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## WEEK 8 — PODIUM AVAILABILITY Wednesday, October 23, 2019 | Hoag Performance Center | Costa Mesa, Calif.

### LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN

#### **On T Russell Okung:**

"Russell Okung is practicing today and he will play this week.

"We were trying to decide last week if he was ready to go. I knew this week, he would be. He just needed more practice time.

"We may wait [to activate him], but he will be activated.

"It helps. He won't be able to play a whole game. [T] Trent Scott will play probably the bulk of the reps like he's been playing. Russell will work his way back in. He has to get his game reps in right now. We don't know how much he'll play, but he is definitely going to play some this week."

#### **On the starting right tackle:**

"Trent Scott, he has been steady all year. He will have an opportunity to compete somewhere else."

#### **On the starting center:**

"[I need] just more time. I haven't seen [C/G] Ryan [Groy] in three years. We just got him a couple of weeks ago. Right now, [C] Scott [Quessenberry] is going to start out. I know Ryan, he's a heck of a competitor. He may work his way into the lineup at some point.

"The good thing about those two [Groy and Quessenberry], is their versatility. They both can play center and guard."

#### **On Chicago:**

"They're a talented football team on all three levels. That secondary is loaded with first-rounders and Pro Bowl players. They have one of the biggest impact players in [Bears LB] Khalil Mack. We've played against him the past couple of years. We know what he can do. [Bears LB Roquan] Smith is doing a heck of a job at linebacker. They're a talented team on defense. Offensively, they're fast. They have a lot of weapons. They try to get you in space. Those guys can score from anywhere on the field. I know they're catching some slack right now because their points are down from last year, but this team can explode at any time. Special teams-wise, they're the No. 1 team in the league in punt return and kick return. [Bears WR Cordarrelle] Patterson does a heck of a job."

#### **On Bears QB Mitchell Trubisky:**

"Well, he was out for like three weeks. He came back last week and they played a pretty good football team. I don't think it was all his fault. He might have been a little rusty and what not, but we know he can play. Just look at what he did last season. He turned that thing around and went 12-4 with him as their starting quarterback. We really liked him coming out of college at North Carolina. He has a heck of a skillset."

#### **On DT Justin Jones and NT Brandon Mebane:**

"No [update]. It's pretty much the same ole, same ole."



**On RB Justin Jackson:**

“Jackson will be limited today in practice.

“First, we have to be careful bringing him back and watch how he runs today. Like I said, he’ll be limited today. You don’t want to have a setback with the calf — such a small muscle, it could linger. Getting him back at full-strength with his versatility, it can’t do anything but help. We would definitely find a way to get him the ball.”

**On LB Uchenna Nwosu:**

“Uchenna, he’s tough as nails, man. He has played with hip pointers the last couple weeks. He just keeps fighting through it and producing. I like the way he’s playing. [DE] Melvin Ingram [III] will come back and get some reps in practice today, but Uchenna will still be in the rotation if Melvin does play.

“[He will practice today] on a limited basis.

“He may still play some OTTO. [LB] Kyzir [White] is doing a pretty good job over there at the OTTO. The defense is definitely keeping the points down, so you don’t want to make too many changes, but Uchenna would be in that rotation with Melvin — especially with Melvin with the hamstring if he’s able to play. That’s going to be important.”

**On one-score losses:**

“You can take a positive that all of the losses have been by one score, but it’s hard, to be honest with you. When you’re sitting there at 2-5 and you feel like you’re a better football team than that, we have to figure out a way to win some of these one-score games. We’ve done that in the past. We have to get back to that. That’s just blocking, tackling and taking care of the football.”

**On the small margin between wins and losses:**

“Yeah, that’s the National Football League with the parity. Any single week, you could get your tail beat if you don’t show up and play the way you’re capable of playing.”

**On his message to the players:**

“The things that we have to do to get better and improve this football team. We don’t have to worry about needing to win. We all want to win and need to win. We understand that, but we have to improve. If each person, coach and player, improve every single week, we’re going to start winning these games. That’s our focus in practice today — work on tackling, blocking and not turning the ball over.”

**On the offensive line’s performance on Sunday:**

“Overall, it wasn’t bad. It wasn’t bad at all. It could have been better in the run game — but everybody. That’s blocking — wide receivers and tight ends, not just the offensive line. That could have been better. For the most part, they kept [QB] Philip [Rivers] clean.”

**On DT Sylvester Williams:**

“He’s a veteran player that played at a pretty good level for a while. I think bringing him on as depth can’t do anything but help us. Right now with [Brandon] Mebane down and Justin [Jones], he will come in and help some of the younger guys. I’m not sure how much he’ll play this week, but he definitely is going to suit up.”

**On RB Troymaine Pope:**

“There’s only one football. You’re trying to get guys reps that need the reps and are rusty, and you have [RB] Austin [Ekeler] back there. It’s just hard to get three guys the football. The last two or three weeks, we’re putting ourselves in situations where we couldn’t even run the football. Trying to get three guys the ball, that’s going to be pretty challenging. I’m okay with what Pope is doing on special teams and his limited role in the backfield.”

**On his message to RB Melvin Gordon III:**

“In critical situations, just fall back on your technique and fundamentals. You’ll always prevail when you can do that. That was a situation where he should have had two hands on the ball the whole time. He was trying to, I guess maybe reach a little bit and get the ball to the end zone. It was just unfortunate because that young man has scored more touchdowns than anyone on this team, I think in the last three years. That’s what he’s made for — those situations right there. Technique and fundamentals right there would have helped him a lot.”



**On staying committed to the run:**

"I'm not content about being 9-7 or 8-8. I think that's what [those] teams do, just throw it all around the field. You have to be a balanced offense. When you're balanced, you can control the tempo of the game and you can do so many other things, offensively. We have to start running the football more efficiently."

**On if an improved running game can help with play-action:**

"Absolutely. There's a reason for that. We run play-action when we get run looks. The passing game has been good, but we need to be more balanced with the passing game. That's everybody. It's not just the backs, it's everyone."

"When you're able to run the football, they have to defend it. That's when you want to run your run-action, but because we haven't ran the ball a lot in the last three weeks, you're not going to see a lot of play-action. It's hard to run a play-action when you're down 17-0 or 24-0."

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK PHILIP RIVERS****On T Russell Okung:**

"It'll be great to have him back out there. Again, I take nothing away from what [T] Trent [Scott] has done these first seven games. He has battled, fought and played pretty dang well, but it will be great to have Russ back out there. I know he's excited. Again, he brings more — much like the way [C Mike] Pouncey brought more than just on the field. Just being in the mix and the huddle, the whole deal will be a positive."

**On the movement along the offensive line:**

"This certainly isn't the first go at it in that way. If, in fact, Russ [Okung] is up and does play Sunday, it will be the same group other than center — the same group we had for the better part, if not all of last year. I think the guys up there have done a nice job. It's part of this game. Not only there, but other positions where we've had some flux and change around with the roster. By no means are those excuses. Those are things that you have to manage and overcome."

**On working with C Scott Quessenberry:**

"The one thing with when [Mike] Pouncey was up and rolling, and he had his occasional rest day, Scott got quite a few reps during those days because [G] Dan [Feeney] was going to be playing guard. They didn't want to take those reps from him at guard and move him to center all practice long. Dan did get some center reps as well, but Scott did also. I actually gotten quite a few reps with Scott in the last six weeks. He will step in and do a nice job. He love ball. He had a 61 jersey growing up. He was a [former C Nick] Hardwick fan. I can talk to him more about our past seasons here than I can anybody else in the locker room. He was there every Sunday at the Q. He will step in there. I know he'll be fired up to go, step in and will do a heck of a job."

**On Bears LB Khalil Mack:**

"He's a heck of a player. I think what makes those guys — the elite ones — elite in addition to what they can do rushing the passer is that they play the run. He's an every-down player and can change the game. Obviously, we've seen him do that in his time in Oakland and the short time that he's been in Chicago. Heck of a player, but he's not the only one they have. You look at that defense, they have a lot of first-round picks, a lot of Pro Bowl players and they play well together. It will be a heck of a challenge again. We've had our share of tough defenses and this is no different this week."

**On the energy level:**

"I imagine that the energy will continue to climb as the day goes and as the week goes. There's no denying, that was a tough one [on Sunday]. Again, when you think you might have won it twice and then to not — and fight back the way we did. It's been a tough three weeks. I think there's no denying that. I think it's best to not try to act like it hasn't been tough, but at the same time, to go, 'What now? What are we going to do now?' I think the guys are excited to go to Chicago, go to Soldier field and play a tough opponent that you don't see but once every four years. Shoot, we have an opportunity. You can't say it forever, but we have this week. We can say that about this week — we have the opportunity to go try to find a way to win a game. So far, what it seems like to me is the guys are in the right frame of mind and headed in that direction to help make that happen."



**On playing in Chicago:**

"It's old-school NFL at its finest. It will be awesome. It's crazy watching film of those guys, too, because the camera angle is low. It will be different. It's not huge by any means, though that's easy for us to say, it's hard to say not big coming from our home stadium now. I know it's one of the smaller ones around the league. It will be loud. It's old-school NFL ball. I think the atmosphere will be great. I imagine it will be a little cool and could be wet, who knows. They'll be cranked up. It seems from hearing they haven't gotten off to the start they obviously wanted to get off to as well. There are two teams that are hungry, aggravated and want to win a game. It will be a heck of an environment."

**On goal-line turnovers:**

"I don't think we can go up there and do a drill to help us not turn it over. Nobody is trying to. I think the one against Indy, the guy made a great play. Maybe it was a poor decision. The one against Denver, on my part, was a bad decision. Those two were bad decisions. That's just, again, being conscious of it in those two spots. One of them didn't hurt us, one of us did. [RB Austin] Ekeler's against Denver, it's fourth down. There's no time on the clock. You have to reach and try to score that ball. I don't know how that one really even counts. You'd hate for him to keep it tucked and not fumble. It's still a turnover on downs. Then, the other two. I mean, gosh, Ekeler had just scored jumping over the top in Detroit. Then, that one comes out and then the one comes out against [RB Melvin [Gordon III]]. I don't know if there is anything that you can say, 'Oh yeah, we got that fixed today.' I think, unfortunately, those things happen. We do know the consequences of those have been severe. I think it's being conscious of it and then just going and play. You can't let it cripple you from a playing standpoint."

**On re-establishing the run:**

"Yeah, it would certainly help. I think we're at our best when we're balanced. I think it's about scoring. Let's score the football. That's what we haven't done. If that means running better and more, then heck yeah, but whatever it means, that, to me, needs to be our No. 1 objective — to score more points. I think that could be the answer to some of our questions, is scoring. I know I've said that the last few weeks. We have to get in the end zone more."

**On chunk plays:**

"I think teams are doing a good job. They know, we had a stretch there early where it was chunk after chunk in both the runs and the pass. Teams are obviously trying to eliminate those. We do need to continue to try to find more ways to get that done. We had a 94-yard drive that was a heck of a drive with some chunk plays in there with sideline catches, great plays by [WR] Mike [Williams] and [WR] Keenan [Allen]. Keenan had two of them. He had two other chunk plays with Hunter back-to-back with play-action. We had some spurts of it, but I think just more of it. Obviously, I had the big one to Austin [Ekeler]. I think it's just, again, that fine line between taking what they give you. We tried to have a couple of different shots in the game and they were just so far out. Then, you throw a check-down to Ekeler and I think he got 15 on the one right after Mike's challenge and [G Forrest] Lamp's injury. We ended up getting a 15-yarder on a dunk. The third quarter was really the quarter that, offensively, we just didn't do anything. I don't think I completed a pass and I think we had four yards or something. That was kind of our lull quarter. If you look there and if you're playing like you maybe were in the first quarter, maybe we do have six more points or 10 more points. Who knows if you just do a better job in that third quarter? It wasn't a poor day offensively. I know we can run it better and do some things, but the first three drives of the game, we were moving the ball pretty well. We were stopped on downs, a field goal and a touchdown on three possessions. I think, other than the stopped on downs, we would take that kind of output."

**On RB Austin Ekeler's ability to create chunk plays:**

"Look at where he sits, it's really unbelievable that he's what, third or fourth in the league in receptions as a runner. I told him, 'We added another route to the route tree.' It's a five-step slant. Yesterday, we ran it twice. I missed him once and he caught the one. He's so versatile, he really is. You could say he's a running back playing receiver or you could say he's a receiver playing running back. I think he's that special and has that much ability. It can continue to be an asset for us moving forward with [WR] Travis [Benjamin] down, [WR] Dontrelle [Inman] down. What he can do and the different things that we can do, formationally, with him in there and Melvin [Gordon] in there can be a positive for us."

**On neutralizing Mack:**

"Well, again, I think it's one of those deals where it's one play at a time. I'm trying to think of an example where you're playing golf and you're like, 'Shoot, yeah, I haven't sprayed a drive yet.' Then, you hit three in a row dead right and a lost ball. I think it's one of those, 'Yeah, we've done well against him,' and then all of the sudden it's sack-fumble, it's a sack and an interception. We've seen him do it. We have done a nice job against him. That's a credit to our tackles, tight ends and backs — all of those are involved. He's one of those players, again like [Broncos OLB] Von Miller and others that you definitely want to know where he is every snap. He will be key, us managing where he is and handling him will be a key component for us, offensively."

