

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

TRANSCRIPTIONS



Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – October 16, 2017
San Francisco 49ers
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I'm sure you were asked this last night, but why did you make the switch from QB Brian Hoyer to QB C.J. Beathard?

"I could see the way the game was going. I know we needed a spark and C.J. had put together a couple good weeks of practice. I knew he had been getting better. I knew he was about ready. Definitely at the time I thought he gave us best chance to win, and I think that going forward, also."

When you get a chance to digest the film, what are your takeaways from C.J.'s performance?

"I was excited with how he played. Pretty much the same stuff I said last night. My opinion didn't really change. By no means was he perfect. He missed a couple things, but that always happens. I thought he came in there, didn't hesitate, competed, the moment was not too big for him. Made a few plays in rhythm. Made a few off-schedule plays and that was a big reason we got back in that game."

When you say he had a good week of practice, what has to happen on the practice field for a guy like that to ascend to the starting lineup?

"Just to watch how he does with his reps. Even the scout team reps, they get it on a card, but very rarely do they see the card and we can't put it in our own terminology and we have that play somewhere in our playbook. Just to watch him run a card, visualize how we're going it, to see where he goes with the ball, not only how he's throwing but how he goes through his progressions and handles the defensive coverage and things like that. As you do with all rookies, you hope the more reps they get, the better they get and I feel like he's been showing that through these weeks in practice."

You were five for 11 on third down with him in the game. What did he do well in particular on third down?

"I thought he hung in there, got the ball to the right spot a few times and when stuff wasn't there, he made a few, he made a couple third downs. I don't know the exact number, but I know a few of those five were he moved with his legs and made a couple off-schedule plays that kept the play going."

Where does he need to improve going forward?

“We'll see that as he plays. He's got the ability. He's got the toughness. Each game will be different. You know, when you talk about where a guy has got to improve, you don't say they need to learn how to throw it better or they need to learn how to get bigger or faster. That's usually the stuff that you have by the time you get to this level. It's about playing in the game and reacting to defenses, reacting to coverages, reacting to adjustments. He's going to see a lot of things he hasn't seen before and that will change each week. That'll probably change each quarter. It's really how does a guy handle that stuff. I've seen a lot of guys come in and struggle early and learn from it and end up becoming pretty good. I've seen guys come in and play very well right away, and things change and they don't adjust that well. So, you're never going to get a quick answer. You see over time. But, he's got the ability to do it. I think he's got the mental toughness to do it. I think he will get better the more he plays.”

Does he have some strengths that are different than Brian's that as a head coach you can incorporate moving forward with him, too?

“I think he's got a similar skill set to Brian in terms of his ability to throw, his ability to make all the throws and to do it from the pocket. I think he is, he's younger, he's got more legs to him. He can maybe make some more off-schedule plays. I wouldn't say he's the most mobile guy in the world, but he has the mobility to scramble and the arm strength to make any of those throws, also.”

Was the biggest reason you waited to bring him in until you thought maybe you would use him for the long haul, or just like a half or so, and you waited?

“No, I wanted to wait until I thought it was the right time, which I was trying to be very patient with that, which is a challenge for a naturally impatient person. But, I tried to wait for if it's the right time for him and the right time for the team. I thought specifically at that time in the game, I had a feeling the way that game was going. I felt the team needed it right then, and it also made me more confident to do it because I thought he was ready for it, also.”

Do you see him as a starter going forward?

“Yes.”

What are the biggest areas you've seen him grow, just from when you first got him here back in spring after drafting him?

“Just soaking it all in. He's a guy who did run, he's one of the few quarterbacks who didn't run a spread offense in college. He had some understanding from playing under center, making huddle calls, having to make some adjustments at the line and not just always going fast, the fast-break type of stuff that you see in these spread offenses. He has some familiarity with that stuff. But, now to get him in and we do a lot more than he did do, so just to get him reps with all of our keepers, with the play-actions, with the different type of drop backs, playing under center, in gun. He is a gym rat. He doesn't do it to impress you. He does it because he enjoys it. He's pretty passionate about football. It's very important to him. I think it's similar with a lot of people. He's grown up around football his whole life. He's had a lot of family members in it. And that doesn't mean that everyone is like that, but you can tell he's a guy who has been around football forever

and it's extremely important to him and you can tell he carries his, the way he carries himself, that's important to him in every aspect of his life.”

What did you see from him in college that made you and general manager John Lynch want to draft him? Just the stuff you mentioned just now?

“Yeah, any time, I'm always trying to look for a quarterback who I think has the ability to play in this league, which to me starts with your throwing ability. And you need guys who are tough enough to hang in there, and who have just that natural feeling and intelligence that they can handle it all and keep their eyes down the field and get the ball to the right spot. When I say intelligence, too, that can be overrated. It's not like the smartest guys know where to go with the ball. It's more can you handle all the stuff, handle the calls, handle the different coverages and can you react? It takes a very natural guy to sit in there and react to things when a lot of bigger guys are coming at you trying to kill you every play. Can you be poised, keep your heart rate even, keep your eyes downfield and not flinch and make quick, impulsive decisions? You can see some of that stuff on tape. It's easier seeing offenses where guys do have to hold on to the ball sometimes. It's not always just spread out and throwing bubbles and things like that. And that's what you saw in C.J. and you never know for sure until you get someone, but I think he has the personality to become a pretty good one.”

You mentioned the ability to make all the throws. Some draft evaluators before the draft questioned his arm strength. You don't question it at all? What do you see?

“No. I see him make every throw just like the ones I think you guys have seen him make since he's here. So yeah, I get confused with that stuff, too. I don't know. I just go with what I see.”

You guys are among the league leaders in dropped passes. How do you coach that up? Do you tell the guys, more times in the JUGS machines? Is it a mental thing? How do you approach that aspect as a coach?

“If you have good hands and you're having drops, it's a huge mental thing. It doesn't get easier. The more you drop it, it gets harder to catch it because now you're starting to think about stuff. I think the key to sports is playing with a very clear mind where you can just attack, don't flinch, don't hesitate and not think about that type of stuff. The more you drop, I mean, just human nature, the more it's going to be harder to catch it, just like the more a guy misses free throws and the more people talk about it, it doesn't get easier. You tighten up. So, how do you get through that? You have to gain that confidence. I know me personally, I always recommend getting on JUGS. Not just sitting there and playing catch, standing in place, but running back and forth full speed, attacking the ball, running through the ball. Doing it over and over again until your mind is shut off and it becomes automatic. If you're a guy who doesn't have very good hands, you'd better bring a lot of other stuff to the table, or it's just a matter of time before we've got to find someone else.”

How were your hands?

“They didn't throw it to me enough, but I never dropped anything. It was only a few of them.”

What's the next step for LB Brock Coyle?

“I just want him to continue to do what he's doing. There was no, we put some pressure on Brock last week by putting him in there. We still weren't sure about what [LB] Reuben's [Foster] status was going to be, but by no means was that just, 'Hey, Brock, this is your deal.' We know we're waiting for Reuben to get healthy and he'll have that MIKE position when he gets back. But, Brock's played a lot in this league. He's started a number of games for Seattle. Got to start our first one last week. I thought he started off slow, but I thought he turned it on in the second half and played some pretty good football in the second half. Brock's very conscientious, gets our guys lined up very fast. He works as hard as anyone. He does contribute a lot on special teams when he's playing. And I think Brock, just like anyone, I think he can get better the more he's out there. Hope to get some guys back, too, so we can take some of that off of him, but the more Brock plays, the better he will get. I thought he showed that yesterday. I thought, like I just said, started off a little slow. I thought he got better throughout the game and Brock is a guy that I do have confidence in.”

What was behind the long touchdown to WR Aldrick Robinson? Was that just C.J. improvising?

“Yeah, it was a little bit of both. We were expecting the quarters coverage to run something over the top with a quarter safety and they ended up playing single safety, and the corner on the outside stopped on [WR] Trent Taylor and Aldrick just kept going. He was supposed to go to the post for a certain coverage and they had a busted coverage. So, he just hung out there which is why C.J. didn't see it right away because he wasn't where he was expecting him to be. But, then we had enough protection to where he could take a couple more hitches. He broke the pocket a little bit and he saw where Aldrick was and he didn't hesitate and made that throw with that arm strength.”

The safety leaning towards the sideline a little bit --

“He wasn't expecting him to be there so he was a little late with it. When that happens, if you lob that up too far, I always say the man can travel faster than the ball, especially when it's far down the field. You've got to get it there as quick as you can and keep it away from that guy which allowed Aldrick to make a play after it and get into the end zone.”

What went into keeping Reuben out and when was that decision made? Was that Saturday or was that something you made Sunday morning?

“No. I had a pretty good feeling on Friday just watching how he went Friday. I mean, probably no one in the world wanted him to play besides, I mean, as much as me and Reuben. Well, I take that back. A lot of guys in this building wanted him to play pretty bad and I know Reuben did, also, and it was very hard to go against our one. He was close, all week. But, I didn't think he put together three days 100-percent like we wanted him to, and I just had to go against what we wanted and I felt like it was much better for Reuben. It was tough to do, but I'm glad we did it.”

Do you have any updates on DL Arik Armstead's hand and DL Aaron Lynch's calf?

"Arik broke his hand. He's going to need surgery. So, it's going to be some time. And Lynch has a calf strain. I think that's what we called it, a calf strain, and that's going to be week-to-week."

What is Brian Hoyer's future with the team?

"Right now, it's just doing his job. He's done a good job and everything I've asked him to do, how he's carried himself, Brian's gone out and done his best. I know it hasn't been perfect. I take responsibility for that, too. I wish I could have made things easier on Brian and helped him more, and I know the guys around him wish they could have done the same. Brian hung in there, did everything we asked him to do. Didn't play at the level we wanted him to, and I know we didn't help him much from the players around him and myself. Brian's been great about it. He handled it great. I think he will handle being a number two quarterback very well, also."

Without Arik for a while now, how do you like your depth on the defensive line?

"Well, the more guys you lose, the less you like that depth. Losing Arik, which could be some time, we're going to have to discuss IR. We'll have to do that over the next couple days and we're going to have Lynch out, too, for at least a week, most likely more. That takes away two guys who were helping. Hopefully we'll get [LB] Dekoda [Watson] back this week, which would help because I know he missed last week with his groin and hopefully getting him back will help that depth and I'm sure we're going to get someone else here."

How about Solomon Thomas? It looked like he made some plays in the running game and he had that sack. How do you evaluate his progression, particularly now that Arik is gone?

"I hope he keeps coming. You know, I think he's had, no one just gets better each week. He goes for it every week. I thought he took a little bit of a step back versus Indy and I thought he took a step forward this week. I thought he played relentlessly and he played very hard, kept working, got that sack opportunity and I think he had a number of tackles. I don't know the exact number, if it was nine or 10 or something and that's because of how hard he was working. He was doing some good things and he definitely had an effect on that game versus a very good O-Line."

With LB Elvis Dumervil, just coming off the injury last year, was the plan with him maybe to ramp him up as the season goes on, and could he get more snaps now that Arik is out?

"It's tough because the plan is to try to keep all of those guys fresh. I would love to keep Elvis fresh. He's one of our better third down pass rushers, the way he gets off the ball and he knows how to get to the quarterback. And the fresher your guys are, not just at D-Line, but every position, the better they play, and that's why I think a number of teams around this league keep a lot of D-Linemen and do that. It's tough as the year goes

when you have injuries. You've just got to deal with it. We will always try to keep guys fresh if we can, but that's definitely getting harder as we go."

On the PI call versus WR Pierre Garçon, was the play not designed for the ball to go to RB Carlos Hyde against man coverage?

"No, it's too, any time you run a man coverage play, guys running to the flat is not a good play for man coverage. It's hard to get open running a flat route. You're just running to the flat. That's usually for zone. Pierre is running a slant, which is for man. The guy guarding the flat runs into Pierre, who is running a slant, which makes now the flat open. So, if you think about it, that's why you hope you go to the flat after that happens. But in man, that's why guys on defense, when you play man coverage and you are having to guard a guy on a flat route and they are bumping outside on the slant, that's why it's very important defensive standpoint you play at different levels. Because if you don't and you're chasing a guy to the flat as a guy is running a slant, you will run into that slant runner every time and you usually get a defensive pass interference."

So on that slat/flat concept, you don't coach the slant receiver to run a rub route against man coverage?

"No, we coach him to run a slant route. And that is like probably the first thing that everyone in the history of football goes to their receivers, when they know it's man and it's a five a man rush, the first thing you're going to look at is can we throw a slant. That's why we called a slant play on the play."

Have you gotten an explanation on that at all?

"Uh-uh. No."

Did you see Washington Redskins LB Zach Brown's comments afterwards? He said he was playing that, hoping to get a flag for OPI.

"Yeah, no, I didn't see it."

When you hear that what is your reaction? When you hear an opposing player saying he predicted it and he played it a certain way?

"No, I mean I know what happened to him. He hesitated looking back. We snapped the ball. He was a little bit late to guard his guy from the flat. He didn't play a different level. That's why he ran into Pierre, because he was a little bit out of position."