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SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – October 18, 2017**

San Francisco 49ers

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How much do you see QB C.J. Beathard adapting to the starting quarterback role and all of those kinds of intangible things that come along with it?

“How do I see it?”

How have you seen him adapt to that?

“He’s been good so far. We just sit and review the game tape on Monday, so we’ve only had him here for a few hours, introduced him to the game plan. We just went out to a walk-through, he did a good job with it. C.J. started a lot of games in college. I don’t think it’s too big for him. I think he’s used to having it and I think he’s just going to go about it like he’s gone about every other day throughout his career.”

Positive vibes in the locker room, seems like the guys are behind him in that regard?

“Yeah, I think our guys are pros. Guys are going to go out and do their job regardless of who is in there. I think the guys have a lot of trust in him. I think the guys like him as a person, so it’s been all positive.”

Does he have an intangible quality that helps him be successful?

“I think everyone who has, especially quarterbacks, who are successful have something besides just talent. I think you’ve got to have the ability to throw in this league to make it and not many people do at this level. It’s the other intangibles that separate everyone who can handle the pressure, who can do it week in and week out, who can handle the highs and lows and recover through adversity and things like that. I think he’s shown that throughout college. Just being around the guy, I think you have a very tough person physically and mentally. Those are his biggest strengths.”

With a rookie making his first start, do you pare down things offensively in the game plan or do you throw as much at him just to see what he’s got and challenge him?

“There’s no exact absolute on how to handle it. You try to make it, your whole game plan is based off what gives this guy the best chance to be successful and the 10 guys around him. Being confident, being clear minded, being able to be aggressive and make quick reactions, that’s usually what does it. When you put too much in that can slow a

guy down and make him think too much, so I definitely don't want to do that to him. But, you also want to put enough in to help people get open and help him have some good opportunities, not to where everything has to be so tough. There's a balance on both. I think C.J. can handle a lot and we'll work on that together as this goes."

Would you have looked at him as much if Iowa hadn't, I mean so many colleges now run a lot of spread offense. Was that a big factor?

"No, it just makes it easier. You've got to look at everybody. So, we look at everybody. We give everyone the same amount of time. If you don't like what you see on tape you get over that pretty quick. When you see guys who have ability, you've just got to keep digging and keep digging. It does make it a lot easier when guys play under center and they're not always in the spread, because you can see some stuff that you know you're going to have to use at the next level. When guys aren't in that, it's just harder, but you look at everyone the same."

I know at this point you're week-to-week, but how much of what he does between now and the end of the year will dictate the team's plans in the future as you start thinking about the draft?

"A ton. That's for every position. That's for every player on our team. That's for every coach on our team. Like I've been saying, I know we're 0-6 and that's extremely tough, but I'm extremely excited about this place and excited about where we're at and where we're going. There's not a moment that I don't waste thinking about that stuff."

His grasp of the offense, has that been a factor in his improved practice play in the last couple weeks?

"Yes. I think it's the grasp of the offense, but it's the reps. Guys work at it. They study hard. They pretty quickly throughout OTAs and training camp could draw it up on a board. They know the playbook, but it's about feeling and reacting and that only happens with reps. You do that throughout training camp, but they get the looks versus the coverages our defense runs. The more scout team work, the more carded looks you get each week you go against a different coverage, you get to try different things. You also get to sit back and watch everything that we've done in six week and how a game plan works, the stuff that we work on through the week, the reps that [QB] Brian [Hoyer] got, how we take him into a film room, how it looks on a game, how he adjusts throughout a game, how you correct those on Monday, how you change it the next week. It is very beneficial for a guy to sit back and watch that stuff. They don't always have that opportunity, but the more you can soak in, especially at the quarterback position, the better you get. Then it comes with, can you handle that pressure and stuff, adversity and all eyes on you and stuff as you do get that playing time. How are you going to react as that goes?"

Is Dallas' defensive scheme any easier for a rookie to come in and play against?

"No, I don't think so. Dallas is an extremely sound scheme. To me, as sound as one there is in the NFL. They make you work for everything. There is not just a ton of crazy stuff that's all over the place, but it's all tied together, so it all looks the same. It's hard to recognize certain coverages. They don't do a ton of them, but pre-snap they all look the

same, same with our fronts. You could say maybe it's easier because they're not doing as much stuff. But, I can look at it as it's a lot harder because it all plays off each other."

You guys have increased your usage of no huddle in the last few weeks and obviously some of that is based on how the game is going. But, C.J. at the end of the first half had a pretty good drive using no huddle and at the end of the game. Do you plan to incorporate that more and how do you balance that given the burden it might place on your defense given the time of possession numbers?

"We plan on doing it every week. I think it just happened, there's a difference between two minute drives and then schematically going no huddle. In the game last week, we had a two minute drive at the end of the second quarter and then we had a couple of them at the end of the game trying to get back in that game. But, besides that, like everyone in the league, everyone does that when you get at the end of the half or a game. But, we always incorporate no huddle. We do it randomly. We try to jump in and out of it. I always felt, we've done it throughout the year. When you stay out there longer, you guys will notice it more. When you quickly go no huddle if you don't convert a third down, sometimes you'll miss it that we were even going no huddle. But, the more we can stay out there the more we can do it. It's something I like to get in and out of. People talk about no huddle is about getting your defense gets the ball back too fast. Well, it's about moving the chains. If you go no huddle and you go three-and-out very fast, yes that's a lot faster than going three-and-out while huddling, but three-and-out is still three-and-out. What's the best way to go on drives? If jumping in no huddle allows you to go on a longer drive, even if you do go into a huddle, that helps the defense."

What happens during a game that makes, is it scripted or do you just kind of--?

"No, it's more gut. You feel you've got the defense on their heels. Those guys are tired. You notice D-Linemen are just getting out of the stacks or the pileups slowly. You feel you've got a team on their heels and you want to attack."

What does C.J. have to do the rest of the season to prove to you that he's the quarterback of the future here and that you don't need to spend your first round pick on a quarterback next year or sign someone to a big money contract during free agency?

"Show that he has the ability to lead us to where we want to go. And I think that's everyone in this league. Everyone's goal in this league is to have an opportunity to go all the way. I think first and foremost, people are going to always look at the quarterback first. He's the guy who touches the ball every play. Depending on that level, that helps you the most. There definitely isn't 32 of those in the world. So, by no means do you have to be one of those top five guys, but you have to show the ability that you can build things around a person who gives you the chance no matter what type of defense you go against, that he's got the ability to make those throws, he's got the ability to make some off schedule plays and he's the type of person who can handle all the stuff that goes with it."

You started some rookie quarterbacks at various points. Is there a common thread to how defenses will approach those guys the way they'll switch up coverages, try to trick them, that sort of thing?

"I think it depends on the defensive coordinator's personality, his mentality, how he views our quarterback. I think I've played with totally different rookie-type quarterbacks. I think it has a lot to do with their skill set. Lots of guys say, 'They're a young guy, let's blitz the heck out of him, see if they can handle it.' A lot of guys say, 'He's a young guy, he's going to struggle to work it all the way down the field, so let's just be real conservative and see if he can execute for 10 plays in a row.' So, it can go either way. It just depends on me how they feel. You try to see that and you try to get a feel as a play caller and adjust."

What was your evaluate of Dallas Cowboys QB Dak Prescott leading into last year's draft and were you surprised, obviously he was thrown into a really good situation, but were you surprised that he had as much success as he did as a rookie?

"I can honestly say I didn't put a lot of time into Dak coming out because I was a coordinator in Atlanta. We knew we weren't going to draft a quarterback, so I put a lot of time into other positions. So, I didn't really get to study him hard coming out of college. Watching him in the NFL, I think everyone can see why he's been very successful and why he's going to continue to be very successful."

When you look at your ideal run-pass balance, in an ideal world would that be around 50-50? Because I know that the passes have far outnumbered the run. Is that because you guys have fallen behind here?

"No, I look at it as I want to be 50-50 in normal situations, which is normal first and second downs. So, I'm taking out two minutes. I'm taking out third downs. We're not going to be 50-50 run-pass in two minutes. We're not going to be 50-50 run-pass in third-and-eight. I think everyone knows that's an extremely high throwing percentages, so you take all that out of the game and then first, second down, normal situations, are you balanced? That's what always our goal is. Now, if you're really bad on third down, you've really been struggling on third down, which we have, those are pretty much 80-percent passes, unless they are all short yardage. If you're not staying on the field and you're throwing every third down, how are you going to have a good run-pass ratio? Only if you run it every first and second down and you throw it third down. So, if you're going to struggle on third down, it's going to be really hard for us to have the ratio that I want. So, we've got to stay on the field longer, we've got to move the chains, we've got to have some longer drives, less three-and-outs and then I think that ratio will be where I want it to be. But, I never take in two minutes and things like that."

LB Reuben Foster and LB Ray-Ray Armstrong were involved in a scary incident. Have you talked to them? Everything okay with them?

"Yes. They told me about it, told me everything that happened. It's just a reminder on how careful you've got to be. Definitely glad they got out of it okay. Sounded pretty

dangerous, something pretty scary, a situation I haven't been in like that before. I know they were pretty shook up from it and worried. I'm just really glad they're alright."

Following up on that, it's not a crime to be at a club at two a.m., but when Reuben was drafted the team talked about having a strong support system around him. Was where he was give you any pause?

"I think you can look at it a bunch of different ways. I don't think everyone totally knows our exact lifestyle. Sunday night, after a game, I'm not making excuses for anyone, but just to be honest with you guys, Monday our first team meeting is at one o'clock. We go over the game tape. It's all meetings. There's nothing physical. There's nothing on the field. Tuesday is the players' day off, then we see them Wednesday. Sunday night, for 90-percent of this league or whatever it is, that's a players' Friday night. Monday night's player Saturdays. Everyone handles their free time differently. You've got to handle it right. When you're in those situations you've got to be careful. Hopefully they learn from being in that situation. But, I also want to keep perspective that when guys do decide to have a night out and they don't have a big thing the next day, I want them to handle themselves right, protect our team. But, I'm not going to get mad at a guy for putting in the work all week, those guys grinding, and then deciding to go out and do what most people do at their age at that time. I know the report was at two, which is a little bit after when it happened. I also know that's about the time when those bars close. You want guys to stay out of trouble and not put themselves in that situation. I think I'd feel a lot differently if that was a Thursday night, if it was a different night in the week. Just to be honest with you guys, Sunday is a little different schedule for people in the NFL."

You guys have had changes lately. LB NaVorro Bowman is gone. You made the change with Brian. Both pretty versatile guys, but there's no room for sentiment in the NFL. That's something you have to kind of be cold blooded?

"Yes. You want me to comment on that?"

Yes.

"Yeah, it's the tough part of the job. I think people who know me, deep down I think I'm a pretty compassionate guy and I have a lot of empathy for people. I'm also extremely aware of the NFL and the decisions that you have to make. I've been around these decisions my whole life and I know no matter how you feel or no matter how hard something is, if you believe it's the right decision you cannot hesitate. That's what I believe my job is. That's what I was trying to talk about last week, [general manager] John [Lynch] and I. It was an extremely hard thing to move on from NaVorro. Extremely hard. It's not something that you want to do because I think everyone knows why, that's hard. It's not easy conversations. But, you have to look at the big picture, you have to think of what's best for your team now and into the future. Once you are convinced and you have your reasons why, you can't hesitate. I never will. That's one of the reasons I wanted to come here because I feel I'm in a situation where John and I can think of what's right for this team and if we do believe it's right from a football standpoint, organizational standpoint, we're in a position that we can make those decisions. That's what our job is to do."

When it comes to leadership in the locker room, do you encourage some of the younger players to say, 'Hey take some ownership here. This is an opportunity for you to maybe fill that leadership void?' Or are you kind of hands-off and you sort of let those things evolve on their own?

"No, I think in order for people to lead, you have to give them a platform to lead. I also think that people will only follow people that they respect. The way people respect people in this league is what they put on tape, how they handle themselves on the field, and then how they handle themselves how they go about their work every single day. It's very important to me to have people here, and I've made it clear that I don't care if you're a rookie, I don't care if you've been here six months, I don't care if you've been here eight years. It doesn't really matter to me. I think leaders can be all over. I think everyone can do it their own way. I think you have to do it by being yourself. But, it's something that I do definitely want more guys here stepping it up to do that. It doesn't matter to me what your status is. It matters to me who you are and how you live your life every day and especially how you are in this building."

Do you expect Reuben to play this week?

"I do expect him to. I guess I should use the words I'm optimistic, maybe not expect. I'm being more optimistic. I was hoping last week. Definitely wasn't as optimistic last week. But, I'm more optimistic this week. You never know. It's a high ankle sprain. You don't know how those act. I'm just really hoping he can get three good days of practice in. If he does, I feel pretty confident he'll be out there."

What's your immediate reaction this morning from NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell's remarks about players? Saying that they're not disrespecting the flag, and he expects them to stand. Did you have time to process that? Have you talked to your players yet?

"No. I didn't hear the remarks, at all. Just heard them from you. I like those remarks. Say it again. Let me make sure of that."

Goodell says players are not being disrespectful when they protest during the National Anthem, but he also said everyone should stand during this plan.

"I think I've made it pretty clear about how we feel here. Nobody should disrespect the flag and do all that stuff. I think I've made it clear that by talking to the people who do that, that is not their intentions at all. That's what's made me understand why they're doing it. I definitely hope that there comes a point where we don't feel the need to. I also know myself, our whole organization included, we're going to respect people's rights and respect people's opinions and we're not going to tell them how to live their life."