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**Mike Tomlin**

## **Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Los Angeles Chargers Acrisure Stadium - September 22, 2024**

**Opening Statement:** You know, we talked about it all week. We knew we were in for a fight. Styles make fights. They're assembled like we're assembled, so we knew it was going to be a great game. They're playing great defense. We're playing great defense. We had to challenge our defense to out-perform theirs. I thought they did. We had a commitment to the run game. Obviously, they came in with the league's leading rusher and the No. 1 offense and our offense had to out-rush theirs, and we did, and that's why the game unfolded the way it did.

I'm just appreciative of the efforts of the guys. It was a fight, though, man. These guys are obviously well-coached and a talented group. It didn't happen instantly. We had to stay in it. But that's life and definitely life in the NFL.

I just like our general demeanor throughout. It wasn't fluid the whole way. But I didn't feel any blink or anybody running away from the challenge. I just felt guys leaning in on the challenge. Obviously, we're going to have to reproduce that as we move forward.

It's good to be 3-0 as we sit here. Obviously, we sustained some injuries and so forth prior to the game and in game, but that's ball and life, as well. We spend less time worrying about the unfortunates that got hurt and like to spend our time focusing on those that get the opportunity to elevate and contribute.

Sucks for Alex Highsmith, excited for [Nick] Herbig, for example. And none of us are surprised with the quality of work that he gave us and a lot of others. Cory Trice had a hamstring, Alex Highsmith had a groin, Jaylen Warren wasn't able to finish there late in the second half. I pulled him from the game. It just didn't look like he was running smoothly. We'll evaluate him.

Van Jefferson was able to go back in in the latter portions of the game. He got poked in the eye. His vision cleared up, he went back to participation.

We got some other bumps and bruises associated with play. We'll analyze that and I'll give you a full report on Tuesday, but just as I sit here today, I'm thankful for the efforts of the men. I'm thankful to be 3-0. It's good to be in a good contest like this, man, good-on-good five-star match-ups, if you will, and come out on the other side. There's growth in it, and we'd better learn the lessons and keep stepping because we've got challenges that await us.

**You couldn't run the ball, had a hard time for three or so quarters, but then when you had to at the end, you did. How satisfying was it to just keep at it and keep doing it?**

You know, they could say the same thing, but as I mentioned, styles make fights, and that's how these two teams and defenses are built. We didn't expect it to be easy sledding at any juncture, but we wanted to continue to pound the rock and hopefully break through, and it felt like we did there in the latter portions of the game.

**What was the catalyst for the way the defense played in the second half?**

They just wanted to be the best defense on the field. They respond to those things and take those challenges very personally, and they played like it.

**With the rejuvenated running game, did it encourage you and the defense that they spent less time on the field, there by helping them get through some situations?**

I don't know that our defense worries about that. They've got no control over when or how they take the field. They've got all the control on how they get off the field. That's the life we live. I think it was reflected when we turned that ball over, right, when that ball got tipped up in the air and intercepted. You saw the spirit in which our defense took the field, so we're not looking for comfort. We're not looking to hide on the sideline. We'll get ourselves off the field.

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**The one turnover on the tipped ball as you mentioned, but overall how has he adjusted to playing the style that complements the way you play?**

Who are you referring to?

**Justin Fields. The one turnover on the tip-off, but how is he adjusting to the style?**

He's doing a good job doing what we're asking him to do, playing and playing to win, and so that's appreciated.

**You only dressed four receivers. Can you speak of the contributions of that group, especially from Austin?**

You know, [Cordarrelle] Patterson is dual purpose, as well, so he played some wide out and running back today, and that gives us flexibility. It's the same thing that Leal gives us. Leal is capable of playing outside linebacker and D-line. We value position flexibility. It allows us to make decisions to strengthen other areas. We went with four wide outs. We carried an extra D-lineman today because we knew we were in for a run game fight. Appreciative of the efforts, but I'm not surprised by it. Guys like Scotty Miller are always ready to answer the call. They might not have the big names or resumes, but they've made plays consistently throughout team development, and the guys in the locker room depend on them and expect them to deliver.

**The setup wasn't a surprise that Nick Herbig stepped up today. How much growth has he shown through training camp and through the first couple games of the regular season?**

You know, this guy wants to be great, but he's looking at the recipe every day of his life, too. He just does, man. He's sharp enough to follow guys at his position that are doing it at a high level who have been doing it longer than him, and I think that positions him more than anything to produce what it is you're looking at.

**Does Justin Fields seem to be getting more comfortable with each passing game?**

I'll let him speak to that, but he does from my perspective.

**You called him a "Steady Eddie." What have you seen from him in the way that he's grown throughout these three games?**

I'd be making something up. Growth through three weeks in a stretch. We're doing what we have to do to win.

**You spoke about the fight and even with your defense. Your thoughts on how they responded to JK Dobbins and Gus Edwards?**

We'd better respond that way. There's a nakedness in this business at this level. There's nowhere to hide. When you've got a challenge like that walking in your venue, you'd better fight. We're the No. 1 rusher and rushing team coming into our building, and so let's be real clear; they've got to fight. They don't have a choice.

**How do you think Broderick Jones responded to getting back in?**

As I mentioned, at the early portions of the week, I expected him to respond positively and appropriately, and he did.

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**Justin Fields**

**Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Los Angeles Chargers**

**Acisure Stadium - September 22, 2024**

**How big of a moment was it to get that scoring drive right after the Chargers had scored that first one in the first half?**

Yeah, it was huge. I think the offense, we did a great job responding, and we knew what kind of game it was going to be, so just proud of the guys out there for responding like we did, especially after they scored that first touchdown, like you said, and going down and putting a drive together. It was good.

**On that touchdown, what were you looking for there? Can you talk about what happened and just how big that play was?**

Yeah, of course, huge play. They were just in zone, quarters high. You're really just high-lowing that hook defender. The hook defender took GP (George Pickens) underneath and Calvin (Austin III) was right behind him. Great play call.

In that situation of course you always appreciate the yards after catch that Calvin got us, and it was a huge play for us.

**Can you say what Calvin (Austin III) and Scotty Miller brought to the offense?**

Yeah, those guys definitely stepped up today. Calvin doing everything on offense and special teams, as well, and then Scott(y), too. I don't think he played last week, so just coming in, he had a big third-down conversion for us, and a broken tackle with some yards. They both played great today.

**They were going to throw some exotic blitzes at you guys and you guys were prepared for some of those strikes over the middle. You had the third-down conversion and the touchdown. How does it feel to execute something like you guys planned it out, saw it, and you got those big plays?**

Yeah, feels great executing. We were preparing for it all week on certain looks -- we would get in certain situations, and like you said, we did a great job executing it. O-line did a great job today holding up and receivers just being at the right time at the right place.

**We heard all week that the dam was about to break on the offense. You stopped short of scoring that one touchdown, but is this when it looks like when that dam is in the process of breaking?**

Yeah, it is. I think we could have scored one more touchdown if I didn't throw that interception. Like we said, we're just going to keep working and keep getting better and keep improving.

**What did you see on that interception?**

Yeah, he just matched the sticker out way too fast, and I shouldn't have thrown the ball, got tipped. But at the end of the day, either should have worked the other side of the field, thrown it to the flat because they were so soft, or just thrown the ball away, especially since we were already in field goal range at the 40-yard line. That can't happen again.

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**Do you feel like you're proving your detractors wrong?**

I'm not really worried about that. I'm more so into proving myself right. I know what kind of player I am. I haven't changed, kind of my whole life. At the end of the day, my teammates helped me be great. Shout-out to them, shout-out to our defense, shout-out to everybody else on the offense for pushing me each and every day at practice, and it's just a credit to them. Definitely glad and just feeling good to be in this position, to be honest with you.

**You talked about improving... What do you feel like you improved on as this game went on and how did you make some adjustments to finish strong like you did?**

Yeah, in the first half we didn't run the ball like we wanted to, so in the second half, especially late in the game when we had to run the ball, the running backs and O-line did a great job, even in situations where we knew we had to run the ball. They did a great job executing. Naj (Najee Harris) and CP (Cordarrelle Patterson), they were hitting the hole great, and we were getting first down after first down. Anytime you can get that run game going, it just helps us out overall.

**How good does it feel for the offense to put together a performance like this against such a good defense like the Chargers?**

Yeah, feels great. We kind of knew what we were up against, two great edge rushers, and I think they were ranked No. 1 defense in the NFL coming into this thing. We knew we had a big test in front of us, but we have a pretty good defense that we go up against every day, as well.

Just going up against those guys on the other side of the ball on our team, just kind of prepared us for this moment, and like I said, everybody came out, executed, and we put points up on the board, so it felt great.

**Do those long drives make you more confident in the sense that the longer their defense stayed on the field you could open up some more pathways to run as well as play action?**

For sure. Anytime you can stay on the field as long as possible definitely tires them out. I think the second quarter maybe before the two-minute warning, they were glad that we actually didn't run a play because they were so tired. Our linebacker kind of made a joke over to us. Was like, appreciate you all, because they were so tired. But anytime you can keep their defense on the field for a long time with their run game and with the play action pass, like you said, and have our defense on the sideline resting, that's a positive for sure.

**This is the first time in your career that you've won three consecutive games in the NFL. What does that mean to you, and what kind of momentum do you feel like you have through the first three weeks of the season?**

It means a lot, but at the end of the day, it's not just me winning games. It's the whole team. I'm just happy to be a part of this team, happy to be a part of this organization, and we definitely look forward to keeping it going next week versus Indy.

**Each opportunity you get, do you feel yourself getting more comfortable, more confident within the system?**

For sure. I think I've just grown a lot over the past year, over the past few months. Really just this year. Definitely feeling more confident and feeling more comfortable out there on the field.

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**Some of the guys were saying they read a confidence in you in the second half that you were going to win the game, and they fed off that. What was it? What made you confident in the second half?**

I think we kind of knew. We knew what kind of game we were going to be in, and we knew that we didn't play well enough in the first half. We had a couple of miscues in the first half, and we knew we were better than that. Like I told a reporter out there, Coach T challenged us at halftime to play better and be better, and we came out in the second half and did just that. It was good.

**You said you've done a lot of growing over the last year and a half. Where do you feel like you've grown the most or shown the most growth?**

Just overall seeing the field. I feel like I'm just very calm out there, cool, calm and collected on the field, and really just that sense of peace out there on the field and not really rushing things and turning in my brain. I'm staying calm in the pocket, just making plays when I can and just doing my job.

**Broderick Jones stepped out there today, of course he was benched last week, and this week he comes out, looked like he was a big part of the offensive line having a good day.**

Huge part of the offense. When that situation pops up, he's not really thinking all week that he's going to play, and then Troy goes down Friday. It just shows how prepared he was. He prepared all week like he was a starter, and definitely showed up big for us, especially with this defense that we faced, showed up huge. Big shout-out to 77 for sure.

**This is the second time you've had 20 something completions in your last eight games. Do you feel that (indiscernible)?**

For sure, yeah. I think the biggest thing is getting completions on 1st and 2nd down and staying in that 3rd and manageable. I think that's the biggest thing and taking shots when they come. Yeah, anytime you can get in a rhythm as a quarterback, you just feel that confidence kind of overflow, and kind of like I said earlier, you just feel very calm in the pocket.

**I think you maybe completed the first 10 passes. Does that help you get in a rhythm and does that help you later in the game?**

I think so, but our game plan was kind of -- we knew they were going to give us completions on 1st and 2nd down, kind of keep a shelf over the top. They don't really want big plays, so they kind of played off and soft, so we knew completions were going to be there on 1st and 2nd down, so it really wasn't a big surprise. Just pitching, catching with the guys, them making great plays and running after catch.

**We asked you Thursday about starting the home opener. What were your first impressions of playing here in Pittsburgh and in this environment?**

Yeah, it was great. Definitely a little bit different from preseason for sure, but the fans showed out. Great turnout, and it was awesome. It was definitely getting loud out there, especially when the defense was on the field. Great turnout by Steeler Nation for sure.

**With the success of the run game, what were your thoughts on Cordarrelle Patterson's contribution?**

He's huge, man. I'm just seeing some of those hits. I'm just handing the ball off and watching him go. I know I can't do that, so the fact that he's been in the league this long and still doing that, it's really crazy to see, to be honest. He definitely did his thing today for sure.

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**You had two very pinpoint passes, one Freiermuth might have dropped and then to Calvin. Is that accuracy something you've gotten better at? They were pretty flawless throws.**

I think I've always been kind of accurate, but I might be a little bit biased. Just those situations, like you said, I'm just trying to get in good field goal position before the two-minute, but yeah, definitely need accuracy at this level for sure.

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**T.J. Watt**

**Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Los Angeles Chargers**

**Acrisure Stadium • September 22, 2024**

**What do you think...what was it that helped you guys turn the tide after halftime and really shut them down?**

Stopping the run, being able to get in one-dimensional spots, get after the quarterback. Just having some fun.

**What can you say about Nick's [Herbig] performance coming in for Alex [Highsmith]?**

It didn't surprise me, that kid works his tail off. We pretty much do everything together when we are in the facility. I'll text him tomorrow when I am heading into the facility, we will get work, me, him, and Alex. We work a lot together; it's never I wish it was me. It's 'I'm happy for him.' The kid that asks all the right questions. I'm not surprised by the performance. He went out there and played with a lot of swag and confidence.

**TJ, I was in Atlanta, I said, a couple of my colleagues said, what do you fear about T.J. Watt the most? He said, he may not be the greatest guy, but he always makes plays when they need them. I was thinking today, is that a weight on you sometimes, that people expect you to kind of rescue the defense when it's needed?**

No, no, and I mean, it's just going out and playing football and trusting it all in my film study and my instincts and my abilities to prepare throughout the week and get my body right to go out and prepare and make plays for my defense. We have so many guys on this defense that are capable of making plays, taking games over, and I'm just trying to be a small part of it.

**Their style of play on offense and the challenges that it presents, how do you feel you responded to that as a defense?**

Good. Obviously stopping the run, I don't have the stats up here, but it didn't seem like they ran for a lot. We were able to shut them down in the second half. Obviously, the backup quarterback went in, and when it gets to one-dimensional spots, we have so much depth on this defense on the back end and up front that we feel very confident with our pass rush and the guys in the back end to make some big plays when we need it.

**You mentioned having fun out there. You held them to zero yards in the second half. How much pride do you take in that?**

Huge. This week was two trains on the track, two top defenses coming in. We know they love to run the ball, we love stopping the run. Haven't looked at the film yet, but it seems like we out-performed today, but that's a hell of a football team, and it means nothing if we don't get back in the lab and learn from all this and keep going.

**To Nick [Herbig], a fourth-round pick, probably overlooked because of his size. Why is he able to have success in spite of his stature?**

That kid has supreme confidence in himself. You can't tell him anything. I respect the heck out of it. He's going to do everything that he possibly can to perform. He's going to ask every question. He's going to turn over every stone and just bust his tail. I respect the heck out of Nick, and I'm glad that he had the day that he did today.

**How much have you seen him grow since last year to this year?**

A lot. Even him, Keeanu [Benton], just those second-year players. Joey [Porter Jr.] you see the jump because you're so much more comfortable out there. You're not just out there saying, I have the curl flat this drop. It's, okay, I know what I have, I can hear, I can use all of my senses and diagnose what I think is potentially happening on this play, and that's why I think you see that jump from those guys from year one to year two. But with that being said, it's because they want to learn, and he's capable of doing it, and he's able to apply what he learns to the game field, which is huge. I'm sick of talking about Herb. Let's stop this now. [laughing]

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**Coach made a point about you guys proving that you had the best defense on the field today. Was that a big rallying cry for your group coming in?**

I don't know, we have a confident group. Obviously, they knew they were a top defense. We don't do a lot of talking, we just like to go out on the field and play and have fun, and I feel like we did that today.

**How does your depth impact what you guys do?**

It's huge, to be able to rotate, to be able to be fresh. There wasn't even that many plays in the first half even -- I think it was the third quarter there wasn't a lot of plays, either. But when you do have that rotation up front and in the back end, it just -- anybody can make a play on this defense, and everybody is training and preparing like they're the starter, and that's why you see so many guys out there making plays.

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## Steelers Players

### Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Los Angeles Chargers

#### Acrisure Stadium - September 22, 2024

AUDIO FROM TODAY'S POST-GAME OPEN LOCKER ROOM CAN BE FOUND BY CLICKING [HERE](#) OR VISITING THE MEDIA CENTER OF THE STEELERS NFL OMG PAGE:

#### OL Mason McCormick

*Timestamps and topics discussed:*

0:09 – Did they tell you why they wanted to rotate like that in-game the first couple weeks?

0:26 – Did you have to report every time?

0:38 – What had you committed to stop the run, they were putting eight or nine guys, did it seem comfortable like they were committed on letting you guys run?

#### TE Pat Freiermuth

0:00- Did you plan to open it up more offensively or is that just how the flow of the game went?

0:17- You guys just about scored a 3<sup>rd</sup> touchdown, but is this what it looks like when the dam breaks for the offensive?

0:41- Did Najee go down on purpose at the end to stop the clock?

#### ILB Elandon Roberts

0:31- What went right with the second half

0:44- Sack with Leal is that the communication you were speaking about

1:13 - Teams cannot key up on one person on defense

#### OLB Nick Herbig

0:14 – Did you smell blood in the water late in the game?

0:33 – Challenge vs. their tackles

0:53 – How was your first sack of many today?

#### WR Calvin Austin III

0:01 – There's also a 3<sup>rd</sup> down conversion simple fade, similarly to a sort of drawn up play- was that something you guys were looking for throughout this game or a matchup you guys thought you would get?

0:49 – How did it feel as an offense to be able to stretch the ball down the field more, and have more of those big passing plays than you've had the first two weeks?

1:25 – Calvin, it seemed like they were in a two-high shell for most of the game, what kind of challenge did that present? How were you able to explode on your touchdown?

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## QB Justin Herbert Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Los Angeles Chargers Acrisure Stadium • September 22, 2024

### **Justin, how is your ankle feeling?**

It's a little sore. I did everything I could to go back in there. I didn't feel like I could move around or really push off of it so that was kind of the decision that was made at the time.

### **You mentioned to us on Friday that you wanted to feel safe, protect yourself. At what point in the process later Friday, Saturday, this morning did you feel like, OK, I'm going to go out there based on how I feel?**

I think it was probably Saturday morning. Got to the walk-through, was able to move around better. I put some tennis shoes on and really tested it out. And then went out again this morning made sure it was okay. Felt comfortable going out there.

### **Just on the hit, was that really what it was, or was it sort of an accumulation of hits you took or was it just really that specific play?**

It had been getting sore up until that point. And I think that play, I can't really remember what exactly happened to it but it must have got twisted up again. Kind of stood back up, realized I couldn't move too great off of it. Got to the sideline and talked about that. Didn't want to attempt –

### **How do you go through the process of wanting to be out there and wanting to play versus knowing that this is happening and not wanting it to continue to drag through the season?**

Yeah, my responsibility as a quarterback is to give everything I can to this team, to my teammates. And I felt like I did that. I pushed myself. I couldn't do it anymore. And I had a tough time walking on it, moving on it, pushing off of it. And I knew that Taylor [Heinicke] gave us a better shot to win. And that's why we believe in him to go out there. And that's why you have guys like that on your team. I'm going to do everything I can to get back, get this thing healthy so we can keep winning.

### **Did halftime mess with -- we saw you activating before the game, warming up, doing all the stretching and the jogging and everything. Did that kind of, I don't know, make you colder as you came in here?**

I think that definitely played a factor into it. You get off your feet and you played an entire half moving around and getting the blood flowing. But I did my best to come back after halftime and get the thing warmed up. But I think it was ultimately that hit, couple hits before, just wasn't able to do it.

### **Does it feel worse now than it did after Sunday, like Monday after the Panthers game?**

Yeah, that's a good question. I guess that's something that we'll wait to see. I was able to finish the game last Sunday. So it's definitely something to look at. But I know that we got the right training staff in there. We've got the right medical doctors. So we're going to do everything we can to get this thing going. But we'll see tomorrow.

### **A few of your teammates commended your effort for giving it the shot the way you did. Did you feel that? Did you feel that motivational effort that your teammates take from when you tough it out like that?**

I think it's my job. I think it's my job to go out there and give everything that I've got. And I know that everyone on defense, offense, special teams, they'd do the same. When you get a locker room like that, we believe in each other. And I know that everyone's hurting out there. Not the way we wanted this one to go down. But we'll get back to work and we'll get it figured out.

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**How did you feel in the first half?**

It was good.

**Did you get X-rays done today?**

Yeah, a few minutes ago.

**Did they tell you the results of those?**

No, I think they're just waiting on an MRI. I don't know the exact results of the X-rays. But it's just something that I'll get done in the next couple of days.

**Knowing what you went through this week to you get to game day able to start, do you feel optimistic you're able to do for next week?**

I'm hopeful. Like I said, we've got great team doctors and great athletic trainers. As long as we're communicating, working together, I think we'll all feel comfortable and safe going out there. They've got my best interests in mind.

**Have you had to hide this sprain before?**

I have not.

**It's an aggravation of the same thing you were dealing with? It's not like a separate injury?**

I would assume so. I think it's just a continuation of last week's.

**What were your conversations with QB Taylor Heinicke like after he got in?**

Just being supportive, to go out there and play his best ball, and we all believe in him and we know he's the right guy when he goes out there.

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## **Chargers Head Coach Jim Harbaugh Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Los Angeles Chargers Acrisure Stadium • September 22, 2024**

### **On his takeaways from today's game**

I thought they were fighting the whole time. And a lot of good football played. And then the fourth quarter it wasn't our best. We didn't have the field position against us. And we didn't get it finished. Not everyone's -- not every game is going to be a fairytale ending. And give credit to the Steelers in all three phases there at the end.

### **On injuries sustained throughout the game**

No, I don't have an update to give you right now. Justin [Herbert], as soon as I saw, he got up. My plan was the first sign of any kind of, any limp he was coming out of the game. So I took him out. Joey [Bosa], I think he reaggravated the hip. And Rashawn [Slater], seemed to be a strain there with the peck.

### **On if QB Justin Herbert was trying to go back into the game**

I knew Justin wasn't going to take himself out. I told him that yesterday. I'm going to let you go. But the plan was, Taylor was going to go in and -- but we were doing a good job there in the first half. Justin had a heck of a half. He's a beast. But that wasn't ever going to be his decision to play today or to stay in.

### **On the decision to start QB Justin Herbert in today's game**

The way he looked on Saturday, where he was able to move around. It was much better. He felt like he could protect himself. He was in a position to be able to effectively play the position.

### **On QB Justin Herbert's toughness**

Yeah, there's no question about that. I mean, at every time I think there's not another rung on the ladder that he can go, in my esteem, he climbs another one. But I knew this a couple months ago. Justin is the kind of guy you've got to pull back because you're never going to have to talk him into anything, but he does have to be pulled back.

### **You said your plan was any sign of limp or anything you were going to take him out.**

Yeah, any chance.

### **Considering that, was there any thought in your head to not starting him, giving him a week?**

It was a possibility, but I've been in that position before. They're warriors, you give them a shot, and that's what I wanted to do.

### **On if they'd be willing to take the same approach this week**

Well, the hypotheticals, we'll see about that next week.

### **On T Joe Alt**

Yeah, Joe's been incredible. Just -- I've said it before, he's like he's been playing five, six years, like a six-year vet. He's gone right out of the chute against some of the best in the game.

### **On moving OL Trey Pipkins around on the line after T Rashawn Slater was injured**

We feel like Trey's our next best guy. He's our third tackle. He had a bit of a finger issue, Trey did, so we put Jamaree [Salyer] out there first. And then when Trey went back, he's our third tackle, swing tackle.

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**On what went wrong from a protection perspective at the end of the game**

Yeah, I don't know that there's -- I can't think of anything really to say there. We got beat a few times.

**On QB Taylor Heinicke**

Yeah, the week of practice. I mean, Taylor and Easton got the same amount of reps in, and then toward the end of the week I gave more to Taylor because I thought he was the one that was going to give us the best chance of winning.

**On the toughness of not having OLB Joey Bosa on the field**

Yeah, it's tough. Yeah. Tough.

**On what he saw from the defense in the second half**

Like I said, just playing really -- playing great. Played great for a long time. Played great on offense for a long time. Played great on defense for a long time. And then the drive with the three penalties, even that drive, they were able to hold to a field goal, 45 yards of penalties.

**Do you feel that particular drive gave them momentum on offense?**

Yeah, I mean they got the momentum at that point and kept it and held onto it. That's the way it went. Any kind of drive, any kind of points, three-and-outs, those give momentum. And we weren't able to get it back and hold on to it.

**On the challenge of letting a guy play with an injury while weighing the long-term risks**

Not really medically qualified to go into all that.

**On S Derwin James' appreciation for QB Justin Herbert's toughness and if that confidence gives the team some juice**

No question. Like I said, we were fighting the whole time. And I thought our guys really stepped up and played really good football for a long time. To answer your question, your question, all your questions, you go back now, you regroup, you refit, retool and get ready for next week.

**On if he learned something about his team today**

I've already learned it about our team. I mean, we work and they're not afraid of any challenge or any new challenge. And it's razor sharp. It's a credit card-difference, the margin. And I thought it was right there. It was back and forth. It was right where I thought it would be. And we didn't get it done at the end there. But we'll come fighting back.

**On if QB Taylor Heinicke is the new backup QB**

As we said in the past, we're really not going into depth chart of the backups, other positions. Starting quarterback, like I told you, we'll talk about the starting quarterback, but really no other positions.

**On QB Taylor Heinicke's performance**

Overall, I didn't think he had a great -- he made a nice throw in the play-action pass, and similar things that we had saw him do in practice, and I was pleased. And I thought he graded himself really well. I wish we could have gave him a little more time there to operate, but I was pleased with his performance. He's a competitor. Competitors are welcome here at the Los Angeles Chargers.

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