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Chargers Week 15 Media Availability

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On T Rashawn Slater's game status:

"Rashawn will be out for the game."

On who will start at LT:

"[T]rey [Pipkins III] will start at left tackle. I think that Trey has had a brief, good week of practice. Trey has continued to improve for us. We have confidence in him to go execute the job, and we're going to do everything we can within the gameplan to make sure that we play really well around him, the other four guys on the line and his other 10 teammates. I think that this is a great opportunity for him. It's a great opportunity for him. I know that he's had a good week of practice. I'm excited to see him compete in the game."

On S Derwin James Jr.'s game status:

"He's questionable for the game. We're going to work him out pregame. He was out there on the practice field today, as you guys saw. He's trending much better than he was last week, after the practice. We're going to work him out pregame, continue to try and treat him today, tomorrow, and then we'll see, at the game, how he feels."

On game statuses of CB Asante Samuel Jr. and RB Austin Ekeler:

"Asante and Austin will both be game-time decisions. Austin is just sore. We're going to make sure, before the game, that he is feeling OK — the same with Asante, he's been out in the practice field, as well. We're just going to make sure, right before the game, that he feels his best. If it's a go, then we'll go that direction. If not, then we'll go in a different direction. Those four guys I just talked about will be game-time decisions. Then, [S] Alohi [Gilman] will be questionable for the game."

On the recent increase in positive COVID-19 tests across the league:

"I think you have to give COVID[-19] the appropriate amount of respect and just make sure that you're doing everything you can, from mask-wearing, social distancing, following the protocols that your state and your facility has in place — that's all you can do. You don't need to make it a bigger issue or a smaller issue than what it is, you just need to treat it with the appropriate amount of respect. I think that's what everyone is trying to do."

On if there is a 'higher urgency' with the recent increase:

"I think that you need to give it the same amount of urgency. I think that we've given it the same amount of urgency that the topic requires. I think that we learn more and more each day. All we can do is continue to follow the protocols to the best of our ability. I know that that's what everybody in the NFL, I know that's what everybody in the world, is doing. I think that we're all giving it the appropriate amount of respect that it deserves."

On 'if he tells the players what is at stake this week':

"Our focus isn't what's at stake, it's just on our opponent. That's where our focus is. We know the challenge that is in front of us. We have full respect for this team. Our focus is on how we need to play this game and what it is going to take from us. That's where our focus is going to be. We know that it's a great opportunity on Thursday Night Football, in front of the entire world. That's exciting, but that's more external. What's internal is the Kansas City Chiefs, and then, how the Los Angeles chargers are going to play, how we're going to play. That's where our focus has been the last couple of days."

On if the game 'could turn into a track meet':

"I think that it can always turn into that with two quarterbacks as good as [QB] Justin [Herbert] and [Chiefs QB] Patrick [Mahomes]. It can always happen that way. When you have two teams that I feel like are the quality that both teams are, then that game can take shape in a bunch of different ways. That's what is unique about this game. You have to be ready to play the game the way it expresses itself. You have to be ready to handle the swings in the game because you don't know how it's going to be. You don't know if it's going to be high-scoring, low-scoring, comeback, tight all the way. That's the sign of great teams, just being able to play that game how it needs to be played. I think that it's going to be exciting for us because any time that you play a team twice, three times in a season, there's that game within the game, that chess match and both teams making adjustments. I'm excited to compete tomorrow night with these guys. The team we're playing is really, really good."

On Herbert being named AFC Offensive Player of the Week for the second-consecutive week:

"I think that he's definitely deserving. The performance that he had, you just talk about the completion percentage and the accuracy, three touchdowns, no interceptions, and then just really leading us to a big win. He really performed at a high level. Any time that you have a signature throw like he had in the game, that's always going to give you a better chance. I'm more excited about how we played as a team. I think that that allowed him to compete at a high level because I think the other two phases really gave him a lot of opportunities in that game. Then, I really felt like his teammates really performed well. I felt like our offensive line and tight ends really blocked at a high level, felt like we ran the football, we had balance, we had even distribution in the skill-position players, and that was without [WR] Keenan [Allen]. I felt like it was a complete performance. Normally, if you can have a performance like that, then you can count on Justin playing like that because he's certainly capable of it. I'm proud of him and proud of our team because any time that you win those individual awards, it's so much of a team award, too."

On if G Senio Kelemete 'will be the backup center':

"Yes, Senio will be the backup center for this game. He's one of those guys who has played a lot of things. With [G] Scott [Quessenberry] being where he's at, you go with a guy that has been, at least has trained there, within his NFL career. [G] Ryan [Hunter] has also done that within his career, too. You're always trying to find guys that have at least had that experience in a practice setting. Senio has that for us."

On Pipkins' improvement:

"He's had to improve. That's why he's going out there because we feel like he's the best option at left tackle. We have contingencies within the game if other things happen, but right now, we feel like Trey gives us the best first option in this game. It's a great opportunity for him. We're excited for him to have that opportunity. We've been working hard with him to improve his game. I know [Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line Coach] Frank [Smith] and [Assistant Offensive Line Coach] Shaun [Sarrett] have worked really hard with him, his fellow O-linemen. I know that he's going to be ready to play."

On Mahomes:

“Over their six [wins] in a row, they’ve played really well as a team. The way that their defense is playing, you can’t minimize what that does for a quarterback. When you’re when you’re playing well in all three phases, just what that gives you. I think that Patrick has always played at a premium, platinum level in this league. That beginning part of the season, there’s a discovery process that happens with every team. Because he’s created such enormous expectations for himself and for his team, I think that you have a difficult stretch. That’s just life in the NFL it’s not like he was performing poorly or his team. They just had a tough stretch, and then since then, I just think that they’ve been a lot more balanced as a football team. On offense, they’ve always been dangerous. They’re still one of the top offenses in the league in passing, running, you name it. They’re settled in with their offensive line. Their skill position players speak for themselves. I think that their backs have done a nice job in the run game. They’re a very complete offense. They’re a team that can knock you out. They have that one-punch threat, which few do in the NFL like them, where they can hit that explosive play that goes a long way. They have several guys that can do it. He’s at the front of all of that. He’s definitely one of the best of the best at that position.”

On the impact of Slater not playing tomorrow night:

“We’re just going to have to play really well as a team, on offense and defense. That’s what we’re going to have to do. We have a lot of good plans for this game. Trey [Pipkins III] is going to have to win his share of tough downs, and that’s part of the NFL. More than anything, it’s really not about Rashawn not being at the game, it’s about those guys on offense, for the Chargers, that are going to play together with Trey so that we can compete at a high level. When you do lose a starting player, just like we did last week with Derwin [James Jr.], just like we did last week with Keenan [Allen], and every other NFL team that loses a starter that’s impactful, everyone has to elevate their performance — coaches, players — and you have to put a really good plan in place so that the next guy up and perform to the best of his abilities. It’s a team effort to allow that person to play as well as they can play, and that’s where our focus has really been this week. I think that our guys are going to really step up and help Trey play his best tomorrow night.”

On Allen returning to the team after being activated off of Reserve/COVID-19:

“I’ve enjoyed seeing the guy. He looks fresh. He certainly helps our chances. It gives these guys perspective, too, when you have to sit one out. Then, when you get back in it, you see how much you miss it. It’s been great to have him back. I’m excited to go compete tomorrow night with him. You want to be as close to full strength as you can be. Keenan just has so many experiences in games like this that, hopefully, can help us tomorrow night.”

On ‘if players come back fresher after being out for a game with COVID-19’:

“The tangible thing about it, if you were me and us, that they do come back fresher. They do come back with a little bit more energy than the rest of us. We’ve joked about that a little bit. There is that element to it, and then how they perform, that’s just up to them. But, I sense a freshness in the guys when they come back. I think that highlights that all of us need our rest; all of us do. That’s probably my tangible takeaway from these guys’ absence.”

On if he ‘has noticed anything in the team’s eight wins that tell him that the players are ready for gameday’:

“We’ve talked about this a lot in this room. We’ve been in a lot of tight games. I feel like in our wins, we’ve really just had the complete performances as a team and playing with the right energy on game day. I think we’ve come to the stadium with the right energy and I’ve felt like we’ve executed in all three phases to win those games and be at our best in the fourth quarter, especially. I feel like that’s been, maybe, a common theme. This year, I think all across the league, we’re all just seeing how tight it is. You’re trying to pinpoint these couple of specifics, and I think every game takes on a life of its own, but I think the commonalities for us, when we win, is that we play as a team and we play with really good energy on gameday.”

SPECIAL TEAMS COORDINATOR DERIUS SWINTON II

Opening statement:

"I have to say, Happy Birthday to my mom. She will be here tomorrow. I'd be remised if I didn't do that because I'm her only son — her favorite son. She always watches us and she'll be here. She's always like, 'You weren't very nice today. I didn't feel like you were in a good mood.' So, Happy Birthday. Hopefully, Mom, you're watching."

On his mother coming to watch the team on *Thursday Night Football*:

"She is [excited]. This is her second time and she has a new baby, a new grandson. She was here for his birth, but now she sees him when he's actually a functioning human being."

On if his mother watched any *Chargers* games in person earlier this year:

"No because that was the end of training camp so she went back before our first game. So it will be the first time seeing a game. She's been at SoFi just for a tour, but it's her first time seeing a game in there. It will be fun."

On a short week against a familiar opponent:

"[Having played them earlier in the year] does help some. It seems like forever ago that we played them. They've been pretty healthy. On teams, they're pretty much, personnel-wise, rotating some of the same guys. I would say from a scheme-wise, [Chiefs Special Teams Coordinator Dave] Toub is going to do what he does. He has those horses back there — 17 [Chiefs WR Mecole Hardman], he has 10 [Chiefs WR Tyreek Hill] that he could throw back there. He has 13 [Chiefs WR Byron Pringle], he has 21 [Chiefs CB Mike Hughes]. He has all of these guys, so he meshes a scheme with the personnel that he has. It does help because, on a long week, it's hard enough just watching three or four years of these guys. On a short week, at least you have some background on the guys. You may get more scheme — the scheme is going to be the scheme, but it's who are these players? Who are these players on the short week? That's what it's going to come down to on a short week, just players making plays."

On Chiefs Special Teams Coordinator Dave Toub:

"Well, I always say great coaches have great players. When you look at his history, you know, at Chicago, you can just name them. [Former Bears Devin] Hester, [Johnny] Knox, Daniel Manning, Nathan Basher. He's had great players. He's always had a very good scheme. He's been very creative. His core guys play really hard. Then, when he got to Kansas City, you look at the guys that he has had there — you go [former Chiefs WR/KR] De'Anthony Thomas, you go Tyreek [Hill]. Over the years, I would watch some of their tape and I'm like — [former Chiefs RB] Charcandrick West, he had him at kick returner. I'm like, 'Gosh, he's had some guys back there.' Good coaches are good coaches. He has a great scheme, but then the players and putting them in the right position, he's done that for a long time. It's a credit to him. He gets consideration for head coaching jobs because he sees the roster well, how he uses the end of the roster. He does a really good job with that. I'm not even going into the scheme. You can go into X's and O's and talk about the creative ways that he does kick return, how he drops guys out of there. He has one thing appear to be a certain way and then it's not. He's just been good in all aspects over the years and that just shows in the way they play."

On punt protection last week:

"[The short punt] was on the protection. It was a protection issue, a communication issue. I told him [P Ty Long], 'For you to even get that off with three guys running free, that was incredible.' In that situation, a two-score game, you don't want to get that blocked. There was a communication issue inside. A young guy was like, 'Hey, I'm blocking this,' and all of the sudden, we got the ball too early. We'll just clean that up. Ty did a great job of getting it off without getting it blocked. The guys, they heard how I felt about it. That's just part of it. I told them — we had an open forum, we try to have that in our meeting room of [where I say], 'Hey, tell me what happened. I'm on the sideline.' I can draw it up and say, 'Hey, this is what we're supposed to do.' Just talking about what happened, clean it up and I think we'll be better for it going forward."

On the inside kick:

“If you look at it and the top two guys are [WR] Keenan [Allen] and [WR] Mike [Williams]. They tried Mike the first time and Keenan’s not there. [TE] Jared Cook is really supposed to be behind him. Jared had a deal, he was out of the game. I mean, it’s a two or three-score game at that point. I trust DP [TE Donald Parham Jr.] back there. The ball hit his hands. He knows. He’s a tall guy, he has to come down with that ball. We were just talking about it — [General Manager] Tom [Telesco], [Head] Coach [Brandon Staley] and I were talking about it — when you look in the league this week, there were four recovered by a kicking team. That’s just one weekend and with the new scheme and all that, it’s supposed to be almost impossible, but it happens. Thankfully, you learn from it on a win. That’s the thing we talked about, was like, ‘Hey, we’re on this team,’ and [LB] Kyzir White, he’s vouching to be the hands guy now because he got the first one. He said, ‘Ah, I have hands. I could have done a spin-move and scored on that.’ I go, ‘Kyzir, you look slower than you think, but good job recovering it.’ It’s just a learning thing. You’re glad you can do it in a win like that, not a loss.”

On if the team coaches players to drop to the ground after recovering an inside kick:

“Yes. We are in recovery mode, we’re not in score mode. I’m over there, ‘No, no.’ Now, if he scores, it’s, ‘Yes,’ but you don’t need to. We’re up that many scores, get down. There is a time element if you get it, we talked to the guys if it’s between 2:07-2:01 [on the clock], you can run around to get it to the two-minute warning. Timeouts play a factor, get them into using their timeouts, but in that situation, Kyzir, I’m glad he recovered it. He should have gotten down quicker, but he wanted to show his moves off a little bit. We’ll have a little grace with him.”

On the Giants fake punt:

“Yeah, I felt good about it. The whole day, I knew they were trying to get a fake call [in]. I mean, we saw three instances where they were signaling things that they’ve signaled in the past for fakes. Our guys were really aware of it. If you watch the film, our guys stand up so they know that we know what’s coming. I think, in that situation, I always tell the guys — and [Hall of Fame QB] Peyton Manning used to talk about it — there are certain combinations that you think about — [Hall of Fame QB Troy] Aikman to [Hall of Fame WR Michael] Irvin — great combinations. I don’t think [Giants P] Riley Dixon to [Giants DB] Keion Crossen is a combination that they want to live with. We’ll live with them making a tight throw like that. That’s one of those things where you have to play the numbers. We were in position for it. I think that they thought we were going to be wide open, but we weren’t. It’s a credit to our players for just being in the right situation and making a punter, who punts for his career, throw the football. Some guys feel confident. I’ll take it. 10 out of 10 times, I feel good. Riley Dixon throwing against our guy one-on-one? We’ll take it.

“I think they thought your corner was going to run deep and just take off. Wich [CB Davontae Harris] did a great job of getting off the ball. He said, ‘I heard them talking. I heard, I felt something,’ so he got off of it a little bit right there. We always try to stay on those guys hips just in case. You see the Chiefs, they’ve done it before. The way they do it, they put their head down and try to act like they’re running deep and they do the same exact route — a comeback. They do that with [Chiefs WR Marcus] Kemp, and they’ve also done it with [Chiefs WR Byron] Pringle in there. If you feel confident that your punter can make that throw, good on you. Some people complete it, some people don’t. But I just think that you have a great quarterback. They’re done it, but you have Patrick Mahomes over there, so I think that going for it on fourth-and-six with him rather than throwing it, but maybe they try it again. We just have to respond and make plays. That’s really what comes down to, just making plays. I don’t think it’s a weird call. I think that they knew, situationally, where the game was and they were trying to get a spark. That’s how the game goes. Sometimes you get some, sometimes you don’t.”

On the Giants ‘running their punt team on late’:

“In the past, when [Giants Head Coach] Joe [Judge] has been in New England with [Patriots Head Coach] Bill Belichick, what they’ve tried to do, before this new rule of holding the substitution, they’ve gone from [former Patriots QB] Tom Brady standing on sideline with the offense, then the punt team runs on and they do an exchange to try to see if you’re going keep your punt return team, and they run the offense off or on. Now that the rules are what they are, the point of doing that, really, is to probably hide somebody to try to fake it. But in reality, the official is going to hold it until we exchange. What I tell our guys is, ‘Hey, we’re not going to panic. We’re going to take our time. We’re going to exchange and make sure that we have 11 guys, and then we’ll set up.’ That’s what we did there. I know what they were trying to do. It’s just trying to get you in a confusion. I had an old coach back a Hampton [University] that used to say, ‘commotion causes emotion.’ But

in this case, the way that the rules are now in the NFL, they're going to stand over the ball anyway, so we don't have any commotion because it's about signaling who is coming on, coming off. We have time. Now, the onus is on them because they're against the shot clock. They're trying to get you to have some type of commotion going in and out. Credit to our guys of being able to handle the situation. 'What do we have here? This is what we're doing. We're out there. We're good to go.' That's what they're trying to do. They've done it over the years. They've done it three times this year, maybe four. They did it four times last year. In New England, they would do it three or four times just to check to see. You use it to a young coordinator to see if you're on top of it. That's what they were trying to do there."

On snap-to-kick time data across the league:

"When you're looking at timing issues, you have to look at where do punters stand. Some guys stand a 15 yards away from the long snapper, some guys are at 14-and-a-half, some guys are at 14. Some guys are pure two-step punters. Some guys are jab, two-step punters. Some guys are full three-step punters. People can come up with these numbers, but the variable are going to be off because not every punter does things the same. What we look at is total time, for us. We're trying to get it between 2.0 [seconds] and 1.9. That's where we're total time, from snap to punt. He's been good with that. Trying to compare it to a league of where some guys are a three-step, one-and-a-half, two-step. It's kind of hard to do that because then you have to look at their snapper, too, because the snapper, he can make up a lot of time if he's under .70 [seconds]. Most of them are at .70, so everybody's probably going to be around the same range. It's hard to compare them because they're not all, technique-wise, the same. From snap-to-punt, that's really it. If a guy is like 2.5 [-second operation], then that's really slow."

On 'matching up' against the Chiefs' veterans on special teams:

"44 [Chiefs LB Dorian O'Daniel], 56 [Chiefs LB Ben Niemann], 40 [Chiefs RB Derrick Gore] is a younger guy. 23 [S Armani Watts] has played for a few years. 85, [Chiefs WR Marcus] Kemp, he's a younger guy, but he's played a lot on teams for them. They do have a group of guys that have played a lot of football. I think they are a group that we match up physically with really well. I think just scheme-wise, I think you look at our bodies versus their bodies, they're comparable. You look at [Chiefs TE] Noah Gray and [OLB] Chris Rumph [II], they almost look the same, physically. As far as experience, I don't think they're as experienced as some of the more veteran groups we've seen, but they are more experienced because they've played three, four years together. I think that's something you look at every week. We put a matchup thing every week of where we match up against them, as far as in each phase. They have some experience in some places. We're just trying to, every week, chop down that tree, week-by-week."

QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On preparing for tomorrow night's game:

"It's always a quick turnaround for those Thursday night games, but we emphasized recovery this past week, and especially after the game, everyone was doing the ice tubs, relaxing and making sure their bodies are right for this week because it is a grind. The guys did a great job with recovery this week."

On playing well in primetime games:

"I think a lot of it is an emphasis on the importance of the game and having a good plan of protection routes and beating coverages, specific coverages. I feel like the coaches have done a great job of putting us in a position to have success. When they do that, we just got out and execute it, and I think we can play some pretty good football."

On T Trey Pipkins III starting at LT tomorrow night:

"We really believe in Trey. He's done a great job stepping up this week. Obviously, it's really tough to lose a guy like Rashawn. He's an incredible player, but you can't worry about that because the Chiefs don't care whether he's out there or not. Trey's done an incredible job so far of picking it up. He's a veteran guy that really gets it, so when he goes out there, we feel comfortable with him."

On WR Keenan Allen:

"Keenan's a special player. Definitely tough to lose him for a game. He just adds such a whole other dimension to our offense. Having him out there, especially on third down, he's a secure guy to go to. To have him around the facility again, it's great to see him again. He definitely brings the juice every week to practice."

On WRs Joshua Palmer and Jalen Guyton 'picking up the slack' for Allen last week:

"Yeah, it's a good point. They had to step up. With Keenan down, it was [WR] Mike [Williams], J.G. and Josh Palmer who had to step up. They did an incredible job of practicing and picking up the offense. We asked a lot of Josh, to be able to play all three positions. He didn't bat an eye and he did it, and he dealt with some adversity. J.G. stepped up big time the past couple of games. It's really good to see from those guys. When you add Keenan [Allen] back in, you have a whole lot of weapons to deal with."

On preparing for the Chiefs:

"Every opportunity is a great opportunity for us to play football. We're always trying to be at our best, regardless of the game. The Chiefs definitely present a lot of challenges for us because they have an incredible defense, a great offense and they're really well coached. It's going to require us to watch a lot of film, prepare the right way during practice, during film, during weights, recovery — it doesn't matter, we have to be perfect. We have to be on our game so that we have any chance come Thursday."

On the potential of 'going blow-for-blow' with Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes:

"Fortunately, I just have to play against the defense and I don't have to worry about offense, defense and special teams. It's all about preparing for their defense. They do a lot of incredible things on defense and they're really well-coached. They do a lot of great disguises and they do a fantastic job of pressuring the quarterback and disrupting the passer. It's up to us to have a good protection plan and be solid on our routes so that we have any chance on Thursday."

On former teammate and current Chiefs DE/LB Melvin Ingram III:

"He's really flashed. It doesn't take long to turn on the film and see how special he is. When he was here last year, he was making a lot of plays all over the place. We got pretty close and I really enjoyed playing with him. I think it's going to be cool to see him back out there again. He's a very talented player."

On the Chiefs' defense as of late:

"I think that they have always been pretty good. Early on, their record wasn't matching how well they were playing. They've really turned it on and they've played consistent football. I think the toughest part about their defense; they are going to get after you, play coverage and do all these things very well. They are well-coached. When you match it up with the guys they have on defense, it pairs for a really good defense."

On playing a divisional opponent in three of the final four weeks:

"I think every game is super important. For us, this week, the emphasis is on a short week of preparation, recovery and doing everything we can to be ready on Thursday. The Chiefs present a lot of challenges for us. It's going to require us to watch a lot of film, get after it in the weight room and out on the practice field, however much time we can get out there. I felt like the guys were dialed and focused this week, so that is always a good sign."

On playing against former MVP quarterbacks:

"I think it's always a great opportunity to be able to go up against those guys to learn, watch and see what they are able to do. They are masters at their craft and what they do. Anything that I can pick up while watching them, I think is huge for my game, as well."

On adjusting his preparation with limited time on a short week:

"You have to manage your time very well. I think that's the tough part about these short weeks, that you have to rely on the game film from the last game, look back at your notes, what you wrote down, what you remember from the previous game, and you have to watch as many games as you can in the short time frame. At the same time, you have to move on to third downs, redzone areas and in short yardage. It's a quick turnaround, but I think that the coaches have done a great job of spacing that out and prepping us so that we feel comfortable heading into the game."

On 'if friends and family reached out' after seeing his 59-yard touchdown pass to Guyton last week:

"A couple here and there. I think [WR] Jalen [Guyton] made an incredible play on it. He saw the right read and ran the great route. I just did everything I could to get him the ball and he did a great job adjusting to it. It's one of those routes that we've thrown thousands of times after practice. There was never a doubt in my mind. I knew that he was going to be able to track it. That's how special he is."

On if that play was designed to go to Palmer:

"Maybe I didn't understand the play as well as he would've wanted, but it turned out well. Pre-snap, I saw the coverage and Jalen [Guyton] saw it that way, as well, so we were on the same page. Maybe that's something that we have to address going forward. It helped us that time. On third down and some yards, and you have a speedster like that in the slot, good things always happen when you push the ball down the field like that."

On his \$25,000 donation to the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank:

"I think the L.A. community is such a special community. Me being a part of it, they've given me so much and they've supported our team for so long. For us to be able to give back and help them out, it's the least we could do. To use our platform, as athletes, I think that's what my parents have always taught me. It's a great opportunity to help others, especially during a time of giving and receiving, so it's awesome."

On being named AFC Offensive Player of the Week for the third time this season:

"I think that it's a great honor for the team. I don't think I'm able to win that without the receivers, the offensive linemen and the guys running the ball. It's a huge props to our offensive line, who has done an incredible job blocking all year. All of those receivers that have put so much work in after and before practice, especially all the tight ends, as well."

On 'how much they will rely on the quick game' on Thursday night:

"I think that the quick game has always been a big part of our offense. The Chiefs definitely do a great job of disrupting the passer. I think that it was a big part of our game back in Week 3. We're always trying to get the ball out quickly, especially getting it to those guys on the outside; Austin Ekeler, Mike Williams, all of those guys. If you get the ball to them, good things will happen. Whether it's intermediate or quick passes, I think that the quick game has been a big part of our offense, as well."

On if he 'has noticed anything in the team's eight wins that tell him that his teammates are ready for gameday':

"A huge thing is the week of practice, and how focused and dialed in those guys are. Going throughout the week of watching film and getting out on the practice field, and seeing how sharp we are on third down and the redzone periods during practice. If you're able to be sharp during those and understand your job, doing your role, I think that normally leads to a good outcome on Sundays."