

Josh.Rupprecht@chargers.nfl.com ⚡ Jennifer.Rojas@chargers.nfl.com ⚡ Jamaal.LaFrance@chargers.nfl.com
Brock.Anderson@chargers.nfl.com ⚡ Lauren.Meyer@chargers.nfl.com ⚡ Danny.Markino@chargers.nfl.com

Chargers Media Availability

Monday, January 10, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On yesterday's game:

"It's unfortunate that we fell short. We didn't execute as well as we could have and as well as we would have wanted to. We had some penalties, some turnovers and some things that you can't have and expect to win."

On the season:

"I'm really proud of the way that the guys battled. It's been a tough year, for sure, but everyone has stuck together, they've worked hard and they showed up to work and gave their best effort every day."

On developing 'further comfort' in the offensive system:

"I still think that's something that we have to work on. It's Year 1 of that system, so there are going to be mistakes, there are going to be errors, it's all about getting better. As close as we were, it is Year 1. There are a lot of things that we need to fix and get better at."

On his takeaway from the season:

"A lot of growth. I thought we got a lot better as a team. Unfortunately, we fell short; we didn't make playoffs. That's the ultimate goal of this league, of this organization. For us, it's going to be an important offseason of working together, going into Year 2 with [Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley and [Offensive Coordinator] Joe Lombardi and this whole organization because I know that we have the talent, it's just all about going out there and executing."

On playing in games late in the season with playoff implications:

"Every game is super important. There are games that we could have looked back at this year and said, 'We could have won those.' We wouldn't have been put into a position of having to win a game to get into the playoffs, I think that's the tough part about the NFL because there are 32 really good football teams, there are 32 really good coaches out there that are getting their guys ready to play. It's up to us to be better and to go out there and have a great offseason and answer all these questions and to keep continuing to get better and to work hard and do all these things, so that when next season does come around, that we're ready to go."

On the value of having the same coaching staff and supporting cast heading into next season:

"I think we'll be able to build off of all the things that we did this season. There were some really good things and there were some not-so-great things. It's up to us to build off of those good things and correct those mistakes. To have a full year of film to look at and to get better from that, we have this year-long of work that we're able to analyze and go over this offseason, heading into next year, where we're more comfortable with the offense. I think that stuff will only help us."

On 'where he really grew and took the next step' this season:

"I thought footwork was one of those things that we really worked hard on this offseason and got better at. [Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks Coach] Shane Day, [QB] Easton Stick, [Offensive Quality Control] Chandler Whitmer, that quarterback room, we put a lot of work into that. I felt more comfortable in the pocket, finding check-downs and extending plays. Along those lines and just continuing to work on that because you can always get better at it."

On not making the postseason for the second-straight season:

"It's always about getting better. Unfortunately, we didn't execute the way we wanted to last night. Unfortunately, we fell short, it's up to us to answer those questions, to get better and to keep working hard."

On his outlook for the offseason:

"Not sure. I haven't gotten that far yet. That's something that we'll address here in the next couple of weeks."

On the team 'fighting back' from a two-touchdown deficit:

"We never quit. That offense that went out there, we were in the huddle together. We believed in each other. Like we have all year, we believed that we still could have won that game. It took all three phases. Unfortunately, we fell short. That's a tough part about the NFL. I'm proud of the way that those guys battled."

On his ability to consistently convert fourth downs:

"We believe in each other. We believe in the defense, as well. We went for that fourth-and-one 9n our own territory and the defense held them to a field goal, and that was big for us. That was an important play in the game. That's something that we'll definitely address going forward, as well."

On the decision to go for it on fourth-and-short in their own territory:

"We believe in the guys up front. The offensive linemen have done an incredible job all year of run blocking. Ek [RB Austin Ekeler] is the guy that we're going to hand the ball off to every single time and I know that he's going to fight for every yard."

On the offensive line's development throughout the season:

"They're competitors. We started with a group of five that we thought was going to be there for a while. That's not really how it goes in the NFL sometimes. The guys that stepped up — [G/T] Michael Schofield [III], [T] Storm Norton, [T] Trey Pipkins, [G/T] Senio [Kelemete], all of those guys — they did a great job of stepping up and filling those gaps. We believed in those guys all year, and they did a great job."

On the importance of WR Mike Williams:

"Mike's a special player. I knew, as soon as I got here, how gifted he was, and what he's able to do with the 50/50 balls. I don't think he gets enough credit for the routes that he runs and the separation. He does such a great job in practice, in games, in the meeting room and in the weight room. He's a really good teammate."

On 'when he felt most comfortable in the offense this season':

"I think that's still something that I'm searching for. It is Year 1, and it's an awfully tough offense to learn. We felt like we did our best. There's always still so much room for improvement. That's one of those things that we're going to have to address this offseason, watching all this film from this past year and getting better and continuing to learn about all the progressions, about all the protections, because there's so much. When we get that figured out, I think we'll be able to play some pretty good football."

On if this season 'was a building block':

"I think you have to look at it that way. It's unfortunate that we didn't make the playoffs. That's the ultimate goal of the NFL, but the way that everyone battled and they worked so hard this year, there's a lot of good things that have happened this year. It's unfortunate that it didn't go the way that we wanted it to, but I'd fight with those guys every day of the week."

On areas of improvement:

"There's probably a ton of room for improvement, but that's something that we're going to have to address in the next couple of weeks. We haven't spent too much time thinking about the offseason, so that's something that I will have to look at."

WIDE RECEIVER KEENAN ALLEN

On missing the postseason:

“It was just a tough game. *Sunday Night Football*, two teams fighting for it all. Trying to get into the tournament. I thought both teams laid it out on the line. I thought we did a great job of fighting all the way to the end, all the way down to overtime. Obviously, it came down to what it came down to.”

On the first season with the coaching staff:

“I thought it was good. I thought the culture has changed. I think we’re transitioning into a winning organization, getting back to winning the division and stuff like that. I think we’re trending in that direction. [Head Coach Brandon Staley] is building a lot of confidence in the culture and the coaching staff. We just have to be ready and do better next year.”

On the offensive balance:

“I thought it was a good balance. Everybody kind of touched the ball — [RB] Austin Ekeler, [TE] Jared Cook, [WR] Mike Williams. We both had 1,000 [yards]. Ekeler went crazy and had a lot of touchdowns, receiving yards out of the backfield. Everybody played a part. I think hats off to [QB] Justin [Herbert] being able to get everybody involved and the coaching staff being able to create the schemes to allow Justin to make those plays. I thought we did a good job.”

On QB Justin Herbert:

“I think his huddle control, being able to call the plays with control. Understanding what he’s saying. Understanding what we’re calling, what we’re running. Just having full control of the offense. I think next year he’ll be able to do it more. He’ll be able to understand what we’re doing more. Obviously, it’s the first year. He’ll be more and more comfortable.”

On the end of the season:

“I don’t know how to reconcile it. It’s going to be tough. I think we have a lot of pieces and a lot of talent on this roster. We made a lot of plays throughout the season. Obviously, we came up short. We didn’t make the plays that we needed to make to advance. We have to figure it out and be able to put it together.”

On WR Mike Williams:

“Mike has been phenomenal all season. I’ve been saying that he’s our big-play guy, our big-money guy. He makes the plays when it’s time to be made. He did it all season, for the money. This was definitely for the money for him. He stayed healthy. He was able to play and made big plays all the way through. He did more than he’s ever done, so hats off to Mike.”

OUTSIDE LINEBACKER JOEY BOSA

On missing the postseason:

“Obviously, it was a huge devastation after that tough game — tough-fought game, but we did go out fighting. You have to be proud of everybody on our team. I mean, we really gave it our all out there, which is what you ask for out there. It’s great to see everybody fighting and clawing to the last minute out there. I’m upset, of course, but I still look to the future and I see a very bright future with a lot of young talent. I see a group that was in their first year in a system — it’s a pretty complex system. It’s going to take a while to master. The fact that we had the year that we did, which was a pretty successful year in my books, I’m pretty happy with it.”

On how to make the postseason consistently:

“Keep playing together. Keep improving. As time moves on, we get more experience together. It’s only going to get better. There’s no drastic changes that need to be made. There are plenty of games this year here or there that could have been the difference. That’s kind of every year. It’s just a process. We have to keep pushing forward.”

On his season:

“It was okay. I’m going to definitely do my best to have a really good offseason this year. In my mind, I think my best year is to come next year. I want to have a really good offseason. I think I learned a lot this year about my game. I’m happy with the production that I had, getting those forced fumbles is good. I’m happy that I’m moving in the right direction on that front. It’s a new system, like I said, so I have to keep getting better in the two-point [stance]. I think I need to be more aggressive coming off the ball in a two-point stance in the run. I could be better in the run and definitely in some areas. I just have to keep improving. I’m happy I made it feeling alright. I’m happy I was able to have some production.”

On the end of the game:

“I mean, I was a little oblivious to what was going on. I was dead tired out there, just grinding and trying to do my best to stop them. The coaches are going to do what they do and that’s out of our control. I wasn’t sure exactly what was going on, but people obviously made the decisions. I honestly was just tired, trying to line up and trying to play ball.

“It was a battle, just a back-and-forth all game. We were in overtime. The amount of drives that we were out there for a bunch of plays — it was definitely a grind of a game all game long. I was just out there, focused. I guess I thought that they called the timeout. I wasn’t really exactly sure. My main thought was keep them out of field goal range and that was it.”

On the defensive scheme:

“I think that’s a hard question to answer after just a year of doing it. I think there are definitely some things that I just have to keep getting better at. I think as I continue — like I mentioned, getting off the ball in a two-point stance. I think I get a little lazy sometimes. I don’t really fly off the ball like I can when I get in a three-point stance. That’s not the scheme’s fault, that’s just something that I have to kind of get used to over time. The dropping, toward the end of the year I was really going to the call a majority of the time. The only time I would ever drop is if there was a motion or a huge switch in the receivers and we’d have to switch the call. It kind of adjusted as the year went on and I didn’t really end up in coverage much at all. As far as what I’m used to, it really wasn’t too different from what I’m used to playing nine-technique, playing the edge. It’s definitely a little more on the edge. I don’t mind the scheme at all.”

RUNNING BACK AUSTIN EKELER

On last night's game:

"There was a lot of 'what if,' scenarios after the game, obviously. There was like a clip of me and [Raiders LS] Trent [Sieg] talking after the game. I'm sure someone is going to ask me about that. A lot of 'what if,' scenarios. There's no way for us to know that they're going to run it out or if they're going to. They're not yelling over there, like, 'Hey, we're gonna run it out.' That's not happening. We have no idea. We're just playing it. Maybe [Head] Coach [Brandon Staley] didn't see something he liked and wanted to call a timeout and make sure we were in the right situation to play defense. It's unfortunate. I think we should play better during the rest of the game so that we don't have to be in that situation, which I know we can and we could have. Play it out. You're in a weird situation where it's like, if we tie — it was funny because I was having a conversation with Trent before the game. We went to high school together. That's how I know him so well. We graduated together and were best friends in high school, still friends to this day. It was like, 'Man, if it comes down to it at the very end, the only scenario that I see us really tying is if there's an end of the game field goal in overtime.' It literally played out like that. That was kind of funny. Obviously, unfortunately, we weren't able to get it done. What a crazy game. A battle that I'll never forget."

On his conversation with Raiders LS Trent Sieg after the game:

"People were DM-ing me on Instagram — players from around the league. They were just like, 'What was that conversation?' He was just like, 'Man, we were thinking about taking a knee.' It's like, ah really? But like I said, it's all the 'what ifs,' who knows? Who knows. Even their head coach came on and said that they were thinking about it, but it's easier to say when everything's played out. Maybe they kick a field goal from the 40 with no seconds left. Like I said, it didn't really matter and we just have to play better so that we're not in that situation."

On scoring 20 touchdowns this season:

"Man, I actually kind of got emotional this morning. I was sitting with my running back coach, Derrick Foster, and he's like, 'Man, just take a moment. Think about this. You went from undrafted out of this little, tiny mountain town and you led the entire NFL in scoring.' It's like, wow. What a journey it's been, man. It's been incredible, just coming in with the same mindset every year and really just chipping my way to a position where now I can say that I've established myself in the NFL. It's always come down to me being who I am. That was literally coming in and making the most out of my opportunity and building on that. That's what I've done every single year. That's what I tell — even when I talk to people, they'll be like, 'Man, how did you get to where you are?' It's my mindset was work and don't complain. Just continue to work as hard as you can and things will work out for you so that you can choose what you want to do. Just keep working. Keep working. Keep working. That's how I was raised and that's what has stayed with me to this point. That's what has gotten me all the way up to be able to even score 20 touchdowns in the NFL and lead the league in scoring. It's been a journey and I appreciate the question. Looking back, I can look back on it now because the season is over, it's like — man, that's something I want to build on for next year, right? Now, that's the new milestone. I want to build on that. It's definitely been a really, really incredible time and really assuring for me, as far as, man, this work that I'm putting in is paying off."

On if he even fathomed his production coming into the season:

"I mean, the way I work, I don't even have the tangible numbers. I don't have the stats in my mind when I come into the season. I don't even know what kind of stats I'm going to end up with, so I can't think, 'Oh, I'm going to lead the league in receiving yards, receptions,' or whatever. I just come in and I'm like, 'Okay, it's an opportunity to work. It's an opportunity to show that I can be efficient in this league.' That's really what I focus on. I focus on what's today? What's today? Today is let's be efficient in today's game. Let's be efficient and at the end of this thing we can look up. We'll look up at the end of this thing. If I get too caught up and be like, 'Oh, I'm chasing these numbers,' I think you lose sight of what really matters — and that's the work that you put in to get there. The journey is the most important part of the ride and getting to the end number. It's the journey. It's all about the journey. When you hear about the Mamba Mentality and you hear about these great people that have done great things in their lives, it's all about the journey, it's all about the people, it's all about what's gone into their success to get them there, which is then highlighted. That's just another thing — going out into the community. It really comes down to your mindset. People see so many different endings and finished products, but it's like, that's great, but you need to see the process to actually learn something from that if you're trying apply something from that situation to your life."

On his conversation with Sieg:

“It was something about [him saying], ‘Man, you guys took the timeout so we ran another play and got into range.’ We were just talking about the situation and how it kind of played out there. It was one of those, if we stopped the run maybe they would have let the time run out, but then they got into field goal range. Obviously, there’s no audio on it. I don’t really remember exactly what was said. I guess, regardless we could have played better to not even be in that situation. There was no way for us to know [whether] they were going to run the clock out. It’s just not realistic for anyone to be like, ‘Oh, they shouldn’t have called the timeout.’ [Head] Coach [Brandon Staley] obviously didn’t like something that he saw and so he wanted to get it figured out. All of these people that are coming out and telling Coach Staley, ‘What are you doing,’ it’s like, come on. How, from top-down, can you see that they were going to run it out? We’re on the field and there’s no communication like that. We have no idea. We have to play ball.

“They had to run one play, yes. They had to run one play, so we still have to stop them one more time, right? For them to get closer. I think they were on the 40-yard line or something like that. I mean, what are we talking about here?”

On QB Justin Herbert last night:

“People wonder why we go for it on fourth down. Well, there you go. If you’ve ever needed a display for it, that’s the confidence that [Head] Coach [Brandon Staley] sees and that’s what he knows he has. He knows that he has a guy that can go out there and do it. He showed that when his back is against the wall that, I think, he plays at an even higher level. Obviously, you get that feeling through the whole game, shoot, we’ll be unstoppable. This guy, man, I even had some players — [Patriots TE] Hunter Henry hit me up and was like, ‘Man, J-Herb is special.’ I’m like, ‘Yeah. That guy makes me want to play forever around him,’ because he’s a guy that, man, you just believe. If we’re on the field, we have a chance to go score and we have J-Herb as quarterback and a great O-line that has been protecting him? Like, wow, this is something special. We have a chance. We’re going to go get it done. I’m looking forward to coming and being his backfield buddy for as long as I can. I know that he’s going to be a great player and I want to be a part of that for as long as I can.”

On his mindset:

“I’ve only known one mindset for my entire life and that’s pounding posts into the ground, working back on the ranch. Working through all of my year-round sports. It was always that you have pressure on you to work. You have to work. There’s no real excuse, you just have to work. You have to get it done. Growing up like that, that’s all I’ve ever known. All I’ve ever known is just work as hard as you can because that’s your life — work — and continue to build, build, build. That’s been part of me forever. It’s one of those things that you can’t really — that’s just part of my upbringing. That’s who Austin Ekeler is. I’m all ready to go start benching. Look at my arms, I have to get these things back. That’s where my mind goes, Coach Staley says when one thing ends, it’s a new beginning. Alright, let’s begin again. Even [former Chargers QB] Philip Rivers used to say ‘Nunc Coepi’ — begin again. It’s so true. It’s all over the place. I’m looking forward to beginning that again. That mindset just stays with me.”

On his charitable activities:

“Through the Austin Ekeler Foundation — I appreciate you asking — we’ve actually done a few projects this year. We donated some washers and dryers to a school up in Watts, California. We donated 200 bags to the women’s center up in LA on Skid Row. We’ve raised 20,000 dollars for underprivileged football programs to help them have equipment and things like that. We’re going to continue to raise money and continue to get out in the community, continue to help. I don’t have any projects past the football one yet, but we’re always going to continue to push ourselves out there and really help the community where we see fit and where we can actually help provide tangible things that can be used for a long time to help people have opportunity.”

SAFETY DERWIN JAMES JR.

On the season:

“I feel like it was a great season. It didn’t end the way that I pictured it, but I felt like I stayed healthy and I feel like it was a great season for me.”

On his ‘takeaway from the season as a whole’:

“We didn’t finish how we wanted to. Looking at the beginning of the year, we knew where we wanted to be; in the playoffs. We fell short, but we have to come back home and work harder and get to that next season.”

On ‘if he wants to start talking about a contract extension’:

“When that time comes, we’ll take care of that. Right now, I’m just still thinking about this game that we just lost.”

On offseason plans:

“Rest and recover. Get the body and get the mind back right. Then, get ready for next season, have to get ready.”

On his season:

“I feel like I achieved a lot. Just want to say, ‘Thank you,’ to everybody who made that this possible, helping me get back home. I feel like next season is going to be an even better season. I’m getting comfortable in this defense. I feel like we’re going to make even more plays next year, just being in this defense for another year.”

On if this season was a ‘building block’ for future success:

“Yes, sir. I feel like we have a lot of great pieces. If you look around at every position, we had guys break records — had a quarterback throw for 5,000 yards, had two receivers over 1,000 yards, Ek [RB Austin Ekeler] had 20 touchdowns. There are a lot of great players that we have around here and a lot to build around. I can’t wait for us to come back stronger next year.”

On ‘what he will reflect on when looking back at his journey’:

“The relationships that I’ve built over this season and the guys that I went to battle with every week. We didn’t have all of our guys every game, but just putting the gameplan together every week to go out and try to get as many wins as we can, I feel like that’s what I missed the most when I wasn’t able to be out there. Being able to do that again, finally, and help the guys as much as I can, I feel like that really stood out to me the most.”

On if he was ‘surprised’ at the timeout called with 38 seconds remaining in overtime:

“No, I wasn’t surprised. We didn’t have all of our guys ready and set, the package that we wanted. They could have snapped the ball and gotten an easy first down. We needed to be ready.”

On being the defensive play-caller this season”

“It was smooth for me. For the most part, it was smooth. We were in all of our calls; we just have to execute and focus a little more. I feel like every game, we were lined up and ready to play. Just have to focus in and, like I always say, beat the man in front of you.”

On Head Coach Brandon Staley:

“We have his back. I run with my coach. That’s my coach. We support all of his decisions. When we went for it on the fourth down, we didn’t get it, but on defense, we held them to a field goal, so that didn’t matter. We just have to be ready and execute. Whatever coach goes with, we’re going to ride with him.”

DEFENSIVE LINEMAN JUSTIN JONES

On this season:

“There was a little setback to start, I was pretty bummed out. Speaking on the identity of our team as a family, those guys really kept me in it, kept me up and really kept me motivated. To really come back and fight and come back and be the player I was when I came back. I owe it all to them because without them I probably would have struggled and had a harder time than I was already having.”

On entering free agency:

“I haven’t really sat down and thought too much about it, but I can say now this is probably one of the best teams I have been ever a part of — hat’s including my career in football. The guys on the team, the coaching staff, I was just telling my D-line coach, ‘Everybody talks about the business side of football, but those who really truly enjoy football, they don’t see it as just football.’ I see it as family. These guys are my family. Whether I’m here, or whether I’m somewhere else, these guys will always be my family. I’ve never had anything like this.”

On the final series of last night’s game:

“At the end of the day with their field position, they are going to kick the field goal regardless. I don’t see our division rivals trying to end in a tie with the rival. That storyline doesn’t make sense whatsoever. That being said, they were going to kick the field goal regardless, our coach decided to make sure we had the best scenario to make it as long as possible just to give us a chance to fight again. If we had the opportunity, I feel like we defiantly would have come through. I don’t think there was any thought in a tie.”

On if he is ‘surprised’ that the team did not make the playoffs:

“100 percent. We play at a high level. We have guys who deserve to be in the tournament, we have guys who deserve to play their best balls in front of the word to show them, ‘Hey, the Chargers are for real.’ We showcased that last night, obviously it didn’t turn out in our favor, but we have some real ball players on this team. True ball players, like from the top to the bottom, and I stand by that.”

On third-down defense:

“You have a bunch of guys on the team, a bunch of really good ball players, who are trying to make plays for the team and really trying to be that guy for the team. Obviously, sometimes you get beat and sometimes you don’t, sometimes you get penalties, sometimes you don’t. There were a couple of times where a couple of penalties fell a few different ways. Obviously, they converted like that, as well. There are a lot of different variables that go into that. It’s not just one problem or one fix for the problem. We just have to keep working and get better at that aspect.”

On Head Coach Brandon Staley:

“Honestly, I feel like Brandon Staley is one of our biggest fans on the team. If anyone is cheering for the Chargers, it’s him. He is trying to put us in the best situation possible to make plays, the best situation for us to win the game. Whatever he decides is what’s best for us, we are going for it because we know he has our best interest at heart. That’s the biggest thing for us, we are on board. We are always on the same page.”

OUTSIDE LINEBACKER UCHENNA NWOSU

On lessons from Head Coach Brandon Staley:

“He taught me a lot. He taught me that every week has a life of its own. You have to treat every week individually; you never know what can happen. Just keep your head down and keep fighting. It’s a very long season — guys go up guys go down, COVID[-19], you have to be ready for it all. Anything can change at any moment.”

On how growing up in Los Angeles and playing collegiately at USC could potentially impact not returning to the Chargers next season:

“It’s definitely something you think about. You never know where you might end up, you start thinking about different possibilities, all the other places that could fit what you do. That definitely has been a thought on my mind. To be able to stay here would be great for me, great for my family. That’s where I’m from, why wouldn’t I want to be here?”

On if the defensive system ‘allowed him to flourish’:

“Absolutely. As you guys were able to witness this year, I feel like this system, I was very comfortable in what I was able to do. I was able to make plays, provide for my teammates, open up things for the guys and it would open up things for me. It went hand-in-hand and I was able to showcase my talents and what I ‘m really capable of doing.”

On this season:

“I feel like starting off the year, I started off pretty slow. I didn’t start off the way I wanted to. I definitely left a lot of things out there that I wish I had back, but as the season continued to go on I felt like I was able to step up for my team. Be more comfortable and played more to my strengths and I’m proud of what I was able to put out there. Like I said, there are things that I would like back, but I am proud of what I did. Hopefully, I can keep building off of it and hopefully people try to recognize it, that I’m capable of doing more.”

On his ‘turning point’ after the bye week:

“I think the turning point for me was when I was able to get my first sack of the year. I forgot what week that was, when I was able to get my first sack and finally get on that stat board. It was like a sigh of relief for me honestly. From there on I was able to say, ‘You know, I can finally do this’. Let the game come to me, don’t try to rush anything and just trust my preparation, hard work, and culture.”

TACKLE RASHAWN SLATER

On his rookie season:

“Overall, I think it had its highs and lows. I always look at it as the team goes as far as the line goes. There were moments where I could have been better to help the O-line and help the offense. For me it’s always about looking for improvement and that’s what I’m going to be doing.”

On yesterday’s game:

“Everyone knew what that game was. Especially during that time, it was now or never and everyone knew that on the field so it was definitely a battle. They have some really good players up front.”

On Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line Coach Frank Smith and Assistant Offensive Line Coach Shaun Sarrett:

“They’ve been huge. They have been a huge asset for me, them and the older guys on the O-line. I knew from the moment I was drafted that I was going into a room where I would have vets like, [C] Corey [Linsey], [G] Matt [Feiler], [T] Bryan [Bulaga], [G] Oday [Aboushi], [T] Storm [Norton] and [G/T Michael] Schofield [III]. Everybody there had years of experience that I was able to learn from. Ever since OTAs is when they started being mentors and teaching me the way things go. I think that was huge. Frank and Shaun were, too, as far as simplifying things and helping me build confidence in my technique. Those guys are very helpful to me.”

On challenges he faces this season:

“Some of it comes from not playing my last year in college. Some of it was my technique. For any rookie, I feel like there’s a huge jump that gets talked about all the time but the level of competition is like you’re playing the best team every week. Everyone was the best in college and now they are competing at a really high level no matter who you’re going against.”

On the offensive line’s development as the season progressed:

“I feel like we really came together as a unit. I feel like it was evident on film that we were getting comfortable with each other and building more and more chemistry throughout the season.”

On his ‘biggest takeaway’ from this season:

“My biggest takeaway is the small margin of error. How many games this season that came down to like three, four, or five plays? Every single game can be like that when everyone is competing at the level they are. For me, its knowing that what separates good from great is those four plays a game. It really does come down to the wire like that. You have to have that edge. You have to be prepared and precise in your execution and preparation.”

On QB Justin Herbert:

“He’s everything I thought he would be and more. You see it like last night. Are you kidding me? The things he’s able to do is just unbelievable. There is never a situation were in where we feel like were out. Like last night, I don’t think anyone for a second lost hope just because we know who we have. We know, as the O-line, if we give him time, or even if we don’t give him time, he’s going to do some freakish things. It’s awesome to be able to play with a guy like that who competes hard every week. It’s such a huge blessing, honestly.”

On ‘how good he thinks he can be’:

“As good as I want to be. I feel like, the biggest limitation is always competing against yourself. I feel like I can build a lot off of this season and that’s going to be my challenge. If you rest of what happened in the past, then you’re doomed to fail. This season is out the window and I’m going to be searching for ways that I can get better and I know there are a lot of ways I can. I’ll just be taking it one step at a time.”

On being named to the Pro Bowl:

“Think it’ll be a really cool experience. I’m always huge on picking the brains of other guys so to be around some of the guys there will be beneficial to me. Just learning how they approach the game, some things about their technique, and seeing how they prepare and stuff like that. It’ll be a really cool experience, which I’m looking forward to.”

WIDE RECEIVER MIKE WILLIAMS

On last night's game:

"I feel like we gave ourselves a chance to win with being down so late in the game. I've been thinking about what I could have done more to help my team win, that was basically it. I feel like I could have done more."

On his season:

"It was pretty good. I wanted to have a career year — that was the main thing for me, to have a career year. Obviously, as a team goal, I wanted to make the playoffs and have a chance to play in the Super Bowl, but we fell short of that. Individually, did pretty well."

On if he would like to return to the Chargers next season

"Yes, I would like to. I don't like changes. I feel like I have built some lifelong friendships here with the guys in this organization, on and off of the field. I like the organization, I like the people that I come to work with every day. Hopefully, things work out on both ends."

On his success this season and if he 'thinks back to prior seasons as to why he wasn't utilized the way that he is now':

"A little bit. Not getting the chance to do those types of things, not even doing it in practice or seeing if I would be able to do it, but this year, just getting the opportunity to do it, I feel like I've shown that I'm capable of doing those types of things to get the ball into my hands, to make things happen, to get the catches up and get yards after the catch. That was the main thing, main focus of the coaches; their plan was for me to get a lot more catches because they've seen that in my career, I didn't have a lot of catches, so they wanted to get me routes to get the ball in my hands and make things happen after that."

On Staley's 'vision' for him:

"The first time that I talked to Coach Staley, he was saying how in the past, playing against me, they wanted to take the deep ball away because they noticed that I wasn't catching many short passes. He said that he wanted to flip the script and get me a lot of in-breaks, a lot of slants, a lot of smokes, to get the ball in my hands. I'm a big body, physical receiver, so I feel like I can play with the ball in my hands and make plays like that. That's what he kind of wanted to do this year, flip the script by not just, necessarily, be a deep threat, but get the ball in the intermediate area and make plays like that."

On Herbert's ability to execute in 'do-or-die' situations:

"It was big. There were a lot of fourth downs, long fourth downs at that. A lot of situations that we were put in that we needed a play to be made. He made some throws that I felt like a lot of quarterbacks can't make. He trusted us to go make the plays. That was the main thing, I feel that we had trust in everybody to go out there and make plays — it didn't matter who he was throwing the ball to. J.G. [WR Jalen Guyton] and [WR] Josh [Palmer] had some big plays. I think Josh's touchdown was on a fourth down, too, right? Yeah, that's crazy. Everybody was just showing up, making plays, just trying to give us a chance to win."

On his touchdown:

"I saw a clip of it. It was simple to me. I don't know what happened. I didn't see it during the play, but after I watched it, everybody did kind of stop and look at the next person like, 'You're supposed to be there,' while I have the ball running. I just tried to outrun the safety. He had a pretty good angle, so I didn't have anywhere else to go."

On 'his NFL journey':

"It's been fun. I feel like I've gotten better and better every year. Every year, I try to find something to get better at in my game to make my game better. I feel like year-in and year-out, I've been doing that. This offseason, I'll try to get better so that we won't be in this position, just try to help my team win ball games; that's the main thing. Get better, better my game, and come out and be a better player next year."