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## POSTGAME TRANSCRIPTS Los Angeles Chargers vs. Detroit Lions

Sunday, November 12, 2023 ⚡ SoFi Stadium ⚡ Inglewood, Calif.

### LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

#### **On injury updates following today's game:**

"We announced [WR] Keenan [Allen] with a shoulder and [TE] Gerald [Everett] with his back."

#### **On 'giving up explosive plays today':**

"I didn't do a good enough job on defense for us today. That was the story, run and pass. Didn't do a good job in the run game in the first half. Then, in the second half, there were far too many [explosive plays]. I didn't do enough job for us today."

#### **On the plan for improvement:**

"We have to go back to practice. We have to get back to work and focus on fundamentals. The fundamentals of playing defense start at the line of scrimmage, playing blocks, leveraging the football, tackling, and then staying connected in coverage. We didn't rush well enough today, didn't cover well enough, and starts with me."

#### **On if the areas of improvement are 'schematic things or talent things':**

"No, it's not any of that. We have a good group of guys. This was a tough day for us. We'll bounce back."

#### **On the defense's performance today compared to the last two games:**

"I thought that we played better in the last two games. Today they came out and played with more energy in the first half. That looked like a fresh team. Just didn't do a good job against the run game in the first half. The long run, the 75 yard run, leverage, missed tackles. You give up a play like that, it takes a lot of air out of you. The story of the first half was the run game. Then, I thought that we did some good things in the second half. But, ultimately, not good enough for us to get the stops when we needed to. It just wasn't a good day for us."

#### **On if the games against the Jets and the Bears were 'illusions':**

"No, the group that you saw in those two games is who our team is. This is a good offensive team that we played. Give them credit, they had a good plan. We have a good group of guys. Sometimes, you're going to have tough nights like this, and that's what it was. We have a good group of guys. We're going to come back to work."

#### **On the run defense in the first half:**

"We didn't set enough edges. We gave up some cutback runs where we lost leverage on the football. Then, there were missed tackles. Lost leverage on the ball, some missed tackles, and then you saw some big runs."

**On CB Michael Davis:**

"Illness. Sick, very sick."

**On today's performance defensively in comparison to the previous eight games:**

"We made a lot of improvements in our run game. We were a top-six run defense in the league coming into this game, and have played plenty of good backs to back it up, plenty of good backs to back it up. We've improved on third down. Our sack numbers have improved. Our red zone numbers have improved. The passing game has been something that hasn't been good enough, and we're a work-in-progress in that area. What you're right about is we have not played consistently enough, and it starts with me."

**On the Lions' passing game today and not allowing a sack:**

"The ball is just out. The way that they play, the ball is out. They throw a lot of screens, a lot of keepers, where it's well-protected. We couldn't get it into a third-down-and-long type of football game, a second-and-long type of football game. We couldn't make it that type of game. We were behind and they were able to stay on schedule. They blocked us, they beat us today."

**On QB Justin Herbert's performance today:**

"I thought that Justin was fantastic in the game. I thought he gave us a chance. We started off slow in the game, but then we scored on our last five drives of the football game. I thought we felt like we could move the football, run our paths. I thought the pace really helped us. He made a couple big plays with his legs. I think in that those critical down-and-distances, the third downs and the fourth downs, we were really good. Every time we got down in the red zone, we scored. It was a good enough offensive performance for us to win today and Justin was at the front of it. I thought that [WR] Keenan [Allen] was fantastic. Just didn't do enough on defense today."

**On areas of improvement on defense:**

"We need to play with the consistent fundamentals. Schematically, they're a good running theme, so you have to make sure that the run game is on your mind. But, again, it wasn't just the passing game today. It was really the run game that got us off balance today. When you run for 200 yards, that really puts a lot of pressure on you. It just wasn't good enough today in any phase. Like I said, I take full responsibility."

**On the Lions' fourth-and-two conversion on their final offensive drive:**

"Just didn't get enough rush. I thought that we had the first part of the route covered. Then, [Lions QB Jared Goff] was able to kind of work through it. [Lions TE Sam LaPorta] just kind of worked away from K9 [LB Kenneth Murray Jr.]. I felt like the first part of the play, we had defended, and then he was just able to kind of progress and he kind of optioned away from K9."

**On both teams combining to go eight-for-nine on fourth down today:**

"Those fourth downs were big in the game. That's how they play. They're a good run team, so in that fourth down and one-to-two, the playbooks open. I thought we did a good job down there on the goal line. There were just a couple of ones where you're just close. It just wasn't good enough today."

**On what makes him 'believe that the defense has the capacity to show up against the NFL's elite offenses':**

"I appreciate your line of questioning, but I know the players that we have on this team, I know the group that I've been coaching for nine games, and it is good enough to beat anybody we play. We've played the very best teams in the NFL and we've been in every single football game — the very best teams in the end of the NFL, and have been down to the wire. We're four-and-five. We're still a work-in-progress, but we have the right men in that group — offense, defense and special teams. We're good enough on offense, defense and special teams to beat anybody we play. We're going to go back to work. We're going to stay together. We have our season in front of us. We have to get on to Green Bay."

## **LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT**

### **On today's game:**

"There's a lot of fight in this team. Obviously, not the outcome that we would have wanted, but those guys didn't quit. Offense, defense, special teams, they gave everything they had for all four quarters, and we fell short. It wasn't good enough today, but I don't question the effort, the dedication by this team."

### **On the 'level of frustration' with the loss and 'scoring over 30 points in each of the last two home games':**

"We play as a team. There have been games where we haven't put up enough points and there were big games where we put up some points, but we play as a team, we win and lose as a team. In all three phases, we believe in each other. We believe in this team, this coaching staff. It didn't happen today. There are definitely things that we could have done offensively a lot better in the first quarter, so there's a lot to look at, watch the film and get better at."

### **On the offense scoring five-straight touchdowns over the final five possessions and 'positive things to take away from this game':**

"I think there are some good things that we can take away from this game, offensively. I thought we moved the ball well in the second half. Being able to convert and get those third downs and score points in the red zone, I think that's huge. We just have to do our best to eliminate turnovers, and that starts with me. In that first quarter, we have to be better, and I have to be better as a quarterback, but there are definitely things that we could look forward to building off of, as an offense."

### **On WR Keenan Allen returning to the game and scoring the game-tying touchdown:**

"He's an incredible player. The teammate, the player, he does everything. He means everything to this offense. To see him battle and fight and go back out there, he leads by example. He's an incredible teammate."

### **On WR Quentin Johnston:**

"I think that he has stepped up big time in the past couple of weeks. Whenever you lose a guy like [WR] Josh Palmer and [WR] Mike Williams, someone is going to have to step up and replace that. Q has done a great job picking up the offense. We know how special and how talented he is, it was only a matter of time to get him the ball and something special will happen."

### **On if today's game 'was a fun game to play in':**

"Losing is never fun, but I thought that we battled today. There are a lot of good things that we can look at this film and say, 'We can build off this.' But, there were a lot of things in the first quarter that we didn't do a good job of, and I didn't do a good job of in the first quarter. If we're not fighting back, maybe the story goes differently. Those are the things that we're going to look at when we watch this film and realize, 'Hey, at least we turned it around, we did our best in the second half, but if we're not put in that position, if I'm not turning the ball over in the first quarter, maybe the story looks different.'"

### **On the 'limited margin of error in the NFL':**

"I think that's the NFL. You can't afford to make mistakes and expect to be able to win games like that. It's an awfully good team that we're going up against in the Lions. They're a very good team offensively, defensively, special teams. I can't make mistakes like that and expect to just be able to come back and win games like that."

### **On 'maintaining consistency':**

"We take each week as they come. It's week by week. We understand that we have a tough task this next Sunday. We have to do everything we can to have our best week of practice, not let this one affect our next one and do everything we can to learn from this one and move on."

**On what he 'saw out of the defense today':**

"A lot of battle. They're tough. We believe in those guys. We have complete trust and faith in them. We know how special they can be. It didn't go away today, and that's the tough part about the NFL is, offensively, we've been there before where things aren't going our way, but I don't question or doubt them for a second. I know how special they are. They're coached well, they have some incredible players on that side of the ball and we stand behind them 100 percent."

**On if the no-huddle offense was 'out of necessity or part of the gameplan':**

"I think, maybe, a little bit of both. Having to come back like that, offensively, not being able to move the ball in the first quarter like that, I think it's one of those things that we looked at and said, 'Hey, if we get on the ball, maybe we can start scoring some points like that. We can cut the deficit a little bit.'"

**On WR Jalen Guyton's touchdown today:**

"It's awesome. He's battled so much over these past couple of years. We know how special he is, and an awfully great teammate, too. I've really enjoyed being able to play with him and work with him. It's never easy coming back from an injury like that, but he has done all of the right things. I was really glad to see him score today."

**On if today's loss was 'particularly disappointing':**

"I think every loss is tough to go with. It didn't go our way today, but there's nothing that we can do now to change that outcome. All we can do is watch this film tomorrow, get our bodies back and do everything we can to attack next Sunday."

**On his message to the defense:**

"Exactly what I just said. We believe in those guys. It's a team game. The NFL is tough, winning these games are very tough. It takes all three phase. Offensively, we weren't good enough in the first quarter. We put ourselves in a position like that, kind of like I said earlier, if we're not scrambling like that, maybe the picture looks different. It's not all on the defense, it's on the offense, it's on special teams. We win and lose as a team."

**On what he 'could have done better in the first quarter'"**

"Eliminate turnovers. Converting on third downs. There were some third downs that we'd love to have back. I threw a pick that I'd love to have back, as well, but there's nothing that we can do about that now."

**On 'pointing for a first down' and 'making a first down signal' while next to Lions DL Aidan Hutchinson:**

"It's an emotional game. I think that was a big part for our offense, being able to convert that third down. I didn't happen to realize that he was right there. I meant no disrespect by it. I know how tough of a competitor he is. I have a lot of respect for him, so I didn't mean any disrespect by that."

**On the 'lack of success' in the run game today:**

"They have a good front seven. We have to be better up front. I thought we did a good job running the ball today. We had our opportunities to be able to run the ball and I thought that Ek [RB Austin Ekeler] and [RB] Josh Kelly, they ran the ball really well. Up front, those guys pushed, they made their they made their stand. We really believe that we have a great offensive line, a great running back group that if we do have those third-and-shorts, fourth-and-shorts, we believe in them. Didn't go our way, but I know that next time, we're going to fight for it."

**On 'if there is any concerned about the playoffs right now':**

"We're just one week at a time you know. We have a good Packers group coming up next week, so we're going to do everything we can to have a good week of practice and look forward to that game."

## **DETROIT LIONS HEAD COACH DAN CAMPBELL**

### **Opening statement:**

"Listen, we found a way to win today. You never know exactly how the game is going to go, but you do what you have to do to find a way to win. We did that today. You know, the most important thing for us — I wanted us to play fast, physical and violent, and truly compete. I did feel that way in all three phases. The offense really showed up today, big time. You get [Lions G] Jonah [Jackson] back, [Lions C] Frank [Ragnow] and [Lions RB] David [Montgomery] is back, and [Lions RB] Jahmyr Gibbs. You know, we have everybody. [Lions WR Amon-Ra] St. Brown and [Lions QB Jared] Goff really stepped up and made some big throws, so the offense really stepped up and just stayed in-phase. Defensively, we played really good early. Then they started getting us a little bit of this no-tempo. We just got to clean up the composure a little bit and get the call, get lined up, let's just play ball. That will all be stuff that we correct, but man, it's a good win. We found a way."

### **On ending the game with the ball:**

"Well, we had the ball last [*laughter*]. Yeah, I wanted to finish with the ball. I trusted our guys and trust [Lions QB Jared] Goff. Going into that situation, there can be a lot of time left if you kick a field goal. So, I just wanted to finish with the ball in our hands. I liked where we're at, offensively We're playing good, Goff was in a good spot, I felt like that was the right thing to do."

### **On his final drive decision:**

"To each his own, and some say it's a boneheaded move and some say it's not. I made the decision and I stick by that decision."

### **On Lions RB David Montgomery and Jahmyr Gibbs:**

"Listen, that, to me, this is part of the vision coming alive now. Those two back there, the two-headed monster. They both deliver something different. They're both very unique and they're dangerous, both of them. It's good to see that. Gibbs continues to grow, and it's great to have David back. He played at a high level. The O-Line, man, really showed up today. It's when we talked about — playing physical, finishing and playing violent. Those guys were outstanding in protection and in the run game."

### **On the fourth-and-2:**

"You guys are still on the fourth down, keep going [*laughter*]. I felt like it was the right move. Let's just say my mind doesn't go there, but let's just say we don't get it — they were going to have a lot of time left anyway. They do, but I've got three timeouts. So, if they get in field goal range or whatever and I feel like we'll bang them, then answer back for a tie. I just felt like the right thing to do was to go for it there and finish with the ball in our hands, get the first down. Drain the clock and then let [Lions K] Riley [Patterson] go in there and hit it. That was a kick that was well within his range, so that's why I did it."

### **On trust in the offense:**

"Oh, well, this group has been together, for the most part, for a while. The new pieces are really [Lions RBs David] Montgomery and [Jahmyr] Gibbs. I guess you could say [Lions TE Sam] LaPorta, but LaPorta, Gibbs and Montgomery have all proven that they're reliable pieces for us. The rooks have grown every year and we have a lot of trust and all those guys. The O-Line is the same, [Lions QB Jared] Goff's the same, [Lions WR Amon-Ra] St. Brown's the same, [Lions WR] Joshua Reynolds is the same, [Lions WR] Khalif Raymond — so I've seen these guys function. I know how [Lions Offensive Coordinator] Ben Johnson will call a game. If we want to play this way. I just believe that was the right thing to do and I thought we'd get it."

### **On how this game can help later in the season:**

"I got asked a little bit earlier — you win close games, low scoring games, but to win a shootout, this is one of those things we haven't done a lot of is win the close shootout. I think every time you win, no matter how you got to get it done, you learn from it and you gain something out of it. The good and the bad you gain. It certainly does."

**On the aggressive fourth downs by both teams:**

"We got our guys back and we're full-force right now. I have a ton of confidence in that offense and [Lions Offensive Coordinator] Ben Johnson calling that offense and [Lions QB Jared] Goff behind center. That O-Line, the backs, the receivers. With where that game was and what we were walking into, I just felt like it was the right thing to do. I told them all week, we're going to play aggressive. I wanted us to be ready to go. That was kind of part of the message — our demeanor and the way we were going coach and play, we're going to be aggressive."

**On having an 'aggressive mindset' for the play to Lions TE Brock Wright:**

"I would say that played into it. That was something we thought would be there. I would say it did."

**On Lions WR Amon-Ra St. Brown:**

"He's a stud. He just continues to make plays. I've said it before and I'll say it again — he is the most steady, reliable guy that you can find in this league. I'd love to know someone that is more reliable than him because I don't know if there is. He just does what he's supposed to do times 10. He's productive. He's tough. He's physical. He's a game-changing type of player. The bigger the moment the bigger he shows up. You talk about that word trust, there is a tremendous amount of trust for him, in him and what he's able to do. [Lions QB Jared] Goff has a ton of trust in him as well. He's a stud it's that simple."

**On Lions QB Jared Goff in the NFL's quarterback landscape:**

"All I know is he's playing at a high level for us and we're winning games because of him. I would say he's certainly up there. I don't know who that would be, but I like that guy. I've said it before and I'll say it again, we've got a quarterback and thank God we do."

**On the return of Lions G Jonah Jackson:**

"It was good to have him back. He does bring an athleticism. There's some power that, certainly, he brings, but the athleticism on the perimeter, his ability to pull is something that really helps us. That O-Line is no different than the other pieces we have on it, we play to their strengths and we're unique in that way. When you've got a guy like [Lions T Taylor] Decker and [Lions G] Jonah [Jackson], [Lions T Penei] Sewell, you play to your strengths. They can do a lot of different things, athletically, and in the run game, schematically, that not everybody can do. When you have them all back and they're all playing a high level, you use them and let these runners go."

**On the plane ride back:**

"This will be one of those I just melt in my seat, probably [*laughter*]. I say I won't, I usually try to stay away from the tape until in the morning because I don't want to grade off emotions. I may peek at it, it's a long one back. I can tell you this, it always feels a lot better after a win. Whatever it is, four or five hours. It's much better after a win than it is when you don't come away from a game like that. I was proud of the guys. They really showed up and found a way to win that game."

## **DETROIT LIONS QUARTERBACK JARED GOFF**

### **On his connection with Lions WR Amon-Ra St. Brown:**

"I feel as good with him as I've ever felt with anybody. He's a stud. He gets himself open. He has great hands. I could go down the list of things we all know about him. I think, ultimately, I trust him. It's a credit to the way he practices and the way that he goes about his business."

### **On the progression on the fourth-and-two play with Lions TE Sam LaPorta:**

"It was really just a simple shallow-cross concept. He's really No. 2 [in the progression]. It's the running back, to him, to over the ball. I kind of went one, two, three then two. Back to him. He had a good feel to widen himself out on that. I haven't seen the tape yet, but it felt like he got covered, then kept widening and got himself open. Another guy that has a great feel for the game. I trust the hell out of him."

### **On being in the wrong personnel for the 75-yard touchdown:**

"Every once in a while, that happens where you end up with the wrong personnel in the field. The certain play we called, we really can't run out of that personnel [that was on the field]. I knew it was wrong kind of when we broke the huddle. I should have relaxed it probably when we were in the huddle. Once we broke the huddle and got lined up, I realized it was wrong, [Lions Offensive Coordinator] Ben [Johnson] was in my headset, saying, 'Hey, Hey Hey! Get to the,' rung that we ended up getting to. We were laughing about it. You do all of this planning through the week, Monday to Saturday for what you want to do and make everything perfect. Then, we basically mess it up and it's a 75-yard touchdown. It's a credit to a good team, we adjust and we're able to make adjustments on the fly like that."

### **On knowing they were going for it on fourth-and-two:**

"With our guy, I kind of lean towards we're going until he tells us we're not. That's not just in that situation, it's kind of every fourth down we get. I had a good feeling that he would go for it. Just the area we were in, we kind of wanted to get an extra five or ten yards to secure it, as well as, I'm sure in his head, I'm sure he didn't want to give [QB] Justin [Herbert] the ball back with a minute and a half. There were many factors going into that, but he has big balls and he showed it there [*laughter*]. It's a lot of fun when he puts the ball in our hands to make the play."

### **On having the coach's confidence on offense:**

"We want to make him right and it gives us a little bit more motivation to make things work. He trusts us. He's showing us that he has full faith in us to make it work. In a scenario that may be the odds are stacked against us in some way, and he's saying, 'No, they're not.' He trusts us and lets us go to work."

### **On coming back to California:**

"When I was walking off the field today, I kind of had those thoughts. Our crowd, how loud they were and getting to give them some love at the end of the game there. They're still cheering us on as we're walking off the field. I've never played for a crowd like this. They travel. They're great at home, obviously, but I've never experienced that. It's pretty incredible and being able to be a part of it as the quarterback is pretty fun."

### **On being in a 'shootout':**

"For me, it's fun. I don't know if we want to win the game like that every week. We felt like we could do some good things against them in the pass game. [QB] Justin [Herbert], obviously on the other side, was doing his thing, as well. You kind of get that feeling, like maybe it's going to be the team with the ball in their hands last type of game. Certainly, it was today. We know how potent their offense is, as well. We knew we would need some points."

### **On the offensive line:**

"That's what we were talking about after the game. [OLB] Khalil Mack and [OLB] Joey Bosa are two of the top guys in the game. We say this all the time, but two of our tackles are two of the top guys in the game. Not only were there no sacks, I don't think I ever got hit. That doesn't happen against a good D-Line like that. It's a credit to those guys and how good they are. I think this unit that we have now is going to start jelling pretty well and continue to keep going."

**On how far they can go this season:**

"As far as we like. It's still early, about the halfway point. We feel great. 7-2, leading the division and a lot of work ahead of us. It's not like we can look towards what January looks like. We can't even do that. We have to keep winning. We have some big challenges coming up ahead."

**On the plane ride home:**

"I'll sleep a little bit, I'll watch the tape. I'll probably watch a movie, I guess. Joke with my teammates about the funny plays that we had. Enjoy those moments because those are the best ones."

**On not being hit often:**

"Yeah, typically doesn't happen, especially against a good D-Line. It's happened a handful of times because of the tackles that we have and the interior that we have. It's very rare against a good D-Line. I maybe fell to the ground once or twice and probably my own fault. I don't think I got hit once."

**On Lions TE Brock Wright's touchdown:**

"It was a run play and checked to what defense they gave us to give us that look. It was a one-man show. Get a good run fake and he kind of runs by the guy who's got him in man. He made a great catch to finish it."

**On if the running game helped Wright's touchdown:**

"Absolutely it does. That was a play that we kind of were ready to call or [Lions Offensive Coordinator] Ben [Johnson] was ready to call in that third-and-one, fourth-and-one range because we were running the ball so well. They had to lean on it a little bit and it was the perfect timing for it."

**On checking plays:**

"We check quite a bit. It's a lot of work throughout the week. How do we find the way to premier plays? That's what we talk about. He [Lions Offensive Coordinator Ben Johnson] and I talking, making sure we're on the same page of what we're looking for. It's my job to try and be 100 percent on that and get us into the premier play on every one. Sometimes I am and sometimes I don't. It is my job to do."

**On being 7-2:**

"It feels good. It's fun. It really is fun and we're having fun. We're playing well. We're winning in a variety of ways. It's a good feeling right now. I wish I could be so excited, but we have so much football ahead of us. We have a lot of work to do to make sure we can achieve what we want to achieve."