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LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN

Opening statement:

"Well not a lot has changed since the last time we spoke, but I will tell you this — [S] Roderic Teamer will not practice today. [CB] Trevor Williams will not practice today. [LB Jatavis] JB [Brown] will not practice today and [LB] Drue Tranquill will not practice today. I don't want to rule players out on a Wednesday. We'll see how they progress by the end of the week, but they will not practice today. Our focus is clearly on the [Indianapolis] Colts right now. This is a very deep and talented football team led by a good friend of mine and a great man, [Indianapolis Colts Head Coach] Frank Reich. This team has really taken on his mentality, his attitude — and you can see it in their play. I mean, they play hard. I know they lost [QB] Andrew Luck, but we expect this team to be even better. It happens a lot. When you lose a key guy, everyone else steps their game up and you become a better team than you were before, so we're definitely expecting their best shot."

On LB Drue Tranquill:

"He got sore in the game last week."

On LB Jatavis Brown:

"It's the ankle that he hurt last week, so we're taking care of him."

On how the Colts are different without Andrew Luck:

"We don't know yet. I went back and looked at tape on [Colts QB] Jacoby [Brissett]. I played him when I was in the AFC East and he was with [New England] Patriots. He played a lot in 2017, but how much has he grown? I don't know yet. I just know that he is a more than capable quarterback. [He is a] strong arm, big man. He can move when he has to. They have a lot of confidence in him and they should. He's been the starting quarterback all summer and all spring when Andrew was out. I think he'll definitely be ready to go."

On what he's seen from Brissett on preseason tape:

"You can look at the [Colts] preseason tape. It is vanilla, but I'm sure they're working on things that they're going to do in the regular season. They didn't show everything, I'm sure of that."

On RB Melvin Gordon III:

"Don't get me wrong, I don't want to talk about the Melvin Gordon situation, but I love Melvin Gordon. We're definitely a better team with Melvin, but he's not here right now. My focus is [on] the guys that are here. I have to get these guys ready to play this team because this is a very talented team coming here on Sunday. I don't want any distractions. I'm really focused on the men that are here."

On how long it takes to get a good read of the roster:

"By the time you make it through the first quarter of the season, you should know. I've been with this team and we've kept this team together for a reason. Going into our third season, I have a pretty good feeling what to expect from this football team, but every year is different. You don't know until you start playing football games. I have a good feeling about our team, but we'll know more as we start playing real games."



On what he has seen from the Colts' improved pass rush:

"They swarm to the ball. They have [DE] Justin Houston over there now. Justin was in our division for a long time. We know what he can do. With Justin on one side, the other three guys — [DT Denico] Autry had nine sacks last year. These guys can get to the quarterback, but what they really do is push the pocket. Pressure doesn't go on stats, but sometimes the pressure is just as big as a sack."

On CB Trevor Williams:

"He's missed a lot of time. I don't think he would be ready to play, but you never know. We'll have to see. If someone goes down in practice or whatever, [the next] guy has to step up and play."

On going into a game with four cornerbacks on the roster:

"You can go into a game with four corners. [DB] Desmond King can actually step in and play corner if we need him to, so we have plans there. [S] Jaylen Watkins has played corner before as well."

On how he would handle losing a big player before the season started:

"Yeah, I look at it every day. They go into this game without Andrew Luck, but I go into this game without one of the best left tackles in the game, Russel Okung. [I go in without] one of the best safeties in the game in Derwin James. [I go in without] one of the top running backs in the league in Melvin Gordon. So yeah, I see it every day. You got to step up and overcome it."

On if he feels bad for the Colts:

"No, I don't."

On if he feels the team will make big plays in late-game situations like last season:

"Well you'd like to think because we've been in those situations before and a lot of these guys have had success, that we can do it again. I think the more times you're in that situation and have success, the more often you can do it. We have the same players, so I don't see why we wouldn't win close games."

On overcoming short-yardage struggles:

"I feel very confident in the running game, but we do need to be better in third-and-one and fourth-and-one situations. Running the ball or passing the ball, we do need to be better. That's something that we understand and we're emphasizing it."

On splitting time between RBs Austin Ekeler and Justin Jackson:

"The flow of the game. You know, if one guy goes in the game and gets hot, you let him ride. We're definitely going to play both guys, but I can't tell you who is going to get how many touches right now."

On announcing team captains:

"Yes, we did today. [QB] Philip Rivers is captain again. [NT] Brandon Mebane was a captain. [C] Mike Pouncey was a new captain. [LB] Thomas Davis [Sr.] was a new captain. [DE] Melvin Ingram [III] was voted captain. Its really important to those guys because they were voted captains by their peers. Captains is something that I've never done before. I've never been on a team with captains — we've always had leadership council groups where coaches select certain players. When I got here [in 2017] we had done captains and I had killed it. Then I had a player come to me and say, 'Coach, being voted captain by my peers is more important to me than going to any Pro Bowl, All-Pro, or any individual honors.' When I get that type of information, then I think we need captains. I think the captains are the leaders of our team. I told the guys, 'Give me five guys that you will follow.' Those are the five guys they gave me and so those are the ones that we're going to go with."

On LB Thomas Davis Sr. being named a captain:

"I think it says a lot because [we signed] Thomas Davis seven months ago, but he's been on campus for only five months. For his peers to vote him a team captain in five months, I think that's pretty impressive."

On how Thomas Davis looks heading into Week 1:

"He looks good. I held him out for a reason. I want to see him a lot on Sunday."

On Colts OLB Darius Leonard:

"He's a game-wrecker, man. He's one of the best linebackers in the game, in my opinion. He can play in space, he can play in the box. He led the NFL in tackles last year, along with seven sacks. He can make a lot of plays in a lot of different ways."



On the defensive communication helmet:

"That's mostly our middle linebacker, so when [LB] Denzel [Perryman] is on the field, he'll have it in his helmet. [LB] Kyzir [White] will have it in his helmet."

On if QB Philip Rivers is set to play:

"Oh yeah. We played him a lot in the [Los Angeles] Rams practices and [New Orleans] Saints practices. I feel like he got a lot of full-speed, game-type reps in a controlled environment. He got his work in."

On the how long of a leash the offensive lineman will have:

"I don't want a guy going into a game looking over his shoulder saying, 'If I make a mistake, I'm out.' I don't want that type of mindset, but [G] Forrest [Lamp] is going to play. How much is he going to play? I can't tell you that, but he is going to get into the game and he is going to play. I know you don't like to rotate lineman, but we saw enough in Forrest where we feel very comfortable when he's in the game that we'll be okay."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR KEN WHISENHUNT**On the familiarity between the Chargers and Colts:**

"I think we've evolved a little bit in the last couple of years since they haven't been here. I mean, we all kind of run a lot of the same things, a lot of the same principles. How we communicate it is a little bit different. Some of the things that we're doing — especially running game-wise — are different. They may know some, they may not. We may change it. You just never know how that goes. Obviously, they can talk about scheme just like we talk to [Defensive Coordinator] Gus [Bradley] a little bit about their scheme. You don't know for sure what changes have been made or exactly what's going on. I don't know how much there is to that."

On the running backs:

"They've been impressive when they've had their opportunities. If we were sitting here and they hadn't played in an NFL game or were really young, you might have a different perspective. I just keep going back to Kansas City and going back to Pittsburgh — those were huge games. You don't get bigger games than that. All of these guys contributed significantly. I mean, Austin [Ekeler] did it all year. [Justin] JJ [Jackson], when he got his opportunity against Pittsburgh, he was tremendous. You have to base it, too, off of their preseason. They've done a great job in camp. [Troymaine] Pope has really stepped up and played well. He returned a punt in special teams, which is, obviously, a valuable asset. We have some guys that we feel good about. They've performed, so it's kind of hard to argue with that."

On distributing carries:

"I don't know that you necessarily have to get into the question — if you block a run and he goes 50 yards, he has a hot hand. If we block it well, we'll have a chance. I think, when you talk about it like that, you're meaning if we have sustained drives and how we are doing in that category. At times last year, we were really good with that. If that's the case, you're getting more opportunities and you naturally think you have a hot hand. I'll tell you, it's hard to go, 'We're going to give somebody [a certain number] of carries,' because you just never know how the game is going. It's going to be more like a feel-thing. Obviously, [Head] Coach [Anthony Lynn], he's really good with the running backs. He has been involved with them for a long time, so he has a great feel for that."

On the offensive balance:

"I hope so, that's what our plan is. I think we were pretty successful running it last year at times. A lot of times, to be honest with you, it's going to be how the game dictates it. You'd like to say that you're going to run the ball every game, but sometimes the matchups, scheme or whatever it is may be better in another area, or it may not be as good as you'd like it. I think that we, obviously, work very hard to make sure that we're consistent with running the football and that we want to keep doing that. If you look at what some of the runs that Austin [Ekeler] and [Justin] JJ [Jackson] had last year, you would think they have the chance to do that. That will be judged, I guess, over the course of time, but we certainly feel good about those guys."



On the offensive line:

“All of them have played and they’ve played against some pretty good teams. They’ve played against our division opponents, they’ve played against some really good football teams last year. It’s not like it’s their first experience. I think, obviously, block out the hype and play like they’ve played. Understand what’s expected of them and keep working on their technique. We’ve got some really good leaders on that line in [C Mike] Pouncey and [G/T Michael] Schofield [III] — both of those guys have been around and they’re really good with the younger guys. [T] Russell [Okung] is even around still with us, so that helps. You just have to play confident. [T] Sam [Tevi], I guess, now is kind of an elder statesman. He’s played quite a bit. Like I said, [T] Trent [Scott] got in there last year in the toughest situation possible — as an undrafted rookie — and he played well. He has had a whole preseason. Hopefully, his upward trend will [continue].”

On G Forrest Lamp:

“He’s going to take a couple of snaps at quarterback. We’re going to see how that works. We’ve been working on the speed-option with him. We think he has a chance with that.

“I think that Forrest did well in camp and we’ve had good competition there. It always makes you better and stronger when you have that. Forrest is going to get a chance to play. It doesn’t matter whether it’s Forrest or somebody else, that’s just the way it is in the NFL — those guys will play as the game goes. That’s just how it happens. I think that will all work itself out.”

On rotating offensive linemen:

“It really, I guess, depends on what you’re implying with rotating linemen. I think Coach [Lynn] has probably answered that and he has a feel for how he wants to do that. I think we’ll see how it goes. It’s not any different than rotating receivers, rotating running backs and even rotating tight ends. At some point, you put guys in there and they get their opportunities.

“I’ve been in the league for a little while — not just with this team, but with other teams as well. When we were in Pittsburgh one year, we rotated linemen on third down. It’s the craziest thing that I’ve ever seen. A guy would come running out, he’d be the third down guy and he’d go back off the field. Alan Faneca would play guard, then he would play tackle and then he would go back to guard. I think some of it is a function of what you have to do. When you have a 53-man roster — or 46 active — that’s something that you have to be prepared for. We’ll see. I’m not saying that we couldn’t — who knows how it will go.”

On the linemen rotation in Pittsburgh:

“Yeah, [it worked]. As strange as it is, it worked for what we needed it to work for. That team, I think, is similar to this team. We have a bunch of guys that were really good veterans and understood what was going on. Everybody sacrificed to help us get the team forward. We have a lot of that going on with this group. That’s what’s so exciting.”

On T Trent Scott:

“Did you think his start [last season] wasn’t that good? I think we won [that game].

“How about this? Let me say it this way. Last year, if you think about it, in his rookie season as an undrafted guy, he probably got the bulk of his playing time in the fourth preseason game. We played the guys up front a lot more last year than we did this year because we had some new faces — like [Mike] Pouncey — and we wanted to get some chemistry there. When he was forced in there to play, he played well. Now, he has all of the OTAs, he has all of summer camp, he’s been working in the offseason program. He understands the techniques better. Does that guarantee that he’s going to play better? No, but I’ll tell you what, I like [his] mentality, how he prepares and how he works. Nothing seems to bother him. He definitely has some talent. He has blocked some of the better rushers in the league. I’m not saying he’s going to be All-Pro. We all — all of us — make mistakes or don’t always win, but I like where he has improved and that’s what you want to see.”

On the Colts defense:

“We didn’t see much since last season. They didn’t do a whole lot in the preseason. That seems to be a little bit of a trend in the NFL right now, which is okay. They’re a disciplined group. They play very well together. They have a good scheme. They play their scheme well. Their second-year linebacker [Darius Leonard], 53, he’s a good player. They have a secondary that plays really well. They can put pressure on you with their front. Their scheme is a very well-coordinated scheme. It obviously presents some issues, but you have to find a way. That’s what we’ve been working to try to make sure we’re set.”



LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK PHILIP RIVERS

On his first appearance in a game this year:

"I think that first snap that you're always a little amped up and going a little bit, whether you played in the preseason or not. That first go at it on opening week, you hope you feel that way I guess. I don't feel like we're going to sputter for a quarter. We had better not. If we do, we'll have to figure it out and go as you do in any game. You have those times where you sputter a little bit, but hopefully, we can get going early."

On his feelings on the team:

"I think it's a long season. I think you've always said it's a 16-week deal. We want to get off to a fast start, no question. Week 1 is the game that everybody in the league has looked forward to ever since the schedule came out, but just because it's the first one. It's no more important than the other 15 after this. Half of the league is going to win, half of the league is not. There is still a lot that goes on after this, but we certainly want to get off to a fast start. I think those kinds of things take shape as the year goes. We had that year where we were 0-4 and then we really may have been as good as any team in the league at the end of that year. Last year, we were pretty steady throughout. It's a new group, we'll see. I look forward to getting out there and seeing us all together and how we get started."

On the retirement of QB Andrew Luck:

"I don't know Andrew personally, so I guess like anyone, you're a little bit surprised — as I think everyone was. You can only go off what he tells you. You certainly never imagined both the pain and all that he dealt with was that tough on him. Shoot, he had a heck of a career, although a little shorter than everyone anticipated. You just hope what's best for him."

On his longevity:

"I'm excited. I'm thankful to be trotting out there for another opening day. I'm excited about this team, I'm excited about this season. We've got a good group. Like you said, we'll see. You asked when do you know, I don't think you ever know because I don't think you ever have it — it's a fun team to be apart of. It's a good group. A group that, I thought, has had a heck of an offseason and training camp. It's a group that's excited to get back out there. It's our first real test again in a game that counts since that New England game where we were all disappointed. Really, no phase played their best. It's a chance to push that aside and get started again."

On the offense:

"I think, gosh, those are good players. They're Pro Bowl players. We've dealt with some injuries and are missing a few already. Here we are in Week 1. I think we have a lot of confidence in the guys that are filling in for them. It's not catching them off-guard. It's not all of the sudden where we have an injury on Wednesday of game week and we're like, 'Alright, here's what we're going to do, the shuffle and how we're going to manage it.' This has been the group that we've had out there for all of camp. We feel good with who we have. At the same time, we'd love to have those guys out there with us."

On Colts Head Coach Frank Reich:

"It was awesome. Frank, as a football coach, was awesome to be around. Frank, as a man, was probably even better. I shouldn't say probably, no question that it was even better. I enjoyed that, the time spent in the meeting room. Really, the first year here with [Offensive Coordinator Ken] Whiz [Whisenhunt] was the first year in a new offense in my whole career. We had so much fun and so many discussions of what we were going to call this, what we were going to call that, here's what we called it — it was just awesome football stuff and then life stories. It was a good couple of years. We've kept in touch over the years and I've pulled for him. It was awesome to see what they did in Philadelphia. I was super fired up for him to get this opportunity in Indy. Really, it's no surprise just knowing him. Obviously, you have to have a good team as well, but it's no surprise to see the grit and toughness they showed last year after starting off the way they did and finding a way to get into the postseason and win a game. Knowing Frank, that was right up his alley to kind of turn that thing around. Those were good years and good memories of those times, for sure."



On RB Melvin Gordon III:

"[We've had] a little bit [of communication]. Nothing probably worth noting.

"You get used to having certain guys around and in the locker room, but you know that there's change every year. It has been different not having [Raiders WR] Tyrell [Williams] in the locker room after all of those years. Obviously, it's totally different circumstances. I think guys come and go. That's what this league is. Certainly, the situation that it is and kind of the unknown, I guess, for such a long period of time — it's been a little different. Again, I don't know any other way to say it other than when it gets to this point right here, it's all eyes on Indy and our guys finding a way to go win one game and then doing that week-by-week. Whether you're dealing with an injury or something like this, when it gets to this [point of the year], it's who do we have that will be suited up and how do we find a way. I think that's the only way to go about it."

On former TE Antonio Gates:

"That's probably more weird for me, personally, in that sense just because [we've been teammates] for so long. Like you mention, his locker was right there for so long. I've checked in with him a few times, too. I think he's doing well. I'm sure it's weird for him as well after so many years. His body clock is probably telling him, 'I need to go run a corner-route,' or something right now. That is different and I certainly miss him, but nothing to complain about there with the 15 years that we had together."

On RBs Austin Ekeler and Justin Jackson:

"I don't think there is any unknown there with JJ and Austin. I think we've both seen it in action and we know what they can do. They both were sprinkled in there in times when all of our backs were here. Like we said, we've seen them all spring and training camp. I don't know that there's an unknown there or wonder how they're going to do. We can see the tape and go off how many days of work we've put in together to know that they're more than capable of helping us move the ball, score points and find a way to win."

On the offensive line:

"They played a bunch of snaps [in the preseason]. That's probably the most snaps of any starting group, I would imagine, besides [C Mike] Pouncey to play in the preseason. Throw in the Saints and the Rams [joint practices], they got a lot of snaps, too — which was good for them. These guys didn't have a lot of snaps in previous years. I think it was good for them. We have a great deal of confidence in those guys. They're all capable physically, but they all have a great deal of toughness and want-to. I know that you can say want-to can only get you so far, but shoot, if you don't have that — I'm thankful that all of the guys that have been in front the last 14 years have had that. That means something. They're going to fight and scrap like crazy to do their job in both the run and passing game. We have a great deal of confidence. I think the biggest thing is — and I think in [T] Trent's [Scott] case filling in there for [T] Russell [Okung] — just go play. Go play and just go. Shoot, you may get beat, you may miss a block. I'm sure going to miss a throw. We're going to keep going and find a way. We believe in each other. We'll find a way to get it done."

On the joint practices:

"I am [confident it was enough work for me]. I think, too — I certainly am. I would have been standing here right now and played 20 snaps in the preseason. I don't know how much more ready I could have been. Once you get out there in a series, get a first down or two and the game gets going, I don't think anybody is thinking, 'Gosh, if I had three more snaps in preseason, I would really be ready to handle this,' you know? I think there may be a little bit of that if you hadn't been in this league at all, but gosh, there has been a lot of snaps. That doesn't mean you're ever — shoot, we've got to go. We may start off three-and-out, but it won't be because I didn't play in the preseason. Certainly, we don't want to do that, but I really don't think that's going to have any bearing on how we start the game."

On not taking a hit until the regular season:

"I think I've had my first hit come in a regular season game. I've had some preseasons where I didn't get touched. I don't stand back there long in preseason with it. I think because of the joint practices — those mornings when you wake up and know you're going against the Rams defense and Saints defense, you put a little more time into the practice. You don't game plan them, but shoot, I certainly watched the Rams game from the previous year, watched the Saints practices from the previous year so that you get a little bit in that mode before you go practice against them. That in addition to the past experience gave me the confidence to feel like I didn't need any extra."



On the upcoming season:

"I don't really think it's different other than the year that we're coming off. Again, that's all last year's stuff, so I don't know that it has any bearing other than I think it's just closer in our memories. A lot of the guys in that locker room have those experiences, really from the last two years. I just think that's a positive. Any time you get in a situation or you get down 14, or in any of those situations like we were in last year — when you can draw from past experiences and done it together, it's meaningful. There for a stretch, I remember saying it — I'm talking three, four or five years ago — we had not done it together. We had not won those close games together. We had not come back from being 3-6 or whatever. We did it in 2008. Some of us knew what it was like, but we hadn't made those plays together. Until we got that done, it was always kind of hanging over our heads — they can't win a close game and all these things. Now, we've done these things together. That doesn't mean it will happen again this year, but it does help you to be able to draw from those experiences."

On C Mike Pouncey:

"I was fired up for Mike, fired up for us. He's brought a ton to us, he really has. Not only his play on the field, which I think was reflected in being a Pro Bowler and just some notoriety as he should have gotten, but just what he brings in the locker room. He has been great in the locker room and in the huddle. To all of those things, he has kind of riled the guys. He's been a good addition for us. I was certainly fired up to know that he was locked in for another year."

On the extension:

"I think it's part of this game that we're in. It's the game that we love, we played as a kid and the ultimate team sport — and then it is a business. Those things come with it, but I think you keep them separate. I think every guy is different. No one guy affects the other. You kind of leave it at that."

