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Chargers Week 5 Media Availability

Friday, October 8, 2021 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On Browns QB Baker Mayfield:

"I think in the stats that quarterbacks are measured by, he has really good stats — which is wins and losses, and taking that team to the playoffs last year. He's a really exciting player. He can really create offense for you when there's not a lot of offense to be had. I think he's a real engine for an offense. If you just go back to watching him at Oklahoma — I remember watching him back then go up against these SEC [Southeastern Conference] schools and going up against Ohio State at Ohio State. I really think he brings that engine that a team needs. That confidence, that fearlessness. I think he's always had that. I think, when you trace it back to wherever he's been — high school, college and now — he's affected his teams in a positive way. I think he's been a fantastic player for them. He's a guy that we respect a lot.

"I've always been kind of a quarterback follower. That was the position I played, so I've always kind of just been interested in that position since I was a little kid. I just know, specifically at Oklahoma from following him in college, this guy is a 'plant-the-flag' type of player. He's a guy that really breeds confidence in your football team and can really bring the best out in the people around him because of how he plays. Every quarterback has a unique style, but I think his style is that of confidence and fearlessness. He's a creator. I think he doesn't get enough credit for how good of a passer he is. I know, when I was with [Rams Head Coach] Sean [McVay] last year, we just have so much respect for how he throws the football, too. He's a very powerful guy. He can really drive the football and can throw it off-platform. I think, just as a pure passer, he does not get enough credit for how good of a thrower of the football that he is."

On CB Chris Harris Jr.:

"We're going to list him as questionable, but barring any setback, I think he should play. He's practiced pretty well this week and is feeling pretty good. Always kind of reserve that setback type of deal, but we're hoping that he can play, for sure.

"If he plays in the game, then we'd expect him to be going [at full reps]."

On if having Harris available changes the defensive game plan:

"It just gives you more options. It just gives you more options how you deploy those DBs [defensive backs]. Like I said, he practiced all last week, too. Like I said, we're always going to err on the side of caution with a player, especially this early in the season. We just felt like having one more week would be good for him and he's performed well so far this week. He's been doing all of the jobs that he normally does for us. If he plays, that means that he can go out there without reservation."

On the Browns defense:

“They’re as good as there is right now in pro football. What they’ve done a nice job of, too, is [Browns LB] Anthony Walker [Jr.], I think, was a value signing for them. I think he’s been a real stabilizer at linebacker. He can really run. He’s really smart. Then, they drafted from Notre Dame [Browns LB Jeremiah] Owusu [-Koramoah], who can really run. He’s a chess piece that they can use and deploy him in a lot of different ways. I think their front, their actual d-line [defensive line] gets a lot of recognition — and rightfully so — but I think their linebacking corps, as important, gives them that front-seven that can really run. You have people behind them that can do the job. I think, from a d-line perspective, they’re just really deep. They’re really deep up front. They kind of remind me of San Francisco’s front, where they just have a lot of rushers, inside and outside. When you have [Browns DE] Myles [Garrett], [Browns DE Takkarist] Takk [McKinley], [Browns DE] Jadeveon [Clowney], [Browns DT] Malik Jackson, [Browns DT] Malik McDowell — they just have a lot of quality players in there. I think their front is definitely the strength of their team. I think the way that they’re playing on defense right now, it doesn’t just reflect a good front-seven, it reflects a complete defense. I have a lot of respect for their secondary. They added two of the guys that I coached, who I have the utmost respect for — [Browns S] John Johnson [III] and [Browns CB] Troy Hill. They have [Browns CB] Denzel Ward, [Browns S] Ronnie Harrison [Jr.], [Browns S] Grant Delpit, [Browns CB] Greedy Williams. They have a lot of guys out there in the secondary that are quality players, too. You don’t play the type of defense that they’ve been able to play if you don’t have a complete defense.”

On Browns S John Johnson III:

“JJ is one of my favorites. I certainly wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for him. I have so much respect for him. We’ll have a moment pregame, but he’s the ultimate competitor. You can see the value that he’s brought to that team. That’s what I’m proud of. He earned every cent that he got last year and that’s what you want from your players and the people around you, is for them to live their dreams. He earned every penny that he signed [for] in free agency. You can see what he’s done for that team in a short time because I know that they needed help in the secondary and he’s given them a bunch of it.”

On if RB Joshua Kelley could be active on game day:

“Yes, that would be the direction, for sure.”

On CB Ryan Smith:

“Ryan is trending [in a] positive [direction]. He’s gone out there all week and practiced well. We’ll look to see him out there this weekend barring a setback between now and the game.”

On growing up in Perry, Ohio, which is 35 miles Northeast of Cleveland:

“[It doesn’t mean] anything extra. I think, for people back home and growing up in Northeast Ohio, there’s a lot of pride in football, growing up there. High school football is a huge deal in Northeast Ohio, where I’m from. The Browns are as big of a deal in Cleveland as anybody. It’s a Browns town. I think you just grow up in that environment where football is really, really important and there is a lot of people there that meant a lot to me. When I was growing up, I played for an awesome high school coach, Bob Ritley, in Perry. I had awesome high school coaches. Those guys mean a lot to me. Then, at John Carroll, there were a lot of Northeast Ohio guys on my staff and that we coached. Football is king there. I think there are some good storylines there, for sure — growing up a Browns fan and all of the family and friends that will be at the game. There will be a healthy amount. It’s always a special deal.”

On Smith:

“If he’s healthy and ready to go, [activating him] would be the direction [we’d look at].”

On OLB Kyler Fackrell:

“We really were going to make a run at this guy when I was with the Rams. We really liked him. He ended up going to the New York Giants. I had a lot of respect for him from when I was in the [NFC North] division with him [when I was] in Chicago [and he was in Green Bay]. This guy always played well against us and we always felt like he was a really versatile player, really underrated and a complete edge player. Last year, he had a really good season with the Giants. When we were able to engage him in free agency and you’re joining up [with a team] in your first year, he’s the type of guy that I just felt like would really help our team, would really help our defense. He’s just been a really bright spot from the second he got here. He’s been great for the room. He gives you value on special teams, which I don’t think you can minimize that, and he’s a complete edge player, which I think you’ve seen. His rush production has been fantastic so far. Then, what he gives you from a flexibility standpoint, doing some of those outside linebacker jobs — him and [OLB] Uchenna [Nwosu] both can do that, which helps [OLB] Joey [Bosa] not have to play all the time. He just has a really valuable role on this team. He has awesome makeup. He’s a great competitor and a student of the game. We’re really glad that we have him.”

On OLB Chris Rumph II:

“I think that room has been awesome for him to learn from three really quality veteran players and we’ve been able to kind of give him spurts of action instead of all of this action at once. I feel like that’s helped him, but he has shown that he belongs out there. He really does. His athleticism, his play-making ability, he continues to get stronger. He’s been awesome with [Director of Sports Performance] Anthony Lomando and [Head Strength and Conditioning Coach] Jonathan Brooks making sure that we’re really on him about his weight. I kind of joke with you guys, squeezing his bicep letting him know that he’s not there yet, but he’s been very good on special teams. For an edge player to be a three or four core special teams guy says a lot about him. He provides that type of value. He had a really nice play on punt against Kansas City. He’s been really good on kickoff. We’re just going to continue to grow him. We’re going to need him this year, for sure.”

On the Browns offense:

“I think it is such an important part of the way we do things is that each week has a life of its own. You can’t ignore the passing game against this team because they’re very dangerous. I mean, you have [Browns WR] Odell Beckham [Jr.] out there, they have [Browns WR] Jarvis Landry, [Browns WR] Donovan Peoples [-Jones], [Browns WR Anthony] Schwartz runs a 4.2 [40-yard dash]. They have three tight ends that can all catch the ball out of the backfield and their runners. You have to treat the passing game with the same amount of attention that you normally do, but what’s different about this team is the way that they run the football and how they run it. They have a lot more types of runs than most teams. They run it out of a lot of different personnel groupings. You multiply the amount of runs that you’re facing. I think that this week is a little bit different because of the volume of runs and the quality of the runs and quality of the runners. That’s why they’re a very balanced team. I think that’s what makes them a dangerous team. This guy throwing the football can really throw it, ok? He’s been banged up this year, but when they’ve needed to throw it with Baker Mayfield, they can throw it. We have so much respect for their weapons. I think, for us, that’s been our approach this week is that the run game is a big part of what they do, but the passing game and how they throw the football is also unique because of their keepers, screens, play-action pass. They throw the ball differently than a traditional drop back team that’s 40 to 50 high-volume throws. The quality of their throws is different and it’s dangerous because their pass design goes a long way without there being a lot of risk. That’s always a dangerous passing attack to defend.”

On TE Tre’ McKitty:

“We’re really high on Tre’ McKitty. A lot of it was that we wanted to make sure that he was full-speed coming off of the year he had last year. He had a knee injury during camp, kind of came back quickly and played the full year. He went to a bowl game, Senior Bowl and that whole thing. We want to make sure that he’s full-speed. That was important to me. He showed himself to me that he’s capable of doing the job. I think more than anything, maybe similar to [G/T] Brenden [Jaimies], it’s just making sure that they’re ready for their action. He’s certainly going to play this season for us, but you bring up another important point. Our tight ends are playing really good football right now. We just want to make sure — I think a lot of times at the beginning of the year, you’re still trying to figure out the exact role that you want them in. I think that’s given us some time here because of those other three guys that you mentioned, that we can kind of get Tre’ doing the right jobs for when he does play for us, similar to Brenden. We’re really high on Tre’ and I think he’s going to be a quality player for us.”

On grading pass rushers when they don't get to the quarterback:

"I think sack production is one of those illusion stats in the league. It's important for the players, in terms of getting paid and all of that, but hurries and hits — from the data standpoint — is a lot more predictable measure of future success because sack production can spike where pressure production is more consistent over time. That's a more valuable stat to look at and what we look at. That's a big one for us, is their hurry production relative to how many rushes they get. A lot of it has to do with how many true rushes did they get? There's some times where, Joey Bosa, for instance, how many true rushes does he get? Is he getting chipped? Is he getting nudged? How many times is he really getting a clean rush? I think that's something that you weigh into it as well because that's the position that I coached. There was a game at the beginning of 2019 where [Broncos OLBs] Bradley [Chubb] and Von [Miller] got chipped out of like 15 rushes were getting chipped nine or 10 times out of those 15. They had like five real rushes in the game. I think it's a great point that you're bringing up. So much of what we value in the EDGE position, too, is being a complete player. Being a complete player, that's what we've really tried to emphasize with [OLB] Joey [Bosa], is being a complete player. He had an awesome drop and a simulated pressure in the Vegas game. It's never going to show up on the stat sheet. It's like when [LB] Kyzir [White] and [DL] Linval [Joseph] almost sacked him — that was when [S Nasir] Nas [Adderley] got the penalty. Joey was like in perfect position. It's that complete player that we're looking for in the run game, how they play on their feet. It's such a hard position to play now with the athleticism of the quarterbacks and all of the schemes that they face. You have to be able to be a complete player in today's NFL. You can't just be a d-linemen. You have to be able to play a lot of different stuff, in my opinion. We have four guys that are doing a really nice job for us."

SPECIAL TEAMS COORDINATOR DERIUS SWINTON II

On the fake punt against the Raiders:

"That's a thing that we have up every week. If they bring a corner down, usually when they're trying to bait you into bringing your gunner down, in that scenario, they have a guy out there, and I think we all saw it and we're communicating — unfortunately, for [LS] Matt [Overton], they were holding it, which they usually don't do. If you watch the film, they don't usually hold it that long for a punt, but they were. We had it. We saw the look. The kid made a great play. [Raiders WR Hunter] Renfrow, he saw it. He's a player. Most punt returners say, 'Somebody should be out there.' The distance he covered in the time that he covered it, and the hit he made, most guys take a shot, duck their head. He made a great play. Great throw by [P] Ty [Long]. T.C. [CB Tevaughn Campbell], that's something that we had practiced on Saturday. As a coach, you always tell guys to practice like it's a game. These things come up. We did it. It's one of the things that we have in our system. You try to take advantage of those situations, but, fortunately, the defense ended up forcing a punt and no points came from it. It's one of those things, you never know when it's going to come up. We have to execute it and just hold onto that ball."

On the official standing over Overton for an extended duration of time:

"Usually, they don't stand over an offensive player that long. They usually just count, make sure everybody's good. I felt like maybe it was a little longer, I don't know. It's normal. It probably was normal, when we go back and look at it in real-time, different punts. We just had to try to get that out quicker. It wasn't anybody's fault. The kid made a great play. I never want to take anything from him. He made a play that you will see for years. You watch New England a few weeks and they do a thing where they bring [Patriots WR] Gunner [Olszewski] up, then they move him back. He's doing his thing, but they don't leave the guy and leave no returners back. It was a great play. That's how it happened."

On when the proper situation is to call that fake punt:

"It's automatic for us. We practice it. It's automatic for us when we get the look that we like. There are some fakes that we do have that you go situational, where it's like, 'This field position, this hash, we like this.' With that one, it could be any field position. If they want to do it, we have it. It doesn't mean that we're all of the time going to do it. But it was one of those things where we liked the field position, we were in the plus area, they had 10 men. We had practiced it and the look was there. There are some fakes where it is situational — are we up in the game, are we down, what's the momentum of the game, do we have the look we like? There are some like that, but that wasn't one of them. That was automatic."

On the 'double punt' in the Seahawks-Rams game:

"Yeah, 100 percent. I'll take you back to 2012 when I was in Kansas City. We were playing Green Bay in a preseason game, you can look this one up. We had a punt that we were the ones that blocked it on Green Bay, we had a guy rush off the edge up and under on the wing, he goes the block it, their wing picks it up and runs for a first down. The same exact thing happened last night. When the ball goes behind the line of scrimmage, it is still a free ball for either team, so you could advance it or you could punt it. Now, he has quarterback protections where if he doesn't get his whole body across the line of scrimmage, it's still a legal punt. The only reason I knew is because I've had it happen to me. You coach enough years, things happen. It was interesting. I guess you could say that's the advantage of having a rugby player that can do that on the run. The only penalty that you will get is illegal man downfield because you have you guys that were protecting now covering. They don't expect it to get blocked, and then get punted. It was an interesting play, but that's the NFL — you see something every few weeks, like flags hitting balls and things like that."

On if he prepares Long for that potential scenario:

"I would love to say that, but I try not to put negative thoughts in his mind, like getting punts blocked. But, when you see it happen to somebody else, it's a good thing to put in front of the team to say, 'Hey, if this scenario happens, let's know that if you're the guy that gets beat, don't just run down the field and look back. You can still recover it because it's behind of the line of scrimmage, or if they pick it up, tackle him so that it's not a touchdown.' They've seen it. We talked about it in the team meeting. This isn't a normal thing, it's not something that everybody has seen. It came up."

On how he knew that it was the right situation to call for the pooch punt:

"I got to know everything. The head coach, we were talking about it. 'OK, we're up to scores with less than two minutes. We're alright timeout-wise. They're an explosive offense.' You have to take all these things to an account. You want the kid to hit a 54-yarder, a 56-yarder, whatever it is, but, you have to consider everything. You have to go through the worst-case scenarios as a coach. You're not saying it to [K Tristan Vizcaino]. He was on board with it. The head coach was on board. All of the guys, we talked through it. We said, 'Hey, listen, [Hunter] Renfrow is a great returner. He has shown that he will return this ball inside the 10-yard line. I don't want him on the field. I'd rather have a guy, as a coach, that isn't as good as him as a returner.' That's what our thinking was. This kid, Renfrow, you don't know what he will do. He's a really good player. I'd rather have a guy that's not him on the field and let's just try to pin it down, make [Raiders QB] Derek Carr go 80-plus yards to score two scores, instead of giving him, if we do miss it, the ball at the 44 — boom, he's right there, one shot. You never know. That was the thing going into it. This is situation. This is good football. This is how we win games. You would love to say, 'Let's kick the long field goal,' Well, do you really need to? How do you win this game and finish this game out? You saw what happened at the end."

On covering the pooch punt:

"[G Matt] Feiler did a great job. We talked about it last week, the Jacksonville-Arizona play, we showed that in our meeting. We had two guys that weren't covering. I get on them, but he covered. The guy picks it up, we take a shot and he makes the tackle. It's the little things during the week. I'm talking about, 'Hey, watch this clip from these guys,' and these guys think whatever, but then you get into that situation. The guys executed it. It helped us win."

On if the punter could run for a first down after recovering his own blocked punt:

"Yeah. Blocks behind the line of scrimmage, yes."

On if that is the same for field goals:

"Field goals, same thing. Behind the line of scrimmage, it's a live ball. You can pick it up and run for a first down. Any time that you see a punt or a field goal get blocked, that's why we tell them, 'Hey, you see the guys running after it because you can pick it up, and if you can get a first down, it'll be a first down. If he decided at some point, 'Hey, I'm not going to punt this and I run,' then yes."

On if a pass can be attempted in that situation:

"It would be illegal because you would have an illegal man downfield. It wouldn't count, just like on offense. They consider it a kicking play, but it's offensive rules in that fashion. The interior linemen, the guard and tackle on the punt team, they're ineligible. If they're already covering down the field, it's just like if a lineman were to go down the field and he throws it."

On WR KJ Hill Jr.'s performance in punt return:

“Good. We had the first one, he got a 10-yard return. Then, the other one, credit to the punter. He put the ball right on the sideline, the second one. He was trying to field the ball, that just happens. The next one, he got at the eight-yard line, fair caught it and did a great job. Then, on the fourth one, on the sideline, was pinned again, but got an eight-yard, nine-yard return, which is really good. He managed the game really well for us. I think that he’s progressing. Like I keep telling him, the shots will come. They are. The more we’re stopping people, we’ll get them in long field position. I think that he’s doing a really good job for us.”

On Hill's decision-making process for a return:

“He has to read what the punt is. The punt was not a traditional punt. It broke up in the air. It’s a nasty punt. You don’t want him to muff it. I tell him that if he doesn’t like it, don’t go field it. If it is going to put you in harm’s way, then be patient. I’d rather have him be patient then — I think that I said it after the Dallas game — where, ‘Hey, you have to make the right read.’ He’s doing a good job for us. In my opinion, he made the right decision in that scenario with what was going on in the game, who was around him, just being patient. You would love to say, ‘Just run up and catch it.’ Well, if the ball is not a perfect spiral, you can’t. It’s just hard to do that at times.”

On RB Larry Rountree III's performance in kickoff return:

“Yes. You saw the one he hit, the one good return was really good. He saw the hole, he burst through that thing. I told him that the second was on me. We had a check. I should have checked the right way, I didn’t do it. Coaches mess up, too. I told him that one was on me. He’s really starting to see the entire picture. I tell him, ‘Listen, man, you’re a heavy runner. I think that we see that all of the time on offense. These guys are not as big as the guys on defense. So, when you goes full speed, they don’t want to hit you.’ You saw that on the one he broke, they were shoe-string tackling him. They’re not trying to hit him in his body. I think that he’s learning that he has to use his strength. He is a strong runner. To hit that guy, that’s a load in the hole. Getting him full-speed where it’s not like three yards, he’s getting a head of steam. Use that and just go. I always tell him to run through the smoke. A little Days of Thunder there.”

On preparing the punt team for Sunday:

“I don’t want to assume we’re going to punt too much or they’re going to punt too much. We love to say that their defense is good and that they’ll stop us, but I’d like to say that we have a pretty good offense. We prepare every week to punt. We prepare for punt return. We work it at a level where we’re expecting them to rush, we expect them to get returns. I don’t want to say that they’re going to stop us every time, but knowing how good they are, you just have to know how to play the game, how to keep them out of long third downs, and how, when we get on fourth down, eliminate some — [Browns Special Teams Coordinator] Mike Priefer, who is one of the longest-tenured special teams coaches — of the rushes that he has, some exotic returns that he has. When I was in Chicago, I went against him twice a year. He’s just done a lot of good things. As a team, we have to prepare for what he is going to bring on Sunday, which could be a lot of things. He has a lot of film out there.”

On if he contributes to game operation on the field with Offensive Coordinator Joe Lombardi and Defensive Coordinator Renaldo Hill up in the coaches booth:

“No. It’s more so [Head Coach] Brandon [Staley] and I will be talking. He’s the intermediary, I guess you could say, because if something on either side of ball needs to get conveyed, I can pop over to offense, I can pop over defense. If it needs to come to me, they can pop over to special teams. Brandon, we go through him because he’s on both lines. He’ll pop over to special team. But, no, I really don’t talk to those guys. Philosophically, we know, as the game goes and we have that communication, ‘Hey, what do we think in this situation? What do you think in this situation?’ It’s not really direct communication with them, but through the head coach.”

On 'how his engagement changes with a lot of punts early in the game':

"Every third down, you're just ready. You have them ready. We just have to look at, more so, just like if you have a lot of third downs, what are the packages that they're bringing? What are the rushes that they're bringing? That's all that we're communicating. You have to know what they are doing in these scenarios. Is it fourth-and-three? Is it fourth-and-seven? That's really where the communication comes. When you punt more or you return more, I don't think it's heightened awareness. It's just, 'Hey, guys, we're doing this more. What are they doing?' Just like the offense and defense, they're looking at, 'If we have more first downs, what are they doing on first down? What are they doing on third down?' Just getting their trends. I think that the more you do that, you're just identifying what they're doing. We've seen this, and now they're going to go to this. Just like offense and defense, they only have so much during a game that they can put into a gameplan. They don't have a litany of different rushes. On special teams, you're going to run out of certain plays as you get to returns. I don't have 20 returns drawn up because you don't have time to practice it. When a game goes like that, you just try to find those trends. What are they doing? What are we going to get to? How do we protect it? It's good."

QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBRET**On the challenges the Browns defense presents:**

"A whole lot of challenges. They have an incredible front seven, and some of the best pass rushers this league has ever seen. They're really well-coached, they do a lot of good things on defense. We've been watching a lot of film; we have to prepare well to give ourselves a shot Sunday."

On the Browns' pass rush:

"The combination of power, speed, quickness, explosiveness. All the things they're able to do are incredible and we have to have a solid protection plan going into the game, so we have a chance on Sunday."

On his level of comfort this season compared to last:

"Last year, being new to the NFL, being new to the system — you're just worried about opening up the right way. You're worried about making the right call and doing all these little things that now you overlook. We've made so much progress over the past year with [Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks Coach] Shane [Day] and [Offensive Coordinator] Joe Lombardi and [Offensive Quality Control] Chandler [Whitmer]. All those guys in the quarterback room have really helped me a ton, and there's still plenty of room for improvement. The more you get out there and have experience, you get a lot better."

On his most significant career injury:

"I broke my femur in high school — I wasn't able to play through that one. That was pretty painful."

On how establishing the run game has improved offensive output:

"They've done an incredible job all year. As long as you're balanced and have a good attack in both the run game and the pass game on offense, you're really tough to stop. I believe in our offensive linemen up front, and I know that we can run the ball behind those guys. Anytime you get the ball to [RB] Austin Ekeler, [RB] Larry [Rountree III], [RB] Justin Jackson or [RB] Joshua Kelley, those guys are going to fight for yards. They make our offense a lot better."

On his 'look options' against the Raiders:

"That's just the way the Raiders play their defense. We knew going into it, it was going to be completions, checkdowns, find your tight ends, find your backs. We're going to do our best to push the ball down the field, but the Raiders do a good job of syncing in their zones and covering. It's always our plan to get those guys [WRs Keenan Allen, Jalen Guyton, Mike Williams] the ball, but anytime you can get [TE] Jared Cook, [TE] Donald Parham [Jr.], [TE] Stephen [Anderson] the ball, and get the win; that's the most important part."

On how he 'felt pressure' from the Raiders' pass rush:

"That's a protection game plan thing we've studied. We knew in that look, they would overload that side and bring one more guy than we had. Thankfully, I peeked it before I got the ball out. Jared [Cook] got out quickly on his route, and we got him the ball. It was only a three-or four-yard gain, but I think the flipside of that is a big sack or a fumble. Talking about that all week was huge for us."

On Offensive Coordinator Joe Lombardi's comment about his pocket awareness, and how his awareness has grown:

"I appreciate the kind words from him. I think it's taken a lot of time to figure that out. These were a lot of the plays last year that I didn't make. Having Joe and [Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks Coach] Shane [Day] in our quarterback room, I've learned so much more from them. Talking about that all week, and see it, and repping it. Maybe we don't make that play without those guys. And maybe there is a part of it where you just have to feel it out there. I think a lot of it can be learned in the film room, especially when Shane and Joe are teaching us."

On changing offensive philosophies to match upcoming defenses:

"You have to game plan for every team. The Browns certainly present a challenge unlike any other. They've got those front seven that's unreal, and we have to do everything we can to watch film. To have a solid game plan, to have a solid protection plan, so that when we go out there on Sunday, we're able to recognize the blitzes and be protected, solid. It's going to require everyone — the quarterback, the offensive linemen, the running backs need protection, too, so that we're all firmed up."

On Browns DE Myles Garrett:

"The combination of size, athleticism, explosiveness — he's able to do anything. And he can defend some passes, too. He's able to do everything. He's one of those guys where you look and see him on film, and he makes plays. You have to know where he is at all times so that you're ready for what he does."

On the 'Los Chargers' shirts and if he speaks Spanish:

"I grew up in a Spanish-immersion program. I spent a little time in Spanish, but I haven't used it quite as much in the recent years. That's something I need to keep practicing on."

On if he can order food in Spanish:

"I'd be able to speak a little bit. It would be very slow, but hopefully they'd understand what I'm saying."

On the versatility of the tight ends:

"The way we play, they need to be able to run-block and pass-block. Go out and win in one-on-one matchups. They guys we have, Stephen Anderson, Jared Cook, Donald Parham Jr., they've done an incredible job so far. The way that Jared Cook is able to run routes and beat man coverage. And [Donald] Parham [Jr.] certainly presents a challenge, how long he is and how able he is to reach above man coverage in all those zone coverages. I think they've done a great job. Stephen Anderson, too, in the run game has been an incredible blocker. He's one of those guys we've really relied on."

On his thoughts on the first quarter of the season:

"We've played some pretty good football. There are a lot of things to clean up, but I've been really pleased with how the guys have performed and battled through a lot of adversity. We've been down some guys with injuries, but everyone's showed up. They've continued to work hard, and I think if we keep doing the right things on and off the field — in the film room, we keep lifting — I think really highly of this team"

On C Corey Linsley:

"He's one of the smartest to ever do it. The way we do it is he gets up on the ball, and we're able to go really quickly. He's able to make those mic identifications, and if we see anything, we can overturn it — we can flip it. Corey does an incredible job studying and preparing so we're able to get up on the ball and go quickly. It gives us a lot of tempo."

On if Linsley's reliability on the line gives him 'one less thing to do':

"In a sense. It's still huge for the quarterback position to understand what we're doing. Especially knowing how to run and block the run game in the pass game when we're protecting. Being able to be in tune with the pass protection so the running backs are all on the same page. But Corey's done an incredible job of stepping up there and doing it quickly."

On RB Joshua Kelley:

“He’s been a really solid guy. He’s smart, he knows what he’s doing. He’s very explosive and is able to make those quick cuts. We really trust him in the pass game, and I know he’s able to get out on routes and catch balls. He’s done a great job so far.”

On where he’ll get his hair cut:

“I haven’t thought about that for a while. I don’t plan on thinking about that for a while. It was an interesting sight to see. [WR] Mike [Williams] and [DL] Justin [Jones] show up and you don’t really recognize them at first, but I think it’s a good look. They’re good. I might have to ask [Director of Sports Performance] Anthony Lomando this year. It’s just hair, I’m not too worried about it.”