

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

# TRANSCRIPTIONS



**General Manager John Lynch and Head Coach Kyle Shanahan  
Press Conference – April 28, 2018  
San Francisco 49ers  
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**John Lynch Opening Comments:**

JL: “Really feel like we got better as a football team today. It was a long day, but I think we all have learned over the years, learned last year in particular, getting really what we saw as three starters in [WR] Trent Taylor, who played in our sub package, [TE] George Kittle, [DB] Adrian Colbert. You get guys who start and play for your team, you have the opportunity to do that. And so, we take every one of these picks seriously. We're proud of what we did today. You know, going down the line, [DL] Kentavious [Street] is a guy that, you know, in these deals you think both short-term and you think long-term. You look at your entire roster. One of the areas that we kind of came into this draft with was the idea of a big end who plays over the tight end and a three-technique, that kind of versatility and getting a little bigger and he's a guy who provides that for us. He's a guy, again, not a projection because we've seen him play both spots and play both spots really well. Did a lot of research on him. We really had him as a, if you took away the injury, a third-round rated guy for us. So, when he was there, we felt like that was the best pick. [CB] D.J. Reed is a guy we're extremely excited about. We talk a lot about profiles, and you know, not the profile fit in terms of his height, interesting thing about him, he's about 5-9 and a half, but he's got 32-inch arms, so he kind of makes up for that. While he can play some nickel and free safety, we also think he can hold up at outside corner. He's done that at K-State. Another great punt returner. We've got a lot of those and that's a good thing. [S] Marcell Harris, he's a thumper at the safety position. The guy that, you know, has a presence on the field, has great tracking angles back there, makes his presence felt. Coming off an Achilles injury, but we feel is on pace to be ready for training camp. [DT] Jullian Taylor, another guy who adds size. Hard in the later rounds to find bigger defensive linemen that can play and we feel like we got that in Jullian Taylor from Temple. Finish it off with [WR] Richie James. This is a guy who we're really fond of as a staff. Played at Middle Tennessee State. Just a fearless player and has a lot of will that shows up on tape, has a little swagger to him and really happy to have all those guys a part of us.

**You talked about the picks from last year and how you were able to get them in and get a lot of contribution. How different are you guys this year compared to last year, where there's not as much need to plug in and play guys right away as there was last year?**

JL: "Yeah, you know, I think last year, [head coach] Kyle [Shanahan] and I kind of looked at it as almost not a blank canvas because we had some spots, but we were putting people in that they knew were going to have a great opportunity to play right away. I think we still felt like coming into this year there's pieces to be added to the puzzle, but it's going to be certainly more competitive and that's what you want on your team. You want competition at every position. You also have to fill numbers at each position, both in the short and long-term, and we feel really happy with where we came out in terms of that with this year's draft."

**Can you talk about strong safety? Obviously S Jaquiski Tartt is your starter there and you have S Chancellor James from last year. Where is he with the ACL and is Harris, you're looking at Harris at that position?**

JL: "Yeah, Chancellor is doing very well in his rehab, but again is kind of on pace for that training camp. Chancellor is a guy you've got to pull back, pull the reins on, because he wants to go all the time. We were very impressed with him. But, we kind of had slots open at safety and wanted to fill some there. We felt like Marcell Harris was a guy who kind of fits what we want out of that strong safety position, really good. Safeties, if you're not a starter, you'd better be a good special teams player and he's a great one."

**When you draft a player who is rehabbing from a torn ACL, your fans go into orbit. That has not gone well. Can you allay their fears? I'm not sure if just because of the history here that that was your most popular pick?**

JL: "I think we're aware of that. We're not trying to make popular picks. We're trying to make good picks. We were very convicted that this was just that. We care about our fans. We love their input. We love their passion. We may have been told that, hey, about that history, sure, you know about it, but we can't let that affect us. We came in with our philosophies and we've got to stick true to those. We aren't looking for guys like that, but when you find a guy you really like, sometimes you've got to be patient and we're willing to be patient if it's worth it and we feel like it's worth it in this case."

Kyle Shanahan: "I'll say on that too, that is hard. It's hard for fans. It's hard for John. It's hard for coaches. You want to improve right away, so usually you can come up with a better decision or talk yourself into something else when you get to that spot. I think that shows how we felt about the player. You are trying to talk yourself into other spots because you want to add now. We get excited, just like everyone else does, but he was the best choice. Everyone has scars from their past, but I've only been on one team who has done that. We did that once, and we did it in Washington our last year there, and it was with [Washington Redskins RB] Chris Thompson. He was a guy we wanted in the second round, but he tore his ACL his last year and we got him in the fourth and I think that worked out. It didn't work out for us. We drafted him for some other people. But, I thought that was a good decision. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. We feel very happy that we got a real good player."

**What's your vision for Richie James?**

KS: "To bring him in and compete with everyone. He has the capability of doing a number of things. We'll probably start him out at 'X' because of his speed and size. I think he can play inside for us, too. He has the speed to run some of the similar routes that start with [WR] Marquise [Goodwin] and to give us some other options behind him. He can run and he plays physical, which we think that he can relate to special teams that way, also, which gives him a chance to make the team. You guys talking about the difference between this year and last year, it's hard, it was much harder this year to pick guys on the second day that we felt had a chance to make our team, so it wasn't just, hey, plug this guy in here. You've got to draft some guys who have some ability and who are good because the competition is a lot harder and that's something that we want. He was one of the better players available at the time and we want some guys who have chances to do it and he has the ability to be an NFL player and that's what excited us most about him?"

**Following up on that point just about the competition level being different, I remember last year seeing you after the draft and you said it's the land of opportunity and you've got all the undrafted guys in here real quick. What is your pitch to those guys this year? Is it much different?**

KS: "Yeah, I think everyone, those guys are smart. Their agents are, too, so everyone looks at rosters and they try to do it on their own and then you talk to them as coaches and scouts and everybody and you try to sell it. It's a lot harder this year than it was last year. They didn't know as many of the names last year. This year, we had a lot of rookies and some, we had a couple fifth-round guys have some success. We had some undrafted guys have some success, which I think excites people because they know we are willing to give those guys opportunities. But, now they also see that we have more depth on our roster than we did before. That's what our guys are working on right now and we'll see how many we can get. We're definitely happier that it's going to be a bigger challenge this year."

JL: "I'm chuckling because last year, the land of opportunity got a little out of control. I think we had 85 at our rookie mini-camp, our tryout camp. Served us well. We came out with Chancellor James and I think [OL] Richard Levy, didn't make it, but had some good players there. I think we'll be a little more tame with that, pull back the reins a little on our numbers. But, still a great opportunity for players in the tryout camp."

**You can sign eight, is that right, undrafted guys?**

KS: "No, you can sign whatever you want to fill up your 90-man roster and then we can have a tryout camp for whatever and whoever you like from that you can take as many as you want until it goes past 90 and then you've got to cut people."

**So, you'll probably sign fewer than eight and keep a couple spots open for guys that impress you?**

JL: "You can always adjust your roster later in terms of what you have to do to make that right, so we kind of have a slotted number of guys that we'll go attempt to get and you may have to adjust rosters accordingly."

**How often would you say throughout the three days you were caught off guard or surprised by something? Is there maybe an example of something in the last three days where you guys are going about whatever your strategies are for your upcoming pick and then something happens and all of a sudden you're either changing course or just wow I didn't expect that?**

JL: "That always happens in the draft. I will say, this year, you go through various exercises. You have a board that has every player in the draft rated. Kyle and I both fill out sheets that have our guys in each round, you know, so we do number grades. We don't grade by round. There's equivalence, but then we both take it and kind of independently say, hey, here is where we have the guys we would like at a given round and then we get together, kind of merge them. I think there's always surprises. Specific cases, I think too many of those. But really, for the most part, first I'd say three or four of those were guys we targeted, we wanted to come out of this draft with, and beyond that, it's a little more reactive later based upon what's happening with other teams. Early on, it proved out pretty well in terms of what we wanted to accomplish, and I would say throughout, but it does later. You have to have more, because as you get on deeper, there's more variables, so you adjust accordingly."

**I know you talked about what you are returning and guys you already have to improve along the edges in terms of production and getting after the passer. I think only two edge rushers went in the first round and then a number of guys ended up dropping to today that a lot of people thought would go yesterday. Was this class different than the outside world might have expected and why did you guys elect to not address that position?**

JL: "Those guys are difficult to find first and foremost. We felt like there were a couple guys who had an opportunity to be special there. You know, just where we were, we didn't have an opportunity or chose not to take them. I think one thing Kyle and I believe strongly in, is that there's a lot of pieces right here that if you just look at their history, you know, might give fans and whatnot pause. We believe there's opportunity. Part of this deal is you have to develop your own talent, so we believe that collectively we've got to get better as a unit. We've got to become better finishers. We believe we have that right within. Were we adverse to adding to it? Not at all. That's just kind of the way the draft fell. We're always looking to get better at every position. But, we do believe there's great room for growth with the guys we have and that's got to come alive. That's a challenge to them, it's a challenge to our coaches and it's a challenge to all of us. That's what this game is all about."

KS: "One thing people don't take into account, we talk about pass rush and there's nine D-Linemen allowed on our roster and there's eight D-Linemen up on game day, and look at all our D-Linemen. We have some pretty good players. Yeah, we'd love to add whoever the best pass rusher is on the outside in the draft. We'd love to get a [Denver Broncos OLB] Von Miller, but you only get eight up on game day and you only get nine on our roster. So, you just keep drafting rushers. You've got to be pretty good to beat out [DL Cassius] Marsh. You've got to be pretty good to beat out [DL Arik] Armstead. You don't just get guys. If you get them, someone else has got to get cut and we've got

a pretty good group. We're going to look to improve at every position all the time but people don't realize that it's not just, you don't just stockpile people, and hey, we've got 20 pass rushers, let's see which one turns up. You only get a few, and in order to bring one in, who are they replacing. We don't have guys that are just easy to replace. We've got a bunch of good players, and again, it's a good problem, but we'll always look for better but that's not an easy thing to do."

**Speaking of Armstead, have you made a decision about his fifth-year option, or G Laken Tomlinson?**

JL: "You know, we're deep into those decisions. We're going to finalize that and kind of let the draft play out here today and then I'm sure we'll be talking to you guys soon."

**Taylor, I noticed there's a couple plays on his film where he did very well against Notre Dame. I'm wondering if you've noticed him while you were watching T Mike McGlinchey's film?**

JL: "That happens a lot. There's guys that you always do. We did take note of that game because you're playing against real good competition. I would say with him, you saw, you get later in the rounds. I talked about one of the stated goals to get a little bigger where we could on the D-Line at those big end, three-technique positions and he's a guy who gives you that but also ran, I believe, a 4.89, so can move for a big boy and has some suddenness to him, so he was a guy we liked for that but you always take notice of that. That happens a lot. We'll be studying someone and somebody else keeps popping up and that's often times how you discover guys."

**What stood out about Jullian?**

JL: "You know, the size and speed. Kind of the profile there. We're picking in the seventh round and so not many players of his size and his abilities at that point. So we like that about Jullian and we didn't hesitate to make him a Niner."

KS: "You think about during the year, we talked about tackles at the Philly game and people are playing all of a sudden, and you know, we went through a time with D-Linemen which we had some depth last year, but there's a time where we had [DL Leger Douzable] Douz who just came off the street and he's our leading play time guy and he's playing inside doing a ton and he was valuable because he could play inside, he could play outside. We got him, week five, whatever it was and he did a heck of a job for us. You have to stockpile those type of guys. Again, only a certain amount you can have on your team, but when you can find those type of bodies and you can get them where we did, it might not always jump off to you guys. He's slotted right here, he's slotted here but it's depth and it helps you and in emergencies, also and there's a huge upside where you've got a chance with the speed he talks about combined with that size so that hopefully you can get more and develop that and even get someone bigger than that."

**Is the idea to be able to bring guys up off the practice squad rather than the street, and you need a guy like that?**

KS: "Definitely, and the best way to get guys on your practice squad, too, is to draft them and you hope they make it. The problem is, you try to go out to the practice squad and that means any other team in the league could steal them. That's why it's hard to keep really good guys on your practice squad because if it's not a secret, someone else is going to take them and sometimes you try to keep guys who are not quite ready but you know other people will steal them, so now out of your nine D-Linemen that you're allowed to carry, only seven of them are really ready to play but you're not willing to lose those two guys who you know are almost a year away. So, you have to balance that out and it's a trickle-down effect for your whole roster. If you can get us a Minor League team, that would help, where we could stash them. But, those are the kind of things with the makeup and 53 and that's why it's not always as simple as, why don't you do this, why don't you do that. It's how do you tie it all together and how do you build a team."

JL: "I would just add to that, it's one of the harsh realities of this league. You're always competing for your job. And so, when we are bringing guys in, we're not just doing it blindly, pick him. We're saying, does this guy, have a realistic shot, at least a shot of making the team and is he going to push our guys to be better or rise to the top. So, you're looking for those things. So, a guy like that, he's got some qualities that we like that think, he's got a shot."

KS: "It wasn't as fun today, but it was a lot, it showed a big difference between now and last year is just coming in this morning and looking at what we have on a 53, not a 90, and looking what you have up on game day and going through the depth chart of everything and before the draft starts and seeing our board on who is available. Regardless of how good they are, who has a chance to make this team, where are the slots that are open. There wasn't as many people as there was last year and there weren't as many positions and that makes the draft harder but that's the goal. You want it to get harder and harder each year and hopefully that's how you develop depth and sometimes you don't always need to use them all."

**Like yesterday, WR Trent Taylor played well as a rookie, good return man, good slot receiver. It's pretty clear to look at WR Dante Pettis and go, well, he takes Trent Taylor's job. So, how should Trent Taylor interpret the decision to draft Dante Pettis where you did?**

JL: "Well, I think he's another piece to the puzzle. Trent Taylor has got a skill that works very well on our team, particularly with [QB] Jimmy [Garoppolo] and his ability to throw accurately, and [QB] C.J. [Beathard], we feel the same way about, really put it on someone on third down, he's tougher to cover. Someone going to go man-to-man, good luck holding up one-on-one. That's what we want to do, as many matchups as possible. Pettis is different as Kyle explained I think real well yesterday, he can line up all over and be a punt returner. Short-term he'll play a bit of everything and he'll also have a great shot at being our punt returner. We may have Trent back there some, we may have [CB] D.J. Reed back there. We've got a bunch of them, like I said. But with these guys, if we are picking them, you know, yes, it's competition, but we believe there's enough balls to go around for all these guys."

KS: "I also think people like Trent understand that, too. This is a tough league. It's extremely hard. I think that's why guys get paid pretty well and I think they more than deserve it. It's hard to make it in this league. You don't know what your future is year-to-year, week-to-week and Trent has a great role for us and we're bringing in Pettis because he can have a good roll for us, too. Everyone talks about roles and how we use guys and we have an idea of how we want to, but a guy's role is up to the player. They've got to show us what they can do. We believe they can do it and we'll coach them what they can do, but they have to earn that role. No one is just given a role and you don't mess with that role. We've got to get the best of everything. We owe that to the organization and we owe that to the defense and we've got to make the offense the best we can and the offense has got to owe the defense by how good they can get. So, it's everybody, that's what's hard about this business is the challenge and also why I think the camaraderie of it, it's kind of a special group because you pull for each other. But, that's why it's a tough business, too."

**There was a report that you guys are going to practice with the Texans in Houston. Can you confirm that and what the plan is for that?**

JL: "Yeah, confirmed."

KS: "Confirmed."

JL: "You and [Houston Texans head coach Bill O'Brien] Billy figured that out yet?"

KS: "Yeah, we are going to practice twice before we play. I think we play on a Saturday, so that means we won't play on Friday. That means we'll walk-through on Friday so I'm sure we'll practice that Thursday and Wednesday."

**You guys going to have rookie camp next week?**

KS: "Yes."

**What days are those?**

KS: "Friday and Saturday. I'm not sure what day it is right now, but I think it's Friday and Saturday. I think we have the option to do it on Sunday. We usually just do it Friday and Saturday and we have all our rookies and the free agents we're signing right now and we'll bring a number to try out to see if the try-out guys can upgrade anyone that we have or anyone that's already on our roster."

**Do you have a set number in mind of how many guys you want on the field?**

JL: "Less than last year."

**More than how much --?**

JL: "We did a lot of favors last year I think. This guy was my roommate in college and his cousin's son kind of has a shot at being in the NFL, they were here."

KS: "It's about the guys that you have. You always want to find the diamond in the rough which you don't every year but sometimes you do, and I mean, [Chicago Bears WR] Taylor Gabriel was a tryout for us. We didn't even sign him. He was a tryout guy in Cleveland. I think [CB] K'Waun [Williams] was, too, who is now our nickel. So, you can get some good tryout players. I have plenty of years where we didn't sign one, but we'd like to have enough here where we can run a camp and have two-deep and have some practice, so if you don't find someone, at least you're training the guys that you have."

**The wide receiver position, Pettis, it wasn't a desperate need. Was this just because of the whole roster being stronger? Was this a more enjoyable or complex draft? Did you have to think more in terms of the future when making the picks more so than you did last year when, hey, we need that position?**

JL: "Yeah, it's a good question. I would say like perhaps last year was a little more role specific. Hey, we need someone to play the slot. Let's identify these traits. This year, we kind of went more to, hey, we want some cornerstone. We want some players that are going to be here for a long time. Still the same type of qualities. You know, what we really stated, Kyle and I sit around a lot and we talk about them and they just turn out to be words, but it's really more what the tape shows. You want tough, dependable, accountable, smart, football IQ and explosive dynamic. Those are some of the things we talk about. When I look down this list, the cool thing, I think each one of these guys exemplify that. Were there tougher decisions, yes, because I think our roster is better this year. That's one thing that's important. That's not to disparage whoever was here before. When people come in, there's different systems and there's different philosophies, so you get guys that kind of favor your eye and the guys that last, you know, they have done a pretty good job because that means they can probably play in any scheme and they have the type of qualities, the intangibles we look for. We are in year two of the process. It should be tougher to find a spot on this roster and we hope it's tougher next year."

KS: "You look at the work that we've done and why it has gotten tougher, I'll say this off the top of my head, but every receiver, every tight end, every running back, every quarterback, I think [TE Garrett] Celek is the only one who was here before we got here, I believe and [RB] Raheem [Mostert]. So, we have made a lot of changes there. Last year, going into the draft, it was [Houston Texans WR] Bruce [Ellington] and [Buffalo Bills WR Jeremy] Kerley were the two receivers and we signed a number of free agents and we had a few, we had to get Trent. There were a few targets in free agency, and these guys, some of those guys were making the team. [WR Kendrick] Bourne made it and didn't have a lot of competition there at some time and then got ready as the year went. It's a different case this year. What I love, now that the draft's over and we can look back at it all, I was saying to these guys last night, I think the coolest thing is, you look at your first three picks, usually the big ones each year that say a lot and I love how our first three picks our first year were at all three levels of our defense. We got [DL Solomon Thomas] Solly as a D-Linemen, [LB] Reuben [Foster] as a linebacker and we got [CB] Ahkello [Witherspoon] as a corner. Then this year, I feel all three of our picks were at all different levels of or offense, where our first-round guy was our right tackle in

[T Mike] McGlinchey and our first second round pick was our quarterback in Jimmy Garoppolo.”

JL: “Good pick.”

KS: “And our next second-round pick was Pettis, so we have six players that are on young contracts that you know you're going to have for a while, three that are spread out through the defense, three that are spread out through the offense, and I feel as far as in two years, the rest of the roster, we've tried to just build it after that. We are going to always try to be as competitive as we can be, do the right thing in free agency and be aggressive in trades that we feel will help us and we'll never miss an opportunity to improve our team, whatever it is. I'm just really happy with the opportunities that we've taken advantage of in the draft and I think it went very well for us.”

**Three levels of offense and defense, that seems pretty cool. Is that a grand plan or is that kind of how it fell?**

KS: “Yeah, but you don't just do it do it. But, if you could write it up on how to do it, I would like it to play out that way. I wouldn't like to say man, our six picks we had in our first two years are all D-Linemen or they're all O-Linemen. It's like, all right, we're solid here, but we have to get everyone else and now we have to go spend three agents on the rest of the team. It's neat to have draft picks invested at six different spots, to me.”