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Chargers Week 4 Media Availability

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR JOE LOMBARDI

On the areas where WR Mike Williams has developed most:

"I'm kind of brand new with him, so it's hard to compare it to the past. I think that I see what a lot of people see, just a big, physical receiver with good hands. He has great ball skills. He can track the ball, high-point the ball, win those contested catches. I've been impressed. He's not a real animated guy, but I can't think of one mental error that he has had through training camp, so he's obviously a smart guy who studies and does the right thing. All around, I'm just really pleased with him."

On Williams' performance against New Orleans last season on Monday Night Football:

"I remember the one up the left sideline where [QB] Justin [Herbert] just threw a bullet, and he jumped up and caught it. There are not a lot of guys that can do that. I've had experience with someone who could do that kind of thing with [Saints WR] Michael Thomas. There are a lot of similarities. A special player. It's a nice tool to have, knowing that if they're going to single him up, you have a winner almost always."

On Williams' traits after the catch:

"It's great to have players like that. When it's an RPO, where I'm not sure, when the ball is snapped, whether we're running it or throwing it, or a called quick game — it's a very high-percentage pass, it's a very low-risk play that can turn into big yards because of the physical abilities of those guys. Not every coach has that player on his team that he can rely on to do those kinds of things. It's a nice luxury."

On the similarities between Williams and Thomas:

"Mike Williams is a little bigger. They're both really competitive. They both have good hands. There are a lot of similarities, really. Michael Thomas is probably a little more animated, a little more emotional. Both are really good players. You could say that there are a lot of similarities to them, as far as how you would use them as an offensive coach."

On when he knew that he would want to play Williams in a role similar to Thomas within the offense:

"I think pretty much right away. You just saw the similarities. I knew that there were things that he would really be good at that we could put them in position to do it. So far, it has paid off."

On the offensive line's run blocking in the fourth quarter against the Chiefs:

"I think it was great. We had those three runs in a row that got us down in the red zone. We ended up kicking a field goal on that drive. The run game is like that sometimes. You have to keep pounding the rock. That first quarter can be frustrating sometimes, but you wear him down and you keep at it, loosen them up a little bit with the passing game, and those yards will come. Part of it is a play-caller having that patience and that trust, knowing that those guys are going to get those yards when it counts. I think it's coming along with those guys."

On Raiders S Johnathan Abram:

“Very talented. He’s down near the ball a lot. Just a guy that’s physical and supports the run. He’s athletic. A lot of times when I hear, ‘box safety,’ I think that the guy is a liability in the passing game, but he’s an all-around player. Someone that you’re going to have to keep your eye on and know where he is.”

On WR Jalen Guyton’s incomplete pass in the end zone against the Chiefs:

“I think that [Chiefs S Daniel] Sorensen made a nice play on it. I think Jalen believes — and we believe — that he’ll make that play if he was put in that position again. To say I’m frustrated? No. I know what kind of player he is. Not every play is going to be an A-plus. I was more wanting him to hurry back after that play so that we could have more time on the clock when we were calling the fourth-down play. That’s what I was more frustrating with.”

On what could be done to limit the illegal shift penalties:

“Just honing in on the details and really emphasizing and practicing the substitutions, getting in and out, on and off, making sure that I’m getting the play calls in on time. On a couple of those, I think Justin [Herbert] has felt hurried up against the clock. Against Dallas, maybe the play-call came in late. This past Sunday, just getting in and out of the huddle and guys having a little bit more urgency when that’s on the line. Maybe just not shifting and motioning so much when we’re in the tight red zone so that we don’t run into those problems. Just being more detailed, more urgent all across the board — communication, all of those things.”

On Herbert’s throw to Guyton in the end zone:

“I don’t want to say I’m spoiled or anything, but we’ve seen a lot of those kinds of throws. If you see him in a position, and there’s someone open, I never think, ‘Oh, it’s too deep. This guy’s too far away for him to make the throw.’ When you first looked up, you thought, ‘Well, this is going to be a sure touchdown. [Chiefs S Daniel] Sorensen really did make a good play on it. I was super excited for a moment there.”

On areas in which Herbert has improved since Week 1:

“Just getting into a groove with the process. He’s a perfectionist. It happened with [former Saints and Chargers QB] Drew [Brees], where there was just a lot of information coming at you on a Tuesday and a Wednesday, and there’s stress involved with that. ‘I have to learn all of the new plays and I have to learn the defense.’ There’s just a lot of information. Just grooving in that process, I can see that his comfort level, even from Week 1 to now, he trusts the process, he knows it. He might not see the total picture Wednesday morning, but by Friday afternoon, he’s going to have it all down. Just that confidence and trust in the process, going through that has been what I’ve seen the biggest improvement in.”

On the Raiders’ defensive front:

“A big, strong nose guard that you’re going to have to battle in the run game. Two edge rushers — really three, because [Raiders DE Carl] Nassib’s always been a guy that’s been effective against us, at least when I was in New Orleans. Their three ends are all guys that you have to pay attention to, from a pass-blocking perspective. [Raiders Defensive Line Coach Rod] Marinelli has always been a defensive coach that we’ve had such great respect for. His guys play so hard — they’re disruptive and technically sound, all of those things. It’s going to be an all-day affair for our O-line.”

On Williams and WR Keenan Allen’s matchup against the Raiders defense, which is coordinated by former Chargers Defensive Coordinator Gus Bradley:

“I think that they have a good feel. When you’re describing the defense and you’re saying, ‘With this player, this is his responsibility,’ they’ve heard that a million times at this point. They have a good familiarity with some of the players on the other side that came from here. This defense has been around the NFL for a while. Atlanta ran a version of it. Gus, I don’t know if he was the founder, the Godfather of this defense, but I’ve always felt like he was one of the best at coaching it, certainly. It’s not complicated, but they execute so well. It can be challenging to attack.”

On Bradley's defense:

"I think that he always does a good job of game-planning for the opponent. I do expect a few wrinkles, specifically, maybe, on third down. This defense has been around for a long time, it's been proven. I don't think that they're ever really trying to trick you. They're just trying to out-execute you. They often do a really good job of that. You're always trying to be ready for the unknowns, but I think that he's going to lean on what they do well."

On the run game:

"I think it's been efficient in critical times, like in the fourth quarter against Kansas City. I think, as a play-caller, especially when you come from a past perspective — a run goes for one yard, you're always angry about it, so you just have to train yourself to be a little more patient. I think it's coming along. I think [RB] Austin [Ekeler] is doing a great job running the football, all of those guys are. The O-line is blocking them up. [Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line Coach] Frank Smith does a great job with the scheme, getting that run game together for us, with [Assistant Offensive Line Coach] Shaun Sarrett. I think it's coming along. It's hard when you have Justin [Herbert], Mike [Williams] and Keenan [Allen] to run the ball here. They're just so good that you get so tempted to throw the ball. Something that is important is being able to establish that. I'm pleased with it."

On the offense's development through the first three games:

"As far as throwing the ball, I feel like we've been pretty effective all three weeks. I think that the execution has been good. Some of that has been the defense making a mistake. You would love to take credit for that, but sometimes the defense busts. Maybe some of the shifts or motions that you did created that, or the tempo that we played with created that. Every week is a new game. I think that these guys are hones in and are understanding of what we're trying to do. Justin [Herbert] is playing with great rhythm and timing. When the play breaks down, he can do great things outside of the structure, too. I was happy with the results of Sunday. There are a lot of things that we need to improve on, but I like where we're trending."

On the initial play-call of the two-point conversion to Williams:

"There was a combination route, but no one was covering him, so he just made eye contact with Justin [Herbert] — Justin threw it to him and he caught it. They never got lined up over him. We thought, maybe, that it would go to Keenan [Allen], but there was a whole progression that was supposed to be involved with that play. They just didn't cover, so we threw it to the uncovered guy. Didn't make it too complicated."

On Williams' go-ahead touchdown being changed from a run play initially:

"They might have been trying to let us score anyway. I think that if we were to hand it off, we might have just walked it in any way. In retrospect, 'Hey, let's get this clock down, try to score a touchdown with 15 seconds left.' Maybe run, tell the running back, 'Don't score. If they're going to let you, don't score.' Then, kick a field goal with five seconds left, if it comes down to that, but, hopefully, score a touchdown before that."

On Herbert changing the play at the line of scrimmage:

"It was built-in. I need to remember that he's not in his 20th year, he's in his second year. I'd say, 'I want to hand it off here.' Sometimes you have a run and it has a route built-in, and I have to remember to remind him of certain things that maybe I take for granted. He gets pretty aggressive on gameday, he might not have listened to me."

On if he could have called a run play without an audible to a pass built-in:

"Yeah, you could. Totally."

On his emotion when he saw the amount of time left in regulation after the touchdown:

"When I saw him throw it, I was like, 'No,' and then, 'Alright, good.' There was some comfort that they had to score a touchdown over a field goal. I was like, 'I wish that we would have left less time on the clock,' for sure."

On if the wind impacted the decision to not let the clock run down and attempt a game-winning field goal:

“That happens sometimes. A lot of the time, if the conditions were different, you probably would be taking a knee and running the clock down, but that wind was howling. It was a tough say. We were like, ‘Let’s score a touchdown.’ Second-level thinking would have been to get down there as close as we can, run the clock out, then score. If you don’t score — we had plenty of timeouts — burn one and kick a 20-yard field goal, or whatever it would have been.”

On if Guyton was ‘wide open’ on the fourth-and-four attempt to Allen:

“With some of those iffy things, the good thing about being a coach is that I can tell you how you did after the play. Keenan [Allen] is number one in the progression, but there is always this awareness. Jalen [Guyton] was trying to pull the inside coverage in. You always want to be aware that if they drop him, they are plugging on him. It’s a good lesson learned. Not a play that we’ve run five million times, so I think that next time, he would throw it to Jalen. Sometimes in those critical situations, you get such trust in certain players, and you just say, ‘I’m throwing to this guy because I know that he’s going to make the play.’ Players, not plays, is often a more important way to think about the game. He got it done; both of those guys did.”

On Herbert’s decision to throw it to Allen over Guyton:

“I trust Jalen [Guyton]. It would have been great if he had thrown it to him. Everyone would have been happy. He would have caught it. All of those things. In those critical situations, you’re trying to find the superhero that you know is going to make the play for you. Keenan has proven that over a number of years.”

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR RENALDO HILL

On seeing the game plan executed against the Chiefs:

“It felt good for coaches and players. We put a lot into that game plan, and to see it come true the way we designed it, it felt good on both ends. Coming out with the win makes it even more sweet.”

On Raiders QB Derek Carr’s improvements from last season to now:

“He’s been poised. Another year in that system, I think the comfort level is there. You can tell he has complete control of it. He’s making it happen, he’s the quarterback. He’s directing everyone where they need to go, and the guys have a comfort level for him. It shows up when the players understand what he wants to do. They’re playing fast, they’re playing at a high level.”

On the Raiders deep-field passing attack:

“I always thought they were an explosive team. I recall last year looking at them from a Denver lens, they were connecting deep with [Raiders WR Nelson] Agholor, [Raiders WR Henry] Ruggs [III], [Raiders TE Darren] Waller. All those guys were coming alive and it’s not different this year. They have [WR Bryan] Edwards in there, and he’s picking up. He’s rolling. He’s an explosive guy, he can stretch the field, he’s big bodied. And then you still have Ruggs and Waller to go with it. You also have [Raiders WR Hunter] Renfrow. They’re a loaded group. We’ll have our hands full.”

On the similarities between the Raiders offense and the Chiefs offense:

“They’re a different game plan. We like to go back to scratch because every team’s different. We can’t look at them the same. They may have a similarity here and there, but we have to make sure that we’re touching base on everything we need to do so nothing pops out of the ground on us. They’re an explosive team and we have our hands full.”

On improving the run defense:

“We talk about improving that each week. Obviously, we’re not happy where we’re sitting at ranked 32nd. We’re going to keep grinding. We know we have the guys in place who want to get it done to make this a better run defense. As coaches we have to keep emphasizing it. We have to be better as coaches to make sure we get our point across. It’s going to be huge because we know they have a ton of experience at the running back position. They have a good offensive line. We have to do a good job and stopping the run.”

On S Derwin James Jr. covering Raiders TE Darren Waller:

“That’s an option if we need to. But they move around so much, how do you get that matchup? It’s a tough deal. The best thing we can do is go out there and execute our game plan the best way that we know how.”

On CB Tevaughn Campbell:

“I’m not surprised at all. He put the work in this offseason, he showed the growth in training camp. We just have to keep him coming along. I know he’s not satisfied; I know we’re not satisfied — we know there’s a lot more in him. We just have to keep working.”

On having depth on defense:

“That’s the overall view we have for all our groupings. How competitive can we make each room? We know injuries are going to happen, but we need to make sure we have the next guy up and ready to roll.”

On what having DL Justin Jones active against the Raiders would mean to the defense:

“It’s huge. They have the chemistry up front with those guys. But we’re making our rooms competitive — next man up. We know the guys that’re already there, they’re going to play as well. It’s a huge plus for us to get him back because those guys play down in, down out. They have a comfort level for each other, and he’s a big communication piece for us up there. We know it’ll be a big help for us this week.”

On CB Asante Samuel Jr.:

“Every time I talk about him, I talk about him being built for it. He had some great coaches in college as well as high school. [Chiefs Defensive Backs/Cornerbacks Coach] Sam Madison coached him in high school. He’s been brought up the right way, the moment hasn’t been too big for him. He stepped in here day one, and he was ready to roll. We knew technique-wise, there would be some things we’d have to work out. But as far as his want, and being able to see in coverage, we knew he had those things.”

On Samuel’s interception in Week 3:

“We corrected him on where he needs to be, but at the same time, you’re happy we came up with the ball. They were rolling down the field, and he wasn’t trying to do the wrong thing. He ended up in the right spot, he made a play, and it was big for us. But we did go over the corrections, he’s fine with it, he’ll be better moving forward.”

On the importance of AFC West matchups:

“It’s the conference. Everybody wants to be sitting in a place where they’re competing for the playoffs and win the division. They’re all important, we have a lot of tough opponents in this division. It matters, and it matters to those guys. We want to do our best job of putting them in position so we can go out there and get wins against our conference opponents.”

On LB Drue Tranquill:

“It’s a competitive room. We knew there’d be a time where guys would have to step up and roll. When his time was called, he stepped right in. He was physical on tackles; you saw him flying around the field. He was the huge impact that we needed. We’re going to continue to need all those guys. Regardless of who’s out there, I’m comfortable with those guys at the linebacker position. We’re trying to make all our rooms like that.”

On LB Kenneth Murray Jr.:

“He’s a competitive guy, he wants to do everything right. He’s been working hard; he’s been doing everything we’ve asked. Three games in, we still want him to take the jump and I know he will. I see him coming it at 5:40 in the morning with me, he’s committed. We just want him to continue to come on and I know he will.”

On Murray’s ‘eyes on the running game’:

“That’s one thing we’ve talked about — not just with him, but with all the backers. Making sure our eyes are in the right place, making sure that we see if it’s in front of us. We know at the second level; we need to correct things that may happen up front. And we have to do that on the back end as well. It’s something we have to continue to train all our guys on. He’s one of those guys that’s first in the building at 5:40 in the morning. That eye discipline that’s not there, he’ll fix it.”

On the challenge of coaching ‘eyes on the run game’:

“It’s not a challenge. It’s just putting us in positions every day. We go through extensive walk throughs out there, and it’s the chance for us to walk and talk. Make sure that we’re all on the same page. Those are the big teaching moments. A lot of times, you can go out there and fly around for a whole hour, or two hours. But you’re not getting the coaching points. Now, we have the chance to slow it down, get the coaching points, and he’s a guy I know is committed. If there’s an issue there, he’ll fix it.”

On the ‘confidence boost’ in the defense from multiple turnovers this season:

“It’s just work. We know that was last week, and that we have to continue to push forward. We practice those things out in practice all the time, and it was good to see it come to life. We’re hoping that more field will pay off from practice. We just have to continue to do it. That was last week, this is this week. We have a new opponent coming in and they’re coming into our place. We have to be ready to roll.”

On S Nasir Adderley:

“We talked about quarterbacking from training camp and he’s finding his own way. It’s good to hear him communicate and I think he’s comfortable back there which is allowing him to play fast. That’s what we need him to do. I talked about [S] Derwin [James Jr.] being up there, being a signal-caller with his back turned. I think Nas has been helping that development too, with our whole defense. He’s seeing the lens from where we’re wanting him to see. And now D.J. can turn around and know he can play ball.”

WIDE RECEIVER KEENAN ALLEN**On going against Raiders CB Casey Hayward Jr.:**

“It’s going to be fun. He’s my brother. We’ve been with each other for four or five years. He’s a great guy, a great teammate, great competitor. It’s going to be fun.”

On if Hayward is ‘still one of the best CBs in the NFL’:

“I think so. When Casey’s ready to play, he goes pretty well. Last year, he just happened to have some injuries. He battled with them, and now he just has to fight back.”

On seeing Hayward play in the Raiders defense:

“Four or five years he was with us, Case. Going against all those guys from back in the day — Remembering it, seeing it — it still looks the same.”

On the advantages of knowing the Raiders defense:

“We know how it’s run; we know the way it’s supposed to be run. That gives us a great deal of advantage. Hopefully, [QB Justin] Herbert is the one to see it. Hopefully, we can get into the zones, get to where we need to.”

On what about the Raiders defense makes it challenging to face:

“They rally and tackle. They have the guys up front, [Raiders DE Maxx] Crosby and the other guys who are pretty good, too. We have to block those guys when [Raiders LB] Denzel [Perryman] and those boys rally. They want to keep you in front, rally, and make a tackle; get turnovers. We just have to be sound, take what they give us and make our plays.”

On WR Mike Williams getting targets:

“You find him a way to get him the ball. Usually, it was just stop and go routes, now he gets it on everything. It’s harder for them, easier for us. That’s the stuff we like.”

On if the offense practiced Williams getting targets in training camp:

“I told you guys in training camp that boy was getting better, believe it or not. He’s been killing it, though. Four touchdowns.”

On his touchdown against Kansas City:

"I felt like I was in the end zone forever. He was just creating, and it kept me wide open. When you see it on film, you say, 'Oh yeah, that was nice.' He's a playmaker. That's what he does."

On if he and Williams are 'a top-three receiver duo in the NFL':

"Yes. I thought it three years ago. It's not a top-three, it's just one."

On the offensive scheme:

"Everybody gets a chance to eat. Everybody gets the ball. [QB] Justin [Herbert] gives it to everybody. He's not shy with one person down. It's tough to guard because you don't know who to double. Obviously, I'm going to get the double, but you don't know if I'm really going to get the ball. [WR] Mike's [Williams] getting third down catches, third down touchdowns. J.G. [WR Jalen Guyton] is catching third-down routes. It's tough to guard like that. You have to guard everybody, and [QB] Justin [Herbert] can run. It's tough."

On the potential of facing single-coverage from opposing defenses:

"I hope. Not yet, but I hope."

On Raiders QB Derek Carr's expectation of a 'Raider party' at SoFi Stadium:

"They do travel well, but it'll probably be 50/50. That's not good for a Raiders fan. They travel well, but we've been winning."