

Josh.Rupprecht@Chargers.NFL.com ⚡ Jennifer.Rojas@Chargers.NFL.com ⚡ Jamaal.LaFrance@Chargers.NFL.com ⚡ Lauren.Meyer@Chargers.NFL.com
Brock.Anderson@Chargers.NFL.com ⚡ Danny.Markino@Chargers.NFL.com ⚡ Jordan.Colquitt@Chargers.NFL.com ⚡ Leonie.Strehl@Chargers.NFL.com

Chargers General Manager Joe Hortiz Introductory Press Conference

Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2024 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS PRESIDENT OF FOOTBALL OPERATIONS JOHN SPANOS

"Thank you all for coming today. I know, like I said last Thursday — driving in the rain in Southern California can be a risky proposition. Two press conferences, two rainy days. I don't know what the odds of that are in Southern California [laughter]. I wouldn't have expected that. This really is an exciting day as we get to introduce the new GM [general manager] of the L.A. Chargers. I want to start out by welcoming [General Manager] Joe's [Hortiz] family, who is here today. Joe's wife, Jennifer, and their four boys — Joey, Jack, Jamie and Julian. They got into town yesterday. We are just so excited to have you here. Welcome to the Charger family.

"Before Joe comes up, I thought I'd talk a little bit about our process and why we feel Joe is the best person for this job. You know, it's been a long time since we've gone through a GM search. It's been 11 years. I remember 11 years ago, we had both the GM and head coach positions open. 11 years ago, we made a very specific plan to hire the GM first. This time around, we wanted to make sure we remained open-minded. We didn't want to limit ourselves. We ran, really a dual process. I explained last Thursday at the press conference, what our process was for the head coach, in regards to first identifying the traits that we're looking for in the candidates and the ways that you go about evaluating those traits, in regards to the interview, the body of work and the references.

"That was exactly what we did in the GM search, as well. We went through both at the same time and went down a parallel path, and really, kind of conducted two separate searches, but I think it's important to point out something that was really important to us was the fit between the head coach and the general manager. We did not want to have an 'arranged marriage' in any way. It was important to us, whatever domino did fall first, that person, we would want their insight on the other spot as well. As we went through the interview process, we asked all the head coaches about GMs, all of the GMs about head coaches. What kind of worked out perfectly was both [Head] Coach [Jim] Harbaugh and Joe [Hortiz] said nothing but super positive things about each other. We felt really good about that fit.

"I first crossed paths with Joe many years ago. We were trying to remember exactly when. We couldn't remember the exact date, but just being on the road scouting, you can really get to know people on other teams. You're spending, sometimes, the entire day with other scouts, if not multiple days in a week. You really get to know people. I think, for me, one of the things that always stood out about Joe from the very beginning when I met him was just how hard-working he is, how low-ego. From being at schools with him and seeing the way he can talk to people who were at the schools, he has a really special way of connecting with people and building relationships, which I think is really important in this business. The body of work, of course, where Joe has been, is super impressive. I think that the Ravens are very highly respected, in regard to their player personnel department for the way that they've done things, for the success that they've had in acquiring players. I know that Joe has been a big part of that.

"I think that successful general managers can really come from all kinds of backgrounds, all kinds of resumes and all kinds of traits. At the end of the day, I really think that this position must excel at team building. When it comes to player evaluation, player acquisition — I think those things are just paramount with the general manager position. From looking at Joe's work and where he's been, we feel really excited about his ability to do just that here. Just really the more that we got to spend time with Joe through the interview process, I think all of those traits that I mentioned really just came to light. I feel like Joe was kind of born to do this job. He has a really high-passion for football. That really came out. Impressive knowledge of the game. He's been evaluating players, really, a long time. Throughout the process, he shared with us his vision and philosophy on team building. A lot of it is rooted in the draft, but I think, what also presented itself is that Joe has a progressive view on team building in regard to factoring in salary cap ramifications, the use of analytics. Taking all of those things into account, we felt that Joe was the perfect person for this job and really just couldn't be more excited to have him here. With that, it's with great pleasure that I introduce the next GM of the L.A. Chargers, Joe Hortiz."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS GENREAL MANAGER JOE HORTIZ

Opening Statement:

"I'm excited to be here. First, thanks to everyone for coming. I just walked through the rain out here, so it's definitely a little wet out there. I'll try to keep dried off. It's really just a pleasure to be here. I want to thank the Spanos Family — [Owner and Chairman of the Board] Dean, Susie, [President of Football Operations] John and [President of Business Operations] A.G., for putting their faith in me and partnering me up with [Head Coach] Jim [Harbaugh]. Obviously, you guys have seen what he has done over the years. He's a special leader. He's a special coach. He's a special person. I've gotten to know him. I've known him for a long time, actually. Always have loved being around him. I'm inspired to be working next to him and with him. I can't wait to get started.

"Before I get to your questions, I just want to thank a couple of people. First, my family, who John mentioned. They mean the world to me. That's my inspiration, right there. My wife, Jennifer, I couldn't be here without her. My four boys, that's who I love and they inspire me. Thank you guys for coming out here. My mother and father are back home watching, my brother and sister — I love you all. The support you've given me and helped nurture me throughout my growing up and helped me become the man I became. I really appreciate you guys. I wish you were here. Then, all of my friends and family back home. People in Delaware and Philadelphia, where I grew up. I'm proud of where I'm from. You guys are where I'm from and I'm bringing you with me.

"Going onto my next family, the Ravens family. 26 years is a long time to be somewhere. I cherish every single moment with all of you. Just a few of you I want to mention — if I mentioned everyone, we'd be here for about an hour and a half and *then* we'd be getting to questions [*laughter*]. Just starting off with the Bisciotti Family — [Ravens Owner] Steve Bisciotti, just such a great owner, great mentor, great leader. Really enjoyed all of our conversations and everything you and your family have done for me. [Ravens Executive Vice President] Ozzie Newsome, [Ravens Executive Vice President & General Manager] Eric DeCosta. Ozzie, you hired me 26 years ago, an Alabama guy hiring an Auburn kid. It was really a great opportunity for me, and I thank you. Eric, just your leadership and mentorship over the years. It's been awesome. I really appreciate your friendship. The crew over there in Baltimore, just a great group of people that I've worked with — the personnel crew, the whole organization and lasting friendships. Thank you for everything.

"Then, one of my good buddies, Jim Denton, who started as a friend and became an agent, sometimes you need somebody on the outside. He was really great for me and I really appreciate that. I mentioned family. I've had three families in my life. I talked about the one that raised me. I talked about the one that I've been with for 26 years. And, looking out at all of you, I mean, this is awesome. This is a family organization. I felt it on the interview. I felt it when I walked into this building on the second interview. I've been feeling it for the last five days when I've been walking around the building. You guys are committed to winning. We're going to build a consistent winner here. You have the right leader, you have the right players on the field. We're going to do it together. As Jim [Harbaugh] mentioned, it's team, team, team. I believe in that philosophy. I've lived that for 16 years in Baltimore. That's what we're going to do here. We're going to get those multiple championships. We're going to do that. We're going to bring you a trophy, Dean. We're going to get it done. I have four boys that have two rings. We're getting the other two, at least, and we're going to keep trying to go [*laughter*]."

On similarities between his personal family and professional family:

"Yeah, I think that it's love and support in our personal family. I feel that here. I felt that in Baltimore. Everyone is working in the same direction. I know that's where Jim [Harbaugh] is from because I've worked with [Ravens Head Coach] John [Harbaugh], who is one of the greatest coaches that I'll ever work with. And this is probably going to be another great coach I work with. I know it. He already is a great coach. It's team, team, team. That's real. That's not a slogan. I've lived it and seen it. You talk about Faith, Family, Football. Take it backwards — Football, Family, Faith. Football builds family if done the right way. If you do it the right way, then all of the sudden you become a family and you care for each other. You have faith in one another. That's what we're going to do here. That's what he has done over and over and over. That's what I've been part of in Baltimore. I believe we're going to bring that here."

On if he sees his relationship with Head Coach Jim Harbaugh as 'Batman and Robin':

"Absolutely. Again, I've lived it 26 years in Baltimore. I've watched it. We've talked about that over the years. Jim has been on my list. I've had a couple of chances elsewhere, he's always been at the top of my list as a guy I wanted to work with. We've talked about that. Before I got the interview here, we talked about Batman and Robin. Certainly, that's the way we're going to operate. The only thing is, I'm not wearing tights [*laughter*]. I may put a cape on, but I'm not wearing tights [*laughter*]. The other thing that I love is that he said Red from Shawshank Redemption — I'll be your Andy. I'll be your Andy Dufresne. That's what it's going to be — it's going to be a partnership. There's a time for the GM to lead and then, certainly, when we kick it off, that's when the head coach leads and I'm going to do everything that I can to support him and give him everything he needs to win."

On coming to the Chargers:

"The great thing is that I met John [Spanos] a long time ago. We can't figure out where it was. I got to know him on the road and see how he is. Then, when I went through the Zoom, I got done with the Zoom call with my wife. I said, 'Baby, this is it. This is the fit. I want this job.' In that Zoom call you hear about the longevity of the people in this organization. You hear about the love that they have for this organization, the commitment that they have to winning. I mean, a commitment to building a consistent winner. You hear that and then, when I came here on the interview, you feel it. You know it's true. You see it in who they hire. You know they're committed to winning. It makes it easy to go from one great organization to another organization that you believe is going to be great. I believe it. There's talent on this field. They know how to draft players here. They've drafted some really talented players. We've played them. We've lost to them in playoff games. We've beaten them in tough, hard-fought games. Our goal is to just build it bigger, better and strong. We want people to walk in here, teams to walk into the stadium knowing they've played us."

On Jets Senior Football Advisor Phil Savage and Ravens Director of Player Personnel George Kokinis:

"Starting with Phil, Phil is the one that really found me at Auburn. I was a student assistant doing everything I could do. I made sure coffee was made every morning at 7 a.m., for the staff meeting. I broke down film. Then, I ran the football camps. That's where I got to know Phil Savage. He was a great early mentor for me and friend. Then, George, we were talking about this before I left [Baltimore]. That was the hardest hug I've ever had. 26 years I was there, and for 25, George was next to me. I really mean next to me. His office was across the way from me. Great friend, mentor, counselor. He has kids that are a little bit older than ours. He's been through it before and he's able to tell me what he's gone through. You're talking about two of my really great friends in my career. Again, I'd love to mention everyone, and thank you for bringing those two up. There's many more, but a special place in my heart."

On things he plans to bring that he learned from Ravens Executive Vice President Ozzie Newsome and Ravens Executive Vice President & General Manager Eric DeCosta:

"The biggest thing that stood out with both of them — and Ozzie taught us all this. He taught Eric this and Eric has taken it forward and continued to teach us — Ozzie is a patient, patient GM. He's going to take all of the information in. You don't make snap judgments, you don't make snap decisions. The draft process, the free agency process, signing players during the season, everything is a process. It's a discussion. The best decisions come through discussions. I think that's what they both have done greatly in Baltimore. That's what we're going to try to do here. It's just trust the process. Believe in the process. Use everybody's information to help us make the best decision."

On having QB Justin Herbert:

"Listen, in personnel, if you ask any scout what are the three things you want? You want great ownership. Check. You want a great head coach. Check. You want a great quarterback. Check. Any scout that walks into a GM role, if you say I have those three things, you have a chance. You have a chance to be really good. We have a chance, here, to be really good. Having that, it's awesome. This is a dream job. If you heard the friend of mine out there on the road and in the profession, the excitement they have for what we're going to create here and do here, it's awesome."

On the department structure:

"It's collaborative. I'm going to work with John [Spanos]. I'm going to work with Jim [Harbaugh]. I am good at personnel, I know that. But I know that there are great people at the things that they do. You trust the experts to do their jobs. I'm going to rely on them. We're going to work together. It's a team. It's a team. It may fall under me, but we're going to work together."

On his team-building philosophy:

"I think you work every avenue. I'm a big fan of [compensatory] comp picks. No. 1, let's create that chain. Let's create that cycle of comp picks. How do you do that? You gain as many picks as you can early and then you draft, develop and then make smart decisions on who you re-sign. Obviously, you want to extend your core players, but there are some players that you're not going to be able to because of the cap, but you want to create that cycle of comp picks. You have to manage your signings in free agency to do that. Certainly, player workouts, let's churn that bottom of the roster. Let's churn that practice squad. We want to get better. I'll talk to Jim [Harbaugh] every morning during the season. 'Where can I help you get better.' He's going to say, 'Joe, I need an inside backer. We need to upgrade.' Well, that's what we're going to go out there and do. You do it through free agency. You do it pre-draft, post-draft in free agency. You do those summer signings, the cap casualties. Things to do to protect comp picks and then, really, just churn the bottom of the roster. Always looking to get better. Always looking to improve every week."

On his 'philosophy' regarding contract negotiations and determinations:

"We're working on filling out the coaching staff and finalizing that, making those hires. That's our main priority right now. Once we get our coaching staff settled, we're going to sit down and grind through it, as a staff. Then, we'll make decisions going from there. But, certainly, there's some work to do, but it's not unattainable. Andy [Dufresne] got out, we'll get out [laughter]. We just have to keep crawling and digging, right? It's going to take some work, but, again, we have smart guys in those roles. [Executive Vice President of Football Administration/Player Finance] Ed [McGuire] is a wizard. I know that. His reputation preceded him with me walking into the building, so I'll rely heavily on him with that."

On his relationship with Ravens Head Coach John Harbaugh and his current connection with Jim Harbaugh:

"I actually met Jim [Harbaugh] before John [Harbaugh]. Jim was our quarterback in Baltimore my very first year. The one thing that I knew, before I knew how competitive John was, was how competitive Jim was. On Friday, [Jim] invited me into the racquetball court, him and [former Ravens QB] Eric Zeier, and I was like, 'Oh my God, this is so cool.' I was 22 years old, I'm a kid. It's the coolest thing in the world, I'm getting ready to go play with a starting NFL quarterback and his backup, I'm going to show them that I'm an athlete. I'm going to show them that I can hang. I swear to you, I'm so blessed to be here today that I got out of that room [laughter]. I was getting thrown around. I'm getting ready to hit a ball off of the wall, Jim comes in and just chucks me into the middle of the court [laughter]. I realized that I was there just to give them a break in a game of cutthroat, as they call it. I've known him. I knew him then, loved watching him play. I saw his fiery nature then — his competitiveness, his desire to win. Then, when John came to Baltimore, that's when we really got to cross paths again. Certainly, going into Stanford, and then Michigan, having conversations with Jim and his whole family — Jack and Jackie [Harbaugh], I know. I've had so many conversations with Jack. Again, it's family, and it's great that I'm really going from brother to brother. It's a really unique and rare gift that's been given to me and my family."

On 'important traits' that he is 'looking for' in player evaluation:

"Every position is different. Like you said, position specifics, critical factors — we want them all to be big, fast, tough, smart. Tough is key, you have to have that mentality. But then, part of the player, only 50 percent of the player is the talent and the skillset to play the position, the other 50 percent is the person. We're going to dive deep into that. We want players that are committed to team. That's where I come from, that's where [Harbaugh] comes from, and that's what we're going to be here. It's the team, the team, the team. That's real. We want guys that have that mentality, to persevere, to fight — up 30 [points] or down 30, we're playing hard all the way to the end of the game. High-character people, players that care about each other, do the right thing. Those are things are going to be really important for us."

On if his scouting background aids in that search process:

"Yeah, I think so. It's the discussion on every player. I can look at film and watch a player and like him, or not like him, but the scouts are going to help us. They're the ones that go into the schools. Anyone can watch the talent and say, 'Hey, this is a good player,' but it's the discussion about who that person is and what he is going to bring to our team, and the value of the tangible skillset and the intangible skillset. That's kind of like what I said, the best decisions are made through discussions. Next week, we're going to get in there and start talking about players in the draft and we're going to find out who are the Chargers in this draft, the people that fit our mentality and what we want."

On if he has 'ever been in a salary cap situation like this one':

"We've been in a situation where we're going to be over and we have had to make decisions, contract decisions and adjustments, I would say. But, I'd have to look back at the percentage that we've been in the past, over the cap, but we've been in a situation where we've had to make decisions, yes."

On different factors involving the discussion:

"You sit there and you weigh them. You don't want to hold on to players, ever, as a personnel guy, that are on a decline or have passed the point of decline, but I think that the players that we have had those discussions about, what's the current value that they bring to the organization and their future value and you discuss it. You weigh those things. That's the reality of this business, you have to weigh the value that they have, the value that they are going to bring and the cost associated with it. That's the nature of it. It's not a fun part. You'd love to have it uncapped and be like baseball — and pay a luxury tax, Dean [Spanos] — but I don't know about that [*laughter*]. But, we have a [salary] cap. That's the reality of it. You have to adjust and manage around the cap."

On his 'willingness to tear the team down and look past 2024 for the best way to build':

"Our goal is to build a winner every year. We want to compete to win a championship every year, OK? That's going to be starting now. That's not going to be, 'Let's gut it and start over.' Those are the decisions. What balance of players give us the best opportunity to go out there and compete this year? I know who we're trying to be, we know who we're trying to be, and we're gunning, we're going that direction. We're not mailing in a season, no way. We're going to try to win this year, but you make the right decisions and the best decisions that give us flexibility this year and going forward."

On 'where the team is at' with coaching staff hires:

"I anticipate that being done relatively soon. We've done a lot of work over the past five days. I got finalized, I think, on Tuesday — I believe it was Tuesday. I'm on the phone with them on Wednesday before I flew out here. I jumped right into the deep end. Every once in a while, I'd crawl over to the wall and catch my breath, and then get back over [*laughter*]. We've been working nonstop all weekend, talking to a ton of coaches. I think we're getting close. We'll probably be making some announcements, I would say, in the next couple of days or so."

On his evaluation of the personnel department and 'if changes are similar to the coaching staff':

"There's a little bit of a difference when change is made at those two respective positions, coaching and scouting. Our scouts here have done a great job through my transition here, and I know a good number of them. I'm going to evaluate our entire scouting staff. There are people that I'd like to bring in — as soon as I can get them in, I'll get them in here — that will help me impart my vision on how we want to run our personnel department. But, I certainly know that there are talented people already in this organization and I'm going to be able to evaluate them through the draft process, through the free agency process, and make decisions, as needed."

On his 'journey as a scout' and how that benefits him now:

"I've been in every position, so I can relate to a lot of people in this organization. The great thing about Baltimore is, again, that we were all together as a big family. I got to know people outside of scouting. Some of my best friendships are with people outside of scouting. You learn how all the processes, all the departments, interact and weave together. But, certainly, going through the ranks, I understand what it's like to pick players up at the airport, to be the guy putting the magnets on the board, to scheduling travel, to being a pro scout to being your college scout, being on the road and away from your family — hours and hours and hours and days and weeks and months away from your family, it can be an isolated feeling. I know that the scouts are going to want to hear from us back in the building, and that helps motivate them. It's great to go through all those processes. Again, take your time doing it, learn it, absorb it, be the best you can be in the role you're in, and a great opportunity like this will come."

On if he can 'onboard external members immediately':

"In terms of bringing people in from the outside? It just depends on whether or not you have the permission to bring a person in or whether they're free to come in. But, that's a harder thing to do, truthfully, this time of the year because our season, in scouting, isn't done until April. Most of the hires are made post-Draft."

On his relationship with Chargers Director of Player Personnel JoJo Wooden and their work together since he arrived:

"It's been awesome. I've known JoJo [Wooden] — again, we've both been doing this a long time. Him and I have been on the road together. I can think of some conversations we've had years and years and years ago, just about players and philosophies and how we scout in Baltimore, back when he was with the Jets. Then, obviously, now, how we do things at our respective teams. Yeah, I've known JoJo for a long time. He's been great, helping me through the transition. Obviously, I'm jumping into a lot of different things, so I need the personnel side to keep running. They've all done a great job, had a great call with them yesterday. I really enjoyed it, they had great questions. I have to translate, I come from a different process than they're used to — grading scales, the way that their calendar works. My job is to be the translator for them, in terms of what they do now and what we're going to do going forward."

On his 'vision' for 'building around' QB Justin Herbert:

"I think Jim [Harbaugh] mentioned it last week, we want to be strong, physical, tough. We want to develop a really good run game. You build a great run game and a great offensive line, you protect your quarterback. I've seen it done year in and year out, where I came from. You help him by supporting him with players that help the entire offense. Certainly, we have some skilled receivers that are already here and good players that are already here, but we just want to create a competitive environment in all the positions around him so that we're at our best at all times."

On his 'dream' as he was 'rising through the ranks':

"I wanted to be the best personnel assistant that I could be. That's what I wanted to be. I wanted to walk into [former Ravens personnel executive James] Shack Harris' office and [former Ravens personnel executive] Phil Savage's office and [former Ravens General Manager] Ozzie Newsome's office and provide for them. I don't think that has changed. I want to provide for Dean [Spanos], I want to provide for John [Spanos], the Spanos family and this organization. I want to provide for Jim [Harbaugh]. That's who I am. I've always tried to be the best that I can be at what I did and didn't look forward. Certainly, as I grew in my career, yeah, that GM goal became more and more, but when I first got in, I wanted to be a coach. This was my way in. Then, I got into the personnel world and I'm like, 'This is awesome, this is great. You get paid to watch football and give an opinion?' [Laughter] I mean, that's what we're all doing. I'm getting paid for it. Now, there are some more things that come with it, but that's what it is. I just wanted to be the best that I could be then and I want to be the best that I can be now for those that I'm here to support."

On 'translating' players 'that are best fit for their system with players on the current roster':

"The good thing is that this current roster, and the way that the Chargers' roster is built, is similar to the Ravens' defense, in terms of the edges, the three down linemen and the two inside linebackers. I talked to the scouts yesterday about that. It's not going to be a big shift, in terms of how we're going to build this team out. I think the big thing is mentality. Let's go. Let's attack. We want, I call it Charger Mentality now, we want that rough, rugged and tough. We want people to walk into SoFi [Stadium], teams to walk in and know what they're in for. That's what teams knew when they were playing Baltimore and that's what we're going to try to create here."

On 'what made the Ravens process so consistent for so many years':

"Honestly, the connection between the head coach and the general manager. That just permeates down through both staffs. There's always a conversation. There's always a commitment to one another. Every day, Ozzie [Newsom] talked with [former Ravens Head Coach] Brian [Billick], and with [former Ravens Head Coach] Ted Marchibroda before that. Then, he'd relay it down to the scouts. Eric [DeCosta] does the same thing. It's that collaboration and commitment together to win. The process itself is driven by the scouts and Eric, but it's led by those at the top. You have a great relationship, you're constantly communicating and working together. That's the true secret. What you do behind, that's where you gain, maybe, the little advantages, but when you have the connection and the collaboration in the organization, that's how you win."

On if he communicated with Harbaugh at AFC Championship Game before being hired by the Chargers:

"I knew that I was coming here the Monday after we lost. That was the one ray of sunshine that day [*laughter*]. I saw him, certainly, on the sideline before the game and we had a conversation, we talked about the opportunity. I'm like, 'I'm hoping that I get a call tomorrow. I think that they're going to call, I feel good about them calling,' but I was not offered the job until Monday after that game. Going into the game, you're anxious for two reasons — you're like, 'Man, I hope I get this job,' they had already hired Jim and this is awesome, a dream-come-true if I get it, but let's go beat the Chiefs. Obviously, we didn't get that done. But, I found out the next day that I was coming here. We talked on the sideline about how I had hoped that it would get done and that it would be awesome if it did, but neither of us knew until Monday."

On if Harbaugh 'had to make any final sales pitches':

"No [*laughter*]. He didn't have to sell me at all. Again, I've been watching him for a long time, I have a tremendous amount of respect for him and his family."

On his philosophy regarding 'using data in decision-making':

"Certainly, I think it's valuable. I've seen the output and I've seen how it helped us in Baltimore. We're going to try to build that here. They've already been doing it, I've had a chance to talk to some of our analysts already. I'm really excited to work with them. We'll continue to grow that. Again, it's on the field and it's off of the field. It's the business side, it's the personnel side, and, certainly, it's the game management and playing side — sports performance. There are so many ways that you can use the data to get better and we're going to do it because it helps you improve, it helps cover your blind spots. In scouting, you can have your favorites, as a player — this guy fits what I like — and you have the analytics behind you saying, 'Yeah, I don't think that you like this guy as much, Joe.' You definitely use it and it is very helpful."

On the Chargers slotted at the number five overall pick in the 2024 NFL Draft and philosophy 'behind potentially moving around':

"I think you stick to the process of finding the best player. It doesn't matter where you're picking in the draft, it's always important. It doesn't matter if it's the fifth pick or the 32nd, every pick is important to this organization. If you put a value of importance on the pick number, you're doing it wrong. Every single pick — our fifth pick is important, our second-round pick is important, our two seventh-round picks are going to be important. Every single one. I've seen it. I've seen a player become a Pro Bowler from the fifth round, that matters. We're in the fifth pick, we don't want to be picking there again, certainly not, but that's where we are right now. We're going to go through the process and have them stacked and ranked and we're going to pick the best player for the Chargers at five, and then we're going to pick the best player for the Chargers the rest of the draft. Our goal is to pick great players all along the way."

On 'how tempting it is being at five' in the 'first year of a new regime' to potentially 'try to move back and accumulate picks'

"I think those are options that you consider. Certainly, you have to have a partner to do something like that. We're a long ways away from the draft. Right now, I don't think anyone can tell you how the first five picks are going to go, the first 10 picks. There's a lot to go, there's a lot more. We'll see at the Combine, Pro Days, workouts, the talk in the media and seeing where everyone goes [*laughter*]. But, we have a lot of time to figure that out and other teams have a lot of time to see if they're interested. You have to be ready to pick at five I know that. If there's one thing that I've learned, from anything in Baltimore, there are times when that phone doesn't ring, and you better be ready to pick."

On his 'approach to being active in the trade market':

"You have to be looking to make the team better. If we can find a player, leading up to the trade deadline, that can help the Chargers now and going forward, either way — and there are different ways, you can trade for a player who ends up factoring into the compensatory formula, maybe it's just a loan, or you can trade for a player that you want to retain. I think that there are multiple ways to go at it, but I definitely think that it is something that's valuable. Always, we're always going to be looking to make this team better. If that's through trade, then that's through trade, as long as it makes sense for the Chargers."