

**49ers Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – January 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers**

Opening comments:

“Injuries: [RB Tevin] Coleman had a shoulder, didn't return. [CB] K'Waun [Williams] had a hip, returned. [LB Dre] Greenlaw, ankle, he was cleared but didn't return and [S Jaquiski] Tartt, ribs. Go ahead.”

42 runs and eight passes, pretty rare in this day and age. Did you have a sense, maybe not that, but it might look like that at the end of the game?

“We had an idea going in. We were hoping to do something like that going in. But, you never plan for it to be like that. When you're watching how the guys were running and everything, and then watching how our defense was playing, it made it very easy to stick with, even the third downs and stuff. The guys played as aggressive as any team I've been on, and they made it very easy to call plays.”

What kind of feedback were you getting from RB Raheem Mostert outside of what your eyes were telling you?

“The lanes that we saw and the way he was running, just wanted to keep feeding him. Raheem is not someone who is going to come up and tell me a bunch during the game. I know he was feeling it and it wasn't too hard to see.”

Third and eight, Raheem's first touchdown, and what were you thinking on fourth down on that play?

“Possibility, if it got close it was. But we liked that play also, just some of the stuff that -- some of the looks you can get there. We thought we could sneak one in. And if you did in that area you sometimes get two downs. It would have depended how close it was, but if not we would have been happy with a field goal. For him to take it to the house was a lot better than anticipated.”

With all you've been through with this team during your tenure here, what goes through your mind when you watch the seconds wind off the clock and head to the Super Bowl?

“I think a lot more will go through my mind when I get home and just sit down and relax tonight. I am never comfortable in games until it's officially over. Once it was officially over I got bombarded by everyone. I'm sure I'll feel those injuries tomorrow. But, it was really awesome to have my family down there, my wife and kids. It was just so cool. I know how happy our players were, how much they wanted this. And, I was just so proud how hard they fought.”

What about getting the trophy from your dad?

“It was pretty special. To get a trophy handed by anyone is really cool, but especially [49ers CEO] Jed [York] making my dad an honorary captain. Jed told me it was special for his mom when his uncle handed her the trophy before they won. And, Jed planned all that and did that. It was pretty cool, I didn't know what was going on, but it was pretty cool that it happened there at the end. It was pretty special.”

All year you've had guys who weren't necessarily starters kind of stepping up. Is Mostert the ultimate example and what has he shown you this year?

“I definitely think so. He made a lot of plays for us last year. He'd get some opportunities here and there. Battled through camp and kind of came into the season in the same situation. Got a lot of opportunities versus Tampa Bay in Week One because Tevin went down with an injury and [RB Matt] Breida was fatigued a couple times, from what I remember, and he played incredible there. He's just earned everything. He's been on a number of teams, earned everything he's gotten. He earned today. He's such a good person. And for him to help us as much as he has on offense -- and you saw the play

he made last week on special teams -- he would have made some more today too, I'm sure. But, once we lost Tevin we only had two backs left, we had to make sure we pulled both of those guys off. I can't say enough good about Raheem."

You've had some 49ers legends in the past talk to the team a lot throughout the season. Did you have anybody speak to the team before this game this weekend?

"No, just this year. [former 49ers QB] Steve [Young] talked to us, I want to say it was about the Rams game, I'm not sure what it was, but Steve talked to us. That was it this year."

What was the message to the team last night?

"Just that everything this league is earned. That's one thing that's really cool about the NFL, nothing's given. And, I told the guys how proud I was that they had earned the right to be in a game to play for the Super Bowl. And, regardless of what was going to happen, though, and what got us up to this point, that we were going to have to go out today and earn the right to go to the Super Bowl. And, no one was going to give it to us. Those guys came out with that mindset from the first play on. They were relentless. And, I know we're going to enjoy tonight. But, we're going to be ready to care it over to Miami too."

Some big-picture perspective, when you're coming off 4-12, probably don't even dare to dream about qualifying for the Super Bowl. So, can you put the whole season into context? I know it's like seconds after that you just won the NFC Championship --?

"It's a good question, but it would be impossible for me to do. The season has been so long. It's also gone so fast too. I just can't tell you how close of a group of guys we have. I know a lot of people say that, but I've been coaching a while and I do feel like it's different. And, I've been on a lot of close teams. Our guys have a lot of love for each other, I think, in the way they play. You can see them play with a lot of love for each other. Doesn't matter who is going, who is up. No one's hesitated. No one really worries about it. I've never had one meeting this year with one player saying, 'Hey, I need the ball more or we need to do this.' Everybody has just been on a mission to try to win each game. And, it started Week One versus Tampa. Today was the same thing. And, I can officially say now we only have one more game left. Hopefully we can do it again."

You've done this as a coordinator, obviously. What are the next two weeks going to be like? What will you tell the team?

"Kind of the stuff I told them right now. It always gets hectic and it gets a little hectic when you get down there. I think this first week is very important. You've got two weeks, but we want to treat it like we're playing Sunday. We'll come in tomorrow having a normal Monday. We'll bring all our families in tomorrow afternoon and let them get their tickets and everything situated. Us coaches will put the game plan in mostly tomorrow and Tuesday. We'll try to have a normal week of practice and make sure when we pick up and go down to Miami, which I believe will be Sunday, that we've got our game plan in and we have everything taken care of with hotels and tickets and stuff. So, when we get down there, we've got a lot more media obligations and stuff when we get down there that get you out of your routine. Hopefully, we'll have our stuff done and we can spend a week tweaking it and making it as good as possible."

What are your thoughts about going against Kansas City Chiefs head coach Andy Reid and the Chiefs?

"Now would be my first thoughts. I mean, Andy Reid is as good of a coach as there is in this league. And I think he's a for sure Hall of Famer. I know how good Andy is. I know how good their quarterback is. I know how good their team is. We got to see them last year. We haven't seen them this year. I know we're going to enjoy tonight and look forward to starting to watch that tape tomorrow."

What's it been like to watch Levi's Stadium go from a place that maybe didn't provide a home field advantage to an atmosphere like tonight?

"It's been great, I think something our whole team is proud of. When I first got here -- growing up, from sixth grade to ninth grade, I lived out here and went to Candlestick every week during the season. And, that was a place that I loved. Every place gets new stadiums and stuff. So, I came back here and when I get here I hear everything is different in the new stadium and stuff. But, then I look at our record and everything, and I kind of understood why. I don't think you could totally judge a stadium off of that, especially our first year starting 0-9 and our second year being 4-12. But there were times, especially our first year starting 0-9 and our second year being 4-12. But, I did know there were times especially our first year when we were 0-9 and we got on a winning streak at the end. I remember the Christmas Eve game versus Jacksonville, how loud I thought the stadium was that game when we had won four in a row. That was the first time that really I sensed that our fans were hungry. They were going to go wherever we went. We just had to give them something to be excited about. And, they have been like that since the first home game against Pittsburgh. It's only got stronger. I've played the Packers a number of times, and I don't care where you play the Packers, there's always a ton of Green Bay fans in the stadium. And out of all the times I've ever played the Packers in any stadium in my life, I did not see green out there, and that's pretty hard to do. So, I love it here. I love Levi's and hoping our fans follow us to Miami."

The injury to Tevin Coleman?

"I know it was a shoulder. He was sitting there. I didn't get to talk to him too much about it. I'm hoping he'll be all right next week. I don't totally know yet. But, I know he's not ruled out or anything. I think there will be a good chance."

Nostalgia sake, would you bring the backpack?

"I will, but I'll lock it to my arm if you're around. I know what you do."

**49ers QB Jimmy Garoppolo
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
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What do you need to do get more passing attempts?

"Got to talk to [head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] or something. I mean, we were running the hell out of the ball tonight. It made my life very easy back there. I think we had, like, eight pass attempts. A fun night."

Talk about the offensive line, how they performed today?

"I thought they came out from the first snap ready to roll. They made a couple of ankle tackles early. You saw the way the game was playing out, and [RB] Raheem [Mostert] just took off tonight."

Could you tell early on you guys were going to have that type of success on the ground?

"You always think that way and you try to plan that way, but you kind of feel the game out as it goes. I thought Kyle did a good job calling the game and I thought the guys did a great job executing."

You talk all the time about complementary football. What is it about this particular style of defense and the run game that works so well at this time of the year?

"It's a long season. So, people always get banged up and things like that. But, when you can play good defense, run the football like that and be efficient on third down it makes you tough to beat this time of year. It's a good combo for success."

That third-and-eight run by Raheem, his first touchdown, is it something that you guys worked a lot on in the run up to this?

"A little bit, yeah. Just it's part of the game plan and Kyle called it at the perfect time. It was a great set up. It was awesome."

Did you have a strong sense that they would lean heavily towards stopping the pass based on last game?

"You kind of have a feeling of it, but this defense, it's kind of a feast-or-famine defense. We got a couple big plays the first time we played them, and we thought we'd have those opportunities, but they wanted to take those away and open up the running lane. Just kind of pick your poison type of thing."

When you got bent back awkwardly, there was a little gasp in the press box, but you were okay obviously?

"Yeah, scary moment. But, the brace held up again. Knock on wood."

You've been to Super Bowls. So, what can you tell the guys that haven't been to Super Bowls what to expect? And are you going to have to lay down a standard for the next couple of weeks?

"This first week is where you really have to take advantage of it. Because once you get down there to Miami, in this case, it's a crazy week down there. So, got to take advantage of this first week and get ahead of the other team."

The last Super Bowl with the Patriots, you were the backup. Obviously, it's a little different now. What does that mean for you personally, within the context of the team thing?

"It's just, starting back with the ACL and everything, since then it's been crazy. It's been a crazy whirlwind of a ride. And nowhere else I'd rather be than in a dogfight with than with those guys in the locker room. Great group to be with, everyone pulling together and everyone tight together. Just a great group, it really is."

Do you think Mostert's rise is kind of emblematic of the guys on the roster and the team in general where he's come from and where he is now?

"I guess so. Throughout the entire year, guys would get hurt, other guys would come in, plug themselves in, we wouldn't really miss a beat. It's just that's the type of team we have."

Backstory on the shirt that TE George Kittle has autographed by you. Is that available at the 49ers team store? I mean in Miami we could sell cases of those. What's the story?

"I got him earlier in the week with a shirt, showed it to the media and everything. He had to get me back a little bit. But, I thought it was a nice shirt he had on. Maybe we'll get them in the team store soon."

Talk a little bit about how your skill players are so enthusiastic about blocking. That's pretty unusual.

"Yeah, it's a good group of guys. Just, I mean, with only eight pass attempts, and they're no different on the sideline than they were when we were in New Orleans playing the ball all over the place. When you have a group like that, it makes it tough to beat and fun to be around."

**49ers DL Arik Armstead
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
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How does it feel to be going to the Super Bowl?

“It is amazing. It means a lot to us, especially going through all of the adversity that we went through over the past couple of years. To be going to the Super Bowl and have the chance to be the top of the league is amazing.”

It has been a career year for you. Did you see this happening in your future or did this kind of culminate in a perfect way for you?

“I have always believed in myself, but being a part of this team and around these guys has been so special for me this year. We enjoy being around each other so much and playing together, we have a lot of fun out there and you can’t take that for granted.”

How did it feel to have your family out there on the field with you to witness this season? How special was that?

“It’s amazing, being from Sacramento. It is just a short drive, there are a lot of Niners fans there as well. To be able to rep Sacramento and have my family here close by, going to the Super Bowl, it is amazing.”

Does this feel like a long way from Pleasant Grove high school?

“Yes. A lot has happened over the past seven years. To be at this point in my career on this team, you look back at everything you went through to get here, it is amazing.”

**49ers DL Nick Bosa
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
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Tell us about the game today. Seems like initially you tried to do the same thing against Green Bay that you did in that November game to make them one dimensional. Early on it felt like you were doing that?

“Yes. You have to bring some exotic pressures on him. They have a really good O-line in pass protection so you have to do a couple things to mix it up. I am glad that we got that lead in the first half because [Green Bay Packers QB] Aaron Rodgers is dangerous. I am just happy to be moving on.”

On the other side of the ball, they threw the ball eight times and you have 160 rushing yards at halftime. That just says they were able to do what they wanted to do.

“Our O-line, [49ers head coach] Kyle [Shanahan], obviously, our tight ends how they block, I mean we dealt with it in camp so we know. It is just an unbelievable offense. It is so nice to have a team that runs the ball like that.”

Now you are heading back to where you grew up to play the Super Bowl. Can you express how that feels?

“I don’t think that it has hit me yet. I’m going to see my family and I’m sure it will hit me then. I am going home so I am excited.”

**49ers DL DeForest Buckner
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
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Did you know that you guys would have this type of success up front against the Packers?

“Yeah, watching film, just going over the course of the season, you could see the teams that got after them, they came out successful. And so, we just knew kind of like we did last time, Week 12, we’ve got to get after them early. And we knew they were going to come out with energy and come out giving us their best and everything, but we had to shut it down early. We didn’t want to let them have confidence early. I think we did a really good job with that, stopping the run early and getting after [Green Bay Packers QB] Aaron [Rodgers] a little bit. Especially in the first half, you could tell he was frustrated.”

Tell us about the chemistry of this team. A lot of people look at that as being one of the key ingredients. What is it internally with those guys that allow that?

“I think you go back to OTAs, man. We all knew we could be a special group, a special team this year. And just seeing the guys work, work through a lot of things from OTAs, to training camp and preseason. The guys just fed off of each other, you know what I mean? Offense, defense special teams, everybody. We’ve got a lot of selfless guys playing for each other. That’s the key ingredient being able to play for your brother next to you, no matter what happens. Doesn’t matter who gets the stats or anything. We’re just trying to go out there and win football games and I think we have a really special group.”

Maybe stating the obvious, but getting healthy like you guys did on defense and the time off, how much do you feel you’re getting back to the dominant group, is there still more sealing to it?

“That Bye Week was key. Getting the Number 1 seed, having home field advantage, all of it, it was a key ingredient for our success. Having the guys back that came back from injury who are out the majority of the year, having them back, it brings that chemistry back in and also the dominance. And even for the guys that played a lot, we could really get our legs back under us and everything. The ceiling’s high with this team, you know what I mean? Just seeing the guys going in and out every single play grinding it out, you know what I mean? Whether we’re up by a lot or down, guys find a way to win, and do their jobs.”

You’ve been a part of this franchise from some of the darkest days the last few years, with that kind of perspective, what is it like to reach this point?

“Yeah, it means a lot, you know what I mean? It’s a slim amount of us that’s been here since my rookie year, but obviously you see the new coaching staff, they trusted us in our abilities moving forward. And just to see the team that they brought together, we knew it wasn’t going to be overnight, it was going to take time. And we had a lot of injuries the past couple of years that set us back. And just to see the grit in the team even when we were losing, guys came out every day ready to work. Nobody was pointing fingers. That’s when I knew we had a lot of special guys in the room. Nobody’s pointing fingers, blaming each other for anything. Everybody was owning up and trying to see what they could do to help the team get better. You could see it over the course of this season, guys stepping up. Guys getting benched and not complaining about it, just trying to see what they can do to help the team. You could see it throughout the entire course of the season. It’s been unbelievable.”

What are your impressions about Kansas City Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs offense, they have so many different weapons and how you guys will match up?

“Patrick Mahomes, the dude is a star. He was the league MVP last year for a reason. And to see them come back, what was it, 24-0 last week in the playoff game -- the guy’s special. The guys around him

are special. They've got a lot of talent and a lot of speed and we've got to figure out a way on defense to slow that down.”

With your fumble recovery, when did you realize that the ball was out and waiting for somebody?

“Kind of initially. The ball was hiked and everything, and all of a sudden I saw something drop by my feet and I looked down and saw the ball was down. So, I jumped on it. I thought it was in the middle of everybody, and nobody touched me or anything. I was like, ‘oh, nobody touched me, I’m going to try to get up’ and Nick was like, get up, Buck, get up. I got up, tried to run. He was like, get down, get down. I just wanted to make sure I had the ball. I was at the right place at the right time.”

When your offense is doing what it did today moving the ball, how much pride do you take as a defense turning over the ball and getting it back to them?

“We want to get the ball back in their hands as quickly as possible, whether it’s three-and-out or a turnover. To do that most part of the game, especially the first half when they were rolling, it’s just great to see. It gets you hyped on the sideline, especially when they’re just running the ball. As a defensive guy, when the offense is running the ball, you know, against your will, I mean it’s demoralizing, especially when you know it’s coming. And it’s a big congrats and kudos to those guys on offense. The O-line, receivers, tight ends, they all were blocking their tails off.”

Everybody has aspirations to go to the Super Bowl. When did you know that this team was special, this team had a chance to actually get to the Super Bowl?

“Training camp. Just to see all the guys working in training camp, the chemistry we were building on all aspects of the ball, offense, defense, special teams. You could just see the chemistry and just knowing that the guys we had in the room that could play at a high level and that were really selfless and really team guys. Training camp was when I could see, if we could just focus, take it one week at a time, there’s no doubt in my mind we could make it to this point.”

There’s a difference between goals and expectations. Was this an expectation to get here?

“It was a goal, expectation, whatever you want to call it. Just knowing that we have one more game to be the best in the world, we have to take advantage of that opportunity.”

**49ers DL Dee Ford
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
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How were you guys able to be successful by bringing pressure against Green Bay Packers QB Aaron Rodgers?

“Stay focused. Do what we got to do. It is very simple if we play together we dominate. We took that same mentality and we didn’t need to do anything different.”

How much have you rejuvenated this defense during the playoffs?

“I was blessed that I was able to come back and add a little bit of pressure and play great on first and second down and help my team win. For the other guys to not play so many snaps so we can keep that thing rolling. It is a great opportunity for me and we capitalized on it.”

How does this game typify what you guys have done to other teams all season?

“It is the epitome of this whole season. We just play together, and we are clicking, it is a fun thing to watch.”

Are you looking forward to the match up against your old team the Kansas City Chiefs?

“Definitely there is a lot of love in that building. I have a lot of love for the guys in that building. They gave me my opportunity of course. I am here with a new team. It is going to be a great opportunity it is going to be like playing my brothers back to training camp days. It is going to be fun.”

**49ers LB Dre Greenlaw
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
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Can you talk about what this season has meant for you?

“Once I got the opportunity, I just made the it last, made it happen so it is just a testament to the guys in the fifth round that they can go out here and work and that they can get it done too. Just because you get drafted in the fifth round, undrafted or first round, it doesn’t matter. If you get an opportunity give it all that you got and put it on the line. Your preparation takes care of everything. If you go out there and prepare and give it your all good things will come for those that work hard.”

What was it like to see 49ers CB Richard Sherman get that interception at the end?

“It was awesome, he looked like a receiver on that play. I am glad that he made up for it. The deep ball got him before that one but he is a captain on our team and we know that you can’t get Richard too many times. You can’t get him for long so we knew that with the time being left and what they needed to do. We knew that they needed to go down the field. He was right there and he made the play and brought us to victory. I am excited to play with a guy of that caliber. He is a legend. I have been watching Richard since I was a young kid and to be able to play with a guy like that. Not only that but to be able to look up to a guy like that and he look back at you and say good job, you played great and it is just a blessing come true.”

What was the key to the first half? You were able to bottle up their offense.

“We knew their game plan. We knew what they wanted to do. Credit to the coaches and the players all week for just buying in and understanding what they were trying to do. The personnel that we have and the personnel that they have and understanding football. They did a great job coming back in the second half with some plays and change it up a little bit and go a little deeper. We just came out swarming and credit to them for coming out in the second half and adjusting.”

**49ers TE George Kittle
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
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Can you explain the shirt?

“Remember when Jimmy had a T-shirt with my face in his locker and he told everyone I sent it to him. I got this in my locker the same day. I just didn't show you guys because I was saving it for a special occasion. I think it's pretty good. He even signed it.”

Does this qualify as a special occasion?

“Yeah, I guess.”

What's your feeling--?

“Obviously, it hasn't hit me yet. I'm pretty excited. I think tonight's going to be pretty fun. But, I'm just so happy. I mean ever since my rookie year, just the hard work, [49ers head] coach [Kyle] Shanahan, just the three years of every single day. He always talks to us about how we're this close, just have to get

over it. It all finally came to. And this whole season, ups and downs, we had injuries left and right. We had guys step up when they needed to from [OL Justin] Skule to [OL Daniel] Brunskill -- to our defense, [S] Marcell [Harris], [LB Dre] Greenlaw. We had guys everywhere stepping up the entire season. And, when we get to finish it on something like that where, I don't know, how many rushes did we have?"

40.

"That's awesome. I could have gone for 50. But, do the kneels count?"

It's 45 with the kneels.

"45 then. But, it's just so fun to see [RB] Raheem [Mostert] do something like that. Just such a special player and he finally gets to show it."

When did you get the feeling that Raheem was going to have such a big impact, when did you kind of sense that?

"I mean whether it's special teams or offense, the way he hits the hole, he gets so vertical so fast. And, I think defenses, they underestimate his speed. You can just see it. He'll hit a hole and the guy will take what he thinks is a good angle. And, next thing you know, he's by him. Doesn't even touch him. And, his 0 to 60 is literally in two steps and it's so special, especially with our offense. The way we do outside zone, inside zone, he can make one cut and get vertical. It's all we need."

**49ers T Mike McGlinchey
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
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How about the atmosphere here at Levi's Stadium?

"It was incredible. The faithful have been showing up all year. They have proven once we put something good in front of them, they are some of the best fans in the NFL. We have felt it really, really strong the last five or six home games. Today was even more so. It was incredible from start to finish. I don't think there was an empty seat in the house even when we were having our awards ceremony, which says a lot."

Is it an offensive lineman's dream to block for running back with the performance he had today?

"It is unbelievable. It is the team [GM] John [Lynch] and [Head Coach] Kyle [Shanahan] built, we have weapons all over the place, it doesn't matter who is up or who is down. We have guys all over the place that are capable of taking over football games. [RB] Raheem [Mostert] is the biggest proof of that."

There was talk all week it was going to be different than it was the first time around, was there a feeling all week that this kind of domination was possible again?

"I think so. I think every time we take the field that is our goal and that is our mindset. I know we are missing some guys to season ending injuries, but our 53 is fully healthy right now and when we have all of our weapons, it is really hard to beat us. In the last two weeks it has been really hard to even stay with us, so that is really cool."

**49ers RB Raheem Mostert
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
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A couple weeks ago you said it's all surreal, you're still trying to take it all in. What is the feeling now?

“Still surreal. You know, I just -- I can't believe that I'm in this position right now and I did the things that I did tonight. And I would like to thank God first and foremost for blessing not only myself but everybody in the organization to be in the position that we're in, to get the win and to move on to Miami, my home state. And I can't believe it. I'm still being able to play at my home state. This is so surreal right now.”

You started your career bouncing around a lot of teams. When you look back at these last few years since you left Purdue, what pops in your head now that you're at this moment?

“You know, I did have a lot of doubters and naysayers, and now I get to actually tell them look at where I'm at now. I never gave up on my dream. I never gave up on the opportunities when it presented itself. And I always worked hard no matter what. And it's crazy that I've been on seven different teams. I actually still have the cut dates. And I look at that before every game. I look at the cut dates when I got cut. I've been on, like I said, seven different teams. The journey's been crazy. Not even -- not everybody can deal with that type of stress and pain and agony that I went through. But like I said, I kept the faith in not only myself but whoever gave me the opportunity. And this organization has done a great job with that.”

We talked a lot about your speed obviously. Can you just describe the vision that you see on the field where you see these lanes that really help you out?

“You know, this scheme that we run, the outside zone and inside zone, it's been working for years. Even back when Mike Shanahan was the head coach in Denver and even in Washington. The philosophy still transpires into what we run today. And you have to have vision in order to read the holes and read the gaps, and I worked on it. Coming in I didn't really run an offense like that coming out of college. I was running more of the shotgun runs and sweeps and all that type of stuff. That's what I was basically known for, especially with my speed it's a little bit easier. But having to transition into gap scheme and reading holes one at a time, it took a little bit longer to work out, but it pays off once you get to it.”

Did you know that you were getting close to Hall of Fame RB Eric Dickerson's playoff record for a single game?

“No, I did not. Truthfully for you to even say that now is like -- I'm still shocked. I can't believe that. Eric Dickerson is the ultimate running back. He's a guy I look up to, even all the other running backs, even with [Former RB] Frank Gore, to even be mentioned with somebody like [Hall of Fame RB] Eric Dickerson, that's unbelievable.”

Your stats, did you have any idea how many yards -- did you ever look up and say wow?

“I looked up here and there but it was one of those things my main focus was to finish the game and help my teammates out as best as I can, especially in that three-minute situation. I missed a bad read on one of the plays. I know I'm going to have to look at that tomorrow and correct it, but it's one of those things where I just, I don't know, I just got to work on it.”

When RB Tevin Coleman was being carted off the field, you stopped by the cart and had an exchange. What did you say to him and what did he say back to you?

“What I said to him was, you know, we're brothers and I'm going to have your back no matter what, we're all going to have your back especially in the running back room, because, like I said, we're brothers. It goes way more than what people see. It's not, okay, him versus me versus [RB] Matt [Breida], versus [RB] Jeff [Wilson Jr.]. It's we're all together. We're all in this together. And that's why I wanted to let him know, hey, I got your back. IGYB. That's our motto in the room. He looked at me and he said: I know you do. And then they took him off. Like I said, when I scored that following play, I threw up the "2-6" for him because I wanted him to know, hey, I told you I got your back no matter what. I know he has my back.”

One thing I believe three teams in the preseason, you never got discouraged to the point to saying I can't make it or -- you just kept coming back?

"I was a little discouraged in 2015 at the end of that year. I was with the Browns. My wife, she's from Cleveland. So, we thought that we had something in the bag, me making the roster. And then coming into training camp, preseason, had a little bit of an injury so I missed the last preseason game that year. And I thought I was on the roster. I made the roster, the 53-man roster. And then celebrated with my family. And then the next day I got cut. And so, having me go through that, it just made me stronger. I got immune to being cut. And I just wanted -- I wanted to show the world what I can do. And honestly it was just one of those things where I really had a talk with my wife and I was saying, what do you think should happen after that cut? And she basically said, hey, if you love your job, if you love this sport, you will do anything for it. And if you love what you do, you would do anything for it. And that was my philosophy from here on out."

When Head Coach Kyle and General Manager John came in in 2016, they held over a lot of guys, but they were highly drafted guys, do you remember the first conversation you had with Kyle and/or John when they came in here, and what led to you sticking around?

"You know, they basically told me that, hey, look, you know how it goes, just everybody's going to clean house, have their own guys come in and stuff like that. And they talked to me and they basically said, hey, look, we believe in you; we're going to give you opportunity but it's up to you how you want to spend that opportunity. And I took that to heart because like I said I was already on six different teams. And it was one of those things I was just like, hey, look, if they believe in me like they say they do, and I know they're a man of their word, and all I've got to do is show up and show out. And that's what I was able to do. And here I am today on this podium, just won the NFC Championship. And I did what I did out there. Like I said, I've got to thank them first and foremost for allowing me to be in a position I am in right now."

When was the last time you ran for 220 and four TDs?

"The last time was about like, what, 30 minutes ago. [Laughter]."

I meant before today.

"Never, honestly."

High school?

"High school. No, I didn't even get it in high school like that. I was a receiver coming out. And I made that transition to running back my junior year of college. After that, honestly, maybe against Illinois 2014, had 100 like 15 rushes on like six carries, something like that, two touchdowns. That was probably like my biggest game."

When you came here, even when you found a team that, as you said, believed in you, were there times early on here where you thought I'm a good special teams player and that's my role in the NFL, that's what I'll be?

"Even back in college my freshman year I led the nation in kickoff return average. And it was one of those things where I knew I had a knack for special teams and, yeah, I knew that if I was going to make it in this league I'd have to take care of special teams. And every coach -- I still talk to coaches on opposing teams and they tell me, hey, look, man, I'm sorry what happened to you. Sorry, it goes a long with me but at the same time I'm in the position I'm in because of you, for you believing in me and ultimately me believing in myself. And I knew I had to come in, special teams, once John and Kyle had got hired, I knew I had to play a role and contribute on teams in order to make the roster. And it didn't stop there for me. I wanted more."

**49ers WR Deebo Samuel
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers**

Offensively, you guys didn't score on that first drive, but on the next drive you pull in a pass over a defender and then you guys continued to will yourself on them. What about that play got it going?

"All it takes is one play for our team, as you can see. I just make the plays and then they come our way, no matter who's passing or who's running. You just have to go out there and execute like we're supposed to do."

You guys weren't passing the ball too much today with only eight passes. What was that like to go out there and spring 49ers RB Raheem Mostert and all those guys for the long runs with your blocking?

"I mean, I think our mentality is, 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it.' I ain't got no problem going out there and being scrappy with the defense and blocking for the running back. They do it for us when we have a pass thrown down."

When you see your running back Raheem Mostert go for 200-plus yards on the ground, what was that like?

"Man, it was crazy. It seemed like every run he did, he was about to score every time. I was just out there going crazy. It was an amazing feeling."

When did you realize that you guys kind of imposed yourself on them. It seemed like by the second quarter that you guys had them right where you wanted them.

"Everybody was just engaged. We could feel the energy. I don't even know how to explain the feeling right now."

**49ers WR Emanuel Sanders
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers**

Talk how the team can when any way, you only through the ball eight times?

"Yes, I only had one target, and I'm not upset with that. I told myself, if I'm not going to get the ball, I might as well go out here and be a bully. I kind of turned into a bully, I started to enjoy blocking. Sometimes I actually like that aspect of it. When they brought me over here, they knew what is in my heart. They know I am going to be an incredible teammate and I am going to do whatever I have to do to help this team win. If it is going in and blocking, and if it is playing special teams, whatever I got to do, I am here to help."

You talked a lot about how loose you guys were coming into this, everybody relaxed, does that allow you guys to play free?

"I know we were going to play free. When you know who you are you don't have to panic, you don't have to stress, you don't have to worry about the pressure. Even last night I slept like a baby. This morning when I woke up it just felt like another regular season game, even though I knew the magnitude of the game. I think that is just confidence in the Coach [Kyle Shanahan], the GM [John Lynch], and my brothers, and myself. We still have to go out there and win it. Miami is going to be fun, but at the same time we going there and it is a business trip."

**49ers CB Richard Sherman
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers**

Another game-sealing interception in the NFC Championship.

“Right.”

Walk us through the moment?

“They ran a corner post. We were in quarters. I just kept running. I knew it wasn't necessarily my responsibility, but I knew he was going to take the shot there and go for the gusto. Just wanted to track the ball down, give us a chance. I was tracking. I thought it was kind of out of my reach for a while. I was going to go for the bat down. And, as I got my feet under me, I noticed I could get under it and I was able to do it.”

What makes this so special for you? Seems like you're pretty emotional. And why are you guys so special?

“It's a long road. And, there's a lot of work that goes into it. A lot of things that you don't see, a lot of unspoken things, a lot of work away from the cameras. You guys see the games. You don't see the hours and hours of work. The hours and hours of study. The hours and hours of treatment, pain, overcoming pain. The nights at home you don't even get to spend with your kids because you're trying to get your knee back or hamstring back or your back. And your kids sitting there rubbing on you trying to make you feel better. People don't understand the sacrifice that goes into being great at this game. They see the games and they're like they won or lost, but regardless, guys sacrifice. Those guys in Green Bay, they put a lot of sacrifice into it throughout the season. They deserve to be there. They earned their right to be there. And no matter what, win, lose, draw, you sacrifice. You give up your body and your time and your health and your mind. You're usually somewhere between going psychotic and you're locked in, you know what I mean? Because, it's such a crazy edge you've got to be on. That's why it's a little emotional. You get to appreciate it a little more.”

You guys won games a lot of different ways this year but in the postseason since you got back to the complementary thing, what's it about this style with the defense and the run game that works so well in the postseason?

“It's just [head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] and [defensive coordinator Robert] Saleh. They designed this thing perfectly. People sit there and say, ‘Oh, well, you don't have a great back.’ We have a stable of great backs. ‘You don't have a great receiver.’ We have four great receivers, five great receivers, you know what I mean? We have great tight end play. It's about people fitting in your system, fitting in what you do. And, I think that's sometimes where people get confused. They're, like, ‘Oh, my God, these guys have All-Pros here and All-Pros there.’ That's for the media, you know what I mean? If you could pick the perfect people for what Kyle does, you'd pick the guys we've got. And that's over just about anybody in the league. And you can see why. Raheem still playing special teams, he ran for 200 in the NFC Championship. There's a ton of elite backs that have come through this league and played in big games. I can't remember a back going for that much. And he's unheralded, but he's perfect for this scheme. He's perfectly built and designed to do what Kyle needs him to do. And for some people -- another scheme he may not be effective, he may be a regular Joe. But in this, he's one of the best backs in this league. And, that's what you can appreciate that Kyle and [general manager] John [Lynch] and Saleh and [special teams coordinator Richard] Hightower, they picked the guys they wanted specifically. They were very specific about their wants and needs. [WR] Deebo Samuel, could he do what he's doing in this offense in another offense? Who knows? But, that's why Kyle picked him. He knew what he was looking for and what he wanted him to do and he was thriving.”

Did you creep up on them by playing more on the right side there?

"I did what my coach told me to do. Plan was to play over there for a few series to just give them something to think about and then go back to our normal status quo defense. I think it worked. There were a few plays where they ran double moves, where I think they wanted me to be on the other side and I was on that side. And, there were plays where I think we confused them just with where we were on the field and how I was moving. But, it was fun. It's always fun to play and mix it up a little bit."

We asked Jimmy Ward how long he was going to wait before he started looking ahead to Kansas City and Patrick Mahomes and I thought he would say 24 hours. He said tonight. Go home and watch it tonight. Did you expect that kind of outlook from you guys?

"Guys aren't just happy to be here. Guys are playing to win. So, guys are going to treat it like a game they're trying to win. And, they're not sitting here like, 'My God, let's celebrate we're in the Sugar Bowl.' Why go if you're not trying to win? We're going to prepare for a great opponent. They have a prolific offense, a great quarterback, a great trio of receivers, a good back, a good O-Line. We have a huge challenge and we look forward to that. You would have it no other way, a great offense, a great team. We're looking forward to the challenge."

Was there a level of confidence that you matched up well with the Packers?

"Yeah, there was a ton of confidence. We took our starters out in the fourth quarter of that game. It could have been worse. We knew that. I think they were trying to pump themselves up, hype themselves up out there, talking about a revenge game like they weren't coming in with an advantage into that game. We were coming off of a battle with Seattle and they were coming off a Bye. So, saying pay back and saying, 'When you stay ready you don't gotta get ready.' They were trying to hype themselves up. Like, man, we're going to be ready this time. You weren't ready the first time, and that was in front of the whole country. It was a Sunday Night game, not just a middle-of-the-day 1 o'clock game. And it bothered us. They're, like, 'Oh, my God, we're going to be ready this time.' Like, do you not take the game seriously? When do we not take games seriously in the regular season? If you won that one, you would have had the 1 seed. We would have been going to Green Bay. But, it wasn't that big a deal. You were going to be ready for this time. Story for a different day."

Could you talk about the balance between the fun that everybody has in the locker room versus this seriousness that happens on the field?

"Yeah, I mean we keep it fun. We keep it loose. There were a few people that came in our locker room for the first time throughout the week and they were like, 'Man, this is the loosest locker room.' You would think this is a winning team. But, that's the difference. That's the difference when you're confident, when you know what you're playing for, when you know what you're doing, when you're locked in. You don't have to sit there serious and worry and sit there with anxiety. You can enjoy, let your hair down because you know you're putting the work in. You put the work in every single day and you're prepared. Now, when you're not prepared and you're nervous, you sit there locked in, quiet. No music in the locker room. Let's be locked in. But, that's not our team. We have a bunch of guys who enjoy this game and play it in a way that brings us a lot of joy, the receiving corps especially. They're a fun group and they're enjoying the ride, but they're still locked in. They're making huge plays."

What perspective can you put on being back on the big stage, personally for yourself, and for your team to carry forth to Miami?

"It's always awesome to fight hard and everybody wants to be standing at the end. But, it doesn't matter unless you win the game. It could be the best day in your life if you win. It can be the worst day if you lose. That's the perspective that I'll keep putting through to these guys, somebody who has been there who has won and lost. We've got to put in the work. It's not a holiday. It's not a vacation. I'm sure it will be good for the families. It will be cool for everybody's experience, get their phones out, get the

Instagram videos and all that. But at the end of the day, it's going to be a challenging game and it's going to be a dogfight.”

Do you think -- you mentioned about respect last week. Do you think after today's victory, does the respect increase? Where is it at now?

“No, I don't think the respect increases. I think we've got to go out there and win one more and even then, I don't know if the respect will be there, but doesn't matter. You get the trophy.”

49ers T Joe Staley
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers

You have been on this road before, what makes this team more special than the past?

“This is like everybody coming to work. The attitude that everybody has every single day. There are no egos. Everybody generally pulls for each other. No one cares about what credit that they get. [49ers QB] Jimmy [Garoppolo] doesn't care if he throws for 300 yards or what did he pass today for 50-60? He doesn't care and same with the running backs. [49ers TE George] Kittle is a superstar and he could care less about his stats. Top to bottom everybody just wants to pull for each other and win. It is just a special bunch.”

When the touchdown was scored you and 49ers T Mike McGlinchey broke into a dance.

“Yes. I don't know what that was. I saw that on the screen afterwards. I didn't even remember doing that. I was just pumped.”

How much fun was that for you guys?

“We didn't think it was going to happen again because we have been running the ball 47 times the week before, that is pretty rare in the NFL. We felt like we were able to control the game in the run game. The offensive line was coming off the ball really well, running backs were hitting it, and as long as they weren't stopping it, we just were going to continue with it.”

Can you explain what this team has become?

“We are a team that can win any kind of way. We have proven that throughout the season. We have had a game where we had to score 48 points to win on the road in New Orleans against a really good New Orleans Saints team. We had a game where we had 47 and 42 rushes in the playoffs. We can do anything and our defense is smothering. We play really great team football. Our special teams have been playing solid all year. This is a really hard team to play against and hard to beat.”

49ers DL Solomon Thomas
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers

It's real simple to say this, but much harder to do, to make a team one-dimensional like you guys did with the Vikings last week with the big lead. It felt like that's what you guys went out, and when the game was on the line, you guys did that defensively.

“Our plan was to come out and overwhelm them defensively. We didn't want them to run the ball or get into their game plan, and we did that. Our work in practice, our preparation with film, all of that paid off.”

On the other side of the ball, I know that's not what you're doing firsthand, but when you've got a running back going 160 yards in the first half, and your quarterback throws the ball six times in the first half, that just says a lot, doesn't it?

"Our O-line, our receivers, our quarterback, running backs, [49ers RB Raheem Mostert], they played lights out. They work their tail off every day. There's a reason why they performed the way that they did. [Head Coach Kyle Shanahan] made a game plan, it all paid off and it worked out. This team is amazing, and we're going to continue to be amazing."

It feels like the scary thing about this team is that you guys have won so many different ways that the minute that they think there is some character about you, you guys show up with something different coming for the Super Bowl.

"We know how to win a game. We've played in close games, games where we're down, games where we're up, high scoring games, low scoring games, crazy weather games, normal weather. We know how to win in any circumstance. We know how to win against the biggest teams, and the biggest team is in a couple of weeks, so we have to go out there and win that."

You guys have a little downtime for fun and then you have to start thinking about Super Bowl LIV.

"We're going to enjoy this one for 24 hours and then back to preparation. We've got to get back to getting ready for the Chiefs."

**49ers LB Fred Warner
Press Conference – January 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers**

Will the injury prevent you from playing?

"We'll see. See the trainers. No, I'm playing."

What is it the feeling like when it's almost there?

"It's still kind of surreal. I mean the stuff this team's gone through, this organization, it's special. This is the pinnacle of football right here. And for me to experience this as early in my career as I'm going to be, it's a loss for words."

Can you kind of describe the feeling when you know Green Bay Packers QB Aaron Rodgers is sitting back there throwing a ton of darts and trying to stage a comeback, what's your feeling when you're trying to defend that?

"Just trying to eliminate big plays, just trying to get him to check the ball down short so we can rally. But that's one of the best to ever do it. He kept his team in the game. Much respect to Aaron and the Packers. They've had an outstanding season, but I think we out-executed today."

Past couple of weeks you guys have gotten healthy on defense. How much do you feel you're back to where you were, maybe even better than where you were?

"Yeah, health, that's huge. Having everybody back, you kind of see the result of that. I feel we could have been so much cleaner today in a lot of areas. We had a great first half shutting them out. But trying to stay on top of it, we'll be back to work tomorrow."

Looking forward to digging into Kansas City Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs, or are you going to let that happen in a couple of days?

"For sure we're looking forward to it. Our mindset all season was we expected to be here. And we are going to enjoy tonight and get back to work tomorrow."

You've gone against them last year. What were your initial thoughts, takeaways from that game?

"A lot of speed on that offense. They have a lot of playmakers. Obviously, Patrick Mahomes is outstanding, a great talent. And so we'll have our hands full for sure."

CB Emmanuel Moseley got the big early interception. How big was that in terms of setting a tone, and what do you think about his journey as an undrafted guy?

"Yeah, man, just super happy for him. That's my guy. We came in together. And he's had to scratch and claw his way into the role he has now. And, I mean, I got so much respect for him, the way he comes to work day in and day out, making the big play in the biggest moment to get our team that momentum. Can't say any more about him. The guy's outstanding. We're going to keep riding."

You probably haven't gone against RB Raheem Mostert since training camp. What's it like when he's running outside like that and you have to go to the sideline and try to beat him to that spot?

"Me and him are about the same speed. So pretty easy. No, I mean, the dude is- it's just so crazy to think about. I don't know every little detail about his journey, but I know it's a tough one. The fact that he's come out and been the type of player he's been throughout his career, but especially this year, the dude has world-class speed. And he showcases that every game day."

**Packers Head Coach Matt LaFleur
Press Conference – January 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers**

Opening comments:

"Just want to start out and congratulate the San Francisco 49ers. They played well today and we didn't play well enough. I told our guys that going into these types of games we know that the ball was going to be a big part of whoever was going to win this game, and we didn't win the turnover margin. And then, the other thing that we knew they were going to try to do was run the football. They absolutely got after us in the run game and it was not good enough, but I'll tell you what, if there's one thing that I can say about our team is these guys are a bunch of fighters and you don't always get that. When you're down 27-nothing and these guys kept battling. I just can't tell you how much that means to myself, to our staff. These guys care about one another. That's why it hurts so bad, because we've accomplished a lot of great things this season and ultimately, at the end of the year, only one team is going to be happy. For us not to finish it, it hurts, but I love this team. I love what these guys are all about and I really appreciate them."

What happened to your run defense today?

"Yeah, I'm going to have to go back and look at it, because it was not good enough. They definitely did some things schematically to us. Caught us in man coverage a couple of times, and hit us with a reverse and around, but for the most part it seemed like we were playing a good bit of single safety defense, and when you're in single high, you shouldn't be able to run the ball like that. I think I looked up one time and saw that [49ers RB Raheem] Mostert had 20 carries for 200 yards, and that is not going to get it done. Not in this league, especially when you know that they're going to try to run the football coming into this game."

In the first half though, I think ESPN had him for 109 of his yards before contact. I know you have to look at the tape, but what does that tell you if he's getting that much yardage before he's even being touched?

"That we're not being physical enough and we're not coaching something right. Like I said, I'm going to have to go back and relook at the tape, but it just wasn't good enough."

Did you see a difference in the speed of the two teams in some key positions, running back, D-line, receiver?

“Well, that is a pretty fast and physical team. There’s no doubt about it. You look at that defense, and that’s what they’re predicated on, is just the whole philosophy of that defense, especially with that front seven, the linebackers, is they want speed, and they are a fast team. You look at their running backs, all their backs can run and shoot, their wide outs run really well, tight end, O-line, their O-linemen. That is a fast team, and they were better, and faster and more physical than us tonight.”

Is that something you feel like you need to do in the offseason, is to get faster at some of those spots?

“Yeah, I think so, but that’s something that we’ll take a look at. You always want as much speed as you can have.”

You said the game was about the ball. What did you think of Packers QB Aaron Rodgers’ performance the first half? He had the interception and there were two fumbles on the ground. I don’t know if, how you look at center muff exchanges or things like that, but what did you think of his performance?

“Yeah, I thought he was under some duress. You’ve got to give them credit. They switched up a couple of tendencies on third down and we didn’t have good plays called for a couple of those early third-down situations. That’s a credit to them, but I thought overall, I thought he played really well. He hung in there. He was making throws. I thought he was competing. He was giving us a chance at the end of the game.”

Speaking of third downs, they go three-and-out their opening drive, you guys seemed to kind of get rolling offensively and then, what was it, third-and-three, was that one of the plays where they had a really good call on for what you had called?

“Yeah, we tried to catch them with a quick play around the huddle where we just get it lined up and go, and we got the completion and a flat. Typically, you think usually when you throw a flat route you’re going to get a minimum of three, maybe anywhere six yards, and we got two. And so, it just, it wasn’t good enough. Again, I’ve got to go back and look at why it didn’t work out, but that was obviously a big play just because if you can start fast, we knew that was going to be important, to start fast, and if you go down and score maybe you have a different game. I don’t know, but that one hurt us.”

You had some young players, Green Bay Packers S Darnell Savage, I’m not picking on anybody, but there were some young guys that they took a bad angle, and maybe guys jumped out of their gaps. I know you need to look at the tape, but did you sense maybe guys were a little overhyped at the beginning, maybe trying to do too much early?

“You know, I don’t know that I necessarily know if I thought that. I just know we didn’t play well enough. So, until I go back and look at it, it’s tough for me to answer that question.”

Is the game changing at all in the last year, or just even this season with the need to stop the run maybe more than, I don’t know, a year, or two or three years ago?

“I think it just depends how you’re built. I mean, you look at the Niners and they’ve got a great defense and it’s tough to score a lot of points on them, especially when they’re at full strength like they were tonight. And so, they rely on that and that’s why I had a pretty good feeling of how this game was going to play out in terms of what they were going to try to get done, and we didn’t stop them.”

At what point are you going to be able to, obviously you’re angry and disappointed now, at what point are you going to be able to look at this season and say, holy crap we, in a first-year program, we got to within a game of the Super Bowl?

"I don't know. I mean, like I said there's only one team happy at the end of the year and we did a lot of great things, but ultimately, the goal is to win the Super Bowl and if you don't you're going to be disappointed. You know how hard it is to get to this point. It's extremely difficult and we had a lot of things go our way. We won a lot of tight ball games this year. We stayed really healthy and I thought we had a chance to get that done, and when you come up short it's just, it's disappointing."

You won a lot of games, but they got you pretty good twice now. How far do you think you have to go to get from where you are right now to basically where they are?

"Yeah, I think we have a ways to go, obviously. I mean, they got after us, like you said two games. They're, right now, they're the gold standard in the NFC. So, we're going to have to look at certain things that we're asking our guys to do. I always think it starts with the coaching, we're going to have to ask our guys to do things they can do, and the guys are going to have to work hard this offseason to have a chance to get back here."

At training camp you had a guy who was your number two receiver, and I don't even know if he played from scrimmage tonight. You had another guy who was coming back from an injury, and had an up and down year. Do you and Packers General Manager Brian Gutekunst have to do on offense kind of what you guys did on defense this offseason, and really add some pieces there do you think?

"I think any time after a season you're always trying to add pieces to your team. So, I think we'll have a good chance to kind of go back and look at all the tape, and kind of see where we're at, and see what areas we need to improve upon."

You may have addressed this, but the sense was all week that you guys had a really good feel for them after playing them the first time, that that experience would help and obviously, it didn't translate tonight. Why do you think it didn't translate?

"Again, I've got to go back and watch the tape in terms of why they were able to just rip through us with their rushing attack. I thought we made some uncharacteristic mistakes as well from the offensive side of the ball. I mean, shoot we fumbled a kickoff. That hadn't happened all year. So, I mean we recovered it but just mishandled it and so, there was definitely some uncharacteristic things that happened but ultimately, I really think this game was about two things. It was the inability to stop the rushing attack and then, the turnovers."

You guys were down already 17-nothing at the time of the turnovers. Do you look at what you weren't able to do defensively and say you can't win a game when a quarterback only throws the ball eight times? I mean, is that another part of this where you don't even force San Francisco 49ers QB Jimmy Garoppolo to do much?

"Yeah, I mean they totally didn't even have to play for much at all. They converted a couple third-downs and he had a couple big passes, but for the most part it was just, it was won on the ground. I thought there was a chance when it was 17-nothing and we started to get our act together offensively, and we were driving and then we had just the fumbled exchange, which shoot I don't think we had one of those all season. So, that definitely hurt us, and it gave them a lot of momentum and then, I think they converted that turnover into points as well. I think it was 20-nothing at that point. Then, we came back and threw a pick and then it was 27-nothing. It was too big of a hole to climb out of and I told the guys at half time just take it one play at a time. Just keep fighting and that's why I'm really proud of our group, because they did. They did that. I didn't see anybody quit. I didn't see anybody blink. I didn't see any guys pointing fingers. I thought they stuck together and that tells me a lot about our team, and the kind of character and resiliency that we have. We've got a bunch of good guys that are really hurting right now, and any time that a season like this comes to an end it's going to hurt. Hopefully, we use it as motivation for the future, and try to get back to this point and then do something about it."

**Packers QB Aaron Rodgers
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers**

Why do you think the first half of the game was debilitating to the offense?

“Not getting that first third down didn’t quite help for sure. We just weren’t very consistent in the first half. I made a couple of mistakes, personally, that hurt us. We kind of let it get away from us.”

Did you feel the botched snap was the turning point tonight?

“It didn’t help. We could’ve cut that to two scores there at a minimum. It was like the fourth down snap the first time we played them. It was a big turning point.”

Why do you think you were able to get Packers WR Davante Adams involved so much better in the second half than in the first?

“I’m not sure. It wasn’t like they did a bunch of new stuff. They brought back the blitz that they showed a few months ago, but there wasn’t a whole lot of different stuff.”

How big do you think the gap is between you and them?

“It looks pretty big. They got us a couple of times, but I don’t think it’s that big. I think we’re really close. We’re just a little more consistent performance away from consistently playing with these guys. We got them at their place twice. I’ve said this before, but we’ve got to get one of these at home. It’s different ballgame playing in 20-degree weather with snow, cold and wind. It’s a different type of game to play in.”

You’ve been in the conference finals four times. When you lose does it take on more of a sense of urgency than when you were younger?

“Yeah. It’s a little raw right now for sure. It definitely hurts a little more than earlier in the career just because you realize how difficult it is to get to this spot. With all of the changes this offseason, the installation of a new system and a new program, to get to this point you feel like it was something special because it just didn’t really make sense. We weren’t picked by most people to win our division, but we found a way to not only do that but to win a home playoff game and get to this spot. It just kind of felt like it was meant to be almost, so that was a little bit disappointing. It’s a little more disappointing when you realize that I don’t have the same number of years ahead of me as I do behind me.”

Do you have a little more hope coming out of this than out of Atlanta in 2016 because the team is so young now?

“It’s a different feeling. I just remember in those moments the emotion compared to this. I feel really confident with [Packers General Manager] Brian Gutekunst and the job he’s done with his staff. They went all in as much as they could this year with the pieces they’ve brought in. I’m confident that he’s going to continue to add to his squad. To that part it is very exciting.”

Do you guys need more weapons on this offense?

“I just think the way things went today were just a microcosm of our season. The inefficiency caught up to us and put us in rough spots. I love our guys and the pieces that we put together. I think we need to continue to find those niche guys like [Packers RB] Tyler Ervin. [Packers T] Jared Veldheer. [Packers TE] Mercedes Lewis. There are a lot of guys I’d like to see back. [Packers T] Bryan Bulaga. Those guys are really important to our success. The one thing that is constant in this game is change, and I know there will be some changes this offseason. The excited thing is I have a lot of faith and trust in Brian and his staff. I think [Packers head coach] Matt LaFleur deserves a lot of credit for the way that we performed week in and week out. He even set the vision every week. Very simple messaging. With his

leadership and empowering guys the way that he did, and with Brian adding pieces as he did this offseason and will continue to do, the window is open for us. That's the exciting thing. It doesn't make this feel any easier, but that is very exciting moving forward."

How much is left to put into the offense?

"We really haven't gotten into the tempo stuff at all. That's just a product of personnel and the way that the installation went. The scheme is there. The scheme that Matt and his staff put together this week was fantastic. The execution and the moving pieces will continue to improve. Like I said, the window is open, and I think we'll be on the right side of these things real soon."

What makes you believe you guys are close compared to what happened in two games against San Francisco?

"Leadership. It's the two guys that I mentioned. Brian and his staff, and Matt LaFleur. What he's done with his own staff is fantastic. He values that leadership aspect, and I know Brian does as well. That's what you can't have enough Mercedes Lewis' on the roster. [Packers LB] B.J. Goodsen. Tyler Ervin. Jared Veldheer. [Packers LB] Preston Smith. [Packers LB] Za'Darius Smith. [Packers S] Adrian Amos. [Packers G] Billy Turner. These are some serious moves that they made. Allowing Matt to put it all together and empower the guys, that's what made this special. It's a close-knit group. The pieces are in place. Last year, I felt like we really needed to reload. Obviously we were 6-9-1. Now it's just adding two and keeping the framework of the leadership in place. I feel good about our team moving forward and our organization."

What happened on the fumbled snap?

"I'm not sure, I have to go back and watch it. I'm not sure if I pulled out too early or if the snap was short. It's a bad feeling."

What happened on the first interception with Packers WR Geronimo Allison?

"We were just on different pages there. I threw the ball a little behind him. That wasn't a great throw. We weren't on the same page."

Knowing how hard it is to get to this level, does that accentuate in your mind your football mortality, for lack of a better word?

"I don't know if it does that. You realize how difficult it is to get here. The beauty of this sport is that it's a true team sport. You rely on so many other people. As we move into the offseason, the reliance is on guys doing their responsibilities and doing their part to be ready for next season. Who knows what can happen. It's a long year, but this one will always be special because it became fun again."

You said this one became fun again. How long had it been since you had the kind of fun you've been having with this team?

"Every team is different. Every room is different. Adding those guys that I mentioned made it fun. A lot of fun. I've had some great quarterback rooms over the years. Matt Flynn. Graham Harrell. Brett Hundley. We've had a lot of fun, but this year was a lot of fun."

**Packers WR Davante Adams
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers**

Can you describe the emotions of how this game played out?

"It's tough to describe. It's hard to get here three times and come up short. We just didn't play the game the right way. We didn't come out hard to start. We didn't play fast like we usually do when we do well."

We knew what he had to do. We didn't win the ball and that's tough when you play games like this. It's tough to be down the way we were and come back. The San Francisco 49ers run the ball really well and they have a really good defense. We dropped the ball."

Let's take a step back. The Green Bay Packers miss the playoffs two years in a row. You rebuild the coaching staff in the offseason and win the division. Is it more bittersweet that you come up one game short of the Super Bowl?

"One game or two, it sucks either way. You either get the trophy or you don't. Obviously as far as we've come and as much as we've done, it sucks to come up short. That's just how it goes. There's just one winner in the end. If you don't take care of business, you will be eliminated."

What do you think about the future of this team and guys in this locker room?

"I love my guys. I love my coaches and everything. I wouldn't change anything about what we have going here other than winning the game. We have all of the pieces in here. We've got the players, we've got the coaching, we've got the right attitude. Everybody has that sour taste in their mouths so hopefully we can use this as fuel going forward into next year."

How about Packers Head Coach Matt LaFleur and how he led the team in his first year? How much hope does that give you for the future of this franchise?

"It gives us a lot of hope. Every game is tough to win in this league, especially when you're a brand new head coach coming in with a whole new scheme. Everything was new. You start from scratch and to be in this position and competing for a championship, it was awesome."

**Packers K Mason Crosby
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers**

What happened out there today?

"Obviously, that wasn't how we drew it up. We looked like we came out there pretty well to start as we got the San Francisco 49ers three-and-out. We started moving the ball and they took advantage of a few opportunities to jump out at us. The type of team we are though, we tried to make a comeback in the second half. We just didn't do what we needed to do in the second half."

There were so many changes in the offseason. The Green Bay Packers go from not making the playoffs for two years in a row to winning the division. The fact that you came up one game short of the Super Bowl probably makes this bittersweet?

"Once you get in the postseason, unless you win the Super Bowl, it always hurts when it ends early. You see it and it's right there in front of you. You can taste it and feel all of the stuff leading up to it. We felt we had the guys in this locker room to get it done, but give the San Francisco 49ers credit for playing a great game. They were flawless and really played solid tonight and all year. You have to give them credit, but it hurts. We'll reflect on how this one feels and what this season was. There are a lot of positives that we can draw from it. In this coming week, we'll look at those things and make sure we don't lose sight of what we did accomplish this year."

You can appreciate how hard it is to get to these games and what was accomplished. What's the difference between the teams that get here and the ones that get here and are able to finish strong?

"The way the San Francisco 49ers played in the first half. They played on all cylinders and didn't make any mistakes. They had what it took, especially in the first half to get to the next one. We tried to claw back in the second half and show what kind of team we were. It's so hard to get here. A lot of guys in

this locker room laid it all on the line and a lot of guys are tired. As you get older and have played for a long time, these games hurt a little bit more every time you don't get to that Super Bowl."

Packers DL Dean Lowry
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers

Did you feel a little bit helpless like they had a step on you or had an edge?

"It was just poor execution on our part. We know they were going to come out and run the football. We couldn't stop it. It was tough. It was a big part of the loss today."

As a competitor do you come in here and say what could we have done?

"We had to stop the run. There's no secret to that. Like I said, they came in from the first series and made no secret about it. It was also a combination of things like poor tackling, poor angles, guys out of their gaps and we have to fix that."

What made this Green Bay Packers team special? What will you take away when you think about his team?

"I think everything from the locker room to the fight we had throughout the season. After the first time we played here this season, we came out and won six straight games. We were looking good, but today we just didn't have it and there's no excuse for that."

Packers LB Blake Martinez
Postgame Quotes – November 24, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers

What is the most frustrating part about tonight's game?

"All across the board, it was little mistakes here and there. It was understanding situations for me. There are certain things that are easy to fix. We just did not make those corrections throughout the game."

Is this loss similar to your loss against the Los Angeles Chargers?

"In a sense it was similar. It was a back and forth thing where we couldn't make a play or our offense couldn't make a play. There was no momentum shift throughout the game."

How surprised are you, coming off of a Bye Week, having so much time to prepare and playing like this?

"I'm definitely surprised. I think, just starting the game off, we didn't do the things obviously necessary to get the momentum in our favor and they got the ball on the two yard line. We always want to make a stop in those situations. The game just started in a bad way for us."

There's a chance that you will see the San Francisco 49ers again here. How much do you want to see them again especially here?

"We definitely want to see them again. We are competitors and we want to be able to show our true selves. I don't think today was our true self."

Packers LB Preston Smith
Postgame Quotes – December 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers

What happened with the rush defense today?

“Those guys capitalized off of our mistakes. They made some big plays when their number was called. We just have to look at the film and be critical of ourselves so that next year we don’t have these same problems and these same mistakes. We have to eliminate them for next season.”

When you see the just eight passing attempts and they put a number like that on the scoreboard just running the ball, does that sting a little extra as a defense?

“I guess so. A loss is a loss no matter how it happens. When we look back at it, we know there are a lot of things we can improve on and a lot of things we can work on for next season. This off season we can improve on some technical aspects and go out and execute a whole lot better next year.”

Is that a way to neutralize the pass rush when you just drop back eight times? Does it make it easier to run the ball?

“I’m not going to say that. We just need to make adjustments. That was something we did not do, but now we know and as we go on to next year we’ll be able to fix these situations when we are in them.”

It was rough today, but when you look back what made this team special through the course of the year?

“We fought to the end. We were resilient. We never gave up no matter what the circumstances were. At one point in the game, we were down huge and our guys kept fighting. No one ever gave up. When we were on the field we had an attack mindset. We just did not execute to the level that we are known for. We didn’t play to the level that we are known for and those guys did. They played a great game. They had a lot of big plays. They ran the score up on us and they did a good job of stopping the run and it showed tonight.”

**Packers CB Tramon Williams
Postgame Quotes – January 19, 2020
NFC Championship Game
San Francisco 49ers vs. Green Bay Packers**

Can you explain what the Green Bay Packers were trying to do to stop the bleeding?

“I can’t really explain it. The San Francisco 49ers threw eight passes and the rest were runs. The first rule of football is to stop the run and we weren’t able to do that. Obviously, they’re a very good team. You have to give them credit first and foremost. They’re a very good team. We knew that coming in. We felt we could come in here and win this game. We knew we had to play a lot better and we didn’t do that.”

After all of the build-up and anticipation for a game like this, to look up at the scoreboard and see 27-0 at the half, how do you handle it?

“It’s tough, but this group has been resilient all year. We never pointed any fingers. We came in and were optimistic we could make a comeback, even though we knew it was going to be tough against this team. We came out in the second half and fought. Obviously, it wasn’t good enough, but that’s what you want to see in a team. You want to see the fight and we showed the fight today. But we’re not in the business of fighting, we’re in the business of winning and it wasn’t good enough.”

You know how hard it is to get to this point. How quickly can this team come back to this point?

“It can be a consistent thing. Obviously, it’s hard to say. It’s hard to come back to these games. I’ve been to four NFC Championship Games in 14 years. I guess that’s good in some people’s books, but from my standpoint, we expect to be there every year. I feel like we can get back there. The offense will

be better next year and the defense should be better next year. We'll have to go into the offseason and put in the work and see what happens and see what develops."