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Chargers Head Coach Brandon Staley

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On the fake punt attempt and pooch punt yesterday:

“It was an advantage look situation for us. I think that the field zone sort of allowed [Raiders WR] Hunter [Renfrow] to have a little bit more proximity to make a remarkable play. He’s such an instinctive player. I think that he had that sense on the field that something was happening. That’s one of those advantages looks that we felt like was available. I think that they were a little bit fortunate about where the ball was. If we were maybe 15 to 20 yards further back, then he probably wouldn’t have been in that proximity to make a play. It was one of those situations where [P] Ty [Long] felt good about the look. I felt like he threw a good pass. I felt like he got it up and down quick enough. [Renfrow] made a really big-time hit on the catch. You have to tip your cap to him. As it related to the pooch punt, what I was trying to key diagnose, in that situation, was if they were going to put a returner back. I felt like if they were going to put a returner back, then we were going to punt it. But if they were going to keep their field goal block team out there, then we were going to pooch it. Just felt like we were able to get the look. Felt like that would be a good advantage for us to be able to pin them deep. [K] Tristan [Vizcaino] hit a good ball down there. We were able to pin them down in there.”

On C Corey Linsley’s run blocking yesterday:

“I thought that Corey was outstanding last night in the run game. I felt like him and, particularly, the left side of our line with him, [G] Matt [Feiler] and [T] Rashawn [Slater], they were outstanding. I felt like we had a couple of really good blocks on the perimeter by tight ends and receivers, as well. I really felt like that was a big factor in the game, getting movement on their interior. I felt like you saw that as the game progressed, we were able to run it better and better. I felt like [RBs] Austin [Ekeler] and Larry [Rountree III] both were running really hard and seeing it well. It really starts up front with Corey in the middle. I felt like he handled the noise well, and from an operations standpoint, overall. I thought that was a winning edge for us, too.”

On CB Asante Samuel Jr.’s defensive pass interference:

“He started off in good shape. You can see that he kind of rolls over, which means that he rolls over his inside shoulder. When [Raiders WR] Henry [Ruggs III] kind of slowed down, I felt like it was a judgment call. I didn’t think that Asante was in a poor position. The one thing that Asante does in the deep part of the field is he is calm. He’s not one of these guys that’s a grabber or a holder. I think that he was just trying to orientate his body after he rolled over. There was the natural contact that happens when a guy slows down. I didn’t think that it was egregious by any means. It was a judgment call, for sure. The lesson is that, I think, if he starts the down more cleanly, then maybe he doesn’t have to roll over and kind of lose ground. When you roll over, you lose vision on the receiver. When you roll over and you lose vision on the receiver, you have to keep pace on the receiver. If he gets off to a better start, then, perhaps, he would eliminate that aspect of it, and then he would put himself in better position on the finish. One that he can learn from, for sure, because we all see the consequence from it.”

On QB Justin Herbert being decisive with his passes:

"I felt like it was a really big part of the plan. We really wanted to make sure that those rushers were off rhythm. I think that once those guys get into rhythm, as you guys know, those guys are really tough guys to block. [Raiders DEs] Yannick [Ngakoue] and Maxx [Crosby] are really quality rushers. I think that their interior rush is underrated because they've added some pieces. You can't minimize how your quarterback plays within the timing of the offense. I felt like Justin was able to get the ball out quickly. When there was chaos in the pocket, he was either able to step up and create a lane to throw or he was able to get rid of it and avoid danger. What I said in the locker room is that to avoid turnovers in a game like that, just one from your quarterback completely flips the type of game that it can become in the second half. You can't minimize the importance of him taking care of the football. It's an 11-man operation, but he's at the heart of it all. I thought that he operated extremely well. I thought that he was patient last night. I think that's something that's difficult to do against the defense like that, being patient. He'll learn even more from playing against the defense like that."

On missed assignments in pass protection:

"[G] Matt [Feiler] had a miss on the left three-technique. It was a missed assignment, just a missed assignment, nothing that related to the noise that way. I just felt like we were in a different protection than the one we were in. [T] Rashawn [Slater] had one on the left side, as well, when Yannick [Ngakoue] came free to Justin's [Herbert] left. He ad repped that same look, with the overload, on the other side. He felt like he was on a different side of the protection. He kind of squeezed when, really, he should've kicked out to Yannick. A good one to learn from, for sure. I think that's the beauty of Justin; when you're in those circumstances, you have to be strong with the ball and decisive with the ball. Sometimes, when you have a free rusher, you can get the ball out somewhere, and you have to be decisive. Then, there are other times where you can't, then, now, 'Hey, we have to have two hands on the ball, be strong with the ball, then you have to take a sack.' I felt like in both of those circumstances, Justin was strong with the ball."

On LBs Drue Tranquill and Kyzir White:

"I thought both of those guys were active. Those guys really fed off one another. The communication was really good. As you guys know, it was loud last night, and so I felt like those guys, just from a central command center, were operating at a high level. I thought that they tackled well. I felt like they saw the game well in the run game. I felt like they fit well in the passing game. Drue had a couple of nice rushes, which is something that is a big factor for him — he can really rush and give us something that way. What that does is it allows us to free some other guys up. We just have to continue to work with those guys. Those are guys are going to keep getting better the more and more that they play together. I thought last night was a good start for those guys, playing together for the first time."

On if there was a focus placed on limiting yards after contact defensively:

"For sure. I think particularly with [Raiders RB Josh] Jacobs playing, he such a good contact runner. I felt like we did a good job of eliminating the space. That was not just the linebackers in there, our front played really well last night in the run game. There weren't a lot of vertical seams in the run front. What that does is it allows more population to get to the football. I felt like our third-level players, our DBs, were where they were supposed to be. I thought that we were physical. I felt like [S] Nas [Nasir Adderley], in particular, on a crack-replace, sort of played the game the way that we want it to be played. That was exciting because he's taking the coaching, the emphasis and the physicality that we want to play with. That's a really good team of skill players. They're a tough group to tackle when you have Jacobs, [Raiders RB Kenyan] Drake, [Peyton] Barber, [Hunter] Renfrow, [Henry] Ruggs [III] — [Raiders TE Darren] Waller is awesome after the catch. That's a good measuring stick for you, in terms of your open-field tackling. I felt like we tackled pretty well in the kicking game, too. A good step for us last night."

On 'fighting back' in the second half:

"I think us being in those tight games, those first three games being tight like that, and going through some momentum sort of issues – natural ebbs and flows of the game – when you're in games like that, it's not the first time. I felt like we responded well, defensively. I felt like we knew, like, 'Hey, there are a couple of penalties here that are kind of the reason why they are down here.' Then, we had a couple of third-down losses in the red area – one in particular, that throw to [Darren] Waller, that's just a tough throw-and-catch by a really good player. Nas [Adderley] had incredible coverage, it's just a big-time play by that guy. I think you can't go into the game and say, 'Hey, we're going to shut this team out.' You know that they're going to make some plays. I felt like our offense did a really nice job, particularly in the fourth quarter, of possessing the ball, and then finishing with a touchdown on that big drive. Even in the drive that we punted – that was like a nine-play drive there in the fourth quarter – we were able to possess the ball. What that does is kind of take the crowd out of it. I felt like we played complementary ball down the stretch, particularly in the fourth quarter, I felt like we responded defensively. We shut them out in the fourth quarter. Offensively, we finished with that touchdown, which kind of put it away. Then, [S] Derwin [James Jr.] finishing with the interception. That's just a big part of it. You have to manage the momentum in the game. That was the number one offense in the NFL that we were playing."

On if he's a 'gangster coach':

"I don't think I've earned that. Those guys have been doing it a lot longer than I have, so there's more evidence that makes them worthy of that [title]. Last night was a team operation for us. Some of the decisions we made were team decisions. I certainly didn't make them by myself, I made that decision because of the help of a lot of people. That's what I want everyone to know – we're a team, that's why I emphasize it so much because it's really important to me. Last night in all three phases of the game, we played as a team. Those decisions we made were team decisions. We've created a lot of belief in the people we have around here. We're going to continue to make good decisions. We won't be perfect in our decision-making, but we want to live with the process. Our process has been one I've enjoyed, and that's because of a lot of different people. [Offensive Assistant] Dan Shamash, all of our coordinators up in the box. Some of those game management decisions aren't a one-man show, that's a team operation there. We're going to keep going, we have to be ready for the storms when it doesn't go well, because that's going to happen, too. We're just trying every day to get to that improvement. That's where our focus is."

On OLB Joey Bosa's postgame comments regarding officiating:

"I'm not going to talk to him about it. This guy's earned the right to express himself. He's a premium player in the league. It's common for players to talk about officiating. It's a part of the game. We want to make sure that he does it respectfully. That's just a part of pro sports. We want to make sure we stay on the high side of things as an operation. The point that he made, that I was made aware of, was that he took ownership that we can't get a 15-yard penalty. That, to me, is the takeaway. It's not him being frustrated with the officiating because he has every right to be frustrated about what was going on. What we can't do is have that frustration lead to something that's hurting our football team. Which he took full ownership for, which is what I want to see as a coach; when he takes ownership for something that happens. The other part is just part of the game. When you're at the pro sports level, these pro players and these officials have a relationship. It's an important one. We're just going to continue doing the best we can within the parameters of the game and create relationships with officials, too. That's something we have to do a good job of. I look forward to working with Joey on that moving forward."

On fourth-down decision-making factors:

"What we're trying to do is treat every decision like it has a life of its own. Just because we hit one fourth down doesn't mean I feel like I'm playing with house money and like we can go for it again. That's not what we're doing. We're trying to look at that independent situation like it has a life of its own. If I feel like it's an advantage situation, from a data standpoint, modeling standpoint, timing, rhythm of the game; if I feel like that's what's best for us, then we're going. What we've done a good job of is making sound decisions, not reckless decisions. If you study the actual data of the decision-making that we've had, I don't think anyone would say that we're gambling. I know everything's a gamble, but, 'Hey, the percentages were not on your side on that.' We're trying to take advantage of situations as they come. There's going to be some where they don't go right, and we're ready to live with the consequences of that if it doesn't go right. But we've managed it well so far, hopefully we continue to do so. It has a positive impact on your football team."

On LB Drue Tranquill:

“There are a lot of really good behind-the-ball linebackers that aren’t good pass rushers. The great rushers I’ve been around that are inside linebackers have outstanding timing. A lot of it is that this guy’s got timing. He was a defensive back; he has real movement. He has that move in his target which is hard to block. Drue’s also really strong, he has speed and power. The other thing Drue has is his brain. He knows how to time up the snap count and shot clock. All these things that tell him what’s going on. Who’s blocking based off the protection? Is the center going away and I know I’m getting the back? Or is the slide side coming to me, and I’m getting the guard? He’s smart enough to know all that. He’s been really good for us in that way. I’m excited about the value that creates because it helps everyone else.”

On how he inspires the team:

“You can’t manufacture trust and belief in between the third and fourth quarter. That has to happen Monday through Saturday. That’s what we’re trying to do around here. We’re trying to create that environment where Monday through Saturday, we’re creating that trust and belief system so that when these storms come, regardless of the quarter, you’re ready for them. That’s what we try to do around here, create that competitive environment; an environment where guys can learn from their mistakes and become as good as they can be. Get put in the fire from a preparation-standpoint so that when something tough happens, it’s not the first time it’s happening during the week. Our guys make a lot of mistakes during the week. They’re put through the toughest plays — at least we try to — the toughest circumstances so that they fail a lot in practice. Because they fail in practice, what that creates is the feeling like, ‘Hey, we could lose. We can lose.’ If you don’t do that during the week if you script for success or keep it easier for them; easier for them doesn’t make it right for them. You’re able to respond more if you put your guys through more. Also, bringing people together with a plan to win, knowing what it takes. That gives you a better chance to figure it out if there is chaos. Plans sound good, but it never goes according to plan. When it doesn’t go according to plan, do you have the chops to adjust and overcome? That’s what we’re trying to do here. We’re just at the beginning, we’re nowhere close to where we need to be, but we’re establishing a standard that’s going to help us get there.”

On DL Linval Joseph:

“When he goes out to the coin toss, you feel good about your chances. He’s a guy that’s experienced a lot as a player. From the Giants to Minnesota, he’s been around a lot of winning football. He’s been one of the best interior guys in the league for a long time. There’s a lot of experience, a lot of wisdom there. He’s really helped me because he’s been around a lot of really good coaches; [Former Giants Head Coach] Tom Coughlin, [Vikings Head Coach] Mike Zimmer. He’s been around a lot of really good players and been in a lot of big-time situations. He’s been such a big sounding board for me, and he just embodies everything you want in a player. From a work ethic standpoint, from a competitor standpoint, the type of leader he is. You can’t say enough about him, and he came to play last night. That guy was rolling last night and really made a big impact on his teammates. We had [DL] Forrest [Merrill] and [DL] Breiden [Fehoko] up in their first big-time action this year, he helped in calming those guys down. He’s also had a big impact on [DL] Jerry Tillery and [DL Christian] Cov [Covington]. He’s been fantastic. Another guy that’s kind of steady like that is [TE] Stephen Anderson. He’s been kind of a glue guy on offense, he does a little bit of everything for us. He’s been outstanding in the kicking game, and he’s a blue guy for us right now. He does a lot of jobs for us, and he caught a really good pass for us last night. He allows us to play the way we want to play. You need guys like that. Everyone’s got a role on the team, everyone’s got value on the team. That’s what gives you the best chance to be successful. When you have a complete team, you can win a lot of different ways. That’s what the NFL requires. You never know based off the matchup or the game how it’s going to go. Our guys are discovering that everyone’s got a role on this team.”

On the injury status of DL Justin Jones and LB Kenneth Murray Jr.:

“Justin had a setback in practice. He felt a little tug in there. What we felt was that we could take advantage of the short-term IR. Yesterday counted as a game, and then we can really get him to the bye so he’ll be one hundred percent after the bye. That’s the goal. It was an unfortunate deal for us since he’s been practicing and felt like he could go. There was just a little bit of a setback. Nothing significant, but enough of a setback where we felt that we should short-term IR him. Then, with Kenny, it’s the same thing. Nothing long-term structural, but we took advantage of the short-term IR where we can get him back after the bye week full speed.”