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LOS ANGELES CHARGERS DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR GUS BRADLEY

Opening statement:

“Okay, let’s go back a week and just talk about the Denver game. Obviously, guys like [S Derwin] DJ [James Jr.] and [S Adrian] AP [Phillips], it’s good to have them out on the field. For DJ, we didn’t know how many reps we were going to get out of him. He got a few more than we probably anticipated. It was hard to get him off the field. I know there was one time I think that he came off. It was good to get him back out there. The things that you know about him — the energy he brings, I think there’s a lot of trust right when he gets on the field, what he’s going to be doing and how he’s going to do it. That part was good. The same with AP, he made a big third down play right away. I think that was good for him to get a hit early in the game. That part was good. We went into the game with the mindset that we had to slow down the run. They had 190 yards rushing in the first game, I believe, somewhere around there. There was a big emphasis on that. I thought we did a pretty good job with the running game. We just gave up some big plays in the red zone area. They had a third down and eight, and they caught the pass on a pressure that we ran. I don’t think we did a good job on sudden change. You had two sudden-change opportunities and we gave up 10 points. You’d like to keep them down more than that, just hold them to a field goal attempt at least. They got 10 points off that. I think the mindset of our players, I know on the defensive side, is if you score 20 points on offense, we have to win. There are more things that we can do. In the second half, we did a good job, we got the ball back to the offense. I think they had 11 yards passing and 20-some yards rushing. So, [good] stat-wise, but we still didn’t do enough. We have to get more turnovers. We had one in the game. Really, we’re competing against their defense with what we can do and how much more we can do. There were some plays out there, we’ll get that taken care of.

“As far as this week, it’s a great challenge. The quarterback is impressive. We didn’t know much about him. We haven’t seen much cross-game work with him. When he’s playing, he’s active. It’s amazing some of these younger quarterbacks in the league now with how well they’re doing. They’re coming in, doing a good job and you’re seeing that. With him, it’s his ability to extend the play. He’s a guy that will look the defense off, he will extend plays, he’ll look one way, he’ll scramble, he’ll come back, he’ll flip it on the run. There are just come unconventional things that show up that, as a defense, you can’t really plan for. You just have to be on those things. He’s doing a really good job for them in the games that we saw. I know we look at points. Against the Jets, they had 29. Against Cincinnati, it was 27. When he’s playing, it seems like they’re scoring more points, too. They have the ability of that. The wide receivers, it’s a good group. I think they’ve been impressive to us as well. Some of them are having career years for them. Then, obviously, the running back. He is always something to deal with. He’s good, fast, a hard runner. His running style is unique. He’s the leading receiver on the team. They have some good weapons. It’s a big challenge for us.”



On the late pass interference call at Denver:

"I think it's more just frustration, too. You have a chance to meet with the officials in OTAs and training camp to sit down and say, 'Alright, let's make sure we're on the same page here,' as far as helmet to helmet or how do we tackle. We've had some really, really good conversations. It's not to prove them wrong or, 'Look at these bad calls you made.' It wasn't a conversation like that with them. It's more, teach us with what's going on and how you're going to call it so that we can, in turn, go into the room and teach our players that way. I think it was more — at the time when I saw it, I was like, 'Well, we've had these conversations and as long as you're going back looking for the ball, it wouldn't be a pass interference.' That was my [understanding]. I think it was more a frustration, like, now how do we have to teach it? It was more of a frustration off of me rather than being upset with them.

"We kind of had AP back there in case it was a post. He took the high [zone]. We had [S] Rayshawn [Jenkins] back. We kind of — it wasn't a bracket coverage, but he was protecting the post with the deep middle third and also over there, [CB] Casey [Hayward Jr.] is on the outside. Casey ran down a straight line. It wasn't like Casey converged on him, he just ran down the straight line. When the ball was coming, he leaned and looked back. I guess they felt like he cut him off. That was the explanation we got. That's what we have to go with. We looked at it. We talked about if we're in that situation again, how we have to do it.

"I think it's just understanding it. When he's running down the field, you have to protect the go-ball, so you're kind of staying on your line. Then, when you cut back, it's just the positioning is what we're understanding. You have to just take a look at — rather than being angry that it happened, say, 'Alright, let's re-look at this, now. This could happen again. What's the way to play it?' It's that separation and making sure. His depth, he was nine yards back. It wasn't like he got on top of him. It wasn't that issue. AP was in good position. It's just one of those things that happened."

On S Derwin James Jr.:

"It's big [to get him back]. He could have very easily said, 'You know what, let me just see.' That's not his personality. For him to come back, he's going to get so much better just in these games and in practice. He's still, what, a second-year player that's only played 18, 19 games. All of the practice that he can get is important. I think that, as a defense, you're constantly trying to figure out the personality of your defense with the players that are in there. It's changed for us. We had [S Roderic] Teamer in there. Now, what's our personality? [S] Jaylen Watkins [was in there]. What's our personality? The linebackers — how can we utilize everybody's strengths? I think when you get a [player like] DJ, you saw that I think we brought a little more pressure with him, trying to get him going. For him, just to get him back in the rhythm, I think, will take a little bit of time. He's off to a good start. He definitely changes our personality."

On James' leadership:

"There are levels of competitors, I think. Sorts of mindset when you look at it. The highest competitor, in my humble opinion, is someone who is really internally motivated but elevates the play of everybody around them. You're very fortunate, if you're a coach, to be around guys like that. I would say in my time in the NFL, there might be five or six. They really stand out. I think he has the ability to be that guy. He is internally driven and he seems to elevate the play of everybody. It's kind of cool to see him and see how he will mature and take on that personality. He's incredible that way. That's what I tell the guys, you don't see guys like this very often that have those sorts of traits. Now, your play has to match. You can be internally driven and elevate the play of everybody around you, and then an average player. That doesn't work. The athleticism and the football ability is a big part of it, but he has that. Now, we just have to keep him going in the right direction."

On third downs:

"We had a bang-bang against Denver. It was third-and-six, I think. They caught it, made it by a yard. We had two guys. We just didn't react quite fast enough. There were some plays like that. Early in the season, we just had some things going on, even in third-and-long situations. We gave up a third-and-18. I think we were probably one of the worst teams in the league in that down-and-distance. That showed up in the bye week, too. I think the tackling part of it, the tight coverage. You're looking at the rush, I know some people have asked, 'Where are the sacks?' It's hard to determine because we're seeing the ball come out quite a bit faster. Like I said, he had 11 yards passing. We're seeing a little bit different style of passes. More quick-rhythm and things like that. Even though you might not see the sacks, they're affecting the quarterback — at least his decision making. Overall, I think that's having an impact."

On DE Joey Bosa:

"I would say he's more complete. He's rushing very well. I think he will get the opportunities — when you see a guy rush like him, he'll get the opportunities for those sacks and those sack-caused-fumbles. I think the run game, too. He has done a really good job there. I think just as an overall player, and that mindset that I talked to you about last week."



On being back in Jacksonville:

"I have fond memories back there — the people and the organization, how good they were to me and my family. It's good. The roster has changed quite a bit. There are some guys on the team that — it's always about relationships. You keep in touch with guys in the offseason or you see them and their families, and stuff like that. There are still a number of them that are still there. The roster, especially offensively, when I look at it, a lot of those guys are new."

On if he assists the offense with prepping for the Jaguars defense:

"No, we have enough to worry about with the offense. You walk by [and ask], 'Hey, how are they playing? How are they doing?' [They say,] 'They're good. They have good rushers and good speed.' Comments like that. Not to sit down and watch, I haven't done that with them."

On DT Jerry Tillery:

"I would say with Jerry Tillery, early in the season, I think he was learning the game a little bit. Some of the things that maybe he got away with in college, he had to just adjust it. I give credit for [Defensive Line Coach] Giff [Smith] for really sticking with it. There were the first couple of games where he got double-teamed and he was driven off the ball some yards. Giff really said, 'No, that's how he's going to learn. He'll learn by playing, not just watching.' He would get him in sporadically. You could see him getting better. Now, I would say if you looked at the Denver game the first time we played them to this time, he's playing much, much better. I think, for him, it was unfortunate that we didn't have him in OTAs and training camp. This offseason will be really big for Jerry Tillery."

On James' defensive roles:

"We did some different things with him and we'll continue to move him around. Again, just for matchups and putting him in different positions. When he came back, that position changed a little bit for us."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR SHANE STEICHEN**On the red zone offense:**

"I think when you go back and look at certain things — obviously, you want to put our guys in the best position. Sometimes, they make a play, but obviously, we have to do a better job of looking at what we're doing. Whether it's the situation where we're running it or we're throwing it. Obviously, it's a cat-and-mouse game when you're playing against defensive coordinator. You might think he's going to be in a two-deep shell and then he plays man. There's that we have to do a better job of self-scouting and trying to see what they're going to be in, possibly."

On TE Hunter Henry:

"Certain games, you know? He'll have some games where he has 10 catches and others — what did he have the other day, two or three? Then, [WR] Keenan [Allen] had six, [WR] Mike [Williams] had six. It just unfolds that way. Each week, like I say every week, it could be a different guy."

On WR Mike Williams:

"We want to get him in the end zone. We want to get everybody in the end zone. Obviously, he's a red zone threat. Like you said, some of those touchdowns that we've scored, we've scored from outside the red zone. We got down in there one time and made the big play. When you get in there, you have certain guys that you want to get the ball to. As soon as we get inside there, we don't want to force-feed certain things. We want to take what the defense gives us. Obviously, we do want to get him in the end zone."

On RB Austin Ekeler's touchdown:

"It worked out well. It was a certain coverage that you wanted to hit. The linebacker saw Austin go out into the flat and then saw [RB] Melvin [Gordon III] swinging. He was like, 'Shoot, I don't know which one to take.' He took Melvin and then Austin came free down the boundary."

"It's always good when you draw something up and it comes up exactly the coverage that you want to hit it against. When that happens, it's cool. Obviously, that doesn't happen all the time, but when it does it's a good feeling for the players."

On putting Ekeler and RB Melvin Gordon III in the backfield together:

"Obviously, Austin is a big-time threat receiving out of the backfield and in the slot receiver, we use him as a receiver. Both of those guys are great players. The most that we can use those guys — obviously, we have to get everyone the ball. Keenan [Allen] is a great player, Hunter [Henry] is a good player, Mike [Williams] — all of those guys. We have to spread the wealth around and keep it as balanced as possible."



On T Russell Okung:

"I think he's been solid. I really do. Obviously, he had the couple of weeks off and he's getting back in the rhythm of things. He brings us great leadership and attitude to our offensive line that we need. He does a great job of that."

On being offensive coordinator:

"Obviously, there's a lot more that goes into it from a weekly standpoint. Managing it, obviously, you're in charge of everything now — the staff meetings and all of that type of stuff. From unexpected stuff, not really. It's been a good transition.

"It's definitely a lot more comfortable after about a month. It has been good."

On QB Philip Rivers:

"Just fight, continue to grind it out. He's the ultimate competitor and wants to win. He hasn't changed a bit. His attitude, his preparation, he's all-in, 100 percent every day. The practice fields, the meetings, when he plays, nothing is going to change about him.

"I think he still plays the same way. Obviously, he wants to make smarter decisions, but he still wants to be aggressive. I don't think that he's going to change the way he plays because of the turnovers. I think he still wants to be aggressive, and obviously, just make a little smarter decisions."

On if one can be a successful quarterback while not taking risks:

"I think at certain times, you have to take some risks. I think it all depends on your team and how you're rolling. I think you have to take risks. If you don't take those shots and risks, then you may not ever hit them."

On the rushing attack:

"I think it's just the guys up front taking it upon themselves. I mean, the offensive line, the backs, the tight ends, I just think there's an attitude thing where they say, 'No more. Let's go run it. Let's go run hard and let's be productive doing it.'"

On WR Andre Patton:

"I like Andre. He works at it hard. He's becoming a really good route-runner. He obviously studies and has been around Keenan [Allen] a lot. You can see it on the practice field. The way he runs his routes, you can see flashes there where it's like, 'Shoot, that looked pretty good.' I think he has a bright future."

On Patton as a run blocker:

"I mean, he's our third receiver right now in that group, so he's going to be in there regardless. He's in right now and he does a good job blocking as well."

On the desire to be an offensive coordinator:

"Yeah, obviously, that's always a dream to be a full-time coordinator. Absolutely."

On the Jacksonville defense:

"Their front three — they have 91 [Jaguars DE Yannick Ngakoue], 41 [Jaguars DE Josh Allen] and [Jaguars DE] Calais Campbell. Those three guys are a load. We have to be prepared for them and have a plan for those guys. They get after the passer. We have to be ready to roll for those guys."

