



POSTGAME TRANSCRIPTS

Los Angeles Chargers vs. New Orleans Saints

Sunday, October 27, 2024 ⚡ SoFi Stadium ⚡ Inglewood, Calif.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH JIM HARBAUGH

On the offensive performance:

"I thought it was very explosive by the offense. Big plays. Started out with some shorter stuff, some screens and they were all over those. Then we started putting it downfield and [were] really good at it. [QB] Justin [Herbert], of course, it's like being around greatness every day. That's all I can say. Just every day I get to watch him. Loved the run. I thought that really got us going and really sparked us. I think he showed what he can do. He can run. He can run fast. [WR] Ladd [McConkey], I mean, a tremendous day. Some big time catches down the field by Ladd. And then finishing on the touchdown. He's in some rare company now with rookie wide receivers for the Chargers, in history. Over 100 yards and two touchdowns in a game, I think it's only been done like four times. There's been some really, really good receivers. I just want to say that about our receivers: We love them. [WR] Joshua Palmer, another really good game. [TE] Will Dissly doing some great things. I loved the way Justin, just like he said he was, he would go back to [WR] Jalen Reagor. He went to him in a crucial situation, I thought that was outstanding. That's a real leader. I could tell from the time that the ball was snapped, what he did with his eyes, he was going to [Reagor]. Big play, great catch by [Reagor]. So many other good things. I thought the offensive line, it was a real battle in there. [RB] J.K. Dobbins, a tremendous job by him. Those were tough yards that he was getting. I thought he really sparked us in the second half. With that, it was an 11-yard run, but that was the hardest 11-yard run I think I've ever seen a guy make with the tackles he was breaking. It was a lot of guys, a lot of heroes from this game. I want to point out [P] JK Scott, who had a tremendous game. Not just a great game, a tremendous game by him flipping the field numerous times with some big, huge punts. And then the defense, we gave up some yards but made the plays we had to. We really only gave up 6 points on defense today, which is almost impossible to do in the NFL. Great play. The holding penalties that our guys got, it was a relentless day. You could just tell, you guys were in there in the locker room right? You could see the price the guys paid. There's a price to be paid for these wins. They really spent themselves. Just look around the locker room and see guys like [RB] J.K. [Dobbins], [DL] Morgan Fox, [C Bradley] Bozeman, [T Rashawn] Slater, [T Joe] Alt. Just guy after guy, you know the price that they pay. They give it their all and left it all out there on the field. I thought they played four quarters of really good football, offensively. Offense, defense and special teams. Very pleased. Very proud. Now we'll go search for our next win."

On the offense and if WR Ladd McConkey being a downfield threat:

"It's not an if. He can. Take the 'if' out of it. He can, most definitely. He's sure fast enough. He's sure been effective as an outside receiver, as a slot receiver. We've known that. His ability to find the ball in contested catches is very special. You saw it again today. The touchdown he had a few weeks ago was very similar. How did [WR Ladd McConkey] come down with that? How did [QB] Justin [Herbert] put the ball just right there in the exact perfect spot 47 yards downfield? It's great and our receivers know it. They know. They can appear to be covered, but they know [Herbert] is going to put the ball on a dime where they've got a chance to make the play. Everybody running, everybody alert, it's special. That takes

nothing away from Ladd. That's incredible. The catch he made today, I didn't think there was any room for it to really come down, but he found it, tracked it and made an unbelievable catch. Then a SportsCenter highlight clip right after that to go score that touchdown and put the ball in the end zone. It was good. It's what we needed. It's what we've been needing. I always think of it like, my dad's got this great analogy of 'the old olive jar.' They get packed in there so tight that if you open the lid on it, you can turn it over and nothing comes out. Not even any juices seeping out. But if you can just get one, like Ladd's touchdown, then another and then another, they start popping out. That's what we're going for. I think that's something that we certainly did today. Make the play but then finish with the ball in the end zone. Or Justin makes a big 34-yard run and then we finish with points. Or we finish in the end zone. [RB] J.K. [Dobbins] makes those kind of runs. It's what it takes. You've got to pry those things out of there. The olives are the touchdowns. Get them pried out and it certainly does a lot for us."

On FB/DL Scott Matlock:

"You talk about leaving it all out there right? Catch a pass, touchdown block, get a sack all in the same game. And what he's doing, getting his job done on special teams. It's why we gave him a game ball in the locker room after the game. We love him. He's a hero to us."

On if the safety and RB Hassan Haskins:

"Yeah. Wide right and [P] JK [Scott] did what he could, but the guy that made the incredible play is [RB] Hassan Haskins. [Haskins] just came hustling over there on the wing position and was able to get that ball out. That's a heroic play in the game. Two instead of seven. That's a big difference. He had another great play on the kickoff return. I didn't think we blocked it as well. He had about five guys that took a shot at him and finally the sixth guy got him down, but he still got the ball out to the 34-yard line and hung on to the ball. He's a football player. Those kinds of guys, what do they do for the team? They embody, whatever you want to call it, the spirit. It gets infectious. Other people want to rise up to that. They want to do the same thing. The guys that are playing that are working through something, we all know what they are and what they're working through. The price they're paying and being out there, helping our team, that becomes infectious too. That's what I would say to answer your question about [FB/DL] Scott [Matlock], or plays that a [Haskins] makes, a [WR] Ladd [McConkey] makes, or [RB] J.K. [Dobbins]. [P] JK Scott, I think I mentioned that right? Game ball for JK Scott. Incredible game. Just keep building, building and building. Better, better and better. That's what we're going for."

On the offsetting personal fouls and C Bradley Bozeman:

"I think it's just something that's instinctual. Those offensive linemen, you ask them to do so much. They've got to run block, they're hitting every play. They've got to pass block. You're asking them to pursue the play just in case there's a fumble down the field. They've got to hustle and do that. We ask so much of them. We don't ask them to clean the piles and things like that. I think everybody knows [QB] Justin [Herbert]'s got a bad ankle. I wasn't out there. I saw what I saw. I don't know how long it was going on, but when that's going on for too long it should be an ejection. I don't blame [the offensive line]. I don't encourage that at all, but I don't blame them either. That's how they're wired, offensive linemen. They're protectors, they're healers, they're forces for good."

On RB J.K. Dobbins:

"Yeah. J.K. all day. That was [RB J.K. Dobbins]' nickname back in his collegiate days. I've seen it from him before, there's a thing that happens. I mean the kind of competitor he is, a fierce competitor, it came out in a way, everybody saw it on that 11-yard run. That was fierce. Just fierce. I mean, did not want to be denied, was not going to go down and was going to do everything he could to be a hero and spark our team and lift us up when we needed it in the second half there. I thought it really did. It's a shining star example of everything else. There's a fierceness there and if he keeps going the way he's going, if he hasn't already been nominated for Comeback Player of the Year, if he has, then I'll add to it and be singing with the choir, but if I am the first to nominate him then so be it. I'll nominate him for Comeback Player of the Year."

On the momentum gained from RB J.K. Dobbins' touchdown:

"Huge. We get down there on that [3-yard line] and we get a false start. I mean, things we're working hard to clean up and not do. Then instead of 1st-and-3, it's 1st-and-8. He got hit behind the line, got hit before the goal line and you could just see it from that point on he was not going to be denied. He was not going to be denied and let's feed him. Those are

all tough one-and-a-half yard carries, one-and-a-half yard carry, two-yard carry. Then there's some threes and fours and then he didn't have many one-yard carries after that. Then the 10 yards. That's 57, hard-earned, not going to be denied type of yards. That's the kind of thing that lifts the ball club and makes you a hero to your team."

On the toughness of the team:

"There's only tough players. There's no such thing as tough coaches. There isn't, I promise you. It's just tough players. I appreciate you saying I was a tough player. I feel good about that, but these guys, [QB] Justin Herbert, I mean there's no way. I could have played with a high ankle sprain, but I wouldn't have been good enough with a high ankle sprain to be out there and helping my team. [Herbert's] got a high ankle sprain, playing a week later and still got a 100.0 quarterback rating in each of those games. That's what I'm saying, it's like being around greatness every day. I'm not nearly as tough as [OLB] Khalil Mack. There's a guy that's, he's working through stuff, but he still plays and he still plays with this perfection, this grace, it's like Joe DiMaggio with a heel spur, there's no difference in the play. Those great players are just, they're tough and they're really good that but you wouldn't even know that it would've affected a guy like me. I could have played through it, but I wouldn't have been good. I wouldn't have been great like they are. And [RB] J.K. [Dobbins] and again, the guys up front, the offense and defensive line, it is a talent. I truly believe that. Toughness is a talent and there's no coach that can take any credit for that particular player's talent of being tough. I can't take credit for the talent that Justin has for throwing the ball or that Khalil Mack has for rushing the passer. They're great. That's why they'll be in the Hall of Fame someday and they are those kinds of players."

On tough coaches:

"Toughness? Toughness is playing. Players are tough. Players are tough. There's that talent of being tough. You [a coach] could be a strategist, you could be an advice-giver, you could be an example-setter, but you don't really get a chance to be tough like football. Football, it's about the closest thing to the last bastion of hope. Outside the military. Military too. Physical, mental toughness on display, on a daily basis. The military and football, those are our last bastions of hope for toughness. Maybe I'm overstepping, maybe I'm overreaching there, but having played I know what these guys go through and being around them every day. The talent of toughness that they have is off the charts. A lesser man couldn't do it. And we're talking lesser, that's going to be about 99% of the population with what these guys go through. Nothing but respect, I'll put it that way and then shut up."

On this performance and the trade deadline:

"That's a [General Manager] Joe Hortiz question. I know he's always, he's got our back, he's got our front, he's got both sides, front, back and sides. I know he is always going to be doing whatever he can to help our team."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On his 38-yard run:

"One play like that can always change the direction of the game. We didn't do much before that, but I thought the guys did a great job of sticking with it, staying patient, waiting for their opportunities, and went and made something happen."

On sliding at end of the 38-yard run:

"The way the play unraveled – I turned the corner and tried to get up as quickly as I could. The ankle was feeling better so I felt like I was got a somewhat good speed – I'm still working on that, but it's good. Making sure that you're being smart about taking your shots, I felt like I was in a good position but in hindsight we'll watch it and we'll probably say go out bounds, cut back, slide or do something smart. But if it wakes up the team, I'll do anything for it."

On the chemistry between him and WR Ladd McConkey:

"I think it started in OTAs. He came up, showed up and he just made plays. He was so friendly to the quarterback and he's got such a great understanding of defenses and leveraging. He just goes out there and makes plays. You've got to find ways to get him the ball because something good is going to happen. He does a great job protecting [the ball] and he can move pretty well. So, we saw in those two long ones that something special is going to happen every time he gets the ball."

On what WR Ladd McConkey offers the offense:

"He's a complete receiver. To have that short game, those intermediate routes that he's been so good at - especially on third down. Now you open up some of those go-balls that you have to respect. For him to be able to line up anywhere – inside, outside, we have a true ball player on our hands."

On the play with Saints' DT Khalen Saunders:

"That'd probably be a good question for him. I just saw [Center] Bradley Bozeman defending me and that's what I saw. That's the type of center that you want on your team. He will give everything for this team and I appreciated what he did. I tried to pull him off so he didn't get any penalties called, but to have a guy like that defend you, there's no better feeling."

On supportive atmosphere of team:

"It means the world. It shows that a group of guys that care so much more – about the team, football and this organization. When you have a locker room like that, I think that special things are going to happen. We just got to keep building on it."

On the offensive momentum:

"A big play can spark some things. So to have a play like that, a guy like [Chargers' Center Bradley Bozeman] defend you like that. It gets everyone going and you go back to the huddle and you know that, 'Hey, it's up to us and we're going to make something happen.' I thought that was huge for us as an offense."

On the defensive performance:

"They've been awesome. It is such a pleasure to be able to play with them. The complimentary that we're trying to play with them, making sure we're doing everything we can to keep them off the field. To continue those drives, keeping our offense on the field and, and letting [the defense] breathe and letting them have that rest. They're only going to keep playing better."

On the second half performance in this game:

"It's all about finding a way to win, whether it's through the air or on the ground. I thought we did a great job of weathering the storm - fighting, staying patient, and making sure that we were smart with the ball. I don't think we had any turnovers today. Just getting to the red zone and scoring - that was our goal this week."

On the touchdown drive late in the first half:

"Yeah, that was awesome. To be able to put up a drive like that, it says a lot about our offense. And it wasn't pretty – those drives never are when you go 15 plus, 18 plus plays. It's all about the offensive line and it starts with them. When we're running the ball, we've got the play action pass-game going I think good things happen.

On the passing offense the past two games:

"I think it's all about finding our identity, going into a game and playing it the way it needs to be played. If we're throwing the ball a bunch, it's all about being smart with the ball, taking our shots down field and understanding the situation. We believe that we've got a great offensive line, a great run game. So, it's on us to be able to put those together."

On what WR Ladd McConkey's can do in this offense:

"Exactly what he did today. He's a true ball player and makes plays wherever he is on the field, whether the play breaks down, scramble drill – he's a guy that you got to be aware of. You have to find him because good things will happen."

On FB/DL Scott Matlock:

"Coach calls him a Swiss-army-knife, being able to do everything. We're asking him to play fullback, tight end, defensive tackle - he had a big sack today. The success that we've seen from him, we're not surprised by.

On seeing FB/DL Scott Matlock join the offensive huddle:

"It's awesome. He is physical and smart ball player. There's never a doubt that he's going to get lined up properly or he's going to do the right job. He's been awesome and he's really well-coached. He listens and he wants to be great. So, to have a guy like that on our team, it's huge for us."

On Head Coach Jim Harbaugh's leadership and comment about Herbert's strength:

"He's way tougher than me. He goes out there and whether it's his heart, his hip – he fights out there. He does everything he can to be out there with the team and even practice. It's a simple thing where there are times where you say 'Hey coach, you're an important piece of this organization - make sure everything's good.' But he wants to be out there and it just makes everyone in that locker room want to play for him more. It's the amount of respect that we have for him and the way he leads this team, it's been awesome to play for."

On his ability to throw out of the pocket for his second touchdown and WR Ladd McConkey's effort:

"It's a little bit of both. The play broke down. What we wanted didn't really happen. We didn't get the look that we wanted. So you roll out and you just want to be smart with the ball, especially in that situation where, I can't remember whether it was second or third down, but you got a guy in the defender not looking. When the defender is not looking like that and you got a ball player, especially like [WR] Ladd [McConkey], the chances go up for you. So, as long as you put a good ball and make sure it's him or nobody, I feel like that's a smart ball play."

New Orleans Saints Head Coach Dennis Allen

Opening statement:

"Alright, guys. Look, you know, frustrating game because I thought we were improved defensively. I thought we did some better things defensively. I think the quarterback for them was kind of the difference in the game. I thought he [QB Justin Herbert] made some plays. They made a couple of long passes down the field, where their guy made the play and we weren't able to make it. Offensively, we just really couldn't get anything going offensively and when we did, we had too many penalties which put us in long distance situations that we just couldn't overcome. We'll go back, get to work, hopefully get a couple more guys back and hopefully start playing some better football."

On the return of injured starters:

"You know, look, it's hard to say. I think we got to go back and evaluate exactly what was going on there. But obviously, we really couldn't get much going offensively – and then we made some big plays, we made some explosive plays and then we followed it up with penalties which put us in the long distance situations. Right now, we're not overcoming those ad so we've got to play a cleaner game to give ourselves a chance. Yeah, penalties I thought hurt us."

On switching quarterbacks:

"Look, I just felt like we needed to do something, to try to get something going offensively. We weren't able to move the football and I felt like we needed to do something to try to create some sort of spark."

On QB Spencer Rattler:

"I think there was a of couple of reads that probably could've been better on and look – we certainly didn't help him with a couple of drops and things of that nature. You know, I think just the margin for error right now is small and so when you have opportunities to make plays, I think we have to be able to make plays."

On QB Spencer Rattler's passing game:

"We had a couple that were dialed up to try to get the ball down the field and for whatever reason, whether it was pressure or the coverage took it away and we had to go put the ball underneath."

On having a conservative gameplan:

"No, I think we had some shock plays up there that we just didn't – for multiple reasons, whether it was pressure or covered where we had to get the ball down rather than get the ball down the field."

On the offensive penalties:

"Well, it's certainly something that we still need to work to clean up. I don't know that I'm saying that that's an ongoing issue. I mean, obviously, any time you have them it's a problem. We've got to work to get those cleaned up."

On RB Kendre Miller's injury:

"No, I think it's a different hamstring. I think it's the opposite side."

On CB Marshon Lattimore's injury:

"I think it's the same one that kind of pulled him out of the game last week."

On hamstring injuries:

"Yeah, it's unfortunate for those two players because they kind of had a little bit of that in their history. We've got to try to figure out how we can eliminate that."

On six consecutive losses:

"Yeah, the message is – it's the people in the room in there that are going to have to change it. Nobody's coming from outside the building. It's going to have to be the guys that are in that locker room, coaches to fix it. That's what it is. We

have to pay better attention to all of the details and we have to do a better job of coaching all of the details because details matter in our league and we don't get to pick and choose which ones do and which ones don't."

On QB Derek Carr playing next week:

"I think there's a possibility there."

On how QB Jake Haener:

"I thought he did some good things, created a few plays. You know took us down and gave us an opportunity to score points. But ultimately, we just have got to play better as a group."

On the offense outside the quarterback:

"The fundamentals of getting in and out the huddle, getting lined up, let's get a ball play called. Let's get moving here, you know – I just thought it was sloppy today and so I think we got to work hard to clean those things up. I think we got to be able to rely on our better players to make some plays for us – that's where we got to improve. Obviously, we got two young quarterbacks, both of which I like a lot, but both are young quarterbacks. You got to deal with some of the challenges that go along with that."

On explosive plays allowed by the defense:

"Look, we did a good job on a lot of things. You know, the one play there in the fourth quarter down our left sideline or their right sideline, I think that's a young player not fully understanding how that coverage is being played. The one on [CB] Alontae [Taylor] I thought he was in a great position, and I really thought when the ball went up, I thought that was going to be an interception. They made the play and we didn't, so some of those like that, is part of playing the game of football. We've got to limit the ones that you know we can control a little bit."

On WR Bub Means' injury:

"It was an ankle there at the end of the game. I'm not sure the extent of the ankle injury."

On the playcalling on QB Spencer Rattler's last drive:

"I'd have to probably go back and look at it. I don't specifically recall. I think when you're in that situation, I mean, you're trying to get yourself into field goal range. I think that's the number one thing when you're in a longer distance situation, the first thing you're trying to do is get yourself into field goal range."

On communication with General Manager Mickey Loomis and the losing streak:

"Yeah, we have conversations every day, you know what I mean. I don't sense any more sense of having to have these conversations. Look, I think we all understand that it's a results-oriented business and we need to play better football. I think we all understand that."

New Orleans Saints Quarterback Spencer Rattler

On his performance and change of quarterback during the game:

"I think we were moving the ball at a good rate in that first half and a little bit in that second half. We just would go forward, then backward, forward, then backward. So we all shot ourselves in the foot a little bit. Just the little things and we just didn't make enough plays to win the game."

On being subbed out:

"I control the controllables. I'm just a team guy. I'm going to want us to win either way. So, it is what is."

On the expectations heading into the game today:

"I mean it's not a given that you're going to go out there and shred it all over the field and win the game. It's not a given. We've got to go out there and earn it. So, it starts with me. It starts with our QB room. We've got to set a better standard to go out there and play at a higher level and just collectively, as a group, got to be better."

On if there is anything he wishes he would have done differently:

"Try to run around and make more stuff happen. I think it's a good defense they make you, they took away that top part of the field. It's a good, sound defense with good players and good tackling. Made some plays here and there in the [first] half, got some points, which was good. [We] wanted to come out and do the same, but we didn't and it's just got to be better."

On the Chargers' defense:

"They try to take away that deep part of the field and that's their go-to. They make you play dink and dunk ball and drive it down the field, and we did a few times, but we've just got to protect the ball. We had no turnovers, but we've just got to just make more plays, convert and not shoot ourselves in the foot."

On the opportunity of being the starting quarterback the last few weeks:

"Obviously we didn't get any wins, so that's very unfortunate. We want to win. Our goal is to come in here and win, to get some momentum going into another divisional game next week, but just control the controllables, all of us. We've got to get back to work and figure it out."