

Chargers Week 6 Media Availability

Friday, October 13, 2023 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR KELLEN MOORE

On preparing for the Cowboys and his 'emotions' this week:

"It's obviously fun. I spent eight years there, so there are a lot of relationships that you love and appreciate there, a lot of people that you're close to and will be close to for a long time. It will be really fun to see all of those people."

On if 'the sharing of information actually happens in the building' when preparing for an opponent that one is familiar with:

"I think that every year is very different. People are continuing to evolve, schemes evolve, schemes change. There are a lot of trends in this league. We get to over-analyze stuff a little bit during the week, and then we get to football as we get closer to Monday. I think a lot of that stuff is pretty overrated. At the end of the day, it's getting on the field and playing 11-on-11."

On his familiarity with the Cowboys:

"Football is football, at the end of the day. There are a few concepts, probably, that we run that they run, that our DBs will have familiarity with. There will be some other stuff, obviously, that is different than what we do. If they have a question, you're available, but we've all been a part of plenty of games where coaches and players have commonalities and, usually, that stuff is kind of blown out of proportion."

On if it is 'easy to overthink' in a situation like this:

"Yeah, I think that it's easy for everyone to overthink it."

On if there is any 'added motivation' to win this week:

"No. Obviously, we're at 2-2 and we have an awesome game right here against a really good team that has played some really good football. Obviously, it's fun to see people that you spend a lot of time with, and certainly in Dallas, but after that aspect of it, you're just going to get to a football game. Everyone deals with these, players and coaches, everyone does."

On Cowboys Owner/President/General Manager Jerry Jones saying that he is 'dreading this game' since Moore is on the Chargers' staff:

"Jerry [Jones] plays the game, too, guys [*laughter*]. Jerry is awesome. Obviously, I'm thankful, I spent eight years there. The Jones Family and all of those people were awesome to me."

On if Jones is 'maybe overstating or playing a little bit' when referencing Moore's skillset as a player:

"I don't play this game [*laughter*]. I used to, but I don't anymore, so it doesn't really matter [*laughter*]."

On QB Justin Herbert and his finger:

"I think that we're optimistic. I think that you have the flexibility to play under center, still. Structurally, I think that we felt pretty comfortable with that ability. We'll just see how it goes. Certainly, we have the ability to do that. We can play in the shotgun, obviously. Not shutting it off, one way or the other, as of today. We'll just see how it progresses as the week goes."

On bye week evaluation:

"The bye week is really good. It's a unique bye week, because it's after four games, so the numbers and stuff can be very misleading, I think, very quickly, if you're only looking at a four-game sample size. But, it gives you a sneak peek into things that maybe you're doing well that you can continue to embrace, things that are maybe you need to focus on or improve. It's really, as everyone calls it a lot of times, the first quarter of an NFL season. I thought that it was an awesome snapshot of where we are. We were kind of able to spend some time just evaluating where we need to go and what we need to do."

On 'where is the offense' and 'where it needs to go':

"[*Laughter*] I think that we have protected the ball pretty well, for the most part. I think that's always a big part of this game. I think we're handling some situational football. I think it's just playing consistent football. We've had a few games where you have a few lulls. That happens, especially early in the season, you kind of have these up-and-down type things. I think we really have a good understanding of who we are, from a personnel standpoint, how we can maybe best utilize our guys. Hopefully, we can put those guys in a better position to succeed moving forward."

On the offense's performance in the red zone thus far:

"I think the red zone has been going well. Red zone is always going have ups and downs, a little bit, through a season. Tennessee was our one low spot, but I think that our guys are doing a really good job down there. I think just continuing to play football. Sometimes redzone turns in this big old science project. I think part of the emphasis is just that we're playing ball down there. When you get into the red zone, there's still first and second down, there's still third downs, there are a lot of just traditional situations, the space is just different. You have to, obviously, plan accordingly for that, but I think that our guys have done a nice job down there."

On the run game 'having success in Week 1, but not much success after' and 'the Vikings blitzing over 80 percent' and 'how much of that is what teams are doing against the Chargers and how much of it is a small sample size and how much of it is a need to improve':

"I think that you hit it all right there [*laughter*]. You hit it perfectly, quote yourself [*laughter*]. I think that it's just a sample size thing. Different matchups present different opportunities. Certainly, we've played a couple of different styles through the first four games. That's how the seasons go. You're going to have to play different styles. You're always trying to improve the run game, just like we're trying to improve the pass game. We'll do different things. Hopefully, those things can benefit us moving forward."

On RB Austin Ekeler returning to the lineup:

"Obviously, Austin [Ekeler] is one of the top running backs in this league. We'd love to have him back and we're really excited to have him."

On if Ekeler will have 'any limitations':

"I don't anticipate much, no."

On third-down pass-protection:

"I think, at the end, would we like it to be cleaner? Absolutely. I thought that [Raiders DE] Maxx [Crosby] did a good job in the last game. I thought that he got some pressure on us. A couple of things. Miami, we had the unfortunate miscommunication at the end, which kind of added some third-down pressures in there. I think it's something that we just have to continue to grow with, make sure everyone's on the same page. There's a physical component of it, but I think a lot of it goes down to communication, making sure that we're all tied together from how we're going to do things. I think our guys are progressing in the right way."

On Cowboys LB Micah Parsons:

"Obviously, Micah [Parsons] has the ability, like no other player in this league, to play all over the field. I got to experience it in a lot of training camps, it's not fun [*laughter*]. D.Q. [Cowboys Defensive Coordinator Dan Quinn] does a phenomenal job of just moving him around and making it challenging for you that you can't assume that he is going to be in one spot or the other. You're constantly having to have plans and contingencies associated with where he is in the lineups. You spend all your time focusing on him, and then [Cowboys DE] DeMarcus [Lawrence] and [Cowboys DT] Osa Odighizuwa and all of those other guys are there ready to come after you, too. It's a challenge."

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR DERRICK ANSLEY

On 'self-scouting' during the bye week:

"We worked on us, mostly. Checked our explosive plays, that's been at an extremely high rate. Just checking why those things are happening. Also, things that we can control and we can fix. We studied that, studied the penalties. Continue to look at our run structures and our cover systems, make sure those are all tied together. Then, we took a look at the league, the big plays. Stay on the cutting edge of the league and seeing what's out there, seeing what's ahead of us. Really, trying to make us better."

On getting information about Dallas from Offensive Coordinator Kellen Moore:

"[Offensive Coordinator] Kellen [Moore] is very familiar with those guys. He was in Dallas a long time, drafted a lot of those players — especially offensively. Him and [Quarterbacks Coach] Doug [Nussmeier] both have a great relationship with [Cowboys QB] Dak [Prescott]. We'd be crazy on defense not to use those guys as resources. But not any more than any given week. Dallas is still one of the most explosive offenses in the league. Really good personnel. Three really good wideouts. The back is premium. Quarterback is really special. We've got our work cut out for us. Kellen helps where he could, we ask questions where we can. He's got his hands full on the other side of the ball, as well."

On the media making a bigger deal out of insight from coaches on their former teams:

"This is a player-driven league. It's going to be about the players on the grass. The plays are not going to win us the games. The players are going to win us the games. We have to do a really good job making sure we get our sides of the ball ready to go play. Kellen [Moore] knows those guys as well as anybody could. We're looking forward to the challenge."

On matchups in the Monday game:

"Well again, it starts with the quarterback. [Cowboys QB] Dak [Prescott], everything goes through him. He does a really good job of controlling the pace. Does a really good job at the line of scrimmage getting them in and out of structures. The receivers are really explosive. It's going to be a big challenge for us. Those guys have been really good for five years now, been consistent. We have to do a really good job of negating their firepower. Staying on top of routes, tackling, hitting and just playing our brand of ball."

On Cowboys QB Dak Prescott:

"Adversity. When you have a guy like Dak and [Chargers QB] Justin [Herbert] that have played a lot of ball — [Chiefs QB] Patrick [Mahomes] in KC — when those guys get in adverse situations, they don't really blink. As a defense, we have to keep playing. Something good happens, something bad happens, those guys continue to be the same guy. We have to do a good job as a defense of being the game guy, with good and bad."

On the secondary:

"You have a lot of guys that have played a lot of ball together back there. When they play together, they've been successful. We're glad that we've got some continuity back there, some guys that have played a lot. [CB Asante] Zont [Samuel Jr.] has played a lot, [CB] Mike [Davis], [Safety Derwin] DJ [James Jr.], [DB Ja'Sir] Ja Taylor is coming into his own. Those guys are really working hard. We're excited about the challenge and moving forward."

On the red zone defense:

"It's the players. We always talk about to play good red zone defense, it's all about communication. That's the first thing, making sure everyone is on the same page. Then, anticipation and then having the right leverage. I think that if you can do those things, you can be hard to play against down there. The first four weeks we've been solid, but we have room for improvement, for sure."