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## WEEK 15 — PODIUM AVAILABILITY

Thursday, December 12, 2019 | Hoag Performance Center | Costa Mesa, Calif.

### LOS ANGELES CHARGERS DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR GUS BRADLEY

#### Opening statement:

“Just to go back, it was a good win in Jacksonville. I thought we played pretty well. We really played hard. There are countless plays, when we looked at tape, where guys really across the board — defensive line, linebackers, [defensive backs] — where the effort really jumped out. I think it was a good illustration that we tackled very well. I know in the beginning of the season, that we felt we needed some work on that. It’s one game, but overall, pretty pleased with the performance. Guys like [NT] Brandon Mebane really played well, [DE] Joey Bosa getting a couple of sacks and [S Derwin] DJ [James Jr.] coming back. It really was a group effort, that’s good.”

“Now, onto the Vikings. It’s a very challenging week. A very, very good offense. An explosive offense. The whole system — I don’t know if they have categorized it as a system — the [former Broncos and Redskins Head Coach] Mike Shanahan, the [Vikings Assistant Head Coach/Offensive Advisor] Gary Kubiak, [49ers Head Coach] Kyle Shanahan, the [Rams Head Coach] Sean McVay — that type of offense is very challenging because they’re a committed run team. They really attack defenses. Off of those runs, they have play-action passes and things like that really keep you on your toes. It’ll be a challenging week. They have a very good running back, probably the best on that we’ve faced thus far as far as his talent level and the things that he can do. The quarterback is playing really well — a high completion percentage, playing smart, making good decisions — and they have threats on the outside along with the tight ends. The offensive line is not a big offensive line like some of the offensive lines that we’ve seen, but they’re probably ranked as one of the top offensive lines that we’ve seen just because of their ability to move. They just really work well together. They’re very well-coached. It’ll be a great challenge for us.”

#### On DE Joey Bosa:

“I think Joey has become — he has always been a talented player — but I think the combination of playing the run, playing the pass and the consistency that he is playing with. It’s just like last week. We said, ‘Hey, just keep coming. The way you’re rushing and the moves [you’re using].’ There has been an opportunity where last week, I mean, we pressured more. I think we had like 15 or 16 pressures last week where we were ahead, and they were in the passing mode. I think that, for a rusher, they like that opportunity. You work hard, you stop the run, you get ahead in the game, that’s kind of the reward — the opportunity for your guys to rush. He’s been rushing so well, it was good to see him get a couple of sacks.”

#### On CB Brandon Facyson:

“I think what really stood out, first and foremost for us, was his ability to tackle. He has been a very, very good tackler. I think that’s something that you don’t take for granted. When you evaluate corners, [you ask] are they a willing tackler? Are they a poor tackler, a willing tackler or a really good tackler? A lot of times, you say, ‘Hopefully, they’re willing,’ because they’re really paid on the outside to cover, but anytime you get a corner that can tackle like he did in the game, that’s a great benefit. I think it’s not only just the front seven, the linebackers and things like that, but also to see the corners tackle as well. His ability to cover and then be put into a spot — he’s worked hard all year, so it’s kind of cool to see that he went in and played very well.”



**On LB Drue Tranquill:**

"I think, he's been very intriguing. We've kind of had our eyes on him as he's gone through OTAs and into training camp. We felt like he's playing more like a veteran player. The way he picks things up, the way he understands the defense, the concepts. Some of the things that we're asking players to do, it seemed like it didn't take him as long to pick it up. We felt like the bar was pretty high on him. What he gives us is versatility. He can go in and play MIKE, he can play dime, he can play WILL. He's a guy that, any time we need a break or someone goes down, he can flip over there and we really don't lose much. His instincts are pretty good. He really set the tone, I think, the first play of the game. He kind of ran through a gap and made a play. It's good to see his aggressiveness."

**On safeties converting to linebacker:**

"I think, for us, with some of the things that we ask them to do, that was kind of the [LB] Kyzir White example, too. A safety that can play linebacker. That type of speed, that type of instinct, initial quickness. That's the kind of guys that we target, somewhat, in the draft. Drue Tranquill fell into that. I think his, to play the run, to get an aggressive guy that can tackle in the box and get off blocks — but then when it comes to pass concepts, there is so much that the league has gotten to, to understand that, I think that back-end experience helps."

**On DT Justin Jones:**

"I mentioned it last week about [DT] Jerry Tillery, to get an offseason with him and a training camp — but Justin Jones came into me right before training camp. I think it was during OTAs and we were talking about, this is what kind of took place for him at North Carolina State. He started off getting a feel for things and how things operate. Then, the next year, his leadership really jumped up, holding other players accountable. That type of personality. He said, 'Gus, that's really my personality.' I see that developing more this year, and it has. I don't know if it's kind of a routine for him, but he really has jumped up. He's a very prideful player, wants to play very aggressively, attack offenses and offensive lines. That type of mentality is good for him. We think he's playing pretty well for us right now."

**On LB Denzel Perryman:**

"He came back and now he's our starter. I would imagine that you'd see both him and Drue [Tranquill] playing. We need to keep those guys fresh. This will be a challenging — put the big boy pads on type of game for us."

**On converted safeties playing linebacker against the run:**

"It does [have an effect] because you don't want a 205-pound safety. We went through that last year, right? [S Adrian] AP [Phillips] did a good job for us, but you're taking on big offensive linemen. To be able to get off the block, the strength, punch and get off them. When I say that as a safety, if they're 225, 230 pounds that can really run and have that instinct, that type of mold is probably ideal for us rather than the 260-pound inside linebacker that takes on the full back. They're good in a lot of systems and there can be a lot of good players, but for our system, more of that highly skilled safety that can play linebacker — that's like [LB Jatavis] JB [Brown]. For him, he is a very instinctive player and his size, we keep talking about his size. When he plays in the box, that he can operate in there."

**On LB Uchenna Nwosu:**

"You talk about Jerry Tillery being quiet, that's kind of Uchenna's personality [as well]. Really, just comes to work every day and puts in a hard day's work. You always know what you're going to get from him. The guy plays multiple positions for us, so on the field, fantastic. Just his mentality, the mentality to want to give back. I go back to [LB] Thomas Davis [Sr.]. I think a guy like Thomas Davis is really good for our team because they can look to him and say, 'Well, that's what it looks like. That's a guy that plays well on the field, does a lot in the community, gives back and is well rounded.' He provides an image of what it looks like, and [Nwosu] is the same way. He is a phenomenal person, so I couldn't be happier for him."

**On S Derwin James Jr.:**

"Well, I think he's exceeded our expectations as far as the amount that we played him. Like the first game, we didn't know how many [reps] we were going to give him. He came in and played, for the most part, the whole game. I think we do some different things. We've always tried to utilize the skillset of players. Last week, we brought him on some pressures more just because he can affect the quarterback when he does come. He made a big play at that, a batted down ball. His ability to be versatile. We had him as a linebacker, we had him as a safety, we had him as the dime position. We can move him around and try to utilize his skillset. I just think, as an overall unit, when he's on the field, it gives really good confidence to the unit."

"You'd rather have to say [slow down, dial it back] to him [than the alternative]. Some of our concepts, he's just so explosive and fast. Some of the things that maybe were issues get taken away quicker when he's on the field."



**On James and S Adrian Phillips changing the defense now that they've returned:**

"I think so. We have some good players that play in front of them. A guy like [S] Jaylen Watkins did really well for us. Again, there are just different skillsets and different personalities on the field. AP's wisdom — he's a guy that communicates on the field, will give indicators. He's kind of that wise veteran out there who brings that presence. DJ plays very fast and explosive. Players, when he is on the field, know that there is a chance for a big play to occur."

**On James' unnecessary roughness penalty:**

"It looked to me — now, I'm on his side, obviously. The target part is so hard because it looked like he lowered his shoulder and it was shoulder to shoulder. It didn't look like it was the head or neck area. Now, where they felt like where he hit him on the shoulder led into his neck — but it was one of those where we just have to talk to him about, 'Hey, continue to lower your target.' I think the biggest coaching point we find, too, is to keep your head up. AP had a great hit on the sideline. He came up, had his head up, where DJ dropped his head a little bit. Sometimes, that what can get you in trouble, and for safety reasons."

**On if roughness penalties have been called consistently this season:**

"I think so. Like I mentioned last week, we've had visits with them in OTAs and training camp. How they explained it to us and how they would call it, I think it's been pretty consistent — from what we've seen anyway."

**On Vikings RB Dalvin Cook:**

"He's one of the best in the league. It's not like you can say, 'Hey, have the scout team running back mirror exactly how he is.' Although, we're getting good looks in that. He's just very explosive. A guy like DJ knows and knows him really well. We have great respect for him. Each day, you try to look at running styles and how he operates, the moves he makes and the cuts that he makes. Is he a jump-cutter, will he try to avoid, will he run away, will he try to run through you? You try to get an image of who he is off the tape the best you can and then try to mirror in practice."

"I don't try to compare. He's just extremely talented. I think he would be good in any system, but for what they're asking him to do, there is a lot of trust. I remember when I was in Seattle with [Raiders Offensive Line] Coach [Tom] Cable, they ran the outside zone and it was always, 'Run through darkness. Trust — just run through darkness. Make that cut and go.' I'm watching [Cook] and now I see what you were talking about, Coach Cable, because he does that."

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR SHANE STEICHEN****On the Minnesota defense:**

"I just think that they're a very competitive group. They have played together for a while. You can see the continuity there with [Vikings LBs Anthony] Barr and [Eric] Kendricks. Shoot, they played together in college. Then, [Vikings S] Harrison Smith on the back end, he's the point guard back there. He's a heck of a football player. [Vikings CB] Xavier Rhodes, the corner, and [Vikings CB] Trae Waynes, these guys — they're a good group. [Vikings Head Coach Mike] Zimmer has always had really good defenses and he has another one this year."

**On implementing play-action:**

"I think it's a game-by-game basis. It just depends on who you're playing. Obviously, play-action is good when you're running it well. The play-action sets it up. Yeah, I'd say game-by-game."

**On RB Austin Ekeler:**

"[His performance] was unbelievable. To have a 100 and 100 performance, it was awesome. He had the big play on the screen and just how it opened up was awesome. Obviously, he had the two explosive runs — the one to start the game and the one right before the half was awesome. He's a tremendous player, as we know, and he's proven it every week."

**On the long touchdown pass to Ekeler:**

"They were in blitz-zero. If you have a screen like that in empty and they're in blitz-zero, it's pretty good. There's no deep safety and they're bringing the house. You have to get one guy blocked and we had them all blocked. The linemen were out blocking. It was a heck of a team effort there. Great job by the team."

**On Ekeler:**

"He's a heck of a runner and he's a heck of a receiver. He's doing a great job of it and has continued to do a good job of it every week. I think he's both."

