty good idea. Verrett keeps getting better each week, so we'll see how that looks, too."

What impresses you about Moseley?

"Everything we've asked him to do he's done at a high level. He first earned his way onto our team by how hard he goes on special teams. He's not the biggest guy, but he doesn't seem like that when he's out there. He plays very physical, he's extremely detailed in everything he does. Everything you give him, even stuff that's new for him, in a few days he always figures it out. He's very football savvy and has the ability to cover."

What are you going to do at long snapper with LS Jon Condo retiring?

"We have someone coming in tonight. We'll have someone signed by tomorrow."

Not LS Colin Holba?

"No."

Obviously, you didn't expect Condo to retire. What was the situation there?

"He just said his heart wasn't in it. Definitely surprised us. He did a real good job for us in the game, had a good week of practice, but I do appreciate him coming and telling us what was in his head. I have a lot of respect for that. Sometimes that's hard for guys to do. He was honest with himself, he knew his heart really wasn't in it and then he was honest with us. He just said he knows his heart's not in it and he doesn't want to end up letting us down. Whether it's next week or a few weeks in advance. I was very appreciative for him coming and telling us right away and that'll give us a chance to replace him."

When you have a Bye week this early in the season, do you approach it differently than it is when it's later in the season when guys need more time off?

"No. I mean, I'm approaching it a little differently than I have in the last couple years because I didn't like how we played coming back versus Tampa last year. I'm trying to get some extra practices in. The one thing that's different for us this week than what we've

had is we're coming back, our game after the Bye week is a Monday night game so we get an extra day there anyways. Our goal is to get three extra practices in that we didn't last year, three more than last year. We'll get one in tomorrow and then we'll get the Monday and Tuesday when we come back."

So, after tomorrow they're gone?

"Yep."

What do you guys do? What do the coaches do?

"We sit here and review a few things. We know we're going to have Cleveland on a long week with extra time, but then the following week we've got the Rams on a short week coming off a Monday night game so we can get some of our busy work for that, get ahead on it a little bit so the six-day week for them isn't so bad."

As you went over the film, aside from the turnovers yesterday, what'd you like about how QB Jimmy Garoppolo played?

"He was under duress and he hung in there. He made some big-time throws, we missed the safety one time where we should have had it and he didn't hesitate, he didn't flinch, he hung in there took the shot and made a hell of a throw and also got the penalty with it. We had a number of hots in the game where we had to get rid of it and he hung in there and got rid of it and threw good balls. They came after him a ton and he answered."

In the locker room you said something to the effect of that's been as good of a win as you've been a part of. Do you mean just as a head coach, your football career, and why was that?

"I don't think I've ever been a part of a win with five turnovers that you win. That was impressive that we were able to win that, not the five turnovers. I think a lot of people who've been in this league for a while haven't been a part of too many wins like that. I think it takes a lot of resilience from all three phases of our guys. They just kept going after them. Four turnovers in the first half was extremely discouraging, but when it was 6-3 we felt good coming out and just the way the defense was responding and talking, they were so upbeat at halftime. Just their confidence level was huge. They got a turnover right in the third quarter in that first drive that got the offense going a little bit. Then to finally get our rhythm and then to go down and fumble there at the end in the red zone, that was kind of crushing to where it's like, man you did that with five-minutes left in the game. It was hard enough to overcome the first half and then do that it's almost the writing on the wall. For the defense to step it up, get the ball right back and to be able to run four-minutes off the clock on the 25-yard line going in just running the ball and doing well, it was a cool victory that there was just a ton of adversity in the game and all three phases did things that we needed each other to do to win the game."

Do you get more satisfaction out of a game where you play not well all the way around and you face adversity rather than a game where you're rolling from start to finish?

"Definitely, yeah. I got a lot more satisfaction out of the Tampa one and that one just because those are the ones that are really tough. The Cincinnati game was a little make

believe to me. Things just went, well it wasn't make believe, the guys earned it and it was well, but you should win when things are going like that. But, the rest of the NFL, there's so many plays in a game that are the difference between winning and losing and I felt like there was 75 of them during that game, which is extremely intense for both sides. To be able to handle that throughout and to be able to be in an intense game like that throughout from beginning to end and guys never waver. When you lose a lot, which we have over the last few years, losing can be contagious and even though you want to block it out, there's somewhere in there like, 'Hey, we can't let this happen again.' When bad things happen, that feeling does come up. I thought it was obvious to our team, which I feel just watching them and being around them is the opposite feeling. The worse it's going, the more guys still believe that we're going to win. I think that's been evident, especially in those two weeks that I mentioned. That's something that's extremely important to teams who want to win and win enough games to get into the playoffs."

Is that a psychological thing for you guys or is it the fact that they know there's more talent around them and they have the guys who can overcome that?

"It's both. It's both. You've got to believe. There's lots of things that make you believe. You've got to believe that you're good enough, and I think we've added some guys that definitely help and I think guys that have played here know that they're good enough. They've gone and been in a lot of situations. I feel like guys are getting better and that's the confidence that helps you believe in yourself."

Where is RB Tevin Coleman in his return from his ankle?

"I think he's got a good chance to come back next week. He was just jogging and moving pretty well last week, just watching him run on the side. So, he won't be out there tomorrow, but hopefully we'll get him practicing here next Monday."

You've gotten good production out of your three reserve running backs. When Coleman comes back, does that create an untenable situation with four running backs?

"Yeah, it's always pretty tough to use four backs throughout a game. But, that's a problem I'm looking forward to having to try to figure out."

Has RB Jeff Wilson Jr. added a dimension to your red zone offense?

"I mean, I think he's ran the ball very well in the red zone. I think we've blocked pretty well down there, too. I think he's been more of our down, north and south, downhill runner. I think Tevin's very similar to that, also, and I think at times [RB] Raheem [Mostert] and [RB Matt] Breida can do that. We're willing to use all of them, but what we've asked Jeff to do in these two weeks he's done very well."

You've been known for using a lot of 21 personnel in the pass. It seems like you're getting a lot of mileage out of 22 personnel this year. What do you like about that particular unit grouping?

"I mean, I can't tell you all the things, but we do use that a lot in the pass. We've used 22 and also what we call 13, it's just a tight end playing [FB Kyle Juszczyk] Juice's spot, so something that we do a lot. Teams don't do a lot out of that schematically, so somebody's

going to slow down the game a little bit for what you're attacking. When you're running the ball well, the edges are a lot wider when you have tight ends in there. Guys are further away and you make people commit to the run and sometimes that opens up some good passes, too."

Mostert in the past has had fumbling issues. He had another one on the pitch. Where is your, I guess, trust with him as far as just keeping a hold onto the ball?

"Well, I mean, he's built up some trust and from where he went last year to what he's done since then. But yeah, it was tough. You've got to keep your eyes on that on the pitch. That was just kind of a lackadaisical play for lack of a better word. No one took it away from him, he just took his eyes off the pitch and looked at the defense, which can't happen. Then the next one was one of our best blocked plays of the day. He got right through to the safety and it looked like he was covering up the ball well, but it looked like [Pittsburgh Steelers S] Minkah [Fitzpatrick], I think it was Minkah, got his helmet on the ball and popped it out and it can't happen. Whether it's Raheem or whether it's anybody, you fumble the ball too much and you're not going to get too many opportunities. Raheem's done well with it, he's improved from the past, he does a hell of a job for us as a running back, but he's got to make sure he holds onto the ball."

With the diving catch and that stiff arm, was that Kyle Juszczyk's best game?

"I think it was, I mean, one that everyone's going to notice, definitely, because the plays he made in the pass game were very impressive. The diving catch, I thought there was no way he was getting to that and somehow he did and then the one he made down the seam, throwing the safety out of the way and stuff, those were two extremely impressive plays, and he played better in the run game. He was one of our best players in the run game. He does that a lot, but when he makes some plays like that in the pass game, I think he gets a little more credit and it's deserved."

How is WR Jalen Hurd progressing and do you still expect him back for Week 5?

"Yeah, I do expect him back. This will be a big week for him with rehab and stuff while we're gone. But yeah, I'm hoping he'll be back next Monday and I'm expecting him to."

What is the issue that he's dealing with exactly with the back?

"I mean, he had a fracture in his back. A hairline deal, something. It's been a serious injury, that's why he had to rest it for about a month and we're getting close to where he should be ready to go. Hopefully it'll work out right for him. You never know when they come back out if that can act up again, but we feel it's healing up and hopefully he'll be able to come out here and help us."

How did you evaluate OL Justin Skule's play yesterday?

"I thought Skule did a very good job. I know those penalties were rough, all three of them, one's that can't happen. But, for his first game, it wasn't too big for him at all. He handled the game well. The only time I really said his name was when he got the penalties and he definitely gave us a good chance to win."

Witherspoon has obviously taken a pretty big step, really looking confident. Just personally for him, how tough is it to have that momentum have to stop?

“I mean, and that’s the challenges of this sport, but yeah I felt real bad for him because, you’re right, he’s been playing at a high level. He’s been covering very well and he’s been playing very physical, too. I thought yesterday was probably his most physical game I’ve seen him have. He was making tackles, throwing his body around and he’s been covering very well all year. It is unfortunate for him, but these setbacks do happen in this league. It’s part of football and he’ll work to get back and when he comes back, we expect him to be right where he was when he left off.”

The team is 3-0, but the offense had committed eight turnovers in three games. Is that a concern and what do you do to correct that?

“I mean, it’s always a concern. It’s hard to win when you turn the ball over, especially when you’re down 5-2. The good thing about it, and the reason we did win, is because the points off of it, they had six and we had 14. You can get by when you’re doing that, but we know that’s not built to last. We’ve got to be smarter with the ball. The two interceptions aren’t throws I want the quarterback to take back. We’ve got to catch those. He can make maybe a little better of a throw, but those are just unfortunate ones we’ve got to catch better. The fumbled snap was unfortunate. We always work on that and talk about it, but we’ve definitely got to fix that stuff.”

In terms of defense, when you watch them, is it more enjoyable now and less stressful than it’s been the last couple of years?

“Yes. Yeah, it’s fun. I mean, it was stressful to go against all summer. It was very hard on us, but I think it made us better offensively. But I mean, I think [defensive coordinator Robert] Saleh and the staff, they’ve always done a real good job with their coverages and stuff and being sound and things like that, which always makes people work pretty hard to go down the field on them. Just adding in some of these different elements with the pass rushers and bringing [LB] Kwon [Alexander] in and stuff like that and the guys who have been here, just taking a step forward, they’ve been tough to go against for us all summer, but I’m having a lot of fun watching other people have to deal with it.”