

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

# TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan**  
**Press Conference – August 23, 2017**  
**San Francisco 49ers**  
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**You guys signed a veteran defensive lineman today. What was the thought process behind adding DL Sen'Derrick Marks?**

"We just wanted more competition inside. I've played against Sen'Derrick a number of times over the years. He's been a good player for a while. We wanted to see where he was at now, along with those other guys. We thought he had the lead in the workout. He's got 10 days to show us he deserves to be on this 53-man roster."

**What's the status of DL DeForest Buckner and his ankle?**

"He's going to be practicing today. I know he's limited. We'll see how much he can do."

**Is DB Jimmie Ward going to practice today?**

"Yeah. Same thing, limited also. He'll be off the PUP, be allowed to go out there. But, definitely going to take it easy with him."

**Is the expectation to try to get him into Sunday's game?**

"Of course we would like to. But, I have really no expectations for that. We'll see how he looks today. I'm hoping we do a little bit more on Thursday and I think we'll have a better idea after two practices."

**Are you excited to get him back, just to kind of start having your pieces in place as you roll towards the regular season?**

"Yes, of course. Jimmie is a good player, did a real good job for us in OTAs at our middle third safety. I was really excited to get him to camp here. I know it hasn't gone the way he's wanted with his unfortunate injury. I know I'm excited, I think everyone's excited and I know he is. So, I look forward to getting him out there today."

**We all noted how sharp QB Brian Hoyer has looked in practice. Has there been a difference with him in the games you've seen so far or have you seen the same kind of thing?**

"No, I've seen the exact same thing. It's about opportunities. You know, I feel in the first game, I can't remember exactly, but he had three passes maybe. I forget. It wasn't many. I know he went two drives and six plays. So, in the second game I was disappointed with the turnover. But, the opportunities he had, he went to the right spot

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with the ball and made pretty good throws. Hopefully we get him out there a little longer this week and get him into a rhythm where he's got a chance to play a little bit more."

**Can you diagnose what it is that's keeping your run game out of the rhythm that you want it to be in?**

"You'd have to ask me which play it's on, but I think we ran the ball fairly good in the first week. I think we had like 180 yards rushing or something. It was real bad in the second week. I think anytime you only get 40-something plays because you're not doing good on third down or because you're turning it over, the run game's not going to look good. The run game is about wearing people down, going on drives, getting calls in. You're never going to just go out and run for seven yards a carry because you're getting seven yards a carry. That's going to be getting one, getting two, getting one, getting two, then getting 14. The more you can do that stuff, the more your run game's going to look good. I was pretty happy with the end result from Kansas City. But, versus Denver I feel like we never got a chance to get it going."

**How are the rookie running backs looking in pass protection?**

"It's still a work in progress. Like all rookie running backs, that's usually the thing they struggle with the most. Some of them are better than others. I know we've got three rookie backs and they're all competing pretty hard, and there's lots of phases to running backs. Who runs the ball the best? Who protects the best? Who's the best in routes in the pass game? Who can help us out the most on special teams? So, there's a bunch of factors that go into running backs. How they win that job? How they get a part of this team? And, I know there's a good battle. Not just between the three rookies, but also the other guys in that room."

**I want to ask about a national story. There were 16 different groups got together today to protest at the NFL headquarters in New York. It was about QB Colin Kaepernick. NAACP has now requested an audience with the NFL to discuss his situation. If I were to ask you, are you surprised that he hasn't been signed this offseason and do you feel like he's being treated fairly?**

"I only can speak for ourselves. You know, when we looked into resigning Colin it wasn't about any of that stuff. It's the direction we wanted to go with our offense and with our team. So, not in our case. I can't speak for anyone else though."

**You talk to anyone else in the league about his situation?**

"No. I don't talk to many people anyway. And when I do it's not about gossip. Usually it's about Xs and Os, or, that's about it."

**You guys decided who's going to be the first QB off the bench in Minnesota?**

"No, we haven't. It's going to depend how this week goes."

**So they'll keep alternating evenly throughout the week?**

"Yes."

**Circling back to something you said about the running backs. With all the different things that go into play, when you have a guy maybe on offense or defense who is performing well in preseason games or in practices in those areas, but maybe hasn't shown as much on special teams, do you go out of your way to try to give them more reps or get them more opportunities in there to get a better evaluation, knowing that that's maybe their way on the roster?**

"Yeah. Most of the things we do in a preseason game is because we're just trying to figure things out. There's certain guys that we have a good feel of, and there's certain guys that we don't. There's certain areas that we're not sure because we can't replicate it the exact right way in practice so we have to do it in the game. There's some things that we can replicate in practice, so we don't even worry about it in the game. So, we put other guys in those situations. I think, special teams is one of the toughest things to replicate in practice because yeah you can be physical, especially through training camp when we have pads on and everything, but we're not tackling. We're not taking people to the ground. Especially when you get offensive guys who are playing special teams. Most defensive guys do know how to tackle, especially at this level. Offensive guys aren't always that way. They're not going to show you that they're good tacklers in practice because we're not going to risk getting one of our guys hurt. So, those are the guys that you've really got to get opportunities in the game on special teams."

**So a guy like WR Kendrick Bourne who goes out and plays well on offense, do you say, "OK we want to see you as a gunner more than what you were doing before," just because realistically, numbers-wise that might be his only way to make the team?**

"Well yeah, totally. On average, you usually keep about six receivers. I've been places where you go five, I've been places where you go seven. Same with running backs. I've been places where we've kept two. The norm I would guess is three. I've been places where we've kept four. So, you never know how it's going to pan out. It's a lot easier to say, 'This guy's our best receiver, this guy's our second, this guy's our fourth or fifth.' But, who's going to be up on game day. Just because he might be your fifth best receiver, just speaking hypothetically, is he going to be up on game day? Does he help special teams? We don't go five wide very much. Ever. We could. But, you don't think of it that way. If you aren't one of those top guys, if you aren't number one, number two, if you're not a true starter and you can't help on special teams, it's very hard to make the team. It's a trickle-down effect. It's a risk sometimes you take because some of those guys can be very good and they're only one play away from being a starter. The problem is they weren't activated that day because they couldn't help on special teams. So, you've got to wait until next week to do it. Special teams is a big part of it. If everyone stays healthy, then you want to think all about special teams. Because the backups will contribute on that. But, once you get one injury, that's where you're like, 'Man I wish I got this guy up,' because now we need him. But, you didn't know that until the game started."

**Where does DB Lorenzo Jerome fit into your safety position? Obviously he's taken advantage of the time that he's had just as a rookie and an undrafted free**

**agent. If you could just kind of share a little bit who is most responsible for bringing him on board?**

"I think that's a great person to talk about. He's gotten a lot of reps out there with the injuries down and stuff. I think he's taken advantage of his reps. There's still 10 more days to go and lots of practice time and two games to earn a spot on this team. But, if you aren't a hands-down starter on our team you better be able to contribute to special teams."

**Who was responsible for signing him? Which one of the scouts?**

"I'm not even sure. We all have a process in that. We go through, we get a list of a ton of guys. That starts very early back to February. That's what the scouts work on all year around, trying to provide that list. They go ahead and they look at it. Us coaches look at it on our own. We do that for about a month separately, then we get together and watch it all together a number of different times. You just keep talking, and we have a list of guys that we want on our team. We try to guess what rounds that we think we should go after them and who could be available as free agents. But, it's very rare that I could ever pin point in anything just remembering who was the one person that wanted a guy because it's very rare that it's just one person. It's usually a group."

**Given where this team is, is it fair to say when you look at some position battles the tie would go to the younger player? I'm thinking like a backup quarterback, LB Ahmad Brooks and LB Eli Harold. Does that make sense for where this team is or as a coach do you have to say we're going to try to win as many games as you can?**

"I think you take everything into account. I think everything starts with who gives you the best chance to win. Who gives you the best chance to win in Week 1. Who gives you the best chance to win throughout a 16-game season. If guys are tied, or there's one guy who's a little bit ahead, that's probably the guy we want to start. But, if we feel maybe there's a younger guy that if he just gets a few reps he'll pass that guy up pretty fast, then I would lean toward the other way. I understand the question, especially in our first year. But, you're always thinking about winning now without ever jeopardizing your future. So, you've got to balance both of those two things. Like I said to our team today, the first thing we look for is who gives us the best chance to win. After that it's going to come down to who we believe likes football more. Who's out here because they truly enjoy it. We can see. Not because they tell us. Because we watch how they play. How they work. Guys who really play like their hair's on fire and they enjoy playing football. If you're like that, I think it's contagious and it helps your team win. Those are the guys I'm going to always side with when it's close."

**Have you ever, ever gone five wide with your receivers?**

"I have before. That's why I took that back."

**It sounded like you regret it.**

"No, it wasn't that. It's just, it's hard to have a threat of a run when there's five wideouts in there. If we can ever get a wideout who's a real good running back and a wide receiver then it can really put them in a bind. You put five wide receivers on the field,

they know you're in a five man protection so they can get their best blitz, they know exactly what you're doing, there's zero threat of run."

**Defensive coordinators should know you could do it again?**

"Yeah definitely."

**Katie Sowers, that became a pretty big story that she did an interview and revealed that she's openly part of the LGBT community. What do you see in how the players react to her coaching on the field? I would imagine they haven't been coached by a woman before. What are your personal feelings about making a hire that's a landmark groundbreaking thing in the NFL? She's a pioneer.**

"I think that's neat, and I respect that, but that doesn't make me feel any different. If anybody knows me, that has nothing to do with why I would ever make a decision like that. I'm probably the opposite of that. That's very simple. Our receivers coach [wide receivers/passing game specialist] Mike LaFleur came to me a couple weeks ago and asked me how much longer Katie was going to be here and I told him. He said, 'Man if there was any way you can keep her on throughout the year, she helps me a lot.' She gets along well with the players, the receivers room. The receivers respect her. She helps our receivers coach with a lot of his work. When he asked me that, I like Katie. I like how she handles herself. She's been great to have around. When she said she'd be interested in staying throughout the year, that was a pretty easy decision for me."

**I know it's a small sample size, but RB Carlos Hyde is averaging 2.6 yards per carry through two preseason games. What's your level of concern and how do you diagnose what the issues have been with that first unit and the running game?**

"I just look at what happened on the runs he had. Off the top of my head I think there's one run in particular that I thought the O-Line blocked it for about a four-yard gain and he got about one yard. Just trying to do too much on one play, which happens a lot with a running back. There was one play I think he left about three yards on the field. After that, his other looks I didn't think were very good. We've got to do better with all 11 guys to give him a chance to improve that yards per carry."

**When you say his looks weren't good, do you mean blocking-wise?**

"Yeah, it truly takes 11 guys to run the ball. He had a great opportunity on the first play of the game, we were just a hair off, for a couple of reasons. Had an opportunity to get a big one, and I think he ended up getting one yard. It wasn't until play 19 we got the exact same look and the next time we were just a little bit more on and he got seven yards versus the same look. It wasn't much of a difference. It was one step by one player. So, that's what football is that not everyone realizes about. It takes 11 guys to execute a play. Usually the guy who has the ball in his hand is the one who's rewarded or blamed, but I've been happy with Carlos' reps in the preseason. I definitely want to do better. I want to score every time we call a play, so I'm usually disappointed if it doesn't end in a touchdown. But, he's done a good job for us."

**What did you see from Hyde during his three quality runs at the end of the first half against Denver? He has a six-yarder, a seven-yarder and then a seven-yarder. What did you see from him during those three runs?**

“We blocked well and he got to the right whole. When contact hit him at five yards he fell for two more. I thought he got exactly what we blocked for and got a little bit more after it.”