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LOS ANGELES CHARGERS vs. DALLAS COWBOYS POSTGAME TRANSCRIPTS

Sunday, September 19, 2021 ⚡ SoFi Stadium ⚡ Inglewood, Calif.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On if he got an explanation on the illegal shift call:

"I did not. I was trying to get the referee's attention. I wasn't getting a response."

On today's loss:

"This game was about the Chargers. All the other stuff I don't really want to talk about. This game was about us. We lost this game on all three phases of the game. We didn't play clean enough to win. Our guys competed. We played together but we didn't play clean enough football to beat that team. That team's a good team, but we didn't play clean enough to finish it."

On if he saw a replay of the illegal shift call:

"I have not."

On the run defense:

"We were just a little bit off in the first level, which caused our second level to be a little bit off. There were a couple slants that we moved the wrong way, which forced a big opening in the middle. Overall, we just have to play better at the first and second levels. We have to play more physically at the point of attack, so the ball doesn't get to the second level as often as it did. And then when it does get to the second level, we have to be where we need to be, and we need to tackle. We need to tackle physically. We missed a crack replace later in the game when we really were playing the run at a high level. We missed a crack replace into the boundary. It's a good running football team, they've got two really good running backs. We knew that that was going to be a big part of their plan coming in. We need to do a much better job next week."

On if 'better job' means execution:

"Yes, it's execution. We were in a lot of good run defenses from a personnel standpoint, from a structure standpoint. We were just a little bit off, a little bit off with our front mechanics, a little bit off with our run fits. We gave up far too many today."

On if the team missed DL Justin Jones:

"Any time you have a player like Justin [out], you miss him. And then [CB] Chris Harris [Jr.], you miss all the guys who are starters for your football team. But the guys that were in there were capable of playing well. That's certainly not the reason we didn't play well today. We have to do much better moving forward."

On the penalties:

“There were 20 penalties in the game — 20 between both teams. It felt like a preseason game, to be quite honest with you. That was just the way the game was being officiated today. We have to play within the parameters of how the game’s being called. We need to make sure that we keep our composure. If we play a clean enough game, none of that would matter. That’s where you make it about you, and you don’t make it about anybody else. Which is what we’re going to do; we’re going to make this about the Chargers. Offense, defense, kicking game, I think we’ll grow from this. With all that said, we were in the fourth quarter at the very end, against a very good team with the chance to win. Last week, we won the game as a team, and today, I thought we lost the game as a team.”

On QB Justin Herbert:

“I felt like Justin Herbert was outstanding in the game. I felt like he gave us a real chance. He made some premium throws, some premium plays in that game — extended plays, ripping it down the field. I feel like if some of those penalties didn’t happen, it’s going to be monster day. Two interceptions. The first call I loved. [WR] Keenan [Allen] got kind of undercut on the spear. We had to flatten out there. And then in the red zone, he fell on the bang play. He was playing within rhythm and timing. Those things happen sometimes, but I thought he was fantastic in the game. I thought he was the best player on the field. He gives us a chance every time we go out there.”

On offensive red-zone struggles:

“There were some unique circumstances down there with some penalties. I think that got us off schedule a little but so that doesn’t help matters. Running the ball better gives you a much better chance of being successful in the red area. We’ll look at our red area plan. And then I felt like we had a lot of good passes up in the plan. You don’t finish the drive there in the end, that’s a touchdown that gets taken off the board. You have a guy slip and fall. I really liked our red area plan. We practice it a lot. Moving forward, I think if we run the ball better, we’ll put ourselves in a more favorable down for distances down there.”

On his first regular-season home game at SoFi Stadium with fans in attendance as head coach of the Chargers:

“I thought it was a great venue. I felt like there was great energy in that crowd. My focus was on the Powder Blue. I felt like our crowd came out. I think they’re going to continue to come out because we have a good team. People in Los Angeles are going to see that we have a good team. I was proud of our crowd. That team travels well, traditionally. But I didn’t hear them very much. I heard our fans, and I was proud of the energy in that stadium for us. We appreciated it, that it allowed us to play better. Hopefully, it’ll be a big edge for us moving forward, having a home crowd like that.”

On the offensive not scoring touchdowns on every red zone appearance:

“Of course, we’d like to score touchdowns when we’re down in there. We’re moving the ball at a high level in the run game and in the pass game. Today was about penalties for me. If those penalties are minimized, you’re probably going to have a 500-yard day at the office, which is hard to achieve in the National Football League. And you’re probably going to double your scoring total. We need to play a cleaner game, technically. I know that we will. We’re going to put a lot of emphasis on it, as we always do. We’ll look at how this is being officiated, and make sure that we respond accordingly. Most penalties happened because of technique and that’s where we need to focus on the Chargers moving forward.”

On T Storm Norton’s performance:

“I felt like he competed in the game. There were times out there where he was going against [Cowboys LB] Micah Parsons, who’s a good player. He had some plays that I felt like he could learn from, for sure. I felt like he gave us a chance in the game. I felt like Justin [Herbert] was clean enough to operate. They had some pressure packages up with some new people in different spots today. I felt like we settled down and handled it as we went forward. I’m proud of the way he competed. He definitely gave us a chance today and I’m excited for him continuing to improve moving forward.”

On S Derwin James Jr.:

“Derwin gave us a real chance. It’s somewhat like Justin [Herbert], he gives us a real chance with his versatility, his flexibility. I know he’s in there exhausted, he gave it everything he had. There are some plays that I know he can finish, that he’s capable of finishing. But I thought that he played a whale of a game that gives us a chance in the game. He kept everybody in it, he kept our heads on straight defensively and allowed us to compete. We had to hang tough today on defense, which is what we did. We hung tough against a really good offense, we held them to 17 points, 48 of that at the end of that half — take that out of it which it is what it is. 360 is not a bad day against that offense. We can play better, for sure; and we need to. But I felt like our guys really hung tough, and Derwin had a lot to do with that.”

On WR Mike Williams:

“Mike’s been playing really, really well. This guy he shows up on game day. He’s been practicing well. We’ve been able to feature him within the plan. I know that he was open on that double-cut that we just missed him; Justin [Herbert] got sped up a little bit. But this guy shows up. We hit him in the deep part of the field, which got called back for a penalty. This guy is a guy that can really make plays on gameday. He can make them in a variety of ways, and we’ll continue to feature him within the offense, and he makes us really dangerous because he forces you to defend a lot of different parts of the field.”

On OLB Joey Bosa’s leg being wrapped:

“Yeah, just normal football stuff.”

On how the Cowboys contained Bosa:

“When you run the ball like that, they’re just more favorable down and distances. I don’t think we got the chance to get the lead or get to those third down and longs; we didn’t have a bunch of those. When we did get them into those known passing situations, I felt like we operated well. There were far too many third-and-two, three, fours, which didn’t allow him to get into a rhythm. So, it had less to do with the protection side of things and more with their run game. It’s a good observation and we need to play better on first and second down, so that Joey can rush.”

On Cowboys QB Dak Prescott:

“That was a big emphasis, forcing them to play within the confines of the pocket. Making sure we didn’t give up any loose plays. We wanted to really put a roof over them in the deep part of the field, which I felt like we did, for the most part. I think the game on defense, the story for us was run front. I felt like there were a couple of third downs that we needed to play better. I’m proud of the result of 17 points. But in terms of how we played, how we operated, we expect to play much better.”

On expected improvements for Week 3:

“Last week, we won that game as a team and today we lost the game as a team. I’m proud of that because we were in it in the fourth quarter against a good team. There was a lot to unpack in that game. There was a lot that happened in that game, and we stayed together, and we had a chance in the fourth quarter. There wasn’t anybody on our sideline that did not believe that we were going to win, and that’s a big part of the NFL. The other part of the NFL is you’re going to lose tight games like this. Most of the games against good teams come down to the end and we lost a tight one today. What we need to do is learn why we lost and then be able to come back tomorrow, get rested up and learn from it. I was proud of the way that we competed in the game. When you’re brand new, you’re trying to get the guys to compete the way you want them to, which we are. Now, we’ve got to execute better. That’s where our focus will be moving forward.”

On his optimistic outlook, with ‘the glass half full’:

“I think the glass is 100 percent realistic. I’m always going to be optimistic because that’s who I am. But I’m also going to tell the guys the truth and the truth is that we didn’t play well enough today. That’s the truth. We did not play a clean enough game. Take the outside circumstances away from the game because I don’t want that to be the focus. I want the focus to be on the Chargers and we didn’t play clean enough football to win. When you put it that way, now you can focus on yourself, and you can figure it out moving forward.”

On if penalties impacted the defense’s performance late in the game:

“No.”

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On taking the blame for today's loss:

"You know, we win and lose as a team. Unfortunately, you know I didn't play as well today. We turned the ball over and had some penalties. There are a lot of things to clean up and we didn't play the ball that we needed to win today."

On the fundamentals of the loss:

"Fundamentally, you know we just had some calls and penalties that got brought back, and some turnovers. I can't turn the ball over in the red zone like that and expect to win. It's a pretty good offense that we are going up against, so we got to put up some points."

On the level of frustration:

"We have 15 more weeks. We've got 15 more opportunities to play football and we got another game on Sunday against a really good opponent. So, we've got to watch the film. We can be salty about it for a couple of hours, but it's time to be back to work."

On the touchdown that called back on an illegal shift:

"No, I didn't see it out there. That was one of those picks where, you know it's man coverage. [WR] Keenan [Allen] picks for them, he runs out of it. Thought it looked good, but someone must have not been set. I haven't seen it yet."

On the pick in the end zone where WR Keenan Allen might have slipped:

"Yeah, it's a tough route. It's one of those timing routes and I have to be smarter, and I have to see when he goes down. I have to go onto my next read. It is one of those bad mistakes that I got to learn from."

On how difficult the loss is:

"Yeah, that's the tough part. You know we felt like we moved the ball well, but just kind of shot ourselves on the foot and had too many penalties — too many turnovers. You can't expect to win in the NFL like that."

On the offense struggling to get to the end zone:

"This week, it's just tough defense. You know we went up against a pretty good defense and we didn't execute as well. That's on us and we have to make better plays. We've got to make plays — we've got to go out and we can't have as many turnovers, we can't have as many penalties. It's just something we have to learn from."

On penalties being mental mistakes or physical mistakes:

"I think it's probably a combination of mental and physical mistakes. You know, it's on us to be better than that. It goes back to our fundamentals and our reads and on our progressions. It's just something that we have to cover this week at practice."

On the 42-yard pass to Allen:

"It was one of those plays where you're expecting Tampa-2. Two deep safeties, and we got three guys spreading out in the middle of the field. If the boundary safety runs with the guy-run up the middle of the field, you go to [WR] Keenan out there. It's just one of those plays that [Offensive Coordinator] Coach Joe Lombardi dialed up."

On the first regular-season game with fans in attendance:

"It's always great to have fans back. You know, that's the aspect of football that you kind of miss. Whether it's Cowboys fans or Chargers fans — it was a good environment out there but unfortunately, we didn't play the way we wanted to today. A lot of room for improvement."

On frustration not getting a win in front of fans at home:

"No, you are always trying to win. Whether it's Cowboys fans or Chargers fans, you're always trying to win. I don't think it adds anymore [frustration], but it's one of those things that we have to look back at the film and we have to get better at it."

On if team felt it should have won on Sunday:

“We go into every game thinking that we can win. We missed a lot of opportunities and, kind of like I said earlier, the turnovers and penalties. You can’t expect to win and be like that. I felt like we moved the ball really well, but when we get into the red zone we have to score.”

On the first interception:

“Yeah, Keenan [Allen] ran a great route, it’s just on me to make a better throw. A better decision. That is something that I’ll have to touch this week at practice.”

On WR Mike Williams:

“[WR] Mike Williams has really stepped up, and he’s one of those guys that you really trust out there. He knows what he’s doing. You know, he’s just so athletic and able to make so many great plays. One of those guys that you really trust when he’s out there.”

On getting out of rhythm with all the penalties:

“It’s always tough, especially when you are in second-and-long, third-and-long — you get out of rhythm. You have to do your best to stay out of that world and we just didn’t do a good job of that today. I thought we did a great job of battling back through some of those. We had some penalties called back, but we fought through. It’s just an uphill battle when you have that many penalties.”

On the offensive line:

“I thought that the offensive line did a good job. You know, we were kind of expecting [Cowboys LB] Micah Parsons to play a little bit of end, and that’s what he did. I thought the offensive line battled really well. We got the ball out quickly, had a couple of sacks, but we can always be better.”

On Offensive Coordinator Joe Lombardi:

“I thought he did a great job. He put us in a position to score and to win, but it’s on us as an offense to eliminate those penalties, the turnovers, and that’s on us.”

On if eliminating penalties brings a different outcome:

“No, I think each game is different, as long as you’re playing efficient football. Sometimes, you’re going to win by putting up 30 to 40 points and sometimes you’re going to win by putting up 10 to 15 points. Each game is different.”

On T Storm Norton filling in for T Bryan Bulaga:

“[T] Storm Norton battled through a lot of adversity. He’s one of those guys that came in, knows what he’s doing. I thought he did an exceptional job. He’s done a great job of filling in for Bulaga.”

DALLAS COWBOYS HEAD COACH MIKE McCARTHY**On today’s win:**

“I think the biggest thing is, especially early in the year, our season started last week, so we established a playstyle, and I just felt that this Week 2 opportunity was so unique. Most of these players have not competed against each other, obviously teams don’t compete against each other, so there’s a lot to that. Obviously, the Chargers are coming off an excellent win last week at Washington. To come in here and win this game was important on a number of fronts for us. We needed it and we needed the confidence that goes with it. Winning in this league is so hard, so I’m just proud of the guys. They’re doing everything the right way. We still have a lot of work to do, we’re young in spots at the game. It was great to get our young guys in there. I just love the communication and the bounce back. These football games usually always come down to the last couple series and this one here came down to the last play. Excellent win for us and it will be a great plane ride home. I really liked their football team, competing against them, the way they play, the talent. This is definitely one that we can build off of.”

On the game and play clocks:

“The clock situation was just different. I’ve never had a clock go off the board on me like that. In the second down, we’re trying to chip away and get a shorter field goal. We were going to attempt a third-down play, kicking on the fourth was the time frame we were in, I think 17 seconds. We were right on the threshold. When you get in these 2 minute [situations], you have thresholds — one minute, 30-seconds, 17 seconds — so we were right at the threshold there of our whole operation. We had personnel — one of our players came off who shouldn’t have come off — and just communication errors. We were just going to run it down, but the clock I was watching came off the board, then the clock [Offensive Coordinator] Kellen [Moore] had with the camera — the camera was great from up top and obviously you want to call that time off between three and four seconds.”

On QB Dak Prescott’s composure:

“I think you see the best of Dak Prescott in those situations. You put a lot of time into it and I just really love his demeanor, his poise, in the 2-minute drills. It’s good to get these wins on Sunday. This is clearly a product of Dak and the offensive players and coaches, just the amount of time that goes into the 2-minute drill. It means a lot when you can get that done in a live game situation. Especially off of what [Cowboys K] Greg [Zuerlein] went through last week, you can see why we have confidence. This guy, he kicks field goals to put teams in the Super Bowl and I think he’s definitely a Super Bowl-caliber champion kicker. He hit two big ones today, and he hit the money one.”

On the offensive line’s performance and the unit having just eight offensive possessions:

“I think we come out there in the beginning with the 16-play drive -- you give them credit too -- they bounced back with some more long drives and three turnovers in the game and plus one. That factors into that. I think both teams showed a lot of patience and I like the way the game was called. From my position, you get to watch them more closely as opposed to participating in it. I thought both offensive play callers called very clean and kept their guys in a low-risk football game. I thought their quarterback [Justin Herbert], those guys played well, especially their defense. There’s a lot of ‘bend don’t break’ out there today. I think the score definitely reflected that.”

On the defense’s ‘personnel loss’ leading into today’s game:

“Defensive personnel loss and the timing of it is usually the challenge. I think these young players and the adjustments — you know [LB] Micah [Parsons] playing exclusively outside, to do it on a short week — making an adjustment mid-week, really gives a lot of credit to [Defensive Coordinator] Dan [Quinn] and the staff, and most of all the players. I have a lot of experience playing young players, I think this definitely pays forward. You kind of hold your breath for a few moments out there with a few of the young guys, but this is a great experience. These are moments and plays and especially games — and the result of games — that you definitely build off of.”

On some of the physical things LB Micah Parsons was asked to do:

“I just think full-time, he’s a run and hit player. He’s an impact player and not down to play exclusively as a pass-rusher. There’s obviously more a side that’s playing the position on first, second and third down as opposed to moving in there when he plays the SAM linebacker on base. It’s just a little more focus and lineman assignment in the schemes that he was asked to do. It’s something that we spent a lot of time with him one-on-one, because he does play both linebacker and defensive line, so for him to make that full switch mid-week is impressive.”

On the impact of the run game:

“Huge. We needed to get it going. We wanted to get the run game going. We were hoping to get some action pass off that. We didn’t really get to a lot of the things we were hoping to get to, but give our defensive front some credit. They did a good job of putting the personnel groups in there. I thought the chess match, Kellen [Moore] did a heck of a job calling the game.”

On if a focus was to keep QB Justin Herbert off the field:

“We’re going to always control the ball, regardless of who we are playing. We feel we can go the long way or the quick way. I thought Kellen [Moore] called an excellent game. I thought he was very patient today when he needed to be patient.”

On RB Tony Pollard having over 100 rushing yards:

“Tony is a heck of a player. I can only speak on my time with him here, he’s a really good inside and outside player. I know it’s where he came from and his past as a slot player and so forth, but he’s almost like another dimension. He’s a natural runner, doesn’t waste any steps. He really has the ability to put his foot in the ground and get vertical. I just think you’re seeing that through the years. Just to have the combination of him and Zeke [RB Ezekiel Elliott], we’re really fortunate to have two caliber backs like that.”

On meeting to decide which player will be brought up on gameday as a COVID-19 replacement:

“Hopefully we get back to not having these kind of meetings. I just think change is constant in our game right now — the COVID exempts and the practice squad exempts — just the number of conversations you have about who your 48 is going to be. I hope I don’t have too many days or weeks like we did this week. It was just constantly moving and turning and so forth. At the end of the day that’s my job, it’s the administrative part of it. The most important part is just to make sure the players don’t see that or feel that and just keep them focused on what’s in front of them. We really did have a very good week of practice and preparation, which we all know doesn’t always lead to playing great. It’s nice when it does as a coach. I like the way our team is progressing and I’m excited about what’s ahead of us with the Monday night game with Philadelphia and the three games at home. This is an excellent win to build off of.”

On the impact of winning today:

“You don’t want to be 0-2, nobody wants to be 0-2, but at the end of the day, my job is to protect and grow the locker room and the culture and make sure the training is enhanced so these guys can be in a position to win games. These guys have uplinked from that. It was a different training camp for me personally but we accomplished a lot, especially last year did mean something, because we did have some things we could build off from last year. Just kind of have a semi-normal training camp and the preseason had its challenges with injuries, particularly for [QB] Dak [Prescott]. That’s why last week we weren’t quite good enough, but there was a lot to build off of that. To me, I don’t think there was ever a lack of belief. I think we demonstrated that the way we came out here today, how we started the game and more importantly how we finished it.”

On today’s run-pass balance:

“You have to, we’re trying to build this thing to win a championship. You have to have diversity and you have to have an understanding of what your opponents can and can’t do. With you being uncommon opponents, it takes a little extra and raises a little different kind of confidence that goes with it because of the reliance, the understanding and the commitment during the course of the week that you have to do. You have to do more. Our players did that this week. It felt good, proud of the guys and it was one win. We’re 1-1 and we have three at home.”

On if they were trying to ‘go after’ the Chargers punt that resulted in a penalty:

“We have a pick stop. I think like a lot of things in the game — is it a pop block, is it a pop rush or is it a return? Sometimes you have calls that is a combination of both. We have picks still on there and the object was to drop the personal protector into the punter, just because of the way they were picking it up. I haven’t seen the video of it and I didn’t get a replay of it on the field. All I saw live was that there was a collision that went into the punter. I’m not exactly sure what they called it. I know the penalty they called. I’m not sure who they called it on.”

On Parsons’ versatility:

“It’s excellent for your defense. I have past experience with [former Packers LB] Clay Matthews. I always feel once we moved Clay back to off the ball and more linebacker position, it made him more valuable. It was tough from an offensive perspective for targeting and trying to help on that type of player. I think that’s definitely the way I view Micah. His ability to play on and off the ball creates potential matchup diversity. Not only for him, but what it does for the other players.”

On Parsons’ confidence:

“Absolutely, no doubt about it. It just looked the way the personnel groups were designed today. [LB] Leighton [Vander Esch] and [LB] Jaylon [Smith] played a lot of football, so this is really the product of how we have been utilizing these guys throughout, since the spring. You need it. You need all these personnel groups. We played a defense today that’s six personnel groups, we rolled five, so that’s today’s NFL.”

On the Cowboys fans in attendance today:

“It felt almost like a home game, definitely like you were back in Oxnard. It’s awesome. When we pulled in here last night coming from the airport, there was a truck with three or four huge Cowboys flags hanging out the back. You love to see that. Our fans are phenomenal and it definitely helps the players and it definitely felt in a lot of ways like a home game.”

On if the defensive gameplan changed after DE DeMarcus Lawrence was placed on Reserve/Injured:

“I would say adjustments. I think you have to give Dan and the coaches some credit because there is flexibility in this game. It’s something that when I arrived here, it was part of the change that I tried to start last year. We wanted to be more diverse, utilize more players. If you look at the defensive free agents and the rookie class, this is what we have been doing and hopefully we can continue to utilize all of the personnel groups.”

On injury updates:

“I know [WR] Amari [Cooper] got hit in the ribs, but they didn’t give us anything before we came in here.”

On Chargers OLB Joey Bosa:

“I thought we did a good job. The first part was the 16-play drive. We gave him a lot of attention, which he obviously deserves because we have a very high respect for him coming into this game. I thought [Cowboys T] Terence [Steele] played very well. I thought [OLB Kyler] Fackrell played well, came in here with a couple big rushes for them in the fourth quarter, but I like the way our guys battled.”

On the run game:

“I wouldn’t say they played with a light box the whole time, it’s always where is that four column and the seventh element and how far is he away — is he an immediate threat, is he from depth? I thought we were a lot more patient dealing with the extra hat today. I think we utilized more formations, more three-man stuff, those tight runs, things like that to make sure we got the ball ran.”

On QB Chargers Justin Herbert:

“I really like him a lot. We watched a little bit in the offseason, the season he had last year, knew some coaches that were here last year that spoke very highly of him. I think he’s a heck of a quarterback. He can make all his throws, he’s a very good athlete. I was impressed with the way they move him around, the quarterback moving packages. I think he has an extremely bright future ahead of him.”

On the game-winning field goal:

“We had a substitution communication there. We were going to run a third down play and we had a clock issue — the clocks were off the boards up top — then the one that Kellen [Moore] was watching, so basically we were communicating with the box. We didn’t have the personnel set for the third-down call. Once you get below 17 seconds, it’s a threshold and you just let it run out and take the kick. The initial plan at the 30-second mark was to run a third-down play.”

DALLAS COWBOYS QUARTERBACK DAK PRESCOTT**On the game-winning drive:**

“We talked about it all week long, we wanted to finish. Wanted to finish each drive, wanted to finish the game, wanted to take it out of the defense’s hands. Obviously, going back to last week we could have finished in the red zone with touchdowns, and we could’ve finished that game last week with a touchdown, right, not settling for a field goal. So, we put that on us this week and got the chance to go out there and do that with three-minutes-or-so or something like that on the clock, so it was important to relay that message and bring the guys back up and focus in on that, and we did, and then just that back end. I wasn’t sure. I’m looking at the endzone clock, so I saw the time, just thought that we’re comfortable and we’re good in field goal range, and so that’s what they wanted to do, and obviously, we had a conversation after about the whole clock getting turned off. “

On the game-winning field goal:

“As he kicked it, I was over there talking to [WR] Amari [Cooper], checking on Amari, trying to get my mind off it, I guess. Obviously, in a situation like that, you trust your team and [K] Greg Zuerlein to put it through. It was great, obviously, believing in him to make it, and he went and did that, and it was just a relief. The first win and the first win of many is usually the hardest, and it was.”

On his feelings coming out for the last drive:

“That’s what you do it for: for the ball in your hands, for the chance to go win it. That’s why I was talking to the offense, telling them that. We talked about it all week long, and now we’ve got the game in a position that we want it, so it’s on us to go capitalize and go finish this game off, and we were able to get it in field goal range and let special teams go out there and do their job.”

On Dallas’ offensive balance:

“Yeah, we didn’t throw it 50 times. I think we’re a whole lot more balanced. [Offensive Coordinator] Kellen [Moore] did a great job just mixing it up. Us as players, we’ve got to convert on some of those third downs. He still put us in great positions, called great plays. I took a sack, I feel like I could have got the ball out there in the third quarter. Just different times, but he’s dialing it up right now. He’s doing a great job, different personells: run, pass, play-action. He’s putting us in a great position to make great plays and we just got to continue to execute and get better.”

On the team identity:

“As I said last week, we’re going to have to go out there and score a bunch to win some games. And there’s going to be some games like this one, and I think it showed tonight. Defense did a great job, turnovers, a big turnover in the red zone when it was needed, and we were able to come back out and get three. It’s just important to play off of one another. When one team makes a big play, the other unit has to come on there and do a good job of picking up their back and taking advantage of them making that play. That’s what complementary football’s all about. That’s how you win games, that’s how you become a championship team, and be the team that we want to be.”

On the impact of rookie LB Micah Parsons and remembering being a rookie:

“Rookie year was six years ago, just knowing what that meant. [LB] Micah’s [Parson] a great player and just the fact of them being able to move him around, him off the edge, him at linebacker and at side, wherever you put him, he’s a special guy and he’s going to make plays, he’s fast, you saw him getting around the edge, recovering on tents sometimes, and [Chargers QB] Justin’s [Herbert] a fast guy as well, so for him to be able to do that, just shows the speed he has and the acceleration. As I said back in the spring, we’re lucky to have him.”

On if it’s the hallmark of a great team when players can step up after other players get injured:

“Yeah, for sure. You’ve got to fill in when someone else goes down, have their back, but understand how great of an opportunity it is for you. I think all those men understand that and the team, each unit understands how good of an opportunity it is for us to pick up the young guys, have their back and those guys get in and make plays that we’re going to need them to contribute all year long. If we want to be the type of team that we want to be and we want to make a run like we’re going to, everybody’s got to play a part in it and understand and respect their role and take advantage of it.”

On what kind of difference G Zack Martin makes and how he recovered the fumble:

“Yeah, [G] Zack’s [Martin] an all-pro player. As I said, that’s not somebody that you can find a filler for or a substitute for. He’s just incredible at everything that he does, communication to obviously, his physicalness to the way he finishes each play. He’s an enforcer in there. I don’t necessarily know how he got the fumble. Obviously, I got hit, looked and saw it bounce, and was like, ‘Hopefully, at any time, the defense doesn’t see it and your guys see it.’ But, I saw a couple of guys go down and get it and for him to come up with it was huge.”

On how he handles going long periods of time without having the ball:

“That’s just the way the game goes, the ebbs and flows and you’ve got to play to them. You’ve got to take advantage of when the ball is in your hands and knowing that we came out in the second half and we didn’t get the touchdown on that second drive like we wanted to, we got the field goal, but knowing that we had the ball in our hands is all you could ask for. That’s what I talked to the offense about and that’s what I’ve just said time and time is, that’s the position we wanted to be in. So, it was important for us to just go out there, focus on each play, communicate and just commit to each other, commit to going to get the job done and finishing and we did that.”

On his comfort level:

“I’ve been in the same offense for six years, pretty much. Just the preparation that I’ve put into it. As I’ve said time and time again, Sunday is for fun. Sundays are for me to go out there and perform. It’s the Monday through Saturday, the grind and every day that I put into this game that allows me to go out there and as you say, look that way, look so comfortable. It’s because I’ve repped all these reps in practice or even sometimes just visually in my head. So, yeah, it’s just all the work coming to fruition and just benefiting from that.”

On how RB Ezekiel Elliott and RB Tony Pollard complement each other:

“That’s what Kellen [Moore] is going to do. He’s going to, obviously, dial it up, get the right personnel, call the right plays for those guys’ strengths and it’s just important for me to not run those guys into a bad play. Those guys are both special and just for them to complement each other and just, obviously, follow that offensive line; they did a great job tonight being physical, setting the tone, giving those guys lanes to get to the second level and then that’s when they show off what they do.”

On how challenging it was going up against the Chargers defense:

“Yeah, it’s tough knowing that [Chargers Head Coach Brandon Staley] he’s not going to give you many shots and that he’s going to play in the gray area. They do a good job in the secondary and on disguises and getting to where they want to be, but that just allows us to know what we’ve got to do and get the ball out quick, as you saw tonight. He’s a great coach and he’s got this defense and this team rolling.”