



## QUOTES

• 714-540-7100 • [CHARGERS.COM](http://CHARGERS.COM) • [@CHARGERS](https://twitter.com/CHARGERS)

[JOSH.RUPPRECHT@CHARGERS.NFL.COM](mailto:JOSH.RUPPRECHT@CHARGERS.NFL.COM) | [SKIP.POWERS@CHARGERS.NFL.COM](mailto:SKIP.POWERS@CHARGERS.NFL.COM) | [JENNIFER.ROJAS@CHARGERS.NFL.COM](mailto:JENNIFER.ROJAS@CHARGERS.NFL.COM) | [JAMAAL.LAFRANCE@CHARGERS.NFL.COM](mailto:JAMAAL.LAFRANCE@CHARGERS.NFL.COM)  
[BROCK.ANDERSON@CHARGERS.NFL.COM](mailto:BROCK.ANDERSON@CHARGERS.NFL.COM) | [LAUREN.MEYER@CHARGERS.NFL.COM](mailto:LAUREN.MEYER@CHARGERS.NFL.COM)

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### **LOS ANGELES CHARGERS OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR KEN WHISENHUNT**

#### **On preparing for a Seattle defense with new personnel:**

"That's a good question. I don't know if it helps or hurts. They're playing good ball right now. [Seahawks LB] K.J. Wright coming up, he and [Seahawks LB Bobby] Wagner both, I'm thinking you have two veteran guys that are inside that have seen just about everything the way they communicate. They're playing well. They've got some young guys playing good ball, too. So it's going to be a good challenge."

#### **On playing in a tough environment when coming off the bye week:**

"When you go into an environment like this where it's a tough place to play, and it's crowd noise like you're dealing with, it's always tough, regardless of the bye week. Our guys, it was a good time for us, because that was a hard trip between Cleveland and going over to London. It's great to get some time off. They seem fired up and ready to go. If you just think about it from the standpoint of going into Buffalo for their opening weekend, first game of their home games this season, it was loud and it was tough. I mean, Cleveland, when we went into there, they were really revved up. So we've experienced that a little bit. This is a little different environment — but I sure hope that's not the case. We've worked to be better starting the game off. I can't guarantee we'll have a Tennessee Titans start, like we did, but the last two games we've been better starting games. I think when you go against a team like this, that's something that you want to do. It's hard to do it, but it's something you want to do."

#### **On T Sam Tevi and T Joe Barksdale:**

"Well, they're both really good players. I think back to Sam when he started against the Jets for us last year, and there was concern because he was a young guy that hadn't played, and he competed. I give Sam a lot of credit because he's worked hard to get to this point. Sam still does young player things and misses some things, but Joe's been really good about keeping himself up and ready to play. He's a good football player. So I think both of those guys fit into the group really well where the chemistry's good with those guys. So we're fortunate to have two guys that are good players."

#### **On the starting right tackle for Sunday:**

"I don't know. To me, it doesn't really matter. I think they're both — to me, you can view both of those guys as starters. Joe's [Barksdale] still working his way back. It was a tough deal that he had and to his credit, he's worked hard to get back, and he played a little bit in the last game. He's working himself in to be ready to go. So, you know, it doesn't matter to me."

#### **On alternative communication:**

"That's hard. If the communicator goes out and you have to communicate, that's really rough. That's not supposed to happen in the NFL world, but it does at times. We've had that happen to us this year two times. You know, we're just lucky that we have a veteran quarterback like Philip that you can give him a one or two-word phrase, and he'll understand it. So you always are concerned about that in this type of environment. But hopefully we'll be able to manage it. I certainly would never say, oh, yeah, we're good because that will certainly mean that you would have trouble."

#### **On his previous experience coaching there with Arizona:**

"Yeah, we've been in there a few times. It's a tough place to play, I think that, you know, being familiar with it doesn't really help you deal with what you're facing. Like I said, the only thing that helps us is we've been in a similar environment. I'm not saying as strong an environment as Seattle is going to be, but this isn't our first time doing that this year. You respect — like I said, the crowd in Buffalo was loud, and it was on the road, just like when we first came in the year, and Cleveland was pretty noisy. So hopefully that helps us deal with it. That's all you can say. It helps us prepare for it, but it's hard. There is nothing you can do, really. You work with noise in practice and you've just got to study your plan and hope that you can communicate it and go."

**On WR Keenan Allen's frustrations with not getting the football in the last game:**

"Well, that was a weird play because after, at the end of the route, Keenan was open — but at the time we were going to throw the route there was a defender sitting right under him. So there are two different perspectives there at quarterback. I think that the one thing that's really good about our group is they all like each other, and they're unselfish. So the competitive part of Keenan, that's what drives him, that's what makes him a good player. Same thing with Philip. You've seen Philip get animated at times, and it's okay. That's going to happen. It's just like if you have a brother, you're going to fight with him at times, but doesn't change the fact that you respect the way they work and you count on them to be successful. So I don't think it's a problem. Certainly, there's been no residual effect. You've seen a couple of those things over the years. I think, our players offensively, we have a lot of guys that do good things for us when they get the ball in their hands — and you're always trying to get different guys plays. I think our players respect the fact that we have a pretty good mix of getting them to do it. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't, but Keenan is a good player. We're going to try to get him the ball."

**On how the number of offensive weapons helps the team be successful:**

"It helps, no question. It helps, but listen, I think you've got to give credit to those guys because they've worked hard. We ask a lot of them from the standpoint that, if you really look at us and you look at where they rely upon different plays and what they have to do at different plays, sometimes it's a decoy. Sometimes it's blocking. Sometimes it's the primary. These guys, like I said, have been unselfish as far as doing that and I believe that's part of the reason why we've been able to do it. It's not because we have a bunch of high-profile guys that are, you know, can do a lot of great things. It's like we have a bunch of hard-working guys that are talented and unselfish, and that's helped us."

**On QB Philip Rivers approaching 200 consecutive starts:**

"Well, I think that he's probably one of the most competitive people I've ever been around. That fire of play. He loves the game. He loves his teammates. Even though he can fight with them on the sidelines, he loves them, and that's a big part of it. I think the challenge of preparing and trying to be successful is something that drives you as a player, and it never gets old. Sometimes as an older player, your body won't let you do it. He's gifted. He hasn't faced that problem, but the drive and the competitiveness that he has is second to none as far as what I've seen. You know, I think certainly our players and team respect that when you know how he works."

**On Rivers playing through the pain:**

"I've seen him play. I think if you're a quarterback in the NFL, you're going to play through pain plenty of times because there are a lot of times when you don't see the hits after they hit, after they've made the throw. Somebody falls or they get knocked down. So, you know, I don't know in the time that I've been with Philip that I've ever said he wasn't going to play or thought that he wasn't going to play because he's been so durable and works so hard to — even when he's sore. I mean, there's been a couple times we've cut reps back in practice for him just so we could let him get back into it, but nothing that's been, in my time — which is a small part of those 200 games — where it's been a question."

**On Rivers throwing blocks:**

"Yeah, hopefully we don't have to do that a lot, but yes, he is. That goes back to what I was talking about him being competitive."

**On RB Melvin Gordon III**

"Well, Gordon's a good football player, and we certainly want him out there, but with that type of injury, that's something you don't want to have long-term effects on. He's working back into practice and we'll see how it goes."

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR GUS BRADLEY****Opening Statement:**

"Coming off the bye week, it's very exciting week for us, just to get everybody back and going again. With a great opponent like Seattle, they've got it rolling now. When you watch them play, I think what's impressive about them is that they know who they are. Especially the last four games that we've been watching and putting a lot of time into, you see them run the ball, and they're doing it very well. Very well-coached. Some of the guys, since my time there, you recognize [Seahawks QB] Russell Wilson and the time with him there, but a lot of the faces have changed. You still see a lot of enthusiasm, very well-coached and they've got a definite philosophy of who they want to be."

**On Seattle returning to an identity of running the ball:**

"Yeah, it seems like that. I think Russell [Wilson] is a guy when you watch him that can take over a game. He can do that. I think with any team, when you have the ability to run the ball, it makes the quarterback that much more effective. He only had 16 or 17 passes with over 200 yards. So these plays that they're having in the pass game are very explosive plays. When you have a running game, then you can play pass off of it. That's what's so challenging. They feel like they're on a roll right now."

**On how having played Chiefs WR Tyreek Hill helps prepare for Seahawks WR Tyler Lockett:**

"They're a little different, but the speed, you know, the big play capabilities. I saw a stat the other day where [Russell Wilson] completed 21-of-25 times he targeted Lockett. So, I mean, he's very aware of where he is on the field. They'll give him the ball on jet sweeps, so there are some similarities like that — but, you know, they're very explosive. A guy that can make a big play and turn the game around for him."

**On playing in Seattle:**

"Yeah, it's a great place to play. You go up there and you know the environment that you're going to be in. I thought the environment in London was very good. So now, this week, we're playing another environment that's, you know, where the crowd noise and the whole atmosphere. You've got two teams that are playing pretty well right now."

**On the Seattle running game:**

"Oh, boy, it's a big challenge. Just because I think they're averaging over 170 yards a game rushing over the last four games. When you look at it, the number of explosive runs, you know, you don't watch them and say, 'Oh, there's a 30-yard run, there is a 40-yard run, there is a 20 yard-run.' There are a lot of four and five, and six and seven. When you look at the stats, there might be a 12 and a 12, and a 15. I mean, they just are very convicted. What I've seen is it's impacting third down. You don't see much third-and-seven, 10 or 11-plus. You see in that medium category and it's helped the third down percentages rise, too."

**On the run defense:**

"Well, we're better. There is no doubt, but I think just our play. Some of our offseason study is what we need to ask of the players and what they're capable of doing. I think, [Defensive Line Coach] Giff [Smith], it always starts up front, so the D-line has taken on that personality of what we're asking them to do. I think we're more on the same page. Then I think a guy like [NT Damion] Square has really helped. You know, ever since we got him in there, more in some of the run situations, he's done a good job for us — but up front they're doing a good job. If we have a misfit, you'll see a run come out. We've had a couple in two-minute or the games where teams have gotten some rushing, but it will be tested this weekend."

**On preventing Seahawks QB Russell Wilson from making unscripted plays:**

"Yeah, you try to mimic it in practice, but it's hard. Hey, every so often, quarterback takes off and run, so we get our plaster rules down, but he's so effective. It's not like, 'Hey, D-line. He'll always try to escape this way.' That's not the case with Russell. I mean, you watch all those plays and you see him escape different ways. Obviously, you want to try to get to him because when he gets out of the pocket and extends plays, but when he goes through the middle, too. So our pass rush lanes have got to be very disciplined this week, very disciplined."

**On NT Brandon Mebane:**

"Week after week he's been playing at a high level for us — and it starts up the middle. You've got to be really solid in the middle part of your defense and he's done a good job with that part. There's never been a time when we're concerned about the match-up as far as how he's playing what we're asking him to do. So he's playing at a pretty good level right now."

**On Seahawks Head Coach Pete Carroll's influence on him as a coach:**

"Oh, a lot of things. He's had tremendous impact on me as a coach. I think he's very analytical as far as studying tape, watching tape and trying to see how to affect different offenses — and his attitude and the way he works day after day, his energy level. I think is something that when you're with him for four years, like I was, and you saw it day after day, and I think it's pretty impressive. They've lost a lot of guys since I've been there. I don't know many of the guys on the roster anymore, but the style of play is very similar. I played with a lot of energy. You know, on defense, I watched a little bit last night, and that energy level and what they're asking them to do, the guys are on it and detailed. So for him to have [Seahawks Defensive Coordinator] Ken Norton back there, too, is a big plus."

**On how matchups change when you know the opposing coaching staff well:**

"Well, I think, you know, as a coach it is a relationship business. You can say what you want, but when you have a relationship with these guys, you know, and it's meant so much to you as a person and as a coach, you can't help it. You're always excited to compete now against them. So it's a unique opportunity. You know those guys, you've been with them through some ups and downs, so you have that part of it, but then it becomes just a game. Once you're up there in that situation, you know, I think it's going to be a great challenge for us and an exciting step for us. I think we need this game where we're at right now. We need to see where we're at and evaluate some things based on the challenge that they're going to give us."

**On tackling better this season:**

"I think it has been, but I didn't think we tackled as well last game. I thought last game there were some missed tackles. Where it was a little bit out of our character, but prior to that, I think, yes, our tackling has improved. We've seen our numbers drop. So that was a big emphasis this week."

**On if the team did anything to focus more on tackling:**

"No, I think by the way we approach it. I mean, the style of runners that we have or we're facing, and then a tackling plan, and making sure that our players are on it and keep it alive every day in meetings. Our players have done a great job. They see it and they've bought into it, and we've been seeing it on tape."

**On how defending the run has changed as the game has evolved:**

"Well, I think there's a big question out there on some staffs, I know it has been with us. Can you run the ball and score a lot of points, or do the points come from explosive passes and do you have to throw it 30, 40 times a game to get the number of points? I think across the board, when you watch it, Seattle is a great example. I mean, they're scoring 28 points and they're running the ball 35 times a game. So the points can come. I still think it's a mindset to go in and say, 'Hey, we've got to slow down this run game. Then we've got to try to make each team one dimensional.' So I think it still is a big factor. Look at our team, we're running the ball more effectively and it's helped, I think, in that manner. I think that's why Seattle, right now, with their identity, they're rolling a little bit."

**On how the two-point conversion stop against Tennessee can galvanize a defense:**

"Well, I think it's good. You give credit to [Head] Coach [Anthony] Lynn. We've been in those situations. Like today, we have a competitive situation in practices on Thursday. He'll throw out different situations where we've got to go out there and lineup and play against our offense, and it's ones versus ones. So we've had those situations in practice. A fourth-and-two, or two-point conversion could win it. So our players have had to jump into that situation in practice. To see it happen in a game, it's like, 'Hey, we've been here. We were in this situation where we've got to make a play.' So I think that's a big part of it. The we always talk about, if it's on the one-yard line, give us an inch and we'll protect it. I think that's more our mentality as a defense in those situations. Not, 'Oh, I'm not running this situation.' No, no. Give us two inches and we'll protect it. So to go out there and compete, and to come together and make a play, you know, it's great to show the players that mindset."

**On S Adrian Phillips**

"He's so consistent. We rely on him because of the multiple positions he can play and I think he has a very, very good understanding of the defense. So, even on that play, he jumped over to the other side. If you watched it on tape, he got situated — got lined up. They had some motion, and he flipped. Ran over and had the presence to get a hand on the ball. He just gives — I think there's a lot of trust for the guys on the field with him being out there. So you would think with the run game sometimes with him being in the box, you might give up some things. He's not 245 pounds, but he's very smart, and I think he knows how to utilize his skill set."

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS NOSE TACKLE BRANDON MEBANE****On playing in Seattle for the first time since being on the Seahawks:**

"It's actually interesting to go back up there. I haven't been back up there. The last time I was up there was for [Seahawks LB] K.J.'s [Wright] wedding. He got married, and that was, what, 2017. So, yeah, going back up there and being out here, it's like, man, you see how small it was out there, and how big and spread out everything is out here. It's different."

**On the Seattle rushing attack with QB Russell Wilson:**

"Well, it takes a lot of pressure off of him. It's pretty much the same thing, the same type of formula or mindset they had when I was there. [Raiders RB] Marshawn [Lynch] was there running the ball. He took a lot of pressure off of Russell. So it's the same mentality. You know, kind of like different type of run style, but same mentality."

**On containing Wilson in the pocket:**

"Oh, just fundamentals, keep your eyes on his hips. He's very shifty. He can try to shake you, Juke you up top. Whenever you have somebody that shakes somebody or jukes somebody, it's mostly the upper body movement. You key in with the hips, and I think the hips and like the bottom of the person's numbers, you have a better shot of tackling a person that likes to do a lot of moves."

**On facing the Seattle offensive line:**

"Oh well, I mean, you know, I played a lot of football. So I don't fear anybody. So respect everybody, but just looking at them, they're a good group and everything. Our job is to just play fundamental, sound football. That's it."

**On if Seahawks C Justin Britt was his teammate in Seattle:**

"Justin Britt was there, but he was at tackle, then he went to guard, and he went to center."

**On containing a team that likes to run:**

"The past two or three games we didn't play some teams that like to run the ball. We didn't play some teams that had two or three running backs, you know. Cleveland, Tennessee, they didn't have a lot of running backs. Here I thought it was a similar situation. So here the main thing that you can do when it comes to a team that likes to run the ball is make them do something they don't want to do. Make them one dimensional. I think that's one of the keys is to make a team that likes to run the ball, make them one dimensional."

**On if it will be weird to be the road team at CenturyLink Field:**

"It probably will be. You know, I played them in the preseason, but it was always here. I think I'm used to it. Now, if you would have said that my first game I would have probably been like, yeah, but now it's like I've forgotten about it. It's in the past. Like, I played there? Wow. I forgot about it."

**On what it's like for an opponent to play at Seattle:**

"Well, a lot of guys probably, like I say, Kansas City or Seattle's loud. It's an environment where I think the players, defense and offense, definitely feed off the crowd. When I was there, there were times where I think we made a lot of plays just because of the crowd, the environment. I think the good thing about us is that we have been in a lot of situations where we didn't play or have a lot of away games. I had an environment to where it felt like it was an away game. So I think that's a good thing for us. We didn't play a lot of games that were away. Then you go to the Super Bowl, which is pretty much an away game for both teams. I think it's good to have that mentality, to have that feel of away game mentality, because it's always hard to play in somebody's backyard."

**On his performance this season:**

"I think the main thing for me is just playing for my family. My daughter, she's supposed to be here December 13th, and just having the feeling of just playing for her. My wife, in and out of the hospital, doing a lot of check-ups and stuff like that, so just playing for her and my kids and my family has been like a motivation or a boost to help me just go."

**On balancing expecting a child with the season:**

"No, it's not hard to balance it. You know, when it's time to play football, I play. When it's time to talk to them on the phone, I talk to them on the phone. I think I'm at the point right now, I'm 33, so I think I'm mature enough to like, I know what is what, but if I was 23 or 24, I'd be like, whoa, you know. Got to get a new contract. Trying to do this, trying to do that, It would be different."