



## QUOTES

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Wednesday, November 28, 2018 | Hoag Performance Center | Costa Mesa, Calif.

### LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN

#### **Opening Statement:**

"Looking forward to getting back on the field, get to work. Pittsburgh is a good football team. It's a fun place to play a game. Our guys are excited, looking forward to it. Should be a heck of a ballgame."

#### **On if RB Melvin Gordon III will play this week:**

"Like I said, he's highly doubtful to play this week. He won't be in practice today. We'll see where he's at tomorrow and the day afterwards."

#### **On kicking field goals at Heinz Field after the stadium expansion:**

"I haven't played there since there was the adjustment. I don't know. I'll see when I get there. I just know it's a heck of a place to play a football game. It's always fun when you go there. Their fans are really into it. It's a tough football team. Really a challenge for us."

#### **On replacing Gordon's ability to score:**

"Yeah, it's hard to replace his production because he's a heck of a player, but we will go with [RB] Austin [Ekeler], [RB] Justin Jackson and [RB] Detrez [Newsome]. I have a lot of confidence in those guys, we all do. I think they'll step up and we're looking for them to do a good job."

#### **On if RB Austin Ekeler will play less special teams:**

"Yeah. That's what you hate is you take Austin, your best special teams player, off of teams. That can hurt coverage a little bit. We have guys that are going to be given a heck of an opportunity to step up and make some plays. Those coverage units have been pretty good this year. [LB] Tre'Von Johnson, he's getting better. Other guys that will have multiple opportunities on Sunday."

#### **On RB Justin Jackson:**

"[When watching film, I saw the] same thing I saw on Sunday. Fresh legs. He's a good runner. Very instinctive guy, intelligent football player. You can use him in a lot of different ways. He's a better receiver than what most people think. He's a good talent."

#### **On playing at Heinz Field:**

"We played there a few times when I was with the Jets. It was just the environment, the atmosphere, the tradition that they have at that place. I can't think of the name of the song they play in the third quarter — the place goes crazy. We went crazy, we liked it so much. It's going to be a fun experience for young guys that haven't played there before."

#### **On if his coaching philosophy changes as the weather does late in the year:**

"I think the way we're built, we're built for this time of year, December. We feel like our defense, special teams can travel. We're very balanced right now, especially on the offensive side of the ball. I think our rush attempts are higher than our passing attempts as far as percentages. We feel like we can take our offense anywhere and play. We have guys on this team that have played a lot of cold weather games. I'm looking forward to that."

#### **On when Ekeler has proven to be the strongest player, pound-for-pound, on the team:**

"We go through the off-season program, to you these percentages, weights, all this. We were very surprised how strong he was. I mean, pound-for-pound, strongest guy on our team. That's why you see him running through tackles, that's why you see him creating contact. He can do those types of things. He's not a big back, but he can still do those types of things."

**On if flying under the radar can galvanize a team:**

"Yeah, I think when you grab those deals for extra motivation, I think it can backfire on you. I think these guys do a heck of a job playing for each other. That's all the motivation they need. They just show up every day. We have a goal, we have an agenda. Guys are staying focused, sticking to the plan. They're doing the little disciplines every day it takes to be successful on the weekend. That's kind of what we focus and emphasize."

**On when Ekeler first caught his eye in camp last year:**

"San Francisco, last preseason game. His consistency. Every time he went in the game, the chains moved, every time. [I thought there has] got to be something to this. We kept him on the team, he became a really good special teams player. Every time we put him in there last week, he moved the sticks. Very consistent on what he does."

**On if Ekeler was on the roster bubble last year:**

"He was on the roster bubble, absolutely. It was that game that he made the team."

**On if the team is better prepared to play without Gordon than earlier in the year:**

"If you're going to miss a guy like Melvin, better do it later in the year because young guys have more reps, they've been around longer. I think those guys have been waiting on the runway, waiting, now they're ready to go. They can fill Melvin's shoes, not completely, but they can help until Melvin gets back."

**On Steelers QB Ben Roethlisberger:**

"He can make all the throws, he's very accurate. He's a scrambler. He made a lot of his plays off creating. We have to get him down. We have to get pressure on him first. The offensive line is doing a heck of a job, but we have to get Ben down because he's a strong guy. He can throw with five people hanging on him. He's [going to be] a Hall of Famer for a reason."

**On if NT Brandon Mebane will play this week:**

"No, he will not. He's having some personal, family things that he's taking care of. His leadership is needed elsewhere."

**On C Mike Pouncey's impact on the offensive line:**

"It's good to have a guy like Pouncey on that front line. He does a lot communication-wise. His attitude, his mentality, his work ethic — it's contagious. It's been a reason why we've improved in that area. Guys like Pouncey, [TE] Virgil Green that we brought in are doing a heck of a job."

**On the familiarity of the young running backs with the offense:**

"Absolutely. They're veterans now. I tell them, 'After three games, you're a veteran. No more rookie mistakes, no more rookie excuses.' I think they're ready to play."

**On the differences between RBs Justin Jackson and Detrez Newsome"**

"I would say Detrez is a little more powerful. He's built differently. He's a pretty explosive young man. Justin, he has more versatility. You can use him in the backfield, you can use him outside. I've been playing him wide receiver on scout team. He's been running some pretty good routes in practice. Has excellent hands. I think you can do more with Justin within our offense, but Detrez, he's a good runner."

**On the offensive success on Sunday:**

"Well, guys executed. After the first 12 minutes of the game, the execution was off the charts last week. I look for signs of that, any shift, anything happen from the sidelines. It was just nobody flinched. That's what I like about this group, they don't flinch. They stay the course. When we were sort of clicking, we were clicking on all cylinders. No, I just think the execution really stood out."

**On the resiliency of the team:**

"Yes, that they're very resilient. They can bounce back. They can forget about the past, stay in the present, take advantage of it."

**On playing on Sunday Night Football:**

"It's nice to play at night with a nationally televised game so everyone can see you play. I'm okay with that. That's something I'm going to get used to around here. Our players, I think they like it, but it's just another game. We don't want to make it a bigger game than what it is because the game last week was just as important, in my opinion. So we want to stay in that mindset. I think these guys play well when they are loose and confident. I don't want guys uptight thinking about a nationally televised game. I'm not making it to be that at all. I think it's just another game."

**On the difficulty of playing on the opposite coast in cold weather:**

"No. When you're an east coast team, you tell your team it's a problem, that's a problem. Try to get an advantage. Sunshine boys coming to a cold place, they can't play in the weather, all that. I've been mind tricked like that before. It doesn't work".

**On the challenge of bringing down Roethlisberger:**

"It's going tough to bring him down. That's his trademark. We have to do a good job of doing that and doing it clean. We won't want unsportsmanlike penalties. We have to get him down, but we have got to stay with our guys in the secondary. They're creating and making big plays in the secondary off scramble drills. It's going to be important. Move out the pocket, you got that coverage, stay with him."

**Q. What do you emphasize to bring him down?**

"We have a Charger roll. We'll wrap up and roll to keep our weight off the guy, get him down. We just have to be really good at that this week."

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK PHILIP RIVERS****On the Pittsburgh defense:**

"It's an attacking group — I'm saying that from a pressure standpoint. They bring some pressure, bring more than four a lot. Just in general, they just fly around and play like you've seen Pittsburgh play for many years. It's different than the Pittsburgh teams from way back, but very similar as far as same style of players. They play hard, fly around, get after both the run and the pass. They're really good. We'll be back at their place now. They've been gone on the road a couple weeks. Will be a heck of a challenge."

**On praise from Hall of Fame QB Brett Favre and Patriots QB Tom Brady after last week's performance:**

"Shoot, those are some of my favorites. No, I mean, it's humbling. You're appreciative of that. As you all have heard me say every week, both good and bad, it's a week-to-week league. It's a week-to-week league. When Monday rolls around, it's time to move on to the next one, know that you can't relax. Like I said, a lot of guys contributed to that game on Sunday. Just counts as one. Didn't count any more than one win. We have a heck of a December ahead of us."

**On playing at Heinz Field:**

"Yeah, I mean, I always remember, we've been there a couple times late in the year. You all were watching in postseason, both the atmosphere from a fan standpoint, and usually there's some weather involved. Looks like there might not be this week. Who knows, you never know. I just thought kind of an old-school football team all the way around. Obviously, [Steelers QB] Ben [Roethlisberger] has been there forever on the offensive side, leading that group. Then just defensively, they always just had tough, really good players that rush the passer, they hit. I feel like some of the most physical games I've been in have been at Pittsburgh. Haven't fared very well there over the years, other than 2012 when we went there. It's one of those— Kansas City is that way to me. Pittsburgh, it's kind of one of those old-school NFL atmospheres. Throw in the fact it's in December with two teams that are right there in the hunt in the AFC, right there in the hunt, you expect a heck of a game."

**On the Steelers playing 'Renegade':**

"I remember that vividly in the 2008 playoff game. They sang that live right there. Big snowflakes falling pregame. It was like out of a dream. This is it. Doesn't get any better than that, right from the coin toss. The game didn't go so well, but — it's that. The fact it moved to Sunday night, everything you can think about as far as from that standpoint. The ball gets kicked off, same game we got to play, execute, find a way to win against a tough team."

**On if players are excited to play Sunday Night Football late in the season:**

"I think it would be silly to say it's another game just from the standpoint of that. You get excited when you play in these games. You mentioned it being a Sunday night game. These guys that haven't been in one, those are the games you grew up watching, know what I mean? You didn't have the NFL Sunday Ticket, Red Zone and all that. It was whatever game was on Sunday night, Monday night, that's whatever we watched. At least back when we were little. These guys might have had different access. It's always exciting. I think it's okay to have a little added juice. That just comes with it. I think it's key that you keep your normal routine, normal week, approach it like we have been. If you're going to approach this one differently, like I've always told you, we've been cheating ourselves in previous weeks, which I haven't. I think keep it the same, keep it normal. [Head] Coach [Anthony Lynn] will do that for us. He's always been very steady from the front. Got to prepare, find a way."

**On replacing RB Melvin Gordon III:**

"[RB] Austin [Ekeler] did a nice job. I think you've seen what he gives us — he caught 10 balls last week. You've seen what he's capable of doing running the football as well. It was fun to get [RB Justin] J.J. [Jackson] in there a little bit, too. We did once or twice against Tennessee, but getting some carries, having a big run, I think that will add to his confidence, as well. We'll collectively have to pick up. If you're going to be down one of your best guys, it's a group effort to kind of pick up the slack there."

**On RB Austin Ekeler's strength:**

"I just think any time you're in the weight room, he's in there. You see it, but especially in the offseason when guys are handling a little more weight. Yeah, I mean, you see a big guy get off the bench, he grabs the second set of dumbbells, lays down. He's strong. I think he's balanced. You see how low he is when he's cutting it in and out of holes. I think sometimes you can see it from afar, but he's just so powerful and tough to bring down. Very seldom does the first guy get him. I know he'll be excited. Obviously, everybody wants an opportunity, but not in this fashion, but we have a lot of faith in him."

**On similarities between him and Steelers QB Ben Roethlisberger:**

"Shoot, we're probably similar in a lot of ways. Obviously, he does a great job extending plays, moving around, hard to bring down, hard to sack. Probably made a lot more plays on the move than I have over the years. In a lot of ways, we both like to stand in there, don't mind holding on until the last second to make a throw, take a hit, all those things. He's been a heck of a player for them for a long time. Again, it's never about the other quarterback. You have to worry about that defense. I always enjoy and appreciate when the quarterback on the opposing side, whether you're linked from a draft class, whether it's a guy of his caliber, it's always awesome going against those teams led by those kind of guys."

**On if he was more critical in film review of this past Sunday:**

"I think somewhere in between. You certainly watch it. I mean, I was sick about the turnover, the fumble really. We had a play, probably should have left on. I changed the play to one that was going to cause to hold it a little longer, then turned it over. I had plenty of time on that play to get a pass off. I just held on to the ball too long. That is one that stands out. That's a turnover that you can quickly brush aside. It didn't cost us because our D goes three-and-out and misses a field goal. Those are huge plays in games. We know that. That's one that stands out. I don't spend a whole lot of time, especially when you know what's coming this week, Pittsburgh. Especially this point in the season. I think you acknowledge things you need to clean up, what could we have done here and there collectively as a group, then it's on to the next game, figure out what we're going to do against these guys."

**On having success against pressure:**

"I mean, shoot, our team, our offense does a heck of a job preparing. Then I think it's, again, schematically what the offensive staff does, it's our guys knowing or at least making themselves available. Hey, we're going to try hit this and this, but all of the sudden they bring something unexpected. It's, Melvin, get your head around — Austin, Virgil — it's them making themselves available so we can avoid those negative plays. I think that's the biggest thing when you think about success versus pressure to me. If it's a two-yard gain because you had to get it out instead of throwing it away, taking a sack, that's turning a disaster into a positive. I think it's a little bit of all of those. It will be especially important this week with guys, who is hot, knowing where the outlets are because they certainly make it very hard for you to pick them all off because they're coming from all over the place all the time."

**On if anything has surprised him playing with C Mike Pouncey:**

"I don't know. I don't want to say 'surprised' because that to me paints it as I had an opinion about him, a strong opinion either way. I really didn't. I respected him from afar, just knowing and hearing guys talk about what a good player he was. Other than that, I had no [preconceived notion]. I think the thing that's really stood out to me — I can make a long list about him as a player — but I think it's really how much he loves to play. You should have seen him in this walk-through. We're giving him a hard time. Is it because your brother is on the other side? Is that why you have a little more juice already this week? He really does enjoy the preparation, the game. The way he practices. I mean, I think that's what has really stood out. I wouldn't say surprised me. This guy loves football. He loves every bit of it. He's so engaged all the time during the week as far as what we're trying to get done. He cares a great deal. I think, again, that rubs off. Not that we don't have a lot of guys that way. When you have a guy there in the middle that's that way, it certainly can be impactful."

**On if his approach is similar to Pouncey's:**

"I think in that way we are. I think that way we definitely are. We're both a little bit nuts when it comes to how we approach the game."

**On if there is a rivalry between the quarterbacks of the 2004 NFL Draft:**

"I don't see it that way. I think you compete amongst quarterbacks. There's probably some that tell you they don't. I think they're probably lying to you, but I don't from that standpoint. You know you're going to be linked to guys. I'm excited that I'm a part of that group. Heck of a group to be a part of. Thinking back to '04, all of us still on the same team. The games, the yards, all those things, how many games we've played in, been available for our teams. I'm excited to be a part of those two guys, what they've done. I hope they feel the same way. I think it's something we can look back and be proud of, that draft class, but I don't check to see where we all stack up, all that stuff. I know we all three have sustained pretty long, good careers. One thing obviously those two guys have been able to lead their teams and do, we all know. We haven't, but we're going to keep fighting like crazy to get it done."

**On if 2004 will go down as one of the best quarterback classes:**

"I don't know. That's not for me to decide. I don't see how it wouldn't. Again, those are things, I'll try to get first downs on Sunday night, to be honest with you. I think it's a pretty good group. Pretty good group."

**On if he has a relationship with Roethlisberger:**

"I don't. We've been at the Pro Bowl a couple times together. You visit there and talk about games, ball, family and stuff. I can't say we know each other very well."