

**Special Teams Coordinator Thomas McGaughey Jr.**  
**Press Conference – December 30, 2015**  
**San Francisco 49ers**  
[Listen to Audio](#) | [Media Center](#)

**How big of a priority is it to block the Rams P Johnny Hekker this week?**

“Oh, Johnny Hekker. He is who he is. Let the tape speak for itself.”

**When you guys play a team for the second time, do teams typically try to switch it up or does it all carry over? How do you approach it?**

“There’s a lot of carryover, especially in what we do. The Rams do what they do. They’ll come out and give you a bunch of different things that you’ve got to work on. They are who they are. They do a really good job. [St. Louis Rams special teams coordinator John Fassel] Coach Fassel does an excellent job with the formations, with their punt formations. It really gives you headaches as a coach to try and prepare for it and you’ve got to spend time on it. It really helps their punter out. He gets plenty of space to punt the ball and doesn’t get a lot of rushes because they will fake you. So, you’ve got to guard for that. It’s really benefitted them.”

**What happened on the fake punt Sunday? Is that something that you guys thought might occur during the game?**

“We knew it was going to happen. The down and distance dictated it. We just need to tighten down on our formation on the one side where they ran it to. If you saw, if you look at the film you’ll see the left side or our right side, their left side, we were pretty tight and we were just a little loose. We were too loose to the line of scrimmage on the side where they snapped it and got the yardage.”

**Right before the snap, their punter really switched his body angle. Is that a giveaway?**

“No, they do that all the time. It’s an offset. Most punters in this league, directional punters, which he is, they’ll do that. They’ll offset away from where they’re going to punt the ball that gives them a good angle. That wasn’t anything. That’s typical.”

**At this point in the season, you guys and the Rams are obviously eliminated from playoffs. Does that allow you to maybe get more aggressive or more creative when it comes to calling fakes or maybe just be a little more aggressive?**

“Yeah. I mean, that’s one of those deals, you can be as aggressive as you want to be, you can be as conservative as you want to be. Just depending on the school of thought you’re from. They’ve always done a good job of mixing it up. They don’t care where it is or when it. They’ll fake you from the minus-25 or the plus-35. It doesn’t matter. That’s who they are. That’s his philosophy, [St. Louis Rams head coach Jeff Fisher] coach Fisher, on fakes and obviously they don’t mind doing it.”

**When there is a suspicion of a fake occurring, whose job is it on that unit to kind of call things out and to get everybody organized? When it’s happening, you no longer have communication with the guys.**

“We have a designated guy that’s watching for it. It’s like anything else. It’s like offense or defense, you make a check in the line accordingly. But, yeah we have guys out there that that’s their job.”

**Can you say who that is?**

“No.”

**It just seems like nowadays, it's been this way for a while, it seems like there's a penalty on every kicking play. Are those unavoidable? How do you approach those?**

"It's difficult, especially when you've got guys out there that are busting their tail and doing what you ask them to do. It's going to happen sometimes. And it's unfortunate we've had some in critical situations. But, you're going to get that sometimes. You've got young players that are working hard and then sometimes you get one of those ones where you think it's questionable, you send it into the league office and they say, 'Yeah coach you were right.' Then sometimes you get them back saying, 'No coach we agree with the official.' It's difficult. It's hard. It's hard to coach through some of those situations because they are doing it right and then sometimes it's just called wrong. And, sometimes they are doing it wrong and they call it right. So, it's a difficult thing to work through. But, we just talk to them, we just preach play penalty free. Just have to keep working through it and they learn from their mistakes and don't repeat it again."

**Are players in this league ever taught to maneuver themselves in such a way to draw a penalty?**

"Oh, absolutely. There is some flopping going on. People coach that."

**To get their backs to positions so you get hit in the back?**

"Or, just to kind of spin out if you're getting blocked, trying to flail and throw your arms. Try to catch the official's eye. That's kind of in any sport."

**In doing that, is there a danger of getting yourself out of a play?**

"Yeah, absolutely. If you're unsuccessful and you're flopping and you hit the ground, the guy runs right by you. You definitely pull yourself out of a play. But, I guess sometimes they are saying if I'm getting blocked I'm not going to get off anyways so I might as well flip or flop or however you want to call it."

**K Phil Dawson is not signed for next season at this point. Is there a sense that the way you guys have gone about it this year with P Bradley Pinion handling the kickoffs, has that added longevity to Dawson's career? That he wouldn't necessarily have to have that aspect of the game to deal with?**

"I think so. That's a very violent leg swing to repeat over and over and over again. Bringing Bradley in was definitely the plan with Phil, just trying to take some of that off of him because Bradley has the ability to do it. And, to make sure that Phil is super fresh. When we go out there and kick field goals, that's all he needs to focus on is kicking the field goals and putting it through the pipes."

**With the extra point being moved back, does it kind of lessen the importance for having the big leg for kickers?**

"I wouldn't say that. You've still got to have some power. Just being able to kick long field goals and do those types of things that you're going to need, especially if you get to the playoffs and you're not in warm weather or inside. You get a chance to go back east and play a playoff game or something. We are where we are, being in the warm weather and play a lot of indoor games. But, when you get to those important games where you've got to go out east, and that's what we plan to do moving forward, and be in those types of games, you want a guy with some good power, some good leg strength."

**If RB Mike Davis is up, would that allow RB Jarryd Hayne to be used more potentially as a returner or are you still set with WR Bruce Ellington?**

"Bruce is going to be our kick returner. That's who he is. That's what he's been the whole year. That Mike Davis thing doesn't really play into Jarryd being back there."

**Fifteen games in now with the rule of moving the extra point back. Has it been what you've expected? Do you like the rule?**

"It's different. I'm more of a traditionalist, but it's different. It's definitely made the game a little more exciting. It's not just an automatic field goal or automatic points so to speak. But, it's definitely made it a little bit more interesting."