

**49ers Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – January 11, 2020
NFC Divisional Playoff Round
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings**

Opening comments:

“Injuries; [DL Nick] Bosa had the wind knocked out of him, [LB Mark] Nzeocha had a stinger, returned. [RB Raheem] Mostert had a calf cramp we’ll look at. [RB Tevin] Coleman had an elbow, we’ll look more into.”

How did you feel about the defensive performance today? Are you worried you just lost your defensive coordinator to the Browns?

“No. I mean, hopefully they’re not making their decision just off that game. He’s done a good job all year. But, I hope I didn’t. We’ll see how that plays out. I was pumped with the defense. We had a goal going into this game. We thought the team that got over 30 runs would win this game. We truly looked at that as a team goal. We ended up getting 47 on offense. It’s a lot easier to do when the other team goes 2-of-12 on third down. I think we were at 45%. I think they ended up only being able to get 10. When you just see the way the defense is playing it makes it so much easier to stay with that. I think our whole team kind of fed off of it.”

It sounds like you almost got those 30 runs on that one drive after the interception. What was the mindset and how determined were you just to ram it down their throats at that point?

“We didn’t start it out that way. You don’t start it out before saying, ‘We’re going to run it every down.’ You just call a run to start out and just stick with it and eventually we scored. Half of us were asking where the throws were on it and we looked back at the picture and realized we didn’t throw any. It was just a hell of a job by the O-Line coming off the ball, getting some push. When you can do that, you wear the guys down and force them to change some of their coverages a little bit. And, the defense kept getting us the ball back. Same with the special teams. That long punt that they had, that we had and Raheem being able to come down there, cause that fumble. That was huge, too. Just a great overall win for the whole team.”

Obviously, the run game was very effective. How much was that the defense playing so well?

“It’s a little bit of both. That’s kind of how it always works out usually. It’s easier to get a lot of runs when you’re getting the ball back a lot. But, if you don’t convert on third down, that’s not going to happen either. Sometimes it’s tough to score points just running. You’ve got to throw some, but we didn’t on one drive. Thought we came out early throwing the ball pretty good on that opening drive. Our plan was to be like that. The way the defense played made it a heck of a lot easier.”

What did you like best about this particular victory in terms of the style--?

“The way we did it. That was our goal. That was our goal that we said on Monday, right when we found out. We really believed the team that got over 30 runs would win. We thought only one team would and that was a complete team goal. The offense would not have been able to get that many runs if the defense didn’t play like they did and if the special teams didn’t play that way also.”

Did you make the decision to make the change at cornerback after the first touchdown?

“Corner? Yes.”

You thought he had seen enough there?

“No, I told [CB] Ahkello [Witherspoon] that going into the game, and [CB Emmanuel] Moseley. I’ve got a lot of confidence in Ahkello. I’ve got a lot of confidence in Eman, what he’s done when he’s come in. we gave Ahkello the start, but he knew. It was a very tough decision with the way that Eman has been playing. He knew if he was struggling at all, we weren’t going to hesitate. I’m sure if we left him in, he

would have had a chance to play himself out of it. He was aware of that before the game and I loved how Mosely came in and played.”

How important was the first drive in terms of setting the tone and getting the crowd engaged?

“You'd like to say that's always the most important drive until it doesn't work, then the next one is. It's huge. We didn't play all last week. You're at your home crowd and you want to come out and be like that. You could hear the fans just in pregame warmups. The stadium was electric. It was different than it's been. When our defense holds them, I want to say it was three-and-out to start. We get in there, are able to go down and get seven. It's a great feeling. They came back and answered with that go route, which tied it up. Felt pretty good throughout the first half. We made a pretty bad mistake with that turnover at the end of the second quarter. It was great that our defense held them to three points, which allowed us to recover the rest of the game.”

The return of DL Dee Ford, LB Kwon Alexander, and S Jaquiski Tartt impact just the emotions of the defense. How much did it let guys sort of settle into their roles?

“I think the emotion is probably the same for the fans as it is for the players. When you get guys back who are really good players and made an impact all year, everyone is a lot more excited. The more players you have out there, the better chance you have. Once the game starts, that's over. But, when you watch it out there, you'll see more on tape, but it looks different. Starting with the rush with Dee Ford out there, just getting off the ball, whether he's doing it or the other guys do it, the speed. Having Kwon out there. The times I'm looking up watching him, the way he flew around, made some plays on the screens. Even when he flew and missed the guy on the screen, he makes the back have to come to a complete stop and cut back the other way, then our pass rushers can get there. Tartt back there. Tartt has been great for us when he's been out there. I knew it took him some time to get back with the injury that he had, but from what I saw, he played very well today. I'm pumped to have him next week playing.”

How much did the Bye Week help?

“The Bye Week helped the most, just all those guys you mentioned. None of those guys would have been available last week. So, it was perfect to give them the week that they had, so their first game back was now. I think they all got out of it, from what I know of, pretty clean and should be ready to go again next week.”

The run game, Coleman hasn't had a game like that since Carolina. How big was that Bye Week as far as getting his legs fresh?

“He looked good out there today. Tevin, I know his numbers haven't been as great. Raheem has had some real good runs. I think Tevin has had some unfortunate looks, just the luck of the draw a little bit. I think he got some better looks today, took advantage of them. When you do that, I think it got him in a little bit of momentum. He was able to stay out there a little bit longer. I think he got some extra carries at the end, didn't have to split them as much with Raheem cramping and stuff. That's why we haven't changed much. We've been excited about Tevin all year. Glad he got his opportunities today. He came through big for us.”

What was your level of concern with Dee Ford's hammy? Was that something you were monitoring throughout the game?

“I didn't monitor it throughout the game because I don't know how to do that. I just wait till someone comes and tells me. He never told me and the trainers never told me. What I saw with my eyes looked pretty good. I was a little worried during the week because it was his first week back and had a little bit of a scare on Wednesday, I think. I'm messed up because today is Saturday, but whatever day that was, it was a little tight. We didn't push him too hard. He came out, had a good practice there on

Thursday. Didn't feel great until we made it into about halftime. I saw he had gone the whole first half. I'm like, 'All right, it's not too tight today.' He's doing a good job, I think it's going to continue."

Do you think this stage is the right one for DL Nick Bosa?

"He played pretty good all year. I don't know how many sacks he got today, but he's been pressuring the quarterback all year. It was great that he ended it. I thought he sat there and milked his injury for a little bit longer just to hear the crowd chant his name. No, he's been a stud. He's been awesome on the field, off the field. Extremely happy to have him on our team."

It's not time for reflection because you have more games to play. You've won 14 out of 17. How confident were you coming into this season this was a possibility?

"I mean, we knew coming into the season that we were going to have a chance to compete in every game. Didn't really look at it much past that. Even when we were 8-0, that's all you look at. We thought we could compete in every game and we had won them up to that. We were like that all the way to the end. Once we got into the playoffs and got that Bye Week, I did personally sit back for a day and think about the season. It was great how we got home-field advantage. Once you get that, that is completely over. All you think about is this game. We just got that done. Not trying to go celebrate anything. We celebrated winning the Division in the Bye Week, which was nice. Now, it's can't wait to watch these games tomorrow and find out who we're playing."

You played both teams. Is that a help?

"You're familiar with them and they're familiar with us. We'll see which one it helps more."

**49ers QB Jimmy Garoppolo
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Talk about your block.

"I'm not in that situation very often. I saw an opportunity. He was a little off balance. Had to get a pancake on the stat sheet. I was pretty happy about it."

I think you only threw the ball six times in the second half. You mentioned earlier in the week passing stats and all that stuff doesn't really matter to you. But to be able to sit back and watch your team take control of a game, you're fine with that, right?

"Yeah, it was awesome. There was one drive where we literally didn't pass the ball, came off to the sideline, it was as excited as we've ever been offensively. When you can do that to a team, it makes it tough on defenses, when they have to bring more guys into the box, start bringing safeties down. We ran the hell out of the ball. Those guys up front battled their asses off. It was fun."

The CB Richard Sherman pick, do you feel like it was a pivotal point in the game?

"That was huge. I didn't actually get to see it. He made the play. It's that complementary football, I've said it before up here. That one, coming off the special teams one with [RB] Raheem [Mostert] when he got that one, too. When all those things are tied together, all three units are playing together like that, it makes us tough to beat."

What happened on the Vikings LB Eric Kendrick's interception? Good play by him, bad read by you?

"Yeah, just left it a little short. I had the hole over the top of him. Just left it short. He made a good play on it. Tip your hat to him."

For the defense to hold them to 3 points after that. To have it not tied, to have it be 14-10...

"That was huge. That's the complementary football I'm talking about. When something like that happens, and the defense can hold them to three-and-out, and make them kick the field goal it picks up offensively after that."

Given the way the first drive went, did you feel differently making a start in a playoff game?

"The fans felt different. It was rocking out there today. Those fans, they were screaming, they were loud. I mean, it was a fun atmosphere. Yeah, as far as just everything, I don't know, got to treat it just like another game. You go out there, the field is still a hundred yards long. Just got to go play football."

What did that first drive do for you? I think you were 5 for 6. And you guys marched down and scored. Did that set the tone for the offense a bit?

"Yeah, I think we ran the ball well, too, on that drive. I think guys were talking on the sidelines that we had opportunities to run it. [Head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] did a great job of getting us into the right calls and everything. Guys up front did the rest. The running backs ran hard. All those guys, even the receivers. It takes all the guys offensively to run the ball. We did a good job of it today."

Did you sense there's a different sort of feeling or emotion from the offensive line when you are put in a situation to play complementary football like that when the defense is playing at that kind of level?

"Oh, yeah, those guys get fired up, man. You can see it in the huddle. As you're calling the play, and it's a run play, their eyes light up. They get excited. I love it when those guys are just teeing off like that. It's fun. Makes my job very easy."

Did you see frustration from the Vikings and their defensive line? Did you sense that at all?

"Yeah. There was a point in the second half, you could definitely feel it. There was a little bit of arguing by them. They weren't getting aligned very quickly. You could definitely feel that. We just tried to take advantage of it."

Are you able to see what this defense does during this game, other games this season?

"You know, I hear it a lot better than I see it. I won't actually see it happen. Just by the fans' reaction, everything like that, you know something happened. Try to look up and see who got the sack. I think it seemed like our entire D-Line had a sack today. Just fun. It's fun when things are clicking like that."

You talked about the fans' reaction. What was the moment like when DL Nick Bosa was down, fans were chanting his name, he got up?

"(Smiling) I hope Nick is all right. It was tough, but he's a tough guy, hopefully he'll be okay. Yeah, it was just one of those moments, makes you kind of laugh a little bit on the sideline. Fans chanting Bosa and everything, it was a crazy atmosphere. I loved it."

Just to be clear, he was milking it, right?

"You'll have to ask him that."

On the block that you had, you laid someone out there, how did that feel?

"Yeah, it felt good. Just sometimes you have to remember that you're not just a quarterback, you're a football player, too, sometimes. Yeah, just tried to do my job on it."

Is that why you dove in the pile on the fumble?

"Yeah, kind of an instinct. I felt it at my feet. I don't know, I didn't really even have a shot at it. Thought I should throw a hand in there or something."

**49ers LB Kwon Alexander
Postgame Quotes – January 11, 2020
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What can you say about the atmosphere out there in Levi's stadium today in its first playoff game here?

"The faithful is crazy. The fans, I love them. They were out there. They were supporting us. We had to go out there and do our job for them and we got the job done."

Anybody who saw Vikings RB Dalvin Cook play the New Orleans Saints last week might have been surprised at how little their running game was able to do against you guys today. What did you guys do so effectively?

"We were able to be us. Once we do that, we can go out there and have fun and when we play together as a team it's hard to beat us. That is all we have to do and we are going to go far."

In the third quarter your team gave up six yards on six plays, that is all that Minnesota was on the field. What did you guys do defensively?

"Yes. We were just being legendary, being ourselves. We work hard. We worked hard this week. Everybody came to work ready, with a lot of excitement, a lot of energy and it showed out there on the field. That is how we did that."

The players are the one that have to do the work on the field but what did 49ers defensive coordinator Robert Saleh do specifically this week to prepare you guys for this?

"He just put his all in it. We have faith in coach and whatever he calls we are going to go out there and execute and make plays happen. He is legendary, he is going to be one of the best to do it."

**49ers DL Arik Armstead
Postgame Quotes – January 11, 2020
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Talk about the win?

"It feels great to get the win and keep playing to extend our season. It was a crazy game the atmosphere was wild. I am just excited to be a part of it."

What changes did you make in the second half that resulted in just completely shutting the Vikings down??

"We were playing good the whole game. They got us early with the touchdown. We just locked in. We knew what they wanted to do which was run the ball. It starts with that, stopping the run. I think we did a good job with that. I saw they only had twenty something rushing yards. Once we did that, we were able to get after the passer. When you do that you can have a complete game and shut people out."

You turned them into a one-dimensional offense in the second half, was that the goal to turn them into one of those?

"Yes, start by stopping the run first. [Minnesota Vikings RB] Dalvin [Cook] has been moving the ball. The run game opens up everything else. It definitely started with that. We did a good job with that and got after the passer."

How does it feel to move on to the NFC Championship game?

"I am super excited. I have been all season to be a part of this. Especially with all of the adversity I have had over the five years here. To have this year, and to win and to earn the right to play another game has been great."

**49ers DL Nick Bosa
Postgame Quotes – January 11, 2020
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Will you be able to play next week?

"Yeah, I got my breath back."

What was that moment like with the fans chanting?

"It was really cool. I was just trying to get my breath back initially. Then they told me to stay down for a second. Then I heard the chants. I had to get up then. It was a really cool moment, though."

Obviously your first NFL playoff game. Did you feel calm in the moment? How did you feel?

"I felt pretty normal. I knew getting [DL] Dee [Ford] back and getting [LB] Kwon [Alexander], [S Jaquiski] Tartt, just having them on the field, it's a completely different energy. It's the energy we had early in the year. It's really fun playing on a really good team, just knowing that every person around you is going to do their job really well. Makes it a lot easier for me."

A couple plays coming from the weak side on the runs. You can just explode like that?

"That's what we do. We chase the ball. Backside players are huge in our defense. We got to run every play we're in there. Usually the running backs either run out of bounds, try to avoid you. I got a couple good hits on them today."

How much faster did it feel immediately out there with Dee?

"Yeah, the whole vibe, the whole energy, it's just different. Has other teams just trying to find answers. But, yeah, I mean, just having Dee is a huge boost for the D-Line."

T Joe Staley said he sort of expects this now from you at that point. Is this the standard that you have for yourself?

"Yeah, I mean, definitely. Obviously making the plays is good. But, I mean, I try and bring the same effort, same technique, same everything every week. Today I got a couple sacks. That always helps. But most of the plays that I'm most proud of are the plays that weren't the sacks. Joe told me to finish today, I got a couple, so..."

What was it like to have your brother at the game, know his eyes are on you?

"That honestly gave me a little nerves. It was cool having him on the sideline. I don't even know if he's made a college game with his schedule. So just having him there, knowing they're up in the box watching, waiting for me outside, it's awesome."

Did you have a chance to talk to him after the game yet?

"No, not yet."

Do you have a sense early on in a game like that that you are in control as a defense, a level of confidence?

"Yeah, you never know, though. They could always make a play. I think the biggest thing for us, we start fast a lot. We kind of let teams hang around. So, I think [CB Richard Sherman] Sherm has really

gotten us to not even worry about what the offense is doing, just worry about our assignments and our job. Just to keep playing. We just want to get the ball to the offense.”

I think you got two sacks when you and Dee were lined up next to each other. What kind of a dynamic is that like?

“I told Dee, ‘I wish I could scare people with my presence like you do.’ I mean, when a guard sees Dee Ford on them, their mind is racing, they’re thinking about what he’s about to do, whatever it is. Just having his presence and his pass-rush ability, his knowledge and communication, he’s a true vet. It’s nice to have him out there.”

Players talk a lot about complementary football. When you’re out there on the sideline, you watch the offense do something like have an eight-play drive, how much does that impact things?

“Yeah, that’s huge, especially when it’s the run game. That was the biggest thing for us this week is trying to get 30 runs. We had like 40 or something, 47. We knew if we did that we’d win. Just seeing them pound down the field, tire their defense out, it gives us energy.”

You talked about Richard Sherman a minute ago. When you think about when you knew of Richard before you got to play with him, what’s the most significant thing you’ve learned?

“Just as genuine a guy as you’ll ever meet. Sometimes as a fan you see somebody, you see the way they act, you question whether it’s really truly who they are or just a front for fans and stuff. Me being here, seeing his passion, his work ethic, I just respect him.”

RB Tevin Coleman talked about seeing frustration from Minnesota, from the defensive line. Did you see frustration from their offense at all?

“Yeah, I mean, later in the game they were starting to jaw at each other. Yeah, we were bringing it on ‘em, so... Yeah, they started to have some frustration. We just kept bringing it.”

Is that a point where you get even more aggressive?

“Yeah, that’s one of [defensive line coach] Kris’ [Kocurek] things, put the foot on the throat and twist it. Yeah, I mean, when you have somebody down, you definitely don’t want to let up.”

You talked about Dee. How do you think guards respond to you?

“Hopefully the same way.”

**49ers WR Kendrick Bourne
Postgame Quotes – January 11, 2020
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How important was it for 49ers QB Jimmy Garoppolo to spread the ball around?

“It was definitely important, just taking what the defense gives you. I think that he sees that pretty well. He was definitely putting everything on the money today. I had two drops that I definitely should have caught. He was doing a good job of putting it where it needed to be at the right time.”

On that first touchdown that you caught, that capped the first drive. Can you walk us through that?

“It was just a good look. [49ers head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] planned it. We were going over it through the week. Just seeing the same look throughout the week for me and that same look came when he called it so the corner used the outside leverage, when you have leverage it should be a good play. So, it worked out for the best. I just had to execute on my end which, I did and Jimmy reading me through

the second or third window. Whatever that safety did, I don't know, he bit on the run so the window was pretty big. Good job by Jimmy being poise and getting it where needed to be."

The Vikings were the best team in the league versus tight ends, giving that did you figure the wide receivers would have several chances today?

"For sure. Yes. If they are going to double team [49ers TE] George [Kittle] it always opens up anybody else. Whoever they double we have so many weapons so you can't really do any of that. If you go one way we have an answer for that. That is the thing about Kyle, he has answers for everything. He always puts us in position to be successful."

**49ers DL DeForest Buckner
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Talk about the Bye week.

"We were able to get guys back healthy. The guys that were playing all year were able to take care of the body a little bit longer. It was a great effort by the defense, honing in on their jobs. It was a great game plan by the coaches. We just went out there and executed."

What kind of impact does DL Dee Ford have on your line?

"Dee's speed off the edge is one of a kind. It really opens up more opportunity for the guys in the inside, also for [DL] Nick [Bosa] on the opposite side. They can't pick and choose every time on where they want to slide the protection or who they want to double. They have to change it up. It's very challenging when you have four guys that can rush the passer."

Is it always good when you see a guy struggle with injury fight to come back, have a setback, for him to go out there and get that sack?

"Yeah, it was just awesome to see, you know what I mean? We know he's been struggling with it all year. He was down at times on having to stay out, it reoccurring, all that. Just having him get that sack on the first game back was great to see."

You even mentioned to us during the course of the week, 'Hey, we're not known for our run defense.' Could it have gotten much better?

"We knew they were going to attack us with the run game. We knew they were going to try us early. We had to shut it down early to make it the game we wanted to make it. I think we ended up getting them about six times. That's a testament to the guys up front and on the back end holding up in coverage."

Did that feel a little bit like the first half of the season defensively?

"Definitely. And having those three guys, [S] Jaquiski [Tartt], [LB] Kwon [Alexander], Dee, having those guys back, having them back really helps with the energy, the confidence in the defense and everything. I feel like the guys just played their tails off, trusted one another while we were out there. We all knew we needed to play really well against the run. Everybody showed up today."

**49ers DL Dee Ford
Postgame Quotes – January 11, 2020
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How did it feel to get back out there today?

"It felt great. Good to be out with my teammates and out of that training room."

Was it close at all for you to play today? Was it a game time decision or anything like that?

"I was going to play regardless. You are going to have to cart me off the field to get me to not play at this point and time."

To come from where you came and to get that sack, what was that like?

"It was great. This is what we have to do in order to move forward. I was up for the challenge on every play, and it just worked out for me on that play."

As the final seconds were ticking off, was it like okay on to the next?

"On to the next. Everything has got to go to another level, especially from me. Individually, and I know all of the players on the team feel the same way, is to take it up another level. Let's enjoy it today, let's understand that another team is going to roll in here and let's handle business."

Did it have a mid-season feel to the game as far as how the defense took over the game?

"It did, and that is what we wanted to get back to. Unfortunately, we had a little stretch of facing some tough offenses. Whether I was out there or not, we played some tough offenses. We had to fight through it, and we got through it."

Was it sort of contagious the way you guys stopped the run early?

"Yes. Any big play early on, is momentum for a team."

How exciting is it for you to get back to your second straight conference championship game although with another team?

"It is very exciting. This year has been very challenging for me from an injury standpoint. I was just glad to be on the other end of the stick and not on the bench. I have been nursing injuries all year so it is a good feeling to persevere and help my team get to the next week."

**49ers TE George Kittle
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This is a convincing win against a good team. What does it say about the 49ers?

"We played good football today. We've been playing good football all year. We keep putting good football on tape. People keep telling us we're not very good. We're just going to keep playing good football, I guess."

You're a guy who said you like setting some of those run blocks maybe more than catching passes. How do you feel about that?

"I think 47 rushes is pretty good, right? I think we had close to 200 on 47 rushes. We ran the heck out of the ball today. Playing against six techniques with the linebackers on the inside, it's pretty easy to get those combo blocks up to them. We dominated the edges today. It was a great day to run the football."

What was your opinion of the defensive performance today?

"Our defense? Pretty good, right? Holy cow. I mean, it's such a blast just to watch them, how they work together. Doesn't matter highs, lows, they ride with them. I think [CB Richard] Sherman does a great job of keeping them even-keeled. Then your kind of just let them off the leash. You have [DL Nick] Bosa, [DL] Dee Ford. We had guys rushing the passer from all angles. It's kind of tough to be a quarterback, I guess."

This is the formula you used in the 8-0 start with the run game and the defense. Did you feel it was necessary to get back to that in the postseason?

"I personally feel like we don't run the ball enough every single week. We got 47 rushes. I was happy about that. I think we should have gotten to at least 50. Our defense did a fantastic job. We put them in a couple of bad situations early. They handled it well, held them to a field goal, got a stop on another one. Our defense keeps playing like that, all we have to do is not turn the ball over and we'll win games."

What was the energy like knowing you'd get Dee, LB Kwon Alexander, and S Jaquiski Tartt back?

"Fired up. Watching those guys play football together, our defense as a whole, it's so fun to watch, especially when they're completely loaded in there, they're deep. Just fun to watch them go out and attack. They're so violent, physical, they play every single snap together. It's so fun to watch from the sidelines."

How excited are you to go to the NFC Championship game and move past this game?

"I got 24 hours to celebrate this one. 5:00 tomorrow, you can ask me about that. I'm going to enjoy this one, I'll definitely be ready to watch some football tomorrow. I can't wait to play more football."

What did you think of QB Jimmy Garoppolo's block?

"I was blocking around the other side of the field, so I didn't really see it. The replay was pretty cool. He's like, 'Yeah, got my first pancake. Sure, you did. He definitely did. I was pretty impressed.'"

**49ers T Mike McGlinchey
Postgame Quotes – January 11, 2020
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How much fun is it, as an O-Lineman, when you run the ball 47 times?

"It's the best. Without a doubt it's the best. It keeps us in control of the game, keeps us out of big third down situations, which is how you play winning football. When you stay in front of the chains, when you manage the clock well, when you take control of the flow of the game, that's the kind of stuff that happens, and that's the way wins need to happen. It's good that we finally had one here that is not a heart attack at the end. We're happy about that and excited for next week."

You guys haven't had a bye since week four. How much did the week off, the freshness factor, factor into this game?

"I think it was huge. I think it was huge all across the board. I think you can especially see it on the defensive side of the ball. When you get [49ers DL Dee Ford] an extra week to get back and get healthy, when you get [49ers LB Kwon Alexander] back. It was dominating all around and the Bye Week definitely helped us. I don't think teams like to give [49ers head coach Kyle Shanahan] two weeks to prepare for something."

Some people made a lot of comments about the fact that for so many of you this was the first time in the playoffs. Was there anything that kind of just opened your eyes like, "wow, this is different?"

"I had a two or three play stretch there in maybe the late first or early second quarter that I would really like to take back, especially in a playoff atmosphere. It was absolutely boneheaded by me. I didn't come off the cadence, let up a sack that they didn't even take a pass at, and then took a penalty a play or two later. It's inexcusable. So, I'll take that and learn from it for sure and make sure it never happens again."

Fortunately, we didn't have it come down to a three-point game or something like that. The playoffs are great. You can feel the energy that a playoff atmosphere has in this building and for our fans. That was noticeable all day. I'm proud to be a Niner, and I'm proud to be representing the Faithful here at Levi's Stadium and having home field advantage throughout the playoffs. We felt that home field advantage today."

**49ers WR Deebo Samuel
Postgame Quotes – January 11, 2020
NFC Divisional Playoff Round
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings**

You were obviously right there at the goal line with that yank, which you've been doing all season. Can you take us through the play there?

"It's just the mindset that I have. Every time that I get the ball, I'm not allowing one guy to bring me down. It's just a carryover from that mindset."

What was it like, early on that you guys were able to dictate from the jump, but really throughout the game, that you guys were able to do whatever it is that you wanted to do?

"I mean, it's just the game plan that [San Francisco 49ers head coach Kyle Shanahan] put in all week. We follow Kyle in everything that he puts in, so we just went out there and did that."

What was the message for you guys, given that this was your first playoff game?

"Nothing, really. Just keep doing what we've been doing all year."

Did you figure the Vikings, given their success and given 49ers TE George Kittle's success, that they were going to focus on him and give you wide receivers some chances?

"Honestly, if you look at our offense, if you double somebody, you're going to be in trouble. I mean, Kittle had a great game, honestly."

Describe the performance of the defense and those guys helping you out there.

"I think everyone knows about our D. It starts up front with our D-line. I think they just brought a whole lot of energy, and we just fed off that."

What is the mentality of this team going forward?

"Don't make nothing up, and keep doing what we've been doing."

**49ers WR Emmanuel Sanders
Postgame Quotes – January 11, 2020
NFC Divisional Playoff Round
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings**

How important was it to be balanced today?

"It felt good. At the end of the day we went in the direction that we needed to go to win the game. I was happy to see the offensive line get some burn in terms of being able to punish some guys. To be able to get [49ers RB Tevin Coleman] T. Cole and the other running backs lanes to run the football."

You figure teams are going to focus on a lot on 49ers TE George Kittle giving his success this year and that allows other positions to step up?

"We will see. I am here to do what I have to do at the end of the day. If they want to do that then I am here."

As one of the few guys in this locker room who has postseason experience, how happy were you when you looked at the other guys handling themselves out there?

"I knew how they were going to handle it. At the end of the day, if you look back at New Orleans and all of those games, they were playoff type games. It was a lot of pressure trying to get the number one seed and they performed. I had nothing but confidence that they were going to do it again because they have shown me time and time again under duress, under pressure that they make the big plays. You can look at [49ers WR] Kendrick Bourne on that third down with that crazy catch and [49ers WR] Deebo [Samuel] with the plays that he was making. These young guys are poised and they believe in themselves. They have confidence and I feel like they are going to continually do that."

**49ers CB Richard Sherman
Press Conference – January 11, 2020
NFC Divisional Playoff Round
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings**

Take us through the interception.

"Yeah, we were in man. It was third down. He gave me an inside release. Gave me a little bit too much at the top of the route. I knew what the route was. I beat him to the spot. [Minnesota Vikings QB] Kirk [Cousins] threw a very catchable ball, appreciate it, and I was able to make the play."

What was the feeling at halftime? Five close December games. You don't have a big lead. What was the feeling like?

"It doesn't really matter. If you're winning, losing, regardless, you've got to compete for 30 more minutes. That was the mindset, to compete for 30 more minutes. We have one of the best defenses in football. I think our pass defense is the best since 2009 or something. The lowest number, you know what I mean? People just keep disrespecting us. That's what our D-Line and our secondary and our linebackers were able to do. Our offense did a great job of scoring points, taking advantage of the opportunities."

LB Kwon Alexander and S Jaquiski Tartt and DL Dee Ford back, what did it feel like?

"Felt good. It felt good. That's what we look like when we're totally healthy. Those guys make a huge difference in our defense. They played fast, they recognize things. Having veteran presence, they understand how teams are trying to attack us. They understand what they're seeing. They play fast. The moment is not too big for them. Dee obviously makes a huge impact on third down and passing situations. So, we're thankful to have them all back. Tartt does a great job of recognizing things, being in the right spot. He made a huge difference. All three of them made a huge difference in this game."

The offense went eight plays all runs and scored. Do you feel like that seemed to break them a little bit?

"I mean, honestly on defense you just keep going next play. I don't know if it broke them or not. Our team, we've got a good offense. [Head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] calls a heck of a game. We just try to worry about things we can control on defense. Going out there, getting another shot. Honestly it was nice to get the touchdown, but we're just ready for our next snap."

You guys stopped the run early in the game, dictating your will throughout the game.

"That's what we expect to do. I think throughout the year, people get fooled. People get fooled. Oh, my God, they can't stop the run. We got up in ball games, people run for some yardage, there's leaky yardage in there, you know what I mean? At the end of the day, we're thankful. [Defensive coordinator Robert] Saleh called a fantastic game. I heard a lot of people and read a lot of media reports talking about this game would decide the Cleveland Browns coaching position between their offensive coordinator and Saleh. If that's the way they want to decide it, I think Saleh put on a great performance

and he deserves consideration. He's called great games throughout the year. This was a masterpiece of him knowing his personnel, having his personnel, coming up with a fantastic plan, and us executing it. He deserves a ton of credit. Obviously, there hasn't been a lot of hires of coaches of color, or minority coaches. You never know. But, I think he deserves a spot. He's done everything he can to put himself in a position for it."

DL Nick Bosa has been good all year, but he looked particularly good in this game-

"I have to watch the tape. You guys get a better look. I'm back there chasing people around the whole game. He's an incredible player. Bosa, you can't say enough positive things about him and his play and his impact, run game, pass game. He's just a dominant player. He wants to be dominant every down. He never gets complacent. He's always working. Motor is always going. We're grateful to have him."

On your pick, was that an anticipation interception, if you will? You saw the pattern, read the quarterback?

"It was man coverage. I get tired of hearing, 'Oh, man, he's a zone corner.' I get tired of hearing the excuses for why I'm great. It was man coverage, I covered the man, I picked the ball off. In the playoffs, in big games, I show up. I show up year in, year out, whether it's 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014. Unless I tear my Achilles, I'm out there and I'm doing my job at a high level. I get tired of excuses for why I'm good. 'Oh, my God, they're playing zone. Oh, my God, it was this guy. Receiver slipped. Oh, my God.' Why don't other people get those opps then? A lot of other corners out there who have the same opps I have."

Why do you think that is?

"It's odd. It's like people got frustrated that I was so confident early on in my career. I was so confident early on so that people wanted me to fail. When I didn't fail, it's like, 'How do we tear him down in other ways? How do we find a way to rip his game apart?' Because I'm too consistent on a year in, year out basis. Since I got in the league, every category that matters to a corner, I'm number one in: Completion percentages, interceptions, touchdowns against, yards, completion percentage, passer rating. If that was any other corner, it wouldn't even be a conversation. But I just get tired of it. In the playoffs, I played in 13 games now, zero touchdowns given up, three interceptions. Like, show me somebody else doing it like that. Then I'll enjoy the argument. But there isn't."

How satisfying is it to be back in the NFC Championship game given the way your career arc has gone?

"This team deserves it. I'm going to take this off of me. That was selfish of me anyway. But this team deserves it. [QB] Jimmy Garoppolo played a fantastic game on offense. [Head coach] Kyle Shanahan deserves it. He's a heck of a coach. Robert Saleh deserves it. [Special teams coordinator Richard] Hightower deserves it. All our position coaches. Our D-Line. Team deserves it. We work week in and week out. We try to put our best on the line. We don't always get the results we want, but this team is a team, it's a family."

TE George Kittle said the people are saying you aren't very good. You said you're disrespected. Are you hearing that from the media or inside the league?

"Nobody is saying it inside the league because they see the tape. It's just the nonsense from the media. It's like they got to sell a story. This is a one seed versus a six seed and you have people calling an upset. Like we haven't played the whole season like we've been playing. You know what I mean? It's just odd. It's really odd. It's odd conversations. I guess it sells tickets, it sells the story. I'm thankful we get another opportunity to play. We look forward to whoever we get to play next week."

Your thoughts on how CB Emmanuel Moseley came in and played in place of CB Ahkello Witherspoon?

“Emmanuel played a fantastic game. Ahkello was playing a fantastic game before that play. That play, it was just an unfortunate series of events. Great coverage. Misjudged the ball. [Minnesota Vikings WR Stefon] Diggs made a hell of a play. You can't take anything away from him or Ahkello. Ahkello was playing fantastic. That was good coverage on the play. The man played a good play. E-Man came in, did a good job securing it, playing top down defense.”

49ers T Joe Staley
Postgame Quotes – January 11, 2020
NFC Divisional Playoff Round
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings

Given everything you have seen here, to be back one step from the Super Bowl, how significant is that? What does it mean to you?

“Yes, really exciting. Today was a big step. We had a great plan coming in, we executed it really well. I am excited to have the opportunity to play in the NFC Championship game. I was excited coming into the locker room after the game, because the guys were excited that we won, but no one was really celebrating. We realize how special this team is and what we can do this year. Guys are really excited and focused and we are moving on.”

How does it feel being able to run the ball 47 times?

“Getting 47 carries that is pretty rare. You don't get too many games when you are going to be running the ball 47 times. To run the ball 47 times is a complete team effort. Our defense has to do what they did today which is to stop their offense. We have to have a lot of opportunities, we have to be able to average and to keep it efficient on first and second downs, and move the chains on third down. I think it was a total team effort running the ball. Coming in that is what we wanted to do. They are really talented up front. We saw what they did by putting pressure on [New Orleans Saints QB] Drew [Brees] the week before, so we came in with the mindset we are going to need to run the ball. We were able to do that.”

Is that the ideal blueprint? You guys spread the ball around through the air in the first half, get a lead, and then use the run game to protect the lead.

“It has been really fun this year. We have shown that we can win in a variety of different ways. We have had to really air out and make all of the plays in the passing game, when the run game wasn't working. We have also had games like this when we run the ball well and control the clock. It really helps getting back everybody on defense. Our defense playing as terrific as they did today gives us the opportunity to really control the clock and I think the time of possession may have been nearly forty minutes of time of possession, those are all positives.”

49ers LB Fred Warner
Press Conference – January 11, 2020
NFC Divisional Playoff Round
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings

How does your confidence level or energy change when the pass-rush is as effective as it was today?

“Man, I feel like I didn't even have to play a game honestly. We ran a lot of man coverage on third down, let the big boys up front go eat. I'd be in man coverage, hear cheering. Wait, we just started. They did outstanding up front. It was a huge team win all around. Obviously, you could see what getting some key pieces back can do for our defense. Honestly, I felt like we could have done better today.”

When DL Nick Bosa was down, a lot of you guys were taking a knee. Can you describe what sort of the emotion was like coming from the fans in that moment?

“Yeah, I mean, it was great to see the fans react the way they did. When he went down, he kind of gave a thumbs up. At first, I thought he was going to be okay. I didn't know what was going on. He hopped up, had the whole spiel he did. He shouldn't stay down that long the next time or else I'm slapping him.”

How much did the bye week rejuvenate the defense?

“It was huge, I think for the entire team. Getting guys healthy, we got some key pieces back on defense. We were fresh. We went out there with the right mindset. We didn't take any day for granted. We knew that we had to come out firing because it was going to be a downhill, physical team we were playing. We took care of business.”

After the interception, they had a chance to tie, had a short field opportunity. You held them to a field goal. Is that a win for your defense?

“Oh, that's huge. I mean, that's probably one of the biggest plays in the game honestly. I always talk about how we never flinch in those situations. We have full confidence in the offense. Any time something like that happens, we go out with the mindset of ‘Let's get the ball back for them.’ A couple guys made some big plays, but that was just one of those plays that probably decided the game.”

Stopping Minnesota Vikings RB Dalvin Cook was a top priority. How do you think you did in that regard?

“Yeah, we did all right. I think every week we want to come out and we want to stop the run. I mean, that was of course a big emphasis this week with how successful they've been in the run of recent or throughout the season, honestly. We took care of business in that phase, were able to get after the quarterback.”

Do you have any thoughts on QB Jimmy Garoppolo's block?

“Oh, yeah, that was a good little block. I don't know what happened with the dude he was blocking. But, yeah, got him on the ground. I hopped up out of my seat. Got me excited. Any time you see something like that, it gets the energy going.”

**Vikings Head Coach Mike Zimmer
Press Conference – January 11, 2020
NFC Divisional Playoff Round
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings**

Opening comments:

“Tough loss today. San Francisco played a lot better than we did. I thought they were outstanding on defense and in control of the tempo of the game offensively.”

From start to finish, why couldn't you get anything going against that defense?

“They played very well. I thought they got off blocks well. I thought they did a nice job on both.”

What did they do so well that was able to just shut down your running game in your estimation?

“It looked like they just got off blocks well, and extra guys at the point of attack. They did a nice job in run support as well.”

There weren't a ton of shots deep down field in the passing game. Do you feel that was a part of the game plan, offensive line blocking or what?

"I think that we had some called and we didn't throw them. Just, we threw the one to [Minnesota Vikings WR] Stefon Diggs and a couple others throughout course so they could win it, and for whatever reason they didn't get down there."

Did you feel Minnesota Vikings WR Adam Thielen was limited at all with his ankle out there?

"No."

It looked like there was some strong player reaction on that illegal hit on Minnesota Vikings T Brian O'Neill. What were your thoughts when you saw that?

"I didn't see the hit. I just heard it was just a cheap shot, which I think it was."

At this point, how do you feel about the season?

"It's hard to discuss the whole entirety of the season. There's so many ups and downs throughout the course of it. I know that I'm proud of this football team. The way they competed and worked, and did all the things that they had to do throughout the course of this year. It's unfortunate we didn't play better today. I don't know, it's not a good day to reminisce."

It looked like there were two plays where Minnesota Vikings QB Kirk Cousins was maybe not quite on the same page as the receiver, and Adam just made a clear mistake on the interception and it looked like there was something from Kirk and him on the down and out near the goal line. Did, I guess your thoughts on either of those plays?

"I don't think there was any one person today that was just not good. I think it was a combination of things like it typically is. On those two plays that you're talking about, the communication we could have went somewhere else with the ball, we could have, so there was a lot of things that happened on not just those plays but throughout the course of the game."

With the run defense, was it a fatigue issue, was it not getting off blocks or what are your thoughts on that?

"When you think about, I don't know how many first downs we had in the second half, but I don't think it was very many, so there were a lot of three-and-outs, which complicated things there. And then, in the first half they had a couple scheme runs that they ran but it just a miss throughout the game."

How would you assess Kirk Cousins' game, and how difficult it was for him when you guys kind of became one dimensional when the pass rush got going?

"Yeah, his game was very similar to the other days' game."

Do you still, I mean, you came out last week and said, "Hey, he's our guy." Do you still feel--?

"Yeah."

I mean, he's up for a contract extension and all that. Do you still feel like he's your kind of guy moving forward?

"I don't know what his contract situation is, so I'll worry about that down the road. Today's not the day to discuss it."

Kirk seemed to struggle against the standard four-man rush. I mean, just the pressure that they were bringing why do you feel--?

"It's a pretty good rush, so that's probably why. It doesn't matter who, they didn't have, they didn't need to blitz much. They've got good pressure with four guys. Pressure affects quarterbacks typically. I don't think it had anything to do with the four-man rush, or three-man rush or an eight-man rush."

The Niners had a few key players return having missed a few weeks. Did you see anything today that you maybe didn't see on film looking through it the last few weeks?

"No, I mean those players are good players. As far as scheme-wise, not really. Honestly, not much with the defense and really not much with the offense either."

Did you sense that the San Francisco 49ers CB Richard Sherman interception was kind of a breaking point? You guys were hanging on pretty good in the first half, still a one score game.

"Yeah, we were fighting to hang in there but that didn't help and then we dropped the punt. When you do those kind of things it doesn't matter. You're going to get beat."

You mentioned the dropped punt. How surprising, Minnesota Vikings CB Marcus Sherels has always been known for being so steady, and muffed two and of course, one of them was the big one.

"Well it's, the wind played a factor in there I figured it would."

A lot of the players are saying that it's a combination, this loss, of missed opportunities and mistakes, but also facing a really good team. Would you say this was a better team score-wise but how would you equivocate or have that balance?

"They were a lot better than we were today. They're a good football team. I think they have a lot of good players that do a great job, but on the same token we do too, but we made too many mistakes today. We did not execute near as well as we needed to."

Do you think fatigue played a role in that on your team?

"I don't know that we looked as fresh as we did the week before."

What did they do to have success against your screen game today?

"I think they just rallied to it pretty well. I don't think they were in man coverages that they hit that wasn't tried. They played very hard defensively."

**Vikings QB Kirk Cousins
Postgame Quotes – January 11, 2020
NFC Divisional Playoff Round
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings**

Overall thoughts on the game?

"The 49ers I felt were the better team today. We didn't do enough offensively to give ourselves a chance to win the game. It hurts right now. Vikings Head Coach Mike Zimmer said he was proud of the way the team fought this year, but right now it's just so raw. We're just kind of focused on this game and falling short. I thought the 49ers were a good team. They earned the number one seed and home field advantage throughout the way they played this season."

With the inability to get the running game going, did it feel like a constant battle against the chains?

"We struggled to run it effectively. That made it tough."

This team being predicated on a run-first offense, is the priority this offseason to figure out other ways to win when the running game is taken away?

"I haven't even thought that far ahead. I'm thinking about this game. Certainly we didn't play well enough as an offense to win."

You couldn't get the offense going against this defense. What were the reasons for that?

“It’s hard to say until I watch the tape, but I would think it’s for a variety of reasons.”

How difficult was it when you guys became one-dimensional and they swarmed you at the end?
“Just the margin at that point with less time, they know we have to pass and be in a hurry-up mode. That made it tough, but it’s always like that when you’re in pass-mode at the end and trailing.”

On the pass to Vikings WR Stefon Diggs near the goal line, was there a miscommunication or something that didn’t go right?
“When I was throwing it, I thought we had it. The corner was off, but I think I just pulled him too far on the sideline and didn’t connect on it.”

Did anything about the physicality of the 49ers defense take you by surprise?
“We knew what we would be facing. We knew they were the number one seed with a bye and home field advantage. You earn that, and you’re a good team. You can look at a lot of their statistical numbers on defense. They’ve proven that they’re a good front, a good defense and a good team.”

What did you see in their defense that made it difficult to come back?
“I’m not sure until I watch the tape. It was a combination of having some third downs that were longer after not being productive on first and second down, and then not converting third downs so that we weren’t able to stay on the field and run more plays. They just do a good job of keeping things in front of them and forcing you to gain bit by bit.”

Can you describe what you were seeing on the interception to 49ers CB Richard Sherman?
“I was just trying to get it at him inside as he breaks across the corner’s space.”

What does this show in how far you guys need to go to get to that championship level?
“Today they were the better team. That’s really what you take from it.”

The subject of a possible contract extension for you will be coming up. Is that something you would like, to be a long-term guy in Minnesota?
“That’s just not my focus right now. My focus is on this game and the playoffs. I certainly love it here and love being a Viking.”

This team certainly improved this year. Do you feel like this team is close to being a championship-caliber team?
“I believe strongly in our organization, our coaches, our players and our locker room. Today we fell short, but there are 31 teams that will feel that way. You know that going in. When you strap it up in April and get going again, you know that 31 teams will feel like they fell short and weren’t good enough. Today we had to face that reality, but I do love our team and the makeup of our team.”

With some of the check downs earlier, was that the result of pressure or were there any you wish you would’ve tried to take a chance down field?
“I think there was one to [Vikings TE] Irv Smith Jr. I would have liked to have taken. I think that was in the second half. Other than that, I’d have to go back and watch. They’ve allowed the fewest explosive plays in the pass game of anybody in the NFL because they drop and try to force you to take check downs. The last thing you want to do is force it. When they do give it a chance like we did to Diggs, you take it, but for the most part you expect to have to chip away and just take what they give you.”

Did you get the sense that they were trying to take away Vikings RB Dalvin Cook at all and make you make the plays?

"I felt like they did a good job on the bootlegs and stopped the run. We didn't convert third downs. We just needed to hit a few more third down conversions down the field."

What was your opinion on 49ers DE Nick Bosa's penalized hit?

"The game was happening so fast that I didn't see it. So I can't even comment."

**Vikings RB Dalvin Cook
Postgame Quotes – December 11, 2019
NFC Divisional Round Playoff
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings**

The running game has been such a big part of the offense. Why do you think it was so hard to get the running game going today?

"They came out ready to play. They have good players too. They played a good game. They just came out ready to play."

Have you ever been bottled up like this in your career?

"It's not about me. It's about getting the win and we didn't get the win. It's not about me. At the end of the day, we did not get the win. I could have had nineteen yards and if we would have gotten the win, you would not be asking me this question. It's about winning the football game and we didn't win today."

As you look back on the season, you got to the playoffs, you did lots of good things do you have any thoughts on the season?

"Yes. When we started this thing back at OTAs and mini-camp, our ultimate goal was to win a Super Bowl and get to the big dance. We fell short of that. I think it's a big building block and now we get to think about what we can accomplish next year. We will put this one in our back pocket and keep it there for a couple of months until we can get this thing going again."

What do you think was the biggest obstacle today?

"We were just not really able to get in a rhythm, so they were able to sit back and do what they do. We just never got a rhythm and they were just able to fly around and make plays."

Is there anything you can take from this moving forward?

"As a team, we just have to look at this as something we can build on. It's not the end of the world. Our core guys are coming back. So we just have to keep this thing going and remember how this feels. We don't want to feel this anymore."

**Vikings G Pat Elflein
Postgame Quotes – December 11, 2019
NFC Divisional Playoff Round
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings**

There's not a lot that you can say because it seems like they just lined it up played and limited you on what you could do offensively.

"Yes, they got after us for sure. We couldn't get anything moving. We couldn't get a rhythm going and that's what we like to do. We like to get a rhythm to our offense and we were not able to do that today. Our hats go off to them. They came prepared and they beat us today."

What was the most frustrating part?

"I think it was just not being able to get into a rhythm. That's what we like to do on offense. We like to run the ball, play action and we were just never able to get into that. They did a really good job and we didn't."

Did they do, pretty much, what you thought they would do?

"Yes. Again, hats off to them. We didn't play good enough to win. Our hats go off to the San Francisco 49ers."

Were they more physical than you thought they might be upfront?

"No. We knew what we were going into. We knew they were a real physical group. They built their team around that front seven and we got beat today."

I know you guys wanted to get the run game going and they obviously wanted to stop it. How did their game plan work so well?

"They came out and beat us today. They kept making plays and we didn't make plays. We couldn't get into a rhythm on offense which is what make us work. It's what makes us go and we were not able to do that today and they beat us."

**Vikings DT Jaleel Johnson
Postgame Quotes – January 11, 2020
NFC Divisional Playoff Round
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings**

49ers RB Tevin Coleman ran for over 100 and 49ers RB Raheem Mostert had a good game. Why were they having success on the ground?

"We were beating ourselves. We just weren't getting to the ball and once we got there, we had too many missed tackles as a group."

Time of possession can sometimes be misleading, but it seemed like it was telling today.

"Yeah, sometimes a team can get a bunch of turnovers and they lose time of possession, but win the game. That wasn't the case for us. We left a lot of big plays on the field. The San Francisco 49ers were able to maintain the clock and touch the ball, especially coming out of halftime."

Did you think 49ers WR Deebo Samuel fumbled the ball based on what you saw on the video board?

"His knee was down, so if anything, it gave us another opportunity. We had some momentum after something like that. When you're on the road and it was so close to being a turnover, we needed to capitalize on that and suck the air out of the building. We didn't and they were able to convert and keep the ball going. That was deflating for us and it gave us more momentum."

How tough is this? You came in here confident and really thought you were going to win. It's got to be a tough pill to swallow.

"No one shows up thinking they're going to lose. We prepared and had a good game plan. We were able to execute it early in the game. We weren't able to execute it consistently throughout the entire 60 minutes. That was another key to victory along with time of possession and the running game. It was executing and doing your best for 60 minutes. We weren't able to do it for 60 minutes."

Vikings TE Irv Smith Jr.
Postgame Quotes – January 11, 2020
NFC Divisional Playoff Round
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings

What made that San Francisco 49ers defense so good in your eyes?

“They played a lot of different personnel. They moved guys around the field. They did a good job of stopping us today. They played a great game.”

As a rookie, when you walk out of here, what do you think you learned from all of this?

“I learned a lot about the game. It’s the most football I’ve played in a season. I learned a lot from the vets. Vikings TE Kyle Rudolph and our coaches have taught me a lot throughout the season. Obviously, we fell short with how we wanted to end the season, but I felt like it was a good rookie year.”

Did you feel like the second season was a step up? Did you feel like the energy was a little higher when you went into the playoffs?

“Definitely. It’s win or go home. You want to continue to get better and win and advance. But it just didn’t happen.”

How quickly do you think about next year and that you have a good club?

“I still have all of the confidence in the world about this team. We have to rest and regroup.”

Vikings WR Adam Thielen
Postgame Quotes – January 11, 2020
NFC Divisional Playoff Round
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings

Obviously, words are hard to come by right now, aren’t they?

“You prepare, you work your tails off and fight through stuff. To have that result, it sucks. It’s never fun, it’s never easy. You have to go back to work and figure it out.”

You knew the San Francisco 49ers defense was staunch as advertised, correct?

“Yeah, for sure. We knew it was going to be a battle. We just didn’t execute and didn’t make the plays when we had the opportunities to and they punched us in the mouth.”

How were you feeling out there?

“Good enough to do my job, but I didn’t do that at high enough of a level.”

Were there any limitations with the ankle?

“No.”

How much harder is it to get the offense going when you can’t get the run going? Did they really bottle up Vikings RB Dalvin Cook?

“We knew on both sides of the ball, we had to run the ball and stop the ball to be successful in the playoffs, especially against a team like this. The first thing you do is look yourself in the mirror and figure out what you could’ve done better in the running game and the passing game. Obviously, it wasn’t good enough.”

What happened on the interception?

“It was completely my fault. I didn’t cross his face and obviously Vikings QB Kurt Cousins trusted me to win on that route and make a play on the ball. I didn’t do that.”

Vikings LB Eric Wilson
Postgame Quotes – December 11, 2019
NFC Divisional Round Playoff
San Francisco 49ers vs. Minnesota Vikings

What happened out there today?

“We just plain lost. We couldn’t get it done. Coming into this week I know we prepared very well. We really felt like we had a chance to really take it to them, but it didn’t happen.”

You were down 14-10 at the half and were very much in the game. Then you get out scored 13-0 in the second half. How is it that you couldn’t get anything going?

“Yeah, we just couldn’t get anything going.”

How were they so effective at running the ball?

“I really don’t think they had too many explosive runs. They just stuck with it. They got a little bit here and a little bit there and they got chunks in the passing game.”

Did that get frustrating?

“We really can’t get into that. We just had to keep going and taking it to them. We weren’t discouraged on defense at all. We have full confidence in our guys and our abilities. We were confident going into this game. We were confident in the game. It just did not go our way.”

What’s the challenge playing a team like that after a short week and an overtime game?

“I don’t think that really affected us. We were prepared. We knew what they were going to do. They just stuck with it. They just did a good job.”