

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

# TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Defensive Coordinator Robert Saleh  
Press Conference – May 31, 2017  
San Francisco 49ers  
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**You had a couple of tryouts this week, a few high-profile guys in the secondary. Are you looking for depth at a certain position or are you okay with your depth at free safety for example?**

“I think [head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] and [general manager] John Lynch do an unbelievable job. They’re always looking outside. But, just because a tryout happens doesn’t mean we are necessarily looking for something.”

**What about the depth at free safety? You’ve got DB Jimmie Ward. How are things lining up with the guys behind him?**

“Everything is going good. The guys are working really hard, depth chart-wise. You never want to label a depth chart, everyone is working, everyone is getting almost equal reps. But, as far as the people that are here now, they are doing a very good job, working hard and doing everything they can to get better.”

**Last time we talked to you, you were talking about how DL Arik Armstead could be a fit at that LEO. Now that you’ve seen him, I know you’re not in pads, but what are your impressions of how he’s fitting in there?**

“He moves well. The concern was that he’s so big and he doesn’t exactly fit the prototype, but he’s so athletic. He’s so long and he’s got a good first step. He just needs to get more comfortable in the things that we’re asking him to do physically.”

**Has he changed his body? He looks--?**

“I can’t speak for last year. He looks lean. He’s in amazing shape and he looks good out there.”

**What have been your initial impressions of CB Rashard Robinson, the corner?**

“He’s a dog. I like him. He’s made of the right stuff, his attitude, his mindset is unique for a corner.”

**He’s looking to make the play and be the guy.**

“He does not want to get beat. Every rep is so important to him. He doesn’t care who he’s going against. It’s a tremendous mindset when you get a guy like Rashard who is so focused on what he’s capable of and about him and how he’s going to win and the man in front of him has no bearing on what he’s about to do.”

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**In Jacksonville, it seemed you ran a lot of over fronts. Are you running more under fronts here, are you switching it up, how does that work?**

“We’re switching it up. We didn’t have, Jacksonville didn’t have the SAM linebacker that we have here. You have [LB] Ahmad Brooks, [LB] Eli Harold, [LB] Dekoda Watson. They’re built to be on the ball and because of that, Jacksonville was more over front. Here, we have the ability to keep that presence of them on the ball so we can send them in pressure and have that element to our defense.”

**How would you compare your defense to what Seattle runs? Do you have the personnel to be like Seattle or do you see it changing in different ways? I mean, how close to Seattle’s system will your system end up being?**

“From a personnel standpoint, it’s our job to find the best way to utilize every player’s talent. To say it’s going to look like Seattle, it’s going to be unique to us. Will you see similarities, maybe. But, there’s going to be things that we do that’s unique to the entire system when you look at Jacksonville, Atlanta, Seattle and now the Chargers.”

**What have you seen from S Eric Reid in the box?**

“Eric is unbelievable from a mental standpoint. He’s very smart, able to absorb a lot of information. He’s very long, very athletic. He’s strong. He’s capable of doing a lot of things down there in the box. I’m excited about Eric and what he’s capable of.”

**On the same topic with S Jaquiski Tartt, where is his skillset? Is he more of an Eric Reid-type in terms of what he can do?**

“You’ll see him. He’s playing a little bit of the third. He’s kind of, I don’t want to say tweener, that would be a bad word, but his strong point is whatever you decide to make it, I guess. JT is very gifted also. We’re very fortunate at that strong safety position to have two guys like JT and Eric Reid who are both capable of playing at a high level.”

**Would you possibly be using Jaquiski Tartt, as you talk about tweeners or hybrids, kind of in the robber scheme where he’s kind of spying on the quarterback in certain situations?**

“You could. Like I said earlier, it’s our job to find the best way to get the best 11 players on the football field. Eventually the cream will always rise to the top. It’s to try to utilize his strengths to help the team in the best way that he can, that’s what we’ll see, but it’s so early in OTAs. But, he is, he’s a very talented athlete.”

**What has LB Reuben Foster been able to do at this point? Obviously he’s doing individual stuff, but what is his process like on practice days?**

“Well, he goes through all of his meetings. He’s very smart. He’s absorbing all of the information that we’re giving to him, going through whatever walk-thrus we have. He’s just not physically cleared to have one-on-one contact so he goes through all of the individual drills and then after practice he’s working with [head strength & conditioning coach] Ray Wright to get the conditioning part of it.”

**From your understanding, I know it’s still early, but is the start of training camp**

**still feasible?**

“I’m not sure.”

**How is LB Aaron Lynch and his conditioning?**

“Aaron is working his tail off. I’ve been impressed with the way he’s come out and approached his job. He’s doing everything he can to get to a spot where he’s well-conditioned and where he can perform at a high level. I’m excited to see, as we go it’ll be exciting to see him work even more in that month we get off to come back for training camp to be where he wants to be.”

**When you have DL DeForest Buckner and Arik Armstead lining up next to each other, is that unique size that not many teams can probably put on the field?**

“Yeah, man. We look good coming off the bus. They’re huge. But, you can be big and still not be very effective. But, those guys are working so hard at kind of transitioning to our style of play. And once they start understanding that, they have the ability to control the line of scrimmage. They’re working hard at it. I’m excited to see them work, for sure.”

**You’ve been around some defensive backs with big personalities and you mentioned Rashard’s mindset. Is that important to the scheme of the defense? You guys run your physical press style. How important is that mindset into what you guys do specifically?**

“For every defensive player, to me, that mindset of taking it personal every single snap, to just have an edge to you. Defense is an emotional part of the football game and to have that mindset, is it a prerequisite? It’s not. But, you always find the ones that have got that dog in them. They manage to find a way to get it done.”

**What kind of interaction does Kyle Shanahan have when he drifts over to the defensive side to talk to you during practice?**

“Kyle’s awesome. He’s everywhere. It’s amazing what his mind’s capable of and what he absorbs. He’s over there running 7-on-7’s against the defense and our group install. He’s involved. He’s involved with the offense. He’s involved with special teams. I don’t know how he does it, but he does it.”

**You guys didn’t keep many free agents that were here last year. DL Chris Jones is one of those guys you brought back. Did you weigh in on that after seeing him play here last year? Did you have any input?**

“We all did collectively as a staff. Chris Jones, you can never have enough Chris Jones’ on your roster. Guys who just stand for all the right things, work their tail off and who are actually effective at playing football. That was a very easy decision on Chris.”

**Defensive line coach Jeff Zgonina was saying he’s not the most talented guy, but he is effective. Why is he effective?**

“Because he’s going to work harder and longer than you’re willing to go.”

**Can you briefly discuss LB Pita Taumoepenu? It looked like he had really good get off coming off the edge today in today's practice. One of the players I'm really looking forward to seeing in his get up up field. Can you just talk about how he's being acclimated into your scheme and how happy you are with his progress just far?**

"Pita's good. He's absorbing the information really well also. His game is going to be speed. I don't want to say he's undersized, but he is a smaller guy. And so, he's got to find a way to utilize that speed and that strength of his to shine. He shows that he's strong enough to do the things that we're asking him to do but it's so early. It will be interesting to see how it all transitions once we get pads on. But, Pita, he's another one of those guys who works so hard that it's almost impossible for a guy like him to fail."