



**QUOTES**

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## **LOS ANGELES CHARGERS OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR KEN WHISENHUNT**

### **On facing Pittsburgh:**

"Yeah, good football team. Been a good football team consistently seems like for a number of years. They're playing the same defensive scheme that they've played for a number of years, and they play it well. They do a nice job. They've got some good edge rushers. Their inside backs are very good. They're very good up front. They work well together as a unit. It's a tough task. We got our jobs cut out for us."

### **On visiting teams playing in Pittsburgh:**

"Well, it's not an easy place to play. Their fans are tremendous. They support the team. Sunday night game especially will be a big deal. For us, we have had a couple of those this year. I think as a players, even as a coaches, this is what you want. You relish this kind of opportunity to be in these kinds of situations and play against a good football team in a loud environment. We've had a couple this year of those loud environments and we have done okay. I'm sure there will be some tough spots, but at least it's not the first time we're going in. it's a great atmosphere."

### **On RB Justin Jackson:**

"[Head Coach] Anthony [Lynn] has done a great job of really staying on — you know, when we picked him late in the draft, one of the things that stood out was his production from college. We didn't see as much of that maybe in the OTAs and training camp. He was nicked up a bit, but he did enough to make the roster and he's really been doing a good job on the scout team. That's a credit to him. If you ever wanted to have a model for this is why you work on those teams to prepare you, it showed up last week. When he had to go in there, you know, we haven't seen that in a game. We haven't seen him run like that. We haven't seen him make these moves. You see it in practice, but just don't know that's really what it's going to be like in a game. Credit to him. Like I said, he has worked hard. [Running Backs Coach] Alfredo [Roberts] and Coach [Lynn] have been on him constantly, and I think that they saw some talent in him, so hopefully he can replicate that again this week."

### **On the running back duties between RB Austin Ekeler and Jackson:**

"I think there will be a mix between both of those guys. I don't think with the way it is now in the league — you have a number of different guys that you play through. I should say a couple that you do. We went on last week after [RB] Melvin [Gordon III] got hurt and just kept going. Still had a rotation, so hopefully there will be some, there will be a rotation."

### **On what Jackson does well in the backfield:**

"Well, that's what we're still finding out a little bit about. It was our first real chance to see him be a runner, and he did a nice job with that. He's shown up on the practice field in space doing some of those things, and we liked what we've seen. Listen, it's different when you go from just practicing to being in a game. He handled it well. This will be a different environment for him. That was at home; this will be on the road with the noise, against a good football team. It'll be a challenge, but we're excited to see how he performs."

### **On how the offense changes with RB Melvin Gordon III's injury:**

"I don't necessarily that it changes. Austin has been playing in it and doing a nice job. When Melvin goes out, it doesn't change the offense. Some of the things we did with both of those guys probably would change a little bit just because you don't have Melvin and Austin at the same time. I think we feel a little bit more comfortable about where we are now after getting [Justin] JJ [Jackson] some practice last week. So we go forward with what we've been doing, and hopefully it'll pay off for us."

**On RB Detrez Newsome:**

"Yeah, I think he had a really good preseason and we liked him. He made our team and has done some nice things. We're definitely comfortable with Detrez. He got in the game a little bit last week and got some reps in had practice. The way that situation is with running backs, you have to have three of them. He certainly is — there is a comfort level with him as well."

**On the play when Gordon was injured:**

"Well that's something we've had in for a couple weeks. We practiced, and it's something that Melvin liked, we wanted to do. It is something that ties in -- one of the things we've done really well this year is we've tied plays in together. We've built off different plays. That was built off another play, you know, which moving him in space and getting him in space. He's shown to be pretty good, and it was just unfortunate that the player for the Cardinals just happened to blow it up and we made him stick up front and he came through and it was a freak thing. In that kind of situation, we were trying to establish the fact that we were going to keep our foot on the gas, we were going to make sure we were staying with it. That was one of the plays, like I said, we carried it for a couple weeks. We felt like it was a good play. It was a chance to get Melvin, we thought, in space, which he's been very good at. We're certainly disappointed that that happened, but could very easily have turned into a big play like the one against Oakland where he went for 30 or 40 yards. We would all be really happy. That's the way this game works sometimes."

**On practicing the tough receptions along the sidelines:**

"I know you guys don't really see it, but if you've ever watched our pregame workout routine, we focus on getting that done on game day. We do it out in there in practice, but that's one of the things that's part of warming up and doing our pregame drills. In fact, it was of funny last week — really kind of ironic — that one of the officials was out there warming up, and [Wide Receivers Coach] Phil [McGeoghan] said, 'You want to watch this? You can get your eyes working to see if we get our feet down.' So we did some of the those drills before the game and it paid off. Those are things that you do in camp. You do it OTAs. People say, 'Okay, why do you do those drills?' Well, there was a good example of why."

**On if he wants to display the potential of the offense:**

"I think we just want to play well and have a chance to win. If it's three to two, because it could actually be two to one. There is a special rule that if the ball comes out of the end zone by the defense and then goes back in it's a one-point safety. I don't care what it is as long as we get a chance to win."

**On his name being circulated as a candidate for the head coaching opening at Georgia Tech:**

"To be honest with you, I heard about that when I walked off the field yesterday. I had no idea. No idea that I was really a candidate for that. I'm certainly flattered that people think that, but the focus right now is really on the Steelers. In this business, if you've been in it, those kind of things happen, but right now it's really more about this game. I've been so busy from when that happened yesterday I haven't had a chance to think about it. I'm honored that my name would be mentioned, but right now it's really more about the Steelers."

**On if he's worried about that being a distraction:**

"Absolutely. I don't have any interest in it being a distraction whatsoever."

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR GUS BRADLEY****Opening Statement:**

"Just got back from practice, but a good practice. Challenging week of preparation. Just very good offensive team. A lot of skilled players. Good offensive line. The quarterback makes them go, so it's been a challenging week that way, but one we're looking forward to."

**On Pittsburgh's wide receivers:**

"Right. That's what makes him so good. They are so effective out there on the perimeter. They mix it up where they're aligned, how they disperse, the routes they run, and then he has a chance to get it to them. Very accurate. I think the biggest thing looking at it — obviously the challenging first and second down normal football that you get, but the extension of plays. His ability to extend plays and the receivers and the quarterback are all on the same page. You see a lot explosive plays come off that, so it's challenging to prepare for that."

**On the differences between Steelers WRs Antonio Brown and JuJu Smith-Schuster:**

"Yeah, there are some differences, but a lot of similarities. They're both very good, very effective, the number of targets they're getting. I mean, they're challenging duo. It's just not those two. Their tight ends, they got a great group of tight ends. We got our work cut out for us."

**On the challenges covering the receivers with Steelers QB Ben Roethlisberger's ability to extend the play:**

"That's every week in the NFL. With those two guys especially, your antennas are up because they do it so often. It really jumped out at you on tape."

**On Steelers RB James Conner:**

"You know what? He's a guy that jumps out, too. Very patient runner, but has the ability to be a very strong runner as well. Breaks tackles. Ability to make people miss in the open space. Screen game that he's involved in. Catching passes out of the backfield. Fits in very well with that offensive scheme."

**On the defensive performance against Arizona:**

"That's how we look at each week, is we definitely have to try to improve on things that happened from the previous week. It didn't start off good right away. First series, we got punched in the mouth a little bit, but we bounced back. I think the players understood just the importance of communication, doing your job — and if we do that, we can be an effective defense. Then you just get things going. To be honest with you, I think we were only out there three plays in the third quarter. When you're out there that limited of time, sometimes your numbers can be low as well."

**On players that stood out last week:**

"Last week? You know, sounds cliché, but it really was a team effort. You see guys that had to make plays individually at different times in the game. [DE] Joey [Bosa] got the pressure on the quarterback in the third down situation. [LB Jatavis] J.B. [Brown] made a play on the screen. That maybe seems like a small play, but in was in good field position for them. once they crossed the 50, and allowed us to get a third down win. So there was multiple plays, and that's kind of how our defense has been. It's not maybe one or two individual players. It's more of a group, collective effort."

**On the mentality in sudden-change situations:**

"Right. Sometimes sudden-change is such a momentum swing. I think for us as a defense, we have to look at it as another opportunity. This is a great opportunity to demonstrate who we are. Kind of like that give us an inch and we'll protect it — same mentality in sudden change. Ah, we got to go out there. We're in a bad field position. What's going to happen — let's regroup. For us, we would like to have more of a mindset of what a challenge. Let's go out there, get a stop here, a chance to get a turnover — that's a great opportunity to demonstrate how we handle situations like that. More of that mindset."

**On LB Jatavis Brown:**

"Yeah, I can't say enough for him. He plays multiple positions for us. He plays MIKE, he plays WILL. They would love to have him on every special teams. So I think another year in a system you're seeing him play faster in to the system. He's always been fast, but the ability to recognize and react quicker than he has in the past, I think that's really been evident for him."

**On preparing for Roethlisberger:**

"You know, [QB] Cardale [Jones], he's our scout team quarterback this week. It's not just his size, you're right. You can have guys on him and he still looks down field to make a play — the pump fakes that he does. When he does extend down the field or he does get out of pocket he's looking down the field, not just for an easy completion, but he's looking for shots. Each week you look at the yards passing that he's had, and, I mean, he's very impressive, as we all know. When you watch him and really study him on tape, I've got a lot of respect for him."

**On S Derwin James continuing to improve:**

"You're right. [Head] Coach [Anthony] Lynn has talked to a lot of our young players about that rookie wall. On our side of the ball, the guys I can speak for, I haven't seen it with those guys. Now, winning obviously helps. When you're relevant at this time year and you got opportunity is that look forward, that helps. Regardless, I think their spirit, all those young guys, I think they've been really a welcome addition to our group and it's been a really good mix."