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## **MANDATORY MINICAMP MEDIA AVAILABILITY** **Wednesday, June 12, 2019 | Hoag Performance Center | Costa Mesa, Calif.**

### **LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN**

#### **Opening statement:**

"Good afternoon. It was a good, spirited practice today, as you could tell. We had some situations in practice today and I thought the guys competed well, they took care of one another and I feel like we got better. It was one of our better practices this offseason so far."

#### **On the practice:**

"Once you get through the basic installs, you can get into situational football. Seeing some of the decision-making today, I thought was pretty good. Guys did well."

#### **On T Russell Okung:**

"When he's ready, he'll be back. I won't look for him [to be here] this [minicamp]."

#### **On TE Hunter Henry:**

"Hunter was fine when he came back last year or we would have never put him back on the field. I think Hunter is just doing what Hunter Henry does. He makes plays. He had a good day today. That's why he broke us down at the end."

#### **On Defensive Backs Coach Ron Milus:**

"Ron has been one of the better defensive back coaches in our league for a long time. He does a heck of a job of developing young men and getting them in the right positions to make plays. He's one heck of a coach."

#### **On if the team will practice tomorrow:**

"Oh, absolutely. I get three mandatory days. You think I'm going to turn one down?"

#### **On if tomorrow will be more focused on the young players:**

"Usually, yes. The young guys need the reps. The veteran guys, they'll probably chill a little bit more tomorrow."

#### **On QB Philip Rivers:**

"That's the balance with Philip when you talk about reps. He's always been one of the hardest working guys on the team. When he's out there, he works hard. He prepares hard. That's what makes him really good, his preparation. He's going to prepare the same, but we're just going to take some of the physical reps off of him — but there's a fine line there. We're going to figure that out. We're in constant communication of what he needs. I just want to make sure that he's getting what he needs."

#### **On Rivers' intangibles:**

"He's intelligent. You talk to a lot of great football players and people think they're just athletic and skillful — no. They're intelligent. A lot of guys are in the right place at the right time and that's not an accident. Philip knows where to go with the ball. He gets us in the right protections up front. He gets us in and out of bad plays. He runs the offense like you want the quarterback too."



**On if there is a sense of urgency with where Rivers is in his career:**

"I don't know about you, but I felt a sense of urgency two years ago when I first got here. My urgency hasn't changed. We want to get it done, in a bad way."

**On Rivers wearing a visor:**

"It did throw me off a little bit. I guess he's trying it out. This is the time of year to do it."

**On QB Tyrod Taylor:**

"Tyrod is having a good camp and is doing a good job. That's why we brought him here."

**On the quarterback depth:**

"We have one starter. Tyrod [Taylor] is our backup. We are very confident in Tyrod, though, if something were to happen."

**On speaking to veterans regarding the possibility of fewer reps in preseason:**

"Oh yes, we've had that conversation. Absolutely there's going to be some resistance. I think that's with all great players. We will work it out."

**On balancing starting QB reps in practice:**

"I just want him to get the reps that he needs to be prepared, and no more."

**On what he learned during his first coaching position under Mike Shanahan:**

"That was a long time ago. Just details. In this game, you're coaching all of these elite athletes and it's the little things that make the biggest difference. It's not always something that's difficult or complex. It's just the simple things in this game that make the biggest difference each and every year. I think those are the things that are genius that sometimes people overlook. It doesn't have to be very complex."

**On if that position shaped his desire to continue coaching:**

"Yeah, it was a test drive for me. I knew I was going to coach, but I didn't think on this level. I was thinking more college and high school. I wanted to work with younger people to maybe have an impression on their life — not just in football, but off the field as well. I got stuck in the NFL, I kind of liked it and I'm still here."

**On how he feels the team is in its progression this offseason:**

"It's hard to tell when you're in shorts and you're not practicing for real in pads and evaluating guys in games. I will say that this was the third exposure — you have OTAs, the rookie minicamp with some of these guys along with Phase 1. I feel like we're further along, for sure, and we should be. This is my third season here. I think the guys that have been here know what to expect and things are running a little smoother."

**On if the retention of the playbook is better than previous years:**

"I believe so because our veterans understand the playbook better. I like for our veterans to teach our young guys and you see that all over the practice field."

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR KEN WHISENHUNT**

**On maintaining QB Philip Rivers' reps in camp:**

"I think we've always done a little bit of that. I think he wants to do everything, but I think last year we did a good bit of that in training camp and we'll probably do the same this year because of the way he started the season. Last year, he started off hot and I think a lot of that is because of the plan for limiting some of the throws, limiting some of the plays — which, how many more plays does he need in practice? I think [Head] Coach [Anthony] Lynn has done a great job in recognizing that and implementing that."

**On Rivers' arm strength throughout the year:**

"He still does. I think that's more of a core strengthening thing that they do during the season. Obviously, the more you do, the more tired you're going to get, but I think as he progresses through the season just continuing to work the way he's worked in the offseason on some of the core things will help him maintain that."



**On what makes Rivers elite:**

"It's hard to get past the success that he has. He has a reputation for wanting to talk a little bit during the game, but it's all because he's so competitive and I think his teammates see that. They recognize that and I think even opponents do. When you see a guy that works as hard as he does, exhibits the leadership qualities that he does, you say, 'Okay, you like this guy.' Even though sometimes you like to hate him, you still like him. You can't ignore some of the plays he makes in games, in critical situations, the throws, being able to adjust the protection, make those calls. There's a lot of things that goes into it and certainly, he epitomizes what's great about that position."

**On being comfortable with not taking a snap in the preseason game:**

"I don't know about mirroring the whole Rams thing. I think we have an idea of what we want to do with our guys. I think it's important to start to establish chemistry, but you have to be smart about how you do it. When you first start out, there's a lot of things you want to get reps on. Now, you have a library of things you can talk about. You have muscle memory — for lack of a better word — to build off. Maybe you can eliminate or cut down some of those reps. I think a lot of it is dependent upon the player depending on what we're trying to get accomplished. It's a fluid thing, but when you have a player who's a little older and like some of ours that are established veterans, you're not opposed to doing that."

**On the importance of snaps for T Sam Tevi and T Trey Pipkins III:**

"Trey needs all the snaps he can get. For young players, there's so much they have to learn and so much they have to see and you just can't do it. To sneak some reps against [DE] Joey Bosa, [DE] Melvin [Ingram III] — some of the best pass rushers in the league — that's always great, but I think for some of the older players, it's not that important. Sam Tevi, [T] Trent Scott — both of those guys played a lot of plays for us last year and they're going to get a lot of reps going forward. It's good to see Forrest Lamp out there getting some reps and progressing, moving [G Dan] Feeney around playing different spots. I think one of the things that has been really good about our line is the versatility of those guys and with [T] Russell [Okung] not practicing, we're going to move guys around even more and get them in different spots which means if somebody has to play in a different spot during a game it's not that uncomfortable."

**On T Trent Scott:**

"He didn't say much. He just worked hard. I think when you have a young player where you put him in positions in game and they continually, consistently, don't mess up that gets your attention. For young guys, a lot of times, it really is — especially like out here at practice we're at the end of minicamp, we've had a tremendous amount of OTA practices. We've had a few minicamp practices, but you put them in there and you run some of the plays they haven't seen yet and they struggle because it's a different technique, they're going against different players, the ones that can get in there and be successful on those opportunities are the ones that stand out, that make it and that's what Trent did. Every time Trent entered a situation last year, whether it was with the three, the twos, even in some instances with the ones, he handled it. Then we threw him into the game as a starter — he came from Grambling as a free agent — and he played well. When you create a track record of doing that, that's where you say this guy is pretty good and we're lucky that we have him. That's what this whole process is about with our guys. It's stressing them, seeing how they react to that stress and the ones that can be successful in that the block, those are what you're always looking for. We've had really good competition and it's great to have guys like Trent."

**On QB Cardale Jones:**

"At this point in the year, you want to see them not mess up the play call, manage the guys — where they need to line up, communicate to them what they need to do, be on top of what you're anticipating — and he's gotten a lot better that way. That's what's important. I think the evaluation is going to come in the preseason games when you're out there against another team, you're having to manage a lot of different things and the trend for him has been good. He's improving. Just seeing his command in the huddle now opposed to what it was last year, much better. The things he's doing out there as far as making a check on the play, making the adjustment call, those kind of things that you take for granted when you have veteran guys and you have a young guy like that and you see him start to do it, it's very encouraging."



**On Pipkins:**

"I've seen some things with Trey that are really exciting. He's very athletic. He's about equal on his hits and his misses but you expect that. I think the pads will be a real test. You have a guy that's a good athlete for that size that moves, has good lateral movement. The big question becomes his strength, his ability to set down a bull rusher and you really can't tell that until you get to the pads, but it's been really positive with him so far. It's been really exciting to see him because you see a guy with the athletic ability, with the size, and he's really worked hard. I'm excited to see how he does when we get into training camp."

**On G Forrest Lamp:**

"He's getting a lot of plays. It's a tremendous progression from what we've been able to do in the past. He's playing a lot of spots. I've seen him play a little bit of tackle, he's played some guard. I've seen a lot of good things from Forrest. It's nice to see that. Another thing is, with him, he's such a strong kid that I think when we get into the pads and we get a chance to see him lock some guys and set them down and see him do that especially against some of our guys that'll be a good test but it's been very positive."

**On WR Artavis Scott:**

"He's made plays. I think the only thing with Artavis is, he was injured and missed about a week of OTAs, so I think the thing is with him is just being available. We want to be able to put him in situations to be able to see if he can be successful because we're looking for those guys. When you lose a guy or two and you're trying to replace them we feel like Artavis has the ability to do that, but we have to see him do it and that only comes from getting those reps. From the time that he's been in there, in the last week or so when he's been getting some reps, you see a lot of things you like. He has to continue to build off of that."

**On WR Dylan Cantrell:**

"He's been a year in. He got the benefit of being around on the practice squad, running a lot of reps. He's doing a good job with his assignments and lining up and getting to where we need him to get to, he just hasn't had a lot of opportunities with the ball coming to him yet. When you look at it and you say he didn't have a lot of catches, well, that's just the way it's gone. I think it's going to be one of those things as we go into tomorrow's practice and even into training camp when you get to see him do some things and then in the preseason games. Last year, he really showed some flashes as we progressed through camp, so we're hoping to see that same thing."

**On the offensive line:**

"Our group did a good job, our line. I understand because when we played against a pretty good defense in Baltimore and New England played well against us, we weren't as effective as we would've liked to have been, but our guys battled their tails off all year. As anything, we go back and look at the tape, try to correct some things technique-wise maybe some of the ways that we attacked them. Not so much the players as it is trying to correct our scheme. We have a really good group. Their chemistry, their ability to play different spots, their ability to adjust as a group, as a whole, has been tremendous."

**On the jump to the next step for running backs:**

"Just speaking on Detrez [Newsome] and Justin [Jackson] — they actually played and they played in big games at the end of the year and they made some plays. This goes back to what I was saying earlier, last year, Detrez had a couple of big runs in the preseason, Justin was a little bit nicked up and didn't do a whole lot in the preseason, but then when those guys actually got reps in the regular season game you're like, 'Wow.' They showed up, they did some good things, they still have some room to grow. They picked up well where they left off and they've done some good things. Justin has made some plays. Detrez has as well. We have a really good group with those guys. I think their versatility, their ability to protect and be able to take on a backer and understanding those protection schemes is really good. We're excited about all those guys."



## **LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK PHILIP RIVERS**

### **On wearing a visor during practice:**

"I just was having a little fun today."

### **On the practice:**

"I thought [it was spirited]. I think we all know that the offseason is winding down and that you're going to be away for five or six weeks. I thought the energy has been good all offseason, but there was a little more juice today, which was fun."

### **On what he does to continue to improve at this stage of his career:**

"I think you're constantly trying to find little tweaks to your routine. In many ways, you do the same, but you're always trying to find tweaks to get better. Whether it be any of the things you mentioned from a preparation standpoint to a training standpoint, eating standpoint — all of that stuff. It's the fine details, as we know. The difference in winning the whole deal or missing the postseason really is not that much. You look at the Kansas City-New England game — not that it's that one play — but talk about six inches, right? Being offside and that whole thing is different, among other plays, obviously. In every game, all throughout the league all year long, the margin from winning and losing is small."

### **On the possibility of having less reps in training camp and preseason work:**

"I think, as a competitor and someone who enjoys practice, it's always hard. You almost need them to protect you from yourself in those situations. I think it can be positive. I think you have to find that just-right recipe that is enough to be ready and prepared to have a great season, but also to be fresh and smart. You mention other veteran players, but it will be my 16th season, so I think it is smart to not rip it and throw it every single day all training camp long. I think it makes sense to do that. [Head Coach Anthony Lynn] mentioned it collectively as a group maybe having a little different approach in the preseason. Ultimately, you want to have your whole team healthy come the first game against the Colts. That's the goal. How can we do that and get ourselves as prepared as possible? I'm sure that will be Coach's plan."

### **On balancing feeling prepared for Week 1 with less reps:**

"I think there's a way. I think that we will have a plan as we get started in camp and then I think you kind of go with how you feel, how we're looking and how it's going. I think it can be tweaked as you go through camp, through preseason and even through the season as far as Wednesday, Thursday, Friday practices. Even last year, I probably didn't throw as many balls in the week during the regular season as maybe I did in years past. Is it those things? What can you do to give yourself a chance to have a heck of a year, collectively, and individually be as good as you can be down the stretch."

### **On how he felt at the end of last season:**

"I felt pretty good. I didn't play as well, as a whole. I had some good stretches and we found a way to win a playoff game in Baltimore. We had some big wins late. Maybe I didn't have some of my better games down the stretch. I mean, I felt good, but you're always looking for things, ways you can improve. Maybe, were you as fresh as you could have been if we had tweaked a few things? I don't know. I think those are all things that you kind of — again, with the weight lifting routine and working out late in the year. There is so much film study, you have to make sure that you can't neglect any of that as well. I think, again, it's — you could say, 'Well don't you have it figured out by now,' but I think it's year-to-year. I think everybody is always trying to find what is just the right routine that allows you to give yourself and your team the best chance to go win."

### **On if he would be comfortable not taking a snap in the preseason games:**

"I think I would be alright. I think the fact that we're going to practice against some other teams — that's about as live as it gets, but you get to wear a red jersey. I think by doing that — if we didn't practice against anybody, I'd say, 'Gosh, that would probably be nice to get in some real game action.' To me, you're getting some real game action when you're going against two different teams, getting seven-on-seven reps. You're getting all kinds of reps, so you're getting more reps in those two practices than you'd ever get action in a game. I think, what did I throw, six or eight passes last year in the preseason? There is something about that game feeling, but I don't think it's necessary at this point. I don't know what the plan is yet, but if that were to be the plan, I would be fine with it."



**On if a pitch count would be similar to a baseball pitcher:**

"I don't think so. It's just totally different with the number of throws that you make. I don't feel like it's the same. You're not exerting as hard as you can throw it very often, if ever. A couple times a day, maybe, are you throwing a ball as far as you can throw it, if that. You may not even be doing that at all. I don't think so, but there have been training camps in my career where I've gone, 'Man, my arm is getting tired.' Those were more in the days where you really practiced twice and back-to-back days where you're actually going back out and practicing again. I really haven't had that feeling in a long time, but I do think you can wear yourself out by throwing too much. I don't think it's just the arm. There is a lot involved in throwing — especially the way that I throw it. I think you do have to make sure that you don't overdo it."

**On managing external expectations for the team:**

"I think last year was good for us for the most part. Again, we've made some tweaks, but for the most part, most guys have experience the last two seasons. They've experienced the 0-4 start, battling back and just missing it — and then last year, having a heck of a run, winning a playoff game, feeling that again and going and getting smacked around pretty good in New England before seeing them win it all. I think we've gained some valuable experience. I think we have some of those same expectations. It's not like, 'Whoa, now they're picking us. They think we're pretty good.' It's that we feel that way about ourselves, but we know how hard it is because of our experience the last two years — and some of us, many years more than that. We know how hard it is to win. We know how some of those games that we won the past few years could have gone the other way. We've been on both sides. Through our experience, I think we'll be able to manage those expectations. I don't think those will have any effect on us. I think it's really how you want it, right? You hope you get to a point where the expectation on the outside is similar to what it is on the inside. Not that it affects it. Even if nobody thinks we're very good, it only matters what we think in there. I think that's how you want it. Shoot, when the schedule comes out and there are more of those national, prime time games, that's really — I really don't care anymore at this point, but I think you can ask these young guys [and they'd say] that's what you want. That's what we all grew up watching. You enjoy that kind of a little more hype, a little more being in the news."

**On what it takes to fulfill the expectations:**

"Shoot, it's a long ride. It's a long run to get there. I think we know how tough our division is. Obviously, Kansas City being the No. 1 seed last year. We haven't won the division in a long time, as we all know. It's going to be a heck of a road. I think we have the capabilities of getting that done. Like we know, that's why they play the games and play the season. We'll find out, but we have the right makeup I think, physically, and I think, mentally. I think you have to re-create it, mentally, both from a football standpoint with how you prepare and then re-create it from a camaraderie standpoint. We have a good group, but it's not, 'Oh, we'll just pick up where we left off.' We have to re-create that bond, love and fight that you have for one another and with one another. I think it's been a productive offseason. Now, you take a break and then you come back and really start over. This time is good, you build some foundation stuff, you get around the guys you enjoy it — but when you come back on the 25th of July, that's when it really starts."

**On if the team has been good about moving past the New England game:**

"I think so because last year we all ended sick to our stomachs because of the way it ended. I think that's probably — we don't know what it feels like — if you've won it all, how are you going to turn the page and go? There's only one team happy at the end. We ended disappointed. I think it was just enough to taste it again, be excited and fired up about it, but also go, 'Hey, how are we going to take that next step?' Then it's let's not worry about that step. How are going to get to that step again? To me, it's don't forget how hard it is to get there. Quickly we can jump to that New England Divisional game and talk about it, but it was a long road to get to that game. We have to make sure that we know the work that it's going to take, how hard it's going to be and work one day at a time."





**On the prospect of facing the Chargers defense in practice:**

"It's great. You hope there's some back-and-forth. You really hope — and of course, we want to get after them every day in practice and they want to get after us, but you really hope it's not too lopsided. You hope there's some back-and-forth. They have a couple good plays, then we make a play. It's a lot of good versus good. I think we make each other better. We compete, we get after one another, but it's good. When you have our tackles having to block these guys and the skill players covering or trying to get open, it makes you better. I think the cool thing, too, about our guys is that they all interact. It's not just go out there an practice. It's, 'Hey, what did you do here?' or, 'Yeah, I felt you do this.' There is a lot of helping going on, kind of cross-work that's really good."

**On the Raiders being selected for HBO's Hard Knocks:**

"I've seen bits and pieces. It's not a must-view for me."

**On building trust with young wide receivers:**

"I think it's reps. I think it's been good this offseason to get some reps with those guys that I really haven't gotten many reps with in the past if you think about it. With [Raiders WR] Tyrell [Williams] here, [WR] Travis [Benjamin] and then [WR] Mike [Williams] coming on last year with [WR] Keenan [Allen], obviously. Those are the main four guys, at least in practice. That's who I've always thrown to. This offseason, [WR] Jeremy [Davis] has been in there with us quite a bit. [WR] Artavis [Scott] has been in there with us quite a bit. You've seen [WR] Andre [Patton], [WR] Justice [Liggins] and [WR] Dylan [Cantrell] make some plays. They've all been kind of sprinkled in. That's been good for me. To me as the quarterback, it's not just going out there and throwing a route with no defense. I feel like that shouldn't take you very long to build or handle that. It's the trust-building, game-type plays where things happen in the coverage and you make a play that really can accelerate that relationship. Those guys are all working hard. Obviously, Tyrell was a heck of a player for us. I'm pulling for him to do good things up there in Oakland. It's going to be a challenge to kind of see who's going to fill his shoes and go. Obviously, with Travis, Mike and Keenan, you know what the expectation is from those guys. After that, we're going to see what happens."

**On if it's exciting to see who rises to the occasion:**

"Yeah, I think you love to see them compete and see kind of how it shakes out. I think you pull for all of them. You're pulling for us. It will be fun to see that competition throughout training camp and how those guys continue. That's a close room, too. They all pull for one another. It's a neat dynamic. It's one that's probably hard to explain and understand. You have guys fighting for a couple spots, but yet they all pull for one another. It's pretty cool to see."

**On RB Melvin Gordon III's progression:**

"It's been cool. It's been fun. I think he and Keenan [Allen], it's been fun to actually see them as rookies and how they operated, and then see how their career has gone and take off to become the players that they are. I never like to say his work ethic — makes it sound like he didn't have one before because I don't think it was bad before. I think you do learn how to be a pro and the right way to go about it. I do think that's played a big part for him. I think just figuring it out. He's always been a guy that loves to train and work and do all that — but how do I do that? How do I study? How do I study tape? All of those things, he's gotten better and better. Like I said, I really think when it really took a jump for him was the unfortunate injury to Danny [Woodhead] that year. He went from, 'Okay, I don't really have to worry about protections. I'm going to sit here in these meetings, I'm going to listen, but I know Danny is going to be in there with all the blitzes and stuff.' Then, all the sudden, it was, 'Oh, I've got to do it.' I think it really put a demand on him and stretched him. I think it stretched him and probably made him very uncomfortable. You see what a great protector he is now and that he takes pride in it. I see him all the time throughout the season when he's studying stuff. He's studying blitz pickups and things like that. It's been cool to see that part of his game, I think, seeing him say, 'I can be on the field in every situation, run every route and do everything.' Even though we have a heck of a group of backs, I think him kind of taking that ownership has been big for him."



## **LOS ANGELES CHARGERS NOSE TACKLE BRANDON MEBANE**

### **On the offseason:**

"It's been pretty good. The defense, we've been doing a lot of improvement as far as gap integrity, turning your shoulders, having an addition with the [Assistant] Defensive Line Coach [La'Roi] Glove [Glover] and already having [Defensive Line Coach] Giff [Smith], there have been a lot of new things and new drills that we've been doing. Every year that I've been here, Giff has always taken it to the next level. I feel with the addition with Glove, we have new things and new drills that we've been working on as far as play-action pass and reading it. When you get play-action pass, you think it's a run, but it's a pass. We've been working on that, training and doing things like that, working on our shoulder turns, violent hands, feet, eyes — training all of those things. We've been seeing a lot of improvement in a lot of guys on the defensive line."

### **On the potential for the defense to be special:**

"Oh yeah, I definitely feel that way. I definitely feel that one of the key things for me and for the other guys to continue to get better with is being a smart football player. Being smart and also getting better with your techniques and fundamentals. I feel like you can call any call on the field, but a lot of times think the call is going to help them make the play. It's actually the skill in the player that helps them make the play. That's the thing that we have to continue to get better with is skill — individual skill. When you have a one-on-one, you have to win."

### **On returning to the Chargers:**

"I was very happy to come back. I thought due to the fact with everything that happened last year, I thought that was going to be it for me. I was kind of preparing for life after, but the Chargers asked me to come back and I was like, 'Okay, let's do it.' I came back and it's definitely a blessing to be in year 13 and still be able to play football at a high level. It's definitely a blessing."

### **On thinking last season could have been the end of his career:**

"I thought that was my last game. I thought that was it. I thought I was going to pretty much retire because, in my mind, I was 34 — I'm still 34 now. At the time, more so for me, I wasn't about to go to another team at my age. To me, I really felt like there was really no point to uproot and move my family across the country or whatever. I was happy to come back here and stay local."

### **On the team wanting him back:**

"It means a lot. It means a lot that they appreciate what I do. My thing is to give back to them, just do what I've been doing. Continue to get better, continue to sharpen my skill and continue to improve. There's always something that I learn every day. Always just trying to gain knowledge."

### **On DT Jerry Tillery:**

"He always has an open ear. He always wants to learn. He told me yesterday that he wanted to pick my brain and learn some of the stuff that I know. I told him, 'I'll teach you, but it's going to take a while.' That's a lot of years to retain a lot of knowledge. I'm going to give him a lot of information. I'll start slow with him and then gradually test him and his mind with formations, stances and things like that. When he gets out there, it will be easier for him to get a hang of things. Right now, it's doing a lot of talking and stuff like that, especially when we do walkthrough and things like that. He asks me what I'm looking at or what I see when get out there."

### **On at what point in the offseason he knew returning could be a possibility:**

"It was more with the stuff that happened with my daughter. She had Trisomy 13. It was interesting because she had Trisomy 13 and I was going into year 13 if I did come back and I was like, maybe I'll just dedicate this year to her. I took that into account and the Chargers offered me something nice. It was like, why not? Why not go again? I definitely want to do it for her."

### **On if there was a time frame he was convinced he had played his last game:**

"It was the start of free agency. They called, they called my agent. We were in constant communication. When they called, I was like, 'Okay, what are we talking?' We went back and forth as usual in negotiation. We came to a point and that was good. I decided to go ahead and take it."





**On if other teams had contacted him:**

"It was two or three other teams. I think one that helped was always practicing against the Saints and Seattle was one and the Rams was one too. The Rams were one because of our [old] assistant defensive line coach [Eric Henderson]. He's over there now, so I had a relationship with him. It was about three other teams. I felt comfortable coming back here. I've been in this system pretty much my whole career."

**On talking with his wife about his decision:**

"Yeah, I talked to her about it. At first, she was more so like I don't know, we were going back and forth — not arguments — but it was more going back and forth like, 'Is this something you want to do?' I said, 'I don't know, yeah.' She was basically saying whatever I wanted to do she was going to support me. I was like, 'Okay, let's do it.' I did it."

**On the Chargers having success:**

"It played a lot. I was very familiar with the system. If I went somewhere else like the Saints or the Rams, those are two different systems. I think three-four systems. It would have been different learning the terminology, dealing with heat. I've never been in a hot training camp in my life. Last year was probably the hottest training camp I've ever been in in my life so dealing with that I was like, I don't know if I want to deal with that. It was a lot and I'm happy with my decision."

**On what it takes to fulfill the expectations of winning:**

"I think the main thing for us is to just be smarter. Make good decisions. Understand that when one guy makes a play, a lot of times people don't see what the guy next to him did to help him create and make that play for him. I think if we continue to do that more, be smarter with our film study and continue to play with a sense of urgency, I think we can do it. I think we have the team. I think we have the talent. I think the main thing is to get sharper with the mind and great decision making on the field as players."

**On still liking the little things leading up to game days:**

"Definitely. I think what makes me love the process is I just like competition. For example, my daughter and my son, Hayley — age five — and Makai — three — we'll race up the stairs. What my daughter does is put her hand in front so nobody can pass her and then my son gets upset. So, sometimes I'll hold her so that he can get three or four steps up the stairs and he'll win and get excited, my daughter will be mad at me but she'll get over it. Then, my kids know how to swim. We have a swim instructor that will come every Sunday. They're really great swimmers. They don't use their arms, they'll use their feet. We'll race in the pool. My son, he's starting to swim in — any type of depth is deep for him — he swims in like eight feet of water across the pool. My daughter and I race. We have competitions and it's just in us. My wife is competitive. She's a prosecutor, she's an attorney. She's competitive, too, so we have a very competitive household."

