

## Chargers Offseason Media Availability, Phase Three

Wednesday, May 31, 2023 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

### OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR KELLEN MOORE

#### **On 'getting on the field' with the team this offseason:**

"It's been nice. It's been really good to get onto the field. Ultimately, that's what we want to do. Sometimes it feels like a desk job during the offseason, so it's nice to just get out there and get things going."

#### **On RB Austin Ekeler and 'knowing that he will be around':**

"Excitement. Really excited to get to work with Austin [Ekeler]. I think that he's been, obviously, one of the top guys in this league. He has had such an impact on this place. Really excited to start building this thing together and building his role in this offense. I'm really, really excited."

#### **On if there is a 'touch number' that he is 'targeting' with Ekeler:**

"As we build this thing, there will, probably, be an ideal goal. I think it's a little early to kind of narrow the focus already, but excited to go through the process with him. Certainly, he's a guy, like a lot of the guys on our team, we want to get these guys as many opportunities as they can. Any time you have a running back like that, it's really about touches, whether it's in the run game, pass game, whatever it may be. When you have playmakers like this, you want to make sure you distribute the ball to those guys."

#### **On 'if anything in particular stands out' about Ekeler's skillset:**

"I think that he has really good vision, a really good feel for the game. His spatial awareness in the run game — running the football, but also in the pass game, his ability to catch rather sometimes simpler routes and turn them into explosive plays, big plays — it's just a really tremendous asset."

#### **On the importance of 'finding a second running back:**

"Like a lot of positions, we're going to need depth. You're going to need a lot of different guys to contribute through a season. These seasons are really, really long — 18 weeks in the regular season, and then the playoffs, preseason, all of the things can add up. We are going to need other guys to contribute. We're really excited about the other guys that are in that room, particularly in the running back room, just to give them these opportunities throughout the training camp process, the preseason process, and then we'll figure out how the roles all get distributed."

#### **On what has 'jumped out' to him about WR Quentin Johnston:**

"Obviously, the physical component of it is really evident, just his ability to make plays. From a physical standpoint; size, height, weight, speed. His range catching the football, when you get out here on the field and you start seeing him catch passes, his range is really, really tremendous. I think the other thing that we've, obviously, highlighted is his ability to make plays after the catch. I think you can certainly see that, his suddenness, to get in and out of brakes once he catches the ball, the transitioning into a runner, I think that will be really big for him."

**On the value of entering a veteran wide receiver room for Johnston as a rookie:**

"It's one of the best setups for a young guy. I think to have those guys who have kind of been there, done that. They're going to be big parts of this offense, but they're going to be able to help bring him along as we go. [WR] Keenan [Allen] and [WR] Mike [Williams] have been great examples to those guys, certainly early in this process. You can see them out on the field, when those guys are together, just giving those guys as much information as you can. All the experiences that Keenan has, that Mike has, that [WR] Josh [Palmer] has are huge assets for these guys."

**On 'early impressions' of T Rashawn Slater:**

"He's done an awesome job. Obviously, we're not able to do as much of the physical component, from an O-line perspective, but his commanding presence is pretty clear and evident, as soon as you walk out on the field with the first group. He's going to be a tremendous asset for us."

**On the impact of Slater at left tackle and how that benefits an offense:**

"I think that it certainly simplifies your thought process, as far as having a guy that you feel comfortable with and can manage a certain side of the football. It allows you to, maybe, draw attention to other aspects of the protection gameplan and whatnot. We have a really deep offense line, guys that have played a lot of football. I think it's really, really exciting for us just to get these guys gelling together, spend time together, because they've all played football — they've all played in different positions and independent, just because of the injuries last year — so to get these guys together, spend some time together, I think we're really excited about that."

**On the left side of the offensive line being a 'weapon':**

"I think we're building this left side that is going to have some tremendous strength behind it. Those guys' ability to use strengths — the right side, as well — to kind of solidify these positions, to get these guys working together. I think that's one of the biggest things with offensive line is that it's five guys that have to be in sync. The more those guys spend time together, I think, is critical. We're really excited about the way it's laying out."

**On the 'progress made' thus far regarding installing the offense:**

"It's really good. I think we take this first lap through OTAs. It's a little bit fast, it's that first lap — there is going to be some stuff that is good, plenty of stuff that we have to clean up and redefine and all of that sort of stuff. Then, you just have to kind of ace it in training camp. I think that's our main focus, this first lap, and then in training camp, we really have to hit it really, really well. Then, get ready for the season."

**On installing an offense during the offseason program:**

"I think that this is a really good process, just because it's new to a lot of guys. You're able to carry over what we can from the past couple of years, and then build off some of the Dallas stuff that is, maybe, coming from a scheme standpoint. But, you have to keep it tight, you have to keep it condensed. There are a lot of different ways of playing football, and you just have to keep it tight and condensed so that these guys can play fast."

**On the challenge of 'taking a good offense and making it better':**

"That's a great question. I think there are a lot of good things here. Certainly, we've tried to embrace that as much as we can, to keep all the good that's in place, and hopefully bring a few other things that hopefully can help us in some other areas, as well."

**On improving the run game:**

"Certainly, statistically, the run game, you want a little bit more out of it. I think some availability on the offensive line and in some of our positions will be a huge asset to that. Then, schematically, there will always be little adjustments, little flavors, that may look different."

**On 'streamlining' the run game in installations and his approach:**

"I think it's identifying what your primary runs are going to be, your go-to runs. You want your guys playing fast so that they can allow their physical talents to show up. Trying to identify what are going to be our strengths, and then you have to have enough flavors through a season just to be able to present different things to defense, protect your primary runs. But, you have to, certainly, identify what's going to be our 'hang our hat on' type of stuff."

**On what he 'does for fun' outside of football:**

"We have three little ones, so that's kind of the chaos that we live in [*laughter*]. We have eight [years old], seven and four. We're becoming Californians, we're exploring the Cali life. It's been good. It was an easy sell for them because we told them that whole Disneyland, California beach thing that we always did in the summer, that's going to become permanent. It was good."

**On 'how much of the install is what has been here with the Chargers and how much was brought from the Cowboys':**

"I think that's a really good question. I haven't quantified it exactly. Football is football, so there are going to be a lot of concepts that maybe are similar in a lot of ways, a few little wrinkles. But again, conceptually, things that Keenan [Allen], [QB] Justin [Herbert], Mike [Williams], [TE] Gerald [Everett], all of these guys that have done it in the past, we want to make sure that we keep incorporating those things in whatever way possible."

**On 'the passing game remaining close to the same' and 'the run game having wrinkles added':**

"I think every season you're going to have wrinkles, you're going to have different stuff. I think that's the ebbs and flows of NFL seasons. Even if we were together for 10 years, the 11th year should feel a little bit different. You should always have a little bit of growth each and every offseason."

**On working with WR Keenan Allen:**

"It's been amazing. It's been awesome for me, even personally, just to have a guy in our room like that who has just played so much football, has so much experience that you can kind of bounce things off of him. I'm really excited, as we build this thing as an offense, to continue to utilize all of those experiences that he has."

## **WIDE RECEIVER KEENAN ALLEN**

### **On his offseason:**

"It's been great. Same old, same old [*laughter*]."

### **On working with Offensive Coordinator Kellen Moore:**

"Smart guy. Obviously, a guy who played [in the NFL]. Knows the game. Knows the ins and outs. Knows different ways to get guys open. I like what we have going right now."

### **On how the offense will be 'different' with Moore as offensive coordinator:**

"It's kind of, almost, the same. Obviously, different terminology, some different techniques and ways that he likes to get it done. I think that he is going to call it different, too."

### **On RB Austin Ekeler 'remaining with the team':**

"It was great news. Obviously, he's a guy that we want on our team. He's a guy that makes big plays for us. He gives us another weapon on offense. Keep making the plays that he always makes."

### **On comparing and contrasting different offensive coordinators that he has played for:**

"I don't know yet, we haven't played [*laughter*]."

### **On 'if it will be easier to recognize closer to training camp':**

"I'm sure that it will be. [Moore] is player friendly. He's played before, so he knows what we like, what we don't like, how defenses play, rather than sticking to something that has been in the offense for a long time. He's willing to change it and make it more friendly to us."

### **On Moore 'calling things differently' means that 'he will adapt more':**

"Yeah, I think so. Obviously, [QB] Justin [Herbert] has a cannon. When [WR] Mike [Williams] goes deep, he has a new guy named [WR] Quentin Johnston, he can go deep — we're probably going to be going deep [*laughter*]."

### **On Johnston:**

"He's a phenomenal athlete. Obviously, he's having the struggles of the NFL — terminology, splits, knowing where to line up. It comes with it, it's only three weeks in. His athletic ability is through the roof. I can't wait for him to understand what's going on and really have the confidence to line up and go play fast."

### **On 'why he still attends OTAs':**

"It helps me get into shape. I use it as a lift. I get the lift in, get the meetings. Obviously, we have the new coordinator, so I want to know all of the terminology so that I can play fast myself, so that I can help the young guys — when we break the huddle, get them lined up when they need help. Make sure that everybody is on the same page. We need old guys out here, too [*laughter*]."

### **On Thursday Night Football games now having the ability to be flexed:**

"Is it a benefit to us or is it just because the game is not going to be big?"

### **On further details of flex practices and potential scenarios late in the season:**

"No thoughts [*laughter*]."

### **On the veteran receivers going to Johnston's hotel after he was drafted:**

"We wanted to embrace the young guy. Obviously, we have a new guy in our room. For us, I've always been a guy who helps the young guys because that's what [former Chargers WR] Eddie Royal and [former Chargers WR] Malcom Floyd, [former Chargers WR] Danario Alexander, they all did that for me. When I get new guys — like when I got Mike [Williams] and Josh [Palmer] — you always want to be there for them and make sure that they have everything that they need."

**On the meeting with Johnston:**

"It was actually my birthday, so we had a great time [*laughter*]. It was a good night."

**On 'moving past' the Wild Card Round loss:**

"Keep going. It's not my first loss. You lose, you win. Keep going. You have to learn from it and come back stronger, with more knowledge from the game, and just try to eliminate that from happening again."

**On if he has thought about that game:**

"I actually haven't thought about it one time. It's not much to think about. We lost. Can't change it."

**On if he 'had any doubts about potentially not returning to the Chargers' this offseason:**

"Me, personally, no. I'm feel like I'm pretty solidified on what I do and what I bring to the table. Obviously, the [salary] cap number was through the roof, but we found a way to make it work and keep this thing together."

**On if he 'renegotiated to lower the cap number':**

"Yeah."

## **TACKLE RASHAWN SLATER**

### **On his offseason:**

"It's been great. A lot of time rehabbing, training. It's been very smooth."

### **On how his bicep is recovering:**

"It's great. I would say that it's been 100 percent for a while now. At this point, it's just the more reps that I get, the more confident I will feel, but it feels great."

### **On if he was able to have a 'normal' offseason:**

"Yeah, it was pretty normal [*laughter*]. I was slated to return towards the end of the season. That kind of allowed me to just go straight into training."

### **On if he 'could have played' in the Divisional Round last season if the team had won in the Wild Card Round:**

"It was very close. That was kind of what we were going after. But, now I get more time. That was really not a concern anymore."

### **On his level of determination entering this season:**

"Extremely. I feel like the biggest thing I learned from that was just how easily this could be taken away from you. You only get so much time as it is in the NFL. If you get something like that, that's already taking a year off of a relatively short career. I really just feel a lot of urgency to get where I want to be."

### **On his reaction to the hiring of Offensive Coordinator Kellen Moore:**

"I was very excited. I trained over in Dallas, so I talked to a lot of the guys. They all loved him."

### **On what Moore 'can bring to the offense':**

"For us, up front, he has really simplified a lot of things. It's allowed us to go a lot quicker and just not think as much, which we always love [*laughter*]. I think that it is going to be really fun."

### **On where Moore can benefit the run game:**

"Simplification. You'd be surprised how much can change in the run game whenever certain rules are rearranged, or just the coaching points change a little bit. I think that is really going to allow us to just play fast and give us a chance to make explosive plays."

### **On RB Austin Ekeler 'returning to the team':**

"Amazing. I love playing with Austin [*Ekeler*], he's such a hard worker. He's just a smart back. I'm excited for that."

### **On G Zion Johnson moving to left guard and the impact that makes on the left side of the line:**

"I'm really excited. I think that Zion [*Johnson*] is a fantastic player. I really like the mindset of him coming over. We will have that side where it's the two of us, back-to-back first-round picks. I feel like we will really have the opportunity to build for a long time, just build that chemistry over our careers. I'm extremely excited. It's going to be a lot of fun."

### **On building chemistry with Johnson:**

"Everything, I guess [*laughter*]. When we're in the weight room, we're always trying to push each other. [*Zion*] is always going more weight, so I have to go match him and stuff like that [*laughter*]. Just trying to really establish that competition, but also gel."

**On G Jamaree Salyer moving to right guard:**

"It's been great. Jamaree [Salyer] is just an amazing player. It didn't surprise me at all last year, when he came in and stepped up and just had a hell of a season at left tackle. He has that demeanor about him where that you could plug him in anywhere and he is going to be a dog. I know that he is going to make that transition very well and I am excited for him. He definitely earned it."

**On if he saw WR Keenan Allen on The Masked Singer:**

"I did. I saw it on Twitter and I had to go back and look at it on YouTube [*laughter*]. He was really good. I was kind of amazed. I've heard him sing in the huddle before, and it's pretty good, but I didn't realize that he had it like that [*laughter*]."

**On Allen 'singing in the huddle':**

"Just in walk-throughs, practice days — not in the game or anything like that [*laughter*]."

**On training with Duke Manyweather:**

"[T] Trey [Pipkins III] and [T] Foster [Sarrell] were out there. We had a really good time. It's cool to see the buy-in growing. Duke [Manyweather] is awesome, he's an incredible trainer. I feel like I get a ton out of him. It's nice to have that change of pace in the offseason, to go home and whatnot. We had a really good offseason there."

**On 'for how long he has felt 100 percent':**

"I'd say that the last couple of months have been pretty pain-free and as strong as it used to be."

**On his level of excitement for being able to play as a complete offensive line:**

"I love it. I'm so excited to be back. I feel like we've all — it's a young group, but now we had last year, especially with Zion [Johnson] and Jamaree [Salyer] — now, we're really coming into Year 3 and I feel like we're really hitting our stride. I feel like the camaraderie is very high. I just feel like the potential is insane with us. It's a really cool thing to be a part of."