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Chargers Training Camp Media Availability

Tuesday, August 2, 2022 ⚡ Jack Hammett Sports Complex ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

SPECIAL TEAMS COORDINATOR RYAN FICKEN

Opening statement:

“Good afternoon. Glad you guys are here. It was great being out here. Another good day of work. I think that these specialists are doing a great job in terms of trying to find their niche, in terms of being consistent. I think that they’re putting in a good day’s work each and every day, continuing to get better. I’m very impressed with the core guys and how they’ve been working, how they’ve bought in, how they’ve worked with the technique and fundamentals, things that we’re trying to get down to lay the foundation and get off of the ground. Other than that, I think that it’s been a good camp so far. We’re just trying to build on each day and move forward.”

On the kickers:

“They have strong legs. They do a great job. They’re professionals. They know their craft. I think that the operation has been going really well with those guys. The thing that we will always try to continue to build on is consistency, making sure that we’re staying in a rhythm up to the ball — our operation — we just have to make sure that we’re consistent all of the way through the kicks and finish our kicks. Very impressed with both of them.”

On if consistency ‘is what has been emphasized the most’:

“Absolutely. Urgency, playing with technique and fundamentals, right now, we’re trying to lay that foundation that is going to allow us to be successful in all of these situations as we continue to move further in camp. We’re going to make sure that we go ahead and get into situational parts of the game with a full operation — full punt, kickoff and all of that — as we continue to move forward. Right now, we have to make sure that we have a good foundation before we can get to the second level.”

On ‘buy in from guys on the roster’ in the special teams phase:

“I think that a lot of it is on the players, the head coach and how he approaches them. They believe in it. These are some really good players around this roster. [General Manager Tom] Telesco and his staff have done a great job of building this roster. Obviously, our head coach, [Brandon] Staley, has done a great job of targeting the guys that they want. We have great guys on this roster, and they want to be great — they work hard, they’re professionals. They want more and more each day. We have to make sure that we continue to work with them on that and get them better.”

On WR DeAndre Carter in the return phase:

“I haven’t been around him as much, obviously, but I’ve seen him, watching him and studying him, around the league. I’ve been very impressed with the way that he is, in terms of him being a professional and the way that he approaches the game, the way that every time he steps on the field, he means business. His acceleration and his burst, I think, is better than what you see on tape. I’m really pleased with where he is at, pleased with all of the other returners. They’re working hard out there to win those spots, too. We’re not solidified, but we know who we have. We have to make sure that we continue to improve in those situations in that position.”

On P JK Scott and the benefit of his hang time on punts:

“It allows us to flip the field. It goes with everything, in terms of our operation, our protection. In order for us to have a successful kick, we have to do great in our operation. In terms of our snap, it starts with him. It starts with our protection and getting him a good pocket. He’s been doing a great job with his operation in terms of getting that ball off quickly. Great job with our directional punts whenever we’re asking of him. That hang time, yesterday he had 11 punts where they were about a five-second hang time. That’s what we need from him. But, again, we need to make sure that we continue to do that on a consistent basis and allow our team to flip the field and give our defense a long field so that we can go ahead and do what we do on defense, getting the ball back to our offense.”

GUARD MATT FEILER

On the start of training camp:

“It’s good to get back out here and work together as a unit at full speed and be able to work everything at the tempo that we need to work on with the blocks and stuff like that. It feels good to get back out here and be with the guys.”

On rookie G Zion Johnson:

“Great work ethic. Tough dude, strong dude. He is one of those guys that is going to be a lock-down guard. I see good things coming.”

On his offseason:

“It was good. I got home to see some family and spend some time with the family, so it was good to kind of get away from football and relax a little bit. But now that we’re back here, it’s it’s good to be back.”

On ‘keeping the left side in tact’ from last season:

“It’s always good if you can keep consistency along the line. There are always gonna be moving parts and stuff with injuries and what not, but just to kind of keep that consistency on the left side, it’s going to be good for a young group.”

On any growth expressed from QB Justin Herbert in their now second season together:

“Having another year under his belt, especially in this offense, kind of in the same system, it’s just maturing and growing every day. He’s progressing well.”

On new Offensive Line Coach Brendan Nugent and if he knew Nugent prior to getting hired:

“I never met him, no — not until he was brought in here. He fits right in with our room. It’s a lot of the same terminology that we used last year, so it wasn’t much turn around with that. It’s been pretty easy going.”

On keeping Assistant Offensive Line Coach Shaun Sarrett on staff and how that benefits the group:

“It’s been good. Same terminology and stuff so it wasn’t very hard to transition at all. It’s been nice to have him in the room just to kind of keep things within the terms that we know.”

On the benefit of practicing against OLBs Joey Bosa and Khalil Mack:

“It definitely helps. Getting guys like that, some of the best pass rushers in the league, lining it up against our guys, we have to be on our best technique and stuff like that. Any time someone gets a rep against them, it’s going to help us out.”

On entering a third-straight season with Sarrett in the room:

“It definitely helps to have Shaun here with me. Being here in the NFL for so long, it’s kind of, I don’t want to say all the systems are the same, but a lot of the techniques are the same, just kind of different terminology and stuff like that. It’s just a little different, but you can catch on pretty quick.”

On rookie G Jamaree Salyer:

“Big, big guy. He’s strong. He uses his size well. He’s another one of those guys that has a hard work ethic. He’s going to be good, too.”

On ‘if the intensity has picked up at all’ over the last couple of days:

“I think it’s just getting the pads on for the first time in a while, just finally being able to hit and get contact against each other. Plus, with the fans coming out yesterday, you kind of have that excitement in the air. So yeah, I think the intensity turned up a little bit yesterday, a little bit more today, just knowing that we’re getting that much closer to games.”

On DL Austin Johnson:

“He’s a strong guy, too. He’s going to be one of those power guys. He also mixes in his hands well. He’s definitely one of those guys that wants to keep you on your toes. He’s going to use both of his abilities to keep doing that.”

On his relationship continuing to develop with C Corey Linsely:

“We have gotten a little bit more comfortable with each other over the year. We’re able to be on the same page with a lot of other things and just kind of keep that consistency.”

LINEBACKER TROY REEDER

On his first training camp with the Chargers:

“It’s been cool, getting used to playing with the new group. There are a lot of us that are new, so I think it’s been kind of cool to see everybody come together pretty quickly. I got to admire the offense from a distance last year, so it’s been really cool to be able to compete with them, compete with these backs. Now, it is all about coming together, seeing what we’re made of and becoming a tough and competitive football team. That’s hard to do until you put the pads on.”

On what he learned from winning the Super Bowl last year:

“The biggest thing is you have to be built to go all the way. That really starts right now and it seems kind of crazy being that it just turned into August right now. The habits that we’re creating right now are stuff that is going to drive us all the way through September, October, November, and then hopefully into mid-February. Just the little things about what it takes and how to stay healthy and do the right things every single day. I was blessed to be around a group that did do it the right way every day and coming out and competing. I see so many similarities in that here. I think this team has what it takes. We just have to put it all together and keep competing in practice and making each other better.”

On how the defense is coming together quickly:

“One, we have really, really good coaches. Not just [Chargers Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley, but our DC [Defensive Coordinator Renaldo Hill] and our position coaches, too. That’s been huge. The familiarity helps a lot. It’s allowed guys like me, [DL] Sebastian [Joseph-Day], [OLB] Khalil [Mack], [CB] Bryce [Callahan], guys that have played in this system at least one year to be able to come in and at least know the general scheme. We’re picking up a little bit of the new stuff that Coach Staley has implemented through last year that was a little bit different than what I did in 2020, then what Khalil did in whatever year that was, 2018, and what Bryce did in Denver and Chicago. Overall, the language is normally a big learning point, learning curve to when you come into a new system. We know the language. We can speak it and that’s the biggest thing. Now we’re just fine-tuning the details. Every day, there are one or two things that I do that are something we did differently last year, but it’s the same call and we’re learning how to play it a different way. It’s been really good and the guys that have been here kind of leading that charge and they had a good group and we’re happy to be with them.”

On ‘the specifics of how the Chargers are similar to the 2021 Rams’:

“First of all, there are leaders on both sides of the ball and special teams. You have a quarterback that can compete and put up any number of points in any given game. You have a defense that can potentially shut out any team. The pieces are there. It’s about doing it week-in and week-out and staying healthy and peaking at the right time. Those are things that, some, are out of your control, some are in your control and they’re down the line. What we’re doing right now is building a team that is capable of peaking at the right time and grinding through a long season that, hopefully, we are playing 21 games this year.”

On which players are ‘emerging leaders on special teams’:

“Right now, there are a lot of guys that are kind of showing up. Overall, our specialists have been really good. It’s been cool for me. I play punk guard. I’ve done that for every year of my career. No matter if I’ve been the number one guy at linebacker or number three guy and not playing much on defense. I’ve always kind of settled into that guard position and it’s been really, really fun to work with [LS] Josh Harris. He’s a Pro Bowl guy that’s been doing it for 10 years. He attacks in the weight room. He’s a leader kind of no matter — offense, defense, or special teams, he’s a guy that I kind of look to and admire. [P] JK [Scott] is coming in and hitting some insane balls yesterday. Obviously, [K] Dustin [Hopkins] has been doing it a long time and is as good as anybody. So, I think those three are leading the way. I’m trying to be one of the guys in that group to bring everything together. I’ve been able to do it for a long time and it’s a big part of my game and being a part of this League and making my name has been in special teams. Just trying to get everybody on the same page and doing all of the right stuff.”

On Special Teams Coordinator Ryan Ficken:

“He is awesome. It’s cool because we had to game plan him when he was in Minnesota last year. I thought they had one of the best units in the NFL. He was really tough to prepare for. They were super multiple. He had a great returner, some good specialists, and just the way they attacked, you can tell that their guys were bought in. That’s generally a pretty good way of telling how good a special teams coach is if they can get guys to buy in. They had a lot of guys that were starting-caliber guys on their special teams units that were contributing. When you have that and guys are bought in, you can tell it’s a guy that people love to play for and have enjoyed it, and I certainly have so far. I’ve played for a different special teams coach every year and I’m still learning a lot. He’s been great for me — and Coach Beep [Assistant Special Teams Coach Chris Gould], as well.”

On ‘what has to happen for the team to come together’:

“First of all, just a little bit of getting to know each other. I had never known [CB] J.C. Jackson and we’re just in the locker room trying to get to know each other a little bit, [OLB] Kyle Van Noy. I’m getting to know the guys that were here and [OLB] Joey Bosa and all of the other guys. I think the best defenses are kind of a group of friends, guys that all know each other to some capacity outside of the game of football. That’s why I love camp. There are some of us that have — [Chargers Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley allows the vets to stay at their own places through camp — but there is a big group of us that have opted to stay at the hotel just to have that camp feel and to grind together. We’re hitting snack late night together and doing all of that. I think those are little things. Then, just on the field, there are certain things that guys like to do that are different than the guys you played with before and you’re just kind of learning how to play with each other. Some of that is drill work. Some of that is just being able to throw us out there and team. I love these two-minute periods where stuff starts kind of going fast and, all of a sudden, guys are reverting to what is natural to them, not just thinking so much. You’re learning to play as a group.”

On reuniting with S Nasir Adderley:

“He had a great pick today in a competitive third-down period. We talk about it all the time, it’s cool because we started playing together when we were 19 years old. Being able to see how far we’ve come, it’s not by accident. That’s one of the hardest working dudes I’ve been around. He and I were super competitive when we were in college. I think it brought the best out of each other and I know it’s going to do the same here.”