

**Special Teams Coordinator Derius Swinton II**  
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**San Francisco 49ers**  
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**RB Carlos Hyde was out there fielding a return yesterday, had one attempt, and then wasn't out there again. What was that about?**

“Carlos Hyde, that’s above my pay grade. He goes out there when he wants to. We give guys the opportunity if they are not in the quarter just go back there if they want to field sometimes. [DL] Arik Armstead jumped back there, but we have some fun with it. Carlos is a good guy. He is a really team guy, so I tell him, ‘Hey, if you want to jump back there.’ Him taking one rep and I think the guys seeing him back there, it does something for the young guys. So, it was good to see him back there.”

**WR Bruce Ellington has a prominent role on offense and he's also been one of your punt returners. If he's a starter when the season begins on offense, would the offensive coaches want him returning punts as well?**

“Well, I can’t speak for them, but I think if you listen to [head coach] coach [Chip] Kelly, he wants the best 11 on the field and I think Bruce brings a weapon and a skillset that is rare in this league. He is a guy that when he gets the ball in his hands, people talk about you haven’t scored a touchdown in this long, well shoot he scored in the first game last year and there was a penalty. So, we talk about you haven’t scored, but has he gotten into the end zone? Yes. So, I think he’s a guy we’ll try to get the ball in his hands. He’s going to keep working it. I think he has a chance to be one of the more dynamic returners in this league if we just block him up. You look at teams like Pittsburgh and [Pittsburgh Steelers WR] Antonio Brown. I mean, they don’t take him off the field. You’ve got to get the best 11 and you’re trying to score points. So, that’s what we’re going to try to do with him and we’ll see how it goes during the season.”

**Is it too early to start identifying you're core special teams guys and if not, which guys have stood out to you?**

“Yeah, I think for me, I think the game is played with pads on. It’s hard for me to identify who’s going to be the guys. I think some guys have shown the skillset. There’s been guys that flash and I’m like, ‘OK, he’s having a good day.’ Then the next day he might drive me crazy. But, right now I think everybody is working at a point where it’s like, ‘Alright we’ve got a chance. We’ve got a chance with some of these young guys.’ But, when the pads come on I’ve seen in the past that guys disappear and some guys show up. So, it’ll be really good when we get the pads on.”

**When you say that Carlos being back there does something for the young guys, what exactly do you mean?**

“Because it shows you that nobody is above it. Some guys come in here and they’ve never done it in college. So, they come and they’re like, ‘Ah, I’m a wide receiver,’ or ‘I’m a running back, I’m this.’ But, if you see Carlos Hyde go back there or I had [Denver Broncos OLB] Von Miller when I was in Denver, he would cover kicks just to get his cardio. But, seeing a guy like that out there, it does something. It says that he’s not above it, so why would I not partake in it?”

**What does it say about QB Jeff Driskel in particular participating?**

“I think when you look at a guy like Driskel, he has a rare skillset for a quarterback. I mean, I look at the Los Angeles Rams and their punter [Johnny Hekker] was an All-American quarterback going into college and now you look at him. So, we want to put a little thing in the back of their heads that if we throw him out there, what can you do now if we have our PP who

can throw the ball, he can run the ball? Now maybe coach Kelly has his whole offense at his disposal now because our PP is a quarterback.”

**Was that your idea to have him out there or did Driskel volunteer?**

“I think it’s something we all talked about as he got in. He’s a guy that’s athletic. He’s a guy that when he was at Florida, you saw him run all over and I think when you have, it comes down to a 53 man roster and if you do carry a guy like that, you just look at numbers. For me, I’m playing the numbers game. I try to squeeze every little bit out of it. You have a guy like [QB] Thad Lewis, when I had him as a rookie, Thad will tell you he covered every kick for us on practice squad. So, if you have a quarterback that can do that, it pays dividends for us.”

**What are your impressions of working with K Phil Dawson so far since he’s been back?**

“Phil is great. Me and Phil have a unique relationship because he thinks that I think that he’s old and I tell him, I say, ‘I think that you’re great.’ So, we have a thing, he’s like, ‘Ah, you want me to kick this?’ So, the other day, last week Thursday, I pushed him back to about 62-yards. I said, ‘Is your old leg ready for this?’ He nails it with about three-yards to go and he looks at me like ‘OK.’ We have a great relationship. It’s a working relationship. We’re getting to know each other, getting a feel for each other. It’s been really good so far.”

**With P Bradley Pinion, do you feel like he’s more comfortable now that he’s in his second year and kind of knows what to expect?**

“Yeah, Bradley, if you watch him, he’s made strides this offseason. He’s gone from a guy that you saw last year, he was really primarily going right to now he can put the ball anywhere on punt. Kickoffs, he’s competing a lot with the young guys and with Phil and you just see a comfort level and you can see the confidence. Now more than just going and punting, he’s understanding situational football. ‘OK coach, we’re in this situation, I want to make sure we don’t have this ball.’ So, it’s a lot easier now, you’re talking to him. He’s comfortable.”

**You’re a very young coordinator.**

“Yes, I am.”

**Phil’s getting--?**

“Phil’s not as young, is what you’d say.”

**But anyway, this being your first time, being younger than most, is there pressure there? Do you feel like, ‘Hey, I’ve got to prove myself in some way?’**

“No, I don’t think it’s a prove yourself. What I think is you put players in a position to make plays and it comes down to it is if you come prepared, organized and you give them nuggets for them to win, they respect it. I think the age thing it’s not a concern if they know you know what you’re talking about. If you go in there and you’re just trying to sell what I call ‘wolf tickets’ and you’re trying to rah rah, they look at you like, ‘Are you really trying to get me better?’ What these guys respect is, ‘Hey, this guy knows what he’s talking about. He’s put us in a position to win and we can win every single down.’ And I think with Phil, a guy that might be older, I’m trying to get better from him. He’s also trying to learn. He soaks up everything. We talk about different things everyday where it’s, ‘Oh, I never thought about that.’ Or I would say, ‘When did you have that?’ And he’ll say, ‘Back in ‘99.’ And I’m like, ‘Oh! OK, well I didn’t see that one and I can’t pull the film.’ We have great conversation and I think the age thing helps because of the relatability too. I can say things in a different way to some of the players, because I know what they’re seeing on social media. I know the little sayings and it gets their attention and I think it helps us.”

**Like what sayings would you--?**

“Aw, we keep that into the meeting room. That’s some of the things, I mean you can go onto social media all the time. They have little things they do, they talk about the Jordan crying face and I say, ‘Hey, if we get scored on, they’ll have me on the camera with the Jordan crying face,’ and things like that. We just joke about it because it’s just the reality. You can’t be serious all the time and I think they want to be related to on this front in the building.”

**Did you have any sort of relationship with Chip before? How did you get here?**

“So, [Philadelphia Eagles special teams coordinator] Dave Fipp, who is the special teams coordinator in Philly, I came from the same system as him. He followed [Chicago Bears special teams coordinator] Jeff Rodgers here, who I worked with in Denver and Chicago. So, we come from the same tree of [Pittsburgh Steelers special teams coordinator] Al Everest, who was a long time coordinator here. We all learned the same things, so when Chip came over here, Fipp gave him my name, I came in for an interview, it was amazing and then it worked from there.”

**So, you know all about their special teams last year and how many points they scored?**

“Yeah, definitely, I followed Fipp. We talk probably once a month during the season just to check on him. I used to tell him all the time, ‘Shoot, you’ve got Pro Bowlers at every,’ I said, we used to joke with him, ‘I can’t wait to have a coach like that,’ and now I have one. So, it’s fun. It’s fun knowing he’s committed to it. Chip is in every special teams meeting. That pays dividends for the young guys. I mean, you see the head coach in there, you can’t fall asleep. He really knows, he’s locked into that part of it and it’s been really good.”

**People have been writing lot about FB Bruce Miller and his snaps at tight end. Could he also be one of the core special teamers, the core coverage guys on your units?**

“Yeah, I think Bruce has a unique skillset in where he’s a guy that’s played on both sides of the ball. He’s a guy who can run, he loves to tackle and he has a knack about finding the football. I always tell these guys, ‘It’s about finding the football and being a playmaker, not just running down covering the kick.’ I tell them, ‘I can go find anybody to cover a kick, we’re trying to find 11 guys that go down there and go and try to make the play.’ So, Bruce has that skillset, where he has that mindset, if I’m on the field, I’m going to make the play. So, I really love what he brings and he brings a leadership to that group because he’s seen a lot of things and he talks with the young guys, so he’s been really good.”

**When you watch film on the 49ers special teams from last year, it seemed like they were a little bit inconsistent and maybe didn’t get enough out of the return game as they would have liked. What stood out to you when you watched them?**

“Well, I think sometimes when you look at things from a year ago when you weren’t somewhere, you don’t know the schemes, you don’t know what was taught and when I looked at it, I looked at it from more of an individual skillset. Not knowing the schemes, I think we had a lot of guys that were young. You look out there sometimes and there’s three, four, five rookies and it’s growing pains. They just don’t see it as fast. I think that’s some of the things. Also, when you look at the return game, you have to look at the situations they were in. It wasn’t a lot of backed up punts to them where they could field them. It was a lot of plus-50, where they’ve got to fair catch. That plays a factor in the return game. You can’t return it if they are punting inside the 10 with hangtime. But, if you have a great defense, great offense, it’s complementary football and I think that’s what we are preaching to these guys, is if they do their part on third down and get them backed up, we’ve got to capitalize on that. I think this year, that’s what we’re really focusing on. Last year I looked at the players and skillsets more than anything.”

**You mentioned some days guys can be great and other days they can drive you crazy. It looked like a couple of guys may have been driving you crazy yesterday. Would you say it's fair to call you a fiery coach?**

"I would say, I am an I love you when I love you and we'll have a talk when I don't. Because, I think you'll see me on there, I think in the meeting room, we coach it out and out there we're in the moment and I get after them. But then, I think you'll see a guy, I went after it with [WR] Quinton Patton, but then I'll go over next period, put my arm around him and say, 'Let's talk about this thing.' And, he realizes. We all want to win and I think they understand that if I'm on you it's because I see something that will help us win and in the moment I tell them we have a no sensitivity rule in our room. You can't be sensitive. You can't have feelings, because at the end of the day we're all trying to win. Now, if you're not trying to win, then we'll talk about that later. But, I think when you see me do that, it's are you helping us win and I'm trying to help you get us all on the same page. So, that's what you saw. So, I probably wouldn't call myself fiery."

**Do you expect to have S L.J. McCray in training camp or what's his status?**

"I think that's the plan. You would have to talk to [vice president of football operations Jeff Ferguson] Ferg and those guys about the medical issues. I think with special teams guys, whoever is out on the field. That changes. You guys have seen it, it changes from play-to-play. A guy will go down before my period and I've got to replace him on scouts and replace him on this. So, whatever Ferg tells me who is up for the day, that's who I play. L.J. has been able to get out here some, which has been good and then we'll see as we go in training camp day by day."

**You mentioned having a lot of rookies on special teams. Can you say what that does for their learning curve and adjusting to the NFL?**

"I think having a lot of young rookies, what it does is that they have to understand how fast this game is played. I go in my first meeting, I say, 'Unless you're a first-round pick, your first snap in the NFL is probably going to be covering a kick.' And, they look at me crazy until we get to preseason one and it's the second quarter and they haven't played and now they're saying, 'Coach, can I get on kickoff?' And so, I think for them being out there and taking the lumps early, it helps them. You've got guys like, [LB] Eli Harold told me yesterday, he said, 'Coach, I see it so much faster now.' And, you watch his film from last year and you could tell he was running down lost. He was just, OK, where is it? Now, he can just tell me. We can have a conversation on punt and he sees it and says, 'Coach, they did this.' And, it's just that learning curve and I think having that year of the rookies going through their lumps and seeing some guys, and that's the good thing about our team, we're young. The second year guys now can tell the rookies, 'Hey, this is what's going to happen. This is what you're going to go through.' And, I think that's the benefit for our team. People talk about how young we are, well our young guys have played. It's not young guys who haven't played. It's young guys that have played, so it's good. It's been really good."