

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS vs. KANSAS CITY CHIEFS POSTGAME TRANSCRIPTS

Sunday, November 20, 2022 ⚡ SoFi Stadium ⚡ Inglewood, Calif.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On the defense's performance on the Chiefs' game-winning drive:

"They made a few plays. We contested the whole series. We just didn't rush or cover well enough to finish it."

On if S Derwin James Jr. 'was matched best-on-best' with Chiefs TE Travis Kelce on the Chiefs' final offensive drive:

"Yes. That's exactly it."

On the defense's performance:

"I thought that we played good in stretches, but, ultimately, didn't rush well enough, didn't cover well enough tonight."

On 'what the team needs to do to close out games':

"You have to play team defense. You have to play team offense. I thought that we did an excellent job of bouncing back after the fumble. The defense ended up forcing a fumble. Go down, make a couple big, clutch plays. [QB] Justin [Herbert] made a couple huge plays. We were able to score and put the pressure on them. To close out games against great offenses, special players, the rush and coverage has to come alive. You have to rush and you have to cover at the end of games and they made a couple of more plays than we did."

On WR Keenan Allen's performance tonight:

"Keenan [Allen] was on a little bit of a pitch count tonight. This is part of kind of his return to play. I thought he exceeded my expectations, for sure. I thought he played well in the game. He felt good all week and he kind of played how he practiced."

On if WR Mike Williams re-injured his ankle:

"Yeah, he tweaked the same ankle."

On if he has 'any idea of how serious' the ankle injury is:

"I do not."

On the offense's performance in the second half:

"I saw us foul on the first kickoff return, which isn't great. You start backed up. Then, we had a penalty on offense, which puts you behind. Then, we didn't convert a third-and-short there. I thought that we had good balance tonight. I thought we ran it and threw it effectively, but just didn't do enough in that third quarter."

On QB Justin Herbert's performance tonight:

"Justin [Herbert] was outstanding tonight. I thought he made a lot of plays. I thought that last drive was signature quarterbacking. He made a bunch of plays on that drive. Then, to finish it with a touchdown and bring us back, I was really proud of the way he competed tonight."

On 'eliminating second-half offensive droughts':

"You have to stay on schedule. You have to eliminate penalties. It's hard to beat good teams when you have penalties. Then, you have to convert third downs when they are makeable. You have to get the explosions, and we didn't get any of that in the third quarter."

On WR Joshua Palmer's performance tonight:

"Josh [Palmer] played well tonight. Josh has played better and better as the season has gone on. He's healthy. You can see he is playing with a lot of confidence. He was big for us tonight."

On punting on fourth-and-short in the third quarter in their own territory:

"I really felt like flipping the field position there was the right thing to do. The game was even and I didn't want to swing the momentum their way. We had been stopped on a couple short-yardage plays. I just felt like our defense was playing at a high enough level and wanted to give our defense a chance to compete."

On the defense's performance on third-and-long situations:

"We have to make more plays. We have to make more plays. It's as simple as that on third down. We're not covering well enough on third down. That's all there is to it."

On 'his level of frustration' following the game:

"You should be frustrated. We just lost to a good team at home. We had the lead. We weren't able to close it out. That's an outstanding team that we played. To not beat those guys is disappointing because we felt like our level was good enough to win, but we didn't finish plays in that fourth quarter to get it done. That group in there has a lot of pride. We have played two really tough ones in a row against two fantastic teams. Now, we have to get our rest and we have to move on. We have to go to Thanksgiving and we have to get ready for the Cardinals."

On 'if he received an explanation from the officials for the holding penalty on James Jr. in the fourth quarter':

"No, I did not."

On the message to the team after the game:

"That we competed at a high level. We didn't make enough plays in the fourth quarter, in the second half, to win, but our level in the last two weeks has been extremely high and that's what we're going to need moving forward. We have to stay connected. We have to put this one behind us, learn from it. Get some guys rested and get some guys back, which is going to happen. Then, get moving on to Arizona. We're 10 games into the season. We're 5-5. Everything is in front of us. We have to make improvements and it starts this week with Arizona."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On tonight's game:

"I thought that there were a lot of good things that we did, offensively. There's still room for improvement for us to continue to develop and get better. Some of the third downs that we could have converted in the third quarter, we, unfortunately, fell short. We didn't put up enough points today. We just have to go back and watch film and get better."

On WR Keenan Allen returning to the lineup tonight:

"He's a big help. To have 13 back out there, he just adds something special to the offense. We know what a competitor he is and the fighter that he is. He has put in the work. It's just good to see him back out there."

On the third-and-18 completion to Allen in the fourth quarter to set up the go-ahead touchdown:

"It's just one of those plays. It was third-and-18, so the odds are stacked against you, but when you have a guy like Keenan [Allen], you have to give him a chance. Just put the ball up there, knowing that he is going to go fight for it. He made an incredible play on it."

On the result of tonight's game:

"Every game in the NFL is tough. You put everything that you have into it, especially that week of practice, that preparation. You lay everything out there. I'm really proud of the way that everyone battled today. It didn't go our way, unfortunately, but we're going to ride with our offense, defense and special teams. We're going to get better. We're going to keep doing everything we can at practice, in the film room and in the weight room. But it wasn't good enough today."

On the 'level of frustration' of WR Mike Williams re-injuring his ankle:

"It's part of the NFL. Injuries are common in the NFL and you have to battle through them. It's adversity that you have to deal with. Mike [Williams] is about as tough as it gets, and Keenan [Allen], too. They're special competitors, so any time that you get those guys out on the field, something good is going to happen. But, unfortunately, it didn't go our way today."

On WR Joshua Palmer's performance tonight:

"Josh [Palmer] just stepped up big time. He's one of those guys that is able to win against man coverage. He's not playing like this is his second year. We trust him completely. He's picked up the offense very quickly and has really established himself."

On 'why games with the Chiefs always come down to the final drive':

"I think a lot of the games in the NFL come down to the final drive. That's a really good team that we were playing up against. Unfortunately, it didn't go our way. We didn't put up enough points today. But, like I said earlier, we're going to ride with our offense, defense and special teams. It didn't go our way, but I know that those guys are going to keep battling. We're going to show up to work tomorrow, watch the film — as painful as it may be — but we're going to get better."

On Allen:

"He's a huge help. He's a special competitor. Kind of touched on briefly, but he's doing everything that he can to be out there. He's a competitor. He's a special guy and a great leader for this team. It's always great to have him out there."

On how he is feeling physically:

"The ribs have gotten better. It's just time and treatment, recovery, doing everything I can to be safe and make sure I'm not taking any unnecessary hits."

On 'how frustrating it is' with the Chiefs gaining a three-game lead in the division:

"It's part of the NFL. We're doing everything we can to win these games. Unfortunately, it's not going our way. We could sit here and complain and blame each other, but we're not. This team is special and we believe in each other. Offense, defense and special teams, it might not go away, but I know that tomorrow, we're going to get after it in the film room. We're going to watch film, as painful as it may be, and we're going to get better, and all of those guys are going to show up because they're professionals and they understand that this is a business, and they're going to be at their best tomorrow."

On if there is 'any particular part of the film that is going to be the most painful to watch':

"Losing is never fun. I think that would probably be what I'm addressing. It's not fun to watch games that you have to lose in. We're going to watch the film and we're going to get better because of it."

On the offense's performance in the second half of each of the last two games:

"I think we just have to convert on third down. We have to execute and we have to be better. Offensively, we have to keep moving the ball. I thought there were a lot of good things that we did, especially in the second half, today, of just driving and converting and doing everything we can to put up points."

On if third down 'was the primary issue tonight':

"Yeah, executing on third down. If we're able to convert those, I think we will be able to move the ball and keep the offense on the field."

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS HEAD COACH ANDY REID

Opening statement:

“As far as the injuries go, [Chiefs RB] Clyde [Edwards-Helaire] has a high-ankle sprain. [Chiefs WR] Kadarius Toney, his hamstring tightened up. [Chiefs S Juan] Thornhill has a left calf that he strained. Then, [Chiefs CB] Jaylen Watson hurt his hand, but we’ll see where that goes from here. Listen, great football game. Our fans were unbelievable, the ones that were here. We appreciate that. [Chargers Head Coach] Brandon Staley has done a heck of a job with this football team. These games come right down to the last series and they can go either way. I was proud of our guys for stepping up and doing a nice job, offensively, that last series that they had, and, defensively, the last series the defense had. That’s big-time football at the right time, and much appreciated. [Chiefs TE Travis] Kelce, again, had another 100-yard game. He’s done a nice job with that. It was good to get [Chiefs RB Isiah] Pacheco 100 yards. We needed that today, every yard of it. It was good to see some of the young guys step up, whether it was [Chiefs WR Justin] Watson having to start and [Chiefs WR] Skyy [Moore] stepping in there and doing a nice job on the offensive side. Defensively, [Chiefs LB Nick] Bolton was all over the place. He’s been doing that all year. [Chiefs DE Mike] Danna had some nice rushes. [Chiefs DT] Chris [Jones], he’s a great player. It’s a great play when great players make them. He did a nice job on that interception, he actually caused that to take place. I could keep going; the offensive line, [Chiefs QB] Pat Mahomes, what are you going to say? He calms everything down. Both sides of the ball he helps out with. [Travis] Kelce does the same, and Chris [Jones] and [Chiefs DE] Frank [Clark]. It was good to have Frank [Clark] back. [Nick] Bolton, all of those guys. The good players really stepped up and calmed things down when it was needed. Anyway, time’s yours.”

On his ‘level of confidence’ during the offense’s game-winning drive:

“Didn’t really think about that part. We just went in saying, ‘This is what we have to do.’ Pat [Mahomes] doesn’t worry about all that; he just goes in and plays. These guys, they all practice. [Chiefs Wide Receivers Coach] Joe [Bleymaier] rotates all of them. [Chiefs Tight Ends Coach] Tom Melvin does the same. Whoever goes in, goes in and plays. That’s how we roll. As far as practicing, we spend so much time on that during camp, working on it. For it to pay off, it’s a good thing. It seems like every time we come here, it comes down to something like this. I mean, it’s ridiculous.”

On the value of ‘integrating the new faces’ in training camp and how that benefits now:

“Well, that, and then rotating them in practice. We have a lot of rookies that finished that game, so it was neat to see them step up and do what they did, whether it was in the secondary or at linebacker or wide receiver. It was a neat thing to see those guys do that.”

On if Kelce ‘was needed more than ever tonight’:

“He battled. They had a plan for him. They were going to bang him around, and then they put an All-Pro safety on him with number three [Derwin James Jr.]. He had to fight like crazy the whole game and come up with things on the fly to get himself open. It’s a tribute to the Chargers, but it’s also a great tribute to [Travis] Kelce for battling through.”

On Chiefs RB Isiah Pacheco ‘lasting until the seventh round’ before being drafted and his impact tonight:

“Really, you saw it tonight, [Chiefs General Manager] Brett Veach, how good he is at doing his job, and [Isiah] Pacheco is one of those guys. He and his crew, they study it, they see what fits into what we do, and then they’re willing to pull the trigger at the right time and evaluate where they think guys are going to fall. It’s an art. That’s not an easy thing to do; you can overdraft guys, you can under-draft. At the same time, you’re talking about guys you want to come in and play, at least within a year or two.”

On Pacheco’s development:

“His growth in the pass protection part of it, even though he had a tough one today when three [James Jr.] blitzed. His pass protection, we are confident in that. His patience, I thought, was good. We’ve been working on that. I thought he did a nice job with that. Not necessarily speed to the hole, but speed through the hole. You could see him let the offensive linemen get it set up and work to the linebacker-level guys, and then go. Hit it, as opposed to being indecisive.”

On Moore's confidence:

"It's great. He had the punt returns that were a bit of a mess, but he had never done that. The guys kept encouraging him through this, whether it was his coach, Joe [Bleymaier], or [Offensive Quality Control] Connor [Embree], they just kept encouraging him. They players stuck by him. They could see how talented he was. Nobody looked at him cross-eyed. That peer pressure is the strongest pressure in that case."

On the duo of Mahomes and Kelce:

"We're a part of it, and that's the fun part. You'd like it to last forever, but these guys grow old and it's not [going to last forever]. So, what I do is I try to enjoy every minute of it, every play. Their chemistry is ridiculous. You know, coming into this game, that they had a plan for Kelce and he and Pat were able to work through it and make some nice things happen."

On Mahomes' ability to 'get everybody on the same page' offensively:

"Sometimes, there's not a lot of thinking involved and you just go play [*laughter*], whether you're the receiving part of that or you're the quarterback throwing it. That's what I saw. I saw guys, 'Listen, you have to be there,' and they were there. 'I know I've got to get there and I'm going to fight like crazy to make sure I'm there.' There's a time when you just have to get down to that part of it and I thought the guys did that."

On Mahomes 'providing a sense that they are going to win the game':

"We've been down with 13 seconds [remaining in regulation] before, so a minute seemed like an eternity. I thought that we gave them too much time [*laughter*] because that other guy [Herbert] is pretty good, too. [Mahomes] gives you that confidence. The more you're around him, the more you watch him do what he does, you know that you have a shot."

On the performance of the rookies tonight:

"They have done a nice job of working hard. It hasn't come naturally easy. They have had to work their tail off to get themselves in a position where a quarterback trusts them and the coaches trust them to play them. We appreciate that effort that they put forward. I mentioned a little bit earlier that Brett Veach has done a nice job, and you are seeing the results of this with all of these young guys playing. We appreciate that, as a coaching staff."

On RB Clyde Edwards-Helaire's ankle injury:

"He's a tough kid, but that doesn't look good. High-ankle sprains on running backs aren't always the best. We'll see how he does in the recovery, but it's pretty tender right now."

On if Edward-Helaire could be placed on the Reserve/Injured list:

"I don't know. I haven't gotten that far."

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS QUARTERBACK PATRICK MAHOMES

On the final offensive drive that led to the go-ahead touchdown:

“We do this a lot. [Chiefs Head] Coach [Andy] Reid prepares us for these moments. We knew we had a lot of time on the clock. We knew we had some time outs, so we didn’t rush. We just kind of went through what we do every single day at practice and everything like that, and we executed. [Chiefs TE] Travis [Kelce] is Travis. He is the greatest tight end of all time. He makes plays like that that we win games. I thought lot of young guys stepped up and some guys that not necessarily have those major roles stepped up on that drive as well. It’s good to see with all of those young guys out there.”

On the performance of the Chiefs’ rookies:

“We had a lot of new faces. To see him excel in moments like these is special because, obviously, we’ve done it in this organization for a little bit now, but to have those new guys step right in and make those plays is special. Not only on the offense. You look at the defense, it seemed like at one point, all of the defensive backs were rookies or new guys. We have done a great job of bringing a lot of talented players in here and they have stepped up and made plays happen.”

On the offense’s execution on the final drive ‘with all of the injuries’:

“I try not to let it affect me. I joked about it during the week; I just go through the reads unless Kelce is maned up and I throw him the ball. That’s kind of my mindset. Obviously, teams have plans for Travis [Kelce], and so guys are going to have to step up. When guys go down, obviously we didn’t [WR] Juju [Smith-Schuster] and [WR] Mecole [Hardman] and [WR Kadarius Toney] KT went down today. [WR] Skyy [Moore] stepped up and made a lot of plays happen. He stepped right into that same role. Just credit [GM Brett] Veach. He brings a lot of good players in here, and so I can just go out there and go through my reads and guys get open.

On ‘if he was joking about throwing the ball to Kelce when he is manned up’:

“I am not joking at all. If he is man-to-man, I am going to give him a chance. He’s going to win most of them. Obviously, they have [S] Derwin [James Jr.] Derwin is going to win his battles because he’s probably the best safety in the league. I am going to give my guy a chance because I know how special he is.”

On if Kelce was ‘more valuable’ tonight due to injuries:

“I thought all of the tight ends were. [TE] Jody [Fortson] made some plays. [TE] Noah [Gray] made some plays. Travis [Kelce], obviously, made some plays. We stayed in a lot of bigger sets. We ran the football. I thought the offensive line did a heck of a job running the football, especially in the second half. We just let them eat and let them go out there and just run it. Then when we needed to make plays, guys stepped up and made plays. Hopefully, we can get healthier as the season goes on, get some of these guys back. That’s the good thing about this team is that everyone is going to step up and make plays when it counts.”

On ‘overcoming all the chatter in the offseason’:

“We are just taking it week-by-week. We take it day-by-day. We just try to get better. We knew that we were going to grow this year and we are going to keep getting better and better. I am proud of our guys. We have played a lot of tough games against a lot of great teams, and we have stepped up and won. Obviously, it feels good now. It will be a nice to plane ride home. The Super Bowl champs come into town next week, so we have to kind of prepare ourselves again when we go into this next week of practice.”

On the presence of the Chiefs’ fans tonight:

“Being on that sideline is special. To be with those guys, to have the Chiefs Kingdom in the stadium and be a part of this team, it is a special feeling. I know how lucky I am. When I talk to people that come from other places and when I see what is going on around the league, I know how lucky I am to be in this organization, and so I just try to embrace it every day.”

On Kelce:

"I think what is special about him is he just competes. At the end of the day, he's going to keep fighting until the very end. When you see that, not only is it impressive for him, but it gets other guys going. It shows that, like I say, he's one of the best, if not the best, tight end of all time, and he's coming to work every single day to get better. That shows you whenever you step into the facility, you are like, 'Man, I got to get to work. If this guy is doing it, I have to be able to at least match that.' And so that leadership that he brings, as well as the play he brings on the field, is special and it takes a lot off my shoulders."

On the offensive huddle prior to the game-winning drive:

"I just thought it was cool today that when I went into the huddle, everybody was just like, 'Let's just do it.' There was no doubt that we were going to go down there and score. There was no doubt that we were going to make it happen. From the offensive line to the receivers to the running backs, tight ends, everybody had the mindset of, 'Let's take it one play at a time, get it down the field and go down there and get a touchdown when it counts.' That's what we did."

On if there is 'less shock' in executing late scoring drives:

"You understand this league. It's always going to be hard. I never will take that for granted. This league, there are a lot of special players on both sides of the field. You go back to your fundamentals. You go back to not making it, 'Hey, we have to get a touchdown right now. We have to get a touchdown.' It's one play at a time. How can I execute this play? Move on to the next play and keep it going. That's usually when the good stuff happens is you just can really focus on what you have to do to make that play work."

On 'the feeling as a quarterback of leading a game-winning drive':

"I have seen enough now that until the clocks hit zero, I don't celebrate. Obviously, you are excited. Just trying to get the job done, try to win the game. You put in so much work. Everybody does. You put in so much work and to get that win, it shows that that work is paying off. All of that time that you are in the building, that you are away from your family, whenever you can have a drive like that, you can tell that it is worth it. Then you get to go home and be with your family and enjoy it with them."

On his 'chemistry' with Kelce:

"Obviously, there are a lot of reps, first off. We have played a lot of football together now. I joke around, I am getting old in this locker room now already. We have played a lot of football together. Have done a lot of reps, but he is just a competitor. I'll say it, I think that's the best talent that Travis has. Not the size, the speed, the route running. It's that he will compete to the very end. He's going to go down fighting. I respect that. I think that I am the same way is that I am going to do whatever I can to win no matter what the score is. We have a lot of guys like that on this team and I think that's what makes great teams are guys that won't give up even when it doesn't look great."

On 'if he will take Henry Winkler up on his dinner offer':

"I already told him I was. I didn't have time to do that this weekend, but hopefully we can win a lot of games to try to win the Super Bowl and then I will be back in L.A. at some point and take him up on that."