

Chargers Week 15 Media Availability

Thursday, December 15, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR JOE LOMBARDI

On areas in which the red zone offense can improve.

“A number of things. Running the ball is always a premium in the red zone, so doing better there. Overall, execution, obviously. We had a couple mental errors that I think would have made a difference this last week. We had some injuries late in the week. In-game we had guys playing positions, maybe, that they weren’t practicing. Just had some execution errors that I think would have made a difference. Overall, running the ball better, calling better plays and executing better.”

On C Corey Linsley’s illegal snap penalty:

“You are trying to get up and snap the ball before the defense has a chance to really see what is going on. You just have to pause a heartbeat before. A little bit of it is a judgement call by the refs. It is not always 100 percent consistent. We just have to coach him up a little bit better. Just take a breath before you snap it. I think we would have been all right there.”

On ‘if the end of the field is like a 12th defender’:

“Yeah, there is not as much space. You look at the NFL, and I don’t know what the completion rate is, overall, but it is well north of 60 percent. When you look every week, all of the passes inside the five-yard line, it’s less than 50 percent, and same thing inside the 10-yard line. It’s just harder, which is why running is a premium down there. Probably have to be more patient and just get better at that.”

On the level of impact injuries have had in passing in the red zone:

“I think it’s all a factor. With the guys that we had, we definitely should be performing better there than we have been. It is certainly something we are working on and it wouldn’t shock me if we go on a run and all of a sudden do really well in the red zone moving forward. We have to do it.”

On his reaction to WR Mike Williams making difficult catches:

“They are very positive. He has been doing it all year, even at a higher percentage making those catches than he has even in the past. He is a premium jump-ball guy, a premium contested catch guy. The quarterback really trusts him. It certainly makes a difference.”

On ‘if he jumps out of his seat’ when Williams makes a difficult catch:

“No [laughter]. I think if it is a touchdown, then maybe, but otherwise you are like, ‘All right, where are we? What hash are we on?’ You are moving on to the next play. Every now and then, as I am calling the play to [QB] Justin [Herbert], I’ll be like, ‘Wow, that was a great catch,’ or, ‘Great throw,’ or something. Moving on to the next play, for sure.”

On ‘what went wrong’ with the fourth down play in the red zone in the first quarter:

“There was an option. We were reading a defender on that play. If he ran with DeAndre [Carter] — which is what he had done every play up to that point in the season, that motion was pulling a defender out — the quarterback was going to do something. Then, if he had stayed, which he did, then we were hoping to outflank the defender. He had a little step on him, but I think we probably didn’t rep that throw enough to get it as efficient. If we had hit him and he hadn’t stumbled, I think we would have been able to get into the end zone there.”

On if Linsley’s snap to QB Justin Herbert on the fourth down red zone play affected the play at all:

“Could have been. Could have been. Justin [Herbert] does such a great job of catching those and finding the laces. That could have affected it.”

On WR DeAndre Carter:

“He is just a fix-it guy. You have four different positions you can be at as a receiver — you can be the X, the Z, the Y, the F — and he is one of those smart guys that can play all of those positions. If someone gets tired or someone is out of the game, ‘Hey, you have the X this snap. You have the F this snap.’ He knows it all. Obviously, we have had receivers down and he has been in a starting role. He has been fantastic for us. Just one of those guys that, I think, as you look back at all of the players you have coached, he will be one of the favorites. Tough, competitive and just a guy you can trust to go out there and get the job done. He is not a big guy, but he blocks and he gets open and he runs hard. Just everything you want in a player.”

On the third-and-short play where WR Keenan Allen ‘was stopped short on a screen pass’:

“That was a check. Justin [Herbert] checked out of the play. Thought we could get there. I think if we blocked that better, we could have gotten it.”

On ‘if he feels like the offense had numbers’ in the play:

“Yeah. They were getting low. I think Justin [Herbert] thought it was going to be cover zero, and so he was just trying to get the ball out. Felt that we had a three-on-two situation out there and the defender played it real well.”

On Herbert attempting 51 passes against the Dolphins and ‘it there should be more balance between the run and pass game’:

“I would rather not throw it 50 times, but sometimes the game script, the way things are going, how they are defending the run, what you think is going to work, you end up leaning on the pass, maybe, a little bit. He is so good and our receivers were playing well. Sometimes you get a little more confidence in that part of the game, but no. I would much rather be balanced.”

On Herbert saying that ‘he wants to throw the ball every play’:

“He doesn’t mind [laughter]. He doesn’t mind. I think you could take stress off the offensive line and keep the defense more honest. I think it just helps everything when you run the ball better.”

On ‘finding the plays and blocking schemes that he wants for the running game’:

“I think we kind of are honed in more than a little bit of what we want to do, but we still have to go out and execute it. It’s a work-in-progress.”

On G Zion Johnson’s abilities as a pulling guard:

“Offensively, I think that is always what you are trying to do; maximize the strengths of your players and minimizing, maybe, what they do as well. As guys get hurt, sometimes that shifts, what it is you think you can do well and what you can’t. He is a strong, athletic player. When he is in space, it’s a good thing. It’s something that he does well.”

On what he ‘expects to see’ from the offense over the final four games of the regular season:

“We have gotten a little healthier. Getting Mike [Williams] back and Keenan [Allen] getting healthier, we’re hoping maybe [TE] Donald Parham [Jr/] comes back this week. We’re hoping [T] Trey [Pipkins III] is able to play. I feel like we’re getting as healthy as we have been since game one or two. Getting all of those pieces incorporated back in, getting them in game shape, all of those things are going to be huge as we get down the stretch.”

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR RENALDO HILL

On Titans RB Derrick Henry:

"It's the problem everyone in the league has been having, trying to stop this 6-foot-3, 250-pound back. What you figure out is that it takes everybody. You can't get tired of doing it. I think they kind of pride themselves on you may stop it once or twice, but eventually they are going to pop it and hit the home run. We have to make sure that our guys stay motivated throughout the whole game and get the run game stopped."

On 'how to defend the size of Henry':

"I just think it takes everyone on the defense. We all have a responsibility, but post-that responsibility, we all have to be in pursuit. We can't think that just based off of the fits that we have that one guy can get him down. We have to make sure we get population to him at all times. I think that is going to be the focus on this game. How many people can we get off blocks and get population to him? Try to get as many guys to his body and hits on him as much as we can because that big guy, we hope we can wear him down, but he has shown that he can persevere and push through. We know it's going to take all 60 minutes."

On the defensive scheme against the Dolphins and 'if it was different than previous games':

"I think it comes to the point where you know that the guys know the scheme. We are pretty much all of the way through the season, there are not a lot of different looks that we haven't seen. Obviously, we want to coach them up on the details throughout the week, but these guys know what to do. They know how to go out and execute it. Giving those guys that confidence and that liberty, that's what they want. That is what the game is about. You coach them up through the week and allow them to go play on Sundays. We just wanted to emphasize that at the end of the week to make sure. 'You guys go out and be loose and have fun. It's the game that we all love and enjoy.' You felt it this past Sunday. We want to be like that moving forward. Not a lot of thinking for the guys, this is our scheme, so let's go out and execute it."

On CB Michael Davis' performance over the last few games:

"Just all year long, I think it has been the confidence. He has been going against big-time receivers week-in and week-out. He is up for the challenge. I think that is the biggest thing. He knows exactly what to do, how to do it with his size and skillset. He is making them play on his terms and using his assets of being a long corner that can run and making it tough to get [passes] through the pass windows. He is really honing-in on that and making sure that he is confident in just his abilities."

On if Davis' 'comfort level' in the scheme has benefitted his performance:

"That definitely takes shape with how he has been playing. With that being said, he knows exactly how he wants to play each week. He is doing a great job throughout the week, knowing what tools he can use against these guys and what gives them problems so that he can go out and execute it. If he has it in his toolbox, he is using a lot of it. He has been switching it up, not giving them one look. I know it gives defenders pause, so I am hoping it gives offensive guys pause on how to get off in a release or play the ball through him. I think Mike [Davis] has been doing an excellent job of that and, not just playing everything one way, I think that is the biggest way you can kind of put it. He is mixing his game up a lot."

On defensive players with rugby backgrounds:

"Usually, from the outskirts of when I see those games, it's population on the ball [laughter]. It's not just one person that is bringing down a ball-carrier, it's three and four guys at a time. That is what it is going to take. [Secondary] Coach [Derrick] Ansley was in the meeting room and he had the sound of bees just singing out. That's what it's going to take, it's going to take us swarming constantly throughout the game in order to get those guys. We have to make sure that we're covering [Henry] up at all times, that at the end of the play, you are not seeing a 22 on the jersey. We have to make sure that it's powder blues covering that guy up. That is what it is going to take."

On the relationship between rugby and football:

"Population. I am just going to say population. Not one guy just doing the job to get it done."

On the performances of S Alohi Gilman and S Nasir Adderley last week against the Dolphins:

“I was definitely happy with how those guys played. We knew that the communication and how those guys play together was going to be important. I think they leaned on each other that whole week. They showed that they have the confidence out in practice, is what I saw. The way they communicated, the way they talked throughout the week when they came off the practice field and on the sidelines, they discussed what they saw and how they were going to do it. I think all of that played into how they played on Sunday night. That is what it takes. Every moment that we are on a practice field, even if we are not practicing, it is a chance for us to get better and make sure that we are on the same page. I think they did a great job of that, making sure that they were on the same page. They ran the show Sunday. We have to hope that they do it again this week.”

On DB Ja'Sir Taylor's performance last week and his development:

“Confidence. He is the same guy we saw in training camp when he first came in here, Day 1. Just a polished guy. Nothing is too big for him. He understands the scheme. He is trying to go out and execute his job at a high level. That is what we saw. We knew he was going to play well. [Head Coach Brandon] Staley mentioned it in meetings last week, even before he started, that he was excited to see 36 out there running around because he knew he was going to have a good game. That is all he has presented to us this whole year and we didn't expect anything less.”