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Chargers LB Daiyan Henley Introductory Media Availability

Saturday, April 29, 2023 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

On being selected by the Chargers:

"Before I start, I want to say thank you to the Spanos Family, [General Manager] Tom Telesco and [Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley for having me here and keeping me home. That's the biggest thing for me, I get to be home and get to do what I love, in a place that I grew up in. That's big for me."

On his Draft experience:

"One, the house was packed. It was a lot more people than a house should have in it [*laughter*]. Even though it was a nice-sized house, there were a lot of people; a lot of people who I love, a lot of people that I knew from like a very long time ago and a lot of people who I never met before a day in my life [*laughter*]. Regardless, it was a lot of fun. When I got that call, it took time to get them to settle down. But, after the call, it erupted right back again to where it was excitement and joy because everybody knew that he's home. I had to like tell him after, like, 'I'm home but you aren't going to see me, so calm down [*laughter*].'"

On which relative of his hosted the party:

"My aunt, she let us use the house, down towards the valley."

On the people that he didn't know at his draft party:

"I still don't know [*laughter*]. A lot of a lot of handshakes, daps, love, hugs. Regardless, I know that every single person in that building was there for me. The support is always welcome, no matter who it comes from. I accept support because I know that I don't do anything or say that I've done anything alone, especially along this journey. Anyone that was there, that was big for me."

On receiving the phone call from the Chargers:

"A breath of fresh air. I spoke about this a little bit earlier, but I was wearing all leather, I don't know what was the bright idea behind that, but I was in all leather on one of the sunniest days in LA [*laughter*]. I was just in there melting. I didn't want to look uncomfortable because there were cameras around, but I was in there melting, so when I got the phone call, it was like the phone call gave me A/C, straight A/C out of the phone [*laughter*]. I was like, 'Man, whoever is talking to me, you're giving me fresh air right now.' Then, turns out I was talking to [Tom] Telesco and I was like, 'Man, it's really happening.'"

On what being drafted means to his family:

"It's just the beginning, just the beginning. Just the start. As big of a moment as it is, I think we're all on the same page knowing that this is only the start of a longer journey."

On the benefit of playing multiple positions throughout his football career:

"Exactly that, just being able to play somebody their positions, be on the opposite side of the ball first. Then, moving to defense, I've been able to see the football through from all types of perspectives. Learning the game that way helps you be more, I guess, capable to do one job because you know so many jobs on that football field. Then, when you take it to an even further extent, it's just techniques, that's really what changes because each position requires a different technique, but the mental, the brain aspect, of that learning, it makes it just that much easier."

On how he would characterize his game:

"I would definitely say fast, low and to the ball. Just meaning that I'm always about the ball, I'm trying to get the ball. I'm sideline-to-sideline. Then, a downhill force. When I can make a hit, I can make a hit. I'm going to do it. Fun, I'm out there to ball, talk a little something on the side and make sure that my teammates are on the same page, as far as us being out here to win this game and have fun doing it."

On transferring to Washington State:

"I had to go to Washington State because I didn't want to go USC [laughter]. That's really the only reason, I didn't want to go to USC, like what is it Trojan? You know? What is it? [Laughter] So, I went to Washington State knowing that my linebacker coach was going to be there [Brian Ward]. I spent a lot of hours extra, just after practice, after games, just talking to my coach and being able to understand the process of becoming a better linebacker. A very monumental step for me, as far as being a better linebacker and player. Going to Washington State meant everything. Or, should I say, not going to USC meant everything [laughter]."

On not going to UCLA:

"A Bruin? I didn't get that offer. No doubt, I did not want to be a Bruin [laughter]."

On why he didn't want to go to USC:

"Because Tuli [Tuipulotu] was there [laughter]. That would be the correct answer, but the politically correct answer would be because Tuli was there [laughter]."

On his father:

"My dad, I know that for him, he's a pretty famous guy, but he's known to be around famous people. The other day, he wanted me to go to Topgolf, and I didn't want to go to top golf, but he was like, 'Bro, you're the only famous person I know right now. Come with me.' [Laughter] For him, it would be that he has a son that is actually doing something that he can be proud of. He has three sons in total. For him and me, he feels like he put a lot of time and effort into my journey and my processing, and he did. A lot of credit goes to him. I have to continuously show him that love and respect that he deserves because without him, I wouldn't be in this position. That includes my mom. On that note, I might be one of the most famous people he knows now. It's just crazy just to be on the flip side of that aspect."

On remaining close to home:

"They're excited. They're very excited that they don't have to sit there and find some travel plans, get on that plane, or whatever. As much as I'm excited, I got to figure out how to keep my mom away from my address, so if you guys have any ideas on how to hide and address from your mother, I need those tips [laughter]."

On if he brought his necklace with him:

"I was trying to just keep a calm and chill vibe. The range of bringing that out on those lively events."

On his nickname relating to Power Rangers:

"It kind of travels back to when I was a kid. My family, we were big on karate. We were always a karate family, we have a dojo and all that stuff. But as big as we were on it, I always elected to stay home to watch Power Rangers. This is like seven years old, like very young. My dad used to get on my head for it. Fast forward, I was on Twitter changing my image all over the place and my uncle was talking to me about how the Power Rangers are good guys and trusting the people to do the right thing. You can't have a name and not make plays. So, I made some plays and it kind of just stuck."

On his relationship with former Chargers DL Brandon Mebane:

"He actually texted me, so I have to text him back. If he sees this before I text him back, I might be in trouble. I hope he doesn't see this before I take text him back."

On Mebane's influence:

"For the most part, just seeing him come from the same section as me, playing in the same city as me, and to go as far as he did. We're talking about a guy who spent countless seasons in the NFL. He is going to show me the way, the blueprint for being a veteran, that's what he means to me, a guy who knows how to do it the right way. We understand that this is a job, this is a profession. Every day, you have to make the right decision, just to be where you are. For the most part, it seems like he did that. I wasn't with him every day, but at the end of the road, he made it."

On the documentary that featured his father:

"Man, when you meet my dad, just know that he loves to talk. His favorite topic is himself [*laughter*]. So, for everyone else watching that FX documentary, it was like, 'Wow.' For me, it was like, I heard that. I know. Alright, cool. It was just more seeing him on TV that was the cool part, but I already knew half of those stories. Then, the other stories, I just was questioning who was there witnessing this and why were they allowing this? You know, this guy did a lot of stuff in his past and gets on me about having a 'C' in class. That's the type of dad that I had. When I look at that documentary, I'm already deep in college and I'm thinking, 'Hey, man. You were wildin' back then. I'm over here getting scolded for having a C or leaving some trash somewhere.' Which, you can't do that. That's how I feel about that one."

On his father being proud of him graduating college:

"Yeah, 1,000 percent. Just because in my family, there's not a lot of people that did that. I'm really the only one that did it in my immediate family. Between my brothers and my little sister — she hasn't had the chance to yet — and my parents, I'm the only one that did it. For him, that's one of the biggest staples and just speaking on it. If you watch the documentary, you kind of know the type of guy he was. Just going off of that, that's something that he couldn't accomplish. He couldn't have, not matter how smart he was. He went through so much that he couldn't actually do it, so for me, I got to do it. That's why he's that proud."

On if he's seen a game at SoFi Stadium:

"I have watched a game. I watched a Chargers game there versus the Rams, where — Bolt Up, baby! We won. I can say 'we' now. I can actually say 'we' for a team and it means something. I say 'we' for the Lakers all the time and it means nothing because I can't talk to them in the locker room, but now, I can say 'we' and it means something. I was there for that and also there for the LA Bowl, where I got to see my team not win, but I was just happy to be there for the last game and be a coach in-spirit and also as a captain. That's something that I'll never forget."

On if he had a favorite NFL team growing up:

"Uh, no. I didn't, but, fun fact — the first NFL game that I ever went to was the Chargers down in San Diego. That was when I was like 13 or 14 years old. One of those ages. That was the first game that I had ever been to."

On being an 'older rookie' and if it's an 'advantage or disadvantage':

"Oh, man, my bones are shaking [*laughter*]. I like to say that it's an advantage just because how I break it down to myself. When people call you old, you have to make yourself feel good. I like to say that I have the wisdom of an older guy, but I have the health of a younger guy. If you look at my playing history, I don't have any injuries and haven't missed a game. We're going to knock on wood, which I don't see around here, so we're going to do it in spirit, but I haven't missed a game. The health of a younger guy with the wisdom of an older guy. Put that together and hope there's longevity."

On how his background playing so many positions affects how he can view the game as a defender with 'an offensive mindset':

"Oh, 1,000 percent as far as breaking down the possibilities, just coming from a quarterback and having that mindset. You're always looking at what the defense is offering you and what's given. The play that you know that's going to be run, you have to find that holes within the scheme because we know that defenses show one thing, but then they'll give another thing when play starts. That whole aspect is something that I look to think about when I'm going against an offense. The biggest thing for me is the difference from being a linebacker and a quarterback is that I have to start with more controlled eyes, like a smaller box. I'm in a box, so I get to see a little tighter of window, so guessing or even knowing the possibilities from film study, I'm much more able to assume or be ready to react to a play that I know is probably going to come."

On his philosophy surrounding special teams:

"Special teams, if you look at it, it's every football movement all in whatever special teams phase it is. It's like football, but in extreme space. That's something that I got from my old coach — it's football in extreme space. You have receiver movements if you're a gunner. You have linebacker movements if you're sitting there trying to rush, or edge movements — just different types of movements based off what position you're playing and what's happening. I found love and joy in doing it. That's why I was always available for special teams and why I will be available here for special teams because I feel like there's a joy, there's an art to it. That's how I feel about special teams. I plan to make an impact on every down. That means being on the field as a linebacker, being on the field as a gunner or whatever it may be for special teams and a linebacker, that's what I plan to do."