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## **Chargers Offseason Media Availability, Phase Two**

**Monday, April 29, 2024 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.**

### **CENTER BRADLEY BOZEMAN**

#### **On signing with the Chargers:**

"I'm excited about the opportunity with [Offensive Coordinator] Coach [Greg] Roman and [Offensive Line] Coach Dev [Mike Devlin], [Run Game Coordinator/Tight Ends Coach] Andy [Bischoff] and the whole crew, [General Manager] Joe Hortiz. I knew what they were about. I knew what they wanted accomplished. I knew they wanted to play high-caliber, winning football here. That's exactly what I want to do. I want to win football games. I want to play to the best of my ability. I want to put some great things on tape. I'm just excited about the opportunity and excited about the vision of where this thing is going. I'm ready to really get into it."

#### **On a physical mentality for the offense:**

"Physicality is my strong suit, for sure. That's what I've always prided myself on, is being physical. Hard-nosed. Just getting down to the nitty gritty. Just moving a person from point A to point B against their will is one of the most gratifying things you could ever do. I'm excited about the opportunity to come in, be in this offense and have an opportunity to hopefully start and go from there. Just one day at a time. See where we are at the end of the day."

#### **On playing for Offensive Coordinator Greg Roman:**

"He's definitely not afraid to run it. Third-and-12, if he feels like he can get the first down, he's going to run it. He's going to do what he needs to do. He's going to be balanced at the same time, but he isn't afraid to run the ball. It's not successful this time or it's not the next, but three or four times in a row, you know it's going to hit. I think that all leans into how we prepare. If we can instill that confidence in him to still continue to call plays in that way, I think that's the biggest thing."

#### **On 'how refreshing' it is to be in an offense willing to run in today's NFL:**

"It's great. Just the physicality of it and mentality behind that is awesome. It's demoralizing to a defense whenever you're hitting three or four yards a pop coming out of the gate. Then you turn those three, four into five, six, eight, 10. Then, you're busting them for 20 yards and touchdowns. That's really demoralizing for a defense. To be able to have the opportunity to do that will be great if we put in the right work."

#### **On what the offensive system looks like when it's rolling:**

"It looks fun. You can see it. You can see the energy. You can see the excitement. You can see the emotion of the game because you're letting big guys be big guys and do what we do best. We're not backing up, we're going forward. Like I said, we're still going to pass the ball. We have one of the best quarterbacks in the league [QB Justin Herbert]. We're going to pass the ball, for sure, but to have the opportunity to be balanced from that aspect is awesome."

**On QB Justin Herbert:**

"Yeah, I have [met him]. I've gotten the opportunity. He texted me. He reached out right away. I talked to him a little bit there. I told him we were having our daughter — Hi, Nikki [wife], Bailey [daughter] and Brody [son]. I was there with them, making sure they got settled. They're coming out in two weeks. I told him I wouldn't be out here until May. He goes, 'I'm just looking forward to working with you.' We got a little work in today. It was good."

**On developing his relationship with Herbert:**

"Just one day at a time. Continue to work. Continue to do the things that you do every day. Talk and communicate. Make sure I'm doing things that suits things and he's doing things that suit me as well. I think there's a lot of middle ground there where you just continue to work. You figure out what each other is good at, not so great at and where you can pick up, where they can pick up. It's just a working relationship. Just continues to build as the year goes on."

**On Head Coach Jim Harbaugh:**

"I haven't had a really good opportunity to be able to sit down and really understand him yet. All of our interactions have been over the phone. My first day here is today. I'm looking forward to really getting to know him and understanding him. So far, I see nothing but great things."

**On if spoke to C Corey Linsley prior to signing with the Chargers:**

"I actually did not. I didn't have the opportunity to reach out to him."

**On meeting his teammates in person:**

"It was great. I've been doing a little calling on Zoom and stuff, but it's been great. It's been great to actually be able to put a name with a face, get in, get to work and actually be on the field. Being in meetings is fun and all good, but when you get to get out on the field, it's football. It's fun. It's getting out, being active, learning the scheme and actually putting pen to paper."

**On if the scheme is different than his previous experiences:**

"Not crazy [different]."

**On the talent in the offensive line room:**

"It's great to have guys like that in your room. To be able to work for and work together. We're all going to work together and continue to build. Like I've said, we're going to build off each other. Where one person lacks, the other person is going to pick up. I'm just excited about the opportunity."

**On Assistant Offensive Line Coach Nick Hardwick:**

"Huge resource. A guy that's done it. [Offensive Line] Coach [Mike] Devlin has done it, as well. Just to have Nick in that room is awesome. To go to that bank of resources is great. We were talking through some things today. Just giving a little input here and there. It's good, it's awesome. It's a great relationship."

## **RUNNING BACK J.K. DOBBINS**

### **On what led to his decision to join the Chargers:**

"Jesus. I prayed for a decision and he gave me the decision, this was the place that he told me to come to. I think that this is a great [coaching] staff. I think that the talent on this team is really good, too. I think that I can come in here and make a big difference. We can win a lot of football games. That was part of my decision."

### **On recovering from his Achilles injury sustained last season:**

"I'm 100 percent now. It was like a walk in the park, it was like a sprained ankle. It was very easy, because I had the knee [injury] — the knee was pretty hard. The Achilles was, I would say, easy, just because that's my mentality. It was pretty easy to me. I've had these injuries. It's been a storm the past two years, having great games, and then, the next thing you know, hurt. Got the injury-prone [label] out there, but I think that the storm is over with. I think that I'm going to take off now. There will be no setbacks. The injury-prone thing will be gone, out of the window, again."

### **On if the torn Achilles occurred on his left leg:**

"Yes."

### **On reconnecting with Offensive Coordinator Greg Roman:**

"I'm excited. He does a lot of great things. He's a great person. We have a great relationship. It's going to be a fun year. We're going to have a lot of fun. We're going to do a lot of great things. I can't wait."

### **On his two season-ending injuries:**

"Just unfortunate, but God has a plan, always. I don't know what the plan exactly is, I don't know, but whatever plan it is, it's for me to be here. I had a great rookie year. I didn't really have the volume as other people, my rookie year, but I still had a great rookie year — six yards per carry, nine touchdowns, 10 including the playoffs. There has always been like, alright, God has let my talents shine, even when I had the knee. I had the knee, a lot of people don't know that I didn't get hurt again, I got cleaned up. I went down in 2021, had the knee injury, and then came back later, the next year, and played the first few games and there was a lot of scar tissue in there, so I had to get it cleaned up. I didn't get hurt again, I could've played the whole year, but I got it cleaned up so that I could feel like me. After I got that cleaned up, the first two games back from the injury, I had over 120 yards rushing. Then, went on to have a great ending of the year, 100 total yards in the playoff game — we lost, which I hate the most. Stats don't matter to me, I want to win. Then, come back the next year, hurt again, torn Achilles. So, two really unfortunate injuries, but that is just God's plan. I think that the storm is now over and I do think that I'll be able to shine a light to the whole world."

### **On if he is 'concerned about the label of player who can't stay on the field':**

"I could care less. I know that's out there, as it should be. It should be, I got hurt, two major injuries. I haven't been on the field as much as I should, that's true. But, it's not like I'm having these little dinky injuries and sitting out, it's something that I can't control, literally. That's why I'm not bothered by it. Yeah, I am injury-prone, you could say that, but I do think that the Chargers are getting a guy that's going to be healthy from now on, God willing. It's going to be great. I do think that it's going to be a great however-many years here."

### **On his level of confidence 'knowing that' he 'produces when on the field':**

"All the confidence in the world. I wouldn't say it just from the numbers, but the way that I work, my work ethic, and my relationship with Jesus, I have the most confidence when I step out there. I do know that if He gives me the health, it's over with. I think it will be a great year, couple of years, however many years, of great health. The work ethic, my prayer and all of that stuff, that's what helps me to have that confidence. The numbers will be there. They might be higher after this year, and it's crazy to think about because I had six yards-per-carry, but we'll see."

**On if he is 'looking forward' to running behind this offensive line:**

"Oh yeah. I played with [C] Bradley [Bozeman]. I know [T Rashawn] Slater. I know all of the guys. I'm excited. Like I said earlier, this is a talented group, we just have to put it together and win some games, because that's what I came here for."

**On RB Gus Edwards and if Edwards was 'part of the recruitment':**

"I wouldn't say part of the recruitment, but whenever I decided that I was going to sign, it was great to have him in the [running backs] room."

**On his relationship with Edwards:**

"We're great. We have a great relationship. He's like my brother."

**On how he and Edwards 'complement each other':**

"I think that they complement each other very well. He can do a lot of stuff, too. A lot of people think that he is just power, power, power, but I think that he has some other parts to his game, too, which will be great. I feel like I can do everything, and when one gets tired, we can roll it in and keep rolling, win some games."

**On what their 'partnership in the backfield will look like':**

"That's a hard question. I think it'll look beautiful. A lot of people call this a passing league, but I think that you have to run the ball to win a Super Bowl. If you look at the teams that win a Super Bowl, they can run the ball, they can control the clock. If we're both good, it'll look great, beautiful."

**On Roman's offensive system:**

"I would describe it as a great offense. I think that he is going to give the quarterback a lot of options, he is going to give the running back a lot of options, he is going to give the receiver a lot of options. I think it's going to be great, his offense is going to be amazing."

**On his 'confidence and excitement' with Roman as the play-caller:**

"It gives me a lot of excitement. It's fun to play in his offense. I think that he does have some good things in the passing game, too. Like you said, he sticks with the run, that's the identity. You want an offense that has an identity. You don't want to be looking everywhere else to find your identity, you want to have it. I think that his offense has that. The guys that he builds and puts in there, it complements that idea. I think that it's going to be great."

**On if he will be 'full go for Training Camp':**

"If it's up to me, yes [*laughter*]. I had this problem two or three years ago, I'm thinking that I'm full-go, I think that I'm ready to go, and the next thing you know, I'm on PUP [Reserve/Physically Unable to Perform]. Some stuff is above my paygrade [*laughter*]. Hopefully, I can start. I think that I'm ready to start at the beginning of training camp, but that is not up to me, as I've learned [*laughter*]."

**On becoming cleared for on-field training:**

"I've been in some great organizations, and I think that this organization is a great organization, and the training staff is great — they just want what's best for me. They're taking care of me, which, that's what you want in an organization. That's where that comes from, which I appreciated. I really appreciate that. I'm the type of guy that works really hard, so maybe, sometimes, I'm blind to the danger of something. I appreciate that. If it's up to me, yeah, I'm out there, but you never know."

**On if he had any 'frustration' with the unrestricted free agency process:**

"No. I like it the hard way. I like trial and tribulation. The dice that I was given to roll, was that I was coming off of an Achilles. That was the Lord's plan. There was beauty in that. I was comfortable, I was calm. There were multiple teams, it wasn't like I didn't have any other teams, but I was comfortable in sitting back and just enjoying the process, letting myself get fully healed, so that whichever team I would sign with, which is now the Chargers, was going to get the best me. I think people all around the league know that. It's a high-risk, high-reward type of thing, right? Not even a high-risk, it's a low-risk. It's a business, I got hurt last year, so not as much money needs to be thrown in there. But, I think that everyone around the league knows that whenever I am on the field, the numbers don't lie. They know that. A lot of teams will be like, 'Here, we'll give you this, but we want you to be healthy.' When I'm healthy, it's going to be great. The chance that I've been given here, I'm so grateful, and I know that they won't regret it."

**On if he 'likes to prove people wrong':**

"No. I hear it, I see it. It's pretty cool. You'll never see me, unless I'm just like in a bad mood — like, if I have a great game or a great year, I have this wonderful year, I'm not going to back and be like, 'Hey, what happened?' No, because I don't care. You'll eventually see, I'm a guy that is really good, so I'm not worried about that. But, I'm proving myself right that I am one of the best in the league. Forget all of the naysayers and people that talk about me being injury-prone, because whenever I have this great year, it's going to be forgotten. So, why give that energy?"

**On if he has met QB Justin Herbert yet:**

"Yeah, I was just with him. He's a great guy. He was in my [draft] class. I remember seeing him when we were at an awards show, because I was a Doak Walker [Award] finalist, and I've seen him play, but I didn't know that he was that tall [*laughter*]. When I first saw him, and this was years ago in college, I was like, 'Damn, this dude is pretty tall.' He's cool, though. I'm not going to lie, I thought that he was going to be nerdy, but he's a cool dude [*laughter*], no offense to him."

## **OFFENSIVE LINE COACH MIKE DEVLIN**

### **On what it's been like since being hired by the Chargers:**

"It's been great. The enthusiasm by all the players, [Head] Coach [Jim] Harbaugh, [General Manager] Joe [Hortiz] and the Spanos Family. It's really just been a great experience so far. It's getting better every day. I look forward to coming to work. I've been doing this a while, but I'm learning something new every day, a different way. It's been really good for me."

### **On coaching in an environment that emphasizes offensive linemen:**

"I was fortunate to be in that system with [Offensive Coordinator] Coach [Greg] Roman. I got to see it live, where the vision is and where he wants to go to. Now, to be on the ground floor of it, it's just really exciting to see it all come to fruition one day at a time, being built up that way."

### **On the offense with QB Justin Herbert:**

"I think, right now, we're in the beginning stages of just putting the system in and seeing what everybody can do. Then, see where that will lead to, if you will. That's kind of how [Offensive Coordinator] Coach [Greg Roman] has always done it. Throw a lot at them, see what they can do, learn different techniques. See how much better we can get from a technique-staindpoint. Then, he's the one that masters it. [Head] Coach [Jim] Harbaugh, Coach Roman, they'll put it all together and start going down the right path with what fits best for us."

### **On if he was 'doing backflips' when the team selected T Joe Alt:**

"[*laughter*] I retired from football in 2000, as a player. No backflips for me [*laughter*]. Obviously, it's exciting to get a player with his athleticism, his size and, really, still young and maturing. From that perspective, yeah, you love to have guys like that. It's a big-man's business, football. And he's a big man that can move."

### **On the athleticism of offensive linemen:**

"I was maybe 6-2, 320. I was definitely not running a five-flat [second 40-yard dash] or whatever [*laughter*]. I think today's athletes are incredible. They're taught better, nutrition-wise, their bodies. That's why they just get bigger, better and faster every year, I think."

### **On if Alt reminds him of any player:**

"He reminds me of his dad [former Chiefs T John Alt]. I went to Iowa four years after he graduated. My [position] coach was [Iowa Head Coach Kirk] Ferentz. We watched a lot of his film. He was the original, 'O.G.,' if you will of Iowa linemen [*laughter*]. He reminds me a lot of [his dad]."

### **On the offensive line:**

"So far, everybody has bought completely in. Really going out to learn the system, learn technique. Then, really learn about each other and learn about me. I'm learning about them. They've really bought in. It's a great room. Every one of those guys has a lot of ability. It's going to be fun to piece it together and find that five best [linemen]. It's a building block. These are the building blocks. It's really in the infancy of it all. It's really going to take until you get the pads on, let's just be honest. Build. Build. Build. Get better. Get better. Get better. Then, put on the pads. That's what separates most people."

### **On his philosophy:**

"It's important to have position flex because you just don't know and you only carry so many. That's the world that I know. By day or it can be by period and just move the pieces around. Really, it's a good way, I've learned, because I was that sixth guy when I was younger. It's a good way to learn the system, too, because you're learning it from different areas and different perspectives, too."

**On T Trey Pipkins III:**

"I think he's big. He's athletic. He's a people-mover from what I've seen on tape. He's smart. Just like the rest of the fellas. Everything is a transition. Joe [Alt] is going to be a transition, he's going right, right? Everything we are doing right now is a transition. Different techniques, different names of plays. Different philosophies. I think, every day we just have to come in here. They know this, this is what I love about them all, every one of them, they've attacked every day to get better and better. They haven't blinked once. It's a joy going in there to get in front of those guys every day."

**On the key to transition from one side of the line to the other:**

"History would tell you that guys are just not willing to do it. It just takes reps. It's just a matter of rep after rep. This is the time to do it, right? We have Phase Two right now, then it will be OTAs [Organized Team Activities]. We're doing this to get them ready for OTAs. We do OTAs to get them ready for training camp. When the live bullets of training camp start and the physicality of it, that's when it usually sinks in for everybody because then you have to put it all together. Now it's real, the speed of it and everything else."

**On what's difficult about transitioning positions:**

"It's really just muscle memory of being able to flip over from one side to the other. Some guys are willing to do that, some are. To me, with the great ones it's just a matter of feeling comfortable. Get over it feeling comfortable. Get enough reps to feel comfortable in whatever they're doing or whatever they're asked to do."

**On T Rashawn Slater:**

"He's really smart. He is very unselfish. I say that because I've had some big-time players that maybe won't hold a bag, but, boy, he's right over there holding the bag for the guys. I'm like, 'Man, this guy. He's got the whole package.' I'm really excited with what he's done. He asks great questions, which I love. There's good banter back-and-forth, which, that's what you want from a coach and player relationship."

**On G Zion Johnson:**

"I'm excited and not only for him, but everybody. I feel like the system can accentuate all of those good qualities you just mentioned about Zion. Zion has a lot of length. I think we're trying right now to get him to use that length. He can pull and all of those things. I think, not only him, but just everybody in the room, the system will fit to what their skillset is."

**On C Bradley Bozeman:**

"He's been in it before, so he kind of knows the general sense of it. It will be different, like you mentioned. It's a different quarterback, right? There's going to be some differences, for sure. The mentality, what the vision is, what we want to get accomplished, he's been there and he's seen it just like I have."

## **ASSISTANT OFFENSIVE LINE COACH NICK HARDWICK**

### **On wearing Chargers gear in a coaching capacity:**

"It feels wonderful. It's exciting. I get to show up here every day and come to work. I get to work with great coaches — under [Offensive Line] Coach [Mike] Devlin. As a first foray into the NFL, to have his leadership is pretty spectacular."

### **On being hired by the Chargers:**

"My issue was that I coached too much football in the fall over the last four years back in Indiana. I fell in love with the sport again. I had enough time [removed from the game] and spent a ton of time with my kids, raising them. They're 12 and 10-years old now. I felt comfortable with the place that they were. They probably need to be out from underneath me a little bit. Every year about playoff time, is when it starts to hit you that [football] is my drug of choice. I wanted to be back in. I put my name in the hat. Thankfully, [Head] Coach [Jim] Harbaugh gave the call. There was no doubt that, if he did call, that I was going to accept and get rolling. It's been a wonderful two months."

### **On when he got called by the Chargers:**

"Yeah, it was nine o'clock at night. I think it was on maybe a Tuesday or a Wednesday. I had gotten a text that said, 'Coach Harbaugh is trying to call you.' I don't answer unknown numbers. I got a call and you feel that in your heart, 'Oh, God, this is happening. This is real.' Within a matter of minutes, 'Hey, we'd like to offer you the assistant offensive line position, would you like to take it?' Yes, of course. Coach Harbaugh calls, you say yes. It's what you do."

### **On if Head Coach Jim Harbaugh had called before he received the text message:**

"I missed one."

### **On if he accepted the position on the same call:**

"Yes [*laughter*]. You only get so many chances to get back into the game. You want to talk about an opportunity to work with, not only him, but under [Offensive Line] Coach [Mike] Devlin, [Offensive Coordinator] Coach [Greg] Roman. With the direction this organization is heading and being really familiar with the organization. For me, it was the chance of a lifetime."

### **On if returning to the NFL was tied to the Chargers:**

"More general. I wanted to get back into the game. It was a matter of time. We're here and it happened to be Coach Harbaugh. That was even further reason to take the job, for sure."

### **On if he had interacted with Coach Harbaugh as a player:**

"I had run into him one or two times while in San Diego when he was still coaching at the University of San Diego. Other than that, no. We played against his teams. I always remember when we played his teams, the defense said, 'Put on your big boy pants. This is going to be a real game, now.' Their offenses hit heavy and come after you. You remember when you play them. I'm happy to be part of that on the other side of things."

### **On if he had any familiarity with Offensive Coordinator Greg Roman:**

"No, but I had called some buddies that had played for him and they loved him. When you call another offensive lineman, they're like, 'That dude is a savage. Yeah, get in.' It was like, alright, we're in. Offensive linemen, we're all pretty similar. When your good friend that you trust tells you he's awesome, you go work for him."

### **On being back in the offensive line room:**

"I'll be honest, I can't believe they let me do this [*laughter*]. I think that every morning when I wake up and I'm driving to work [*laughter*], I can't believe they let me in this place. My key still works. I've only been here two months, but it's so special. I mean, the whole thing is just so special. When you're a player toward the end [of your career], you forget how special it is. Then, I took nine years off. When you're watching from the outside, you remember how special it was and you remember that, at one point, you dreamed of being in that room and you are no longer in that room. When you're back, you just really take in every moment and soak it all up. I'm just super appreciative and grateful. It's the greatest."



**On coaching in an environment that emphasizes offensive linemen:**

"To have a coach say that offensive linemen are weapons and are valued is pretty awesome. We know how important we are. A lot of the players know how important we are, but to have a head coach reiterate that, you do feel special, but you should anyway."

**On the direction of the organization:**

"The new facility is coming, bringing in Coach Harbaugh and resources. The commitment level is there. That's exciting when you feel really supported. It's an exciting, exciting opportunity."

**On his role:**

"I'm here to learn. I'm here to learn how to coach to be a better coach. I'm here to learn how to support the players, the coaching staff, to support [Offensive Line] Coach [Mike] Devlin, and give everybody the best that I can give for what they need. Just help everybody learn. Whatever that is, if it's drawing up plays on the computer. Everyone said that was going to be the hardest thing, like, 'Oh, do you know how to draw?' We'll figure it out. We'll get in there and get our hands dirty. That's the only way to get good at anything, is just to get in and get going. It's just learning and watching. I'm really observant. Just watch the coaches and be super intent. Just like you did as a player, every day you try to improve on something that maybe you weren't as good at the day before."

**On his interactions with the players:**

"It's just building relationships. It's a relationship game. I've always felt that the teams that have the most success care the most for each other. If you develop great relationships, they'll all fight in this thing harder together. I'll fight as a coach harder. They'll fight harder. We'll all compete harder. It's building relationships. Are they curious? I'm sure. They ask questions, but it's everything. I ask questions of them, too. I want to learn what they're doing."

**On how he got into coaching in Indiana:**

"My kids got me into it, yeah. My kids got me into it and I lived four houses away from the local high school. I went and knocked on their door and got involved there. I realized over the last several years — it was a big high school and I was up breaking down film until midnight, we'd grade and evaluate. I was getting four hours of sleep per night. I was like, 'Well, if I'm doing this for free and actually donating money, why would I not do this at another level, one that I'm more familiar with if I could? If I ever got the opportunity to do that?'"

**On if he ever thought he would coach:**

"I thought for sure I wouldn't coach [*laughter*]. I remember [former Offensive Coordinator] Ken Whisenhunt coming to me and he goes, 'Hey, if you ever want a job, just come. You're going to be a great coach. Take your time, raise your kids. Get them to a certain place.' I was like, 'There is absolutely no way I would do that.' [*laughter*] And here I am."

**On when he knocked on the high school door to inquire about coaching:**

"They told me no first [*laughter*]. I had to go coach youth ball, second and fourth grade for two years before I was allowed to coach at the high school. Had to earn my way in."

**On snapping to QB Justin Herbert:**

"I was getting some snaps in [*laughter*]. Somebody has to snap and it's nice to have the guys be in the drills with the offensive line so they have a shot to learn the techniques that we are trying to teach them. They needed an extra snapper and I'm available."

**On snapping to Herbert:**

"It was like riding a bike. It was great. You don't get many snaps out in the real world [*laughter*]."