

Chargers Training Camp Media Availability

Monday, August 14, 2023 ⚡ Jack Hammett Sports Complex ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR DERRICK ANSLEY

On the defense's performance in the first preseason game:

"I thought that it was a good showing. The guys got out there for the first time as a unit. We've been going against our offense for the last two-plus weeks, and that's been a challenge, so to get a chance to go out there and get some live action, it was really good. We had some young guys where it was their first time in a pro game, and I thought that those guys handled the variables and the circumstances very well."

On how the defense tackled in the game:

"It was improved. We break it down by run missed tackles and pass missed tackles, and it was very low, which is a good thing. Guys are getting to the ball. There were multiple hats at the point of contact. The key to being a good tackling team is to get multiple hats there, not leaving people on an island. I thought that the guys did a very good job of that."

On OLB Chris Rumph II's development:

"Consistency in his rush. He has gotten stronger. Chris [Rumph II] is a pro. He knows the things that he needs to work on. He attacked those in the offseason. He came in here bigger and stronger. I think that you can see that in his day-to-day rushes, even against some of our guys."

On if Rumph's sack in the game is 'indicative of adding strength':

"I think so. I think that it's more strength and explosion. The stronger you get, the heavier you get, the more explosive you are in your legs. He's doing a really good job with speed-to-power. His hand swipe, he's doing a good job. That whole group, we've felt them the whole camp."

On CB J.C. Jackson:

"The guy is working hard. Today, I think, was the most reps that he has gotten since we started [training camp]. He's feeling good. We're just going to take it day-by-day. He's in a good place physically. We're just going to continue to try to maximize each day, in the classroom and on the field."

On Jackson's growth in his second season with the team:

"Everything is slowing down for him. Last year, everything was brand new for him. Year 2, the multiples are shrinking and he can just go out there and be him and cover the number one receiver and be the guy that we know that he can be."

On DL CJ Okoye getting a sack in his first-ever organized football game:

"This guy has come a long way. It was incredible to see that. I don't know if you guys saw the reaction from the sideline, I think that really answers it for you, and for me. There is a really good culture in the D-line room. CJ [Okoye] has worked tremendously hard to be able to go out there and execute in the football game — a professional football game. I think that the execution of that stunt that he did, it wasn't just a straight rush, he had some layers that he had to go in there and execute. I think that the energy and the enthusiasm that the veteran players showed when he made that sack, I mean, they beat the coaches out there [laughter]. CJ is doing a really good job. We're happy for him."

On S JT Woods' performance in the preseason game:

"I thought that JT [Woods] went in there and did a really good job of commanding the backend and running the show. He had some really good fills on some alley tackles in there. I thought that he did a really good job. Obviously, there are things that we have to work on — pad level and things like that — but I was pleased with his physicality at the point of contact."

On upcoming joint practices with the New Orleans Saints:

"It's an opportunity to go against another pro team. The Saints have a really good organization. [Saints QB] Derek Carr, [Saints WR] Michael Thomas and [Saints RB Alvin] Kamara, it's going to be a really good bunch on offense for us to come in here and combat against. We're looking forward to the challenge. It's going to be a good vibe. I know that you guys are going to be here and write some good stories about it [laughter], so we're excited about it."

On LB Kenneth Murray Jr.'s growth:

"He has grown a lot. Kenneth [Murray Jr.] is physically more talented than most people. He is big, strong, fast. He's a really good person. This is really going to be the year that, I think, he can break out. He has had a really good training camp. He is calm in there. He is seeing things at a high level. We're very proud of where he has come and I think that he has even more room to continue to get better."

On Murray Jr.'s 'healthy offseason' and the potential impact that may have had:

"If the mind is feeling good, then the body feels good. Now, I think that he is actually physically able to come out here and do his job at a high level. He had really good OTAs. He got all of those reps. He's been repping since we've been here. All of those things are finally starting to pay dividends for his game out there."

On Woods' unsportsmanlike conduct penalty in the game:

"I thought that you saw a young player who got caught up in the moment of competing. There were a couple of plays that led up to that, him and that receiver were really competing back-and-forth. You just have to know when to pump the brakes. It wasn't anything that got out of character for him. He's a really good person, really high competitor. It was one of those things that you learn from that and move on."

On Woods' performance against the run:

"All of our guys have to continue to get better at tackling, not just JT [Woods]. JT is 6-foot-2 and runs 4.3 [40-yard-dash], he has a lot of tools. Everybody has things that they have to work on. Nobody has ever gotten tackling figured out as a defender. He did stick up in on the goal line, got a really good stop, and gave us a chance to stop it again. Those are things that we're going to build on and emphasize and continue to build on it."

On situational work in practice today:

"The two offense had a chance to drive down, so there was a lot of adversity in that drive. The one defense closed the door down there on fourth-and-goal and gave us a chance to come back out there, and we stopped [QB] Justin [Herbert], which gave us a chance to go play again. It was really good back-and-forth, really good situational awareness by both sides. We can't do enough of those kinds of situations."

On OLB Tuli Tuipulotu's first professional game on Saturday:

"Usually — and this is just my opinion — when you make plays at practice, you usually make plays in the game. We've seen that from him, even back to college. He has a unique skillset, a style of play. He's rugged, tough. He plays the game the right way, so we're very, very proud of how he went out there and competed."

On DB Mark Webb Jr.:

"Mark [Webb Jr.] has worked extremely hard from Year 1 to Year 3 to get to this point to where he was a starter in the game. That's a testament to his work habits. He's a versatile player, like a lot of our safeties. He has things that he has to continue to work on, but he brings a lot of energy every day. He has a lot of speed. Those are things that we're going to continue to work on."

GUARD ZION JOHNSON

On moving to the left side:

"It feels pretty good. I've had a lot of reps at that side, I played it pretty much my whole football career. Feels pretty good."

On the preseason game against the Rams:

"I feel like it went pretty well. To go against some different competition — we've been going against our guys for the longest time. It was good to go against some other guys. It was good, but it showed some stuff that we need to work on as a unit. We're ready to meet that challenge, we'll work on it the rest of camp and come back a force."

On T Rashawn Slater:

"Rashawn is awesome. We both like the run game — we love running the ball. We try to bring that intensity to every practice that we have out here. It's been great to play with all the guys, next to [C] Corey [Linsley] again for another year. Even though they're on the other side, [OL] Jamaree [Salyer] and [T] Trey [Pipkins III]. We have a great unit, and we mesh really well together I'd say."

On what 'makes Slater such a special player':

"His attention to detail, he's really focused and honed in on the details and technique, the scheme. When you're around somebody like that, it really opens your eyes to the details as well and set that standard for yourself."

On joint practices:

"Last year was my first time, but joint practices are a good opportunity to get that real-game scenario. Preseason is good, but you're not really going against the ones. Joints, you get to go against the best players on the team. It's good to really see where you stack up and show the stuff you've been working on in the offseason against brand new opponents."

On the potential of the offense:

"The sky is the limit. We've got a lot of talented guys. I think the main thing for us is honing in on details, knowing the scheme, technique and just that edge in our mind. That mental toughness and physical toughness. As long as we continue to grow at that every single day, I think the sky is the limit."

On C Corey Linsley:

"Just his eye for defenses is different. When you have that amount of time in the league, there are certain things he picks up on — not even the things he picks up on, but how quickly he is able to realize certain things. The instincts have been building for so long and he's been playing at a high level for so long. Just that level of experience, he's been in so many situations. We watch games in the meetings of the NFC Championship, the Packers four years ago and stuff like that, and he's out there. Just being in all those situations, he knows a lot."

On the new rushing scheme under Offensive Coordinator Kellen Moore:

"All of us love it, we feel like we're built for the downhill run game. We've got a lot of big strong guys and we're excited to add that aspect to our offense and really get after it."

On the biggest change for the rushing scheme:

"We're always trying to stay aggressive, whether we're pass set or running wide zone, different run plays. But when you're downhill and you're bringing it to the defense it really amps you up early and gets you going."

On DL CJ Okoye getting a sack against the Rams:

"That was awesome. Just to see how he's been working, it brought me back to when I first started playing and was kind of green to the game, back in my senior year of high school. Those moments are what craft you and really push you forward to want to become a better player."

On the sideline reaction:

"We were all hype for him. It meant a lot to our team and I know it meant a lot to him. We're excited to see how he goes as we go forward."

LINEBACKER KENNETH MURRAY JR.

On training camp:

"I feel like it's been good. Just coming out and trying to make the most of every day. I feel like that's been my mindset. I feel like it's going well."

On his relationship with LB Eric Kendricks:

"I definitely feel like the relationship started because of cars. We kind of hit it off even before he was signed here. He was still playing for the Vikings. We had a get-together then. Then, obviously, once he got signed here, it was like, 'Alright dude, we have to hang out.' That's what we did first. It's just been like a big brother. He has been somebody that I looked up to in this league. I love what he's done in this game. Having the opportunity to be able to play next to him, it's been something that I look forward to every day."

On if he and Kendricks discuss more than cars:

"Oh, yeah. We talk about a lot of stuff."

On his growth as a player:

"I feel good. I feel like I know this defense like the back of my hand. It's my third season [in the scheme]. It also just feels good to participate in training camp this year. That's something that I wasn't able to do last year. Being healthy, having a full offseason, has been something that's been a tremendous help for me."

On being healthy during the offseason:

"It's all part of it. The more you get time-on-task, obviously, the better you're able to do things. It's the first time that I've had a fully healthy offseason in my career. I'm excited about that, being able to be with the family and be able to just focus on football and train."

On Kendricks' demeanor in the huddle:

"He's very chill. Getting us the call, whatever coaches need to let us know, he gets that to us. He and I are just constantly going back-and-forth. What we see, what I see. As he's kind of getting the call, I'm kind of looking at what personnel we have in the game and see as they break the huddle, kind of get an idea of what they want to run as he's getting the call and turning it around. I try to let him know what I see so far. Just having that communication."

On if he agrees with teammates that say this has been his best camp:

"I mean, I feel like I come in and try to max it every day. I feel like I would have had a good camp last year if I was healthy, but it is what it is. I just come out here every day."

On joint practices:

"It is [exciting to go up against another team]. This is our house. We want to come out here and defend it. Just being able to go out against somebody else is going to be tremendous. It's a tremendous opportunity for everybody. I'm just looking forward to putting on a show."