



QUOTES

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LOS ANGELES CHARGERS OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR KEN WHISENHUNT

On RB Justin Jackson:

"You know, I can't remember because I've been asked a little bit about him, but I went through the whole progression of when he came in and how he didn't do a lot in camp. He was injured. Then the start of the season it was like, okay, is this guy going to be able to do it? Then it was how he worked his way into getting back into shape and playing on the scout team. Then last week, not this week, but the week before that when he played against Arizona, you were like, I wasn't surprised because he's been doing that in practice. That's where a lot of these guys don't understand sometimes is that's where you can get better in this time of year for a young player, and he did. So was I surprised that he did what he did against the Steelers? Not after having seen what he did against Arizona. So, maybe, yeah, I was a little surprised, but I can't say that I was surprised because I've seen him do it on the field, and I've seen our players get excited about him. So I was happy to see it, but you never know in that environment. He handled it really well, and it was big for us."

On his Bengals Head Coach Marvin Lewis calling the defense:

"Coach Lewis and I go way back. He's a good friend and I think he's an outstanding football coach, and he does a great job. I think a lot of times when you make changes in-season, especially when you've built up a basis from the OTAs and in training camp, it's difficult to change too much. You can tweak some things. There are some things that they're doing a little bit differently, and they're playing hard. That's the one thing that you see. It will be a challenge. They have some talented players."

On coaching QBs like Philip Rivers:

"Well, I've been very fortunate to be around a couple of those guys in my time in the NFL. It's always great. We all know it's important that you have a quarterback in this league, and to have one of the best ones and the way he's performing right now is fantastic. I think he can do a lot of different things, and I think it helps from the standpoint of our players because they know they're all live. There is a chance they're going to get the ball. He's been able to play at a tremendous level since I've been with him, and he's one of the best, I think. I know he's one of the best I've been around, and I think he's one of the best to play the game. So, yes, it's great to have a guy like that."

On slow starts to the past couple of weeks:

"Have we had slower starts? I thought Arizona was pretty good. I know we started out the first thing, but then we scored like six-straight drives. Pittsburgh is pretty good. It was a tough road the first half, but we got it going pretty good in the second half. I can speak more so, I think, from the Pittsburgh part of it. When you're playing a really good football team on the road in a crazy environment, sometimes it is difficult. I think a lot of times you have to make some adjustments and tweak some things to where you get what you think is working well. We kind of got to that in the second half and played better. We didn't have a lot of plays in the first half, I don't think, but we missed some opportunities. The first drive we did pretty good and moved down the field and missed the field goal. After that, we weren't really good. So it's not easy to play on the road in that type of environment. So sometimes that's part of it, but we'll continue to work and hopefully we can get to where we ended up in that game, which is playing pretty good."

On being a candidate for Georgia Tech's head coach opening:

"Like I said last week, my focus really is about this team and what we're doing. I'm trying not to, by any means, creep into that. [Georgia Tech Athletics Director] Todd [Stansbury] and I were teammates. We played together and we've talked, so that process is still ongoing."

On if he has been formally interviewed for the position:

"Well, I mean, based on what I heard, I was in Atlanta Saturday, in Atlanta Monday. So I've spoken with them. What you consider formal or not formal. Like I said, it's a tremendous honor to be considered for that position at a school that I played for and have very strong feelings for. The process is still ongoing, but right now my focus is still on our team and it's really hard to get to the point where we are right now. We're talking about that today. Sometimes you're in this position and you're hoping that you have a chance to get in. If we do what we're capable of doing, we can control that. That's a big deal."

On reports about his status as a candidate:

"It seems my cell phone goes in cycles with messages. I wasn't even aware of that. So I can't speak to it because I didn't even know that was something. I know I get — when something like that comes out, boom, the messages come in. So that's interesting."

On preparing for two games in a five-day span:

"Okay, what I think you're asking there is really two different questions, okay. I would hope that we're not focused on Kansas City by any stretch of the imagination right now. Cincinnati's a good football team. If you put on some of their tape and see some of the things they've done earlier this year, you better be prepared for them. They've got some good players. The fact that we play Kansas City on Thursday on a short week from purely a coaching perspective, yes, you have to get on that a little bit because there is so much you have to get done in a short period, but certainly not with the players. I don't think that we are — I would hope not — from an offensive perspective, overlooking Cincinnati at all."

On how to prepare for two games in such a short span:

"It's hard. It is hard. When you've done it — the way it is now, because everybody has to play a Thursday game after a Sunday game, and you've been doing it for a couple years, I think you have a method of operating that you do. So you just know you have to check this box, this box and this box. When we get to the end of the week before the game, there is a little bit of time in there where some of our coaches can turn their attention to doing some advanced work on Kansas City. So it helps, but different people have different ideas. Some people can do that and it doesn't affect their preparation, and others it does."

On if he has been to Atlanta recently:

"Have I been to Atlanta recently? No, I haven't been to Atlanta in the past week."

On when he would like to have his candidacy at Georgia Tech resolved:

"Like I said, I respect your question, and I understand that you have a job to do, but once again, I don't want any of this to get involved with what we're trying to do as a football team. It is a process, and I'm grateful that I'm being considered for it, but right now we've got a game in a couple days to try to get ready for."

On the diversity of wide receiver skillsets:

"Well, it really helps when they're all good. You know, it's really kind of not so much a function of what their size is, which I understand your question. It's a good question. I think what we've been able to do, and it all starts with the OTAs and training camp is try to find out what they do best, and then put them in situations where they can do those things. If you notice from watching us, and I think you know this about [WR] Keenan [Allen], he lines up everywhere. We're blessed that we have a guy that's not only talented but smart enough to do that. He sets the standard for the whole group. So when you talk about what [WR] Tyrell's [Williams] strength is or [WR] Mike's [Williams] strength is, or what [WR] Travis' [Benjamin] strength is — we're trying to put them in spots where you can't really get a beat on them defensively saying this is where he is, this is what he's doing, but yet still put them in a position where they're going to be successful. We're not going to have Travis block a defensive end, but if you watched our game the last couple weeks, there have been times when Mike has done that. So you mix those things in, but the biggest thing you've got to do is try not to be predictable because they're looking for those type of things. It's tremendous from the standpoint of having these guys because they can do different things, it allows us to do a lot of different things. When you have a quarterback, to your earlier question, that makes it even better."

On the Cincinnati defensive line:

"You're absolutely right. It a tremendous challenge. [DT Geno] Atkins is one of the best interior linemen that plays and he's very good. The two outside guys are good pass-rushers, but they're big guys, long guys. So with what they do, they're difficult in the protection. The Steelers had a good defensive front, and listen, that's what it is in this league. You have to face some guys. You have to mix up your protection and do some things to compensate for that, so it's difficult."

On how the offense has developed over the season compared to projections:

"It's a good question. It's funny you asked that. We started looking at different things that we wanted to do back in, probably, February or March and trying to integrate those things. The period of OTAs and training camp is when you can do that. So we have evolved quite significantly since then. Some of the things we thought we would get to, but some of the other things have just kind of moved in that direction, and it's been really awesome. Some of the different things that we've been doing, trying to expand off of that. We've got a good group of coaches. Very consistent about trying to say, 'Okay, this is what we did, now what can we build off of that?' All of the stuff with motions and adjusting those things with receivers be. To see what Keenan [Allen] did in the first play of the Seattle game where he runs for 26 yards or whatever it was, those are the kind of things when we're sitting back early in the year and saying this is going to happen. No, it happened because we've kind of evolved and that's been really cool."

On how the offensive development's impact in a game:

"I think to the earlier question, that's what happened in Pittsburgh. Some of the things we were doing in the first half especially weren't working great for us, and we evolved into something a little bit differently. Something that Justin [Jackson] and Austin [Ekeler] both had runs on in the second half that worked for us, and that's a big part of it. I think when you have — it was in our plan. That part of it was in our plan. You just prioritize when you go in what you think is going to be good. Sometimes it is, sometimes it isn't, but you still have the other things that you can draw from. I think that having had a history or having had some experience being able to do different things has really helped us. If you look at us from game-to-game, we're a little bit different some of the things that we do aren't exactly what we did the week before. Not trying to say that that creates problems for the defense because then it sounds like, yeah, we've got it going. What I'm trying to say is it has helped us. It's helped us to be more versatile which can help."

On T Sam Tevi:

"Well, Sam can do some things really well and he's doing some other things that he's going to consistently work on because he's a young lineman. We've had a couple different guys play in those spots this year and they've done a good job. So a lot of it is the expectation of that group and what they hold the other guys to. It's not so much about what Sam can do. It's more about what he's expected to do and those guys holding him accountable. It's been awesome to see Sam grow. From where he was last year, it was about this time last year that he started against the Jets in New York, and now he's played a number of games and he's a legitimate tackle in this league and doing a good job, so it's been really good."

On the offensive balance:

"You know what? I'm not going to touch that one, because I got asked about a turnover a couple weeks ago, and you guys remember what happened there, right? So no disrespect to you, I think I will just ignore that question."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR GUS BRADLEY**Opening Statement:**

"We walked through the session that we had in the gym, and it was good. A lot of things going on. As far as Cincinnati, we've got a lot of respect for them. When you take a look at their running back, their running game, it jumps out at you. It's not hard to put on in front of our players and they take notice. Very talented the running back obviously at the skill position. We've got our work cut out for us this week with this group."

On DE Joey Bosa:

"I think you see every game that he plays, every series that he plays, you start seeing him come back to who he is. I think that especially after last week's game, it was a very physical game. I think he can feel it from the game, the effects, and that tells you that he's not quite maybe in game, tip-top shape where he's at, but he's getting closer. So we really like the progress he's making."

On how having Bosa changes the defense:

"I mean, we've changed some things because of his coming back, you know, as far as position guys. What he gives us, you know, especially versus the run and his pass rush. You know, third down rushes and things like that, he's come back and got three sacks, I think in two games. So just that, the ability to get the pressure on the quarterback from the four-man rush."

On how Cincinnati's offense has changed with Bengals QB Jeff Driskel:

"That's a great question. You know, I looked back at them early in the season, their four games, and this team scored a lot of points — a lot of points against Atlanta, a lot of points and they were rolling. Now they've had some injuries, but you still see that ability to score points because of their skill players and because of their backs. So you see a little bit of differences. You see the way they attack the offenses, that philosophy is still there. You see how they want to go about doing it, but I think now that Driskel, the ability of him to run, there are a few things that may be a little bit different than they did with Dalton — but their overall philosophy is still there."

On if he expects the Bengals to utilize run-pass options:

"You know, [Driskel's] ability, I think we're very aware of his ability to run the ball."

On Bengals WR John Ross:

"A lot of strength because of his speed. He has the ability to stretch the field vertically. Every week you have guys like that that have elite speed, but he might have the most elite speed in his ability to run. So he can take the top off the defense. So, again, it's just building awareness to where he's at on the field and his abilities."

On the pass-rush struggling early against Pittsburgh:

"No, I would agree. I didn't think as far as the first half, we didn't get the type of pressure we were hoping., but the second half I think some things got cleaned up. Whether it was just the four-man rush or some of the games, [Defensive Line Coach] Giff [Smith] did a great job at halftime with those guys. I think we've really detailed the package of getting more clarity on what we were trying to do, and it fell in place a little bit better. So even though there was only one sack, we felt like we were getting closer to him, affecting him a little bit more."

On any adjustments made in the secondary against Pittsburgh:

"Well, it didn't start very good right away early, but I think the guys — you know, it felt like right away, like we said at halftime, let's just do what we're supposed to do. Do the techniques. Do what we show up and practice and we've done in previous weeks and let's see what happens. I think guys kind of got back into that groove. There were some subtle things that we did, but nothing drastic. I think our guys just really played better. I think the rush started to get where they were more affecting the quarterback a little bit more. Our coverage was a little bit tighter, and we were making plays on third down."

On the defensive backs being physical with opposing receivers:

"I would say that's our objective every game is to try to be as physical as we can, especially at the line of scrimmage, but no, I don't think it was anything like that. I think that guys got more into a rhythm as the flow of the game. Then you know how momentum goes — you start getting momentum, these guys start making plays. I thought looking back at it, we had some missed assignments, but I felt like we really tackled well. I think earlier I talked about if you were in single digit, missed tackles, I think we had five in the game. So that, I think, is progressive week after week. I think we're becoming a better tackling team. I think that showed up."

On CB Michael Davis' pass interference:

"You're talking about the deep ball and the penalty? Yeah, that was one of our busts. We didn't have the proper leverage on that play, so he had to make up. I think that's where you saw the speed. He had the catch-up speed, but then the 50-50 ball and the ability to run that, that's a challenge for him. That's what we want to see more from him are those 50-50 type balls to go up and make plays on them. So I think leverage to start would have been better for him. Then, you're right, the ability to, you know, to get to where you're back in leap position and the ability to look back and make the play. He just thought he was still in the trail position."

On the versatility of S Adrian Phillips:

"First of all, he's extremely intelligent. He can play strong safety, free safety, dime and nickel for us, and we'd feel extremely comfortable if he was in any of those positions. So that intelligence, he's got a football IQ that is, to say compare him to anybody, he's just one of the most elite guys in that area that I've ever been around. So that helps him. Now, his athleticism, and his ability to make plays, the challenge for him was being in the box and getting off blocks and making plays because your safety, you're not doing that much. You might be doing it on the perimeter, but he's been impressive inside there. He's really taken ownership of it, and how it happened was just basically because of injuries. Our hands were tied a little bit and said, alright, where do we go from here? After talking with [Defensive Backs] Coach [Ron] Milus and everybody, we thought he would be the next man that we felt like could handle that and all the things that we ask him to do. We're very grateful for him. Very grateful."

On if Phillips has made pass coverage and flexibility a strength at linebacker:

"Yeah, I would say so. In our minds, if you ask us as coaches, that is a strength right now, his ability to play that because it gives us flexibility. Usually having a linebacker and there are only so many things you can do with them. You saw him, he was in the box, but other times he was playing half field coverage. So that type of athlete gives us some flexibility."

On NT Damion Square:

"It's funny that you talk about him right after [Adrian] AP [Phillips], because in our mind those two guys are very similar. Damion Square plays nose, four-technique, and he's another guy with his football IQ and intelligence, we can play him at multiple positions. It's not just play [there], he excels at it. He's been playing very well for us. Those are two key guys in our defense. Those two guys, we've had some injuries, but those two guys, I think, have given us the flexibility that we can maneuver some things and keep going."

On when he knew Phillips had an elite football IQ:

"I think they told me about him when I first got here, but now being around him and just seeing him, I think it's something that you appreciate once you see him involved in the games and some of the things he does because it's not only for him. He's helping guys next to him. I think [LB Jatavis Brown] has played very well for us and I think a lot of that credit goes to AP [Phillips]. I think just that presence with him on the field. They're constantly challenging one another and talking through some things, and they're similar in body types, you know."

On S Derwin James:

"He played pretty well. He's a guy that we want to make sure he's around the ball. Every week it changes for every position. I mean, that's the goal for everybody on our defense is to try to put them in position where they can impact the game. So he's been a play-maker for us all year. His skill set is unique, very unique. It's our job to try to position him to where we can utilize that skill set."

On what position Phillips plays:

"Yeah, we call him a dime. He can double up on many positions, so you know, when [CB] Desmond [King II] went down and he was on the field, we kind of hesitated. Okay, we would have to move some guys around if we lost him. Again, we would probably look to him in that situation where he might have had to move out to nickel or [CB] Trevor [Williams]. So I think for a coach, it just gives you more peace of mind when he's out there, because, again, he can play so many different positions."

On if Phillips studies with the defensive backs:

"Oh, yeah, he's not going to give up that part. [Linebackers Coach Richard] Smith would like him in his room, but I don't think that's going to happen."

On NT Brandon Mebane:

"You know what? He's one of the strongest leaders in that locker room for our defense. His presence on the field, his presence in that locker room, he brings a sense of calm and wisdom to the guys. He's not going to get up in front of the group and give this passionate, long speech, but if there's issue, he's the one that a lot of them go to. He has been such a great impact on our room and to see what he's going through and his family is going through, your heart goes out to him. Just the relationship I have with him, being with him in Seattle and here, you hurt for him — but I think the greatest thing about him is he is all this on his plate with his family and what his family's going through, and then to be able to perform at a high level on the field and deal with that. It's not surprising because I know him and his professionalism and his ability to handle those things. Je's playing at such a high level, but his priority is his family, as it should be."

On Bengals RB Joe Mixon:

"You know what? You hate to compare. You see his ability to accelerate through a hole is something that jumps out at you. He can jump cut. That part reminded me of Fred Taylor. The ability to start in the A-gap and get to the edge like that. So, you know, we looked at it, and no doubt he's one of the top running backs we've faced. That's not even a question. You know, his average per attempt and things like that are high. So he's strong. He's physical. He can make you miss. The jump-cut, the acceleration. So if you just pulled up their explosive plays and look at their explosive runs he's had, and we look at running style each day, five or six flips of running style. Well, it's not hard to find those this week because of him."

On Bengals RB Giovani Bernard:

"Completely different style, completely different style, but very effective. Another guy that can go and accelerate. Yes, his size, they're a little bit different there, but as a third down back, and they'll change it up with him. So our defense has to be aware of which back is in the game because of the different styles."