

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**General Manager John Lynch & Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – April 23, 2020
San Francisco 49ers**

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Just curious how much action you got on the pick at 13 and what led you to make the decision to just do the one thing there and with DT Javon Kinlaw being the guy, how much, was he one of your six guys, that you mentioned the other day, John?

General Manager John Lynch: "The answer to the latter part of that is yes. Kinlaw was one of those guys. He was actually the first guy on our list that we would've taken at 13. In response to how much action, you know, I think we did a lot more and I think the entire league did before the draft because of the potential hitches that could go on with the virtual drafting. And so there was a lot of calling before the draft and the last, in the days leading up and then during that. So, we had a lot of different things going. I think the Tampa thing came about while we were in that pick and we felt like there was a good chance that Kinlaw would be there. If not, you know, a couple of the other players that we really liked at kind of that 13 slot would be there. So, we felt comfortable getting back one spot, gaining a fourth round pick and had a good idea that Javon would still be there and he's a guy that we had zeroed in on for a while. You know, you go back to when we first built this thing, Kyle and I came together, one of the things that we really believed in is that that's an equalizer in a football league where everything's set up for offenses to be successful. One of the ways you can equalize the equation is by to get after and knock down the passer. We built a pretty good unit there and we wanted to keep that strong. We thought he was a great fit for that."

Just curious about your thoughts on WR Brandon Aiyuk. Given that he didn't have, you know, he was only a one-year starter, so pretty limited sample, but assuming with him it's about the physical traits that you covet and could you explain what those traits are that you saw in him?

Head Coach Kyle Shanahan: "Yeah. You know, I mean when I start with receivers, I really don't know much of their history. I don't know much of their stats. I just get a list from our scouts and John's whole team of guys they've been studying for a few years. They give you all the guys they think are going to be eligible towards the top and Aiyuk was up there in those top six guys. I think five went today if I'm not mistaken. And there's going to be a couple more that'll probably go tomorrow in the first ten. So, there was a good group, but just watching them all and not knowing where they're going to go, you know, I loved Aiyuk and the first thing you know, not knowing anything about him, I don't know a lot about college football until I get into these guys, to see him just, you know, they didn't do everything in their office, but he has on tape that he can run every single route and he

can do it outside the numbers and he can do it inside the numbers. He has a certain skillset where I think is similar to [WR] Dante's [Pettis] in terms of you wouldn't just peg him at one position. You know, he can do all three. He can play the X, he can play the Z, he can play the F. He's got the speed to get on top. He's got the quickness, to play in the slot. He's got the toughness to go over in the middle. And the guy is just completely committed to me in to being as good as God ever intended him to be. And I know he only has real stats on one year. He was, he went to junior college, he had [New England Patriots WR] N'Keal Harry there last year. So, there's a lot of things that go into that. That is why he probably wasn't considered to go before 13 for most people, but just watching him, the guy, what he's put on tape this year at Arizona state and getting to meet the person, everything he did there, he was more than a viable option there at 13. And the fact that we were able to get him late, I can't, I feel very fortunate and I'm very happy for the Niners today."

You currently don't have any second-day picks. Are you optimistic that you could end up with some and where do things stand on trades, specifically WR Marquise Goodwin?

JL: "Yeah, in response to Marquise, we're talking with a few teams and we'll see where that goes tomorrow. Kyle just spoke to the strength of this receiver class and I think that's, you know, you talk about the many variables holding things up and I think that's giving people pause, but people see the value in what Marquise brings. He's an extremely talented player who is a game changer in terms of what he does to defenses. So, there is interest out there, we'll see where that goes. We're trying to find a good home for him. As for getting into the second round, we've emptied the tank a little there today, but Kyle just alluded to the fact that why we did. I think we never thought there would be a scenario where we could grab Kinlaw, you know, eventually at 14 and then still have an opportunity to get one of those six guys I talked about the other day. You know, for us at 13 he was probably the third guy on our list. And so when he kept coming back there, we said, we ought to start looking to get up and fortunately [Minnesota Vikings general manager] Rick Spielman answered the call and we were able to work something out."

At what point, John, did you realize that you couldn't sit at 31 and get the guy you wanted? Was it during that run of wide receivers or was the plan to go up all along?

JL: "Well, you know, in both these situations I want to give a lot of credit, you know, I think this year probably more than ever you've got to trust a couple of things. That's your film, your scouts, your coaches. Kyle will talk about how prepared our coaches were this year. Our Scouts were unbelievable, but [South Carolina head coach] Will Muschamp is a guy that I really grew to know last year and the process with [WR] Deebo Samuel and one thing Kyle and I talked to him, I think we talked to him a couple of days before the draft. We both were just struck I think a couple months later how accurately he just depicted exactly who Deebo was both in his strengths and the limited weaknesses that he had. He was extremely honest, so Will was tremendous. I talked to his junior college coach, with Javon and then [South Carolina defensive line coach] John Scott, their defensive line coach is a guy some of our guys had relationships, so all those guys were huge. With Aiyuk, [Arizona State head coach] Herm Edwards is one of my best friends in life. He was one of my coaches. And so Herm was a tremendous guy to lean on. There was talk

throughout the league that Aiyuk was one of the guys getting hot. And I think that's just because people started just watching the film. And, albeit the one-year starter, what he put on film was extremely impressive and we decided to pounce and we gave up a lot for it and we sure hope it's worth it, but he's a guy that we value tremendously."

KS: "And just for everyone, because this draft was so hard. I mean, no one will ever want to be in a situation where they don't have a second, third or fourth-round pick. So, why are we in that situation? And we decided last year going into the draft we thought we could get [DL Nick] Bosa and we were like, 'Man, how nice would it be to have someone else on the other side of Bosa and we spent a second-round pick to get [DL] Dee Ford with that. And that's what it is this year. And if we feel like we didn't have Dee Ford, we wouldn't have been in the Super Bowl. So, we're happy with that. And then halfway through the year we had some injuries, some things weren't going exactly as planned at wide out and we were 8-0 or 7-0 or whatever it was. And we realized, man, we do have a chance to go to the Super Bowl. What are we going to need to do that? And we thought at the time it was we need to add a receiver. And that was [WR] Emmanuel Sanders and in order to get that done at that time, which we didn't plan on it at that time, but we were 8-0 or 7-0 and so we realized it was Emmanuel. In order to do that, we got rid of a three and we swapped a four and five. So that left us without a two, three and four. And that's not something you ever want to do. But, I do believe those two things are what got us to the Super Bowl. Well I think it would have been, we were close, but it would have been very hard to get over the hump without those two guys. And that's what has us in this situation this year. And it was real tough to lose [Indianapolis Colts DL DeForest Buckner] DeFo, like as hard as anything, not only with the player but the guy. But DeFo got us and gave us a chance to fix a little bit and to be able to regain some of that. And we had that, we got the 13th pick and it would have been great, John and I talked for the last few months because of how little we have in the second, third and fourth. You know, if we could trade back a little bit and stuff and maybe pick up a third player in the third or fourth round, that would be our goal. But, there's a few guys who you can't pass at 13 and Kinlaw was one of those guys. And for Kinlaw to be there at 13 and us to go to 14 and still get him and pick up a fourth rounder, we thought it was unbelievable. But, Aiyuk was one of the guys we were going to do that for if Kinlaw wasn't there and then to still be there sitting there at 31 and a guy that we would have done it if we had to at 13 is sitting there when we're at 31 available at 25 and we feel very strongly from our Intel over the last few months there's no way Aiyuk is getting to 31 and so if we could take our fourth- round pick, which a fourth-round pick on our team is going to be hard to find a fourth-round pick to beat out any of our guys to start. So, to risk that to go up and get a starting receiver with a starting three technique that we already got, it was something we didn't think was going to be there and we just feel real happy it was. We get what we don't have this year and that's something John and I are going to work to never not be in again. But, you know what, if those decisions that put us here helped us last year. We'll do that every time and that's what we're happy about. But, that's what we're trying to get out of too. And we added two guys here today that without a doubt are starting caliber players who will make our team better, who are going to be contributors on their first contracts for a long time. And that'll really help us in free agency next year. That'll really help us in the draft next year and it'll really help the 2021 49ers. So, that's what we're just pumped about because it was tough,

but that's what we had to do to get to the Super Bowl last year and we feel we did as good as we could right now to redeem that. We're excited."

Two quick questions. One about Kinlaw. He reportedly didn't work at the combine because of knee tendinitis. Can you speak to if there's any concern there? I'm sure he got checked out at the combine, but the way this offseason is structured was it any different as far as getting medical on him and then with Aiyuk to what you're saying might he have been your top rated wide receiver in this draft?

JL: "The first question with Javon and his injury at the Senior Bowl, first of all I was down there at the Senior Bowl. He went and absolutely decimated folks down there and then got out after a couple of days. And apparently the knee did flare up. Our guys did, as extensive of a medical check as they could have. We got to the point where we were comfortable there. And we liked the player so much. It's a guy who missed one game in college and played at an incredibly high level. We just think he's a tremendous fit. The second part of your question I'm forgetting already."

As far as the injury? Yeah. Did it make it more difficult just the way this offseason is as far as getting more medical information did you have what you needed?

JL: "No, that was tough. So, typically what happens, they do what they call a recheck for guys who had things at the combine. You're not able to do those rechecks, but what a lot of agents did was send their guys to independent doctors. Those doctors then distributed letters and their opinions. And so then you leverage your medical staff and your doctors' relationships with those doctors. And we got to the point where we were comfortable. And that's where we're at. As I think the second part of the question, what was the second part of the question?"

Based off what you were saying, was Aiyuk your highest rated wide receiver and if he was in a foundational big six?

JL: "Yeah, he was, he was. Six was from the press conference the other week. I wanted to keep them guessing. He was one of the six though."

Kyle, you're obviously an offensive minded guy. You've coached offense and yet in three of your first four drafts here, you've taken a defensive lineman with your first pick. Is that you look back on that as surprising to you or is that when you were, and John, were first talking about this with a team that's already invested a lot in a defensive line. Were you thinking, okay, we're just going to keep going with defensive line, defensive line, defensive line and how important is that to you when you build a team?

KS: "I'm always going, I'm always down to go defensive lineman if the right guy is there. And that's, I was surprised Kinlaw was there. But, I can promise you, ask my high school friends when we did Madden and we drafted our own guys, like this is back in '97 or whatever, my first pick was always [former NFL DL Michael] Strahan and there's was always like [former NFL WR] Randy Moss. I always built it. I always wanted to do D-Line and I think that's what we've done here. And I think John feels the same way. You ask John why was why he was on one of the best defenses in the history of the NFL? Yeah, they had a hall of fame safety, a hall of fame corner in [former NFL CB] Tiki [Barber] and

a linebacker in [former NFL LB] Derrick Brooks, but it was because of the D-Line and I think we both firmly believed that. And I was on a team in Atlanta with I think possibly the best offense in the history of the NFL or at least up there with a few of them and still really tough to win if you don't have that D-Line and you don't have that defense. And that's what we've been able, that's what our goal was to do here since before we came here and I think last year that really showed, and I can't tell you what it was like for an offensive coach that yeah, I love calling plays and running an offense for a team that's more talented than everyone offensively. I mean, that's really fun and I felt like that's where we were at in Atlanta. You know, it's a lot easier to call offensive plays for what we had in Weeks 1-8 last year where our defense was 100-percent healthy and dominated everyone and I felt like that was the easiest I've ever had to call a game offensively. And if we can keep our defense that way and still gradually build our offense, that was the goal of John and I talking before we got here. Now you've got to make sure those guys are there because it's always bittersweet. I mean, you're right. I am an offensive coach and all I want are, I mean it's more fun for me in an offense with offensive playmakers, but nothing's more fun than having a defense like we had last year. And I think that gives you the best chance to go to the Super Bowl. And I think that's why John has a Super Bowl ring. I think that's why a lot of people have been on the top defenses too. And if we have that top defense, I think it's easier to manufacture it on offense where not many people manufacture a defense. That defense better be more talented than almost everyone they're going against."

Is it safe to say Brandon was your top receiver on the board and what, what hole I guess, or what need do you see him filling in your offense among your receiver corps?

KS: "I just, I think when we reached out for Emmanuel and made that trade, we just needed a consistent receiver who could do a little bit of everything, who we didn't have to only put in on this play or that play who was just a down in a down out receiver. It didn't matter where you put him and it didn't matter what the play was and that's what we got a little bit with Emmanuel when we traded for him and that's what I think we're getting with Brandon. There's not something like, all right, if you use him this way he'll be really good. I think Brandon would have been great whatever team he went to. And I'm so excited to have a guy like that because I think we can use him anyway we want. And I think he's capable of doing everything from an athletic standpoint. And I think he has the mentality from a toughest standpoint in terms of the contact of the game and also in terms of this guy is just not happy with today. This guy wants to be great. I want someone like that. And I think he has the tools to be great. I think he has the mindset to be great and I promise you schematically we're going to give him every chance to do that. And when that's the case and you have a guy wired that way and you have a system that way, I mean what can hold him back. And I mean there's always injuries that, you know, you can't hold into it, but Brandon is being asked if he's the top guy, he was my favorite receiver I evaluated. There is no doubt on that. [Dallas Cowboys WR] CeeDee Lamb was hell of a player who can make a lot of plays. I mean, I always keep it pretty real with you guys. And so, that was the guy who was competition with him. But in terms of the receiver and just all the positions and developed, this guy was there from the first time we watched him."

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DT Javon Kinlaw
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You had some contact with the 49ers throughout this process. What led you to believe that you're a good fit for their system and how did you connect with the people you talked to with the 49ers?

"It wasn't about connecting or talking to anybody. I just liked the way they play honestly."

And, how's that?

"They just going after it. Penetrating, getting off, getting off the ball. That type of thing. And, that's what I like to do."

And do you think you can step in and be a three-down player for them?

"Hands down. I'm ready."

As you know, you've got a fellow on Gamecock already on the roster. How well do you know WR Deebo Samuel? Has he contacted you since the pick was made? And, what are your thoughts about joining him in Santa Clara?

"Deebo called me the other day and told me I was coming to San Francisco and I just texted Deebo. So, me and Deebo, we've got a pretty good relationship."

What do you know about this team and sort of the culture that you're going to be joining out here?

"By the way things look, you can tell everybody is working together for the same goal. That's what I want to be a part of."

You mentioned that you had watched a lot of the Niners. I just am curious how much you had seen in terms of watching their defensive line that allowed you to fit in and what you make of your defensive line-mates? Guys like DL Nick Bosa and DL Dee Ford and DL Arik Armstead and those guys.

"Yeah, I think they might've been the best defensive line in football last year. I'm not just saying that. The way they play, they play the right way. I feel like they play the way the game is supposed to be played."

And, Indianapolis Colts DL DeForest Buckner was a guy who they traded out of here and they used that pick essentially to get you. What did you know about DeForest Buckner and do you feel like you have some big shoes to fill in that way?

"I was watching DeForest since he was coming out of college. I know he started off as a raw player and he developed into a monster. I feel like once I can get that type of coaching, I can probably be somebody like him."

You reportedly didn't participate at the combine because of knee tendinitis. What is the situation with your knee? How long have you been dealing with that?

"My knee is healed 100%. There's no issues."

Was that an issue you dealt with in college at all?

"Not really."

I read about a game against Georgia last year where you guys won and you took almost 95 snaps and you refused to come out of the game. I'm wondering if that game is an illustration of who you are as a football player? I was hoping you could kind of tell me about your mentality as a defensive lineman, because I thought that was pretty cool that you wouldn't come out of the game even after that many snaps.

"That's just who I am as a person. That's just my makeup. It's just in my DNA. On the field, off the field, I just want to be that guy. I feel like I was born to be that guy."

I read also that you feel that you haven't even scratched the surface of your potential as a pass rusher. How much do you think that working with Nick Bosa, Arik Armstead, those guys on the 49ers right now, that defensive line, how much do you think that can improve your game as a pass rusher?

"Well playing next to guys like that, I think it leaves opportunities for me to get a lot of one-on-one. And, I feel as though the D-Line coach, I feel like he's gonna do a good job of developing me the right way and help me understand the game of football more and more as the years go on."

You mentioned your D-Line coach, defensive line coach Kris Kocurek. I'm wondering how much contact you had with him during the pre-draft process and he's known for being very loud and screaming a lot on the practice field. Have you ever had a coach like that and are you prepared for that type of coaching style?

"You all must not know who [University of South Carolina head coach] Will Muschamp is."

Muschamp yells a lot?

"Muschamp will put his foot up your behind if he could. But, I'm used to that type of coaching. That's what I respond to the best anyway."

Can you describe just how this draft unfolded for you tonight and were you concerned at all that the 49ers might go with a wide receiver instead of you, since there was only one off the board at that point?

"I didn't really know what they were going to do. I didn't know where I was going at, I was just waiting for a call. Once I got that call I was like, 'Okay, cool.' This is where I'm going. I'm lit. I'm ready to go."

How have you been able to continue staying in shape and working out during this time?

“Just mainly working on my cardio, honestly. Just keeping my cardio up, jogging a lot.”

Is there anything football-wise, techniques or anything that you can really hone in on?

“I haven't been able to find fields where I live, so I've just been jogging. That's about it. But, I know one thing, my wind will be up.”

You said that you were so impressed with watching this defensive line play this year. How do you feel like your skillset can add to that and even enhance it?

“Just a physical presence. Another physical, dominating presence attached with three more? You can't ask for nothing better than that. I feel like I can come in and play a vital role.”

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WR Brandon Aiyuk
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So you just posted a picture of yourself as a four-year-old wearing 49ers gear. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

“Yeah. So, my mom's been a huge 49ers fan her whole life, so that kind of bled on me a little bit when I was younger.”

So that selection and this choice now seem a little fortuitous?

“It did. It did. There were a lot of people telling me before today and all week that it was going to happen. So, it's crazy that it actually did happen.”

So did you have any idea that you would be heading to the 49ers?

“When they traded 13th away I believed, kind of had a strong feeling, just with my agent telling me the communication that he had going back and forth. So, after that I kind of had a strong feeling and then when they traded it up, I kind of, I knew right then and there.”

I was hoping you could talk about your background as a running back and how you apply that to playing wide receiver?

“Yes sir. So, with my back background, I played running back early on in my career, so I just feel like that contributes to the yards after the catch. After I catch the football, I kind of just change back into that running back that I was early on.”

Can you talk a little bit about, you just talked a little bit about it, but about your mentality as receiver and why you're so successful yards after the catch?

“Yeah, so for me, I take a lot of pride in my yards after the catch. Early on at Arizona State, I didn't get a lot of touches and one of my coaches told me that when you do get the ball just go score a touchdown. So I kind of just have that mentality that every time I touch the football I want to go score a touchdown.”

What do you know about this 49ers offense you're joining? What did you notice last season as they were making their run of the Super Bowl and playing in the Super Bowl?

“I know that this offense is crazy with [TE George] Kittle and [WR] Deebo [Samuel] and [WR] Kendrick Bourne. I just know [head coach] Kyle Shanahan is a great offensive coordinator. He moves people around. Just the way he manufactured touches for Deebo

last year and just gets everyone involved. I just know it's a scary offense and I'm very excited to get added to that offense."

You mentioned you had a slow start at ASU. I think after your first nine games, you had something like 11 catches. How frustrated, if at all, were you at that time and could you have imagined at that time that you were going to be a first round pick?

"My first year we had [New England Patriots WR] N'Keal Harry, so he was kind of the focal point of the offense. So, I just had a role that I understood in offense. Just contribute where I can, just help where I fit in. So I was pretty much more of a role player that year. It was frustrating at times, but just looking bigger picture and understanding that can still happen because I still had another year to do what I wanted to do."

Now that you're going to be working with 49ers wide receivers coach Wes Welker, in what ways do you think you can be better and in what specific areas do you think you can improve your game?

"I think I can improve my game in all aspects of my game. When I talk to Wes, he's just always talking about how he's going to push me, how he's going to make me better. He's just going to continuously push me daily, which is something that I love and something that I'm excited for. I think there's a lot of work to do still in my game in a lot of different areas. I think when I'm able to get with him and sit down and finally be able to be coached by him, we can start working at those things one by one."

Where are you right now?

"I'm at home. I'm at my house in Reno, Nevada."

And how did you end up at Sierra College?

"I ended up at Sierra College, so I didn't play my junior year. That's a big year in recruiting. Pretty much my senior year, I knew I was going to end up going to junior college if I wanted to continue to play football."

And do you know the history of Sierra College and the 49ers?

"Yeah. I do. I know that they practiced up there. Our D-Line coach played for the 49ers for some time. So my coaches told me that they were up there in Rocklin a long time ago."

And you've been a 49ers fan throughout?

"So I would say a fan throughout, I just kind of move with players. But, definitely when I was younger, I was rolling with the 49ers because of my mom."

WR Emmanuel Sanders obviously was with the 49ers last year. They don't have him anymore and a lot of people have compared your game and said that maybe you could fit into a similar role as him. I'm wondering if Emmanuel was a receiver that you watched as you were coming up, as kind of a model in the NFL?

"Yeah. So, Emmanuel, he's just great. I saw a lot of compare me to him. For him it's just all aspects of the game. I just feel like he can do the same things I can do, which is catch the ball at all three levels or even just go behind the line of scrimmage with a screen pass

and just break touches and make things happen. Then just also block in the run game. He's just effort all around. He's a complete receiver."

Wondering whether you spoke to the 49ers about the return game, whether kickoffs and punts were something they're interested in you doing.

"I haven't talked to them about that yet, but I figured that was something that I will be doing."

Your trajectory from junior college to ASU to the NFL, how has that kind of shaped you as a player versus maybe someone who got to spend three or four years in division one?

"I was a one year starter, so I feel like for me it's just going to keep on going up. I still feel like I haven't even scratched the surface of what I can do as a football player and at this position, the receiver position. I only played one year as a full time starter. So, I still have a lot to learn, so I have a lot to grow in my game. I just think that for me, the ceiling is limitless. I don't think there's a ceiling to my game. That's another exciting part because I know that I can continue to get better."

How have you dealt with the shelter in place, staying in shape? What have you been doing over the past month or so?

"Yeah, so for staying in shape, I've been lucky. I have a pretty nice garage set up that I've been able to work. And then, I have a nice empty field right around the corner from my house. Trying to figure out ways to work out hasn't been too much of an issue for me, but I just know that the main thing is to be in shape whenever we do get back to football."

Growing up, is there any receiver you kind of modeled yourself after?

"I would say Odell [Beckham Jr.]. I just feel like he was somebody that I watched a lot because we're similar in builds, similar playing style. And then, what he does after the catch. I think he was a guy that had a huge upside coming out of college. Not a lot of a lot of numbers, but just a great talent. So, I think just Odell is one of those guys that I watched a lot and somebody that I try to model my game after."