



## QUOTES

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

#### **Opening Statement:**

"Before we get started, I'd just like to say something about the tragedy in Thousand Oaks. That was awful. Certainly, our thoughts and prayers go out to the families and the friends that were affected with that. That was just a terrible thing."

#### **On the rushing attack:**

"You know, I think our linemen always — that group, when you have success running the football, they feel good, and that's important. I mean, let's face it. It's much easier to run block than it is to drop back and pass protect on some of these guys. It makes it a lot easier for the rest of us when we want to throw it because they don't get mad because we don't run it enough. I think probably the most important thing is maybe it makes us a little more versatile. When you have a credible threat in the run game, it helps you oftentimes in the play-action game where we've hit some of our big shots, plus it keeps you moving the chains a little bit easier. When you have second-and-shorter situations or you get in chunks like we're getting in the run game, it's good for us. Also, I think it's a little bit harder for defenses when you do that because you're — it's not easy to run the ball in this league. Our guys have been doing a good job with it up front, and we've had a number of different guys that are contributing. You know, it's not just the running backs, it's the receivers, it's a lot of guys. Yeah, I think it has really helped us."

#### **On if RB Melvin Gordon III is running more physically this year:**

"You know, I think he kind of picked up where he left off last year. He's getting better and better, and he's always — to me — been a pretty violent runner. I think what he's really doing a great job with is ball security and how he's working finishing off some of these runs. I think the scheme, he's obviously more comfortable, and listen, you've got to give credit to those guys up front. They're doing a good job. There were a couple holes in the game last week that were big that you maybe could have run through. I don't think you would have gotten quite the distance, but you could have gotten through it."

#### **On how the running game provides confidence to the offense:**

"You know, it's good. There have been a couple games where we haven't run it as great and we've compensated for that with the pass game. We've thrown it. I think we've had a good mix. You know, I just — that's one of the things, like I said, in this league, it's not always easy to do, and it's a credit to our running backs and to our line. It does, it gives you a lift. When you hit a couple of runs, when you break out for a 10-yard gain, it does, it gives you a little — I hate to say it so cliché — it gives you a little pep in your step, and I think that's a good thing"

#### **On Oakland's rushing defense in the last game:**

"They played well. They did a good job against us. They played very aggressively. They were physical. You know, they did a nice job against us. You know, that's happened to us a couple times this year where we haven't been as effective as we would have liked to have been running the football, and hopefully we can — we work every week trying to put together a plan that we feel like is a good attack against our opponent, and hopefully we can execute it, but I have a lot of respect for the way those guys played us. Four minutes left in the second quarter, it's [tied at three points each] and we hadn't done much. We hit a couple of runs early, but it was tough after that. That's something obviously that we'd like to do better, but they did a nice job against us."

**On Raiders DTs P.J. Hall and Maurice Hurst:**

"They played it well. They're physical guys. They play their technique well, they anchor well. If you're not good with your technique, if you're not good with your double teams, if you're not good with your technique steps on these guys — first of all, it's hard to move them, and second of all, they can get off blocks. Hurst especially, he's a good young player that's quick, has some quick lateral movement and is always working. They've always had a good group of guys behind that could run. Their backers, they always seem like they're fast and they're big and they can move, so sometimes against those kind of fronts, you've got to be really precise in what you're doing and how you attack it. You know, sometimes you have success and sometimes you don't. We ran it early in the game last time. We had a couple of runs early, but it certainly wasn't great after that."

**On the number of play-action plays run this season:**

"You know, I think it's really just kind of a feel. Every game is a little bit different. Sometimes it's what you're incorporating with your runs. You know, you'd like to run it every time, but you do have to run it some just so that some of that works. I think what happens, too, a lot of times is we'll have maybe a check to get out of it if it's not the right look, and when we're fortunate and you've got a quarterback like Philip [Rivers] that can do those kind of things, then sometimes that will take you out of it."

**On QB Philip Rivers taking care of the football but being efficient throwing into tight windows:**

"Well, when you've got some guys that are doing a good job underneath, you know, like you've got [RB] Melvin [Gordon III] and Austin [Ekeler] — Austin has made some big plays when he's thrown the check-downs, too, and so has Melvin and our tight ends and even some of the schemes that we use that are underneath schemes where we're getting them to shallows or quick-routes underneath. You know, he does a great job with that. I think one of the things as you say, 'Oh, he gets rid of it quick,' but a lot of it's progression based and what we're trying to do when we attack a defense. I think one of the best things about what we've done — and I'm not talking about our team — is having to go against [Defensive Coordinator] Gus [Bradley] in that defense, and we spend all spring and summer trying to figure out ways that we can get things to be successful because it's so competitive against our guys. I really think that helps us in preparation for the season. You know what, you're talking about different defenses, but just the idea of how we're going to approach the plan that week sometimes those things work out. We called quite a few of them in the game last week, we didn't get the look and we threw it underneath or checked it down — and then there was a couple like you think back to Cleveland where, shoot, we threw those two bombs back-to-back. That did work. Every week is different and a lot of it is based off of how they're playing us, but it's because our guys — I think it's because we were able to be flexible because our guys are smart. They're able to line up in different spots. We can do different things with them and we've got a quarterback that can make it work. You know, hopefully we can keep going with it."

**On the balance of where to go with the football being second nature to Rivers:**

"Well, we've been doing it so long, this kind of type thing, that it's just kind of what we are. I think we all are trying to achieve the same thing and trying to create balance, and hopefully we can continue with that."

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

"I'd like to start by saying as an organization, as a staff, the players, we're deeply saddened by the news that came out this morning about Thousand Oaks. Our thoughts and prayers are with the loved ones and the victims. Just a sad, sad tragedy, and the first responders — my dad was a highway patrolman, so whenever you see situations like that where they're involved, you come to appreciate things that take place and how important those people are. Just want to make sure I address that first. Secondly, the Raiders — they're doing some good things offensively. You see it in spurts. You know, like the Indianapolis game, I think when you look at [Raiders QB Derek] Carr, I think he completed 16 or 17 passes in a row, and they had the ability to put up a lot of points just like you've seen throughout the season. So I think the key to them is when they get into a rhythm and they're rolling, they come in bunches. Yards come in bunches, and his accuracy, I think he's still the second-leading quarterback as far as completion percentage in the league. So you see the accuracy, you see the timing, you see the rhythm and they have some good skill players. That part of it is — we all understand that. The running game is a little bit different than with [RB] Marshawn [Lynch], so it's more of it by committee, although [RB Doug] Martin you see, and I know how strongly they feel about him. They feel like he is really a franchise-type running back, and you see him on tape do some really good things, as well. The big thing for them is once they build a rhythm and confidence and they get rolling, it can take off really quickly. That's the challenge with this — we go into every game, stopping the run is very important to us, and try to eliminate some of these big plays that are going on. I think last week we did a better job with that coming out of the bye week, and this week will be no different."

**On CB Michael Davis starting last week in place of CB Trevor Williams:**

"Well, I think there's a couple things. One, it wasn't that Trevor was playing bad. He was doing some good things. I think when we watched practice and you try to reward guys with opportunities when you see it on the practice field, and Michael is a guy that we've seen it on the practice field week in and week out where he's being very competitive, and we felt like he needed a chance to play. He's rolled in some games prior to last week, but last week we gave him the opportunity to start."

**On if Davis will start again this week:**

"Yeah."

**On Davis' physical traits:**

"I think that's a big part of it. You know, his flat-out speed is elite. He's got really good speed. I think the toughness on the perimeter and the corner, we ask a lot of our corners as far as getting involved in the run game, and that part we didn't see as consistently as we needed. Michael is the type of guy that would put together his tackling tape and then come in and sit with the coaches and says, 'Alright, let's go through this.' So I think he identified that it was a weakness on his part and really tried to attack it because he probably wouldn't get on the field unless he improves there. Then we saw it on special teams. We saw his toughness and his ability to make plays on special teams, and it kind of filtered over into the defensive side, so he's becoming a more consistent, willing tackler."

**On Davis' performance:**

"He did good. You know, he gave up the deep one, but even the last play, he competed. He fought all the way through it, and that play I think best shows what he's all about. What we've seen in practice, there might be times where he wasn't quite on top in the perfect situation, but he competed all the way through the end of the play just like that play that took place."

**On CB Desmond King II:**

"Yeah, Des is very unique to us because of his ability — you know, he's playing a little bit more man coverage now for us, and he's taking on that. He is a guy that, at times when you look at coverage, we had a conversation as coaches, sometimes when you play things so much, when you watch on tape, there's tweaks that take place. The players know it so well, that they do different things, and it looks like, I don't know if that's single-high safety zone coverage, but they know it so well, and they can anticipate. We're starting to see more of that with Des, where he's anticipating, and he's making plays. There's a couple plays that took place in the game that he really — it wasn't really his responsibility, but he identified it and played a pass and eliminated a big play for us. So I think he's becoming more versed in the defense. He understands it. We're challenging him more with more man coverage, and that's the next step for him."

**On if King is more consistent than he was a season ago:**

"Yes. You know, he's always been a really physical type player, attack mode, a guy that can tackle in space with some of our principles that we use in our zone coverages. I think the evolution where it's more consistent and having more awareness I think might be the biggest statement for him."

**On King as a blitz:**

"Yeah, that's not — I think that we'll continue. He is a good blitz, so I think in different packages based on the week and team that we're going against, we'll utilize their skill set. He is a good blitz, so I won't say that he'll never blitz again."

**On the pass rush picking up despite the absence of DE Joey Bosa:**

"Well, I think a big credit — I think with us, we were struggling with the run initially and [Defensive Line Coach] Giff [Smith] did a great job as far as personnel placement. I think you see that [NT Damion] Square is playing a lot more end for us and I think that has helped tremendously, and then the evolution of [LB] Uchenna [Nwosu], getting him involved. In our situation, we have some players. Now it's just positioning them in opportunities to make plays, and I think a lot of credit goes to Giff with that and the players being flexible, and that started way back in OTAs. We kind of drafted Uchenna with that in mind, that he could play an outside linebacker and a rusher, and because of injuries he's just getting more reps now. Now, I think [S] Derwin [James] has rushed, [S] Jahleel [Addae] rushed and got a sack, so I think you've got to be creative and do some different things to help your rush."

**On the pass rush and coverage units improving together:**

"Rush and cover, that's our saying. Rush and cover work together, so if you can affect the quarterback and force some bad decisions — last week was a huge play because not only an interception, we talk in terms of the defense that we're defined by our ability to get the ball and score. It's not just by our ability to get the ball, but it's more that mindset. Third down, hey, we're looking to get a third down stop — no, we're looking to get the ball. It's more that mentality. So I think that mentality, the players have really bought into. I think the ability to get some pressure and then the coverage being tight enough to where you have opportunities to make plays."

**On the confidence of the defense:**

"Well, in our meetings we talk always in terms of we need this game. We need to go to Cleveland and stay there for a week and then go to London. We need this experience. We need this to take place with us. Okay, now we come back. Hey, we need to go up to Seattle, we need this experience, what this is going to bring to us, and play a very good team in a hostile environment. So let's go see can we amp it up and play to that level. Now we're coming back, and we need this game, too, because hey, it's another road game for us in a hostile environment, and we need to play better. There are some areas that we need to improve on. So it's that mindset that we really need these opportunities to help us get where we want to go."

**On the having back-to-back games with late defensive stands to win:**

"Boy, that's a good question. You hope that you're not in those situations at the end of a game in either one of them, but you know, I think by team it's different, and really what their philosophy is going into it. You look at first and second down, you look at third down in the red zone, and then towards the end of the week you look at 'gotta have it,' situations. It might be, hey, it's fourth-and-four on the 50-yard line. What's your call, what are you going to be in? I think our staff, we look at those situations throughout, and we move right down the field in doing that, and there's been some situations, hey, it's the last play of the game on the 20, it's the last play of the game on the six, it's the last play of the game on the one, and go through that. Now, I mentioned last week that [Head Coach] Anthony [Lynn] puts us in those situations in practice, which I've never been a part of. I thought that was great. You did it in OTAs and training camp, but during the season. So I think that guys can recall from being in those situations, and again, it allows them to play fast, like we've been here. We just had this situation in practice. Now let's go do what we do, and it's more that mentality."

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS SAFETY DERWIN JAMES****On his performance this season:**

"I feel like I'm off to a good start. I feel like the first part of the season has been going pretty well. We've been winning, so that's the main thing."

**On the secondary:**

"Everybody can make plays. We're a very confident group, a very tight, close group — on and off the field. I feel like everybody, any week, can make plays on the ball, and I feel like that's what makes this group special."

**On how the Raiders have changed from earlier in the year:**

"They're still the same Raider team. They've still got a good team. [Raiders QB] Derek Carr, he's playing good, completing a lot of passes at a high level. They still have [Raiders WR] Martavis Bryant, so they've still got a lot of guys over there that can make plays and you've got to be aware of, so I feel like it'll be a good test, good challenge going into their place."

**On the challenge of the past three weeks:**

"As a defense we like playing on the road because of course if we're on the road it's not as loud when we're on the field because that's usually the home team, the offense. We love playing on the road. We love playing anywhere, honestly, to be honest."

**On if the mentality changes for the divisional game:**

"No, we play every game the same game. Even if it wasn't a division game, we come in with the same mindset that we want to get to 1-0 and get that game that we need."