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WEEK 9 — PODIUM AVAILABILITY

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LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN

Opening statement:

“As you guys already know, we made a change at offensive coordinator. That was not an easy decision. Like I said in my statement, it’s never about one person winning or losing but it’s a team. I felt like there was a change that definitely needed to be made. [Offensive Coordinator] Shane Steichen will be our play-caller now. I have a lot of confidence in Shane and I’m going to let him call it. I do not want him looking over his shoulder for any reason. I will assist like I’ve always assisted, but I have a lot of confidence in Shane and our offensive staff to get this done. Now, moving on to Green Bay, hopefully.”

On making the move now:

“I just felt like it was time. I mean, if I was eventually going to do it, why not just do it right now? We have eight weeks left in this season and we still have everything in front of us that we want. I feel like this move would be smoother for us.”

On the time frame of the decision:

“I don’t want to get into all of that, but I think it’s a move that I feel like needed to be made right now.”

On Offensive Coordinator Shane Steichen:

“Shane — he’s young, he’s innovative, he has a lot of juice. I think the players are going to respond to Shane. He’s a good communicator. I’m just looking forward to seeing him do his job and help him the best I can. I’ve been in his shoes. I’ve had to take over a team during the season before. I’ve kind of helped with the operation and the exchange that way, but I’ve got confidence in the young man.”

On the decision relating to the running game:

“Well, sometimes it’s hard to reach 40 yards if you don’t have enough rushing attempts, but that wasn’t all on [former Offensive Coordinator] Ken [Whisenhunt]. That wasn’t all on Ken at all. It was just there was no flow, there was no rhythm. It was just time for a change, in my opinion.”

On concerns with Steichen calling plays:

“No, I don’t. I think Shane’s been calling plays his whole life. He just wasn’t a coordinator. He’s always had great ideas and like I said, he’s not going to be doing this alone. He is going to have plenty of help.”

On Steichen’s relationship with QB Philip Rivers:

“He has a great relationship with our quarterback. They have good chemistry. I’m sure that’s going to make it smoother and an easier process for him.”

On offensive philosophies:

“I think all coaches have fundamental differences in philosophies, but what’s most important is that we all come together we’re all on the same page. I just want to make sure moving forward that’s how we operate.”

“I made the change because I thought it was the best for the team. I really don’t want to get into great detail of why I made the change.”

On if Steichen could stay in the offensive coordinator position after the season:

“Yeah, I guess you can say that it’s an audition or whatnot, but I believe in the young man. I believe that he’s going to do a heck of a job and we’ll see what happens for all of us after the season.”



On being the play-caller:

“Once you’ve called plays, it’s kind of addicting. When you are on the sidelines on game day, you have to be careful because you can disrupt your play-caller. I’ve had to hold back, but I’ve always had the urge to call plays again for sure — but my job now is to be the head coach of the football team, trust people and delegate to my coaches to do their job.”

On touches for running backs:

“We will see how the game goes. There is this narrative that I just want to run the ball. That’s not true. I just want to win. I want to advance the ball down the field the best way possible. Sometimes, that’s passing and sometimes that’s going to be running it — but I do expect a better balance.”

On assisting with play calling:

“It will be like I’ve always done. I may have to be a little bit more involved early on, but as soon as Shane [Steichen] takes it and runs with it, it’s going to be his baby. I just want to make sure he’s okay, comfortable and just assist him with information that he may need on game day to make the correct calls.”

On advice he has given to Steichen:

“Simplify. Cut back, simplify and let these young men play fast and physical, and know what the hell they’re doing. That’s the first thing I did as a play-caller and I think we won four-straight games. We definitely want to simplify and allow our players to play faster. It’s our job as coaches to figure out ways to slow this game down. That’s what we’re trying to do.”

On if the win over Chicago saved the season:

“Last time I checked we’re 3-5 and fighting for our lives to try to get in the tournament. That game helped. We needed to get that game before we could get next week, for sure, but I wouldn’t say that game saved our season. We have a tough opponent coming in here Sunday and we need this game in a desperate way.”

On Packers RB Aaron Jones:

“He is a versatile running back. He’s having a breakout year. He’s playing outstanding with his versatility. His versatility is similar to [RB] Austin [Ekeler]. You can do things in the backfield, you can use him as a wide receiver. We’re going to have to do the best we can to slow him down.”

On S Derwin James Jr.:

“He is doing just fine. I think he’s right on schedule. I don’t like to put a timetable on player’s injuries, but he’s working hard and when he’s ready, trust me, he will be back out on the field, but that may be some time.

“No, he will not be at practice this week.”

On preparing for Packers QB Aaron Rodgers:

“Well, Aaron is a great quarterback. He’s a future Hall of Famer. Right now, he’s playing very efficiently with his quick passing game, calculated shots down the field, getting them into the right running plays. Right now, he’s playing really good football. We have to figure out ways to disrupt this offense.”

On similarities between Rodgers and Rivers:

“I think they’re both franchise quarterbacks, future Hall of Famers. A lot of similarities. Those guys are well-prepared. They’re like coaches on the football field.”

On Offensive Line Coach Pat Meyer:

“Pat Meyer will be the run game coordinator. He will help Shane [Steichen] call the run game for sure.

“It could [help the running game]. We’re going to find out.”

On improving the running game:

“You have to give guys the chance to get into a rhythm and flow. Sometimes, you can do that through play calling. We’ll see moving forward if we can get into that rhythm, if the offensive line can take over a game on the ground and stay on the field.”

On T Russell Okung:

“Russell will be limited.”



On quarterbacks playing at a high level into their late 30s:

"I don't think anyone told Aaron [Rodgers]. I mean, he moves around like a young man. He is way more mobile than what people give him credit for. He's rushed for a lot of yards. He's very creative at extending plays all the time. He's just playing at a really high level."

On the offensive line:

"We have some young guys up there. We have to give them a chance, like I said earlier, just to get into a rhythm, get into a flow. We plan on doing that. I'm very comfortable with the offensive line."

On planning against Aaron Jones:

"We've played against other backs that are versatile just like him. We've done some things to help take that back away, but this is a guy that is going to show up at some point. He's a play maker. We just have to figure out a way to slow him down."

On DT Justin Jones:

"He will not be a full [participant in practice], I'll tell you that."

On frustration with the running production:

"Like I said, my frustration has been with not winning, not not running the ball. I think running the ball can help that process, but believe me, I'd throw it 50 times if that's what it takes to win."

On Packers Defensive Coordinator Mike Pettine:

"Mike is really aggressive. Guys play hard. He's going to mix coverages, mix fronts. He's very moldable. You see it in his defense. Mike is an outstanding defensive coordinator. His guys are playing well for him."

On WR Keenan Allen:

"Keenan will be limited today as well. That's still kind of up in the air. We'll see where he is at the end of the week."

On if Green Bay looks as good as their record:

"I think so. I think they're a good football all the way around — all three phases."

On K Michael Badgley:

"Badgley is kicking, man. He's ready to go. He's kicking."

On if Badgley will handle kickoffs:

"Yes. Yes he will."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK PHILIP RIVERS**On the firing of former Offensive Coordinator Ken Whisenhunt:**

"I think anytime something like that happens, you're disappointed as a player that you didn't play better first and foremost. I have a lot of respect for Whiz and had some great memories. Shoot, we just haven't been good enough. It's obvious these first eight weeks that we just haven't been good enough, offensively. There were a handful of games where we should have scored more points and won games. Certainly, I wish I had played a little better. At the same time, I'm excited for [Offensive Coordinator] Shane [Steichen] and certainly know that he's more than capable of picking it up and keeping us rolling."

On his relationship with Offensive Coordinator Shane Steichen:

"It certainly helps. I think Shane and I are very much on the same page. We talk all the time. Obviously, the ins and outs of everything with him being our position coach, we very much think alike. It'll be a different voice in the helmet, obviously, but the way we communicate, I don't see there being any problem at all."

On Steichen calling the plays:

"He has a great feel. I feel like he, without actually doing it, has been calling them in practice and calling them for many years. I think he is certainly prepared for this. Yeah, there is going to be a first time for everybody doing it, but I have full confidence that he will do a heck of a job."

"Our system and our offense is going to stay the same. Again, Shane has obviously been on the staff and heavily involved in the game planning week-to-week. Everybody has a few things that they differently here and there, and different styles as far as how they call them. That will kind of play out as we get going."



On the running game:

"I think that's a collective effort. We know we need to run it better. We need to do a lot of things better. We weren't very good on Sunday. We were just good enough to win, which is what ultimately matters, but we all know we need to run it better. When we're balanced, that's when we are at our best. We just have to continue to work at it — all of us — and get it going."

On being at the halfway point of the season:

"I think you said it right there, 3-5 isn't where we hoped to be at this point. Certainly, we've had some disappointing outings. To be 3-5 and have a chance to get right into the thick of it is certainly exciting. We have a tough opponent on Sunday. We just need to do one game at a time. We don't play them all at once, but certainly, we can climb ourselves right back into the mix even with the disappointing start."

On improving the running game:

"I think, again, we all just have to do our jobs better. I think that it's a combination of getting more first downs, getting some leads in games — it's all of these things. I mean, you look around the league, teams that run it — it's usually not 25 four-yard carries. It's two carries that went for 60 and the other 23 that go for 45, you know? They rush for 120 and it was a heck of a rushing day. I think it's not normal to say, 'We're going to get four yards-per-clip,' in that way. You're going to have to pop off a few big runs, which is what we did early in the year, even, in those games that we ran it better. We just have to stay with it, keep believing, stay with it and, again, get first downs. To me, every time you get a first down, you get another run, usually, and score points. The teams that we have run it the best [against], we found ourselves up 20-10 at some point in the game. That's when things happen. Late in the game in the fourth quarter, you get five, six, seven, eight more carries when you're in the lead. We just have to hang with it and keep believing in it. Backs keep running hard, guys up front keep fighting and just keep going."

On added responsibility for him:

"Again, I've always felt a responsibility — and really am thankful in some regards to think that I've earned it a little bit over the years — that I can help us get in and out of plays, and do some things at the line of scrimmage to help us get out of a bad play. I think those things will continue to be the same. I don't see any added pressure. Again, I could do a better job of that. I haven't done it great so far this year. Again, Shane's lack of experience calling the plays, but not lacking experience in his football career knowledge and understanding of the system, both offensive and defensive. You know, he started on defense on this team, actually, years ago. He's been around a lot of great offensive coaches. He'll do a heck of a job, again, in unison with the whole staff and the guys, getting this thing going. Again, shoot, you hate that we got to where we stand today. You always feel, as a player, if a coach gets let go, you feel, deep down, 'Gosh, I had a hand in that. I need to do a better job.' I think we all just need to, shoot, dig deep, keep going and find a way to get it turned around."

On the team's success in the second half of seasons:

"I think every team probably says it, we've always said it — you want to be playing your best ball in November and December as you get into what is hopefully January. We've emphasized it. I don't know anymore that you could emphasize it all offseason this year about, 'Let's not wait. Let's have a heck of a September and October, and then have a great November and December.' We obviously didn't get that done. I think we have a lot of strong-willed guys, some mentally tough guys that just keep going whether we're 3-5, 4-8 or 0-4 like two years ago, we just keep going. That's the only way we know. I think it starts with [Head] Coach [Anthony] Lynn and his approach. The way he was in our team meeting today, you leave fired up. I think you acknowledge where we've fallen short and then you go, 'Shoot, let's go. We have it all out in front of us. Let's go find a way.' That's where we are here on this Wednesday."

On facing Packers QB Aaron Rodgers:

"Again, it's certainly what you've said. The offense have a defensive opponent over there that is playing really well. Obviously, this team, their record and what they're doing right now is awesome. It's going to be a tough challenge, what we have in front of us defensively. I've always thought it was special and it meant a little something when the other quarterback over there is the caliber of player that Aaron is. Over the years, the [QB] Peyton's [Manning], [Patriots QB] Tom Brady, [Saints QB] Drew [Brees] and all of these guys. It's awesome. You even more so know that you better not have one first down with three minutes left in the second quarter like we did last week. It would be ugly. I think you know that. You don't press or do anything like that, but you just have to be aware of what's over there. I certainly respect his game. I've been in awe of it at times with some of the throws and things that he has done over his career. We only see these guys once every four years. It will be good to go against those guys."



On the offense:

“Whatever happens Sunday, there shouldn’t be any quick reaction to it — like, ‘Oh, wow. Look what the Chargers did,’ good or bad. Again, we’ve lost one guy from the room on that offensive side. All of the rest of us are still there, still fighting. We have to pick up the slack, push and work harder to get it done. It certainly isn’t a reflection of one person. I’m certainly, again, thankful for Whiz and the time we had together.”

On Rodgers:

“I think we all know a lot of it. I think the combination. Again, you see some guys that have unbelievably strong arms. He can throw it as far as anybody in this league, but I think that’s where you fall short of really giving him his due, if you just say that, ‘That guy has a strong arm.’ The accuracy that he throws the football with, the anticipation, I think his understanding. It’s a combination of all of those things. I think he has every quality that you want in a quarterback, and the fact that he can make every throw arm-wise just adds to that. If he didn’t have the strongest arm, he would still be awesome because of all of those other qualities he has. The fact that he can move around, too, certainly helps. He can run around a little bit, buy a little time — and not only run with it, but make some throws on the run. He has obviously done a heck of a job there for a long time. Now they are in a little bit of a different system and you see him doing a little more things. It seems like they’re a little more creative now. Not that he probably wasn’t creative in the past, they just didn’t maybe need to be. I feel like it’s probably been a positive just looking at it from afar.”

On if he ever watches the opposing quarterback:

“As far as Sunday nights, Monday nights, if those guys are on, I’m certainly watching. As far as during the game, whenever we get done taking care of whatever we need to get taken care of, I’m there pulling for our defense regardless of who the other quarterback is. I’ve always been a fan of guys around the league, but I will not pay attention any more this Sunday than any others. I’m out there pulling for our defense.”

On DE Joey Bosa:

“He was an awesome player as a rookie, too. I think, obviously, him being healthy and getting to start at Week 1 has been huge. What a game. Those guys that you’ve mentioned — you’ve asked me about [Broncos OLB] Von Miller and we have talked about [Bears LB] Khalil Mack and these guys, you talk about them being an every-down player. I think that’s the thing that I know our guys in our locker room appreciate from Joey, is how he plays the run, how he plays every single down. He’s not just an elite pass rusher. He’s a heck of a football player. I think not only last week did you see it, but you’ve seen it over the course of his young career.”

On RB Melvin Gordon III:

“That was a heck of a run [for the touchdown], too. Obviously, how physical he was at the end, it was a heck of a run finishing in the end zone like he did. He made a great cut. We just have to keep going. You look at it, it’s not even fair to say this, but he would now just be through — he has been here about a training camp, not even quite yet, and we haven’t been practicing every single day in a training camp fashion. He’s going to continue to [ascend] as the year goes, and all of those guys. We are going to need all of them. Whether it’s a check-down that we need to go for 20 or a big run late in the game, or whether we need him to have 25 carries for 100-something yards one of these weeks, we just keep going, keep believing in each other and find a way to get it done.

“I think it’s every day. You keep stacking them on one another. You never know what’s going to be the week when he kind of has that huge game. Just like any of our guys, it’s a collective effort. We have to find a way to score more points than the other team. We’re working toward that this week.”

On quarterbacks playing at a high level into their late 30s:

“I don’t know, I hope I can stick around to be part of that group for a little longer. I don’t know, in some ways, that I’m in that group, but am certainly thankful to still be here doing it. Again, it will be a heck of a challenge for us on Sunday.”

On if his mustache is to compete with Rodgers’:

“I can’t compete with his mustache, that’s for sure — or many guys, for that matter. We’ll see how long it lasts. I usually don’t make it very long.”

On Halloween costumes for his children:

“Yeah, it can be challenging. We’re not the most festive when it comes to Halloween. We’ll see how it goes. When is that? Tomorrow, I guess?”

