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## LOS ANGELES CHARGERS vs. KANSAS CITY CHIEFS POSTGAME TRANSCRIPTS

Thursday, December 16, 2021 ⚡ SoFi Stadium ⚡ Inglewood, Calif.

### LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

#### **On the final play of the game:**

“We just didn’t tackle very well. We had a lot of guys in position. We had a five-man rush, just had three guys miss a tackle. [Chiefs TE Travis Kelce] made a nice play, a nice, good run after the catch. He finished the game off.”

#### **On clock management in the fourth quarter:**

“I really liked the way that we manage the entire game. I love the way we managed this game. It didn’t go down for us today, but we gave ourselves an opportunity. We didn’t get it. We didn’t finish the game off defensively, and they’re a tough group to finish it against, defensively. We gave ourselves a chance there at the end with [QB] Justin [Herbert], and we just didn’t quite get it done. Then, when it went into overtime, you lose the coin toss, and we just weren’t able to finish it out. Credit to Kansas City, they did a really good job on those last couple of drives.”

#### **On the production of Chiefs’ offense:**

“I have full respect for [Chiefs QB] Patrick [Mahomes], [Chiefs TE] Travis [Kelce] and [Chiefs WR] Tyreek [Hill]. You’re not going to beat that team if those three have performances like that. We were down a bunch of guys, there’s no doubt about that, but that’s life in the NFL. We need to make sure that the next time, that we have a good plan, when that happens, and that ultimately falls on me. We just have to make sure that we execute and play the game on our terms at the end, and we can live with that. I didn’t think that we rushed and covered well at the end. I didn’t think that we were connected enough in the fourth quarter and in overtime. That’s why we lost.”

#### **On if S Derwin James Jr. ‘tweaked’ his hamstring:**

“This guy gave it a go. He tried everything that he could, but it was just pulling on him. We just didn’t want to do anything more to it. He’s a warrior and the ultimate competitor. He gave it a go. He gave it a go, but it just wasn’t going to go down for him tonight.”

#### **On ‘having to go for it on fourth down when playing the Chiefs’:**

“That’s going to be the mindset no matter who we play. I felt really comfortable with all of those decisions. The first one, it was a perfect pass, then you have this really tragic thing happen on the way down. The one at the end of the half, I loved that. We just missed [TE] Jared [Cook] on the stick. That’s the way that we’re going to play around here. That’s the way we’re going to play. When we have a quarterback like ours, and we have an offense like ours, that’s the way we’re going to play because that’s how you need to play against Kansas City, for sure. That’s how we’re going to become the team that we’re ultimately capable of being, by playing that way. I’m really proud of our guys. I thought we competed like champions today. They made a couple of more plays in the fourth quarter and in overtime than we did. I felt like our guys laid it on the line tonight. I’m very, very proud of them for that.”

**On his level of frustration with RB Joshua Kelley's fumble:**

"Very frustrating. We wanted to run the football in there. I felt like we had a really good design. You just have to be careful when you go up and over. It's one thing to go up and over and it's another thing to reach it out when you go up and over. It was third down, not fourth down. That's not what we coach around here. We need to learn from that and make sure that that doesn't happen again. Fortunately for us, [OLB] Uchenna [Nwosu] had an incredible play on that very next series and got us the ball back and another opportunity. We need to make sure that we do a better job."

**On TE Donald Parham Jr.:**

"I know that he is at the hospital. That's where my thoughts are. That's where our thoughts are right now, with him. That's one of those things that's the tough side of the game. He means so much to us. He's having such an incredible season. I'm hoping, if D.P. can hear me, that we love him and we're thinking about him. I can't wait to see him soon."

**On continuing the game following Parham's injury:**

"That's the tough side of pro sport. Any time that you see that live and you're close to it, it impacts you. At the same time, we're trying to play for him the rest of the way. That's what our guys did tonight, they laid it on the line and played a whale of a game for him. I hope that he's proud of that. Just praying for him right now. We'll have more news for you as it becomes available."

**On TE Tre' McKitty's performance:**

"I saw a guy you know really coming into his own at the point of attack. We ran the football tonight, that was a big part of our gameplan. We felt like we could do it and he's a big reason why. You have to have tight ends at the point of attack. That's why we drafted him. He has a pro body This guy is physical at the point of attack. He has got good feet. He has a good head on his shoulders. He's really coming alive for us and he was a real bright spot for us tonight."

**On the run game:**

"I loved our design tonight. I thought that [Offensive Coordinator] Joe [Lombardi], [Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line Coach] Frank [Smith], [Assistant Offensive Line Coach] Shaun Sarrett, [Running Backs Coach] Derrick Foster, those guys has really good designs. I felt like we had a lot of balance, in terms of zone scheme, gap scheme, inside plays, outside plays, runs from the gun, quarterback under. We felt like that would be an advantage for us because we felt like they would play some shell with their corner being out and [Chiefs DT] Chris Jones not being out there. Just felt like that would be something that we would be able to do to control the pace of the game. I just really felt like that was a strength of ours today. I thought all three of our backs ran at a high level today."

**On 'coaching drops':**

"It's just us playing together. There's no answer that I can give you other than that. It's just us playing together because all of those guys are quality players. It's not a lack of concentration. It's definitely not a lack of talent. I truly believe that that's what the storyline is. It's nothing more, nothing less than that. We have one of the best passers in the history of the NFL playing and we have an outstanding skill group who have good hands, who have history of good hands. We just need to continue to stay together, which is what we're going to do. I have full confidence in all of those guys and I know that Justin does, too."

**On 'balancing out' going for it on fourth down and not attempting a field goal:**

"It's a great question that I would love to answer. It's life in the NFL, in decision making like that. From where my mindset is, I know that the quickest way to win a game like that is to score touchdowns, not field goals, especially considering who's on the other side. To me, when you feel like you're in an advantage situation, when you don't feel like it's a gamble, and you feel like this is an advantage for you, then that's going to be our mindset. I don't think that any decision that I made tonight was a gamble. We felt like it was an advantage situation for us. That's why we did it. If we didn't feel like that was the case, then we would have kicked a field goal or we would have punted. That's the way that we're going to do things around here. I know that our team embraces that mindset. We're going to continue to do it every game we play moving forward."

**On Mahomes' scramble on the game-tying drive**

"It's the recipe that he uses to play well. When you allow loose plays by the quarterback, then you see numbers like he had today because most of his yardage is that way. He gets those types of explosions outside the framework of the play. That's what happened tonight. That's why those two guys had nights like they had tonight. That's why we did not defend well enough in the end of the fourth quarter and overtime."

**On CB Tevaughn Campbell not playing in the fourth quarter:**

"He was cramping."

**On T Trey Pipkins III's performance:**

"I feel like Trey Pipkins is one of these guys that held his own in an NFL game. I'm really proud of him because his teammates lifted him up. I thought we had a really good gameplan to get him into a comfort zone. I felt like the run game did that for him. I felt like our keeper game, our RPO game, some of the quick game, some of the empty, I felt like it helped him. We felt like that they would try and put a roof over the coverage. I just felt like to get Trey going that, those elements of running the football, and then those pass elements, would really help him. I felt like Justin [Herbert] was well-protected today. We had outstanding run numbers and outstanding production as an offense. We went for 428 [yards] tonight and didn't get an opportunity in the overtime. We played pretty well enough on offense today to win the game and Trey was a big reason why."

**On three games remaining in the regular season:**

"This is just one game in the NFL. That's tonight was. Whether we had won it or lost it, it's just one game in the NFL. Had we won tonight, nothing would have happened for us. Nothing. Nothing would have happened, other than it would have been a win in our division. That's the same thing with a loss. Nothing happened today. Our whole season is in front of us. What we have to do is we need to get some rest. We have three days right now. That's what we need to do. We need to rest. We need to be around our families, get some Christmas shopping done, take our kids to school, because the NFL season is really challenging. We just went through something really challenging. Then, we have to come back Monday and get ready for the Houston Texans. That's what I told our players and our coaches. That's exactly what we're going to do, is we're going to come back a better football team than we left the stadium today."

**On RB Austin Ekeler 'battling through' his ankle injury:**

"He's battling, for sure. The guy was really sore. But, he has a warrior spirit, just like Derwin [James Jr.], and he wasn't missing this game. He wasn't missing it. Then, I really thought that Derrick Foster did a nice job with the running back rotation. We were able to mix those three [running backs], get Austin the right opportunities tonight so that he could be effective in the game. I felt like he was effective in the game."

**On tackling:**

"I thought our guys came in the fourth quarter, they just they didn't have a lot left. There wasn't a lot left in our tank, defensively. They have a lot to do with that. I give full credit to Kansas City, full credit to Patrick [Mahomes] and those skill players, their coaching staff. They earned the win tonight by the way that they finished the game. Our guys laid it on the field tonight. They played as hard as they could play and as well as they could play. There were a couple of plays there that didn't that didn't go our way. It was one of those championship-type of atmospheres. I'm really proud of the way we competed. Defensively, we're going to learn from that, learning how to how to finish against a quarterback like that. We finished against them in the first game, I didn't go down this game. We're going to know exactly why when we watch this film. We're going to have to look inward for that. But like I said, I tip my cap to them because they made a lot of plays tonight."

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

### **On the run game:**

"I thought it was huge for us. To be able to run behind the offensive line, they did a great job blocking. To give the ball to Ek [RB Austin Ekeler], J.J. [RB Justin Jackson] and J.K. [RB Joshua Kelley], they ran the ball really well. We moved the ball well. Unfortunately, we just came up short. Tough, but really good to see the run game moving the ball."

### **On clock management in the fourth quarter:**

"The goal is always to score. We needed to put up points. We got into the end zone and that was our mission. We would've loved to have been able to move the clock down and not have any time left, but this is the NFL and you have to get in the end zone. We called a play that we trusted. We ran, we got down the field. That's the mission. We scored. We did our job. I think it's really tough because we'd love to be able to run it down, but that's not the NFL, so it's really tough."

### **On WR Joshua Palmer's touchdown:**

"I thought he ran a great route. It was kind of a naked [boot] fake and carry-out. He just came running across the field and got a lot of separation. He runs a really good route."

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

"It's one of those run-pass options. We saw the end crash. I kept the ball and he got open, found a lane. He made a great catch on it."

### **On TE Donald Parham Jr.:**

"I'm just hoping for the best. Parm has been an incredible teammate and an incredible friend. He's been nice to everyone in that locker room and everyone loves him. We're just hoping for the best. Obviously, it's incredibly tough to see that on the field, but he's tough, he's a fighter. We just have to pray for him, hope for him."

### **On close games against the Chiefs:**

"We're awfully close. I think that's the toughest part. We've played with those guys. I was really proud of the way the defense, the offense and special teams played. The defense came up with some big stops. We came up short on a couple of fourth downs, but everyone is going to ride with us and we're going to trust each other. We love to be in that opportunity, and the defense feels the same way. We believe in those guys 100 percent. We were close. We fell short today, but we couldn't have tried any harder. I'm really proud of those guys."

### **On the potential of playing the Chiefs in the playoffs:**

"Whatever happens, happens. We have three more games left, and it starts with the Texans. All of the preparation is going to be for them. We have to get back to a good week of practice and preparation. We have another chance on Sunday."

### **On T Trey Pipkins III's performance tonight:**

"I thought he did a great job. He stepped up. He knows what he's doing. He's a veteran guy and we feel comfortable with him out there. He got the ball moving and he did a great job."

### **On learning from a loss:**

"As hard as it is, we're going to have to watch the film and have to get better. If you don't watch it and just kind of turn a blind eye to it, you're missing out on a learning opportunity. I think for the coaching staff and the players, there is so much for us to learn and so many things we could've fixed out there on the field. Unfortunately, we fell short, but it's one of those opportunities that we're going to learn. We're going to have to get better. We're just thankful to be playing football still."

**On not converting fourth-down tries:**

“It’s always tough and you’d love to be able to convert those. I think we need to be better on third downs so that we’re not in those situations, but we believe in each other. We believe in the guys in that locker room and that huddle, and we believe in the defense. I think that’s a statement of trusting everyone on the field and off the field, as well. We love to be put in those situations. Unfortunately, we didn’t convert as many as we would’ve liked to have today, but we’re going to ride with each other and we’re going to be right back.”

**On ‘if it’s any less of an advantage to go for it on fourth down when teams are expecting it’:**

“No. I think it’s another opportunity to gain some yards. To be able to have four downs and drive, I think, is huge, especially as short as they have been. We need to convert those and we need to be better. We’re going to have to watch the film on third down and we’re going to have to be sharper and more dialed-in and focused. We believe in each other.”

## **KANSAS CITY CHIEFS HEAD COACH ANDY REID**

### **Opening statement:**

“What a game. As far as injuries go, we really don’t have much for you at all, other than the guys — [Chiefs DT] Chris [Jones], [Chiefs LB] Willie Gay, [Chiefs CB] L’Jarius [Sneed] — missing from our defensive side of the ball, and [Chiefs WR] Josh [Gordon] from the offensive side. I’m proud of the guys that stepped up and did a nice job in their place. Our fans were incredible. A lot of red here, which was a beautiful thing, always. [Head Coach] Brandon Staley, what a great job he has done with the Chargers. It was a battle. Those are two heavyweights going after each other. We were able to have the ball last. My hat goes out to [Chiefs DE/LB] Melvin Ingram [III] for winning two coin flips, and here he comes back to a team that he loved for all those years. He had an opportunity to put on the uniform of his rival, one of the rivals, and do such a nice job for us. [Chiefs LB] Nick Bolton, on defense, had a nice night with 14 tackles. [Chiefs OT Lucas] Niang stepping back in at tackle, he did a good job. He kind of persevered through some ups and downs. He was going against one of the better defensive ends in the National Football League, and [OLB Joey Bosa] got him a couple of times. Niang hung in there and got him a couple of times. It was a great battle to watch. Offensively, [Chiefs QB] Patrick [Mahomes], he just keeps firing. That’s the part that you love about him. He is never out of it, mentally, of a game. He just keeps rolling. He has 400-plus yards. [Chiefs WR] Tyreek Hill was unbelievable. What a job that he did. His energy level, I wish I could tap into that. He is unbelievable. He has endurance, quickness, all of those things combined, speed. Then, for the old man [Chiefs TE Travis] Kelce, everyone is talking about him losing his step or being off his game, here he steps up. The offensive line, the defensive line, everyone; this is one of those games where everyone did a fantastic job. The coaching staff was incredible. There was never any panic on the sideline, which I appreciate. E.B. [Chiefs Offensive Coordinator Eric Bieniemy] had a great gameplan, as did [Chiefs Defensive Coordinator] Steve Spagnuolo. That defense is rolling right now. His preparation has been tremendous. Then, [Chiefs Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator] Dave Toub, after that first run, made a few little corrections in there, and then the special teams took off.”

### **On the recovered fumble at the goal line:**

“I said that we have a lot of time left. The guys know, they know when they make a mistake.”

### **Oh Mahomes’ fourth-down incompleting intended for WR Mecole Hardman:**

“He just keeps firing. He wants to know what went wrong. He normally knows himself, so you just talk to him and make sure that he stays with it. Whatever mistake has taken place, just get it corrected and move on.”

### **On his trust in Mahomes:**

“Always. He’s unique that way. You guys have been around him now for a few years and you’ve see just about everything. He’s going to stick with it, trust himself, trust the guys around him, trust in everyone and never question that stuff. He just goes and plays. There are so many little things that I appreciate from him. That’s why he is one of the greatest.”

### **On if Mahomes’ production is ‘harder to understand than it might appear:**

“You’re playing against a good football team, so not everything is perfect, whether it’s a rush or a transition between you and the back and you’re pulling out and there’s a step; there are all kinds of things. Every once in a while, he throws a bad ball. That happens with every quarterback in this league. We are fortunate here to have a good one, and so are the Chargers.”

### **On the amount of consideration was placed on K Harrison Butker attempting a long field goal near the end of regulation:**

“I felt like if we got to the 40 [-yard line], we would probably be in the ballpark there. We just needed to get to that spot. We weren’t able to do that, then we ran out of time. We were down to five seconds, took a knee and just said, ‘Listen, we have Melvin [Ingram] for the coin flip.’”

**On 'must have situations':**

"The receiving core, the tight ends, we were rotating everybody, just trying to keep them as fresh as we could later in the game. I thought they all stepped up and did a great job. They jumped into a little bit of man coverage on us in the second half, a little bit more than what they had in the first half. You have to win one-on-one and know where the whole player is, or the thief/robber player coming out of the sky. The guys handled that well and got themselves open. After they caught the ball, they were yards-after-catches involved, so I thought that was big, too."

**On the confidence the team possesses in narrow-margin games:**

"Tonight, yes. The last time we played them, no. I do trust our guys. I think they trust themselves, which is huge, in those situations. You have to go out and you have to produce like this, when your back is to the wall. The guys bear'd down when they needed to bear down. That was a great job by them."

**On if WR Tyreek Hill's injury status:**

"Yeah, he had a couple things. Things were just tightening up on him, mainly because he was running like 50 yards every play down the field. We were just trying to get him in there so that he wouldn't cramp up. He is unbelievable. His endurance, for a fast guy, is phenomenal. It is hard to find one in this league that can run with his speed play after play after play."

**On TE Travis Kelce's emotions during this game:**

"He's emotional every game. He loves to play. I would tell you that the three catches over the last two games he has had, six total catches, I could do a better job of working him into the mix a little better. [Bieniemy] and I have sat down and thrown some things together, along with [Chiefs Quarterbacks/Passing Game Coordinator] Mike [Kafka] and [Chiefs Wide Receivers Coach] Joe [Bleymaier]. We met just to try to find ways. [Chiefs Tight Ends Coach] Tom Melvin always has a bunch of ideas, so we threw a few of those things in there and it worked out OK. His endurance down the stretch though, for an older player. He's kind of our elder statesman, I keep saying like he's over the hill, but his acceleration after the catch, that was something that late in the game."

**On the sideline near the end of the game:**

"It's kind of crazy. Until the moment has ended, you're just tunneled in on the gameplan. You're just trying to find the next thing that you think might work. Then, when it's over, you go, 'Woah.' If I could jump, I would jump with excitement. That locker room was great. It was phenomenal. The guys after every play, it was like a walk-off home run in baseball. When you have a walk-off like that and a celebration, you look over and see the guys jumping around. Knowing all of the hard work that goes into it, that's satisfying."

**On if anything 'extra' added to Kelce's production tonight:**

"I don't think so. These guys have been so sore the past couple days. I would imagine they were the same way on the other side. To muster it up to travel, and then play on a Thursday, that's not an easy thing. There is a lot of mental preparation that goes into that, not that there isn't for the other days, but really for these Thursday games, you have to get yourself right and do it quickly."

**On the 'grit' of the defensive players tonight:**

"[Chiefs LB Nick] Bolton stepped in and had a big day. They all picked up the pieces. 56 [Chiefs LB Ben Niemann], 49 [Chiefs S Daniel Sorensen] back there again starting, he did a nice job. You have 21 [Chiefs CB Mike Hughes]. You know the guys, they're making plays. They're just going with no hesitation. It will be good to get them back though, all of those guys."

**On Bolton's development:**

"He has gotten better every opportunity that he has had to play. He has a bright future down the road. [Chiefs General Manager Brett] Veach did a nice job of bringing him here, Brett and his scouts really studied him. He is a great kid. He doesn't say a whole lot, but he knows what he is doing, and the guys know that, the veteran players know that. He's a sure tackler. He has a couple of tough tackles down the stretch, as did 21 [Hughes]. That's a sure tackler right there."

**On stopping the Chargers on fourth down:**

“That’s what they do. They do it with everybody. It wasn’t just us. We knew that coming into the game, if it was fourth down — the head coach has said it, he said that it is like third down to them. But, you have to stop them. Our guys got enough of those to help. We kind of went through the same thing, we got stopped, too. But, it is a long field to drive. Both teams ended up driving the length of the field with pretty good drives.”

**On his message to the team heading into the weekend and the league’s updated COVID-19 protocols:**

“They will get a little time off. Be safe. Be smart who you hang with. Be safe. We went over all of the rules, [Chiefs Vice President of Sports Medicine and Performance] Rick [Burkholder] did just now, so they would know what is expected.”



## **KANSAS CITY CHIEFS QUARTERBACK PATRICK MAHOMES**

### **On tonight's game:**

"I think we just fought. At the end of the day, they didn't play any different coverages and we didn't call any different plays, just guys stepped up to the challenge. Obviously, those two drives before that where I dirt'd the fourth-down play and threw the interception, it put us in the hole. I think guys just rallied and fought and found a way to win the game."

### **On TE Travis Kelce:**

"I think what I've seen in Travis just over the last few years is the maturity to know that it's not just the numbers, it's about winning football games. I think this year has been big for him where he hasn't put up the same numbers, but his mentality has never changed. He's been a leader on this team. He's happier for anyone other than himself. When his number gets called, he goes out there and makes plays in big moments. That's what special players do. He's a special player. I'm glad he's on my team."

### **On his relationship with Kelce and connecting with him for the game-winning touchdown:**

"That was a special moment just in general. I don't think I've ever been part of a walk-off touchdown or anything like that. So, to be in that moment, find him underneath and him making such a dynamic play where he cut back, ran by people. You'd think he's old, so he can't run by people, but he's still running by people and he got in the end zone. It was just a special moment and I'm glad that all that hard work that he puts in every single day is paying off."

### **On what he told Kelce after the game-winning touchdown:**

"I just said, 'I love you, man.' He was the first guy that came up to me after the interception that was just like, 'Hey, let's show that heart. Get back out there, we believe in you.' I mean it seems like he's always that guy for everybody. I mean he has a true belief in every single person on this team. We feed off that energy that he brings every single day."

### **On the team's effort:**

"I think these last few weeks, you've seen it in the defense and the swagger that they've had. You've seen guys step up on that defense and make plays whenever their number is called. You've seen the offense, even when games are ugly and they're not the games you're used to having; stepping up and making drives to end the game to win football games and that's what happened today. The defense held us in that game; all those fourth down stops against a really, really good offense. Then, at the end of the day, the offense, we stepped up in those last three drives and got down there and scored when we needed to."

### **On Kelce's late contested catch:**

"They brought pressure off the side, so it kind of had to force them to give a one-on-one coverage. They were trying to catch us in kind of like a five-man protection. We were able to get picked up, so it put him in that one-on-one situation. They had gotten us in that pressure earlier in the game, I think, and the nickel coming off and getting right to me where I threw the ball away. We kind of learned from that. We were able to pick it up and then it puts our guys in one-on-one situations. We have some the best guys in the league at whenever they're in one-on-one coverage."

### **On his incomplete fourth-down pass to WR Mecole Hardman:**

"It was just a really [expletive] throw. That's all it was. I grabbed the ball and the motion was just a tad late. I let it go a little too long and he was wide-open, so I tried to hurry up and just throw it to him. I didn't grab the ball the way I wanted to, so I over-strided and just threw it straight into the ground."

### **On 'flipping the switch' after the failed fourth-down attempt:**

"In this league, that's what you have to do, good or bad. It doesn't matter what happened that last play, you have to go out there and do it even better the next one. Even though it was such a bad moment in the game where we could've taken the lead and we didn't, the defense ended up getting a stop and then I turned the ball over and then they scored. But, we were still only one score down, so whenever you still have a fighting chance, you've just got to believe that you're going to go out there and make it happen. I thought the guys stepped up to the challenge, made some big plays happen there at the end of the game and we were able to find a way to win it."

**On if Kelce 'got his swagger back':**

"If that guy loses his swagger, then I don't know what swagger is. He has that swag at all times. Like we've said, he's gotten double-teamed and tackled off the line of scrimmage for the last few years, but especially this year. I thought him and [Chiefs WR] Tyreek [Hill] continued to battle and they find ways to make big plays happen whenever their number is called in the games."

**On NFL's expansion in Germany:**

"I have a little relationship with [FC] Bayern Munich and some guys on that team. You have to respect that sport over there. The fandom, the way they pack that stadium and the type of athletes that play that sport, it is awesome that we will eventually get over there one day and play in front of those fans and see what that atmosphere is like."

**On perseverance:**

"If you want to be great and if you want to be a part of a great team, you have to believe that until that final whistle blows, that you have a chance to go out there and win the football game. Obviously, it sucks in the moment. I promise you that I felt as bad as everyone and knew how bad it looked, but you get another chance in this league. Not even if it is just the next drive, the next game, whatever it is, you are getting another chance and you have to be ready for that moment."

**On defeating the Chargers:**

"Doing it against a division opponent that's studied you the whole entire offseason. It's a really good football team, in general. They have a good defense and a good defensive coordinator, it definitely gives you confidence. They're playing the same coverages that people have said have given us struggles, but it all comes down to execution. I've always said if we execute, we can score on anybody, but it's going to take us executing on every drive, and we did at the beginning and at the end. We have to figure out a way to do it for the full entire game."

**On coming back late in the game:**

"I think it shows the character of the guys in the locker room. My first few years, it's always been jumping out to these early leads with all these leads and then we kind of try to coast almost into the playoffs. This year was the opposite of that. It was we're going to have to battle every single week to get to where we want to be at. The job's not finished. We have three more regular-season games, and then going into the playoffs. We have to find a way to continue to get better and better and try to build that momentum into that playoffs."

**On the two-point conversion:**

"It's probably crazy because I think Mecole [Hardman], Travis [Kelce], and Tyreek [Hill] were all open, and I didn't throw it to any of them. Then, [Chiefs RB] Clyde [Edwards-Helaire], who was supposed to be blocking, actually ran and caught it. It's one of those, on film, where Coach is going to be like, 'What were you seeing,' and I was like, 'I saw them all open. I just for some reason didn't throw it.' We got two points regardless, and we were able to move it to overtime."

**On if the Chiefs 'lost their swagger' earlier in the season:**

"I don't think we lost it. We didn't win those games kind of at the early part of the year, but we always had the confidence that we knew we had the guys in the locker room to win them. I think we're still building on trying to become great, but I think we got the guys to do it, so I'm excited for these last few weeks and the playoffs. "

**On forming 'patient drives':**

"We've had to learn that. I think that's one of the biggest things this season. We've always been this big-play team that's had short drives in under three minutes, whatever it is. With the way defenses are playing us, you have to learn how to take the short stuff and do these long drives. I think it's made us better because we can always have the big plays. We're always going to have the chance to make the throws to Tyreek and [WR] Mecole [Hardman] and all that different type of stuff. But, if we can show everybody that we can drive down the field methodically with patience, that will be hard for defenses to stop."

**On Kelce's ability as a route-runner:**

"He's just so slippery with his routes, it's hard to even imagine. His shoulders start rocking and that's why he dances, I think. He's running and it looks like he's running slow, but he's moving fast. I think you've seen that on some of the long runs that he has. People even take bad angles on him and they don't understand where he's going because it doesn't look like he's moving fast, but he is. He understands the offense, too, which helps out a ton. He knows how to run routes to get himself open and others open, but he's learned a lot in his career and he has gotten better and better, it seems, every year."