

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**General Manager John Lynch
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San Francisco 49ers
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You look at your draft, at 31, you don't go again for a few rounds. People say to trade back and accumulate more picks. Easier said than done or how would you go about doing that?

"I think the important part right now is that we're prepared for all scenarios. So, the best way to do that is to do our due diligence in terms of getting ready for the draft class, the free agent class and evaluating our own players. That's where our mindset is. I think those things will take care of themselves as our plan and our vision for making our team better this year develops further. Right now, the most important part is that we work really hard in trying to assess the talents and the opportunities to improve our team."

When you look at how WR Deebo Samuel was able to perform last year, do you feel like the learning curve is getting easier at receiver?

"I don't know about that. I think coaches and our coaches are extremely talented at it. We saw a skill in Deebo, not only being a traditional receiver, but also just a guy who you want the ball in his hands. I think perhaps some of the trickle up that has come from the colleges and such has opened a lot of people's minds up to being creative. [Head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] and his group do a tremendous job. I thought they did a tremendous job with Deebo. You've got to give Deebo a ton of credit. That's a tough transition and he made it as well as a lot of the guys that I've seen. We love everything about Deebo. You know, the other side, he's got a spirit about him that I think is kind of infectious. He lifts a team with his youthful exuberance and enthusiasm, and he's a really good football player. When you put those two things together, you've got an opportunity to be special."

Obviously, last year you guys had higher picks, and now you have a lower pick. How tricky is that going to be for preparing for the draft?

"Well, you know, it's fun this time of year having the lower picks and being able to look at the [DL Nick] Bosa's of the world and those guys, but it's a lot more fun playing deep into the year. So, you take the later pick. You know, we don't have as much equity as we've had in years past, so we've got to figure out a way, we've got to be creative, we've got to be exhaustive in all the avenues we look at to improve our football team. We're committed to doing that."

How proud were you of QB Jimmy Garoppolo's development?

“Extremely proud of Jimmy. I can’t speak enough about what a great teammate he is. From day one when he entered our building, he made everyone else around him better. I think he’s continued to do that. He had his first full season as a starter in the NFL and ended up in the Super Bowl. I know Jimmy feels the same way we all do. We left a little out there and that’s a shame. That’s something we’re going to have to deal with, really, for the rest of our lives, but nobody knows that more than him. I’m incredibly proud, as is our entire organization for the way he’s handled himself and the way he’s played and how he’s led our team.”

How much do you look at the fourth quarter when you’re evaluating him?

“Jimmy? I think we all have to take a hard look at the fourth quarter. We built this team to be finishers and we fell short of that. We’ve all got to live with that. You know the nature of that position, it’s probably going to get examined a little bit more, but I think we all have to own that. I think the guys have done a great job of doing just that, not running from it. The other side, you’ve got to give the Chiefs a ton of credit. They went out and earned that game and we fell short. We’ve got to live with that.”

It’s that time of year when there are a lot of rumors flying, especially different websites. One of the crazier rumors is that you might move on from QB Jimmy Garoppolo and go after someone else.

“We’re extremely proud of Jimmy and committed to Jimmy moving forward. He’s our guy. As I said, from the day he walked into our building, he made us better and we continue to feel that’s the case. That’s the most exciting thing about him is the room for growth. He’s not come close to hitting his ceiling. I think the room for growth, the more experience he gets in this system, the more experience he gets playing in general, we think the arrow’s up, and that’s a good thing.”

How surprising was it after you guys bring in RB Jerick McKinnon and RB Tevin Coleman and all these guys and all of a sudden it’s RB Raheem Mostert? What did you see out of him and are you expecting him to have a similar role moving forward?

“Yeah, well, what a tremendous story of a guy who’s been released numerous times from numerous teams and kept the dream alive. Kept himself in the league by being one of the better special teams players in football. I give a lot of credit to our coaching staff for seeing more, and Kyle specifically, for seeing more in Raheem. I think some of the things in the past that kept him from the success that we saw this year, injuries and then ball security. To his credit, and I think with the belief of our coaches with him and sticking with him when he did put the ball on the ground or when he did get injured, we got to see the fruition of that belief this year. Raheem exploded onto the scene. He earned that. We’re very proud of him, very happy for him. He made our team better.”

To follow up on that, are you expecting much turnover in the running back room?

“We like our group a lot. It’s obviously, the one characteristic when you see that group, you see a lot of speed and you see a lot of guys with the right makeup. You can’t ever speak because there are guys who are at certain points where we have to make

decisions. We like that group a lot and we'd like to keep as much continuity there as possible."

You talked about this being a little different of a feel picking so late in the draft. Does it change how you approach either just staying at your pick or maybe even getting aggressive with different guys who are boom or bust players that you're trying to get high impact out of? How does that change?

"The ultimate goal, and I do think it gets more tricky, is how do you improve your team? We like where our team was this year. We've got the right kind of guys, we're a very talented football team, but [Las Vegas Raiders head] coach [Jon] Gruden, Kyle, they all subscribe to it, I've heard it so many times, you never stay the same. You're either getting better or getting worse. We're into getting better. It becomes trickier with less draft equity and things of that nature, but we've got a lot of good players that are part of us moving forward as well. Being creative in the draft, free agency, via trade, whatever, how do we find a way to get ourselves better and that's what we're working each and every day to try to do."

This draft looks to be strong at the wide receiver position. How do you see this draft class?

"We like our group, I think we like the core of our group. The draft class is incredibly strong, this is my fourth combine and it's as good as I've ever seen. The depth of it, the top-end players, it's a really good class. You kind of get whatever flavor you like. If you like a smaller quicker guy, those guys are there. If you like the big guys that can move, those guys are there. If you like speed, that's there. If you like separators. And so, I think the whole league is smiling about that. We do in fact really like our group. We feel like one way of looking at it is that we've got some players coming back to us. [WR] Jalen Hurd was a third-round pick and we never got to see him so he's got to show that he can do it but we think he's got some talents. [WR] Dante Pettis is still a guy we have a lot of belief in and it's incumbent on him to have a tremendous offseason so that he sets himself up for success and [WR] Trent Taylor was having a tremendous camp. So, we see some guys that can add to what we already had and then who knows whether we add to it through via the draft or any other avenue."

Where do you guys feel most excited about?

"I just spoke about what I think is a very uniquely good class in the wide receiver group, but I think it's a strong draft in general. I think all the positions really. When you're here and you're doing your work, you look at everything. One class is particularly strong and I think everyone shares that opinion, but we get excited about all these players."

Three years ago, you mentioned that you were interested in playing in Mexico City, are you still interested?

"I'd love to go there, yeah. We'll see where that goes. I'm not responsible for those things, but I'm always staying fresh on my Spanish so I'll be ready to go."