



Josh.Rupprecht@chargers.nfl.com  
Jamaal.LaFrance@chargers.nfl.com

Skip.Powers@chargers.nfl.com  
Brock.Anderson@chargers.nfl.com

Jennifer.Rojas@chargers.nfl.com  
Lauren.Meyer@chargers.nfl.com

## WEEK 8 — PODIUM AVAILABILITY Thursday, October 24, 2019 | Hoag Performance Center | Costa Mesa, Calif.

### LOS ANGELES CHARGERS DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR GUS BRADLEY

#### **Opening statement:**

“Let’s go back (to the) Tennessee game, just to recap. How we address the group is ‘It’s hard to win if. It’s hard to win when.’ It comes back to situational football. On third down if you’re not playing as tight as you need to or if you’re supposed to come off a route and take another route, you need to do that. For us, when we get in the red zone, I think the two situations we’re looking at are red zone and third down. We started out really strong on third down, but as the game went on, that’s where we faltered some. It’s hard to win if you’re not good on third down at all times. The other one is the red zone. If they get into the red zone, we have to keep them just to a field goal attempt. The red zone opportunities led to touchdowns. And if we’re talking about keeping the points down, then it’s hard to win if you’re not good in the red zone. That was really the message and about tackling and things like that still. There were some good signs — the stop at the four-minute (mark) and against the rush. They’re a good running team with some [of our guys] that were out, I thought our guys adjusted pretty well to it. We did some different things out front to try to handle that. The guys really accepted that and did a good job executing that.”

“On to Chicago. This is a challenging team to prepare for, because (you have to) expect the unusual, really with Chicago. A lot of different things they can come up with. [Bears Head] Coach [Matt] Nagy, I have a lot of respect for him. When he was at Kansas City, it was the same type of mentality — expect the unusual. They do a good job with their execution. I know they struggled a little bit running the ball last week, but they are a team, that you can see, they want to run the ball and they’re going to find a way to run the ball. When you get behind like that sometimes it changes the mindset, but the tape that we watched, they’ve got two good backs as far as getting the ball to. [Bears WR] Allen Robinson [II], I was fortunate enough to be with him in Jacksonville. I have a real good feel for just how elite he is. Very, very talented receiver, hard worker, he plays with a lot of pride. You can tell that they have a lot of confidence in him, and they should. Good skill set on the perimeter and a good scheme. They attack your scheme and try to get you in difficult situations.”

#### **On Bears QB Mitchell Trubisky:**

“Coming back, we have a lot of respect for him. Seeing him last year in some cross-breakdown games, his accuracy, his timing, his ability to move, extend the plays, he’s a threat to run, so all those things into place. Now, he was hurt for a little bit, now he’s coming back. You hear about his throwing and his timing. There are a few of those, but for the most part, he’s a talented quarterback. We have a lot of respect for him. Sometimes when you get back from them, it’s getting into a rhythm. We have to make sure he doesn’t get into a rhythm in our game.”

#### **On how to combat Trubisky’s mobility:**

“Well, I think our rush. It starts with our rush. Having a good rush plan for him because he does it. He sees open gaps and he can get easy throwing lanes. It makes his job easier. He has the ability to see clearly and he also has the ability to run, so we have to do a good job up front, keep him in the pocket and bring the pressure at him.”



**On DT Justin Jones and NT Brandon Mebane:**

“Yeah. They’re talented players. You’d like to have all of them. You go into it and you’re game planning, and then you find out maybe they’re not going to be with you, and you have to adjust for it. Then, there’s an excitement to see how guys progress. Guys like [DT Jerry] Tillery and [DT] Cortez [Broughton], when they got in there. Then we brought [DT] T.Y. [McGill Jr.] on. I think some of the things that we did to help them — again, look at a player’s strength and put them in a position to make plays — it caused us to adjust a little bit, but looking back at it, they did a pretty good job with a team that got that many carries and [keeping them] under 100 yards rushing for that game. They had a challenging run scheme. You’d like to have everybody, but that’s across the league. I think everybody’s dealing with that right now.”

**On Titans WR Tajae Sharp’s touchdown:**

“It’s a good point. That one was not a miscommunication. That was just there was no communication. It was the huddle call, and you got to play the huddle call. It wasn’t like based on formation, ‘Hey, there’s a check. We got to get to this.’ There was no communication needed. It was just a flat-out bust. He keyed the wrong guy to find out how to play it and they got a touchdown. It takes away from getting a stop down there, just like the third down-and-11. Again, that was just not executing an assignment. There was no communication that took place. It was just, ‘Go do your job.’ That’s more of it than communication.”

**On making lineup changes after defensive mistakes:**

“I think when you look at it and say, ‘Alright, yes, in critical times, you made these mistakes’ or, ‘made this mistake.’ With some guys, what they bring is of value. We’re going to go through some learning curves. We did that with [S Derwin] DJ [James Jr.] last year. We’re going to go through some learning curves. Hopefully, those times when a mistake happens don’t come back to create an explosive play. You know that if they just keep getting better, you stay true to it, trust them and build that trust, the good is going to come where it’s consistently good. I think it’s that juggling act right now.”

**On DT Jerry Tillery:**

“Tillery did some good things. I think his pad level is getting better. Like I said, some of the things that we did, took some of the double-teams off. Some of the double-teams, he’s getting better at, but still not where we want him to be — the combo blocks and things like that. I would say that we’re still just working out the consistency. It’s better on some of the zone schemes. I think that what I see in him now is more of a strain. He’s straining more. I don’t know if I could have said that the first time he played. You’re seeing the strain more and now it’s just more and more reps of it and technique.”

**On what ‘straining’ means:**

“If you get a double-team, to sit in there and battle because eventually that double-team’s going to work up to the next level. To stay in that double-team long enough that when he comes off, you’re straining that you can go make a play. Some teams, on a double-team when they feel it, might just go to the ground. We’re not that team. We want him to stay on his feet and strain, so that when it comes off, he has a chance to make the play. Probably in the simplest terms, that’s the way to explain it.”

**On NT Damion Square:**

“He can play all the positions, and a very intelligent player. Last year, we asked him to get a little bit bigger because he played more big [defensive] end. Now, he’s dropped his weight a little bit, but now we’re finding ourselves with some of these injuries having the flexibility of moving him around. I think he’s more of a comfort-level for us to say, ‘Alright, we have an issue here. We can put him in, and we’re ready to roll, and we shouldn’t miss a beat.’ That part, we really appreciate about him.”

**On DT Cortez Broughton:**

“Cortez is a guy that is a really big bigger body-type guy, and you see the strain right away from him. You do see the strain. There are some things he might not be as polished in some of the areas, but he’s tough, he strains, he’s active in there. We’ve been pleased with him. I think this was another one. We’d like to have seen him in another game here before he got sick, just to see how much of a jump. Going into the game, when we knew we had some injuries and he was going to play — you know how I say, sometimes stories come about with injuries? He was my guy that I thought, ‘This might be a story how he comes in and plays,’ because he’s shown enough of that in practice. We’re optimistic about his ability to play.”

**On WR Allen Robinson II:**

“He is extremely talented. How we’d go about doing that I’ll probably keep here, but I think, for him, we have to have really, really good awareness. He is a guy that has a great catch radius, he runs very precise routes, he runs with precision, he’s very prideful, he’ll block as well as he can run routes. I’ve got a lot of respect for him, a lot of respect. He’s really a hard worker. I didn’t flinch when he hurt his knee [or wonder] how was he going to come back. Don’t worry about him. He’s that type of mentality.”



**On DE Joey Bosa as a stand-up pass rusher against Tennessee:**

"I would say that's unique, yeah. [Defensive ends coach] Giff [Smith] came up with that. We're trying to find ways to get guys in one-on-ones. To see Joey Bosa standing up, why not just get his hand in the ground and let him come? It was felt that we got to find ways to get one-on-ones, and that was the way we felt like [we could], and it was good. He really took to it. I think it was something that he was very open to, but it was a little out of his comfort level. 'Hey Joey, we're going to ask you to stand up and get a one-on-one on the guard and beat him that way.' It was pretty cool to see that it was effective for him."

**On Bosa taking on some of DE Melvin Ingram III's role:**

"Similar role and that's something that we haven't done. Giff, [Assistant Defensive Line Coach] La'Roi [Glover] and Joey, they sat down and when they were putting the pass rush game plan, they brought it to my attention, and it looked good. Some of the things on tape that we saw, but there's still the unknown, right? He hasn't done it much and to see, but it's a credit to Joey."

**On Trubisky's mobility:**

"With quarterbacks like that, it starts with up front like a pass rush. We have to make sure that we take care of it. You have four rushers and you have to take care of the pocket. Make sure that he feels pressure up the middle, protect the edges and not give him a lot of escape lanes. The other thing that he does is he has the ability to keep the ball. They'll run some cut-belly option, where they fake it, and now they get a lead blocker with a tight end and he's coming off the perimeter, and he keeps it. He gets yards that way. You don't see that as much with quarterbacks, but they incorporate that. Where he's at with that and physically how he's doing, whether that's part of the game plan, we're prepared that he has the ability to do that. How much they'll do that, I don't know. I think that also incorporates some of his rushing yards last year."

**On the linebackers:**

"I would have said that we started off not completely healthy as far as moving around guys, but it appears now within the last week, like in practice, I felt like they had one of their better practices yesterday and you're seeing the speed. I don't know if it's healthy, a comfort level with the defense and playing side-by-side next to each other, but it appears a lot faster now. Right away in the beginning, maybe it was a little bit of a learning curve, and maybe some of the injuries that they were dealing with, but I feel like that's starting to fade away and I'm starting to see the speed more."

**On LB Denzel Perryman:**

"For him last week, we got him out some because of it, but he comes back and he feels pretty good at the start of the week. We try to keep as many of those guys healthy as we can, but I do see him playing faster now."

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR KEN WHISENHUNT****On C/G Scott Quessenberry:**

"It's really funny to say this, but he's been an integral part of our field goal protection and block team, and you say, 'Well, what has that have to do with it?' It showed he had some power. He could stand up to some of the push from these guys that are on the field goal team. I kind of like that about him. Then, we will see how he does when he actually gets in the game and he actually did a good job last week. It's a credit to him. He's worked hard and he's worked hard at learning to play guard and then playing center as well. He held up pretty good in the game last week, so I was happy for him and you feel a lot more comfortable with him in whatever role it is going forward."

**On who will start at center:**

"I think it's just we are working through the week to see. [C/G] Ryan Groy hasn't been with us that long, so systematically just learning that and the protection calls because he's the tip of the spear in that standpoint — he gets the communication from the quarterback. He's played and it will be a decision we make, I guess, as the week progresses."

**On positional moves with the addition of T Russell Okung:**

"Both of those guys have done that before, [T] Trent [Scott] and [T] Sam [Tevi] I'm talking about. Trent did it some last year and Sam has done it in his career, so we'll see how it goes in the game. I think, obviously, Russell's not going to be able to play to whole game coming back in, but we are certainly excited to get him back and get him in there. At least Trent has been playing and he's done this before, so has Sam. It's better than having a guy that hasn't played or somebody that hasn't played much. When you make that switch maybe the transition's a little bit easier."



**On Bears LB Khalil Mack:**

“There’s no guarantee he’s going to be on the other side. He could be on that side just as easily. He lines up on both sides and [Bears LB Leonard] Floyd’s pretty good too, but that’s every weekend in the NFL. It’s not just necessarily this weekend. I have a lot of respect for those guys, they play hard and they’re really good rushers, but [Broncos LB] Von Miller was pretty good, guys that we face weekly they have somebody that’s pretty good. That’s part of the job. It’s always a battle and especially when you’re going into a place like Chicago, but at least our guys have gotten some experience so it’s not going to be the first time for them.”

**On TE Hunter Henry:**

“Well, as banged up as we’ve been at the receiver position, it’s helped tremendously because he’s a target that [QB] Philip [Rivers] likes and trusts and he wins. He makes good plays for us. He’s always done that, it’s great to have Hunter back. He’s very versatile, he can do a lot of things, I mean our other tight ends, [TE] Lance [Kendricks] has done some good things for us too and [TE Virgil] Virg [Green] has as well. Now, instead of having just one guy, we’ve got a couple guys that we feel really good about because when we lost [TE Sean] Culkin, I mean all we had was Virgil and Virgil was a little banged up. We feel a lot better about that group right now. Lance, he came in and now he’s certainly up to speed with the offense, so it makes you feel a little bit better. Hunter is a tremendous player and he really makes a lot of plays. Just that catch he made in the Tennessee game early was incredible. Those are the kind of plays that you get and it kind of ignites you and makes you feel good.”

**On three tight end personnel groupings:**

“Now that we actually have three tight ends, we could do that. That’s a position group that can give you some flexibility even if it’s lining up in the backfield if you have two of them in the game, three of them in the game. It’s not so much — maybe just giving teams another thing that they have to prepare for, which can help. We’ve used those groups before. We’ve been short with that number, so we haven’t been able to do it as much, but it does give us some flexibility in that area.”

**On play-action:**

“I think, obviously, it’s a lot easier in play-action when you’re running the ball effectively. We have had pretty good success this year with play-action and we haven’t run it as effectively at times, but I just don’t think you can live in that world. You can’t not have a run game and expect your play-action to be as proficient. Our goal is and hopefully, we’ll run it a little bit better.”

**On RB Austin Ekeler’s route running:**

“From where he came in, I think I told that story about him the first practice — he caught a ball in the corner of the end zone against the Saints in the practice and you thought, ‘Wow, that was pretty impressive,’ because he dropped some balls, he just didn’t have a feel for the pass game as much. I think the OTAs and the training camp has helped because he hasn’t just played halfback, we’ve used him in a couple of different roles. Even last year early in the season — the second game of the year against Buffalo, we gave him a speed sweep coming around the edge and then he had a pass play in there where he was down the field and all of a sudden you start seeing him feel more comfortable with some of those things. He’s really developed. He has done a tremendous job of catching the football, obviously, and being effective. He’s turned into a really good player.”

**On the balance of the receivers on sideline catches:**

“[Wide Receivers Coach] Phil [McGeoghan], our receivers coach, does sideline drills with those guys and they work on that. We do it in camp. A lot of time you’ll see him set the bag up so that when they do that and they fall, they fall into the bag, so they’ve worked at it. I give them credit. Those were really good catches by both of them. [WR] Keenan [Allen] made two of them and [WR] Mike [Williams] made a big one on the boundary, too. It does a lot for us as an offense when guys make those plays because it gets you excited, moves the chains and we’re making big plays. It’s a credit to those guys for how hard they’ve worked. When you have those key kinds of catches, it’s good to see those guys have success with it.”

**On challenges playing at Soldier Field:**

“I’ll tell you, I’ve always enjoyed playing there. The history of the game. Having played in Chicago and the fans there. I think, a lot of times, we play well in those types of environments. It’s a great environment. It’s tough, they are a good football team. It’s always hard when you have to deal with the noise, but it is from the standpoint of just playing there, for me personally, I like going in there. It’s kind of neat to see that just because of the history of the game.”



**On the possible decision to throw on the goal line against Tennessee:**

“We had a plan. We did throw. We threw the one, we got the penalty. The play got stopped because of the review, but we had a play to throw it immediately after if we didn’t get in with the run. When we ran it, they weren’t sure if it was a score or not, so then we had time to talk while they were trying to figure that out to go to the next thing. So, we had a plan to do that. I mean, we still had time even after it happened, so it was part of the plan.”

**On if the offense would have spiked the ball if they hadn’t fumbled:**

“No, I wouldn’t have spiked it because I didn’t want to lose the down. At that particular point, it would have been second down. We would have had one down to score and then we would have had to kick a field goal to tie it and we still had plenty of time. The strategy, at that point, is if it didn’t work — the run play — get into a formation where you could pass it. Then, if you didn’t complete the pass, it stopped the clock, then you had the option to do what you wanted to do from that point on third down. We had a group in there that we thought a run with a group that we felt like we could do that and we had a second play called. That was the idea.”

**On quarterback sneaks:**

“We’ve had sneaks in this year. We just haven’t had a situation where we’ve run them. I don’t think that it’s something that we won’t do, not at all.”

