

TRANSCRIPTIONS



Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
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San Francisco 49ers
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We asked general manager John Lynch about the wide receiver class. What has been your overall assessment of that class so far?

“I mean, I haven’t seen it yet, but from what I’ve been told it’s a very good one. I’m excited to see them here. Here it’s more about getting to know the guys. We interviewed a number of them last night. It’s a good group of guys. I think we’ve got a couple more today and then when we get back to the office next week, we can start grinding out and watching them.”

What’s so tricky about evaluating wide receivers?

“I think the way college football is a little bit, there’s not as much man-to-man coverage. There’s a lot of zone, it’s a lot more spaced out with the hashes, so you don’t get to see a lot of one-on-ones and how they beat man coverage. A lot of it is just spread out zones, so you can see guys run with the ball and their movements, but you don’t always get to see a developed receiver. It takes time to develop a guy, so you never know how long that is going to take. It depends on the guy, it depends on the skillset. It always helps when they go to the Senior Bowl and things like that, where you can see one-on-ones and things, but it’s always a guess.”

Why was WR Deebo Samuel able to make an impact and skip that whole development stage?

“Because of how good a football player he is. When I say that, I don’t in the receiver position. I mean, he’s a good receiver and can only get better, but Deebo is as fearless of a rookie as I’ve ever been around. He’s extremely tough, wants the ball in his hands, will fight for everything, he’ll play injured. The game was never too big for him. The moment was never too big for him and that’s why he helped us huge this year. He can get a lot better developing in his routes and things like that, and while he continues to do that, it’s nice that you don’t have to wait on all that. You can still use him because of how tough he is in every other aspect.”

Philadelphia Eagles head coach Doug Peterson restructured his offensive coaching staff, much like you have, with a run game coordinator, pass game coordinator. What’s the benefit of that and why did you do it that way?

“My main thing was how long I had been around those two guys in particular. [Run game coordinator] Mike McDaniel, [passing game coordinator] Mike LaFleur, we’ve been

together in a number of different places. They're very important for me to bring here and help implement the offense. And then just how good they are at it. When you're a head coach, you can't do the exact same schedule as you do as a coordinator. You want to, but you can't. So, you've got to have guys that you've worked with, guys that can help you, guys that you're confident in who can do it and so you can catch up later in the week. It's a lot easier said than done. You can't just pick anyone to do that. I had the two perfect guys that I had been with for a long time. I have a ton of confidence in them and they get better and better each year. They were great this year and it really helped me out."

It helps to keep the run game and the pass game separate?

"That's the main thing. Everyone's process as a coordinator is different. I know my process and what I went through Monday all the way up until kickoff, I couldn't do as a head coach. My Mondays were a little different, my Tuesdays were. That's extremely stressful if you can't put that on some other people. You've still got to find time to do it, which has always been at the end of the week for me now, where it used to be at the beginning of the week."

Will you guys go through the offense line options this week?

"Oh yeah. We're looking at every option this week. There's not a position we don't look at."

You mentioned a passing game coordinator. Philadelphia Eagles senior offensive assistant Rich Scangarello, why did you bring him with to San Francisco?

"Rich was with us in Atlanta. That's where I got to meet him. He had worked with some other coaches and he came in. He was an offensive coordinator in college and he came in to learn our run game. He came in at an entry level for us just to have the opportunity. He left a coordinator job in college. He came in just to draw the runs and everything, learn the run game. I was also able to be around him for a whole year. I had a lot of confidence in him talking to the quarterbacks and things like that. He went away for a year my last year in Atlanta. When I got the job in San Fran, he was the first guy I called to be quarterback coach."

How many times did you go back and watch that film and at what point did you make the transition from that to focusing on the offseason?

"You've got to watch it. You don't want to watch it right away because it just doesn't put you in the best mood. You want to get away for a little bit, but definitely have to watch it before I answer questions for you guys so it's fresh in my head. I did that a number of times right after. I did a little bit a week ago. I'll do it gradually as the year goes. I always mix it in. You can always get something out of it, but it's not always fun to revisit."

What kind of interaction have you had with the players since the season ended?

"Last couple of weeks I haven't talked to many people at all. I've been a little bit off the grid. I saw a couple players. I was out in Cabo and saw a couple players out there randomly. I got to play golf with a few of those guys, which was fun. I think we broke a record because we played nine holes in five hours. Besides that, I think we've all been

getting away. I just came back here on Monday, so just getting back into it and I'll start catching up with people here in the next week or so."

T Mike McGlinchey was obviously a high pick a couple years ago. After he came back from injury, he seemed to really come on. What have you seen from him?

"Mike was huge for us. His rookie year we threw him in right away. He battled throughout the whole year and was able to play and play through a number of injuries. Came in with some high expectations this year. Had a tough injury early on that did set him back, missing some games. Came back and had to play through getting healthy again and finished the year unbelievable. Mike just got better and better after that injury. He's as detailed and focused of a player as I've been around. No matter what you give to him, he's going to figure out how to get it right."

John talked about not having as much draft equity this year. How much does that change things?

"I mean, it's different, definitely. You've got to know, I mean you can eliminate a lot of people at number two. You don't have to put as much time into everyone. You still do it, but when you're at 31, you've got to be ready for anything. I also know long enough that you don't just sit there and look at your draft and say, alright we've got to know 1-31, but then we can just chill until the fourth round or fifth round, whatever we are, take a day off because things change. There's always trades, there's always different draft picks so you've got to still go through the same process, but there's not as much pressure on getting to know all the top guys in the draft."

One of the top defensive prospects in the draft is LB prospect Isaiah Simmons. He can do so many things. He can play linebacker, safety, blitz. As an offensive coach, what's the challenge playing against those kinds of players and going against them?

"There's only five eligibles so you're trying to find the best mismatch out of those five and usually it can be running backs versus linebackers or tight ends versus linebackers or safeties. That's why you mix in personnel groups with fullbacks and 11 personnel with three receivers and that's why the defense has to go dime sometimes and nickel just to cover people. Then it gives you a disadvantage to stop the run. When you can have some bigger guys in there who cover running backs, cover linebackers, make tackles, can still get away with covering receivers in the slot, it makes it a lot harder to know what coverages you're getting."

There's no left-handed quarterbacks in the NFL. There hasn't been one since 2017. Is there any reason why that would be?

"There's not as many left handers in the world I guess so it's a smaller percentage, I'm guessing. I've never looked at it as that guys left handed. I mean, a good thrower is a good thrower. I had a left-handed quarterback in college and then you go to the right-handed quarterback and it'd be a little bit different back and forth, but I'd say that's just a coincidence, probably a less pool to choose from."

You like to throw sometimes, demonstrate stuff for your quarterbacks. Would it be different if you had a left-handed quarterback, would you try to throw lefty?

“We’d be done. If I demonstrated as a lefty, I would lose all credibility. It would look so awkward.”

What would you do to improve the running game?

“We’ve got to catch Baltimore. We need to get [QB] Jimmy’s [Garoppolo] 40 up [laughter]. No, I mean you get better or worse. We had a pretty good year last year running the ball. So, we’ve got to make sure we do everything we can to keep the guys we have and make sure we add a couple more.”

What do you think was the key for your team to respond and fight for you last season?

“I think we were a good team, I think we had good people. We played hard, we battled through adversity, we battled through some injuries and it got us almost there.”

Last year a lot of people were wondering what you were going to do with all those running backs. How do you view that group going forward? Do you want to keep the depth that you have?

“I would love to keep it going forward. I think the group that we had last year showed where we could get with them, but it’s always hard to do that. I hope that we can. It’s not as simple as just tying all the running backs together, it’s how you compare them to the other positions and everything. It’s two years in a row that we’ve gone in with four backs and we’ve needed all four. It’s something that I used to look at as a luxury and now I’m almost feeling like it’s a necessity.”

The Super Bowl hangover is something that it’s not real, but it is a challenge to get back there. How do you guys go into this offseason to try to guard against the drop-off that sometimes happens?

“I mean, just deal with it. Anytime you have a tough loss I think there’s a grieving process you’ve got to go through. I think everyone goes through that individually. I mean, it is disappointing, especially how much you put on the line for that, but that’s life. You can deal with it, no one died. It is disappointing, we do have to grieve, but I’m doing a lot better now than I was three weeks ago and I plan on doing better three weeks from now than I am right now. I think our team is made of the right stuff. I think it’s very important to our team, individually to not just have a career in this league, but we’ve got guys who want to win and it’s very important to and those are the guys that we are going to continue to bring in our building.”

When it comes to quarterback footwork, starting in the shotgun, some quarterbacks start with their left foot, some start with right, I think Jimmy starts on his left. Is that something you teach? Are you dogmatic about which foot goes first?

“I have an opinion on what I think is better and stuff, but I’m also the one who doesn’t have to do it with defensive guys trying to hit me. I always try to coach a guy with the left foot up. I think it times out better. You lose a step, you lose time, because you don’t have

the ball in your hand right away so I think you need to lose a step in your drop. When you're in gun you have the left foot up, it's more of two steps you take and when you're under center it's three. I think that's an even timing. Some guys have been doing it with their right foot up or parallel their whole life and they just struggle with it. They try to coach it in the offseason and if they don't get it you make sure to do what they're comfortable with. Sometimes for handoffs and stuff you can't have your feet staggered, you've got to put them parallel when you're doing the zone read and things like that."

Did you change Jimmy? I know New England Patriots QB Tom Brady does left foot first. Can he do that as well?

"I think he did, I can't quite remember. Brady I've watched forever and he changes all the time. I like it when he goes with his left foot up, but yeah, it depends on the throw, depends on the quarter, the year. But, no, I think Jimmy was more left foot up."

How were you able to keep Mike LaFleur? It looked like there was a possibility of him joining his brother in Green Bay.

"Mainly the first year, it wasn't his choice, because he was under contract, but it would've happened eventually. Mike and I are close and [Green Bay Packer head coach] Matt [LaFleur] and I are very close, so it wasn't like, it was something we all talked about for a while. I know the emotion of going to work with a family member is very high at first. I think the more we all talked about it, we thought it was a better situation for him to stay and I know Mike went into this year, just so we could make sure it was the right decision, without a contract. I obviously would've given him one and he would've taken one, but we just wanted to make sure to do it the right way and make sure that everybody wanted what we had. When we gave him a new one in January, he didn't want to go somewhere else, he wanted to be here."

The Browns swiped former defensive backs/passing game coordinator Joe Woods and another one of your defensive guys. What's it like being on the side where a team is trying to take your coaches?

"I mean, last year we were 4-12 and I felt like every one of our offensive coaches tried to get raided, so that threw me off last year, because I didn't expect it. I was a little more prepared for it this year. I had an idea it was coming. Those guys deserved it. Joe Woods has been a coordinator in this league, he deserves to be a coordinator. [Cleveland Browns defensive line coach] Chris Kiffin has been a coordinator in college and he just has to get his name out there more, because he's going to be a coordinator in this league, also. Two guys I didn't want to lose at all, but two guys I felt fortunate enough just to have, because I knew it was a matter of time before they got promoted somewhere."

In terms of the interactions with the players, what is it like for teams just in the perspective of the combine?

"For me, it's usually just the start. I just kind of soak it all in. From a coach's perspective, it's way too long. It's dragged out a lot, but I don't know how to organize it any better. For me, all the football stuff and everything, that's all second, we'll see that when we get back to our offices and we can actually study it. I just like being able to come down here, meet a couple players and things like that. You only get a certain amount of people to come

visit you, you only can go visit a certain amount of people and it's really hard to draft a guy that you've never even looked at or talked to. Also, I don't want to put too much into it, too, because I've had guys that I've met that have been awesome and they completely tricked me. You just try to soak it all in and not go too strong on anything."

Has your routine changed at all since you've gotten more experiences at the combine?

"Not really. My routine, it was the best when I was a position coach and I didn't have to go to anything so I could just sit at the train station and actually talk to players one-on-one and not in such a big room. They usually didn't know who I was, so they were probably more comfortable. Now, since I've become a coordinator and as a head coach, you sit in bigger rooms where they're all more formal interviews, so you can't connect with a guy as much. I kind of used to like it more when I was a position coach."

I know that you were in Cabo, Mexico. Right now, there's a new professional football team down there. Do you have a message for these guys, the first professional football team down in Cabo and some of them are 49ers fans?

"I just got back from there. There's a lot of Niners fans down there and real diehard. I fully support Cabo. Hopefully we can talk to our owner and set up a scrimmage there or something in the offseason. If he takes us all down there, that would be awesome."

Jimmy Garoppolo, after a year of not playing, what did you see from him being back as the season progressed just in terms of the growth?

"Yeah, I think Jimmy deserves a ton of credit for what he did this year. I think people talk a little bit about how he was coming off an ACL, but I also think that people don't realize that was his first year playing quarterback in this league. I think he got three games in New England and he got five games with us. This was his first time going through a full season. He had less games than [Cleveland Browns QB] Baker Mayfield going into his second year. To do that, with the pressure of, to me, everyone thinking you've already arrived and coming off an ACL, I thought there was much pressure on him at the beginning of the year as anyone I've been around. He just took it, handled it all year and got better throughout the year. I was very impressed with him."

You mentioned Deebo Samuel earlier, and you got a chance to coach him at the Senior Bowl. Was there something during that week that you saw that made you think you had to have that guy?

"Just being around the guy. You can see most of the stuff on film, whether you're there or not, but to be around a person for a week, they can usually trick you in a day. To be around a person for a week where you're having to go to meetings, having to coach them every day, you get a good idea on who really, genuinely loves football and that was the thing that was most obvious about him there."