



## QUOTES

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### **LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN**

#### **On how he felt after seeing the Kansas City Chiefs game last night:**

"I hope you guys had a good Christmas. We did. Today is back to business. Had a good practice. [T] Russell [Okung] was limited today in practice. [RB] Austin Ekeler was full. [WR] Keenan Allen, with the hip, was full. [TE] Sean Culkin, he was limited. Other than that, we're as healthy as can be."

#### **On if T Russell Okung's injury was his ankle:**

"Yeah, his ankle."

#### **On being this healthy going into the final week of the regular season:**

"I think it's a good thing. Anytime you can have minor injuries at this point in the season — we've been through some lumps and recovered. So hopefully, our guys are getting ready at the right time."

#### **On what he would need to see from RB Austin Ekeler to be available on Sunday:**

"We're going to put him out there. He's back full. He is out of the protocol. He looked good today in practice. It's just getting his timing back, catching the ball, running and things like that."

#### **On if the team is jilted after the loss to Baltimore:**

"I hope not. We've lost before and we've bounced back. So I'm looking to do the same thing. This team is pretty good at eliminating distractions, re-focusing and just hitting the reset button."

#### **On the signing of LB Tyrone Holmes to the practice squad:**

"Yeah, he's good. He had a good practice today. Had to slow him down at one point."

#### **On issues surrounded Holmes' signing:**

"I'm not sure what the story is behind that, but we got our guy. We targeted him and we got him, so we're good."

#### **On the challenges with players in the Alliance of American Football:**

"It's tough because you're probably losing about 400 to 500 players that you used to have access to. A lot of those player's contracts say they can't come out [to the NFL]. They can always quit and walk away, but you're giving up your opportunity in that league. So it's right there, the pickings are a lot smaller than they used to be — that whole pool."

#### **On if the recent play of Oakland gives him optimism to secure a division title:**

"No, we can't control that one. Yeah, I would love to see the Raiders play their best game of the year and win, but we can't control that one. We have this Denver team that, since I've been here, we're 1-2 against. We are looking to get even there, so we have some improvements to do this week to get there, and that's what we're working on."

#### **On rooting for the Raiders this week:**

"Yeah, it is weird to be rooting for the Raiders, but that's the nature of this business."

#### **On if the team has unfinished business with Denver:**

"It was a while ago, so no one is frustrated about that game anymore. Of course, we've watched it again, and we know we had our opportunities, but all we can do is focus on this one now."

#### **On what the team has improved on since the first game against Denver:**

"Well, we've definitely gotten better in the penalty category. We're not where we want to be, but we've definitely gotten better."

**On Broncos OLB Von Miller:**

"Yeah, he's one of the best defensive players in the game and [Broncos OLB Bradley] Chubb is not playing too bad either. So that combination right there, I do believe that's the strength of their defense, the pass rush. So we want to find a way to contain those two, for sure."

**On Broncos RB Royce Freeman:**

"[He gets] yards after contact. He's a good runner. You look at Royce and you look at [Broncos RB Devontae] Booker, they're averaging five yards-per-catch against us right now. Our hands are going to be full trying to stop those two. Denver, they've always been able to run the football. That's been one of their strengths, and it is this year."

**On facing talented edge rushers:**

"It seems like we face [those kinds of] guys every single week. Last week, there were times that they got the best of us — but there were some times when we could have gotten rid of the ball. It all ties in. The o-line, running backs or tight ends — it's never just one group's fault, but we have to do a better job protecting, period."

**On if the team will watch the scoreboard of the Raiders-Chiefs game on Sunday:**

"No, no. That's a distraction. Why do I care what the Raiders are doing while we're trying to beat the Broncos, you know what I'm saying?"

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK PHILIP RIVERS****On facing Denver for the second time:**

"Yeah, I feel good. They haven't changed a whole lot, and I'm sure they probably are watching us and thinking that we haven't either. They beat us the first time. We kind of fell apart there at the end, but give them credit. We're going to have a good week of preparation and go see if we can find a way to finish off the regular season the right way."

**On if the team will watch the score of the Oakland game:**

"Nah. Shoot, [we will watch] our scoreboard, finding a way to score more points than the Broncos. That's all we're concerned with, is find a way to win our last game. Then we will re-group and go from there."

**On if it's odd rooting for the Raiders:**

"Yeah, a little bit. I think first and foremost — and [Head] Coach [Anthony Lynn] made it clear, and I think he's dead on — is just worry about us. It's nice to be in a Week 17 game and not having to worry about everybody else and us. Let's just focus on us. We know that we will have a game [at least] the following weekend. Where? Who knows how it all shakes out, but let's focus on us and get back to playing the way we have for most of this year. We had too many penalties, our lowest yardage total and our lowest point total [last week]. Offensively, we have plenty of things to work on both in practice and, hopefully, that will transfer to playing better on Sunday."

**On if the offensive struggles were attributed to Baltimore's defense:**

"It's definitely a combination [of the defense and a lack of offensive execution]. That's a good defense. I think we weren't caught off-guard by how good they were. I mean, we respected that defense and the numbers showed it, plus watching them on tape. I would say I think they played probably as good as they've played all year. They certainly had a lot to do with why we didn't play our best, and then some of it was on us. The combination of all of that led to the poor outing."

**On if the team re-visits the first game against Denver:**

"Yeah, not so much the ending of it. I think you learn from that in case you're ever in that situation again against any opponent, to better handle the way we finish. Both sides [of the ball], I think, wish that they handled it better. As far as watching that game again and in general — just the game flow, what they did well against us, what some things were that we got off of them that maybe we can counter, and vice versa. I'm sure they're thinking the same things. [We also look at] the five or six games it has been in-between, what have they done differently. Obviously, they've had some injuries and things. Again, we're continuing to grow, but both teams are very similar, schematically, of what we [have been]. When you're playing in the division, you know teams well. Especially when you get to this point in the season, you are who you are for the most part from a schematic standpoint. It's just a matter of who out-executes the other."

**On the first play of the game against Baltimore:**

"It was just a little underthrown. We really had exactly what we wanted. If I make a little better throw, the whole game kind of maybe gets off to a different start and maybe goes a little differently. I just underthrew it."

**On the Baltimore pass rush:**

"I think they did a good job of creating some pass rush opportunities and made it tough on us on some things. We can do a better job, all of us — me, the backs, the line — in some of those areas to pick some of that up. Then, it's better execution. We had three third down conversions that got called back due to errors. I'm not saying get called back that were phantom [calls], they were just due to our mistakes. We were just off on a few things here and there. Again, they did a nice job of breaking some things up and covering us. I could make some better throws. I think it's just a collective deal. We had some runs that almost popped that didn't. I thought it was going to be that kind of game, though. I didn't see it being a 35-30 game. I thought it was going to be a somewhat lower scoring game. I thought we would certainly do a better job executing, but even playing better as we know we can, I saw that being a 21-20 kind of game. I just thought that's what it would be. That's what games are in January usually and late December against good teams — and I think that's a good team. They've proven that. They had that game won in Arrowhead a few weeks prior, too. They had the Saints at 17-7 late in the game and had that one get away. I think they missed an extra point late in that one. They've beaten some good teams or had a chance where they could have. We know that was a solid opponent."

**On the AFC playoffs not having a seed determined yet:**

"I think [it says something about the conference]. I mean, you look and there are a couple fighting for position in the NFC, but for the most part, that one is pretty settled. All of the division races are settled and those top four are kind of situated for the most part. Yeah, it is [odd]. I think it just shows, again, there are a lot of teams and how close it is. We always talk about it. You're just that far off, last year, from getting in and being on the outside looking in — and how far you are from us not being where we are sitting at 11-4. There are a couple of things. We made some big plays in some close games where that thing could be flipped. In the years we were 5-11, we used to say, 'Gosh, we're a few plays away from being 9-7.' I think a lot of teams are saying that. This Broncos team is one of them that are right there. I had a feeling when they got out of here that day we played them and then they beat Pittsburgh that they were going to be sitting at 9-6 when we played them. I was like, 'They're going to be 9-6 and we're all going to be right in the hunt.' It didn't happen that way, but it's a tough league. It's a week-to-week league. It's a one-score league and you see it over and over again each and every week."

**On fourth quarter execution in close games:**

"One, I feel like we're a mentally tough team. In those situations, we don't tend to get all worked up about it. We just say, 'Let's go find a way to finish.' There's a belief there. There's a mental toughness element to it — and I think the fact that you have to do it together to grow that confidence and belief, and we've done it. If you've done it with a group of guys — like I said, it doesn't mean you're always going to do it. We didn't get it done last week. We didn't get it done against Denver, but we have done it a lot of other times. When you believe that, you always have a chance. I think that everybody on that sideline thought, 'Man, that game didn't go how we wanted to. Let's go find a way to win it here in the fourth quarter.' We didn't get it done, but we believe. We did it last week, we'll believe it this week and moving forward. We'll find a way, whatever the situation is."

**On if there is a different approach in the fourth quarter:**

"I don't think so. I think, again, the situational football becomes even more key — but I don't think so. You need to play that way all the time. It's not now just time to do something spectacular to really convert third downs. I think you have those, but the consequences go up. Possessions in the fourth quarter with eight minutes left is a little different than in the second quarter, right? Shoot, we may not get it back until two minutes left. All of those little things are more critical in the fourth quarter of a one-score game and in the fourth quarter of what is going to be a postseason game here really soon."

**On the Denver pass rush:**

"It's a heck of a group. This division has always had great edge rushers. In Denver, they had it with [former Broncos OLB DeMarcus] Ware and [Broncos OLB] Von Miller there for a long time as well. Getting [Broncos OLB Bradley] Chubb in there, it's been good [for them]. It's a tough group. They both have many sacks, you have to be aware of where they are and have a plan for those guys because if you can't get the ball off, it doesn't matter what you draw up on the back end. Our guys, our tackles and all of the guys involved have always done a heck of a job going against those guys. They're going to make some plays. They're good players, really good players, but our guys have always risen to the challenge."

**On his relationship with Head Coach Anthony Lynn:**

"Shoot, it's just great. I think, again, the more time that you spend with somebody — the more and more games that you've been in, the time you have on the practice field and conversations you have — the more you both learn one another and the trust and respect continues to grow over time. Shoot, it's been great. Not that we didn't, at one time, see eye-to-eye by any means, but I think you just grow because you know [each other better]. I think you just don't know sometimes early on. When you go through some tough losses, some wins and different stretches, you really build on that foundation and grow in that trust and respect. I think it's most important that the players and myself, our vision, becomes what his is, but I can say just strictly mine and his that we see so many things the exact same way and have really grown. I want to be a teammate first in the locker room and all of that, but I also want to be an extension of him as far as leading and making sure what he wants done that I'm able to do my best to continue to lead that and spread that message along to the guys, too. It was always good, but it's done nothing but gotten better over the last two years."

**On facing a team that is eliminated from contention:**

"We haven't been in this boat in a long time. The way I look at it from their standpoint, is how would I treat it? That's the only way that I know. You only get 16 of them that you're promised and you play them all regardless of what is coming next. We've been in this boat somewhat — not exactly similar — and we were at Denver, out of it, and they were playing to be the No. 1 seed a few years ago. We came and fought like crazy to keep them from getting it. This is a division opponent. It's professional football, so I expect to get their best. We know that their best is dang good and they have a lot of good players. We're going to focus on us, ourselves this week and get ourselves ready — but I think, at the same time, I'm certainly preparing for a heck of a Broncos defense and a tough opponent."

**On rooting for the Raiders:**

"Yeah, I don't know if I call it rooting for them, sure, but I'm rooting for us. I'm rooting for us on Sunday and whatever happens, happens. I don't know that my cheering is going to matter. Whatever happens, will happen."