

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – December 13, 2019
San Francisco 49ers**

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Opening comments:

“Alright guys, the injuries: [DL] Dee Ford will be out, [DL D.J.] Jones will be out, [CB Richard] Sherman out, [S Jaquiski] Tartt out, [DL Jullian] Taylor and [CB] K’Waun [Williams]. Go ahead.”

There was a report on NFL Network today that said Richard Sherman is out through the rest of the regular season.

“Really?”

Is that correct?

“I haven’t read that report yet, but I hope not. I hope it’s week-to-week. No, that’s news to me.”

Is D.J. Jones going on IR?

“Yes.”

Today?

“I’m not sure if it’s today. I think we have until tomorrow at 1:00, but he will be.”

Is DL Kentavious Street--?

“Yes.”

Did D.J. play on a high ankle sprain in the game?

“Yes, yep. That was what was pretty impressive. That’s why we were somewhat optimistic about it. He did it early in the game, too. It was one of the first couple, maybe the first drive. So, that’s why we were optimistic about it, but after they looked in there and stuff, it was too bad. It’s going to be more likely eight weeks. I talked to [general manager John] Lynch, it happened to him, too. He had a high ankle sprain. He told me his first one he finished the game on it, thought it would be alright and then the next day he got up and couldn’t walk. So, sometimes the adrenaline just goes where you can go through it, but he definitely can’t play with it.”

There was also a report that Dee Ford would be out four weeks. Is that accurate?

"I don't know. When you have a hamstring, it can be anywhere from two to four weeks. I would be not very optimistic about next week, but hopefully we can get him back before, hopefully, the playoffs. But no, that's usually the timeline it lasts with the hamstring."

Do you know which ankle it was that D.J. came into the game with a problem with and then which one he injured during?

"He came in with either his left or his right one and then he hurt the other one when he got in. But, I don't know which order it went in."

How did Kentavius get through the week and just the last couple of weeks?

"He's been real good. Just getting him back out there, I know how hard he's worked to get out there. I think each week he's gotten more of his legs under him. He's been ready to go, but to get into football practice and everything, holding his gaps and stuff, looked in shape, healthy from the beginning and now getting these weeks of practice. He definitely looks ready to go this week and he's getting his opportunity."

At that nickel spot, is that a situation where the reserves have been working on the outside also get reps there so you guys can have that--?

"Yeah, that's something you always have to work, especially with how many DBs you have up on gameday. So, everyone knows that that spot is K'Waun's for us, and when he's not out there we have more than one option. But, that's something guys are always working at through the games and we've got to do that with our safeties, too."

Is there a lesson for DL Nick Bosa just in the fact that I know he wants more sacks than the one that he's had since October 27th, but just in terms of dealing frustration as a pass rusher, I know he's obviously still playing well and affecting the game, but is there any message to him on how to stick with it?

"I don't think we've had to. I thought last week was one of his best games. I thought he was unbelievable last game, not all over the stat sheet by any means, but when you're as good of a player as he is and what he's put on tape, people are going to make it a very strong point to not allow you to get on the stat sheet. I think he's learning through that. I think earlier in the season he got a little surprised when he was chipped and now he expects it and I think he's gotten a lot better at that. They had a huge game plan to take care of him last week and I still think he impacted that game as much as anyone on our defense. It's just part of it. Rookies sometimes don't get this much attention, but he's earned it and I still believe he's affecting that game a lot even though you might not always see it on the stat sheet."

This has all the makings of a so-called "trap game" and with all these tough games, the Falcons record is what it is. Do you have to address that with the team or have you?

"Yeah, you always address that. It's not as much about them. I think what we've been through these last few weeks and then when you know how people outside of this building will look at it because they aren't in the playoffs, they have been eliminated, the difference in the records and stuff. You want to address it, but it's been very easy for me. The way these guys have looked on tape these last five weeks, how hard they've played, the

coaches that they have, the players that they have and then when you turn on the tape and watch how hard they've been going, it hasn't been hard at all for me to tell the guys. As soon as they saw the tape they could see that. These guys have won three out of their last five games. They beat a very good team in New Orleans. It wasn't a close game, they beat them with ease. Beat Carolina last week by a lot. It's not just luck. You turn on the tape and you can see why. Everyone knows the names that they have over there, the team is playing at a very high level right now."

The MVP discussion is generally centered around quarterbacks, and I wouldn't expect TE George Kittle to become a candidate at any point, but just in terms of the way he impacts the game, is he up there in terms of best players in the league and most impactful?

"Yes, definitely. I know I feel that way and pretty sure that everyone we play against would answer it the same way I just did."

What specifically?

"I mean, everyone knows he's talented, but that's not what makes you ask that question. I mean, he's playing at a different level out there. The way he plays with, the aggressiveness he plays with, and he's not out of control, either. It's a different level, a different mindset and I think everyone can feel that, especially the players trying to tackle him."

As good as Kittle's been, how about your other tight ends, TE Ross Dwelley and TE Levine Toilolo? What have they provided this year?

"First of all, all of them stepped it up a ton when Kittle was out. Kittle is tough to take off the field because he's extremely good at blocking and extremely good at passing. The other guys have fit into the roles that we've used him in, in whatever way we have. Levine is, you know, who I've been with before. He's a very good blocker in the run game and the pass game and as a receiver. He can catch, he's very good in zones and things like that and he's always ready if we need to throw him the ball. But, the ways we've used him, he's done exactly what we've wanted. He was banged up for a while, too, especially when Kittle went out. Levine had to really tough through some things for a couple weeks. Now with [TE Garrett] Celek going on IR, Levine's health has been key because it's just coming back right now. He's going to have to take a much bigger role here going forward. Dwelley's been great everywhere we've used him. I mean, he's been a solid number two tight end this whole year. He's got as good of hands as anyone on our team. A little bit undersized, but he doesn't block like it. When he's been put in the right positions, he's blocked well. What he did when [FB Kyle Juszczyk] Juice went out, hopping into fullback, to me has said the most about him all year."

Atlanta Falcons QB Matt Ryan's jump from 2015 to 2016, I'm sure some of that obviously had to do with being in the system. Tell me, was he initially struggling with turning his back to the defense that first year and either him embracing that and getting more comfortable with that, was that part of his evolution?

"Yeah, I think it's part of everyone's. Having your back to the defense is a lot harder than being in shotgun and being able to see everything. But, people not getting open is even

harder. There's a fine line with that. When you have a guy who's going to be successful regardless of what you do, and has been successful before, there's always easier ways for them to do it. The cool thing with Matt was he was smart enough and could understand the vision of where you're trying to go and how much that can help the O-Line and the running backs and things like that. That's why Matt was always committed to it and always worked at it. He did it very well his first year, as good as anyone. But, when he did go through hard times, he didn't just sit there and try to go back to what he did. He understood why we were doing it and he kept working at it. As our whole team got better, so did he. I thought he did it very good the first year, but when you have the work ethic that he has and the talent that he has, you only get better and our players got better around him. We brought in a couple guys who really helped and that's why I thought he had a MVP year the second year."