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Chargers Week 15 Media Availability

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR JOE LOMBARDI

On if 'the plan' is for T Trey Pipkins III to start at LT on Thursday night:

"He lined up there today."

On Pipkins:

"He comes to practice every day. He works at it. He takes coaching well. He'll be ready to go."

On preparing the protection plan without T Rashawn Slater:

"There are challenges regardless of who you have blocking. Obviously, we are going to miss Rashawn, but we trust Trey to go in there and do his job. We'll give him help when appropriate, but I think that he will be ready to go."

On QB Justin Herbert's 59-yard touchdown pass to WR Jalen Guyton last week:

"It was pretty impressive; not just the distance, but the accuracy of which it fell into his arms. I probably didn't appreciate it enough in the moment. Obviously, there has been a lot of hoopla around it, and deservedly so. I think we all know that he is a very talented young man. I expect to see more of that in the future."

On if the hit that Herbert sustained while throwing the touchdown to Guyton 'impacted the throw at all':

"How much could it have affected it? I'm going to guess not a lot. He got it off in time and just took the hit afterward."

On the play-call:

"In all honestly, Jalen [Guyton] was really running a clear-out route. It's one that you alert. I think that if he weren't flushed [out of the pocket], it would have been hard to find it. But, the fact that that play had gotten extended, [Herbert] was able to see him split those safeties. That being said, there are plays in our playbook that you would not run with most other quarterbacks. That certainly helps. There are things that we put in that probably would not be doable for a lot of guys."

On if the throw 'was supposed to go to WR Joshua Palmer on the corner route':

"We had to the field. Really, you read it out. There are a couple of options on it; a deep dagger backside and a deep-out. You're hoping to get a chunk. With the amount of time on the clock, we were hoping to get into field goal range. But, a lot of our plays do have a deep option that you don't expect the defense to give to you. You alert it, as we say. It's not really in the progression, but keep your eyes down the middle of the field and if he splits the defense, here we go. As he got flushed, it probably popped to him a little clearer than if he was throwing in rhythm."

On quarterback development 'over his time in the league':

"I think that some of the mobility of these guys, or the ability to extend plays, therefore letting some of these plays develop down the field, you never feel comfortable when you're on defense and you never feel out of it when you're on offense. Thinking back, we had some drives where we were able to get into scoring position, or score quickly, in New Orleans. As we mentioned before, Justin's [Herbert] arm strength and his ability to extend plays, it makes it easier."

On Palmer's performance last week:

"I thought that he was excellent. On the touchdown catch, I thought that it was a great route and a great throw by Justin [Herbert]. I thought that was fantastic. We've talked about him, he's a guy that keeps improving. Obviously, we drafted him, so we had a high opinion of him, but he has impressed us since he's been here. He got a few more opportunities because of [WR] Keenan's [Allen] absence. Sometimes, that's all you need. There's a bright future for him."

On Palmer's blocking ability:

"Good. He's dependable, physical and accountable. He's everything you want. He'll do the dirty work, but he can make the flashy plays, too. It's a nice combination."

On the development of the run game:

"I think it's awesome. We rushed for over 150 yards and ran it over 35 times. I think that's a really good front that we were blocking, so credit to the offensive line. Fewer bad things can happen when you run the ball, but, obviously, you don't always get as many good things that happen. When you're consistently getting chunks in the running game, it takes a lot of pressure off of the quarterback, it takes a lot of pressure off of the O-line, from a pass-blocking perspective. If you're able to run consistently and effectively, it certainly helps all parts of the offense and the team."

On the Chiefs' defensive improvement since Week 3:

"There are always sample sizes. Sometimes, I think, we see a couple of games and feel like a certain team stinks — maybe they just hit some bad luck or had a couple of bad performances. They have been playing really well lately. I think that we are maybe not as bad as people were saying early in the year. They have gotten better. I think that they're executing better. Getting healthy has helped them. They're playing the run a lot better. I think that it's been a top-five defense over the last few weeks. I know [Chiefs Defensive Coordinator] Steve [Spagnuolo] from his time in New Orleans. I know that he is a good football coach and that he has those guys playing really well."

On Chiefs DT Chris Jones:

"He's, obviously, one of the more dominant defensive linemen in the NFL. He's a big part of what they do. They have depth over there, so they will have good players replacing him. But, obviously, when you're one of the best, it's hard to replace."

On Palmer's 36-yard catch in the third quarter last week:

"We scored to [TE Donald] Parham on a similar concept against the Cowboys. Heavy run fake, then you sneak out the other side. It was a really good throw-and-catch by Justin [Herbert] and him."

On if that play call is normally run with a tight end in Palmer's spot:

"[Tight ends] are in that position more, but we put Josh [Palmer] in that position a lot in the run game. It's believable."

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR RENALDO HILL

On how the cornerbacks performed last week:

“I thought that those guys were really aggressive. They did a good job of challenging the ball in the air. It was good to see Mike D [CB Michael Davis] have four PBUs there. I thought that those guys really challenged. They really attacked the ball.”

On CB Chris Harris Jr.:

“He looked sharp on Sunday. He was on point with all of his calls, all of his adjustments. You could tell that he was in tune and letting other guys know where their plays were going. He was really jumping some routes. That’s what you expect from you a guy who has played at that level for so long. It really showed on Sunday and we’re hoping that can continue moving forward.”

On CBs playing ‘with their backs to the ball’:

“The way that the league is shaping out now, it’s coming between a pass interference, possibly, or the receiver making a spectacular play, so you have to have corners out there that can play with their back turned away from the ball and be able to have the timing. When the ball is coming up, try to read the indicators of the receiver — hands going up, eyes getting big — all of those things that we try to teach those guys when they are in those moments when they’re not turned back and looking at the ball. I thought Mike [Davis] did a good job of executing that this past Sunday. We have to continue with it because those opportunities are going to come, especially when the look is induced, meaning that when we’re showing a single-high look that it shows that we have access on the outside lanes. They have to anticipate that the ball is coming there and be prepared and ready to play it.”

On how LBs Drue Tranquill and Kyzir White are playing together:

“Those guys are really comfortable playing with each other. They feed off of each other. Obviously, they’re two athletic, fast guys. They both have a secondary background and it shows on the football field by the way that they communicate and the way that they run to the ball. Then, you mix in K9 [LB Kenneth Murray Jr.] being able to do both jobs. I think that we have a really strong group there.”

On Murray being penalized for lining up in the neutral zone twice last week:

“Playing a new position, you have to hit it with all of those things; making sure that you check with the officials, making sure that you’re checking with the guys that are lining up along with you, so that we don’t have those situations. You could tell that he was eager to get to the pass-rushing. We just have to control that, make sure that we’re doing the things pre-snap to ensure that those things don’t happen.”

On if the team is ‘limiting Murray’s snaps due to his ankle’:

“I think the ankle is good. I think that it’s all going to be on the gameplan. What’s needed that week? Do we need him behind the ball, or do we need him up on the edge? This past week was a chance for him to use his ability and speed to get off of the edge. We thought that would be an advantage for. We’ll play it each week and see what is best for us and best for K9 to make some plays out there.”

On ‘not playing as much dime personnel’ last week:

“We look at what’s the strongest package. We thought that our linebackers playing in there together, with D.J. [S Derwin James Jr.] being out, would be the best fit for us. Finding out Friday what the situation could be, we knew that those guys were comfortable with all of the other packages that we did out of dime. I think that’s the beauty of it, that we can play nickel, dime or base and still run those same calls, and still be athletic with Drue [Tranquill] and Kyzir [White] in there.”

On Giants TE Kyle Rudolph’s 60-yard catch-and-run:

“It was a few things; it was the timing of the blitz, it was a new call, being able to execute it the right way and, really, just trying to save it and get it done on the ground. There were a lot of combinations. We thought that the blitz was coming open and it was really just a matter of seconds. That’s just, sometimes, how it can flip. We really like the pressure. We had a clear shot at him, we were just maybe a tad second late.”

On why the blitz didn't 'get home' on that play:

"We're expecting that they would probably keep six [blockers] in to protect. They had [Giants RB Saquon] Barkley out, so we knew that [CB] Kemon [Hall] would be the free guy. It just took a little bit of time getting there. The guy made a spectacular throw. He hit it on the dime. That's the one that you wish that you could have back, or you wish that you could time it up and hit it a little bit faster. The guys were playing fast, they got after it. For me, it would still be up on the menu because I still thought that it was a good pressure, it was just a tad second late."

On if DB Trey Marshall 'should have taken a better angle' on his attempt to tackle Rudolph:

"I think that there are going to be some things to tweak on that coverage, but he did everything that we asked him to. We asked him to nail down on the single guy and the other guy kind of popped off of the ground, not anticipating that they would have the time. That kind of expressed itself, where that guy could extend and get deeper on us."

On Marshall's performance:

"I thought that he did a really good job. I had been in those situations with him in Denver before. We had [Broncos S] Kareem Jackson go down for a few games and he stepped in just like he was the starter. That's how I felt this past week; I felt like he held his own and that he had command of the defense."

On 'how the defense has been tackling':

"It's been much better. Obviously, we keep trying to put an emphasis on it. It's showing up. We just have to continue to do those things. Obviously, the elements are a little different today and it's a short week, but we are still going to put an emphasis on tackling and what these guys present, as far as if we don't tackle."

On the Chiefs' offense:

"We definitely have to identify where those threats are at. Obviously, there are big producers in that offense. Our main objective, coming into the game, is making sure that we stop the run early. We definitely have to make sure that we nip them in the bud with that because if you let that get going, as well as those threats, it can be a long day. We have a big task. We also have to try to stop the run."

On younger players seeing action late in the game last week:

"It was just good seeing them get those reps. We always talk about trying to be a playoff team, you're going to need those guys late in the season. I was happy all of those guys got out there and got some reps. [DB] Ben DeLuca, who we just elevated, was able to get in and get some reps. That's big for us, moving forward. [OLB Emeke] Egbule, all of those guys, I was just happy with those guys and that they went out there and played our defense. Getting those guys more comfortable and having some live bullets in front of them, as far as playing in game action, I thought that was huge."

On the potential of using the Week 3 gameplan for the Chiefs again this week:

"I think that you have to scrap it. Obviously, there were a lot of good things in that ball game, but when you look back, it was three months ago. That was a long time ago. They were still finding themselves as a team, and we were still trying to find ourselves as a team. A lot of things were happening. We'll definitely look at that game and see what we did well, what we can improve on and see where we are at now, as a team. I think that we're both in different places. We have to continue to do what we do best and what's been good for us. Hopefully, that's enough for us to play well and, hopefully, come out with the win."

On where CB Tevaughn Campbell will play this week:

"I think that that is all going to be a big part of how we play those guys and who is available. Last week, T.C./played outside and he helped us a ton out there. You just have to have everybody ready to go. Kemon [Hall] was ready to go. Not knowing what all of their statuses will be — [Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley will deal with that and see how we do moving forward. I'm excited for the guys being able to step up and be ready to roll. We play all of those guys in multiple spots, so I don't think that it will be hard for us to adjust if something was to happen or did happen."

LINEBACKER KYZIR WHITE

On preparing for the Chiefs:

"I feel like they are one of the best offenses in the NFL. When we played them in Week 3, they were really good, and I think that they've gotten better since then. They have better chemistry now, so we have to be locked in for sure this week to come out with a win."

On if the Chiefs have 'other dangerous players' outside of WR Tyreek Hill and TE Travis Kelce:

"For sure. People think that the Chiefs are just a passing team, but I feel like they have some good running backs in the backfield. They can be dangerous in that aspect of the game, as well."

On wearing the 'green dot' and relaying the play calls to the rest of the defense:

"I feel like it went pretty well. It could always be better, but for being my first time, I think I did a pretty good job of handling it."

On how beneficial it was having multiple defensive players utilize the in-helmet communication system in training camp:

"That was definitely was an advantage. Going out there and having some experience doing that in training camp, that definitely helped me, for sure."

On playing without S Derwin James Jr. last week:

"You always want a player like that behind you, but it's a next-man-up mentality. We knew that we had to just hold it down for him for that week. He's going to be back with us."

On adjusting to the new defensive system:

"When we broke for OTAs, I was really in my playbook heavy. I was getting in extra work with my coaches. The linebacker coaches, Coach [Alex G. Spanos Coaching Fellow John] Timu and [Linebackers] Coach [Michael] Wilhoite, did a great job of preparing me and getting me ready for the season."

On how playing safety in college benefits him now as a linebacker:

"I am very fortunate to be a previous safety. I feel like it helps me with my coverage skills and my read-and-reacts. I feel like it definitely plays a big part in my game now."

On reaching 100 tackles this season, along with James:

"It means a lot. That is a big accomplishment. When I saw on Twitter that the last time that happened here was in 2000, it really hit home for me. I am grateful that we did that, but we have other milestones to hit and other things to accomplish as a team. It took me four years to hit it. In my rookie year, I feel like I could have hit it if I had stayed healthy. Everything happens for a reason. I feel like this is perfect timing for me. But I'm not done yet. I still want to keep going, keep getting better and keep helping this team win games."

On the defense's improvement recently:

"I feel like we're locked in more, as far as our keys and things like that. We're taking it one play at a time and just really locking in and keying in. I definitely feel like we are turning a corner, for sure."

On LB Drue Tranquill:

"I feel like we have really good chemistry. We play well with each other, we feed off of each other. Drue is like another coach on the field. He's really smart, so he'll help get guys lined up, as well. I definitely love having him out there with me."

On 'if there is anything to take away from the first Chiefs game' to use this week:

"This is a different game. Obviously, it's the same team, but I feel like they are going to switch some things up. We just have to be ready for it all. I will definitely go back and watch that game, for sure, just to see what I could have done better to help me out in certain situations. It's definitely a new game coming up."

On former teammate and current Chiefs DE/LB Melvin Ingram III:

"He's a great player. He's fast. He's really physical. He's a vocal leader. He's a guy that you definitely want on your team. It's definitely going to be good seeing him out there."