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Chargers Media Availability

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HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On diverting from scripted plays after a loss of yardage on an early down:

“You definitely go off script if something like that happens within the first 15 [plays]. That could also be affected by which field zone you are in, too. For instance, in the Philadelphia game, when you start the game backed up, you have to go off-script and go more into your situational stuff. That second play yesterday definitely affected that next play, for sure.”

On LB Kyzir White:

“Kyzir White is playing at a high level for an NFL linebacker. He has the entire season. He started, really, with an outstanding training camp, and then he’s just gotten better and better as the season has gone on. He’s a commander. He can really see the game. He’s calm. He’s physical. He’s outstanding in pass coverage. He can blitz. He’s a complete linebacker. He had 12 tackles yesterday. That physicality that he brings to the table, he had a big tackle for a loss. He’s outstanding in past coverage. He’s a general out there. He’s the type of guy that we definitely want to be joining up with, playing defense with. I’m really proud of the way that he’s playing. What that has done for us is allow us to really bring [LB] Kenneth [Murray Jr.] along in a lot of different ways over the last couple of weeks since the injury. I thought you saw that on display yesterday. I felt like they played well together yesterday. We were trying to get K9 into a rhythm — made sure that his conditioning was OK, too, because this was his first game back in a while. You were able to see him in a variety of locations. I was happy with the way that he played in his first game back and I think that Kyzir had a lot to do with that.”

On if it is ‘fair to say’ that the pairing of White and Murray will be present defensively:

“Yes, I think that’s fair to say. We were really excited about the way K9 played yesterday. There are things to correct, for sure, but I just thought that he played with toughness, with physicality and made some plays. I thought that he looked comfortable out there from an assignment standpoint. Just continue to work with him and I think that he’s going to continue to get better and better.”

On WR Andre Roberts’ performance in the return game since joining the Chargers:

“I think Andre has really given us a lift. I know that there’s a lot more confidence in our return units, just who they’re blocking for. I think most special teams coaches will tell you that who they’re blocking for matters. I think that he gives you that confidence of a guy that’s been there and done that, and he’s done it with us with the Chargers. I thought, yesterday, he had a couple of good punt returns, was able to create some space for us, which we really haven’t had the entire season. The Philly game was a really good demonstration of that. But, I felt like yesterday, in the punt return game, he had a good game. I think he’s going to continue to help us grow because he sees a lot out there. He does a lot for the younger guys that are out there playing, in terms of setting up blocks and understanding kickoff coverage schemes. He can kind of give you that extra set of eyes, that coach on the field, which is a big help, as well.”

On if S Nasir Adderley was ‘close’ to playing yesterday:

“He was close, just didn’t make it. He was still really sore. He was out there Friday. After the practice, just didn’t quite feel up to it. We just wanted to kind of take it the game time, but he just wasn’t able to come back. Hoping that we can work him back into practice this week.”

On if CB Michael Davis could potentially play this week:

“The plan, according to the injury report this morning, is for him to be able to work back into practice this week. I don’t know if he’ll play in the game, but I know that he’s going to try and work back into practice. He’s progressing well. He had a hamstringing maybe a year ago or a couple of years ago. This is definitely not as severe as the last one. He’s been working hard at it. Look forward to seeing him in practice this week.”

On LB Drue Tranquill’s status:

“He is still in the COVID[-19] protocols for right now.”

On ‘protections issues’ yesterday and if they were due to intricacies within Vikings Head Coach Mike Zimmer’s defensive scheme:

“On the second play, they were just in man-to-man. We were in a ‘block it up’ play-action [play]. [Vikings LB] Eric Kendricks added off his coverage, his coverage block, so he added. That can be tough on that protection design. It’s a well-protected play, but if that certain player adds to the rush, it can be problematic. You have to make sure that you speed it up at quarterback. It was one of those untimely, maybe unlucky, types of plays for us. Good play for them. What we can’t do there, though, was take the loss. Hopefully, we can throw that football away. We had a good route called for the coverage; we just weren’t able to get the actual pass off in time.”

On the decision to challenge Vikings WR Justin Jefferson’s reception in the fourth quarter:

“It was third down and there was huge field position at stake because of the game, of the actual reception. To me, from my vantage point, it looked similar to [WR] Keenan’s [Allen] drop, where there was movement with the ball. From my vantage point, it was worth the challenge because of the yards that were at stake. We still had the two-minute [warning stoppage], so felt like it was worth it given the field position and given the optics of the end of the catch, from both upstairs and from the field. Just felt like it would be worth it, given the circumstance.”

On if he was the one who made the call to challenge the catch:

“There’s communication from the booth, for sure. If it’s an either/or decision, then it just comes down to you as the head coach. That’s kind of the way it was yesterday. It was just kind of an either/or. I felt like it was worth it. It didn’t go our way. Seeing the TV copy, I definitely think that it was worth the challenge.”

On ‘why downfield passing rates are relatively low’:

“I think that you can see from the TV copy, that I know you guys study — the All-22 [version] — I know that you see the frequency of the passes that are designed to get to the deep part of the field. Whether or not that happens is a reflection of the coverage systems being played or the pass rush. Going into the plan, there is a lot of design to get to the deep part of the field. There are a lot of plays, not only that are just on the call sheet, but that are being called to access the deep part of the field. When you play against a quarterback that’s as gifted as [QB] Justin Herbert is, and you play against skill-position groupings like ours, you’re going to try and force them to drive the field. That’s going to be a part of your strategy. I don’t think that that’s uncommon to quarterbacks like him or a passing attack like ours, and so I think that we have to continue to find ways to get explosions without the air yards because air yards is one thing, the resulting play is another thing. If a team is going to say, ‘Hey, you’re not going here in the deep part of the field from an air yard standpoint,’ what you have to be able to do is create explosions from the run-and-catch game or from misdirection, more catch-and-run type of plays that can you get you an explosion. Then, find ways in the dropback game to access the intermediate part of the field that can also result in an explosion. In the passing game, you always have to factor in pass protection first, in terms of your thought process. I know that that’s something that we do an excellent job of. I know that we’re like seventh in the NFL in sacks allowed. I know that our pressure rate, compared to other teams, is outstanding. I think that’s a real strength of our offense. I think the reason why that number is the way it is is because you’re taking into consideration who’s blocking and who you’re blocking. I think that you can never spend enough time trying to access the deep part of the field. You know the way that we feel about that. I think that you can see from the design of our plays that there’s a lot of design that’s supposed to go there, and then whether or not it gets there is probably dictated by the coverage. I think that we just have to continue to try and find as many creative ways, within our groupings, to get there. If not, then we really have to be strategic, in terms of creating the explosions another way and being patient that way, and always being on the look for creative ways to get those big plays because yesterday, that was a big part of the passing game. We just didn’t have the explosions yesterday.”

On if opposing defenses are ‘taking the deep part of the field away because of Herbert’s arm strength’:

“I think it’s a fair representation of our quarterback and our receiving corps. When you have [WR] Keenan [Allen], [WR] Mike [Williams], [TE] Jared [Cook], [TE Donald] Parham [Jr.], you have four guys, for sure, that can get to the deep part of the field and that are dangerous in the deep part of the field. Just from nine games, I think that you’ve seen a concerted effort to keep them out of there. Now, they’ve done that in a variety of ways, but I think that our passing attack is still very prolific, in terms of where we’re ranked and our passing yards and our frequency of throws and stuff like that — how we’re playing on third down, red zone. I think that we can improve. The thing that I’m excited about is that I like where we’re ranked in terms of yardage, and I think that we can improve, but I think where we need to go as a passing offense — as just an offense, in general — is just scoring the ball better. I think that we need to score the ball better. That happens when you get more explosions. I think that’s where, yesterday, we fell short.”

On if OLB Uchenna Nwosu displayed a ‘strong performance’ yesterday:

“I think you’re seeing it right. Uchenna was outstanding in the game yesterday. I felt like yesterday was our best edge day. We really challenged those guys this week. I talked to you guys about how I think that we’re finding our sweet spot in the run front and I think that yesterday was a real reflection of that, and it started with our edges; [OLBs] Joey [Bosa], Uchenna [Nwosu], Kyler [Fackrell], Chris [Rumph II] — K9 [LB Kenneth Murray Jr.], when he was on the edge. I thought that we were really, really physical at the point of attack. As you guys know, both of those backs are really, really good. I felt like it was as complete of a performance that we’ve had and it started with our edges. I thought Uchenna was really physical. I thought that he rushed. I thought his takeoff was a lot different yesterday. We’ve really been emphasizing take-off and get-off on the edge. I thought that was our best game. I really have liked the way Uchenna has played for us this season. I’ve made that comment, as well. I think that he’s feeling real confidence right now. That’s what’s exciting for us, we see that improvement. He’s a good example of it. I thought yesterday was a strong effort from him, for sure.”

On CB Tevaughn Campbell’s performance yesterday:

“T.C. played really hard. I thought that he contested yesterday. He didn’t play his technique correctly all the time, and that’s what hurt him yesterday. There were two throws on the sideline that are tough. One, specifically, down close to their sideline. That’s a big-time throw-and-catch. The last one on the third-and-six, we’re in the middle of the field closed, so he needs to be on top of that route. That’s where he fell short. When you’re in post middle, you need to be on top of that route. When you get an outside release, you need to be on top of the route. If you’re going to lose, you’re going to lose on a comeback, you’re going to lose on a stop route — you’re not going to lose on a ‘nine’ [go route]. Even though that it was a spectacular throw-and-catch, it shouldn’t be there for him to make that catch because we should be on top of the route. But, those were good catches by Justin [Jefferson] and good throws by [Vikings QB] Kirk [Cousins]. The one that was disappointing for me with T.C. was the hold on third-and-15, where we go and give up an out [route] where there is a safety right inside of him. At the end of the game on third-and-20, when he should be sinking the guy — [Cover] 2-Man that we were taking away [Vikings WR] Adam Thielen and Justin Jefferson. I think there were some technique errors that he had in that game that he’s going to learn a lot from because he’s still a new player. But, the thing I like about the guy, he’s a competitor. I think that he’s going to bounce back. He made a lot of good plays in that game, too. He almost made that interception where he kind of rolled over. He did a lot of good things in the game. Those two guys are, as we talked about last week, are as good of a tandem as we’re going to face. I think he’ll grow from it. He competed, but I think, fundamentally and then situationally, he can improve.”

On Herbert’s reaction to an incomplete third-down attempt in the first quarter:

“[WR Joshua Palmer] has the short-in on the outside half of it. They were in two-deep [safety], so Justin [Herbert] made the right decision. I think that Josh could have pushed that route depth a little bit deeper. I think that he sped it up a little bit. Especially against a cloud corner, I think you can really push that a little bit further. Then, it was a drop. It was [thrown] back pad. I think it’s one of those moments, from an execution standpoint, where in a got-to-have-it situation, you need to make that catch. If it was frustration, I’m sure that it was with that. Nothing more, nothing less.”

On if RB Joshua Kelley was ‘supposed to pick up’ Vikings LB Camryn Bynum on Bynum’s sack:

“It’s a designer look there. [C] Corey and Josh ended up on the same guy. Having done it again, you would like Corey to be on the safety and Josh to be on the linebacker so that you’re two-for-two there. It’s a good protection scheme by them. It just happened to come at the wrong time for us. You give credit to Mike [Zimmer] and their staff on that one. It was a good play call for them. That was the one protection issue that stood out to us. We wish that we had that one back.”

On if WR Mike Williams is ‘being bothered by a knee issue’

“His knee is not an issue. It’s a non-factor in his play. From a design standpoint, I said it last week, he’s definitely in the plan. Down in there in the red zone, we have them on the dart and we drop it. It was a kind of a big incompleteness. We had a couple of designer [plays] — the shots formed in the deep part of the field that the ball just didn’t get there. I like the way that he’s practicing. I like the way that he’s playing. We have to continue to get him involved. The point is well-taken. We play better when Mike is involved, that’s for sure. That’s what are our games state so far through nine games; when Mike’s involved, we perform better. This last game, the Baltimore game and the New England game, we weren’t able to get him the football like we hoped, and those were all three losses. We have to continue to feature him, but not disappointed with him at all. I know that he’s at the front of all of our thoughts. Like I said last week, I love the way that he’s practicing. He is going to have a huge impact on our season moving forward, that’s for sure.”

On DL Jerry Tillery’s execution on Vikings TE Tyler Conklin’s second-quarter touchdown:

“It was a play-action pass. We were in a goal line defense. He’s coming off of the ball and it was one of those, ‘Hey, he’s reacting to the play-action.’ He was coming off of the ball like it was a run, and then reacted to the pass, saw Kirk [Cousins] bail and just kind of floated back there. He’s definitely not involved in the coverage; he’s rushing. He just happened to be in the way. He was just more reacting to what he is seeing. His job is to be going forward. He just kind of made an instinctive reaction. I wish he had ‘Go Go Gadget’ arms a little bit. It was a near miss there for him.”

On WR Jalen Guyton:

“I like coaching J.G. We know who J.G. is as a player. I think that his consistency and performance can improve. He had a drop yesterday, which we need to continue to earn that trust with the quarterback. We had a couple of plays in the deep part of the field early in the season that didn’t happen for us. We have to continue to feature his skills and how they complement the other two guys. That’s always the challenge when you’re trying to scheme for as many skill players as we’re trying to scheme for — when you factor in the tight ends and the wideouts and the backs — we’re just trying to find that sweet spot for Jalen. It’s kind of an ongoing process, but I think that, to your point, we do need to see that production from that third wideout spot, much like we do in the second running back spot, so that people really respect that player out there and we force them to defend everybody who is out there.”

On the tight ends ‘not being involved’ in yesterday’s game:

“Just kind of how the game unfolded. I’ve been really impressed with the way [TE] Tre’ [McKitty] has played in the last several games. I think getting him involved in our offense has been big, from a run-game standpoint. Tre’ can contribute in the passing game. I know that it hasn’t happened for him yet, but I know that he can do it. It’s finding the right balance with those other guys. I think that, from the way that the game flowed yesterday, the ball didn’t get there to that position as much as it had in previous games. The groupings that we were featuring against that defense as the game went on were just different than the Philly game. We like all for those guys. Like you saw yesterday with D.P. [TE Donald Parham Jr.], he’s just a weapon. With [TE] Jared [Cook], we all know his production level so far this season. We have to continue to feature that group. I think so much of offense is going into a gameplan and finding that sweet spot for your players, and then your players having that understanding that each week is going to be a little bit different and your role may be a little bit different within the plan. I think tight end is a position that is especially like that, because the run game can be a big component in it, too; how you want to run the ball. We’re going to continue to try and do our best to get those guys in the right spots.”

On if 'lack of execution' on offense is due to being in 'Year 1' of the system:

"I think that there is always that discovery process that I've talked about. I think there is that continuity and that chemistry that is real. Sometimes it happens really fast and then you never look back, and sometimes you kind of fight to find it. From an offensive yardage and ranking standpoint, our offense has been very productive. That's the truth. It's been very productive. I like the way that we've moved the football. From my vantage point, we need to score the ball better. I think that that's where my energy is after that last ball game, is scoring the ball better. Yesterday, our yardage wasn't where it needed to be, for sure. But I think that scoring the football is more where I'm at with this group, and then creating the explosions, which will be a byproduct — the explosions will create the scoring for you. That's where I'm at with it. When you look at total yards, pass offense, sacks [allowed], first downs gained, all of these relevant numbers that people look at, I like where we're at, but I think that we need to score the ball better."

On the Vikings third and long conversions:

"They were 1-for-9 at one point in the game. Then, we had a third and 15 where we held, where we were in outstanding pass coverage. We had third and 10, where we held and had a great coverage system. Third and six on the last drive, they made a big throw on the sideline on a 50-50 pass. I was disappointed with the third and 20, when we were in the wrong technique, and it never should've come to fourth and two. That sequence was poor. And then on the third and nine, there was a throw when they were in empty, which I take ownership of. We were in a miscommunication there, where they were able to hit an in-route. We miscommunicated the call, which falls on me. But other than that, play, I liked how we rushed and covered just in terms of our thought process, our design, how our guys were playing. I felt like penalties yesterday for me was something I was disappointed with. Otherwise, I really liked our plan, and I liked the way our guys were playing. I think you take away those two plays from a penalty standpoint, and you're looking at a different movie."

On safeties Derwin James Jr. and Alohi Gilman running into each other in coverage:

"We were in position. We had it matched, perfectly. Alohi should tailpipe the receiver, which means he should be on the lower half of the player. He was on the higher half of the player. When you're on the higher half, there's the risk of running into one another, and that's what happened. If he were on the lower part of that route, and Derwin plays the top of it, now we're perfect and Derwin probably makes the interception. Everybody else was perfect on the play — we were ready for the play, the way we matched the route. Our location on those receivers was just a little off, and we ran into each other. But our guys were ready for it, and I have to do a better job of putting Lo through that so he's sure of that location."

On punt coverage:

"We have to do a better job coaching. Those guys can do it. We had a right-side issue on the first punt; we have a new right gunner. We put an edge on the return, and our right side had two guys in close proximity to each other instead of getting proper spacing at the point of attack. [TE] Stephen Anderson and [LB] Nick Niemann — then [DL] Chris Rumph [II] was late getting over there. Our right side was in poor position, which is why he got over there. All those guys I mentioned can do it, and they have done it. We have to do a better job coaching and we're working through it at all times with those guys. Everything is a learning experience, and right now, it's an area we need to improve. We can't lose the vertical field position. We had minus-55 in hidden yards yesterday, and we had three penalties on teams. We need to be better, and we're going to work hard at it."

On RB Larry Rountree III:

"He had a couple quality runs yesterday. I feel like you're seeing a player that can perform, he just needs to be more consistent. I think he's performed better on special teams for us, and provided a legitimate special team running back, which is important. We have to continue to teach him — every game is a learning experience for him. Simple things — tracks, alignments, protection. All these things that go into being a complete NFL back. But he's working hard, he's still new. I thought he did some good things yesterday, and the touchdown run at the goal line was a big run. He looked powerful on that run, and that's a good thing to have down there."

On his first season as a head coach:

“It’s an opportunity of a lifetime. Energizing, challenging. I think every day is a huge learning experience for me, but it’s energizing. Every day, I gain more and more confidence in myself. I really love it — I really love doing this. I feel like nine games in, I have a pretty good sense of who are team is, and where we are, where we need to go. That’s a good thing. I think we’ve established a good way of playing, a good way of operating on a day-to-day basis. Setting high expectations for performance that I think everybody understands. And now we have the second half of our season; it’s going to really define our season. We’re halfway — passed halfway, now — and we’ve given ourselves the chance to compete. But we have to get to work, we have to improve, and that’s also on my mind. When I wake up, it’s how much we need to improve, and that’s where I’ve been spending a lot of my energy.”

On his coffee intake:

“I try to have some balance. I try to wake up, and on my way in have one. It gets me in the right focus on my way in early. I made a pledge to my wife that I make sure it’s not too much. I’ll transition to tea every now and then, to keep it in moderation. But I enjoy it. I’m one of those people that truly enjoys coffee; it’s one of my passions. I don’t have that many passions — I’m passionate about the coffee I drink. It gives me great strength. My father’s great saying growing up was, ‘Variety is the spice of life with me.’ I do a little bit of this, a little bit of that. Breakfast blend, a little dark roast, in the middle; you name it, I’ll try it. [Offensive Coordinator] Joe Lombardi has Café Lombardi — he has a Jura here. He always has high-quality coffee, too. I like to keep it moving as long as it’s hot. It has to be hot, nothing cold in the Staley household.”

CENTER COREY LINSLEY**On the inconsistencies within the offense:**

“In my mind, the stuff we’ve gone over is just execution. I feel like we have the eyes in the room, I feel like everybody else feels that way as well. It’s not an excuse at all, it’s just an acknowledgement to know that we are in the first year of the system, and we have that attitude of no excuses. It’s never a crutch that we’re going to lean on. As long as we acknowledge that and know that these things are going to come up, and we don’t freak out and try to blame. I feel like what happens when you freak out is you try to blame people instead of reasoning through it, thinking logically, and trying to figure out what exactly the problem is. I feel like we have that going for us. Just knowing that we are going to have these inconsistencies, and the pressure that we have on ourselves to keep moving forward and keep growing in this system and learning different things that come up. Now we can have answers to them. The more we can do that, the less these inconsistencies are going to come up. I do feel like there’s no one reason, it’s just an execution thing. I need to do a better job executing, other guys on the team will acknowledge that as well.”

On the newness of the offense:

“We’ve done a pretty good job, and I feel like there’s such a small margin for error in this league. Especially for having played a lot of good teams. I feel like we’ve beat some good teams, we’ve lost to some good teams. It’s not an excuse, it’s just an acknowledgement. I know [G Michael] Schofield [III] and I talked in the Patriots game — there was an issue that actually came up in the Patriots game that we’d discussed in camp. And I know he wasn’t there for that. We came off on the sideline and I was like, ‘Hey, that issue actually came up in camp. I wasn’t sure if you were going to do that or not — adjust in that way.’ And he said, ‘No, I totally get what you’re saying. I would’ve done this.’ And I was like, ‘Awesome, cool.’ And then boom — no, we’re on the same page. That type of thing has been happening. And I feel like to keep growing, to keep getting better, to lessen the inconsistencies, we just need to keep pushing through. That’s the only way I know how to do it.”

On the Vikings defense:

“They had some guys out. With [Vikings LB Anthony] Barr being out, we knew some of their things were going to change. There were some in-game adjustments that we had to do, and I felt like we did them. On one, they just got us with the sack and the safety. I blocked the first thing I saw; I wish I would’ve seen the safety and stuck to that side. But regardless, kudos to them. It’s kind of what’s made their defense so great over the years, being able to do that. It wasn’t like they came out in a totally new deal and threw an entirely new playbook at us. We just have to execute better — we have to keep growing, keep learning. I felt like coming out of this game and meeting with [Run Game Coordinator/OL] Coach Frank Smith, we grew today. But the only way we’re going to be able to see if that came true is next Sunday.”

On the Chargers matching donation to his charity of choice, his work Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA):

“We’re very thankful and grateful to the entire Chargers organization for doing that, playing part in that, in whatever role. We’re looking forward to building that relationship with CASA out here, just like we did with CASA Wisconsin of Brown County. That money’s going to go a long way, and they can never have enough funds. They’re doing great work — CASA all across the country is doing great work. We really appreciate it.”

On the continuity of the offensive line:

“That acknowledgement to know we’re growing, to know this is the first time that we’ve all played with each other, and to consistently attack each day, communicate and talk about different looks and issues that come up. There’s a long list of things that we can improve on. The guys in the room are all great, and they come to work every day, and we have the right thing on our mind. I feel like [Run Game Coordinator/OL] Frank [Smith] and [Assistant Offensive Line] Shaun [Sarrett] are fantastic guys. We’ve come a long way from training camp, but we obviously didn’t play well enough to win yesterday. Team loss, team win — however you want to paint it each week — it is what it is. We have to keep growing, we have to keep communicating, and talking about the different issues that come up. That’s how we’ll get where we want to be.”

LINEBACKER KENNETH MURRAY JR.

On his first start back from injury:

“It felt good. It’s been five games, so getting back out there, moving around, and getting back to game speed felt good. A couple times, I came out to regain my breath. But it felt good. Today, I feel a little sorer than usual, but that’s all a part of getting back.”

On his role on the edge:

“It went well. I feel like there are things I can do to be better. As we’re going throughout the game, I kept talking to my coach [Defensive Line/OLBs], saying, ‘Man, I see this. I can shoot it here; I can be better here to make more impact plays.’ But it went well. That plan started to develop as I started to come back and get healthier. Just talking about giving me more of a role on the edge, and also playing inside backer as well, which I feel is good. I like that role because it allows me to be multiple and show my versatility. I feel like that’s something I’m capable of doing — being able to bounce back from the edge to inside linebacker. Just playing a bunch of different things. That’s really where it came from, and I feel like I handled it pretty well yesterday.”

On how his role on the edge impacts the scheme:

“Being on the edge is simple. A majority of the time, I’m either outside defender or I’m playing the run. There aren’t as many responsibilities as it is at inside backer. It’s being able to see a bunch of different things. I feel like being on the edge allowed me to get to the quarterback more, which is something I want to do more. It allowed me to be more disruptive and cause havoc. That’s what I want to do; whether it’s at inside linebacker or at the edge position — just being able to come in and cause havoc.”

On the defense:

“We have some stuff to clean up. We didn’t play to the extent that we want to play to. We want to be elite; we want to be able to close out games and get the ball back to our offense. I feel like we weren’t able to do that in those critical moments yesterday. It just comes down to us homing in on our jobs and getting better at that — executing better. It was a tough day in the office. Giving up long third downs isn’t something you want to do. We’re going to have to look at ourselves and be accountable, ready to work next week.”

On his dual role in the scheme:

“That was the whole plan from the jump — going out there, working half of my drills with the edge, and then going back to inside linebacker. I talked to the coaches, and that was their plan from the jump for me to play edge and also inside backer. This week, it was making sure I got comfortable in the first day and getting back to what I know at inside backer the rest of the week. I feel comfortable. It’s something I’ve been doing; I did in college.”

On readjusting to the defense coming back from injury:

“Being out hurt me because I’m a football guy. I live, eat, sleep, and breathe football. It’s really the first time in my career I’ve ever missed a game, so being out, being injured, and missing five games was something that was a challenge for me. It was a challenge, and that’s how I looked at it. I just tried to find ways to continue to get better. Whether that was being here early in the morning, watching film with my coach, or continuing to work in rehab. Doing everything I can to be able to get back. And also, when I get back, being able to see things clearer. Just trying to continue to get better, in spite of being out. That’s the only thing I can control, and, in that moment, it was just get better.”

On his preference to edge or inside linebacker:

“Both allow me to be disruptive, it just depends on what kind of play is being ran at us, and what I’m seeing. I feel like it doesn’t matter. Being on the edge, I can be disruptive by coming off the edge, or I can be disruptive playing a run off the edge. And I feel like at inside backer, I can be disruptive depending on what I see and knowing when I can shoot my shot and when I can’t shoot my shot. I really do feel comfortable in both positions because it’s been something I’ve done pretty much my whole career. At Oklahoma, I played some edge snaps and some inside backer snaps. Being versatile isn’t something I struggle with.”