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Chargers Media Availability

Monday, September 20, 2021 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On the illegal shift penalty:

"Yes, there were grounds for them to call us for an illegal shift. Our right side two receivers weren't fully set when [TE] Jared [Cook] came in motion. It's kind of a judgement thing with a lot of teams that shift in motion a lot where that can be excused. But we have to do a better job from an operational standpoint of getting set and then sending motion once our guys are set so that we don't give them any room to make a call like that."

On what caused the flag:

"It was the result of the two receivers on the right side not being set when the motion happened. You have to be set on the right side before the motion is sent. That's why they called an illegal shift."

On the potential T Storm Norton starting against the Chiefs:

"We're exploring a lot of options there. I think Storm was a little broken down yesterday, but he gave us a chance to win that game. I know he had a tough day, but that's not the reason we lost that football game. He competed in the game, for sure. I think from a fundamental standpoint, that's where he can improve the most. Just trusting his technique. I felt like in that first game, in the second half, fundamentally, he was strong. I felt like he got out of a rhythm yesterday. We're certainly going to stay with Storm and keep developing all the guys on our line. Certainly, those combinations of [G] Matt [Feiler], [T] Trey [Pipkins III], those guys are options, guys that have played tackle in the NFL. But I have a lot of confidence in Storm and I'm hoping he can bounce back this week."

On if Norton will start at RT in Week 3:

"Yes."

On G/T Michael Schofield III:

"We see him as an inside player and a guy that can kick outside in an emergency, but we're really onboarding him as an inside player."

On improving the line of scrimmage:

"We needed to be more physical at the line of attack in level one. I think our front mechanics were a hair off, which caused us to be a little bit off in the second level, too. We have to be stronger at the point of attack and eliminate the air in the run. We weren't off by much, but those two runners are good. It normally has a compounding affect; when you're a little bit off in level one, you start to overcompensate in the second level. And then, we have to finish tackles. We have to tackle well, too. Make sure that we finish plays. It was a combination of those factors in the game. There were plenty of instances of us playing good run defense yesterday. But there were far too many instances of us playing poorly. The good news is it's completely within our control. We knew that that was going to be part of our plan against us, and we were in good run defenses, good run structures. We were a little off with our mechanics and with our technique. That's going to be a point of emphasis moving forward."

On late-game clock management strategy:

"We felt like we were in good shape in two-minute. I really wish that third down had gone a little bit better. We had a miscommunication on that early third down. We felt like we were in good shape in that particular instance. They hit that slant to [Cowboys WR] Amari [Cooper] in a bunch of traffic, and we were hoping to keep the ball inbounds to force them to burn their timeouts. We were in two defenses to deny the ball on those two downs before the field goal. We let it get out of bounds, there with that jet motion in the boundary. I didn't feel like taking the timeout there would've unpacked the type of time we needed to get the ball back."

On technique-based penalties:

"We just have to pay more attention to detail in both our fundamentals and our operation. We had ten penalties on offense and a lot of it was technique-oriented and operation-oriented, guys making sure that we're set from a cadence operation-motion standpoint. Going on a quick cadence, making sure people are set, and then understanding the frame of a play from a technique standpoint. What leverage am I playing? Where's my help? Who am I playing against? Just making sure we're playing with the right fundamentals. All those things will be alleviated from a penalty standpoint. As you saw offensively, we had a really productive day. If those ten penalties don't occur, who knows what type of day it's going to be. That's what we wanted to unpack today, which is the truth of what happened. The main takeaway for me is that the Los Angeles Chargers are in control of what happened yesterday. We need to put the focus on us, that's what we're going to do moving forward."

On the passing game:

"We're throwing the ball really prolifically. Yesterday, we had two forty-plus-yard passes taken off the board because of penalties. We're one of the top-five offenses in football right now; that's not even counting the penalty yards of both weeks. I think [QB] Justin's [Herbert] yards per attempt, as you guys see, is really high. We're distributing the ball evenly, balanced. Getting it to a lot of different people. I really like the way we're throwing the football right now. I think that's the strength of our offense. Yesterday, I thought we ran the football really well. We just need to continue to improve a lot of the details of playing together. We've got a lot of guys that have played a lot of football in the NFL, but they haven't played together. I think that's coming together as an offense, and really understanding all the details of every play. The continuity that it takes, the chemistry that it takes to truly score the ball like we're capable of. I feel like we're still at the beginning of that process. But I'm really pleased with how we're moving it. Now we just have to finish drives with touchdowns, and a lot of that starts with us playing penalty-free. If we can do that, then we're going to have the production I know we're capable of."

On opposing defenses expecting QB Justin Herbert's 'big arm':

"There were a lot of explosive plays yesterday. I think we're still accessing the deep part of the field. Two chunks to [WR] Keenan [Allen], [WR] Mike [Williams], [TE] Jared Cook, [TE Donald] Parham [Jr.], [RB] Austin [Ekeler] on the double move. I feel like we're pushing the ball down the field. That's what's tough about playing us. We can get it to a lot of different people. When you have a passing attack like ours, people are going to try and put a roof over the coverage the best they can. If that's the case, then you have to take completions and you have to run the football. I felt like we did that yesterday. One of Justin's best assets is he doesn't hang on to the football. This guy plays fast, he was getting through it. When we got [RB] Austin [Ekeler] activated in the passing game yesterday — there were a lot of shallow crosses, check-downs — stuff within the progression of the play where we were able to throw it short. Other than that, I felt like we ran the football really well yesterday. For me, it's about finishing drives with touchdowns. I like what I'm seeing from our offense from a production standpoint. But from a finish and scoring standpoint, that's where we can improve."

On DL Jerry Tillery's performance yesterday:

"He was a good illustration of our defense. I can show you a movie of him playing at a really high level. I felt like he rushed better than he did in the first game. I felt like he had some excellent reps in the run game, and then I felt like there were some snaps that for sure he can play better, where we created some seams and we weren't as firm at the point of attack. It starts with me coaching better and him truly understanding exactly what we want based off of the blocking schemes that we see. I think that I can communicate that more effectively because this guy is doing everything that we ask. I felt like he made plays yesterday and I think that he will make even more when he has that full understanding. A lot of that is just time on task, playing the game within our scheme and playing against different people. I felt like he improved yesterday, overall. Any issue that he had is easily correctable. I like where his mindset is. I think that he's competing well for us. I just

expect him to continue to improve because he's all in and he's plenty good enough. I'm excited to keep coaching him, for sure."

On S Nasir Adderley's performance yesterday:

"I think that he took a big step forward yesterday as a player in the game. That play that you're referring to yesterday, he was in the right leverage, where the week before, he was in the wrong leverage on that same play. Very similar coverage, actually. I really liked where he was from a location standpoint on that play. I felt like he tackled really well yesterday. I thought that he was really active from a communication standpoint. He's one of the guys that I felt like yesterday, for us, really took a step up. I really felt like he played a good game. I felt him. I saw him. I felt like yesterday was a good day. As the play you're talking about, yeah, we want to finish that play. But he climbed the ladder, he was up, up and away on that. I'm just glad that he was there to make a play for us. By him doing that, we were able to get the sack-fumble the next time and were able to get a stop there. We want to make those plays. It was a game where if you do finish that type of play, then that movie is going to be different. For him, I thought it was a big step forward. I think that he's continuing to understand how we want to do things. I thought that he was a bright spot for us yesterday."

On if there is 'any level of concern' with Herbert's three interceptions through the first two games:

"No, Justin Herbert is playing at a really, really high-level guys. You know, sometimes as a quarterback, there are some circumstances that can be misleading when it comes to interceptions. I think the first interception we have a play that's a really premium play against that coverage against man-to-man, single safety. We just get undercut there. It was a really, really good play by [Dallas CB] Trevon Diggs. I think we can flatten it out more for him too, I think that's what [WR] Keenan [Allen] would tell you. On the interception in the red zone, Keenan fell down on that bang. Our spacing can be different. Our spacing needs to be better to the front side of that play. What I think he will learn from it is if it's a little cloudy on that third down, maybe I hit that shell across underneath but he's playing within the timing and rhythm of play, and if you see him at the top of the drop. He's trusting the Keenan is going to be there. So, that's a tough one. I think that's one that he will learn from. Where, hey if I have a do-over, maybe I'll see it a little cloudy, maybe I hit the shallow cross. I know this Fernando, that guy gave us a real chance in the game. These penalties don't express themselves. This is going to be a monster 400-yard day. The plays he was making with fourth and pressure yesterday and the type of throws that were happening on that field, I felt like he was the best player on the field."

On S Derwin James Jr. playing the Star position in the nickel sub-package, rather than his regular safety position, and how that impacted the run defense:

"I think it's a fair observation. I don't think Derwin's positioning would have helped us, if that makes sense. I actually think playing in the slot was a big benefit for us in that game because of how good they are outside at receiver. I felt like that gave us an advantage that way. I felt like all of our issues yesterday were really level one and level two. I felt like Derwin wouldn't have been able to solve those issues yesterday. That's the thing about Derwin James, he can solve a lot of issues. So, you kind of wish he was where all the elites are because he can do so much. You know he's one of those players, where you can find yourself as a coach, 'Ah, I wish he was at safety,' or, 'Man, I wish he was at money or I wish he was at star.' That's kind of why he's so amazing. The issues that we had yesterday in the run front. We can fix those, certainly what that did more than anything for us is it did not allow us to rush the passer and play the type of game that we were probably capable of playing, because able to stay more on schedule. I think when you watch the movie, it's a little thing. It's a couple of things here and there, little things that added up to being a big difference. I think that we'll learn a lot from it. I guess you guys just got to trust me on that, but I think our guys would really unpack a lot in that film and it'll help us move forward."

On DL Jerry Tillery's 'mental and physical mistakes':

"I think just truly understanding what we want. 'Hey, if this block shows up, this is how I want you to play this block-based off of what technique you're in.' He's playing it from a variety of different places for us because that's a strength of his. I think that it's finding that sweet spot of, how do I really want this to be played so that he can make me play, not somebody else. I think that there's just growth to be had, and again, I think it starts with me coaching better, defining that better for the play. I know what your eyes can tell you because you guys are on it, but a lot of it's me doing a better job coaching the guy. That's what we are pouring all of our time into. I thought that he's a guy that played better, but there were still some, there were still some of this and there was some of this because of me, not because of him. I'm going to be better for moving forward."

On the specifics of an illegal motion penalty:

"I think that that's a question for [the officials]. I think that's a question for them. For us, I know that we just need to be cleaner from our side of things moving forward. That's what I told the guys. That's what I'm going to try and be for them, is to tap into a better understanding of exactly what's being officiated and what's being emphasized, just put all this stuff on me and put it on our team to play better, to play cleaner. That way, we can live with the results instead of depending on somebody else."

On G Oday Aboushi's penalty in the third quarter:

"They probably explained it to me like they explained it to you. You know, that's one, that's certainly a tough one for us."

On if the team researches the officiating crew prior to each game:

"We had [Referee] Tony [Corrente] in the preseason, too. You guys can look back at the data in that game, as well. We do a report every Friday on the crew that we're going to be operating with so that we have name recognition, facial recognition and data. It boils down to just playing clean football. It really does. I know that there's awesome data to track, but a lot of it is just calling what they see. I think we just have to always be in that process of rules education. I know that through two weeks it hasn't been good enough [for us]. We've been penalized far too much. That's a big mission statement of ours, to play clean ball. It hasn't been cleaned up after two weeks."

On if there's a 'level of concern' over the amount of attempts Herbert has thrown through the first two games:

"I'd be more concerned if those 40 were dropback oriented where, 'Hey, man, you're really dropping back a lot,' because that's when there's a lot more risk when the rush is really on you and then the risk of turnovers. There's a lot more variables that are good for the defense when you're actually dropping back. I think out of those 41 attempts, there's a lot of different types of assets where they're well-protected; RPOs, quickies and movement. I feel like there's a lot of different types of passes, so I'm not as concerned with the volume. We trust this guy a lot. There's nobody I would rather have with the ball in his hands. I felt like we ran the football at a really high level yesterday, and at the same time, we felt like there was a lot available in the passing game. I felt like we tried to stay balanced yesterday. I think your point's a good one. Especially when we get down in there in the red area, it's really on running the football at a high level to put ourselves in favorable down and distances. It's always a really good predictor of success in the red area when you can run the football better, especially when a lot of the coverages are designed to take your people away when he's going to continue to look at that. Justin Herbert's a guy that you can't put the ball in his hands enough. I feel like we're going to continue to try to do what gives us the best chance based on the defense we're playing. That's a good one for sure."

On any new injury concerns:

"That was a positive out of the game. I think just bumps and bruises, but nothing significant. We will unpack more for Wednesday, but the initial part of the game was positive for sure."

OUTSIDE LINEBACKER JOEY BOSA**On yesterday's loss to the Cowboys:**

"I think [Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley just had a good message to the team. We are just going to move into these meetings and watch the game. I still haven't watched it yet, I know I have to play a lot better without watching the tape, I can tell you that. I think we are just going to unpack it like you said over the next few hours, take what we can from the game, win or lose, that's what we should do every time and tomorrow move onto the next week."

On LB Kenneth Murray Jr.:

"All of the linebackers, they had a great camp. [LB] Kyzir [White] and Kenneth, they just fly around with their speed. In the middle of the field, they can cover so much ground and I think that we have just a great group on defense including Kenneth, we have him and [S] Derwin [James Jr.]. All the guys during practice every week, every day, they always bring energy so they have been great."

On stopping the run:

"Yeah, I think it starts at the front. Obviously, we have to be better upfront as a D-line and an EDGE group. That will make the job on the linebackers that much easier and the secondary. We've got to tackle better, that's definitely a big point from yesterday. We just have to execute on every part of the ball. Every level of the defense and I still haven't watched the film like I said. We are going to unpack it here and see what we can take from it."

On preparing for the Chiefs:

"They've been great every year for the past, however long. They are always a challenge when we play them. I think coming off a loss like this, this is a huge game to see if we can bounce back after some adversity. Starting tomorrow, it's on to Kansas City, and we are going to start preparing after we watch the film today."

On 'being better at the line of scrimmage' as a defensive unit:

"As I was saying, it does start at the front. We have to be better as a d-line and an edge group to make it easier on the secondary and the linebackers making tackles. I was just saying as well, tackling was a big problem yesterday. I missed a tackled and a good opportunity for a tackle for loss. There were many missed opportunities out there, so I still have to watch the film. Like I said, I'll get a better idea after."

On if the 'lack of effective tackling' yesterday was due to 'limited padded practices in training camp':

"No, I don't think so. There's hardly any time where you're actually tackling and bringing people to the ground at practice anyway, even if you do have pads. It's something we just have to execute better. I got to run my feet and we just got to get more people to the ball and I think we will be fine."

On having a 'wrap' on his leg after yesterday's game:

"Yeah, I rolled my ankle a little bit. Going to take it day by day, but it's feeling a bit sore today. It's nothing too bad, nothing too serious."

On what the Cowboys offensive line did well yesterday:

"Again, I'll know better once I watch it. I don't get the full story on my side of the ball, obviously. I mean, they are a talented group upfront. they leaned on the running backs, and they did a good job. We'll see soon though, I'll know...in a couple of hours."

On not being able to stop the running game and not getting into pass-rushing situations:

"There were a lot of quick passes and the run game, but I still know there were still opportunities that I left out there. We did hold the ball for a few times where I was not getting the pressure, not getting the rush that I should have been. I left some great opportunities out there. [OLB] Kyler [Fackrell] make a great rush on [Dallas T] Tyron [Smith] and got the ball. It's too bad that we didn't recover that one, that was a huge opportunity for us. There weren't a bunch of third-and-long opportunities, but there's still plenty of opportunities to affect the game. I have to do better."

On if DL Justin Jones 'was missed' yesterday:

"It shows when they run that much, I think having him in there and then being thin on the d-line with the rotation. It's tough on us guys but to throw somebody in there like that against a talented o-line like that it's tough but I mean I'll have to see soon with the film. Hopefully, J.J. feels better, and I think he will be coming back this week."

SAFTEY DERWIN JAMES JR.**On moving to cover the slot in the nickel sub-package yesterday:**

"It doesn't take away from anything. That's part of the game, that's part of what [Head] Coach [Brandon Staley] asked me to do. I feel like when I'm on the line, I have to come make plays."

On the Cowboys' offensive line:

"I feel like came out and they ran the ball a little more than what we wanted as a defense. We can clean up that area. It's very feasible."

On what's necessary for 'cleaning up' the run defense:

"Being tough up front. We have to be tough; we have to set edges. We have to come out ready to play on the outside. When the ball expresses itself outside, we have to be ready. It's a team effort. It's not just the guy inside, it's everybody. We have to tackle in the zone a bit better, we just have to be better all around."

On his role in the slot:

"I'm comfortable anywhere [Head] Coach [Brandon Staley] asks me to play. It's my job to go out there and execute. Coach asked me to play the nickel and he needed me while [CB] Chris [Harris Jr.] was out. I had to come out, step in and play that position."

On preparing for the Chiefs:

"We basically need to fix the mistakes we made in the Dallas game. Move on from it and get ready for Kansas City. We really have to focus on being us. We don't have to do anything more, just focus on being us. Clean up the little things, and I feel like we'll be fine."

On defensive adjustments made to hold the Cowboys without a touchdown in the final three quarters:

"Just getting the calls, getting ready. Getting set in the beginning of the game, from the start to the beginning. We picked up as the game went on, but it was a little too much in the beginning of the game. It came back to beat us in the end. Them getting 14 points in the first half, we have to be better there."

On containing Cowboys RB Ezekiel Elliott in the final drive of the first half:

"We were in our end zone defense. I was back deep, and I saw the ball getting ready to express itself. I saw Zeke [Cowboys RB Ezekiel Elliott] the whole way, I saw him looking like he wanted to get a lateral. Once I saw [Cowboys WR] CeeDee [Lamb] trying to come, I tried to get to Zeke as fast as I could. I knew that was where the ball was going. If I'd tackled CeeDee, I knew he would've pitched it."

On his perception of the field from the slot position:

"You can see, but of course when you're at safety, you see the field. When you're back deep, you see the whole field. At star, you can see the formations still, you're just closer. You're closer to the action. It's just part of the game."

On influencing the run defense:

"I saw in the slot they were giving us two receivers open. Spreading us out a lot and running the ball out of shotgun and under center. We just have to be better. We can't pinpoint it on me playing star, me playing safety. Overall, we have to be better. I had opportunities to make some run stops and we just have to be better."

On if the game was 'winnable' for the Chargers:

"Every game we play, we expect to win. Every game. We expect to win every game we play. It didn't end the way we wanted it to end, of course. We wanted to be on the other side of that. It didn't happen. It's part of this league. It's what makes the league so fun and competitive. We just have to come back and bounce back from it. We can't dwell on it, we can't get stuck on it. We didn't get it done, they got it done."

On how he feels physically:

"I'm getting better as the games go. I'm getting my wind back up. I just have to make sure I'm good, and when the times comes, I'm ready to play ball."

On if he needs to 're-acclimate to the league' since he missed last season due to injury:

"I'm a football player. No matter how much time I miss, I always put the work on myself and say, 'Man, you have to come back stronger.' No matter what, I always want to come back stronger. No matter how much time I miss."