

## **Chargers Guard Zion Johnson Introductory Media Availability** **Thursday, April 28, 2022 ⚡ SoFi Stadium ⚡ Inglewood, Calif.**

### **On the feeling when he found out he was going to be selected the Los Angeles Chargers:**

“It was awesome. It was so unexpected. I was mid-conversation when I got the call. I’m just so excited to be in L.A. for the first time and to see all the coaches and meet all of my teammates. It’s awesome.”

### **On if he got a chance to speak to the Chargers before the draft:**

“I met with them at the Combine. They had a formal interview at the Combine and after that, I really didn’t have an opportunity to talk with them or speak with them after that. I’m glad to be a Charger now.”

### **On if he spoke to the coaches about where he will fit into the offensive line:**

“Not particularly, but I’m willing to play wherever they want me to.”

### **On his journey going from golfing to football:**

“It’s been awesome. A lot of guys, you ask them, ‘When you were in high school, did you see yourself here now?’ For me, honestly, no. I went to Davidson and really, it was just having to overcome a lot of things on my way to Boston College. I think when I got there, I got a perspective where I thought the NFL was an achievable goal. I’m just glad to be here now and thankful to all of the people who helped me along the way.”

### **On his golf handicap:**

“So, I’m super rusty. I haven’t golfed since last summer and I shot a 92.”

### **On if he’d feel comfortable playing either left or right guard:**

“I did some individual work and pass-rush at some right guard and I’m willing to play wherever [Head] Coach [Brandon Staley] wants me to, whether that’s left or right.”

### **On how he would describe his game on the offensive line:**

“I would say the No. 1 thing that I pride myself on is the mental part of the game. Just seeing the defense while knowing your assignment on every play and being able to help out the offensive linemen around you. The secondary thing I would say is my physicality. I sort of pride myself on being able to absorb those rushes. So, I’ll give you those two.”

### **On when he realized in college he had a shot to play in the NFL:**

“I would say, for me, after my junior year, when I came in, a lot of the coaches didn’t really expect me to play and I had the opportunity to get on the field after only being there for not very long. I got to learn the playbook really quickly. Things started to click for me mentally, in terms of just understanding the game. I think after that, it was really a thing for me where it was like let’s see how high I can go, let’s see the heights I can achieve.”

### **On if he thought about entering the draft last year:**

“There definitely was some thought. I thought about it because before COVID emerged, there were no super seniors, so I was expecting it to be my final year. But how the season ended for us at Boston College, I wanted to run it back. I think we left some games out there on the field and I don’t regret my decision at all.”

**On how much the extra season helped him prepare for the NFL:**

"I think it helped me a lot. I learned a lot. My body developed a lot; I put on 12 to 15 pounds. It was really my first year being in an offense for two years consecutively, so I started to become a master of our scheme and I started to understand everything and that really helped me in terms of processing."

**On how much the Senior Bowl and playing center helped his value go up for positions on the offensive line:**

"I think it definitely did help. Center was something I worked at for a while and getting to showcase that ability, I think, really opened teams to the possibility of that happening. So, I think it definitely did help. But also, it helped me personally because I had the opportunity to go against good competition, which just makes you better as a player."

**On if he played tackle instead of guard because Boston College was lacking depth:**

"I think the main thing was [Boston College Head] Coach [Jeff Hafley] was going to play me where he felt that was the best fit that year. That year, we had injuries at tackle, so that's where he put me. He thought I would excel there and then the next year, our tackles were healthy, he thought I would fit best at left guard. It really just goes back to playing wherever coach feels like is the best spot for me."

**On if he thinks guard is his most natural position:**

"I mean, I've played guard the most. So I think, yes, there is definitely a level of comfortability there, but I think I can excel at any of the positions on the offensive line."

**On how golf has helped him become a better football player and offensive lineman:**

"The one thing is golf can be a very frustrating game. It's something where one day you might be on, one day you're off and it takes a lot of consistency in order to become better. I think it's the same thing for offensive linemen. You have to work consistently on your technique and become a better player. Some days aren't going to be the best. Some days you're going to be at the high and sometimes you're going to have a low. But, honestly, it's just working through that and just continuing to become the best player you can be."

**On his recruiting process coming out of high school:**

"I think, from high school, I wanted to prove people wrong. That wasn't the main reason I played the game, but it definitely played a factor. When I started playing in high school, my teammates and a lot of my coaches didn't think I would be able to play. I was undersized and I struggled a lot, but it was something for me to overcome. Just throughout my process, whether it is at Davidson or B.C., similar things have happened where I've had to overcome adversity. I think that just has really helped me today to understand that, if you want to achieve something, it's not always going to be easy, but as long as you work and you put in the necessary work, it can be an achievable goal."

**On what he has improved at the most with his extra season at Boston College:**

"I would say the main thing, for me, was pass protection. So, after being at tackle for a year, you get to go against all of these [Atlantic Coast Conference] D-Ends that got drafted, guys that play well in space and you get a different bag from guys than guys that play inside. So, after experiencing that, when I moved back inside, I felt a lot more comfortable, a lot better about my pass-protective skills because a big thing about that is your confidence, your willingness to set out your angle, get to your spot and not overreact to little moves that the defensive line gives you. I think after experiencing that year at tackle, I felt more comfortable."

**On his message to the fans:**

"I think the main message is I'm happy to be a Charger. I can't wait to work and earn my right to be one."

**On the Chargers chain around his neck:**

"Yeah, so after I got drafted, we went out and took a selfie with the fans and one of the fans put [the Chargers chain] on my neck and I've been wearing it since then."