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WEEK 6 — PODIUM AVAILABILITY

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LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN

Opening statement:

"I know you are what your record says you are, but this football team — the Steelers — are 1-4. I don't see them as a 1-4 football team. They've lost three games by nine points. They lead this league in takeaways and forced fumbles. It's just a matter of time before that group gets it together. I know they've gone through a couple of quarterbacks, but the young man that came in last week, I thought he was outstanding. The first thing he did was take them straight down the field and scored. He knew exactly what he was doing. He was well-prepared. That was impressive. When you go back and look at his college stats, every time he was on the big stage, he showed up. This is not too big for him. This is a dangerous football team. We played them last year. We pretty much know what to expect. It's going to be a tough, physical, four-quarter football game. We're getting ready for it."

On preparing for Steelers QBs Mason Rudolph and Devlin Hodges:

"I mean, [it is difficult] when you don't know what guy is going to go initially. From what I saw last week, it looks like it would be Hodges."

On C Mike Pouncey:

"Pouncey is done for the year. He's done for the year. We're going to miss him, his leadership and on the field. We are tickled to death that he is okay with the injury that he had. He's going to have neck surgery at some point. We wish him all the best."

"I can't say if it's career-ending or not. We just won't have him for the rest of the season, I know that."

"It's a neck injury. It's probably something that's been going on for a while."

"Like I said, he's been playing football for a long time. It's probably something that has been bothering him for a while and he's just been playing through it."

On the offensive line:

"Just like we did in preseason, [G Dan] Feeney will go to center and [G] Forrest Lamp will go to left guard. That's what we drafted those guys for. It's time for them to step up and I know they will."

On G Dan Feeney at center:

"If you look at the way he's built, the way he knows our offense, he was the next man up if something happened to [Mike] Pouncey. A couple of years ago, if you remember, we had moved Feeney to center before we signed Pouncey. He's a heck of a guard, but I think he's in more of his natural position [now], to be honest with you. Forrest will have to go in and play left [guard] and get it done."

On G Forrest Lamp:

"He was a little rusty, but he's going to get a lot of opportunities to work that rust off. Forrest is in there full-time. I have no doubt that his confidence will grow and that Forrest will be a good fit."



On the leader of the offensive line:

"All of those guys lead by example, but [Mike] Pouncey was a vocal guy. There's no doubt about it. Who knows? That's why these young players, they get these opportunities, and we'll see. Maybe it's Forrest Lamp, maybe it's Dan Feeney. I don't know, but they're going to have plenty of opportunities to step up."

On T Russell Okung:

"I just know that we can't do anything with Russell for six weeks. After his six weeks are up, we'll see where it goes from there."

On TE Hunter Henry:

"Hunter is going to practice in a limited role today."

On injuries:

"No. 1, I'm glad the guys are okay and we're going to get some of these guys back. In the meantime, guys are getting opportunities to step up and show that they can help this football and increase their value. As a coaching staff, we have to continue to figure out how to use the personnel that we have."

On the mentality of the team:

"I don't think we're down. We talked about it a little bit. Being down is not going to help. Re-focusing, learning, going out and practicing our tails off today, that's what is going to help."

On Henry:

"[To see] that he's okay, that the knee is healed. I know, stamina-wise, that he may not be in the shape that we want him to be in right now. I just want to make sure that he's okay before we put him back out there."

On the spirits of the team:

"Well, we talked about it last week a little bit. What is it, Murphy's law? 'What can go wrong will go wrong.' We were like, 'Hell, we have to kick Murphy's butt.' That's where we are."

"It's the National Football League. Injuries happen. We are just getting them in bunches right now, but it's going to slow down. At some point, we'll start getting guys back and it'll slow down. We just have to go play our best ball. Regardless of the injuries, there are times that we just haven't executed or coached as [well] as we should have."

On the offense:

"We like to be a balanced attack. Last week, we just weren't balanced. The rushing game let us down a little bit. We have to be able to run the football and make people defend the run so that we can throw the ball better. I just think that we need to be a little more balanced."

On his mentality:

"It seems like a decade ago [when we started 2017 with an 0-4 record], but you learn a lot when you go through the fire. Right now, I wouldn't say that we're going through the fire. We're 2-3. We never thought that after the first five games that we would have dropped three, but we have. This where we are and we have to work our way out of this. I believe when the real grit shows in our coaching staff and football team. We all feel challenged. That's why I came in smiling because we just left the practice field and guys are in great spirits, and I believe I know what's going to happen."

On Steelers S Minkah Fitzpatrick:

"Boy, he's talented. He is good. He started making plays right away and he's learning their defense more and more each and every week. He's an outstanding football player. [Steelers S Terrell] Edmunds, he's another good player. I thought they really improved at the safety position."

On the Steelers front seven:

"Their front seven is really good, but their front five is as good as we've seen, I can tell you that. They're led by [Steelers LB] T.J. Watt and [Steelers LB Bud] Dupree. They do a good job up front. It's a good front seven."

On Steelers LB Devin Bush:

"I'll tell you what, speed and he's very athletic. You can tell that he's young and he's raw, but his speed. Man, he's fast. He's a run-hit guy."



On K Michael Badgley:

"Mike is going to work his way back in a little bit, but we're not going to rush it. We're not sure where he is."

On advice to coaches that begin their head coaching career with a losing streak:

"If you believe in the process, if you believe in what you're doing, stay committed and keep emphasizing the things that you think are important. A lot of times, we all have great plans. We all have great visions, but sometimes we just don't have the stamina and the guts to carry it out."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK PHILIP RIVERS**On G Dan Feeney playing center:**

"He has gotten a lot of reps. He'll step in there and do a solid job. We're confident in that. It's tough losing [C] Mike [Pouncey], though. Obviously, you've heard what I've said publicly about the guy and what he has meant to the group both on the field and off. I think, in the locker room and the meeting rooms, just that energy. The guy is in here at 5:30 every morning. Just the way he goes about it. He brought it every day. You'll lose more than just the player there from a personality standpoint and some things, but we have a good group. As you mentioned, thankfully Dan can slide over and [G] Forrest [Lamp] has been getting more and more reps at guard in game situations the last few weeks. Those guys will step in there and do a heck of a job. We'll certainly miss Mike. I feel terrible for Mike and hope that he heals up."

On the leadership of the offensive line:

"I think that's something that all of us probably have to pick that up a little bit. I think it just has to happen naturally with that group. I don't think you say, 'Alright, Dan [Feeney],' or, 'Okay, [G/T Michael] Schofield [III].' I think you just kind of let that take place naturally with that group because it's even a younger group now, when you think about the five guys that have been out there [this year]. Obviously, Mike [Pouncey] being the older guy of the group, which isn't really old. You kind of let it take place naturally. I think, from [WR] Keenan [Allen] to myself, to [TE] Virgil [Green] — all of us, collectively, will definitely have to fill that void."

On protection calls among linemen:

"They'll take on the regular communication that a center does. It won't put any more on my plate than I had. Obviously, [Mike] Pouncey and I developed a great deal of communication, but I don't just communicate with the center and [have] him relay it. We're all talking together. Dan [Feeney] has gotten a lot of reps at center, even in practice, over the last six months. He's not far from him, he's been right there at guard. It's not as if he's getting thrown in the mix and isn't sure how we operate. He has been right there as part of the operation for the last season-and-a-half. From the communication standpoint, I don't see that being a hurdle at all."

On how C Mike Pouncey's injury affects the offense:

"I mean, I think that everybody snaps it a little differently. Everybody's timing with how they do things is a little bit different. I think, from that standpoint, yes. Again, I've worked with Dan [Feeney]. It's all, though, been with the understanding that Pouncey was going to be the one playing on Sunday. It will take a little more, I guess, focus or paying attention to those little subtleties that will be key from a timing standpoint, a cadence standpoint, where we get to having to use a silent count and those kinds of things. To say there will be anymore asked of a certain guy because of that, no — other than filling a Pro Bowl center's shoes, which is a big task itself."

On the team's mentality:

"I think it's tough. I think the biggest thing — it's tough for all of our guys. You never want to see anybody get hurt. When you lose guys like [Mike] Pouncey, [S] Derwin [James Jr.] — I could go on and on — I don't mean to leave the others out that brought so much from an energy standpoint. It was more than just the safety and the center. I think it's more than just the position. With Pouncey in particular, he's like one of the warriors. He's one of the guys that's always invincible. If he's got something bothering him, it doesn't matter. He's going to be out there. You see him go down with something this severe and that he won't be able to be back. It takes a little bit out of you. I think, again, as a group, we have to kind of rally and be thankful that he's okay, No. 1. Then, shoot, let's go. Let's find a way to pick it up and go. I think you can, when you're just sitting around, you can allow yourself to feel sorry for yourself a little bit even though the guys that are injured are the guys that are really the ones hurting. I think we're a tough enough group, strong enough of a group, mentally and physically. We have the capabilities with the roster to carry on and find a way."



On dealing with injuries:

"In year's past — I'm always careful to not speak too much on it because I know this is a new team. I don't want to talk out of both sides. I always say, 'Oh, this team has never been 2-3,' and we haven't. In the past, we've been at our best when it's been that way — when it's kind of like, 'Oh it's the same old deal. The Chargers are hurt. They're injured and they'll mess it up somehow.' We've been better when it's been that way. We'll see. I think we'll find out if this group is that way. There is still just so much football left. We've been 2-3 in some of our best, record-wise, seasons over the 15 years I've been here. We've been 2-3 and then won 11 in a row in that '09 year. We've been in this boat and kind of gotten rolling. Hopefully, we can weather the storm, injury-wise, and find a way to win a game. Then, hopefully we can string some together."

On Pouncey's injury:

"Yeah, I think it was — I don't want to speak for Pounce. I think it was one of those deals where there was something bothering him a little bit and then he realized, 'Hey, this might be a bigger deal than I think.' Again, with a guy like that, you always just think, 'I'm good.' Right? 'I'm fine.' I don't know, exactly, if that was the case or if it was a particular moment. I'm sure it was one of those deals where he thought, 'Maybe I need to be smart about this one.' Thankfully, he did."

On injuries this season:

"It's been crazy, but I do think it tests you, makes you stronger and can make you closer as a team. Certainly, you don't wish it for any of us or anybody. I think, if you can find a way to weather it, and then, again, hopefully get healthier — with guys currently maybe playing nicked up and then get some guys back. It'll be good for us in the long run, collectively. Obviously, you never like to see anybody go down. There is no question that it has been challenging."

On the offense:

"It is a good defense. I think struggling is fair to use mostly in putting points on the scoreboard. We've moved the ball and been efficient in a lot of ways. Last week, we weren't. Last week, you can chalk that one up as a rare circumstance. I don't know how many, but I know it's a small number of times where we haven't scored a touchdown out of the last 200-something games. I don't know how many it is, but it's not many. That one, you can chalk up as just a bad day. I had a bad day. We had a bad day. We can look at it, see it and see why. We didn't execute. I think that pushed aside, we've done some really good thing offensively, but the most important — which is to score points. I think, if we can get to where we are finishing in the end zone, not turning it over in the red zone and we start scoring 25, 28, 29, 30, 24 even — we would have won them all to this point. I think, offensively, we feel that responsibility to get that done."

On the offense struggling to score early in the season compared to late:

"Yeah, if we don't continue to struggle. Certainly, if you said, 'When do you want to have some hiccups? Do you want them early or do you want them in December?' You definitely want them now. You'd prefer to not have any. We have to find a way to get it turned around. We can say, right now, that there's a lot of football left because that's the truth. You can't say it forever. We can right now."

On if he has been risky with his decisions:

"No, I don't think so. Shoot, we've had two interceptions going into the last week, so no. I don't. I made two bad throws, two bad decisions last week, and one other one that probably should have been intercepted. Again, it was one of those days. Usually, if we're 32-of-48, it's for about 450 and five touchdowns. It just happened to be for 200 and none, which is a bad day. Those are few and far between."

On the Steelers defense:

"It's a good group. I think this team, again, it's history kind of stays with this team over the years. You still just see that old Pittsburgh defense from a style standpoint, from a physical standpoint and somewhat from a scheme standpoint. They have two, young safeties that are flying around. They have some Pro Bowl, veteran corners and a good front. It's a good defense. They're leading the league in taking the ball away. We know that they've dealt with some injuries, too, on the other side. It will be a tough challenge. You see with them as well, how they've been down to the wire also. It will be a heck of a game, as it seems like we've had a handful over the last decade-plus of Sunday night and Monday night games with Pittsburgh. They all tend to come down to the wire. I imagine this one will be a heck of a game also."



On his longevity:

“What it’s done for me, really in the last two years, is just be thankful for right now. Be thankful for right now, for this game against the Steelers. I know I’ve said it in the past, if you had a chance to play on Sunday Night Football at 37-years-old, you wouldn’t say, ‘Hold on, what’s our record? I’ll tell you if I’ll play or not,’ or, ‘What struggles or injuries do we have?’ You would say, ‘Sign me up.’ I think all of the variables that have taken place with the situation that we’re in, you go, ‘We have right now. We have this challenge in front of us. We have this Wednesday practice. We have this Sunday to go play.’ When you realize that the guy leading the other squad is getting his first career start. He grew up about an hour from where I did, 16 years younger or whatever. It is cool. It just puts in perspective, again, of how thankful I should be that I’m still able to be out there.”

On if he knows Steelers QB Devlin Hodges’ family:

“No, I don’t. I just saw where he was from and what high school he went to, which isn’t far from home.”

On the come-from-behind win in Pittsburgh last year:

“It was a heck of a win. I think you look back. Again, we had a punt return for a touchdown and some huge two-point conversions. We ran the ball great in that last couple of drives. We finished with a drive and made a field goal. Obviously, the ball bounced our way a little bit, too. I threw that skinny-post to Keenan [Allen] that almost got intercepted, it pops up in the air and we catch it for a touchdown. We had some things go our way as well. It was big. That one and Kansas City, obviously on the road last year, were huge for us. I think that’s what this league is, right? The teams that find a way to win those close games go 12-4 and get themselves in the postseason. The teams that don’t can end up anywhere from the reciprocal of that — 4-12 — to who knows what. That’s what this league is. We could be 5-0, we could be 0-5, but we sit at 2-3. You just stay the course and keep rolling.”

