



QUOTES

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LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN

Opening Statement:

"As you all know we got some good news on [RB] Melvin Gordon, just an MCL sprain and we'll take it week-by-week. It's highly doubtful that he'll play this week but never count that guy out because he recovers quickly. If he doesn't play, I have full confidence in the young men we have behind him in [RB] Austin [Ekeler], [RB] Justin [Jackson] and [RB] Detrez [Newsome]. Those guys are young, young legs this time of the season, with the fresh legs and the veterans being grinded down a little bit sometimes they can come in and bring a little juice to your offense. It'll be a good break for Mel if he doesn't play and we'll have full confidence in those younger guys. On to the game yesterday, other than spotting them 10 points I thought they played pretty well."

On if the offense changes at all with RB Austin Ekeler being the main running back:

"No. Not at all. [RB] Austin [Ekeler] was already plugged in at what we are doing right now, inside, outside, special plays. It won't change at all. Justin Jackson came in and I thought he ran well yesterday."

On RB Austin Ekeler being a smaller back:

"He's a smaller back but he's our pound-for-pound strongest young man on the team. I have no problem bouncing him in between tackles."

On RB Justin Jackson's first real NFL game versus Arizona:

"I saw that's been waiting on the runway. Waiting for his opportunity. When he got it, I thought he took full advantage of it. He's not banged up at all. He's fresh and that's what we brought him here for. This time of year, a lot of young backs have to step up and play and he was ready."

On Coach Lynn's offensive philosophy and where it came from:

"When you look at how many games are in this league you have to take care of the football and in his position, you have to be efficient with it. Those are some of the things we talk about every week is turnovers, takeaways, giveaways and QBR rating. QBR rating is not just Philip [Rivers], it's protection, offensive line, running backs, tight ends. Its wide receivers running their routes at the right depth, getting open, separated, catching the ball, running off the catch, touchdowns, interceptions. We talk about all those things every single week. I think Philip [Rivers] has bought into that. He always has. He's just done a good job taking care of the football all year. I think we're the top 5 team in the league right now in taking care of the football and giveaways."

On if there was a coach he learned that philosophy from:

"I think when it comes to learning how to win with what you have there probably isn't a better person than Bill Parcel to be honest with you. He was really good in teaching his coaching staff how to win games with the personnel that they had and how to get the most out of their players."

On how crucial the philosophy is going into the last stretch of games:

"It's been critical all year for us and I think you saw what happened when we didn't do it last week. It's something that we've always emphasized. Our coaches emphasize it every day and our players have bought into it."

On the injuries this season:

"Next man up. We've had some key players go down, but it's been the next man up mentality here and guys prepare every single week like they're starters. That's what I like about this group. They prepare."

On the team's mental toughness with the injuries this season:

"You just look at the character of our football team. We have good guys and that's what I like about this group. I say it all the time, great players don't win championships, great teams do. I think we have an opportunity to have a great team here."

On how relieved he was when he found out about RB Melvin Gordon's only having a sprain:

"I was very relieved because I've had MCLs and I know you can recover quickly from those and Melvin is a fast healer. I was very relieved. When I saw it happen on the field it looked pretty nasty. I thought he came out on the good end of this one."

On if the hit on RB Melvin Gordon was intentional:

"I don't know if it was intentional. I thought the young man was just playing hard and it happened."

On if he's hopeful RB Melvin Gordon will be back by the end of the year:

"Absolutely. Absolutely."

On QB Philip Rivers season and the recognition he gets:

"He gets a lot recognition with us. We appreciate him. I think he's having a great season. He is doing a heck of a job leading this team number one and taking care of the football, getting us in the right place. He understands our offense. He works with the coaching staff. I just can't say enough about the season that he's having but that doesn't mean anything right now if we don't get into the playoffs."

On QB Philip Rivers understanding the offense and Coach Lynn better in year two together:

"I sure hope so. It's our second year together and I've never wavered from what I believe in how this team will look. I would think he has a pretty good understanding of how to win football games."

On QB Philip Rivers and Coach Lynn's animated interactions on the sidelines:

"Families have disagreements. It happens all the time. I trust that young man, I think he trusts me, and I think we're in a good place."

On the defense without NT Brandon Mebane and DT Corey Liuget:

"I thought [Damion] Square did a pretty good job inside and then [DL] Justin Jones came in and gave him a relief at times. I thought they strained a little bit. I thought they made their plays and we're looking for those guys to do the same thing this week if they need to."

On if NT Brandon Mebane will return this week:

"Brandon right now is taking care of some personal, family business and his leadership is needed with his family right now and that's where we want him to be."

On T Damion Square being able to play multiple spots:

"That's what [Damion] Square brings to your football team is versatility. He played big end, he played three-technique, he played nose. That's what you like about him and that makes him real valuable to our defense."

On holding RB Melvin Gordon out for the next two games to prepare him for Kansas City:

"It all depends on how he progresses. It's a recovery. Melvin [Gordon] over the years, he's healed pretty quickly so when he's ready to go, he's ready to go."

On if it's easier to game plan for Pittsburgh knowing that RB Melvin Gordon is most likely out:

"It's always better to know game plan wise, if a player is playing or not but it's not going to make that big of a difference in how we plan."

On WR Tyrell Williams not playing a lot versus Arizona:

"He's sore. He was limited last week in practice. His groin was a little sore yesterday so we're just trying to take care of him."

On if WR Tyrell Williams was persuasive in talking his way into limited play:

"We wanted him to play. He's been playing well but we didn't need him to be out there the whole time yesterday. We probably played that one pretty closely."

On the right tackle rotation:

"As far as yesterday, I think Joe [Barksdale] came in at times. We try to keep both guys involved. Both guys are pretty good right tackles. Sam [Tevi] is the starter right now and Sam played most of the snaps, but Joe got quite a few snaps as well. Right now, that's going fine for us. Joe is a good player and we want to keep him involved."

On repetitions of footwork in practice:

"You see it all the time when you watch our practice. [QB] Phil [Rivers] does a good of that with the wide receivers just two-stepping on the sidelines. They work those drills every single day. It just shows up in the game. If you work at it, you focus on it, you want to get better at it you'll see it happen during the game. I thought Uchenna [Nwosu] made a heck of a play on that one in the endzone on the running back. That's a drill that the linebackers practice every single week. Hands go up, rip the ball out. I love to see things happen on the field on the Sunday's that we do throughout the week in practice."

On if anyone told him that QB Philip Rivers was near completing the record for most consecutive pass competitions:

"Someone told me in the third quarter that 23, 24. I had no idea. It didn't feel that way, but I'm not surprised."

On if anyone told him the record was 25 pass competitions:

"No, I wasn't worried about the record but when you get that close with a nice little lead like that if someone had told me I might have been thinking about that."

On if working both guys in at right tackle messes up the rhythm of the offensive line:

"That came up. Yes, that is a factor, but I think with right tackles it's different than playing running back, quarterback. I think those guys right now are handling that situation really well and I don't think it's a problem."

On LB Jatavis Brown:

"He has versatility. He plays mike, he plays will. He comes in and plays nickel, he plays dime. He knows the defense very well and we were very fortunate to have someone like him on our team when [LB] Denzel [Perryman] went down we could just plug a guy in."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS CORNERBACK CASEY HAYWARD JR.

On playing against Pittsburgh on Sunday night:

"It's a game. So, clearly we took care of business this week and it's on to the [Pittsburgh] Steelers. No matter what time the game is, it's on the schedule."

On whether there is any added pressure to playing in primetime:

"No, it's the same juice. It's the same juice [whether] it's 1 p.m., 4 p.m., or 8 p.m. Same juice."

On the preparation to play Steelers WR Juju Smith-Schuster and WR Antonio Brown:

"I haven't watched much film on them just yet. But, you know they are really good players [when] looking at the numbers. If you go back to [Antonio Brown], year in and year out, he's been putting up crazy numbers. But we need to go there being locked in on the back end and stopping the run. [We] just need to try and contain those guys, they are pretty good players."

On whether this upcoming game will place the Chargers in the 'national' conversation:

"It's the next [game]. We try to be 1-0 each week and I guess it just so happens to be against the Steelers [this week]. We've already been around the world a lot, so if we can win this game against the next opponent - it'll help us out in trying to get to the playoffs."

On what it will take to be successful against Steelers offense and QB Ben Roethlisberger:

"[With] their offense - keep them off the field. [We] need to stop the run and try to contain all of their receivers. They have some good players. Hopefully, we'll get some [pass] rush as he is a big guy. So, we need to have an attacking plan on all of their guys. Hopefully, we can keep them off the field as much as we can so [QB] Phil [Philip Rivers] and those [offensive] guys can run the ball, [get] key possessions, [get] touchdowns and things like that. [As well as], win on third down."

On the potential absence of RB Melvin Gordon III:

"He missed one game this year already. I think we won that game. [RB] Austin [Ekeler] and those guys do a great job, even if [Gordon III] is not playing. If [Gordon III] is not playing, I hope he can get healthy. We're going to need him down the road. He's missed a game before and we've won. So, we've got it figured out."

On the impact of Steelers RB James Conner:

"I haven't watched him much. But he's been doing pretty well this year, numbers wise and the highlights I've seen. But I don't know much as we haven't watched film on him yet."

On preparation to play in cold weather:

"I don't think you can really prepare for it. It's a little over hyped. I've played in cold weather. A lot of our players played in cold weather in college - [CB] Desmond [King II] played in Iowa and [DE] Joey [Bosa] played at Ohio State. I've played in

[Green Bay,] Wisconsin. Guys play in cold weather, so I don't think there is going to be too much of a difference. Maybe [some players] have become used to it, but [everyone] has to play in that same weather. It's not going to matter. Win or lose, you're not going to be able to blame on how cold it is."

On the adjustments made following the Arizona Cardinals 10-0 lead on Sunday:

"Just focusing. I think it was 10-0 right away and it [felt] like crazy. They hit us in the mouth right away and we did a good job of settling in. After those first two drives, [the Cardinals] only had 47 yards, which is crazy. So, I guess we did our job after the first quarter. After those first two drives, we locked in, won on third down and won in the run game. We keep them in third and long [situations] so we could have [Defensive Coordinator] Gus [Bradley] dial it up."

On LB Jatavis Brown:

"He's been playing pretty really well [and] flying around. It's not new to him as he's been a starter. He's a starter in this league. He started when he was here as a rookie last year and things like that. You've got AP [Adrian Phillips] as a safety/linebacker, he's been doing a good job as well. The other linebackers have been doing a good job too. So, hopefully we can continue that trend playing on defense each and every week."

On the importance of avoiding a quick deficit:

"It's super important. It's real important to not get punched in the mouth. You don't want to start slow or [otherwise] you'll probably be the one punched in the mouth. Hopefully they don't respond and this week, there will be a lot of punching in the mouth."

On the impact of DE Joey Bosa's return:

"It's big. Just him being out there [with] his presence, makes us better. To have your best defensive player come back, it's always a plus on the back end, especially for us. If we can slow [the opponent] down and back-end can give him a little bit more time to get to the quarterback make errant throws, that helps us. We work together. So, having him back is huge. Especially this week as he got back on track with his two sacks. I wouldn't be surprised if he ends up leading the time in sacks. He's just that impactful [of] a player."

On whether he enjoys the potential matchup against Steelers WR Juju Smith-Schuster and WR Antonio Brown:

"Yeah, probably so. I've never really heard them talk [on the field]. We're going to see how much they really talk on the field. They're really good players so we need to really lock in. [I think] Juju had about 150 [yards] this past week with a touchdown, so we have our hands full this week. They have a good tight end as well."

On the importance to playing tight coverage on the Steelers receivers:

"No doubt, you have to stay with your man for the whole period of play. [QB Ben Roethlisberger] is never down. Especially with him. If he has a guy hanging on, he will still throw the ball down the field and those receivers will make a play. You definitely have to be plastered on your man and stay on them longer than you would normally. Even if you think [Roethlisberger] is sacked, sometimes he's [actually] not sacked."

On whether opponents have game-planned against the Chargers secondary, specifically against S Derwin James:

"No. [Derwin James] is a good player and they always know where he is and where he's at in his defense. They watch film and so they know he's a really good player. He's a special player for us. They definitely need to know where he's at, at all times. It's like [DE] Joey [Bosa] and [DE] Melvin [Ingram III], you need to account for those [type of] guys."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS SAFETY ADRIAN PHILLIPS

On whether the extensive five-game road trip is an advantage when entering the prime-time game in Pittsburgh:

"Definitely. We won [every game] over the five-week stretch where we had to play in Cleveland [as well as] play in London. We were away for a while and I think it just made us stronger. This [upcoming game] is nothing new. People want to build it up because it's a Sunday night game. But, in our eyes, it's just another opponent that we need to beat to get to where we want to go."

On whether the Pittsburgh game is being considered as an early playoff matchup:

"I mean, you could say it like that. But the way that our team thinks right now is way different than in the past. Maybe in the past we would have thought like that, [if it were] two or three years ago. But, we really don't care [about considering the game as such]. They're on our schedule and we have to play them. We're going in there [this week] to get the win. Maybe we do see them down the road, but right now, the only thing on our mind is to be 1-0 [this week]."

On whether winning in Pittsburgh will put the team in a 'national' conversation:

"I guess so. I'm not going to lie, but I like being the dark horse. I like being that team that people don't really talk about. We keep earning our respect - every week. It just so happens that this is a nationally televised game on Sunday Night

Football. I guess it's an opportunity to show the world what we've been doing, but we're just worried about ourselves. We don't really care about what the outside critics have to say or anything like that. If [the national critics] talk about us - whatever. If they don't - same thing."

On why he likes being considered a dark horse:

"I don't know, I guess I've been the underdog my whole life. Other guys on our defensive side have [also] been the underdog all of their lives. Everybody has had that 'thing' that they've had to overcome and it makes for a great story. When you see our defense, and the whole team, as we come together and [buy in, we've] accepted the [mindset] behind 'Hey, they don't talk about us - it is what it is. We're just going to out and do our thing.' It makes us actually play a lot harder."

On whether the thought of being overlooked is a talking point inside the locker room:

"We talk about it here and there. But at the end of the day, we need to go out and make plays. That's what we do. At the end of the season, our plan is to have them talk about us. But right now, week to week, we just go out and do our job."

On playing in the cold weather:

"[California] - it does have great weather. We're not used to playing on the road [in cold weather], but it's just another distraction that we'll have to get over. I don't think we'll have a problem with it. We go to Denver in December, and Kansas City as well. I don't think it will affect us as much as everybody else thinks it will. Whoever shows up to play, it's going to affect them as well. [So,] whoever shows up on Saturday or Sunday [to play], it just depends [on them]."

On whether he likes playing in the cold weather:

"I don't think anyone really likes to play in the cold weather. Maybe you have some people up in the north who likes to play in it. It's not one of my favorite [environments], but I play [well] in the cold. It's easier for the ball to come out."

On the broad adjustments made after recent opponents have scored early in the first quarter:

"I don't think [there has] really been any adjustments [made]. We don't make too many adjustments because throughout the week, we [stick to our] great [game] plan. As long as we follow that plan, the game usually plays out how we want it to play out. [With] those first 15 plays of the game, that's when you usually see the other side of [the game plan]. [The opponent] has their scripted plays and [afterward, they will start] throwing in little wrinkles here and there. They are trying to get up on you quickly, because they know with our defense and offense, we can jump on you and really take the game to another level. So, with those 15 plays, I'd hate to say we're feeling [the opponent] out, because we're not. We're an attacking defense. [Those first 15 plays] are when you get their best shot. [Afterward], we go back to the sideline and say 'Hey, it's time to settle down. All of that other stuff is over with.' We take off from there. But generally, we want to start fast."

On the impact of DE Joey Bosa's return:

"It felt good to how Joey out there. But defensively, it really doesn't matter who is out there. We have it in our mind that whoever is on the field will get the job done. Rush & Cover does work together, so we just put it on each other. The [defensive line] - whoever is rushing - they need to get there fast. Whoever is covering, you need to hold them no matter if it's for two seconds or six seconds. It's great to have Joey out there, but it's not all him. It's the whole group of 11 guys."

On any schematic changes due to the recent injuries:

"It really doesn't change at all. We have a great group of guys who really attack the mental side of the game in the way you're supposed to. So, while it was unfortunate that [LB] Denzel [Perryman] went out and [DL] Corey [Liuget] went out, those guys who were behind them stepped in and knew their job. They knew what they had to do. Schematically, we really didn't lose anything. Guys do their job [because] we stay prepared."

On RB Austin Ekeler:

"This is Austin's second year - so you've seen what he brings to the table. He's an exciting player. I don't really expect a dropoff [in offense production] at all. We want [RB] Melvin [Gordon III] back, but Austin is a great running back. He's going to get the job done. That's not really my side of the ball, so I stay away from that. From the outside looking in, they were a great one-two punch. But, I think [Ekeler] is ready for the challenge."

On whether there is extra pressure on the Chargers secondary considering the string of defensive injuries:

"Every group in our defense puts pressure on themselves. That's what makes us so great. If you talk to the [defensive backs], they're going to say that 'it's all on us, we need to get this done and make sure the D-line can get home.' If you talk to the [defensive line], they're going to say 'Hey, we need to get home so those guys back there don't have to cover.' If you talk to the linebackers, they're going to say 'We need to stop this run game, so they don't get on the [defensive backs] and make it a tough game.' I don't think we put too much pressure on ourselves. It's the right amount of pressure here. We know guys are doing to do their job. So, no."

On whether his time is being equally split between defensive backs and linebackers meetings:

"The good thing about our defense and coaching staff is that we're together for a lot of the time. We have our separate meetings, but we're together for a lot of time. The linebackers are hearing what the secondary is hearing. When you're talking about zone or man coverages, that whole back seven needs to be working together. I think that's a good thing that our coaching staff does. When we go over the pass game and the run game, even though we are a Cover 3 team with a down safety - it ends up working out perfectly."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS OUTSIDE LINEBACKER UCHENNA NWOSU

On his role changing with the injury to LB Denzel Perryman:

"Denzel [Perryman] being out is very unfortunate, but it is next guy up mentality. We have made a couple of changes such as moving Kyle [Emanuel] to the MIKE and moving me to the starting outside linebacker which is the OTTO. The coaches believe in me, that is why they have me out there and just being able to be on the field more and contribute any way I can is very important for the team."

On knowing he will be out on the field for more snaps:

"For right now until further changes, yes. I just prepare as if I am the starter and if that changes, that is coach's decision but as of right now I am preparing like I am the starter."

On the emotions of his first professional primetime game:

"It is going to be a fun game. I have never played on Sunday Night. I am looking forward to it. Pittsburgh is a great team, and it will be a good challenge for us to see what we are about as a team, so I am looking forward to it."

On DE Joey Bosa elevating the pass rush:

"You see what type of presence Joey [Bosa] brings so having an extra force like that on the defensive line and already having DE Melvin [Ingram], DE Isaac [Rochell] has stepped up, [DE Darius] Philon has been good in interior pass rush and to add a guy like Joey back has been very good for our d-line, especially in pass-rushing situations."

On the growth of his pass rush abilities:

"Maybe because I am getting more comfortable, especially with the scheme of things. Coach Giff [Smith] wants things to happen and he is putting me out there more, giving me more and more reps. So, I would definitely say I am a lot more comfortable now than at the beginning of the season."

On developing at the OTTO position:

"That has always been my position since I got here. I have been in the linebacker room just as much as I have been in the defensive line room, so I have always been able to prepare and get reps at that position, and like I said, I prepare like I am the starter and I finally got that opportunity. It is really not that big of a change for me but just to put it all in place."

On what he remembers of Steelers WR JuJu Smith-Schuster from their time together at USC:

"He is a great dude. The cool thing about him is he hasn't changed. Everyone thinks now that he is in the NFL that he has this perception, but he has always been like that, wearing Superman suits to class and having nice cool little kid backpacks, he has always had that characteristic to him as a cool, funny dude."

On how to play him on the field:

"We have to play our technique. We are going to prepare for him like we do every week so we need to stay focused and stay on our keys and just preparing like we always prepare."

On responding to trash talking on the field:

"I talk trash right back. I don't let anyone get under my skin or anything like that. I always stay focused. I know when to turn it off and turn it on but definitely don't let someone get the upper hand on you in a game, especially going up into a big game like this."

On his method in playing in cold temperatures:

"In college, my coach didn't allow us to wear sleeves. At Washington State my sophomore year it was freezing. I couldn't wear sleeves, the only thing I could wear was a head wrap, so no sleeves for me."