

2026 SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS DRAFT PICKS

ROUND	OVERALL PICK		PLAYER	POS	COLLEGE	NOTES
1	27th	Own Pick				Traded pick and 2026 4th round compensatory (138th) pick to Miami for 2026 1st round (30th) and 2026 3rd round (90th) picks
1	30th	From Miami via trade				Traded pick to New York Jets for 2026 2nd round (33rd) and 2026 5th round (179th) picks
2	33rd	From New York Jets via trade	De'Zhaun Stribling	WR	Mississippi	6-2, 207
2	58th	Own Pick				Traded pick and 2026 5th round (152nd from Dallas) pick to Cleveland for 2026 3rd round (70th) and 2026 4th round (107th) picks
3	70th	From Cleveland via trade	Romello Height	DL	Texas Tech	6-3, 239
3	90th	From Miami via trade	Kaelon Black	RB	Indiana	5-10, 208
3	92nd	Own Pick				Traded pick to Dallas for DL Osa Odighizuwa
4	107th	From Cleveland via trade				
4	127th	Own Pick				
4	133rd	Compensatory				
4	138th	Compensatory				Traded pick and 2026 1st round (30th) pick to Miami for 2026 1st round (30th) and 2026 3rd round (90th) picks
4	139th	Compensatory				
5	152nd	From Dallas via trade				Traded pick and 2026 2nd round (58th from Dallas) pick to Cleveland for 2026 3rd round (70th) and 2026 4th round (107th) picks
5	166th	Own Pick				Traded pick to Philadelphia for DL Bryce Huff
5	179th	From New York Jets via trade				
6	198th	From Minnesota via trade				Traded pick to New England for DL Keion White
6	209th	Own Pick				Traded pick to Washington for RB Brian Robinson Jr.
7	243rd	Own Pick				Traded pick to Houston for DL Khalil Davis



DE'ZHAUN STRIBLING

WR x MISSISSIPPI

6-2 x 207 x 12.18.02 x KAPOLEI, HI x ROOKIE x ACQUIRED D-2 IN '26

COLLEGE

- Appeared in 56 games (55 starts) over 5 seasons at Mississippi (2025), Oklahoma State (2023-24) and Washington State (2021-22) and finished with 216 receptions for 2,964 yards (13.7 avg.) and 23 TDs. In 2025 at Mississippi, started all 15 games he appeared in and recorded 55 receipts. for 811 yds. (14.8 avg.) and 6 TDs. In 2024 at Oklahoma State, appeared in 12 games (11 starts) and tallied 52 receipts. for 882 yds. (17.0 avg.) and 6 TDs. In 2023, appeared in 4 games (all starts) and recorded 14 receipts. for 198 yds. (14.1 avg.) and 1 TD before redshirt-ing due to injury. In 2022 at Washington State, started all 12 games he appeared in and tallied 51 receipts. for 602 yds. (11.8 avg.) and 5 TDs. In 2021 at Washington State, started all 13 games he appeared in and recorded 44 receipts. for 471 yds. (10.7 avg.) and 5 TDs, earning Honorable Mention All-Pac-12 honors.



STRIBLING'S GOLDEN NUGGETS

- First name is pronounced DAY-zhawn.
- Started his football career at quarterback before transitioning to wide receiver in 7th grade.
- His uncle, Don 'The Rock' Muraco was a professional wrestler, including a stint in the World Wrestling Federation (1981-88).

PERSONAL

- Attended Kapolei (HI) High School.
- Graduated with a degree in university studies from Oklahoma State.
- Born De'Zhaun Stribling (12/18/02) in Kapolei, HI, to Karlos and Aisha Johnson.

STRIBLING'S TRANSACTIONS

Originally a 2nd-round (33rd overall) draft choice by SF in 2026.



ROMELLO HEIGHT

DL x TEXAS TECH

6-3 x 239 x 4.13.01 x DUBLIN, GA x ROOKIE x ACQUIRED D-3A IN '26

COLLEGE

- Appeared in 50 games (28 starts) over 6 seasons at Texas Tech (2025), Georgia Tech (2024), Southern California (2022-23) and Auburn (2020-21) and finished with 111 tackles, 26.5 TFLs, 16.0 sacks, 4 FFs, 2 PDs and 1 INT. In 2025 at Texas Tech, started all 14 games he appeared in and tallied 38 tackles, 11.0 TFLs, 9.5 sacks, 2 FFs and 1 PD, earning First-Team All-Big 12 honors. In 2024 at Georgia Tech, started all 12 games he appeared in and recorded 34 tackles, 6.5 TFLs, 2.5 sacks, 2 FFs, 1 PD and 1 INT. In 2023 at Southern California, appeared in 12 games and tallied 20 tackles, 6.0 TFLs and 4.0 sacks. In 2022, started in 2 games. In 2021 at Auburn, appeared in 9 games and recorded 19 tackles and 3.0 TFLs. Redshirted in 2020 after appearing in 1 game.



HEIGHT'S GOLDEN NUGGETS

- Has one brother and five sisters in his family.
- Goes by the nickname "Mello."

PERSONAL

- Attended West Laurens (Dexter, GA) High School before transferring to Dublin (GA) High School.
- Graduated from Southern California with a degree in American popular culture.
- Born Romello Height (4/13/01) in Dublin, GA, to Ronnie and Sharon Rozier.

HEIGHT'S TRANSACTIONS

Originally the first of two 3rd-round (70th overall) draft choices by SF in 2026.



KAELON BLACK

RB x INDIANA

5-10 x 208 x 10.17.01 x VIRGINIA BEACH, VA x ROOKIE x ACQUIRED D-3B IN '26

COLLEGE

- Appeared in 56 games (16 starts) over 6 seasons at Indiana (2024-25) and James Madison (2020-23) and registered 496 carries for 2,595 yds. and 17 TDs on the ground to go along with 55 receipts. for 528 yds. and 6 TDs through the air. In 2025 at Indiana, appeared in all 16 games and tallied 187 carries for 1,039 yds. and 10 TDs while adding 4 receipts. for 36 yds. through the air. In 2024, appeared in all 13 games and recorded 46 carries for 251 yds. and 2 TDs on the ground to go along with 4 receipts. for 6 yds. through the air. In 2023 at James Madison, appeared in 13 games (12 starts) and tallied 142 carries for 637 yds. and 1 TD with 27 receipts. for 254 yds. and 4 TDs through the air. In 2022, appeared in 9 games (1 start) and recorded 69 carries for 333 yds. and 3 TDs on the ground to go along with 17 receipts. for 177 yds. and 2 TDs through the air. As a redshirt freshman in 2021, appeared in 3 games (2 starts) and tallied 27 carries for 165 yds. on the ground and added 3 receipts. for 55 yds. Redshirted in 2020 after appearing in 2 games and registering 25 carries for 170 yds. and 1 TD on the ground.



BLACK'S GOLDEN NUGGETS

- Grew up with football in the family as his father, William, played linebacker at Norfolk State for four seasons (1996-99).
- Was college teammates with current 49ers players QB Kurtis Rourke and DL C.J. West.

PERSONAL

- Attended Salem (Virginia Beach, VA) High School.
- Graduated with a degree in liberal studies from Indiana.
- Born Kaelon Black (10/17/01) in Virginia Beach, VA.

BLACK'S TRANSACTIONS

Originally the second of two third-round (90th overall) draft choices by SF in 2026.



Transcriptions



**President of Football Operations and General Manager John Lynch
and Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – April 24, 2026
San Francisco 49ers**

[Listen to Audio](#) | [Media Center](#)

We'll start with the last pick first. What was the logic or the thinking in taking a running back before you even take an offensive lineman where you have an opening there at left guard?

President of Football Operations and General Manager John Lynch: "Yeah. I think we talked a lot about staying true to our board and our convictions, and [RB] Kaelon Black was a kid that we just, like you hear this story a lot as the process went, just kept feeling better and better and better. His film speaks for itself. Really hard-running kid, rocked up kid, had an opportunity to visit with him at the Senior Bowl, met with him at the Senior Bowl, and you can't help but love the kid and everything he stands for. You know, people there just talk about one of their favorite kids in the program. A lot of that from the school, from the strength coach, from the offensive coordinator, and then you turn on the film and we really feel like he can help us in a big way and we're really excited to have landed him."

Not many passes caught this last year. But, he did catch some at James Madison. So, are you confident that he can really fit into the passing game as well?

JL: "Yeah. I think he can handle himself there. I think that's another thing, Senior Bowl, you evaluate everything. Senior Bowl, you turn on his one-on-ones, I was there, Kyle watched it on the film, and the one-on-ones really stood out. So, while he wasn't featured at Indiana, like you mentioned, at James Madison did a little more of that. Think he can have a role there as well and just couldn't be happier to have him."

As far as WR De' Zhaun Stribling, he's got a reputation as a really good blocker. Is that something that you saw and does that mean that he can kind of step into that WR Jauan Jennings F position?

Head Coach Kyle Shanahan: "Yes, definitely. I think everyone knows how good of a blocker Jauan is and how big he's been for us in that way. So, we have a hole without that. So, this guy definitely could fill that. For me, I don't ever start watching receivers block, it all has to do with the football. And I really fell in love with him with the ball as a route runner, how fast he is, how big he is, how good his hands are and how physical he played with the ball. When you watch a guy with that size and how physical he runs with the ball, you assume he is a good blocker. And then to hear the people who are further along than I was say he is the best blocker in the draft. He has an elite blocking skill. And then to confirm it after that, it was really cool to watch."

JL: "Guys really quick too, I wanted to start with this, and I failed to do so. [Dallas Cowboys LB] Dee Winters, we made that trade today and that's tough. Dee's a guy who's done a lot for us here. Sixth-round pick out of TCU, but Dee is one of the favorite guys in that locker room amongst his teammates. He's done a lot for us on the field. We just felt like we were in good position at linebacker. And Dallas has been really interested in him for a long time. I'd say the talks probably started with myself and [Dallas Cowboys chief operating officer and co-owner] Steven Jones when we were talking about [DL] Osa [Odighizuwa]. They've stayed on that. We kind of held it off for a while, and as we got there today, we just felt like it was the right thing to do for our team. It's a good opportunity for Dee. I think there's a lot of opportunity for him to shine and just very grateful for Dee's time here and all his contributions he made to our squad."

I do understand past Drafts have absolutely nothing to do with this Draft, but when you guys are talking about we're going to take a running back in the third round, Kyle, you even joked once about when you took Washington Commanders K Jake Moody, can't believe we didn't take a running back in the third round. Does it register with you, like, we haven't had much success doing this in the past?

KS: "Honestly, I forgot about that too until you just said that (laughter), but now I remember everything. No, it doesn't hit us, but it's fun to mess with each other on. But, we don't think it's relevant, but hopefully we have better luck."

With DL Romello Height, he played for four programs over six seasons. So, you had a lot of tape, I'm guessing. Did his get-off improve? What jumped out about his get-off because that's so important with that position with you guys?

JL: "Well, his year at Texas Tech was just a spectacular season. They're a really good football team. You turn on that tape, and we do a lot of evaluation just based on how hard, how relentless does a guy play. We feel like Romello is at the top of this draft in terms of the effort, the tenacity the relentlessness with which he plays with. And we were all in on that. And so, we made a little move to get back from 58. We thought that was a good move, and we were hanging on, we wanted to have Romello there. He lasted to 70 and we made the pick with a lot of conviction. We're really excited to have him. I mean, you turn on that tape, it was [New York Jets DL] David Bailey on the other side, [Carolina Panthers DL] Lee Hunter in the middle, Romello Height, and they were wreaking havoc and that's what we want to be and we think he can help in a big way. He's going to have to come earn it, but he's got a lot of the indicators that we look for. He's got some Gumby-like qualities. He's real loose. And he can get after the quarterback."

To follow up on Romello, he kind of talked about the kind of guy he wants to be for this team, an energy guy in the locker room, kind of a glue guy somewhat is what he said, but then also someone that kind of seemed like he had a really good encounter with linebackers coach K.J. Wright. What kind of guy are you getting out of Romello Height?

JL: "Well, I think we're getting a guy who loves the game. We did have a nice visit. He met with, these poor guys, they're asked who they met with. They meet with a lot of people. When we bring them in, we take them over to TopGolf. And Romello actually came before the TopGolf thing because he had a schedule conflict, but Romello, we had

a tremendous visit. He met with K.J., he met with [defensive line coach Kris] Kocurek, he met with a lot of people, met with Kyle and I, and handled himself really well.”

Defensive coordinator Raheem Morris has had luck with guys like Los Angeles Rams LB Byron Young and Atlanta Falcons LB Jalon Walker. Do you envision a similar role? Can you kind of lay out what you see for Romello in terms of that?

KS: “Yeah, with Romello with me, he was on the ball rushing, so he looked like a defensive end and how he played, and especially being opposite of Bailey. And the way he played, the style he played is exactly what we want. Very relentless. We have a hair on fire grade, and he was the top of it. And just the style that he did. When you're done with the tape and you get to like body type and stuff, he is somewhat tweener like that like someone would say maybe [New York Giants LB] Arvell Reese is or something like that. So, there's lots of varieties you can do with him. Raheem has a ton of experience in doing that. We'll see how he does use him. You see him on the line of scrimmage all the time in college. You've seen him drop before. So, he's a guy you can use in a linebacker role. He is a guy you can use in a rush role. So, we'll see what Raheem does with him. But, I think he's similar to the guys that you compared him to.”

What went into the decision to trade down from 58? There were some pretty good safeties on the board. Were you just locked into Romello Height?

JL: “It wasn't all about Romello at that point, but we just felt like we had a lot of guys on our board there that we still liked. And I will tell you at some point in there, we started hoping that Romello would get there. And we were thrilled when he did.”

What do you make of the fact that he didn't really break out until his sixth year in school?

JL: “He broke out, and we liked what we saw. Everybody's got a different journey. They all do, and you have to evaluate it all, but what we saw in that year at Texas Tech really spoke volumes to us.”

Can you give us a little behind the scenes of running backs coach Robert Turner Jr. and Kaelon Black and how that relationship evolved?

JL: “Yeah, I mean, the one thing, we joke about it, but it just speaks to what makes Bobby Turner great. You know, he lives this stuff. He's got his number two pencil out, one of the last around that still uses that number two pencil. He calls these guys multiple times. And you know, Kyle asked Kaelon about Bobby T and his interaction. He said, ‘I love Bobby T,’ and we all do. And you know, Kaelon's his type of guy. He's a hardworking dude, a hard running dude, and such a great kid. That really is one of my favorite interviews. You know, interviews are just part of the process. On the way to Mobile, I always take a load of guys. I'd watched him in the fall, but really on the way to Mobile studied him and then sat down with him. And I knew about the kid, knew about his background, but really learned who the kid is and how hungry he is and what a bell cow he was for that program, and that program's a pretty special program, what they've been able to accomplish. He came with [Indiana Hoosiers head coach Curt] Cignetti from JMU, and he hit the big time, and he rotated, but they ran the football a lot. They ran it really well, and he was a big part of that.”

Is there anything he said to you that really kind of triggered you to go, okay, this is a great prospect?

JL: "It's nothing they say. I think it's just a feeling you get for the type of person you're dealing with. And then it always goes back to the film. So, you put those together, and I think he presents exactly how he plays and that's always a good thing."

I realize your board won't reflect public opinion. Regarding De'Zhaun and Kaelon where you guys picked them, you didn't feel like you could let them slide farther than that?

JL: "That's where we had them, and we had a lot of conviction on each of them. And you know, De'Zhaun, we listened. There were a lot of calls for 33 because it is a coveted pick. But you know, at the end of the day, our entire building had conviction. And there's a lot to love about the kid. He's a big, strong guy who plays with tremendous physicality, legit speed. To be that size running a 4.39, that shows on tape. It's not just a time that you never see on film. He's got that speed and he shows it. And we love the total package."

You guys have picks at 107, 127, 133, 139, and I don't know if you guys feel like you have a starting left guard right now. Do you believe you either have the starting guard on the team now or can you get that guy with those picks that I just mentioned?

JL: "Well, first of all, you just mentioned the picks we have. We'll see where the draft takes us. We believe we have good options. You know, [OL] Connor Colby is a guy who started six games for us, a seventh-round pick from Iowa last year. We like the progression that Connor had. We like where he's at, how he's looking. As he enters year two, you know, year one to year two is always a big jump. And we hope to get that jump from Connor. We went out and added some competition with [OL] Robert Jones and [OL] Brett Toth, two guys that have started games in this league. And Brett has been more of a center, but we believe that his skills translate to give him a chance at that left guard. And so, we have options there and we're excited about those options."

You said after the season you probably needed to add speed on offense, or it would be nice to. When you were thinking about wide receiver, was that kind of a must-have quality when you were looking at wideouts?

KS: "No."

High on the list?

KS: "Nope. I don't think I've ever really had a must have. I have preferences. You always prefer speed, but just because you might not have as much speed on your team as you want, it doesn't mean you just draft the fastest guy possible. I've done stuff like that in the past and you try to balance things out to make it perfect and when it's said and done, you're like you know what would make us better? Taking the best football player. They come in all different shapes and sizes. I think we were fortunate to get a guy who could really run. The main thing is how he plays overall. Speed is a big asset of his game, but it's not the reason we drafted him. It's one of many."



Transcriptions



WR De’Zhaun Stribling
Press Conference – April 24, 2026
San Francisco 49ers
[Listen to Audio](#) | [Media Center](#)

Where are you right now, and who did you spend the draft day with?

“I’m currently in Hawaii, down here on the west side. Spent the whole draft here with all my family and friends. Really just a little tight circle.”

Did you have a did you have an inkling that the 49ers were this interested in you, and how do you see yourself coming out to this team?

“Yeah, I definitely had a little communication in this whole process. But very excited to be here, very excited to come in and work, contribute however I can and just help the team win.”

How familiar are you with WR Mike Evans, their newest acquisition during free agency?

“Yeah, always been a fan of him growing up, so I think it's a beautiful thing that I'll be able to share the receiver room with him and learn off of him.”

How do you see your skillset fitting in with head coach Kyle Shanahan’s offense and how that passing attack works?

“Yeah, so I’m a very versatile guy. I can do a lot of things and also block at a high level. So, very excited to go out there and contribute in the pass game, but also the run game.”

Did you meet with president of football operations and general manager John Lynch and Kyle Shanahan at the Combine, and what were those conversations like if you did?

“No, I haven't met with them yet. First time hearing from them, so excited to know more about them and have some more conversations.”

As you went to bed last night, were you thinking I could be the first guy off the board tomorrow?

“You know, I was ready at all times. Couldn't really sleep last night, you know, kind of just waiting up for the moment, but very excited and very blessed for it.”

To follow up on that, what was the moment when you heard your name called?

“Oh, just a surreal feeling kind of just feeling all the emotions all at one time. How I’m very happy to celebrate with me, all my family and all the people that helped me get here.”

If you could elaborate a bit, what's your message to the Faithful and 49ers fans all over the world?

"Yeah, I'm excited to be here, excited to work and excited to do what I can to help us win."

Were you surprised the 49ers picked you or did you know there was interest there?

"I believe there was some interest, but it's always a surprise and it's always a blessing. In the Draft, you never know what can happen. So excited for all the opportunities."

Growing up in Hawaii, did you notice 49ers fans just around? It seems like there's a lot of them there in particular.

"For sure. Being in Hawaii, this is a big thing over here. Everyone is a Niners fan, so definitely happy I can put on and represent over here."

As you come to this team, what do you know about the offense and the supporting cast behind or around QB Bock Purdy?

"Yeah, so have a great offense, have a lot of playmakers on the offense. A lot of guys who can do different things, so I'm just very excited to come in, fit in and just kind of just make my little mark."

What are the benefits of playing in three different schools, three different systems and now coming here?

"I learned a lot. I learned a lot of offense, learned a lot of ball, ran different types of offenses, concepts, so kind of just feel very ready, very positive about everything with my learning skills and everything I can recall."

How would you define your dream of an NFL career?

"You know, just really try not to put too many expectations on anything, just kind of getting in, competing at a high level, getting on the field early and just contributing to the team however I can."

Obviously, you're coming in and you have your perspective on learning from everyone that you'll be playing with, but where do you feel like your skillset is the strongest that you will immediately be able to show this is the impact that I can make with the 49ers?

"Yeah, my physicality, my run after catch and having reliable hands. So, all those three things kind of fit into one and kind of just being there for the quarterback and being there for the team."

You probably haven't had a chance to think about it a lot, but what similarities do you see between Louisiana State University Head Coach Lane Kiffin's offense and what Kyle Shanahan runs in San Francisco?

"Yeah, a lot of similar concepts, trying to get the receivers open, but also having a big part in the run game with the receivers blocking. So very excited for the opportunity and very blessed to be here."

Before today, did you have a favorite NFL team? Is there a comp out there, a wide receiver that you've patterned yourself after?

"Yeah, I haven't really had a favorite NFL team, growing up in Hawaii, but I've always liked watching [Los Angeles Rams WR] Puka Nacua's game. I'm a big fan of him and also loved watching [Pittsburgh Steelers WR] DK [Metcalf] growing up. So, very excited to be in the league now and compete with all these guys and also learn from them."

Well, with DK Metcalf being an Ole Miss product, do you have a relationship with him? Have you learned to play with him or train with him at any time?

"Yeah, I had some training sessions with him back at Ole Miss, just catching balls and stuff like that. So, I've just been able to ask him questions and get some feedback from him."

Do you have a relationship with San Francisco 49ers WR Jordan Watkins who the Niners selected last year, and then were there any conversations with 49ers Hall of Fame LB Patrick Willis at all?

"Yeah, I talked to J-Wat a little bit since I've been here at Ole Miss. But that was really it, kind of surface level for the most part."

How often do you go back home, having spent a lot of time on the mainland and throughout your college years?

"Yeah, I normally come back home once a year, if that. Always in the summer, sometimes after the bowl game. Whenever I'm home, I really try to take advantage of it, relax a lot, stay at the beach, just get as much sunlight as I can."

So, you've got a lot of family there?

"Yes, I still have a whole bunch of family here."



Transcriptions



DL Romello Height
Press Conference – April 24, 2026
San Francisco 49ers
[Listen to Audio](#) | [Media Center](#)

How much contact did you have with the 49ers before? Is this a surprise to you?

"No, sir. It is not a surprise. I kind of felt it, and I've been having that feeling all week, that it was going to be the 49ers, and I was telling my agent the whole time that it was going to either be the Colts or the Niners, and man, thank God that it was the Niners."

Why were you so certain the Niners were one of the teams? What about them?

"It's crazy. I had a dream about it. I had a dream about it. And it wasn't like exactly the Niners, but it was the Niners colors and man, look at God."

What were your conversations like pre-Draft with the Niners?

"We talked at the Combine and that was it up until the 30 visit, I got up with coach [linebackers coach] K.J. [Wright], and he was just telling me about the scheme and how they'll use me. And man, it was a great feeling. Like I just felt it after that 30 visit, I felt that this was my home."

Obviously, this is an uncertain time for everyone going through the Draft process, and then you have a dream that you'll end up with the 49ers. How does that kind of make you even more certain that you are, where you feel like you're supposed to be now stepping into the next stage of your career?

"It's just like everything happened for a reason. I was expecting to go a little earlier, but I was just thinking like, 'God got me.' Like, he's going to put me in a place that I need to be in, and we're going to thrive. It's a huge blessing that I'm with the Niners because we going to go win. We going to win Super Bowls."

The Niners often emphasize the first step, get-off, for their defensive ends. Can you describe just how that's come along for you over the last six years in college?

"The get-off, it was key to my game, and it was like something I emphasized when trying to perfect my craft. Whenever I'm hitting the lab, it started with my get-off. Every drill was a get-off drill. It started with get-offs and even with my position coach at my previous school at Texas Tech everything started with get-off. Even at the school before that, Georgia Tech, it was everything started with get-off, and the get-off is the key to the pass rush. You got to have a great get-off. So, I just emphasized that and continue to work on it. And I'm not going to say I perfected it, but it became a huge deal when I continued to work on it."

How familiar are you with defensive coordinator Raheem Morris and how he's used guys like you that fit your description at those previous stops?

"Yes, sir. We talked about it on the 30 visit, and I feel like how he is going to use me is a good way because I feel like I can move around, and I'm a little versatile, so I feel like I could play the MIKE. I can go to outside linebacker, I can go to true standup, humbly, but I feel like he is going to use me in a great way."

Do you look at Atlanta Falcons LB Jalon Walker and Los Angeles Rams LB Byron Young? I mean, are those good sorts of comparisons to what you'll be doing in this defense?

"I'm not sure what the Rams do defensively, like scheme wise. But I see that they move they use Young in many different ways. So, yeah, probably."

I just want to clarify it was K.J. Wright who you met with?

"Yes, sir. Man, that's a great coach. I felt his energy. Man, we're going to do some special things together."

I'm sure you've heard the stick out like a sore thumb stat for the 49ers was 20.0 sacks, and you're coming in as a guy that can play the edge. Can you help them with that?

"Yes, sir. Humbly, I will be able to help them with that."

How familiar are you with DL Nick Bosa and what he does on the field?

"Man, Nick Bosa is a beast. I can't wait to play on the other side of him. Whether it is right beside him or behind him. I can't wait to play with Nick Bosa. We're going to wreak havoc."

How did it help you playing opposite New York Jets DL David Bailey this past season?

"Man, playing opposite of David Bailey was a huge privilege because that's a great athlete and he worked his tail off. He deserved everything that came his way. David was an even better person, and he lived in the building. He continued to work day-to-day, first one in the building, last one out of the building. That's what I said about David. David is a great, great athlete."

Did all your different stops help you to be able to come to another stop and assimilate to a new defense?

"Yes sir. I feel like I played in many different defensive schemes. I feel like what we talked about, I feel like this is the perfect scheme for my ability and my skillset."

Do you feel like you're already at the playing weight you want to be at? Or do you see yourself putting on some pounds?

"No, sir. I see myself putting on some pounds."

You talked about how you had a dream that you got drafted by the Red and Gold, but what was your process before that? Did you do like a lot of praying? Was there

somewhere that you wanted to end up or were you just going to let God work it out?

"I was just going to let God work it out. I just put it in God's hands; there is nothing bigger than God. He is my Lord and savior, and when I actually started praying to God and getting on my knees more, he opened so many doors for me. And man, that's all I did. I got on my knees and prayed and just prayed. I prayed throughout the day and man, it happened."

And now that you kind of opened this door into this point of your career, what do you expect to be the biggest impact that you make starting out here as you grow with the program?

"I haven't really thought about that. I just want to contribute how I can contribute. Like, you know, I just want to bring energy to the building. I want to bring that natural energy to the building. I want to make plays, but that's going to come with work, so I have to work when I hit the building. And nothing is going to come easy, and I know I have to put in a lot of work to go in and actually work my way to that starting job."

What's the key to beating pass blockers that may outweigh you by 80 pounds in the NFL?

"Speed and playing chess, playing with the Tackle's mind. You have to switch the game up. If he has some type of advantage on you. You have to play with his mind, and you have to switch the game up and get him uncomfortable."

What team did you follow when you were growing up and who do you watch when you look at the NFL film?

"The Broncos because of [former Denver Broncos WR] Demaryius Thomas. That's my cousin, you know, and he's from out of Dexter, Georgia and went to West Laurens [HS]. He was a huge idol to me, and I looked up to him like no other. And he's the reason I feel like I've had success in my career."

Are you able to go into a little bit of detail as to what the conversation was between you and Coach K.J. that helped you to really feel like you were connected to him as a coach?

"So, Coach K.J., when they brought me in, he told me straight up. He didn't hold back on anything. He told me straight up how they're going to use me, and how I was going to be used in the scheme. And man, I just felt it. Like I said, I felt Coach's energy, and it was a natural attitude, and he wasn't trying to scare me or anything. He just told me how I was going to go and I just felt it. I was like, man, I'm ready to work with this guy."

You guys played Utah last year twice, and they had two first round picks in Cleveland Browns OT Spencer Fano and New England Patriots OT Caleb Lomu yesterday. How do you feel going against those guys and tackles and guards in the Big 12 or your local area for the next level?

"Yeah, I feel like Spencer Fano was one of my toughest challenges this year. He's a great, great athlete and you could tell his film study is wonderful because of how he came and approached the game. He switched it up, like he showed me things that I didn't see on

film when I played him. So, I feel like playing against guys like Spencer Fano prepared me well for the League because man, he's going to be super special when he gets to the league."



Transcriptions



RB Kaelon Black
Press Conference – April 24, 2026
San Francisco 49ers
[Listen to Audio](#) | [Media Center](#)

Any inkling this was coming, the 49ers?

“I had some talks, but I had no idea it was coming. It is just, it's a dream come true to be able to be in the NFL now and be on the team that I've also looked up to growing up.”

What are you looking forward to most now that you're with the 49ers?

“Man, just learning and growing from, from guys like [RB] Christian McCaffrey and even [Running Backs Coach Robert Turner Jr.] Coach Bobby T. I had some contact with him in our Zoom meetings and things like that. And I just feel like being a part of a great running back room is one of those things that can help you excel and become a better player. So I'm just truly humbled and just very excited to get going.”

How many times did Bobby T. call you and text you?

“I can't even put a number to it. I just love him as a coach, and I could tell how excited he is. Just the way that we talked and interacted, it seemed like we've been in contact with each other for a long time.”

How does the outside zone scheme of these guys run a lot fit with your running style?

“It's one of those things where it is just a style that I'm comfortable with. We ran a lot of outside zone at IU, even back to my days at JMU. So, running outside zone, I feel like it's going to be even more of my bread and butter now.”

I know there was a lot of buzz about you sleeping in Chicago. Can you just take us through that? I know we haven't really gotten your perspective. What have you learned throughout the draft process?

“Yeah, so I was pretty much coming from Vegas on a visit and got stuck in Chicago because of a lot of rain. And then, I think Cincinnati was around a five-hour drive away, and the next available flight wasn't until 1:00 PM the next day, so I pretty much would've missed the visit. And they said we're just going to get you guys an Uber. We got in the Uber, took the ride, and by this time it was probably like 9:00 or 10:00 AM when we finally got to Cincinnati. So yeah, we were in the airport for a long time, but it's just a testament to character. Doing whatever, going through whatever to make things happen. And I feel like that's also a character trait that I carry in my life as well.”

What do you think that you can take from being a teammate with Christian McCaffrey?

“Just how to be dynamic. We all know that Christian McCaffrey is a one thousand/one thousand guy easily. And I just feel like being under a guy like him is going to be special. I'm truly humbled to be able to work with a guy like him, someone I've always looked up to, even back to his days at Stanford. So, I'm just really excited to get to work with him.”

I noticed there haven't really been a lot of receptions for you the past couple of years. You had more receptions at James Madison under the same head coach. Was that a part of your game that was underutilized the last two years? Is it something that you have and just haven't done or a part of your game that you're going to watch Christian and take it all in?

“Honestly, it's one of the things where I'm going to take it all in. It kind of got schemed out being at IU. We had some great receivers like [Indiana Hoosiers WR] Elijah Sarratt, [Indiana Hoosiers WR] Charlie Becker, and [Indiana Hoosiers WR] E.J. Williams [Jr.], and [New York Jets WR] Omar Cooper [Jr.] as well. So anytime [Las Vegas Raiders QB] Fernando [Mendoza] was throwing the ball to those guys, they were catching them. So, it wasn't like we couldn't do it as running backs, it was making sure we stayed on it and made sure we stayed focused, and it was always there.”

What's the most important thing you learned at Indiana going all the way through?

“Honestly, how to build a winning program and a winning culture. Being under Coach [Indiana Hoosiers Head Coach Curt] Cignetti for so long has taught me a lot and I'm truly blessed to be coached by him for such a long time. Great team building, having a great locker room, no cliques, and everyone just being focused on the same common goal regardless of what anyone says on the outside.”

You're going to be reuniting with DL C.J. West and QB Kurtis Rourke. What are your feelings on that? And was there ever a world where you thought this was possible?

“Man, I didn't even realize it until now. My boy, C.J. and Kurt are still out there, so I'm like, man, it's definitely going to be exciting. Like I said, I'm just truly humbled, truly blessed, and I don't even know what to say. Like, I'm glad to be back with some winners again.”