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## Chargers Week 3 Media Availability

Thursday, September 23, 2021 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

### OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR JOE LOMBARDI

#### **On offense's 10 penalties against the Cowboys:**

"It's disappointing. There are a couple that you learn from, maybe things that you're not used to getting called, but by the letter of the law, they're penalties — just being a little more disciplined, as coaches, making sure that those details are being covered. That's the big takeaway. It's a hard job that the refs have. They're not always going to be perfect, and we're not always going to be perfect. There's a lesson in there, just tightening up some of the details. You get distracted, sometimes, with all the blitz pickups and the schemes and the coverages. Doing the little things, obviously, is something that you can never lose sight of."

#### **On any particular penalties that impacted execution:**

"The one that disappointed me the most was the illegal shift on that first down, down on the two-yard line when we scored a touchdown. That's just fundamental. There's a lot to unpack with that play. I remember breaking the huddle and looking at the play clock and thinking, 'Man, did I get to play in that late?' I think [QB] Justin [Herbert] saw it, and so he was kind of hurrying up the operation. Then, the play clock kind of got bumped, and I saw it go back up to 25 [seconds]. I haven't quite unpacked exactly what happened there because we've moved on to the next game. That one kept me out a little bit. That's a first day of training camp fundamental — get set, the motions — and it's something that we just have to do a better job with because the players will do it when we coach it correctly. I think there were other factors involved there with the play clock that contributed to that."

#### **On if he would rather have Herbert 'burn a timeout' next time that situation arises:**

"It was just one of those things that. We probably could have gotten him set. I think there was enough time. He just came out and saw the clock — I just think that we need to make sure that we're getting out of the huddle in time. Going forward, if you knew that you were going to get a penalty, totally take a timeout. I don't think that hit his mind and hit our mind. It's just one of those things that you learn from. I think that the guys will do a better job coaching it, and they'll be on top of it."

#### **On QB Justin Herbert's performance through the first two games:**

"I think it's a combination that he plays outstanding in-structure, meaning that, when the play works the way you want it to work, the ball gets out on time to the right receiver accurately. When there's a little bit of adversity, whether there's a rusher coming free or no one is open, he can buy time and make a big-time throw downfield — just that combination of playing within the offense when it's appropriate, but also, making a play when maybe we didn't dial up the perfect scheme. As time goes on, you just get more confidence and trust in the way he operates. He's kind of a great combination of those two things."

**On the team's red zone efficiency:**

"I think that there's a little bit of both. The interception this was last weekend, down there in the end zone, our splits weren't right. There were a number of things that happened on that play that could have helped us out, not throw that interception. There's a play-call or two that I wish, in retrospect, I could have back. I could have gotten him something better. I think it's a combination of things. I think that the way that we've been moving the ball is encouraging. We just have to tighten up in the red zone. I think that will come. I hope this is just a little bit of an outlier. Obviously, there's stuff that we can control and get better at. Then, some fluky stuff. Hopefully, that fluky stuff bounces out in the end and we improve on the things that we can control, and this kind of becomes a 'stub your toe' at the beginning, but we find our groove in the red zone, kind of like I feel like we have in other places on the field."

**On the significance behind running the ball in the red zone:**

"The space gets compressed in the red zone. There's less space, with the receivers, to get open, so it's maybe a little easier for the defense to cover things. It's obviously safer. [Head Coach] Brandon [Staley] read a stat out to the team today that 80 percent of turnovers happen on pass plays. Our four turnovers have been on pass plays in the red zone or approaching it. There's a little safety issue. When you run the ball, it's always easier than throwing it, just handed off and knocked them off the ball or split the defense and get some yards. It just takes the pressure off because the passing yards are harder down there in the red zone. The running yards can be, too, but a good run of three yards when you're at the seven-yard line on first down, where maybe you're not as happy with that back at the minus-20 [yard line]. It just takes the pressure off. You don't need as many yards to have that run be successful, if that makes sense."

**On if there's 'an urgency to score' when playing the Chiefs:**

"For sure. It's one of our keys this week, we have to be efficient in the red zone. It's a key every week, but when you're playing a team like the Chiefs, you don't want to trade field goals for touchdowns. It's going to be really important that we get that ball in the end zone."

**On Chiefs S Tyrann Mathieu:**

"He's a dangerous player. We played him a number of times in New Orleans, and just always a guy that every play you're thinking about, 'OK, where's he going to be? How can he mess up this play?' He just has such instincts and moxie. He just gets around the football and creates turnovers. Just a guy that you really have to be aware of. They have a number of good players. [Chiefs Defensive Coordinator Steve] Spagnuolo does a great job with them, just creating a bunch of different looks. He disguises things, a lot of pressure. It's a high-pressure defense that you really have to be on your 'A' game."

**On Herbert facing the Chiefs last season in his first career start:**

"I've watched that game a number of times. I do remember. Obviously, the story was so unique of how it all came about that he got put in there, that you paid attention to it. I saw how well he played and knew that the Chargers were coming up on our schedule in a few weeks, so I was paying attention to it. Obviously, it was very impressive, what he was able to do without knowing that he was going to be out there."

**On what the Week 2 game against the Chiefs last season said about Herbert:**

"I just think that it says a lot about his natural feel for the game and his instincts. That guy didn't really have any practice reps that week to speak of. He was just kind of told the last minute to go out and play. Playing as well as he did, I think it tells you that he's just a natural. He has a natural feel for the game and is a competitor. As good as he is in practice that, gameday kind of brings out the best in him. Like I said, it was very impressive."

**On preparing for Chiefs Defensive Coordinator Steve Spagnuolo:**

"You're paying attention to all the games, but specifically, ones where you think about how he's looking at us specifically, like how he defends Baltimore may be different than how he defends Cleveland, and how it will be different than how he defends us. You're always trying to find those crossover game that makes sense. Obviously, the chargers are one. A lot of different faces are out on the field and. The scheme is an important part of it, but also matchups and trying to figure out who's out there that is going to be out there against us on Sunday. As you're trying to anticipate how they're going to treat us, [WR] Keenan [Allen] wasn't in that game, so there are a lot of things that you're looking at. It's definitely an important part of our preparation."

**On C Corey Linsley's false start penalty against the Cowboys:**

"I think there was some confusion at the line of scrimmage. It was kind of a quick snap and we were still moving. It was just one of these, kind of down at the goal line where our operation needs to tighten up a bit."

**On the potential of assisting T Storm Norton by providing extra support through the scheme:**

"I think that you're always aware of helping tackles. I think if Storm had that game over again, you'd see a much different game. I think his set patterns could have been better. Just kind of his gameplan going into it. Every passing play kind of starts out with who our tackles are, who are they blocking, and are we going to have time to make this pass? Probably could have done a better job of that on Sunday."

**On Norton's battle with Cowboys LB Micah Parsons off the edge:**

"I think a lot of people that the tackle just goes out there and we snap the ball, and he goes and blocks his guy. The amount of strategy that goes into how I'm going to set on each defender, and so probably not having a lot of film on that guy, not knowing exactly what his plan was going to be, that's huge for tackles. You put someone that they haven't seen before in front of them. It's not as simple as people think it is. I think they think it's all physical, but there is a big mental game to how a tackle sets and his pass protection. I think that he probably learned some really valuable lessons there."

**DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR RENALDO HILL****On the run defense:**

"We just have to be better overall, from the front to the back. It's going to take a team effort to get the run stopped, and we didn't do it last week. Those are the areas that we're working on this week to get it fixed."

**On what lacked in the defense against Dallas:**

"I think it's just scheme — one piece here, one piece there — just out of place. When you're going up against a team like that, that has a great offensive line, and a good running back, everybody has to do their job. Coaches have to put them in better spots and make sure it's defined and clean for those guys."

**On containing Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes:**

"Just executing our plan. I think we have a good play in place. Everybody seems enthusiastic and excited about the plan; we have to go out there and execute it."

**On 'keeping Mahomes in the pocket':**

"That's our emphasis for the week. We talk about those things daily. We talked about the tackling efforts from all those guys; from the running back to the skilled guys getting into space. You're trying to hit on all those points. It's going to take a team effort. We're trying to make sure we address those things in the meeting room and try to address those things out on the practice field, so it shows up on Sundays."

**On S Nasir Adderley:**

"We know with more and more games he's going to get more comfortable in this system. You can see that he took a jump last week. He was a lot more comfortable, which allowed him to be in proper positions. He made some stout tackles out there. Things that were in space, where if he doesn't get it, it's gone. That's what we're going to ask for from our safeties, to erase plays. Hopefully, he's not in that [open space tackle] position a lot, but if he is, he showed that he can do it. It was a big step for him."

**On CB Asante Samuel Jr.:**

"From day one when he came in here, nothing seemed too big for him at all. It didn't matter if he was going against [WR] Keenan [Allen] in practice, or the guys he faced last week. I think he's shown growth and I think he learns fast. It's one of those situations where you tell him one time and he gets it. He's moving on and he's applying it to his game. I think that's what helps him so much. He can see in coverages as well. He's built for it, he's not afraid of the moment."

**On Samuel's position in the scheme:**

"He'll have times where he'll have to get out there and fight guys, but he does see well off [coverage]. That's a big plus for him, that he's able to do those things. If we asked him to go out there and fight them and get down there, he'll do that as well."

**On Samuel's interception against Dallas:**

"He can see, and he has good vision. He knew he had post help there. He was squeezing well. He can see the overlap that Nas [S Nasir Adderley] was able to get on the ball. That helped him, being able to see. A lot of guys are just locked in on their receiver. I think San does a good job of being able to [use his] periphery and see other things that come into his area. Sometimes that's hard to teach, and he just has a knack for it."

**On whom Dallas QB Dak Prescott was targeting when Samuel intercepted:**

"From my perspective, it's hard to know what Dak was doing. Looking at it from my lens, it looked like he was trying to hit [Cowboys WR] CeeDee [Lamb] on the crosser. I thought Nas [Adderley] did a great job of getting in the passing window there. Asante [Samuel Jr.] had a good beat on his guy. He had him on his sights, but he could also see the crosser, as well. It was a hell of a play by a young rookie there."

**On communication in the defense covering the Chiefs offense:**

"We have to have our lens on where those speed guys are at all times. They have [Chiefs TE Travis] Kelce as well. We're going to have our eyes glued on a lot of people this week. It's going to take a team effort. It's going to take that communication where guys are identifying those splits, and what they'd like to do out of those looks. We have to be vocal. We can't have any secrets back there. We have to make sure that everyone's aware of what's going on and what they try to do."

**On the challenges the Chiefs offense presents:**

"A lot of those jet-orbit motions they do, the timing motions. They try to get you with the eye candy. You have to have keys. That's what they try to do, they try to mess with your lens — try to get your eyes off of things that you shouldn't. We all have a responsibility in our scheme, and guys have to make sure they're not looking at the things they're not supposed to. We have to keep emphasizing every time we come to the sideline. You can be good for the first couple of times, but the more and more times you get fatigued in the game, or get tired, that's when those big explosions happen. We have to do a good job of continuing to remind those guys and they have to remind each other on the field."

**On the Chiefs' 'off-script' plays:**

"If you have that responsibility on [Chiefs TE Travis] Kelce, and you're matched on him, you can't get nosy looking at what [Chiefs QB] Patrick [Mahomes] is doing. Is he running around? That's my guy, I have to stay connected to him. Even if you are connected, he's trying to drill the ball in there, because he's trying to get it to his playmakers. We have to be aware. That has to be our intention on every play out there."

**On CB Michael Davis:**

"He's been playing well. He's been doing what we've asked of him. I know he's tough on himself, he wants to take that next jump. But he's doing all the right things and doing everything we ask. He's our CB1 and he's been playing pretty well. I know the more and more he gets experienced with the scheme, and he can find out where to get his opportunities, he'll play more calmly. But he's doing everything we ask."

**On missed defensive coverages against Dallas:**

"I felt like Nas [Adderley] had a good beat on it. Knowing that [Cowboys WR] Amari [Cooper] is a multi-cut route runner, we knew those things could pop off the ground. I don't know how the outcome would've happened because Nas did have a jump on it. I could see from his lens that he was already headed that way. I think Mike [Davis] knows it's on the book and that we have to be able to defend the double-cut routes."

**On DL Jerry Tillery:**

"Jerry's been doing what we ask. Obviously, Dallas was tough. They ran the ball well. But he was in the places where we asked him to be. There are other people around us that have to help support the run. He's holding some double teams in there, and it's tough a lot of times. We all have to do better, coaches and players. We have to put them in better spots."



**On S Derwin James Jr.:**

“He’s been doing everything we ask, he’s a leader out there. The toe was a little issue after the first game, but he’s battling through. It doesn’t seem like something that’s going to hold him back from doing his job. He’s been playing hard. He’s getting more comfortable in the scheme. If you get your top guy comfortable in the scheme, we expect some jumps to happen.”

**On ways Tillery can improve:**

“He’s been doing everything we’ve asked. You can have some of those double teams on L.J. [DL Linval Joseph], that can be tough on him. But I don’t see an issue. He works hard, he stays after it. His technique with [Defensive Line Coach] Giff [Smith] has always been good. We just have to keep working. But I like where we’re at. We just have to keep improving as a whole.”

**On Tillery’s performance against Cowboys G Zack Martin:**

“There’s going to be different schemes that allow him to do those things. In that play, I could see that he was one-on-one. He beat his one-on-one. And then there will be other times where we’re going to ask him to hold the point and take up two. And other guys have to show up. It’s going to take a team effort. When it’s one-on-one and he gets those ops, we’re going to expect that against Martin, like he did. He acknowledged that, ‘Hey, this was a tough job holding double teams.’ But he did what we asked. I expect him to win those one-on-ones.”

**On how he can help Tillery defeat potential double-teams:**

“Coaching him better and getting other guys to the ball to help Jerry get some of those double teams off him.”

**CORNERBACK ASANTE SAMUEL JR.****On being named Pepsi Zero Sugar Rookie of the Week:**

“It’s definitely a blessing. I want to thank my family, my friends, my fans and Bolt Nation for helping me get the award. I couldn’t have done it without them.”

**On if he prepared any differently than he normally does going into last week against Cowboys WR Amari Cooper:**

“I try to keep the same mindset with any receiver, whether it’s a third-string receiver or Amari Cooper, one of the best receivers in the league. I am going to bring the same approach and preparation each week. Whatever I can do to help the team win, that’s what I want to do.”

**On his matchup against Cooper and getting ‘targeted’ by Cowboys QB Dak Prescott:**

“I’m a rookie, I am going to get tested to see if I’m supposed to belong here. I honestly think I am supposed to be here. I just have to prove it to the world, not myself.”

**On playing the ball:**

“When I see the ball in the air, I just think, ‘If I can’t catch it, he can’t catch it.’ Whatever I have to do, scratch and claw, that’s what I am going to do to get the ball.”

**On preparing to cover Chiefs WR Tyreek Hill:**

“I feel like it’s all about preparation. If you prepare throughout the week and make sure you know your calls and be where you’re supposed to be, you should be fine. Just go out there and compete.”

**On his performance through the first two games:**

“I’m just learning the league’s pace and the speed of the game, just getting adjusted to that. Just trying to get comfortable out there.”

**On Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes:**

“I used to watch him a lot in college. I still watch him a lot today, he’s one of the best quarterbacks in the league. Definitely a great quarterback. On film, he’s a great quarterback, too. I’ll be excited to compete against him this week. Just thankful for the opportunity.”