



QUOTES

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LOS ANGELES CHARGERS OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR KEN WHISENHUNT

On QBs Geno Smith and Cardale Jones:

"It's really more than just a couple of weeks. We have seen them all spring and they have been competing the whole time. You see them grown. Cardale, we had last season and he was around, so he's in the system. Geno has come in [and done well]. They're both competitive — which I think, a lot of times, you like because it makes both of the guys better. They know that they're competing. They both have the skillset that it takes to play this position, which is something that you look for, and they're both doing a good job. Obviously, [preseason] games will be a good test — a good chance to see. I'm very pleased with how both of those guys are competing."

On who will play first in the preseason:

"No, [we don't know]. We haven't really even talked about it right now. We try to balance the reps so that they've been even the whole camp. We haven't even really discussed it yet."

On how Jones has improved:

"I think probably most from understanding the system. It's hard when you come in at the end of a camp when you have gone through a whole offseason and put [elements] in, you've seen things happen and then you're thrown in. He was here in camp [last year] — but from understanding the system and being around some of the guys he now has seen play and worked with, it helps you feel more comfortable. Cardale has done a good job."

On developing a raw quarterback:

"Well this is the time when they get their reps. You try to split the reps up so that they get them in training camp. You can take some off of [QB] Philip's [Rivers] plate just because he doesn't need as many, but you still want to keep them sharp. That's what it's about. This is a competitive atmosphere and that's where you get the chance to find out about them."

On the dynamic between Smith and Jones:

"I haven't seen anything that would make me think there's anything negative with it. The guys, they communicate. We're in the room a lot together, talking about different situations. They pull for each other, but they're very competitive, which is what you want. I haven't seen anything that would indicate them not getting along very well or that it's become an issue between them."

On WR Mike Williams:

"It was nice to see him in that environment [scrimmage on Saturday]. He's getting better and better. To come out here in front of all the people where it's a little bit more of an atmosphere like a game, and see him make some plays is really good. I think it was a question of time. We saw it in different stages. We saw it last year and then he got hurt. We saw it in the spring and then he got hurt. This year in camp, he has been able to put a bunch of practices together, play well and make some plays — and you see his confidence grow. Obviously, it has been really good."

On what he looks for in a backup quarterback:

"The right answer for me is that I want a guy that can go in there and win if your starter is out, however that is. When I was in Pittsburgh, we had a guy named [QB] Charlie Batch and [QB] Ben [Roethlisberger] was out for a couple of games one year and we were playing really well. Charlie came in and won both games that he had to play, and that's invaluable. If you have a guy that can do that and the team is confident in doing that, it goes a long way. You don't want to ever lose your starting quarterback, but if you feel like you have a guy that has shown that he can go in there, handle it and do well, it's a really good feeling."

On if it helps a backup quarterback to be a former starter:

"I think knowledge of the game probably helps a little bit, but there are some guys that — speaking back to Ben [Roethlisberger], he was never a starter but won 15 games his first year. I think, really, some guys have it. The ones that do and can perform are the ones that you feel strongly about and do well."

On first impressions of Jones:

"He has always been a big, athletic guy, and he had a lot of success in college. He can throw it, he can run, he can move in the pocket. Being able to operate in the system is what you look for — and being able to understand the players that you're playing with and what you have to do to help them be successful. I've seen him grow a lot with that. I think being around a veteran quarterback like Philip, who is one of the best in the business, I think it helps. It has been exciting to see the way Cardale has grown up."

On WR Artavis Scott:

"I think it made a big difference for him [being on the practice squad last season]. Obviously, he and Mike [Williams] go back a long way. They both had success at Clemson. On the practice squad, understanding the system and understanding the expectations [are important]. Look, when you're around [WR] Keenan [Allen], [WR] Travis [Benjamin] and [WR] Tyrell [Williams], and you see the way those guys work and what's expected of them, it helps the younger guys develop. They have been really good with Artavis. It's been a lot of fun to see him make some plays out here. We get the chance to see him [do it in a game], that's the next step for him. Definitely, he has done a nice job."

On importance of depth players providing something different:

"I think what we try to do is put guys in different spots where they can be successful. We're looking for guys that can develop that way and can do different things. We as a lot of our guys. They have done a great job. It's nice to see Artavis [Scott] grow the way he has. He has been able to do better playing outside, play in the slot and [when] doing some motion things. If we're talking about him, specifically, those are the kinds of things you like to see. The next big test for him comes in the preseason and to see how much of that he can put to use in the preseason game."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK CARDALE JONES**On the difference between last year and this season:**

"It's light years [difference]. Coming here last year, I was fresh on a new team. I got here a day before we did the conditioning test and reported to camp and I was still learning a new system and get reps. From last year to now, it's a complete difference."

On where the difference is most prominent:

"Just understanding everything. Understanding what we are trying to do the defense and what the defense wants to do us. Understanding, all the tools in my toolbox when I'm up there at the line of scrimmage, checking a play or something like that."

On competing for the backup quarterback position:

"I mean, I wouldn't want it any other way. I wouldn't want anything given to me. I'm pretty sure he [QB Geno Smith] feels the same way. It's great to have competition with an experienced [veteran]. I'm trying to take advantage of some of the mistakes or things [Smith does] well and try to put it in my game. It's a huge advantage and it [seems like] he [Smith] feels the same way to just not be thrown into the position of 'Hey, you're our guy. You're our backup and we're sticking with you.' So, it's kind of a position where we both need to prove our worth."

On the relationship with QB Geno Smith:

"Clearly, we understand it's a battle, but we both want what's best for the team. I think not having a decent enough a relationship to have a decent conversation with one another — that's not going to get [either of us] closer to our goals."

On his growth over the past year:

"I think it doesn't [just] mean [being] an overall player delivering the ball down the field. You need to do a good job at that, but you understand that guys are a lot better and faster. So, you need to do different things and that's what I can say. I have all the tools and tips to throw the ball down the field, but it's more than just having a good arm."

On thoughts about his initial assessment coming out of Ohio State:

"Everyone's entitled to their own opinion, but I know I still have a lot of work to do to get where I want to be."

On where he feels most of his improvement is:

"The knowledge of the game and that comes from [being] in my first offseason with a team in a system where I was the previous year — since college. [I was] just trying to dive deep into the playbook this past offseason to get to the point where I am now going into preseason."

On any challenges surrounding the strength of his arm:

"I don't think it's a challenge. It's understanding the personnel, understanding the type of receiver and understanding the type of route concept. You don't want to throw a dart to a guy coming in full-speed on a slant route. You can't do it all the time. Sometimes, you might have that third window [open] down the field where you really need to [throw it down field]."

On whether he's comfortable in learning the offense:

"Definitely around Week 10 or 11 it really started to click. Solely because we're not using the whole offense and more game planning. Usually at that time in the year, we are playing another team in the division. So [with it being] the second time, the game plan might come back up and I'll remember 'I know what I'd do versus this,' or, 'I know how this is working.' That's when it starts really clicking and then the offseason really took off."

On the influence of QB Philip Rivers:

"Shoot, a lot. I think everything. I made the comment to one of our coaches this time last year about a week into camp. Just being in a room with Philip for a week, I felt like I wasn't in the NFL the year before because of the knowledge he was able to provide. Just coming from experience he has an answer for any question I have."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK GENO SMITH**On his confidence:**

"I think it's continuing to grow. I do feel a lot more confident, playing a lot faster and being able to see the same things twice. We had these plays that we ran in OTAs and minicamp, then we get out here in [training] camp and were running them again. Just having that repetition has helped me play a lot faster and I'm getting more comfortable with it."

On offense:

"I've been in a couple of systems. It's actually similar to one I played in when I was with [former Jets Offensive Coordinator] Chan Gailey, so that helped me get up to speed with things. I wasn't as behind the eight-ball as [much as] I may have been if I hadn't seen it or heard the terminology before. Other than that, it's a new system and I wanted to start fresh, learn everything new and just see how [Offensive Coordinator Ken] Wiz [Whisenhunt] and [QB] Philip [Rivers] do things, and how they want it to get done."

On first preseason game:

"I'm super excited, we're all super excited. We have a great opportunity to go out there and see what we're made of. We're going up against a good team in Arizona [Cardinals] and it's the first preseason game so everyone's going to be excited. You're going to see a lot of reps from the young guys and it'll be interesting to see how they do, myself included. It'll be my first time in this offense. Just to get some live game reps, to put some things on tape, I'm excited for it. It'll be fun."

On his approach to the position battle:

"You've got to approach it like you're a starter. That's been my whole mantra my entire time in the league: I approach every single day like I'm a starter. I expect great things from myself and I put the pressure on myself. No one else can put any added pressure on me. You know you're competing and you know you're always going to compete, that's the name of the game. As far as anything outside, you just look at it the same way every day, and that's to get better and be the best player you can be on a daily basis."

On importance preseason and practice reps:

"Every rep counts. There is no one rep that's more valuable [than another]. Obviously, when the season comes and the preseason, it's out there against a different team, but you still have to perform in practice and in the classroom. Everything you do, you have to be able to perform. You have to be at a high level. It's the name of this game and that's what we do as quarterbacks, we've always got to be at a high level."

On familiarity with Head Coach Anthony Lynn:

"Coach Lynn has been doing a great job as the head coach, but honestly it is different. Back when I was with him on the Jets, he was the running back coach and now he's the head coach so he has a new set of responsibilities. But overall I see

the same guy, someone who's a stern coach who wants things done a certain way, wants practices done a certain way and we try to live up to his standards."

On interactions with Lynn in New York:

"We talked a lot. I was the quarterback, he was the running backs coach. We talked protections — everything — so we had a really good relationship then and still to this day."

On if the familiarity with Lynn one of the reasons you chose the Chargers:

"It was one of the things yes, being that I had known Coach Lynn — and a few other factors, but that was one of them."

On the early portion of his career:

"I've always been focused. The times haven't always been great, but that's just the name of the game. You can't take anything back, but I've always had my head on straight and always been focused."

On important attributes of backup quarterback:

"The most important attribute is to be ready every single week. You never know when your number is going to be called. You have to make sure your helping the starter prepare for the week if he needs it. It depends on what he does, and then just be ready to play if called upon."