

# TRANSCRIPTS

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## Chargers Week 7 Media Availability

Thursday, October 20, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

### OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR JOE LOMBARDI

#### **On the Seahawks' defense:**

"I think they play hard. They are big inside. You know there is this rookie on the left, 27 [Seahawks CB Tariq Woolen]. He's making a lot of plays for them. They run to the ball and the turnovers are what really sticks out. They get the ball out. It has always been a hallmark of Seattle, regardless of their scheme, and so ball security is a huge emphasis this week."

#### **On the Seahawks' defensive development:**

"They're young at some positions. I think as the season goes on, they get a little more connected, understand what they are trying to accomplish. You definitely see a defense that is improving each week."

#### **On the offensive unit's performance last week:**

"I wish we would have scored more points. It was really a slog. I think it's rare that you get that many plays, when you don't feel like you're moving the ball. We had an inordinate amount of third downs and converted a lot of them, especially kind of in the middle there. We had a bunch of long drives that we ended up kicking some field goals, but you always want to score touchdowns. Not as good as we had hoped. We'd hope that we had a little more explosive [plays], but we won the game. Like you said, it's a good unit. They are well coached and when you don't run the ball real well against them, it's tough. Like I said, you are happy with the win, but I felt that we left some stuff on the field that we could have scored some more points."

#### **On the Broncos' defense defending 'naked' play calls:**

"Sometimes, it is dependent on what is called. We had the one naked where we had [WR] Josh [Palmer] and he broke a tackle for about 15 yards. The thing with naked [bootlegs] is that there is always the chance that they have a blitz off the edge. Is that they knew it was coming or just they called, and you called the play at the wrong time. A little of both."

#### **On the red zone offense:**

"I'd say it needs improving. We're getting down there a lot, but we need to come away with touchdowns. A lot of that comes down to running the ball a little bit better and executing some of the plays better, having a better plan, everything. Not as good as we want."

#### **On if WR Keenan Allen's absence is affecting the red zone offense:**

"Yeah, I think he factors into everything. Hopefully, he's back this week. We'll see. You always expect a top receiver to add to any element of your game."

**On ‘if he has to be more creative with the offense while managing injuries’:**

“I think a little of everything. Each player has strengths and weaknesses. When you are fully healthy and you go through a few games, you really know your players and you know what works for them and what doesn’t. As you get new players then, well they may have different strengths and weaknesses, so you tilt the game plan a little bit. Maybe Keenan’s replacement does this well, but maybe not this well. It may be different for him than it was for Keenan. You’re just always trying to put guys in a position to help them do their best and that formula changes as you get new players in there. As an offensive lineman gets hurt, there may be something that you have to protect him more in certain plays than you did the starter. You’re trying to find that formula for who you have out there.”

**On if the injuries are impacting the way he gameplans for QB Justin Herbert:**

“I think each game is different, just where your matchups are, what you think you can accomplish, how to protection is going to hold up and you’re always trying to find a protection or a play-action that’s going to give him time to get a couple of hitches and get guys down field. I think you’re always assessing their defense, their scheme, your matchups up front, matchups in the secondary. Some games, you feel like, ‘Hey, this ball has to come out fast, faster than others. They have a good pass rush, but we think this protection, based on how they’re lining up, is going to give us some extra time.’ You’re always sitting there in the film room trying to get that perfect mix of making sure you are giving yourself a chance for explosive plays, but also protecting the quarterback and being able to move the ball.”

**On Herbert’s ‘health percentage’:**

“I don’t think I can put a percentage on it, but he definitely feels a lot better. At first, he wasn’t throwing the first couple of days of the week. Now, he’s throwing the football early on in the week. I know that he is feeling better. I don’t know what the percentage is. I don’t know if it is 100 percent, but I don’t feel like there are any limitations.”

**On TE Gerald Everett:**

“You see a guy with good hands. He makes some exceptional catches. Really special, I think, with the ball in his hands, running after the catch. I think as he gets longer — just a little consistency assignment-wise, but I think that’s coming as he gets more time in the offense.”

**On WR Mike Williams’ performance last week:**

“Good. He didn’t get a lot of opportunities. He had the one catch that would have been an all-timer. I couldn’t tell if his feet were in or not. I understand the call. I think Mike [Williams] is pretty consistent and we just have to keep working to give him the opportunities.”

**On if Williams’ ‘low target count is a result of facing the Broncos defense game plan’:**

“I think so. You always have a lot in the game plan for Mike and when you call the plays, each play you have, ‘Hey, here is the premium coverage we’re hoping to get,’ and you’re trying to call it at the right time. Maybe, instead of single-high, they were in shell and clouding over the top and the structure of the defense kind of made it a dead route in the beginning and now the quarterback is going somewhere else. Sometimes, I’m good calling those plays at the right time and he gets the opportunities. Other times, I strike out a few times. I think it was a little bit of that.”

**On if there is a ‘common thread’ between Williams’ ‘variance of performances’:**

“I don’t think it’s him. I think it’s just the opportunities and whether I called the plays at the wrong time or Justin [Herbert] saw something and threw it somewhere else. I think when he gets the opportunities, he’s going to make the play. We just have to make sure we’re giving it to him.”

**On WR Joshua Palmer:**

“I think good. He hasn’t had a ton of explosive [plays]. I forget exactly how many catches he had on Monday. Anyone know off the top of their head? I think it was six or seven. He’s been battling through some injuries, but he always gives good effort and is making the catches when the ball comes his way.”

**On how ‘unnerving’ it is for a quarterback when a defense is blitzing:**

“I think there is always stress as far as getting your protection right, but it also gives you an opportunity to make big plays. When they are blitzing, it usually means Mike [Williams] is one-on-one, or Keenan [Allen] is one-on-one. It gives you the opportunity to make some big plays. I think the more competitive quarterbacks kind of like it when you blitz them because he knows he can make a play.”

**On the third-and-one play at the end of regulation:**

“[FB] Zander [Horvath] is first in the progression. You’re hoping they are reading run and he sneaks out to the flat. When he got bumped, I think Justin [Herbert] lost track of him. I think he felt like he could see, ‘Hey, this guy is going to be open and he got knocked off.’ Then we had [TE] Tre’ [McKitty] coming on a shallow cross. The corner is always an alert on that play. It gets thrown maybe one time out of 50. He was open, but I think because he really felt good about the flat and then when it got knocked off, he was kind of like, ‘OK,’ and was trying to find a shallow cross.”

**On if McKitty would have been the second read in the progression on that play:**

“Yeah. There was an alert on the corner. Just like, ‘Hey, if it’s open, throw it.’ Usually, you get to that because the flat got covered and you were looking for the — and the corner just popped in your vision and I think he just got stuck a little long because he got knocked off his course.”

**On RB Sony Michel:**

“I think he’s been very reliable. He had some really good short-yardage runs that were important. He’s not hitting those 70-yard runs like Austin [Ekeler] did the other day, but he’s been getting those tough yards. Very reliable guy, protections, always knows what to do. There are certain situations where we really like him.”

## **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR RENALDO HILL**

### **On Seahawks QB Geno Smith:**

“He’s doing a great job of taking care of the ball. Obviously, his completion percentage is up. He’s not turning the ball over. He’s using his legs when he needs to. He’s doing a great job of being QB1 over there. He’s playing at, probably, his highest level since I’ve been around him in the NFL. He’s doing a great job over there running that offense. I can see why they’re sitting in a good spot right now.”

### **On CB J.C. Jackson’s transition:**

“I think that it’s just going to be the process. For four years, he’s been doing one thing and one thing alone, they asked him to play man. We’re going to try to do as much as we can to simplify and do the things that made him successful over there. I think that the meeting time that he’s getting with [Secondary] Coach [Derrick] Ansley in the morning, staying later, we’re hoping that we see those things translate on to the football field. It doesn’t happen as soon as a guy comes into the building all of the time. That’s what we’re seeing now. We just have to continue to approach it and work hard. I think that J.C. [Jackson] is doing the right things. We are hoping that we are going to put better product on the field this week.”

### **On Jackson overcoming early challenges with zone coverage:**

“Not surprising. We are all people of habit. When you’re doing something for so long, you revert back here and there, but the best way to solve it is to keep putting him through those things that cause problems within our scheme. That is the only way that I know how to approach it, to keep getting on the grass and taking him through that process of how we want to play it. Then, capitalize on that with the visual of seeing it in the meeting room. Then, making sure that he can give it to us back so that we know that he knows exactly what he is doing. That’s part of our job, as well, to make sure that we get him through that. I don’t want to hang everything on J.C., it’s us, as coaches, as well. We have to make sure that we’re giving him the right things so that he can play at a high level on Sundays because he’s shown that before.”

### **On Jackson’s response to not playing in the second half of last Monday night’s game and their internal conversations:**

“I think that he is in a good place. Obviously, he didn’t want to let his teammates down. He wanted to be in there in that situation, but I think that he is approaching it the right way. Like I said, he’s in here at 7:30 [a.m.], or earlier, in the morning. He stopped in even before his 7:30 meeting just to sit with me. I wanted to see where his [mental] state was at. He’s in a great [mental] state. He’s spending all of that time, before we get to our initial meetings, with Coach Ansley, and they’re grinding through it. I think that’s the way that it has to be. We see that it’s a problem, he sees that it’s a problem, and we’re trying to correct it.”

### **On if the staff is doing ‘anything different’ with Jackson this week to ‘help his headspace’:**

“No, we’re just going to prepare and practice hard. Obviously, he is doing those extra steps now. I think that is a start. We’re just going to stay on him, from this point on until the end of the season. We’re hoping to see some growth. He’s a professional. He wants to play at a high level. I know that he’ll do the right things to make sure that he’s playing at a high level.”

### **On if Jackson missing time with his ankle injury has impacted his performance at the beginning of the season:**

“I think it’s that; the time away. When you’re not in the room or repping it, it’s a lot different when you’re on the grass and repping it versus being in the seat and talking yourself through it. When you can get on the grass — see it on the grass and feel it on the grass — then, take it into the meetings and be able to explain it, those are the combinations that you want to continue to bring together. That was, probably, the missing point right there. It’s just us getting him fine-tuned again. We’re really taking all of the fundamentals and techniques that we talked about in training camp and we’re starting over. We’re hoping that those things that we saw in training camp will show up again here.”

### **On forcing turnovers:**

“We talked about us being 4-0 [in games with a takeaway], that was a product of us creating those turnovers. The two games that we lost, we didn’t create any turnovers. That’s the big emphasis for our defense, moving forward. We have to know that when we do create them, good things happen. If we don’t, it’s going to be a shootout and we’re going to be fighting until the end. That’s how you have to try to get separation in this league because these offenses are good. Sometimes, plus-1 [in the turnover differential] doesn’t get it, so we have to create as many as we can.”

**On creating takeaways:**

"It starts in practice. It starts with getting to the ball and getting the opportunities when they come there. We saw, just one week ago, with Buffalo. Those opportunities we got in Kansas City, we didn't capitalize on that, they did. That was probably the outcome of the game. We have to keep emphasizing that when we do get those opportunities, we have to make them happen."

**On if the Seahawks' offense has 'changed' since Smith has been the starting quarterback:**

"Not a ton. You see some similarities, as far as when the pocket does break down, he's able to move. What you like from Geno [Smith] is that he is sitting in the pocket, he knows where his targets are at and he's making good decisions with the football. Then, you tie that in with the run game. They hit some big, explosive runs, when you look at the cutup. They're a big, home-run hitting team, and they can do it in the pass, as well as in the run, game."

**On what he 'likes seeing out of' LB Drue Tranquill thus far this season:**

"His command. It's his second year in the system, so he's confident. He's asking all of the right questions. He wants to know those questions so that he can solve the problems on the field. That's what we're seeing. I wish that I had some wood here [laughter], but both of those guys [Tranquill and LB Kenneth Murray Jr.] have been healthy, and that's been a huge key. Having those guys, there's not a lot of substitution, different guys in the lineup, and I think that is giving those guys confidence. They're seeing all of the looks, and the more and more that you see looks, the better you play."

**On Tranquill's ability to support the entire defense:**

"We ask a lot of those linebackers. Playing in a 3-4 system, they have to be able to two-gap and get separation off of blocks, and he's doing that like second nature. He's not staying attached to the blockers, he's getting off. Obviously, he can use his speed. On a play last week versus Denver, he was on the opposite side and ran [Broncos QB] Russell [Wilson] down. Those are the kinds of things that he and K9 [Murray Jr.] can bring at that linebacker depth. They have speed to erase plays when things break down."

**On if Tranquill and Murray Jr.'s performance together has been 'a pleasant surprise':**

"We knew that they were both talented guys. I think that was the biggest thing: How can we keep this combination on the field as much as possible, without having the injuries? Like I said, now that we have a constant in those guys being on the field, I think that it's allowing them to gain confidence and it's expressing their skillset, being physical and being able to play fast."

**On S Nasir Adderley's performance against the Broncos, returning to the starting lineup:**

"I thought that he did a good job. We challenged him. Obviously, he hadn't been playing up to what he expect and what we expected. He came out and had a good week of practice and it showed in the ballgame. Competition creates that. We want to continue to keep the competition going on in that room. The best man wins out in the week. Hopefully, we can continue to keep putting guys that are going to be responsible and accountable for the defense."

**On Adderley not getting discouraged about 'being benched' in Week 5:**

"Very encouraging. Those are the types of guys that we want. Those guys that tuck their heads and run, you find out a lot about a guy right there, as well. He approached it the right way. He knew that he wasn't playing up to his expectations, and ours, as well. He approached it the right way. I think that it's going to benefit us and him, moving forward, that we have those types of guys in the locker room, which we all expected from the start. I just think that it helps our defense, moving forward."

**On LB Kyle Van Noy:**

"I think that's a process, too. You know that you have a guy that can do multiple things and, for us, is still trying to find that groove of where he fits. We know that if an injury happens, he can be a plug-and-play guy. We want to be able to highlight the things that he does, as well, being able to express himself on third down, being able to put him behind the ball and be able to plug him, with his size, and be able to get off and separate from blocks. It's still a constant process. I think that that is going to be something that we continue to explore throughout the year, but we do know that he can do all of those things. Each week, we're always going to look at the gameplan and see how we can attack the team. I think, maybe some weeks, it's going to express itself a little bit more on what Kyle [Van Noy] can do. That's how we're going to approach it, moving forward."

**On the 'leadership duo' of S Derwin James Jr. and OLB Khalil Mack:**

"That's what you expect from your top players, to step up and perform. Regardless of the situation, those guys play at their best. That's what you expect from those two. We're going to keep rallying behind those guys and try to take some pressure off of them, but we know that they're going to keep rising to the occasion, as well."