

LB KENNETH MURRAY DRAFT AVAILABILITY Thursday, April 23, 2020 | Hoag Performance Center | Costa Mesa, Calif.

Opening statement:

“First thing I want to say is how excited I am, and how blessed I am to be in this position. This has been a long time coming for me, but I’m truly excited to be a Charger. I’m truly excited to be in the city of Los Angeles. I can’t wait to get there and get to playing great defense and winning a lot of games.”

On where he expects himself to fit it on defense:

“To be honest I really don’t have any idea. I’ve talked to [Linebackers] Coach [Richard] Smith, who pretty much gave me a congratulations and said how much he thought of me. He told me he’d give me a call tomorrow and that we’d talk a little bit more. But I really don’t know. I just know that wherever they decide to put me, I’m going to give it my all. I’m going to go out there and produce.”

On his versatility in the linebacker position:

“Without a doubt. I was recruited to Oklahoma to play outside linebacker and be a pass rusher. That’s something that I’ve shown in my game multiple times. I have the versatility to be a stand-up rusher, to be an outside linebacker SAM, or to be an inside linebacker, at MIKE or WILL. I’m universal.”

On what he thinks he can bring to the defense:

“My biggest quality is my work ethic. I’m a guy that is going to come in and set the tone. My work ethic — I’m going to come in and work extremely hard. That’s just who I am. That’s where I make plays. That’s where I get it from — from my preparation. You’re getting a guy that’s extremely passionate about the game. I’m a guy that loves to win, that is a winner, and a guy that loves to play great defense. I think it’s going to be really, really fun being an LA Charger hearing about all the defensive players we have now. It’s going to be fun to be able to go out there and play some great defense.”

On how playing in the Big 12 has molded him as a linebacker:

“Well I think that it’s allowed me to develop my game, specifically in [defending the pass]. The Big 12 is so spread out. You’re required to fire around the field and cover a lot. I think it’s really just helped me become a better linebacker and helped me become a better player in space. I think that’s something I improved on all three years of college. So, I’m looking forward to going out there for the Chargers and making plays.”

On the perception of the Big 12 being a weak defensive conference:

“I feel like that perception is completely false. There are great defenses throughout the Big 12. At Oklahoma, this year, we were a top-25 defense. We had TCU who was pretty highly ranked. We have defenses, and we play defenses at Oklahoma and throughout the Big 12. Just because the numbers and offenses create so much glamor and so much hype, it doesn’t mean that there is no defense being played. It doesn’t mean that, in the Big 12, it is getting easier to win. You know it’s definitely been a long time fighting each year to win a Big 12 championship, so I know exactly how hard it is to win.”

On if he was surprised to be drafted by the Chargers:

“To be honest, I was completely surprised. I met with them at the combine and put my best foot forward. I feel like we connected well. I saw one of their scouts at the pro day, and he asked me if I was healthy and if I would be doing any drills. I told him I was healthy. Two or three weeks after that, I got another call from a scout just seeing if I was healthy and confirming my number. Tonight, I got a call from the general manager. His phone number was an Indianapolis number, and I thought it was somebody else. When I answered the phone, he said it was the Chargers, it just really took me all by surprise. So definitely it was something that was surprising, and it’s definitely something I’m extremely grateful for.”

On if he had spoken to General Manager Tom Telesco before:

“Yeah. We had a chance to meet at the combine. That’s where I said I tried to put my best foot forward. I think I showed who I was, and I think it was enough for them to decide to draft me.”

On where he felt he improved in 2019:

“I think, overall, my play speed. Also, my recognition of how offenses are trying to attack me. I’m understanding schemes and different things like that. I think that’s really where I improved the most this past season, which is what led to me making huge plays in our games. I think, just overall, me playing fast and having an understanding of how teams are trying to attack me, and taking advantage of it.”

On how he has developed from being just a pass rusher:

“It’s something that I pride myself on a lot. When I got moved to middle linebacker my freshman year, not having played that position before, it was something I tried to get better at every day. I think it’s still that way to this day. If you take a look at my game these past three seasons, all you see is a kid that gets better every year. So, I look forward to taking that next step this upcoming season.”

On how excited his family was for him:

“Oh, they were extremely excited. It was just crazy energy once I got the call. Emotional. It’s been a long time coming for us, but I’m super blessed to be in this position.”

On his leadership qualities playing a role in him being drafted:

“Definitely. Talking to [Head Coach Anthony Lynn] today, he just said that he loved who I was and what I was. He said, when I come in, just to be me and continue to do what I do. So, I think coming in and showing those guys who I am definitely helped me put my best foot forward.”

On how he felt getting drafted in round one:

“Man, it’s surreal. I would even act it out as a kid. Just to actually have it happen is such a blessing. It was really, really crazy when I got the call and knew I was about to get drafted. To hear and see my name called across the screen, and to see how happy it made my family — it’s just such a blessing.”

On if he cried:

“Yeah, I cried quite a bit. It’s just a moment I’ve been dreaming about all my life.”

On how he feels Oklahoma prepared him for the NFL:

“I think it prepared me in a huge way, going to Oklahoma. There are always great players, you’re always competing against great players. That’s what breeds success. Iron sharpens iron. I think that’s all you get at Oklahoma. I think that’s where it has really made me and helped me become the player I am today.”

On his emotions when he got the call, and his excitement to play in Los Angeles:

“When I got the call, it was just so surreal, to be honest. He told me, ‘we’re going to trade up and draft you.’ I said, ‘Okay.’ I got on the phone with the head coach and after that I just couldn’t control my emotions. It was just such a surreal moment, and I’m so blessed to be in this situation — to be a Charger. As far as LA, I’m just looking forward to being out there and playing football, to be honest. I know it’s a great city, obviously, because of everything that goes on there. I’m just looking forward to being out there and going to work.”

On how it felt to have the Chargers trade up for him:

“It means a lot. That is a testament to how much they believe in me. When you have a team like that, it means so much to me. The fact that they believe in me that much, to be able to do that — you’re going to get everything out of me. Becoming a Charger, I’m going to give my all and go out there to lay in on the line every week, every Sunday.”

On how much time he has spent in California:

“I’ve been there probably a couple of times since the Rose Bowl game. My agency is actually out there, so it was kind of funny, being an Athletes First guy. It going to be really fun and unique.”

On how he used to act out getting drafted:

“I used to do it all the time with my siblings, all the time with my family. With my girlfriend, these past few years, every time we watch the draft, I’m like, ‘Yo, this is what it’s going to be like when I get up there. I’m going to hold the jersey up like this.’ To actually be drafted in the first round is such a blessing.”

On his rookie campaign playing time expectations:

“I just want to come in and compete. I want to come in and let my work speak for itself. I’m really confident in how I work and my work ethic. So, I’m just going to come in and let that speak for itself.”

On practicing against solid quarterback talents at Oklahoma:

“It has helped me a lot. As I said before, being at Oklahoma, you’re able to play against great competition. Iron sharpens iron. I definitely wouldn’t be the football player that I am without that type of competition.”