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Chargers Week 1 Media Availability

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR JOE LOMBARDI

On if there is a 'first day of school feeling' leading into Sunday's game:

"There is a little bit of that. There is certainly a little excitement and a bit of anxiety mixed in with the first game, especially with a new staff. You can look at their history, but the players matching the scheme is really what you want to take a look at on film. That always adds a little bit of stress. Any first game is a little bit like that. You want to go out and play sound and be ready to make any adjustments that need to be made as you're looking at what they're doing. There is a lot of excitement for sure."

On preparing for Raiders Defensive Coordinator Patrick Graham's defensive scheme and the benefit of playing against Graham's defense last year on the Giants:

"I guess we'll see what they do to see how valuable it is. I think you have an idea of what their structure is, their front structure. Any good coach is going to adjust to the players they have. I know that Patrick Graham is a good coach. They have a different edge situation in Las Vegas with those rushers than they did with the Giants, and I'm sure that's going to change a lot of how they approach defense. Different DBs, that may change some of how they play coverage. You want to go out there and run plays that your guys are comfortable with that they feel like they can find answers and start getting the feel as the game goes on and ready to make adjustments as you see how it's different than maybe what we were expecting based on the Giants."

On T Trey Pipkins III earning the starting job at right tackle and the competition with T Storm Norton:

"I think they were very close. I think I said it before that as you just watched them back-to-back, Trey was a little further from the quarterback at the end of the pass, maybe, and maybe a little bit more movement in the run game. It was a close battle so I think they both played well this summer. Trey just really improved on his consistency from the year before, but we're excited about both of those guys."

On the Raiders' front seven:

"They are very good. If there is any good news, it's that we faced some elite rushers all during camp. Those tackles are used to facing guys that can get out after the quarterback. It's definitely a challenge. Something that you have to be aware of those guys every single play. It's a lot easier if they only have one really good edge player, but they have two elite guys, and so we'll have our work cut out for them, for sure."

On Raiders DE Chandler Jones:

"When you have a rusher that's got the length he does, his arms are at the far end of the bell curve for length. The way that he tempos his rushes is challenging. He switches it up. It's hard to get a beat on him as a tackle. The way he rushes is not as consistent maybe as some other guys. He's got a really good change of pace. Obviously, a very smart player. He's been in some really good programs and talent is always good."

On if he is 'expecting more variety' in where the edge rushers will line up:

"We're not 100 percent sure. We think, probably, [Raiders DE] Maxx [Crosby] is more comfortable over there. When you're in this structure, if they are in base defense, they certainly can switch. That's part of the first game jitters trying to figure out exactly what they're doing. We'll find out soon enough."

On G Zion Johnson's progression in training camp:

"I think very well. He's got a maturity about him that is a little bit more so than your average rookie. When he gets on somebody, he stays on them. He is a very sticky blocker and he's got power. I'm sure there will be some rookie things that we'll have to work through, but probably less than most rookies just because of his maturity."

On if Johnson's progression is 'in the same place' as T Rashawn Slater's progression this time last year:

"I think so. I think there are a lot of similarities there."

On how many adjustments there will be in-game with facing a defense with a new coordinator:

"We don't know. I think it depends. You go in with a plan and if they are matching kind of what you planned for, then you still have some adjustments. But if it's a wholesale difference, then there will be a lot. I think it goes back to the first question. That's part of the anxiety of facing a new staff in game one. It's a little bit like the Cowboys last year in game two. We kind of were very aware of what [Cowboys Defensive Coordinator] Dan [Quinn] did in Atlanta. In the first game, and even in preseason, you could see a little bit of variety from what we were used to. You weren't 100 percent sure, but it was a lot more comforting getting them game two than if we had gotten them game one."

On RB Sony Michel:

"Another guy that's really smart and very mature. He's picked things up kind of at a surprisingly quick level. We had some pressure reviews out there and there are some things that he didn't have summer camp with us that he's working through. Just knowing what to do and where to line up, it's been impressive. A very, very smart, mature guy. Another guy that's been in some good programs and kind of knows how to act like a pro."

On the advantage of having three 'three-down running backs':

"It's super helpful. Guys that you can rely on in all of the different situations. If there is an injury, you're not out there unsure of how these guys are going to respond to situations that they're not used to, or that you had hoped that they were not in. Having those guys, all that we trust on three downs, is very valuable."

On if the team gave WR Keenan Allen 'things to work on' this past offseason:

"I think every player you have that kind of, 'Hey, here's what we want to improve on.' Probably less with him maybe than some other players [*laughter*]. He's felt a little more sudden this year. I think he's motivated and ready to go. He is another guy that is such a pro that you know that he's working and improving every day."

On TE Gerald Everett:

"I think there are a lot of things that we are excited about with him in free agency. You could almost feel it yesterday. He felt a little faster in practice as he was zoning in on his game plan. So we're excited to see him get going, for sure."

On if he 'checks in' with rookies before their first game 'to see where they are mentally':

"I think you are always managing that stuff with your whole team. We'll certainly talk to [Johnson] and make sure he's comfortable. That's the big thing that I tell him. It's usually for the quarterback, but for any player, if there is anything that you are uncomfortable with -- if there is a play or if there is a volume -- man, we can cut plays. We have plenty of plays on our call sheet. We're always checking in with those guys and making sure that when that whistle blows on Sunday, that they are ready to go 100 miles an hour."

On if he 'checks in' with former New Orleans Saints Head Coach Sean Payton:

"Not since training camp started. I should probably give him a call. I'm sure he's enjoying life and doing well."

On if Payton 'is a good sounding board' for him:

"For sure. You don't know how much he's paying attention, but if he's watching our games, then he's going to have some opinions, and they will be good opinions. He's always a good resource."

On the Raiders' secondary:

"They have [Raiders CB] Rock Ya-Sin from Indianapolis. A strong, good tackler. Their nickel, we haven't seen him as much outside, but we think that's where he'll start. Another good, savvy player. Their safeties are good players. 25 [Raiders S Tre'Von Moehrig] has a lot of range, and we know what a good tackler 24 [Raiders S Johnathan Abram] is. They are a talented group. They have strengths and weaknesses like everyone else, and that's going to be part of that early game, figuring out how they are deploying those guys and what they are asking them to do. Based on who they had with the Giants, they had a certain coverage profile that they ran and you're not sure if that's what they're going to do with their current secondary. That will be a part of that first half getting a look at how they're playing us."

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR RENALDO HILL

On the approach to preparing for a team with a new coaching staff:

“That’s been the biggest thing, the mystery, because they didn’t play a lot of players that we’re expecting to do big things for them this year and you’re not able to anticipate where those guys are lining up. So our approach is that you try to visualize it, you try to cover all of those bases of where guys could potentially line up. At the end of the day, we have to be able to go out and play our scheme and be able to make adjustments on the fly.”

On the difficulty of ‘figuring out’ how the new offensive scheme will utilize WR Davante Adams:

“It definitely is because they already have premium number ones at that position with [Raiders WR Hunter] Renfrow and [Raiders TE Darren] Waller. Now, you add Adams into the picture, it’s a lot of things to cover for our end. We have to make sure we do a good job of trying to move the down around, and once the game is taking place, we have to be able to make early adjustments. Sometimes you try to wait until halftime and it may be too late. We have to do a good job of making sure that we’re locked in, whether it is coaches on the field or people up in the box so we can make those adjustments, so we can play the scheme that we’re going to see.”

On what ‘moving the down around’ means:

“It could be having the coverage to the left or the right, or to the field or to the boundaries. We just have to make sure that we’re mixing it up, making sure that they are not identifying a particular guy, maybe by itself. Continue to move it around just so that we can cover up guys if we need to. Then once we kind of figure out what they are doing, we can kind of put our feet in the ground and play some football.”

On if ‘moving the down around’ means mixing coverages:

“Yes. Sorry about that [*laughter*].”

On preparing for Raiders Head Coach Josh McDaniels’ usage of running backs:

“It’s definitely difficult. You try to visualize who those guys were in the past in his time at New England and how they deployed them. Going into this game, you don’t know if they may come out with two halfback sets. They have a lot of running backs that they kept on the roster. We just have to be prepared for who is in the game and kind of what they’re characteristics are.”

On the connection between QB Derek Carr and WR Davante Adams, dating back to their time at Fresno State and his time coaching at Wyoming:

“I know it because I was in that movie [*laughter*]. I was at Wyoming during that time. I saw the chemistry live and upfront. I don’t think that’s going to be a problem with them two meshing because they were dynamic then and I’m sure that they are much more experienced now. They are going to be ready.”

On going against Carr and Adams during their time at Fresno State and his time coaching at Wyoming:

“You wanted to close your eyes at times [*laughter*]. That’s what you wanted to do, but you just saw an unstoppable force. They had other weapons, as well, with that receiving core. They maximized what they had. They had a lot of skill on the outside lanes and they attacked.”

On if he discussed Carr and Adams’ partnership from Fresno State during preparations this week:

“I don’t even want to think about that [*laughter*]. Like I said, that’s a movie that I saw. I wanted to close my eyes [*laughter*]. But this is a different group that we have, as well, and I’m confident in the guys we have. We just have to go out and play our game.”

On if the defense has to ‘change its configuration’ if CB J.C. Jackson does not play this week:

“We have our game plan. Obviously, if J.C. is in there, it changes the dynamics of moving the down around possibly. I think we have to do those things early in the game as well because like I said, we don’t know how they are going to deploy those guys. It’s going to be a game-time decision with J.C. and we’re going to see how it plays out, but the rest of the guys are ready. The game plan is going pretty well and he’s ready to mix in there if we need him, if that comes to it.”

On if Jackson's presence in the game 'allows him to have more flexibility' with other defensive backs:

"It's a possibility, but then you also have the element that if he were to stay on one side, maybe that's not moving the down to him, too. I think it gives us a lot of different things that we can do, but we're ready. We have both things available if that's the case, if we want to match up or if we want to leave him backside."

On CB Michael Davis' comfort in the defensive system:

"He's much more confident. He's not thinking about the call or the technique. He knows exactly what it is and it's allowing him to play fast, allowing him to focus on his technique, whether that's press alignment or playing off. He's done a great job this offseason of putting himself in position to attack the ball. Not much so playing the receiver, but going and attack the ball, so that's really helped. I think he's much calmer. I think he's ready for the challenge."

On OLB Khalil Mack's development since OTAs:

"I knew he was a football guy that dove in fully, but every moment that I look over, him and [OLB] Joey [Bosa] are talking about the run game, the pass game, the pass rush. He's fully invested in it and that's the one thing that you couldn't see from afar, but when you are up close and personal, every moment is a ball moment. He's talking everything and a lot of times when you have a guy who has a lot of sacks, you think of his pass rush. But he's talking about setting the tempo in the run game, how those two will work together, and then the pass rush, how that plan will come together. They are constant with it and that's the one thing that I didn't know because I wasn't attached to it."

On LB Kenneth Murray Jr.:

"He is another guy that is way more confident [this year]. Just being able to sit in the linebacker room, he makes all of the checks, he's talking to those guys more, he's more vocal. I think he's itching a lot just because of the injury bug and he's ready to get out there and let it rip. More comfortable in the scheme, second year, so I think that's going to allow him to play a lot faster and he's already a fast individual."