

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – December 9, 2019
San Francisco 49ers**

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Opening comments:

“Alright guys, the injuries from the game: [DL] Dee Ford, hamstring strain, reaggravated the same one. It’s probably going to take a little bit longer than it did last time, it’ll probably be at least three weeks. [DL] D.J. Jones, ankle sprain, we’re still waiting for the results to get back. [C/G Weston] Richburg is a patellar tendon, so he’s out for the year. [CB Richard Sherman] Sherm, hamstring strain, probably be a couple weeks. [CB] K’Waun [Williams] is in the concussion protocol. The existing injuries: [WR Marquise] Goodwin, knee and ankle, he’s dealing with some chronic stuff. We’re evaluating treatment options right now. [WR Dante] Pettis, his knee sprain, hopefully we’ll get him back practicing this week. [S Jaquiski] Tartt, rib fracture, we’ll see on Wednesday how he’s feeling and [DL] Jullian Taylor is probably going to be another week also.”

Is Richburg a torn patellar tendon?

“Yes, we haven’t gotten all the stuff back, but we know he at least has that.”

Yesterday, I watched some of the film today and OL Ben Garland had a really good block, I thought, on the end around. I was wondering if you could speak to his performance in that and in pass play?

“Yeah, I thought it was one of his best plays of the game, definitely, and he did a hell of a job when he came in. Replacing Richburg is a huge job. He’s played very well for us this year and Ben came in and we were able to not miss a beat. He stepped it up, knew the game plan well, blocked those guys even when they were the head up nose. When he was uncovered he got through to the second level and made a number of plays in the game that helped us.”

How well had Richburg played this season?

“I thought Richburg played very well. He played like the guy that we hoped for when he got here. I think he did that last year in some games, but not consistently throughout the year. His injury had a lot to do with that, so I know it was a hard offseason for him. He didn’t get cleared until the Tampa Bay game, so I know there was a lot of anxiety with him going through that and whether to do it or not and I think it really paid off because it helped him a ton this year. He was able to stay healthy throughout the year until this point. It happened on a different leg, so it was very unfortunate what happened. He got bent back

and there was no way he could avoid it. He got caught in a real bad position, but we were extremely appreciative of him this year.”

Is he facing another long, tough offseason of rehab here?

“Yeah, I believe so. The patellar tendon, hopefully there won’t be other stuff in there, but I don’t know yet. It’s definitely stuff you can come back from, there’s no doubt about that.”

Did you have to make any adjustments communication-wise in the heat of battle and the noise or did Ben step in and handle everything that Weston did?

“No, he did a great job when he went in there. From a center standpoint, just the snaps and everything, I think it was very good. I know we had a couple false starts, which I would love to have had back, but it’s tough in that environment. The noise thing, I think the hardest thing with the noise in that game was in the huddle, which is rare. We struggled a lot to hear in the huddle. [QB] Jimmy [Garoppolo] can speak loudly, but sometimes he couldn’t even hear my microphone it was so loud. Even the backup quarterback is trying to hear it on the sideline. It was as loud of a stadium as I’ve been in.”

As exhilarating as that was yesterday, how sobering is it to list all these injuries? I mean, these are key guys.

“Yeah, it’s tough. It was a huge win and we enjoyed that a ton, obviously, but yeah, some mixed feelings today with some of these injuries, which is tough. Especially losing Richburg for the year. The other guys have got some serious ones, too. Hopefully we can keep playing well so we can give them a chance to come back and help us if we can make our season longer than three games.”

You’ve shown good depth with previous injuries, the tackles and whatever. How much does this test the offensive line and the secondary to lose, specifically Sherman and Richburg?

“A lot. Ben’s going to get his opportunity here and it was nice to get [T Joe] Staley back in that game, it’s nice that we’ve had [T Mike] McGlinchey for a number of games back in that we’re going on for about three weeks in a row just really playing like his old self and even doing better. I feel like we’re moving forward a lot offensively with the injuries. I know Richburg’s a pretty big setback, but we do have guys who can replace him. The defense is a little bit harder right now. They haven’t had to go through this as much and losing [DL] Ronald Blair [III], too, and then [DL] Damontre [Moore] when we brought him in, it just adds up a little bit. We’ve got guys who go in there and still play well, but the wear and tear does add a little bit up to them.”

Do you anticipate that you’re going to have to make any roster moves?

“Yeah, I would think so. We definitely don’t know quite now because there’s a lot of moving parts here, but definitely anticipate us having to do something.”

Is that the best performance of Jimmy Garoppolo’s career and what impressed you the most about what he did?

“I think a lot of people are going to throw that up there because of the stats and the points and just how well [New Orleans Saints QB] Drew [Brees] was playing on the other side

and having to match that. So, it was, I think, extremely impressive. The thing that impressed me the most was just how he handled the noise. I've been in that stadium a lot, but it was louder than usual to me. You never can hear at the line, but it was very hard for him to hear in the huddle. That's why we had to call the timeout on that fourth-and-two, because I called a play that had 14 in it, but it sounded a heck of a lot like 15. Four and five, you know, and you just couldn't hear it. That stuff was happening a lot and for him to just still keep his poise and try to fix things a lot in the game, he kept our guys pretty cool throughout the whole time."

Would 15 have meant something else or would that have just been gibberish to him? Like could it have possibly led to something, a different play that could have been wrong?

"Oh yeah. Wristband number 15 is a lot different than wristband number 14. You don't really know until they line up there and it's a pretty big time in the game and you're also trying to save your timeouts, too."

Did you know right away what the issue was?

"Yes. I didn't know what he had missed because I didn't know exactly what 15 looked like at the time, but I knew it didn't look like 14 when they lined up. Fortunately, we had a timeout and we did it and fortunately the next play was a good play."

As a play-caller, what kind of adrenaline rush do you get calling a play like that and then when they execute and it's successful?

"It's why we do this. It's fun, not always in the heat of battle. We're as tight as probably just as everyone else watching it, but maybe less because at least we get to do something about it. My wife just sits there miserable and stressed out the whole time. It's fun, a lot of fun, it's kind of why you do this. It's kind of what I said as why when coaches do that stuff that's why they want to retire and take a year off because their heart hurts probably, but it's also why after two weeks off you're like I've got to get back because you get addicted to that type of stuff and it's a lot of fun. But, really after the game you're not quite celebrating right away, you kind of just want to lay down and decompress. Usually about halfway home on the plane it hits you then you start having a little more fun."

Earlier in the game when WR Emmanuel Sanders hit RB Raheem Mostert for the touchdown, I went back and watched the video and it reminded me when I was a kid, I saw former NFL WR Jerry Rice throw his only career touchdown pass in '95. Just throwing it out there, wondering if that play might have been an influence. It looked like the same exact play.

"No, I mean it wasn't honestly. I've seen that play a few times over the last few years. I remember I was talking to [New York Jets head coach Adam] Gase a couple weeks ago, they run that play a lot so he was telling me about it and then I think [passing game coordinator] Mike LaFleur saw Buffalo run it last week for a touchdown. We didn't make it up, lots of people do it and fortunately we had the guy to do it. It didn't look so good in practice. Emmanuel didn't throw the best ball in practice so no one thought I would call it in the game, but I had seen Emmanuel throw pretty good in other games for other teams so we knew he could throw pretty well so the practice one didn't faze us much. He had a

much tougher look in the game because someone was chasing him. We didn't expect to run into a SAM-MIKE blitz and they were chasing him down and luckily he got it off."

There was a lot of talk going into these last three games about the test it provided. Now that you're done with these three games, what did you learn about your team and how much particularly the last two, given how close and intense literally down to the last play, how will that help your team going forward?

"I just think the more you can be in pressure situations like that, the better for your team regardless of what happens. Not many people get to experience that type of pressure and all that stuff that's on the line. You always experience that in the playoffs and if you're ever fortunate to get to the Super Bowl, it's all the same stuff, just everything is on the line and you need to perform in it. The more you can do that and put yourself through it, the better. When you go to those games it's not about trying to get guys up for the game, everyone wants to do so well that sometimes you don't play that freely and you realize that you've just got to cut it loose and go and those two environments we were in and what our guys did, I thought it was great for them. It started out versus Seattle, that type of game I thought was similar. Went into the Green Bay game like that too and these last two have been even more. I expect it to keep getting bigger and bigger as this goes."

I think you talked about it last week, but Emmanuel, WR Deebo Samuel and WR Kendrick Bourne seem to have stood out and you credited them for that. How much has it enabled you freedom or just comfortability to have three guys who've stood out after basically the whole preseason you were calling for somebody to stand out?

"It's been nice. I think those guys have gotten better each week and I think the better they've gotten, the better the whole offense has gotten too. Emmanuel obviously had a late start and Deebo being a rookie and Bourne throwing him at a number of different spots that we have in the past, I think those guys have gone through some ups and downs throughout the year, but they've fought through it all and they've gotten better. The way that they've competed in the run game and the pass game and that's why we've kept them out there a lot more."

After watching the film, what do you make of your defensive lapses?

"I think one, we didn't play our best game. I think that was obvious. And two, we went against a very good quarterback, with some very good weapons, with a very good coach and I think they got us on a number of things. I think you've got to play clean football versus them and you've got to make sure you don't have many mistakes. I thought we had a lot more than usual, especially in that first half. Then I think getting some of those open plays and giving them some freebies and then add we missed a few tackles, more than we have this year. I think it took us a while for us to settle down. I thought we did in the third quarter. I think they had four drives in the third quarter. The first drive was great because we turned it over on offense and they held them to three plays and they kicked a field goal. I thought that was a god job by them. I think the next one they held them on downs, I think they returned it to the 50 and we held them on fourth down and got it out. I think they got a field goal on the third one and on the fourth one I think they went three-and-out. I thought we settled down in the third quarter. On the fourth quarter they had two

drives and they stayed on the field once after a penalty, after [DL Solomon Thomas] Solly's sack which kept the drive going and then I thought we could have had two picks on that last one that kind of kept it going. When you have a lot of those things, I thought we did recover some pretty well in the third, but going against those guys, Drew on it, going against someone like [New Orleans Saints head coach] Sean [Payton] and we don't tackle our best, we don't totally play our best, then that stuff happens."

Early in the game, that first touchdown S Marcell Harris was the deep safety. I guess I was used to DB Jimmie Ward being back there. Was there some kind of shuffling there defensively?

"No, it just has to do with formations and stuff, but that wasn't on Marcell. We got out of position underneath, with our underneath coverage and we expect him to stop the touchdown and not make it a touchdown, but it was going to be an explosive play with what we did underneath and then hopefully Marcell can save it and at least make them have first-and-goal inside the 10."

I think you talked about the first flight back from that long road trip you had at the start of the year as kind of like a party-ish sort of atmosphere where everyone was pretty stoked. Was it any similar on the flight back this week or was everyone taking a nap?

"I think the coaches probably had more fun than the players. We're stressed out a lot during the game and after, we unwind a little bit more. I think those guys are exhausted and went through a battle physically. You always get a chance to go to the back of the plane and talk to those guys. I think a lot of them were sleeping by the time I went back there. Some were playing cards and stuff, but we've got a pretty good group. They're low-key. They don't get too up and down. We've got some pros who know that this stuff's bigger than just one week. They're doing everything they can to take care of their bodies. I know we enjoyed that game, and it was nice to give them today off, but I know they will come in here fired up on Wednesday thinking about Atlanta."

You talked about that exhaustion. Does that make you, especially since you won and took another step forward toward that one seed, does that make you cherish or realize that that BYE that you can get is all the more important?

"I mean, everyone knows that it always is great, but I don't feel any different this week than I did last week. I mean, it's not like all these seeds and stuff are make-believe. We're all right there. I mean, it's going to come down to the last week I'm sure of it. It's one week at a time and right now, it's not just us, it's a number of teams that you feel like you've got to win every one to be where you want to be. We'll see how that is and how it goes, but right now we're in the same situation this week as we were last week and as we were the week before we played Baltimore. Nothing changed. I know we've just got to keep winning."

You talked a couple weeks ago about how few of your players had played in big games, how young they are. Do you feel proud of your team after winning a game like that? Especially the young guys?

“Yeah, I do. Especially the way we had to do it. That was real tough to do, especially in that atmosphere, especially versus some of the people that I have an unbelievable amount of respect for. Things didn’t go great in that game at all, but they ended up going well. I truly like our team and the fact that you keep trying to tell them that the pressure isn’t on just one person to have to over-perform all the time and carry everyone. It’s not on the quarterback, it’s not on the defense, it’s everybody and everybody has their ways that they can help us win games. I think our defense has carried us most of the year, but by no means do they have to carry us. It’s on our whole team to do it and we’re going to need all phases like all good teams do to get where we want to go.”

As you noted, there’s still a lot of teams in this mix. To be 11-2 and still fighting like this for that playoff spot, I mean there’s a big difference between the one seed and a wild card. How nerve-racking is that, as much as you’ve achieved to this point?

“It is what it is. It’d be nice if you were sitting here at our record and you clinched and you could think about whatever you wanted to think about to work at. You know that’s not there. It’s just, we’re going at it and you’ve got to go. I mean, the last time I was on a team that went to the playoffs, I think we were 11-5 and we were the two seed, but we had to win our last six games of the year in a row to get to that and it was 11-5, but it was still the same thing. We still had to win six in a row and you didn’t know until the last week whether we were going to be able to be the five seed, the two seed, and it all just happens where we are the two seed at 11-5. Who knows what will happen this year? Who knows what will happen over these next three weeks. Right now, we’re 11-2 which I feel happy about, but like I keep saying, that doesn’t mean anything. It’s a good record, but it’s only a good record if it’s better than other people’s. We’ll see what happens.”

What did you think of Jimmy on third down? He made that scramble and used his legs to get a big first down and extend the drive.

“That was huge. I mean, Jimmy made a lot of plays in that game that there were some looks that you expect him to be automatic on and throw good balls, and he did. He didn’t miss any of the open ones, but there was a number of plays where he didn’t have a good play and he’d keep it alive and made some plays out there that weren’t necessarily there in rhythm.”

How does his athleticism stack up against other quarterbacks?

“He’s number one. He’s the most athletic guy out there.”

But really, people haven’t talked about that, I feel. We’ve now seen him make a few runs that--?

“Yeah, it’s been good. Especially going into this year coming off an ACL and everything. You didn’t totally know. I think what Jimmy’s shown, too, I think he’s a lot stronger than people think. He’s not out there all the time just diming people up and stuff, but he has a couple times this year. I think the best thing that he has done is people got to really get ahold of him to bring him down. I mean, we’ve had some guys on his back and stuff that he’s been able to shake off and he’s always got a pretty sturdy base under him. You’ve got to hit him pretty clean to tackle him.”

You've gone with RB Raheem Mostert a lot more in the past couple weeks. What's your process of basically identifying how that running back trio is going to work out in a game?

"Raheem's earned it over these last few weeks. I mean, how many games can you go and how many years can you go averaging six yards a carry, somewhere in there? I mean, we keep trying to balance it out and stuff, but what Raheem has done these last few weeks and has continued to do, we need to give him more opportunities. He's given us no choice. I'm happy for him and it's been great. He's been extremely impressive."

He's not the flashiest running back, but as you said, he's consistently excellent. What does he do well?

"Well, he's faster than most people and I think sometimes it's a little bit deceptive. I mean, you see guys who have an angle on him and all of a sudden, they just don't. I don't know if they don't know that he's that fast, because our other guys are fast too. I'm not exactly sure what it is, but when you do it week in and week out, I mean, it's time for people to notice. I mean, he's been pretty damn good and he needs some more opportunities because he's making the best of it."