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Chargers Training Camp Availability

Friday, August 20, 2021 ⚡ Jack Hammett Sports Complex ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On S Derwin James Jr. closing joint practices with a red zone interception:

“A lot of awareness of what’s happening in the red area, that’s what I saw. I think that he really anticipated the matchup, anticipated the route. [49ers TE] George [Kittle] got him in seven-on-seven on a similar sort of stem, then George went to the back corner — on that one, Derwin held his ground. That’s a special matchup. It’s been fun to see those guys go head-to-head the last couple of days. They’re two of the best in the entire league — not just at their positions, they’re two of the best players in the NFL. To see that competition, both in the passing game and in the run game, it was a great environment out there. That was a big-time play.”

On his level of excitement upon seeing the interception and how that reflects on the defensive unit:

“You need your premium players playing well in those types of situations. Most of the time, in the NFL, the end of the game is going to come down to two-minute, low red area — those ‘got to have it’ situations. You know where good teams are going to go in those situations. George [Kittle] is as good of a player, really in any down-and-distance, but specifically down there. It’s an awesome matchup and great work for us. Can’t thank the 49ers enough for two really good days of work.”

On ‘chippy’ circumstances toward the end of practice:

“There was good competition. It never crossed the line. Today was just normal, NFL competition. Second day of playing with another team. Their coaching staff, our coaching staff, their players, our players — I thought that we all really respected the game. Any time that you’re going against someone for the second day, there is going to be that intensity, but it never crossed the line. That was important for both teams. I was really proud of the way that we practiced these last two days, for sure.”

On the run defense ‘giving up’ long plays to the 49ers offense:

“I saw one. The first run, [RB] Raheem [Mostert] bounced it and we kind of lost the force. Other than that, I thought that we played really well all week. That’s a really good running team. I felt like our interior guys were playing well, the linebackers were flowing well, and then, our DBs, what they really force you to do is they force your DBs to tackle. They do a really good job of that. I like the way that we competed. We got a really good look against one of the premier running teams in the league.”

On T Rashawn Slater:

“Same as yesterday. Feeling good, just keeping him out of this setting. I truly believe that he would go if we had a game this week. We’re just going to make sure that he’s well. Next week, hopefully, we can get him back to practice.”

On ending practice earlier than anticipated:

“It sometimes happens when you have some people out. I know that we were low on [offensive] tackles with [T] Bryan [Bulaga] and [T] Rashawn [Slater] not there. Then, [T] Trey Pipkins [III] is having his baby today, so we were a little bit low on tackles. Same thing with them. It kind of gets like that. When you have two good staffs, you kind of know when to say when. We have a game to play Sunday. A lot of respect for how we managed these last two days, keeping our guys healthy so that they can go compete in the game on Sunday.”

On if there is a volume element on the coaches film and the level of enthusiasm displayed over the last two practices by the 49ers:

“No, there’s not sound on the tape. When you get to the TV copies, yes, there will be. I think that’s part of how they play over there, their style. Just because they’re talking a lot, that doesn’t mean that the results are translating. I just think that’s how they do things over there. I think that our guys came out and competed today. Yesterday, I thought that they came out and competed. I like the way that we performed. Not having some of our guys out there — as you guys know, with Rashawn [Slater], Bryan [Bulaga] and [WR] Mike [Williams] — I felt like it was an even matchup because they didn’t have [49ers DL] Nick [Bosa] and [49ers DT Javon] Kinlaw. I felt like this was really even competition. I like the way that we played yesterday. A big part of the NFL is how you play when some of your guys are down. You still have to go out there and compete against the best teams in the league with some of your backups in there. I thought we were able to get a really good evaluation of some of our guys — guys like [T] Storm Norton, guys like [T] Trey [Pipkins III] who were having to block some of the edges — and how we would plan if we had those guys in there. I thought that it was a really good evolution for us the last couple of days.”

On if he was ‘encouraged’ by the offense’s performance:

“Definitely. That’s a top-five defense in the league. They were the number one defense two years ago, they were top-five last year, and I expect them to be one of the top defenses in the NFL. I felt like it was a really good measuring stick for us. I love the way that [QB] Justin Herbert played over the last two days, I know that. I like the way that our receivers competed. That front is going to be as good of a front as you’re going to block in the NFL, even with those two guys out. It’s an outstanding front seven.”

On who will start at QB on Sunday:

“[QB] Easton [Stick] is going to start the game out, and then [QB] Chase will take the second half.”

On the benefit of joint practices:

“When you go into these practices, you really want to join up with the right team. We have so much respect for that group and how they do things. You also want to play a team that’s different than you, that has a different type of style where it can prepare you for what’s down the line in the NFL. Playing against those guys, it kind of prepared us for both things. You also want to measure yourself against somebody really good, and they’re really good. The work that we were able to get in, and collaborating with their staff to create really good practice scripts. I was really impressed with the environment out here. There was a lot of high-level ball out on this field.”

On his level of concern with Bulaga’s injury:

“Where we’re at in training camp is when football kind of sets in. We’re three-plus weeks in, and football life is happening to guys. You’re going to get the soreness, you’re not going to feel great, and I think that’s kind of where we are at. We’re at that peak of training camp. It’s nothing to be concerned about. Most of the things that our guys are going through are just football soreness — probably 20 years ago, that’s what they’d be saying, ‘Hey, you’re just really sore because you guys have been working hard.’ Looking forward to getting him and these other guys back. We still have a bunch of time before our first game.”

On is Slater will play on Sunday:

“He will not play on Sunday.”

On if the veteran players along the offensive line will play on Sunday:

“We’re going to work through that tonight and see where we’re at. With [G] Matt [Feiler] and [G] Oday [Aboushi], specifically, we’re going to see where they’re at physically, and then we’ll make that determination for Sunday.”

On his evaluation of the offensive line's performance on Thursday after watching the film:

"I thought that they competed. I felt like there were some good moments. They had some stuff on third down that's new to pick up. I thought that there were plenty of good moments, and then there were plenty of moments where, 'Hey, we need to learn from what happened.' A big part of when it's not live to the ground, what you underestimate is what the quarterbacks are doing. What I really liked was the way that our quarterbacks played yesterday. [QB] Justin Herbert was strong in the pocket. When the pocket was tight, the ball was out. We weren't taking a bunch of unnecessary sacks. Then, there are some times where there isn't anywhere to go with the football and you have to take a sack, and you have to be strong with the ball. That's important to me at the quarterback position. I was able to evaluate that yesterday because the pocket was tight at times. We weren't in a gameplan where you might be helping those guys a little bit more than normal, but I think that it was good for our quarterbacks to feel that because that's what is going to happen at some point during the season, probably. You're not going to be playing with all of your guys. I was impressed with our quarterback play yesterday, all three guys — Justin [Herbert], specifically — going against their first group. [Ts] Storm [Norton] and Trey [Pipkins III], I thought that they had a lot of good moments yesterday. It's just not easy. I've coached [Bears OLB] Khalil Mack and [Broncos OLB] Von Miller, and we coach [OLB] Joey Bosa — those guys are really hard to block. You're going to have tough moments, tough plays. It's how you respond. I think [Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line Coach] Frank [Smith] and [Assistant Offensive Line Coach] Shaun [Sarrett] are doing a great job of coaching that group. Those guys are getting better every time that they go out there."

On 'developing an identity' on offense and defense:

"You want the leadership of your team to take shape, with your brand of ball. Any time that you're in the second practice of one of these things, a lot of that is you coming out with the right energy, with the right physicality. Defensively, we had a lot more bodies out there than we did offensively. There was a lot more guys out on offense than on defense, so we should have more energy on our side of the ball. Both teams got a lot of good work in, which was important to us. I felt like, on our field — I can just speak for our field — I know that there's a lot of things that went well, and that there are a lot of things to learn from. That's what we wanted out of this; to grow from it and to become a better team. I think that's what has happened over the last couple of days."

On establishing a 'championship culture':

"You have to have the right type of energy because there's a lot of false enthusiasm out there. You want to have the right type of energy with the right guys doing the right things. It's not often that you have to say a lot, it's just by how you play, about how you carry yourself. That's what we want to do. When we step in-between the white lines, we want to carry ourselves the right way. On the second practice of a joint practice session, you're not going to feel the same as you did the first day. You're not going to feel the same. You just practiced for two hours, so you are going to be coming down a little bit. It's how you respond, and your level of focus in-between the white lines, how well you execute and how well you play fundamentally. When you establish a championship program, it's all of those things into one; the way that you communicate, your fundamentals, how well you're executing the scheme, where your mind is at with situations, how are your substitutions? There's so much that goes into that. That's what we want, we want the right type of work each and every day against whoever we're playing. I really thought that we got that the last couple of days."

On TE Donald Parham Jr.:

"Just feeling a little bit sore. Had a really good day — he caught the long one yesterday. He had a good practice yesterday. Just wanted to make sure that he's feeling good for this weekend. Moving forward, nothing to be concerned about."

On if Parham will play on Sunday:

"Don't know that. We're going to work through that this evening. Nothing to worry about long-term, for sure."

On the injury to Parham:

"It's his tailbone."

On FB Gabe Nabers not practicing today:

“Just being careful with his knee. Gabe has played a lot for us. He’s had a really, really, really good camp — he’s been one of our top performers on special teams. He had a good practice yesterday. He just had some swelling. Making sure that’s calm.”

On taunting being an increased point of emphasis this season:

“Great point. We just had an officials meeting two nights ago. Land Clark, one of the top officials in the league that was here the last couple of days, went through the mandatory NFL video. We showed the points of emphasis this year and the new rules. Certainly, the taunting rule has been one of those rules. The way we said it in the meeting is that we’re going to make sure that we play with the right energy, that we feed off of the crowd, and that we celebrate all of the big plays, but what you don’t want to do is disrespect your opponent. There’s kind of a nose-to-nose element of football that you can’t ignore, but it’s just making sure that we don’t cross that line of disrespect to our opponent and making sure that we understand the difference. We want to be able to feed off of our crowd, we expect to. We want to feed off of each other, we expect to. We’re just going to try and carry ourselves the right way. I wanted to make that clear to our guys. There’s no one saying that you aren’t going to turn up on gameday — you better turn up on gameday. It’s walking that fine line of respect.”

On CBs Brandon Facyson and Asante Samuel Jr. competing for a starting CB spot:

“It’s still open. I think that Asante is really coming on strong. He’s gaining more confidence every time that he goes out there. He’s playing in two spots still for us. Brandon has had a good camp. I think that we’re just going to let that thing play out until the end. Asante is really coming on strong, for sure. Brandon is competing hard, too — he had a couple of nice plays out here today. He came back from a disappointing play yesterday and really defended the deep part of the field well today, so that was really good to see for him.”

On if Pipkins was at practice today, prior to the birth of his child:

“He was not. We knew that this was coming. In fact, his wife was here a couple of days ago and my wife saw her and said, ‘She’s ready.’ Got that text message this morning. We’re praying for the Pipkins family. It’s an exciting time.”

OUTSIDE LINEBACKER JOEY BOSA**On joint practices with the 49ers:**

“It was great, I woke up today feeling like I played in a game. That was a really good feeling. Going against [49ers T Mike] McGlinchey and [49ers OL Jaylon] Moore — He’s a great rookie over there. It’s too bad [49ers T] Trent [Williams] wasn’t out there, it would have been great to work against one of the best to ever do it, honestly. It was a great couple of days. Good to see [49ers DL] Nick [Bosa], he was in and out quick to take care of that knee. He looks amazing. I think our team really showed up today and brought the energy. We got after them, but it was valuable, especially for the guys who aren’t coming to play this preseason.”

On if practice got ‘chippy’ at all today:

“A little bit, not as much as around the league, though. We settled it down a little bit. I think that was the first time I ever intervened in a little scrap before. I had to throw them off of [S] Derwin [James Jr.]. It was good. Good energy. They didn’t take it too far. They dapped up and apologized after the fact, so it was good.”

On practicing with the 49ers:

“I think we have some great coaches, a great group of guys on both sides. I know the 49ers pretty well from seeing my brother play that year that he went to the Super Bowl. I met a lot of those guys. Great group of guys, professionals. We just have a lot of respect for each other. At the end of the day, it’s football. Like [Head] Coach [Brandon Staley] says, we all have families at home, we should get home safe and take care of each other. At the end of the day, we are just out there competing.”

On if the ‘chippy’ play between the two teams will carry over to Sunday’s game:

“I don’t think so. I think it was just little spirited today. We are tired, so luckily, we had some clouds to cover at practice today. I think we’ll be fine. [S] Derwin [James Jr.] ended it with that pick-six though, so it’s over.”

On James:

"I don't think he needs anything to awaken him. He would have done that regardless, but it was a good way to put the nail on the coffin."

On the defensive unit:

"I think we did a great job this camp. We still have some time to go. We still have a few more weeks to get ready for. We are feeling good, most of us are healthy. We have a couple of guys out with some bumps and bruises. [Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley has done a good job at managing us and managing our bodies. I mean, it is a lot, defense checks this and that. There's a lot going on. It's a lot to learn for all of us. Go back a month, and you can see we that have come a long way. With a few more weeks, we will be more prepared and ready to go."

On James' interception toward the end of today's practice:

"The excitement after that was great, especially after the little scrap. It has been amazing. It seems like it has been so long since we've been out there together. I love looking at pictures of us both flying up on the edge together. It's a scary sight. I always say he is one of the best on the league. I truly believe that in any position, honestly, he is one of the most gifted athletes I have ever seen. His energy is unbelievable. To see him out there happy and healthy, it's great."

On Nick watching his reps:

"He didn't get to watch too much. My trainer was telling me that he was on the other side of the one-on-ones and every time he'd be peeking over to see what I was doing. I really wanted to perform for him. He's been the weapon of his team for the past two years now, so I wanted to show what I can do. I'm happy he's healthy. I know he's going to be an absolute menace out there."

On his relationship with Run Game Coordinator/Outside Linebackers Coach Jay Rodgers:

"I've like him since day one. He's an easy guy to get along with. He doesn't get after you too much, he just wants to talk to you, coach you up and make sure you're getting things right. He's a technician and he pays attention to detail. Meetings are a little bit longer than I'm used to, but I really appreciate that. We dive into technique and break down every rush, every play. We see what we did right, see what we did wrong. I'm not a big fan of coaches that are stuck in their own way, who aren't open to learning and listening to other guys. He understands we're some great players. We have a great back-and-forth relationship where we can pitch him ideas, talk, and learn together."

On conversations with Defensive Line Coach Giff Smith:

"Sometimes we talk about family and random stuff. I'm not on special teams, so usually I'm with him doing ball drills, hand drills, working on stuff. We get along. It's great to have Giff still because I've been with him five years now, we came to the Chargers together."

QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT**On who won the group competition with the 49ers QBs:**

"The Chargers did."

On the background behind the competition:

"[QB] Chase Daniel and [Offensive Coordinator] Joe Lombardi brought over from the Saints. They've always done it. After walk-through each day, it's just something I was used to."

On the joint practices with the 49ers:

"I think it's really important to see other defenses. When you go up against the same defense, it kind of gets repetitive, especially over the past couple of weeks. It's nice to see a new defense and to be able to put in a little bit of a game plan, study some film and get prepared going into the season."

On not playing in preseason games:

“That’s always a tough decision, but I say whatever [Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley decides. As long as I get the reps in at practice, that’s what’s most important. Those reps out there today are super valuable, and I’ve been able to learn so much going against the 49ers. Even going against our defense, being able to get those reps is huge for me.”

On the intensity of the offense:

“It’s huge. To start a little slow and then bounce back during seven-on in those red zone periods really showed a lot of toughness dealing with adversity. We can’t always start perfectly, but for us to battle back was really good.”

On today’s practice:

“It’s all about execution. We had certain plays we wanted to run today, and I thought we did a good job. There were some good throws and bad throws, good execution and poor execution. But that’s what practice is all about and we’re going to watch the film later today. We have a bunch of meetings to go over that, to get better. Next time we set out on the practice field, hopefully we’ll execute a little bit better.”

On the first one-on-one session:

“It’s a tough situation when you’re down a couple of offensive linemen — shoutout to [T] Trey Pipkins [III], who’s expecting a baby today. We were down a couple of offensive linemen, but the guys who stepped up did a great job. Some young guys and rookies went against some pretty good guys on defense. The front seven for the 49ers are no joke. They’re the real deal. It was a tough situation, but I loved the way they battled.”

On ‘frustration’ in the huddle:

“There was no frustration. It was more that ‘we’re going to get it next time’ mentality. Those guys never gave up. We know we have the right guys out there to execute. Those front five guys have battled all of camp. Legs get heavy, but I know they’re going to show and give it their best.”

On TE Donald Parham Jr.:

“He’s become right the route-runner. He’s done such a great job of stepping up and being able to run so many different routes. He’s not limited to tight end routes, sometimes we put him on the outside. He’s about to break contained leverage. He’s done a great job. As gifted as he is, we need to take advantage of that.”

“He’s very fast, and like you saw, he’s able to break away from some guys. As long as we’re able to get him the ball — put the ball high — he’ll be pretty tough to guard.”

On his takeaways from camp:

“There’s so much room to grow at quarterback. It’s an awesome opportunity because there’s so much more about the game that you keep learning. As much as I think I know, there’s always more to learn, whether it’s protections, defensive coverages, fronts, or the way the linebackers line up and discuss their blitzes. Just being around [Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks] Coach Shane Day has taught me so much about our defense and their defense. I’m learning a lot.”

On his first joint practice:

“It’s huge. To be able to go against those guys and see how they fly around the football [is exciting]. They’ve got some talented guys on that defense. I didn’t get to watch much of our defense today, but I’m sure we’ll watch the film. It’s always great to compete, to have fun and learn in an environment where we’re pushing each other. Hopefully, we’re making each other better.”

On disguising plays:

“A lot of teams do a great job at disguising. I think our defense does a great job. Being able to see a safety rotation and have a good feel for that makes us able to take what the defense gives. It gives us a plan. The more times you see it, the better you’re going to get.”

On how the quarterbacks group evaluates film:

"Mainly, we all watch our own reps going against the defense. But if we have time between meetings, [QB] Chase [Daniel], [QB] Easton [Stick], and I will put in on and just watch it."

On his interaction with 49ers QB Trey Lance:

"I didn't get much time, other than the quarterback competition, but I've seen some of the throws he's made over the past couple days. I think he's really impressive."

On WR Joshua Palmer:

"He's a very physical guy. He's fast. He's able to go up and get the ball. I think he's talented and he wants to get better. He comes out here every day with me to throw routes and catch. Sometimes I have to tell him, 'Hey, it's time to get off the field, you have a game this Sunday.' He's done a great job, and he's picking it up quickly."

On his reaction upon Palmer getting drafted by the Chargers:

"I'd heard stories about him, and he's exactly what we were expecting. We knew he was going to be a hardworking kid. I texted him immediately and he was super excited to come out here. I was, too. Any time we get to throw with each other is huge. I've been really pleased with his performance so far."

On talking to 49ers TE George Kittle after practice:

"I just told him I was a big fan. I saw one of the reps he caught yesterday, this catch pump. He went up and got the ball over someone. It was an impressive play. I just told him good luck this year and that I'm excited to watch him and that I hope he stays healthy."

On his relationship with Offensive Coordinator Joe Lombardi:

"It's been crucial. He's such a smart guy. Having him and being around [Passing Game Coordinator/QBs Coach] Shane Day, and even [former NFL QB] Drew Brees when he's come around, it makes this offense the real deal. It's tough, but I'm doing my best to learn and pick it up. I'm going to make mistakes here and there, but having him in the film room teaching me and learning through those mistakes has been huge."

On learning Lombardi's offense:

"It's been trial by fire. You have to go in there knowing you're going to make mistakes. The way we've installed everything is by the front end. There are tough situations, you're going to make mistakes, but you get better from them. You watch the film, and as the weeks go on, it seems like fewer and fewer mistakes. We're at the point now where it's second nature. He's calling the play; we're going in the huddle. We're still going to make mistakes here and there, but that's what practice is for. I think that's the great thing about going up against the 49ers today. I learned a lot from them."

On Lombardi's 'hands-off' approach to coaching during practice:

"I think that's the great thing about practice. He's not too worried about each individual rep. It's more of playing like a game; you're about to play, come off the field, come to the sideline. That's what the meetings are for after practice. We talk through the film. When you're practicing, you want to be dialed in. Afterward is when you can talk about everything."

On not playing in the preseason games:

"It's always tough because I love competing. I love being out there. I was just thankful for the opportunity to cheer on [QB] Easton [Stick] and [QB] Chase [Daniel] to be supportive. I love to help them out in any way I can."

On the last time he watched a game from the sideline:

"I think my sophomore year of college. I broke my clavicle and was out for a couple of weeks."

On his interest in cryptocurrency:

"It's actually Chase [Daniel] that's super into that. I was joking with him about it."

QUARTERBACK EASTON STICK

On joint practices with the 49ers:

“It was awesome. I think we needed it at this point in camp. It’s getting to the point where you are a little tired and a little beat up, so it was good to see some different colors out there. Going against a different scheme that challenges a little differently than ours does. Came up with a little mini-gameplan to see how our coaches work that way, then us try to learn and go and execute. It came at a perfect time and it has been a lot of fun.”

On reuniting with 49ers QB Trey Lance:

“It was really cool to see Trey. I’m really happy for everything he has earned up until this point. Good to see him and good to chat a little. It will be fun to watch him run around on Sunday. Hopefully, we can get after him a little bit, but it was cool to see Trey.”

On the value of preseason games:

“Yeah, it has been a long time since I have played real football, so it’s valuable. Any time you get game experience, there is nothing like it. It’s just a little but different, a little bit faster. Things operate differently, but you are on your own. It’s really invaluable. Excited to get more opportunities moving forward.”

On learning the new offensive scheme and watching former NFL QB Drew Brees operate a similar system when he was playing for the Saints:

“It has been fun. Learning and growing up watching guys him, Drew is one of those guys that I think everyone that grew up around my age and played this position watched. Now, you get to dive into what he was doing for so long in that offense. It has been a lot of fun learning a ton of football. [Offensive Coordinator] Joe [Lombardi] has been awesome. He’s a good communicator. [Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks Coach] Shane [Day] is the same way. We are trying to learn this thing together and trying to see what it’s going to look like. I think every day we get a little bit more comfortable with, ‘Hey, we are calling this for this reason.’ We are learning why we are doing things and trying to find answers to different coverages. It has been a lot of fun.”

On if Lombardi has told any noteworthy stories about his time with Brees:

“Nothing specifically. [QB] Chase [Daniel] probably has more tidbits than anyone, sitting in that quarterback room. It’s cool to get Chase’s perspective, as well. He sat with Drew for a long time. He’s been in this offense for a long time. To get his spin on it, like, ‘Yeah, its strung like this, but in 2012, we ran it like this, this is what it looks like.’ That kind of stuff is neat.”

On how to further develop the offensive system:

“Just continuing to figure out what kind of team we are going to be. Learning and developing guys in different spots. Guys go down, guys step up. Just trying to get comfortable in different roles. Everyone is trying to expand their knowledge in what we are trying to do, and then going out there and executing. For us, it’s continuing to be more comfortable with the system, knowing exactly what the play is telling us to do, then going out there and executing it.”

On sharing an NFL field with Lance, his former teammate at North Dakota State:

“It’s been cool. It’s been really good to see him. Like I said, I am super happy for Trey. The year I was with him, he worked his tail off. You can tell that he really loved football and wanted to be great at it. He’s a really unique guy. Just his ability to connect with people and lead is pretty special. I am happy for him getting his opportunity and excited to see where that goes. It has been really cool to be out here at the same field and being able to chat with him.”

On he and Lance playing in the NFL at the same time:

“It’s awesome, a familiar face. You know, it’s something that we both probably thought of at some point when we were together. Trey showed up to campus and it was like, ‘OK, this guy has a shot. He’s pretty special.’ To be able to do it, joint practices and all that, it’s pretty neat. Bison Nation is special, that program is special. We both consider that a second home, so it’s been cool to be able to connect out here.”

On how much he will play on Sunday:

“We haven’t talked about it. I’ll be ready to go regardless. I am excited to play football regardless. Like I said, last week was a first time in a long time I have been able to be out there. I am excited for any opportunity.”

On QB Justin Herbert:

“It has been cool to see his development. Just continuing to be more comfortable with his role as a leader, connecting with guys, and building relationships. Really starting to see his personality grow and his leadership style grow. You can tell he’s getting more comfortable with the system and with Coach Lombardi. He’s been able to give his opinion on the things he likes, doesn’t like. He’s a special player and a special guy. It’s been cool seeing his development.”