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Wednesday, September 5, 2018 | Hoag Performance Center | Costa Mesa, Calif.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN

Opening Statement:

"Opening day, full house. We're excited. Couldn't wait for this week to get here. Guys put in a lot of hard work, time and effort — and obviously our attention is Kansas City, but also it's on ourselves. We're trying to focus on some things that we can do better because it doesn't matter what the game plan is. If we don't go out and execute it, it's not going to matter. Any questions?"

On S Derwin James potentially starting:

"We'll see how the week goes. You know guys, young guys taking in the game plan seeing how they catch on in a couple of days it's not like training camp anymore. We go to specific game plans for people and they catch on quickly, yeah, they'll be out there on the field."

On Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes:

"You haven't seen much of him. I know him. He went to my alma mater. I've seen him play for a lot of years. I know he's very talented. Strong arm. He can move around and so they didn't show everything they're going to do in preseason so who knows. That's why we have to be more focused on ourselves this week, make sure that we're sound, we're disciplined. Our techniques are tight because you don't know what they're going to do."

On the difficulty of facing a new quarterback:

"Well, normally you have the whole offseason to get ready for this game. So the fear is doing too much because you know so much. But we know — we know what we know. They're not going to change too much, but they do have a new quarterback and I'm sure they have some wrinkles for him. They lost some guys [in free agency] on defense. They may do some things differently on defense, but we just have to pick up on the adjustments throughout the game and see where it goes from there."

On watching historical tape of Mahomes:

"You know, we saw that [Week 17] game [last year]. He played well in that game. He just came in and ran their offense."

On the feeling throughout the building:

"It's a different vibe. The focus is there. It's more business-like. Guys know, they know what's at stake now."

On C Mike Pouncey integrating with the offensive line:

"Mike is a skillful center, but I love the intangibles he brings in the leadership category. His whole demeanor — he brings a little alpha dog up front and I can see that a little bit, especially with the younger players. He's been good for our football team."

On TE Antonio Gates:

"I'm going to watch him closely this week. I want to know where he is conditioning-wise. We know that he can help us. That's why we brought him back. I don't know how much yet, but we'll see."

On Gates practicing this afternoon:

"He's going to practice today, yes."

On if Gates participated in any of Monday's practice:

"He was taking physicals Monday and signed his contract. He didn't do anything Monday."

On playing the Chiefs in Week 1:

"I do [like it] because they're the best team in our division. I think right away we get to see where we stack up against the best and that's all you can ask for as a coach and an athlete."

On QB Philip Rivers relating with younger players:

"He's a good leader and I think good leaders they always find a way to communicate with the people that they're around. It's intentional. I've seen them go to dinner with guys that are a lot younger than he is. Philip has his own unique way of doing that. That hasn't been a problem at all."

On the offense being more philosophically balanced early this season:

"No doubt [it will be], just being here for another year around the same players and coaching staff. We have a pretty good idea of what we do best and where we need to focus."

On Oakland trading DE Khalil Mack to Chicago:

"Never crossed my mind. My focus is on Kansas City right now."

On the poor start last season:

"No, [I haven't brought it up] at all. No. You can't take the wins and losses from last year over this year. So I don't even worry about that. I don't even talk about that. I do believe you can bring the culture over and I like what I see from my guys from that perspective."

On Kansas City as the best team in the division:

"Well, they've won the division — I mean back-to-back years. Until someone knock them off, they're the division champs. That's the way it's always been."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK PHILIP RIVERS**On facing Kansas City:**

"It's exciting. I think in the last — seems like in the last decade we've had quite a few of our opening games against division opponents whether it be Oakland, Denver, Kansas City. It's always exciting the opening game of the season, whoever it is. It is in the division, it carries a little more weight, but at the same time it's big. It's a big game. All games are big. All 16 are big, but however this one goes, there's a long road ahead. This doesn't automatically put you winning the division or it doesn't do the opposite of that either if we stumble — but it's a big game. I think especially with our start last year, our emphasis has been on a faster start and that will be key here on Sunday."

On the early test facing Kansas City:

"I think so and I think every season stands alone. I know it's been a handful — we've had quite a few in a row on us, but this current team has never played these guys and vice-versa. They haven't played us. That's the way I like to look at it — or if you want some positiveness, I go back to the eight. The eight before of the last eight [we played Kansas City] and I go how about that stretch there. It was pretty good on our end. So it starts with taking care of the ball. I think that's the biggest thing from my standpoint is six interceptions against these guys in the two games last year and only had four in the other 14. It's always important. The game against Kansas City got away from us, but the game at home we had two turnovers in the first half and it still was a one-score game in the fourth quarter. So, protecting the football is key, as it always is, and go out and execute. I think our team is focused and excited about getting off to a good start."

On what caused the turnovers against the Chiefs last season:

"Threw it to them. Nothing crazy. A mishap here or there, a poor decision here or there. There's a story to every turnover, but ultimately it's just taking care of it. The first couple were early in the season, then we kind of settled in down the stretch there and had a chance against Kansas City. We had the lead in the third quarter, but it got away from us. Again, there are guys in this locker room that didn't play in either of those games. There are guys in this locker room that weren't part of the last eight [where] we've had our share of struggles. So it's a new year and our team's fired up."

On TE Antonio Gates returning:

"It's good to have him back. It's good to see him again. It's funny [for] a guy like that [who's] been here that long, it's like he's never left. It's like he's been here all season and all training camp. It will be good to have him out there today in practice and good to have him back in the building."

On the Kansas City defense:

"I think first is just how different it is when you don't see [Oakland LB] Derrick Johnson out there and [Los Angeles Rams CB Marcus] Peters. It's different not seeing [S Daniel] Sorensen out there and [S Eric] Berry hadn't been in there. He's been dealing with some injuries — whether you see him or not, you always plan for him to be out there. It's been different seeing different guys, and after that you go, 'Well it's the same scheme and it's a heck -- it's still a heck of a group.' You always think about those edge rushers 50 [LB Justin Houston] and 55 [LB Dee Ford], they can really rush the passer. Then there are just a lot of new faces — a lot back from Dallas, different DBs in there that we've seen and other teams, but haven't seen in this Chiefs defense. So there will be a little bit of — you'll get Parker back, who we know very well and who I imagine will be in there from the first snap, a big part of that success and that run they had. There are certain things you're not sure how they're going to be and how they're going to match up just because we're not sure who is going to be in there in certain situations. All-in-all it's a [Defensive Coordinator] Bob Sutton-coached defense and it's a solid group. They play that scheme very well and we know what to expect on Sunday. Like I've always told you, I never overreact on our preseason — good or bad. I know there's been some negative reaction to their preseason defensively, but I don't buy that. We know what we'll get. We'll get Kansas City's best on Sunday."

On his level of excitement for the start of a season compared to earlier in his career:

"Probably a little different, but still super excited. Even in the meeting today installing first and second down passes, my hands were sweating a little bit thinking about some of the plays you had drawn up and this and that if they play this. I think, in a lot of ways the same. Maybe it's just a little more subdued, I guess than when I was 22, 23 years old, but [I'm] super excited. That opening week in the season even my oldest son he keeps saying — he must have said since Sunday, 'Hey, almost four days until Thursday.' He's counting down to tomorrow's game just until the season gets kicked off. It's something about that opening weekend that gets you fired up and it being at home and in the division, probably even adds to that."

On his comfort level with the routine this season:

"Yeah, I think you said it routine. I think routine is key. All of us have our routine, our game day routine, our Wednesday routine. We're used to having that. Last year was new and everything was new. What was going to be our new routine? I had the same game day at home routine at home for 13 years. So that was new. Now all that it's pushed aside we know that part and everything — I just think a little more dialed in. That isn't to say I felt like we weren't dialed in last year, but there's no denying it was different. So, shoot, we know how long it takes to get there and we know all those things from the pregame to where our lockers are to all those little things. We can just focus on the red team. They'll be in red. We'll be in white. Focus on the red team on Sunday."

On how a slow start can derail a season:

"Yeah, I think I look at that as a whole four — the four games. A 2-2 start last year would have had us playing in January. So, I think again no need to put added pressure on this one game. We know how big it is. There's no game you go into saying it's okay if we lose. I'm not by any means saying that, but at the same time you can't say if we don't win this game, then our season's over because that's not the truth either, but it's a big game in the division. It's one of 16. It just happens to be one against the team that's been the defending champs for the last handful of years and we'll be ready for it."

On WR Mike Williams:

"He's healthy. The biggest thing is that he's healthy. He missed really all the training camp [last year]. I don't remember what week it was when he got out there and it's just hard Wednesday and Thursday practices during the season to get a lot of reps. I thought it was huge for him this training camp, as you heard me say, to be consistently out there every day and he was. You saw him make a big play and just be part — just be a consistent performer and so it will be nice to have him in the mix from Week 1."

On if Gates will be ready to play Sunday:

"Yeah, from a me-to-you standpoint, it takes no time whatsoever. It's already — that's already taken care of, but I think from a standpoint of him getting in the flow, again, it's different. I mean, you know he's been taking care of himself and staying in shape, but when you're in cleats and you're practicing and it's a whole different deal. So, I'm sure you'll see how he feels throughout this week, but from a standpoint of confidence level of me to him and us being on the same page, I don't have any concerns with that."

On how the offense differs from previous years:

"We'll see, I think each year your offense kind of evolves as the year goes. As the year goes, things that are working good, what kind of runs, is [RB] Melvin [Gordon III] really rolling in the offensive line and what different personnel groups [work well]? I think those kind of things change and grow as the year goes until you kind of get in that groove. Hopefully, it doesn't take us as long to get into that groove. I'm not sure. We've worked on a lot of the same things this whole offseason like each team. I like Kansas City's defense. They have a pressure or two on defense that they haven't shown all preseason that we may see, much like each offense out there. They haven't shown everything they've run that's different. So I think those things you kind of see as the year goes. For the most part we're going to be the same — we're going to be the same style of offense. We're going to be balanced. We're going to throw a lot of completions, not turn it over and take our shots when teams give them to us. For the most part, we're going to be the same — we're going to be the same style of offense. We're going to be balanced. We're going to throw a lot of completions and not turn it over and take our shots when teams give them to us."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS TIGHT END ANTONIO GATES**On the process of returning to the Chargers:**

"You know, what happens is you have big differences and it's okay to disagree for the most part. I think, at one point, we disagreed on certain things and I think what we agreed on is that we had an opportunity this year to be a part of this family. This will always be family to me. So, it's like forgiving a family member and then moving forward. I think our goal is to go out and try to win a Super Bowl and that's what I wanted to be a part of. So that's what we agreed on and I came to the same conclusion and so here I am today."

On the importance of playing with the team this year:

"It's always important to you. You have so much skin in the game you expect the franchise to be here. I think everybody knew that about me, how loyal I am to the program and I tried to do the things that represent the whole organization with the utmost respect — but at the end of the day, the business side of it always had an effect on certain things and certain outlooks that you would never understand. Me personally, it was great. The process was what it was. Like I said, I wanted to be here they knew I wanted to be here, and our goal was the same. I think ultimately that's what it came down to. We have the opportunity to do something special and I wanted to be a part of that and they wanted me here."

On if he expected to see his jersey in the locker:

"No, not really. You know, due to the fact that how it all ended with no expectations was for me to be back here. I figured they moved on and gave them the best 15 years that I could possibly give them. So, no, with that being said, no, I didn't, but as time went by things were happening that was uncontrollable. So it was kind of became more realistic that I would have an opportunity to come back."

On if he has a new appreciation for putting on the pads on Sunday:

"I think the appreciation comes from just being in the locker room with the guys. I think once you get done and you move on, I have so many friends here that I've been playing with for a while now. I think that's what I missed the most, just the laughter being in the locker room, the preparation part of it, going out and playing with your brothers to try and win a game. So you don't have it — you know what I'm saying? You really start to embrace it even more when it's in your face, when you just live in a world and you are just a guy just doing everyday things that a normal person would do."

On how it feels to go to practice today:

"[Walk-through] was good. Got a chance to move around. Got a chance to get the calls again. I try to take my approach like my first day here because I've always felt like I wanted to treat every situation like my first day. Trying to learn. Things that I've heard before, just getting an opportunity to hearing it again and seeing things. Seeing formations, seeing the fronts and taking my same approach that got me to this, 15 years later."

On if he can be ready for Sunday:

"I've always been optimistic in terms of playing a game whether I was injured or not here, it didn't matter. So, I think I am well aware of the preparation that needs to be put into it throughout the week to go play a game at the highest level possible. With that being said, the way I imagine my career and all the opportunities that I have a chance to enjoy and be a part of, I don't know — it just depends on how I feel leading up to Sunday. That's something that we talked about. I don't want to put too much on Monday through Friday because it's still football when it's all said and done. It's a game. You go out and play in and compete and mistakes happen, but my ability to adapt, I've always tried to. That's what I try to be is trying to figure out how to adapt in certain situations and this doesn't change. Now, I didn't have the OTAs and the mini camps and training camps, but I do have a week to try to prepare to get ready for the Kansas City Chiefs and hopefully I can make the most of it."

On how he feels:

"I feel good. I feel like how you'd feel if you missed minicamp and training camp, so it's the same thing that you still have to go through. You have to get through kinks and the rust, which is normal. I've always — even when I was here throughout the training camps— game one was still intense. There was still the nervousness. I don't think that would change for anyone. I don't think the guys here feel any different. Still going to go out there, still have to get in better shape because you cannot duplicate playing in a game. Just can't do it no matter what you try to do."

On the challenge preparing physically and mentally:

"I think it's always been a combination of both because as you get older as a player, you know that it becomes mental. In a sense, you can only do something physical. Physical or learning ability, I ran and did things, but ultimately I try to use my mind as a staple of how I play the game now. Just trying to be crafty in what I do and trying to be, seeing different fronts, different schemes has helped me out a whole bunch. So for me, it's just the physical part will come eventually, but as of right now I'm trying to consume everything — the plays, what they're trying to look for, what we're doing. That's my main focus right now is on the mental aspect of it."

On if he had contact with other teams in the offseason:

"Yeah, I mean I had my share of people who called and were interested, but at the same time I was like I said I've always — I was kind of going day by day. I had nobody that would interest me more than the Chargers, obviously, because I'm here. I just tried to wait and see how everything would play out."

On how much he kept up with the team:

"I wasn't here so I didn't see as much, but I've heard some great things about our rookies and the guys we drafted, which ultimately it stems from the organization of what we've been able to do over the years. I've never been worried about the kind of guys that gets drafted here because, obviously, we have a high standard. So, you know, once they become a part of this family, I expect them to carry and conduct themselves in a way which were set years before they became a Charger."

On his expectations this year:

"You know, I think that part never changes for you as a person. I think my competitive edge, who I am mentally will always remain to try and go out and win as many football games [as we can]. That was always my approach. That will continue to be my approach. I think that's the reason why I'm still here, to try and help win football games. So, no, it's been the same. It's always been the same. Go out and be the best I can be and help win football games."