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Chargers Week 11 Media Availability

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR JOE LOMBARDI

On the Steelers' pass rush:

"I think that their pass rush has been very good. I think that they're fourth [in the NFL] in sacks, so they are a team that can put pressure on you. That's a challenge, but it doesn't mean that you can't go deep. You just have to be smart about when and your protections and all of that. We'll see how it all works out. That will be the big challenge, the protection and their pass rush."

On developing continuity within the offense:

"I don't see a lot of mental errors from the guys out there. I think if you're going to talk about that, there may be some timing issues with plays that, maybe, they're not as used to. The more reps that you get, I think the better it is. As guys play together and get that experience together, that always helps."

On WR Mike Williams not receiving 'as many' targets as he did earlier in the season:

"The way that the defense presents itself sometimes decides where that ball goes. The last couple of weeks, we've certainly been making an effort to get him the ball more. But, maybe in a particular look, he was primary, but the particular look took them away or the ball got batted down or something of that nature. I do think there is some just variance and luck to that, but I do continue to expect him to be involved and to make catches every game. If I were to answer your question, I'd say that I think it's more a little bit of randomness, as far as the way the defense is playing. Is he going to have a 10-catch game every week? Probably not. But, I do expect his numbers to start creeping up again."

On WRs Joshua Palmer and Jalen Guyton:

"Jalen, obviously, is kind of our speed guy. We're continuing to work that part of his game. With Josh, he's really been coming on lately. It's nothing necessarily to do with Jalen's play as much as we just see Josh ascending and wanting to get him more opportunities in there. I think that they both have a role. They both have their own skillset. Each play, we kind of tag which guy is in there, depending upon what we're asking him to do. Expect them both to stay involved in the game, but I think that Josh's reps have been creeping up lately and that's a testament to him and his development."

On the third-and-four incompleteness intended for Palmer:

"I think that he got in there maybe a little quick. If you're going to talk about continuity, that's a play that we haven't run as much. Maybe a little bit more depth there. I still thought that he could have caught it. I think that just the timing and tempo could have helped them out a little bit."

On the increase in three-and-outs:

"Some games, maybe we haven't played as well as we could have. I don't know what the stats say, but I would guess that our yards per drive is higher in the NFL, maybe — top-10, at least. We're always trying to avoid that. We're always trying to keep drives going, keep them successful. Again, everything is a small sample size at this point. The first four weeks were a small sample size, and the next four were a small sample size. I don't think that'll be something that will continue, a high percentage of three-and-outs. It's just calling the right plays, executing them and getting in that rhythm."

On the 'downfield threat' at wide receiver:

"I think Mike [Williams] is always a downfield threat. To think of the number three receiver is like a title that is bequeathed in somebody. I think that it's a role. Depending on the play, who is fresh and what they're doing, that's kind of how you decide who goes in the game. Jalen [Guyton] is not going to go away in our offense. He will still be there. Sometimes we want Josh [Palmer] and Jalen in the game and that doesn't mean that Mike or Keenan [Allen] is the fourth receiver, it's just that they need a break or there is a role that we want those guys to play because of that play. Jalen's speed won't go away."

On RB Larry Rountree III:

"He's a big, powerful back. When you get in those situations, he's a guy that you'd like to give him the ball. He's another rookie that is coming along. He's a lot better today than maybe he was eight weeks ago. You're always working, as a coaching staff, on the development of those young players, knowing that they're not ready to have the role that [RB] Austin [Ekeler] does or a veteran has. That experience is a little bit like with [TE] Tre' [McKitty]. The first game that he was up, he had this many plays. We are just increasing his role. As we get confidence, he gets confidence. You just keep monitoring it and watching it and figuring out what it is that you trust them to do, that they trust themselves to do. Down there on the goal line, he's one of those guys in short yardage that you feel like, 'Man, if we give him the ball, he's going to get the yard that we need.'"

On the importance the run game has on developing continuity:

"I think that's huge. If you can be successful and efficient running the football, it opens up a lot of offense for you and it makes the defense have to defend a lot more and to play you a little bit more honest. That's something that's always helpful."

On his evaluation of the run game:

"Everything you always want to be better. You want the running game to be better, you want the passing game to be better, you want the protection to be better. I think that our running game has been big at times. It's been big in crucial situations. I can't access off of the top of my head what our average per run is, but I think that it has been pretty efficient. An old coach once said, 'You pass to score, you run to win.' I think in some of those drives at the end of the game where we've held the ball and kind of finished with the ball, whether it was Washington or Philly, that run game has been huge in that, in crucial situations. I think our short-yardage offense has been really good, which is a credit to the running game. We need to keep working on it and getting better at it."

On if the drops will 'even themselves out' as the season progresses:

"I do think so. I don't know how many drops each guy's had, specifically, but I think we all trust Mike Williams to catch the football and we all trust Keenan Allen to catch the football and Austin Ekeler. I think those guys have a body of work that kind of speaks for itself. I always hark on — have you ever taken a drink of water and swallowed it wrong? How many reps do you have on taking a drink of water? You can still mess it up. Or, you bite the side of your mouth when you're eating. With great players, sometimes the water goes down the wrong pipe. I think that it will even out."

On drops coming at key points in the game:

"I think it sticks out when that happens. Because of the body of work that those guys have, you trust them. I don't think that cast of characters has all of a sudden forgotten how to catch a football. It's not something that you just sweep under the rug. It's staying after and getting work on the JUGS [Machine] and catching more balls. I don't think that we have a group of guys with poor hands, that's for sure."

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR RENALDO HILL

On fumble recoveries:

“The main objective is us getting on the ball. His comfort level was, ‘Hey, let me get on it, get the ball back to [QB] Justin [Herbert] who we know can do some awesome things when he has the ball in his hand.’ But we teach both of those things — city if it’s a crowd, get on it. We teach that if it’s in the country, you have the ability to scoop. But if you feel like, ‘Hey, I need to recover this ball and get it back to our offense that can move the ball and score points, let’s do so.’ The whole objective is getting ball.”

On how he inspires the defense to force turnovers:

“We tell them, ‘Hey if you get those opportunities, get them.’ What I like is guys are attacking the ball. They’re not hesitant, they’re aggressive, they know what they’re doing. There were a couple opportunities where we didn’t get it. But keep being aggressive, and those things will show. That’s what we want to do — we want to continue to be aggressive, know what we’re doing in our responsibility, and be in the right places. And good things will happen. We’re going to keep emphasizing that as well as the drills. We’re hoping that’ll turn in our favor.

On the run defense:

“We’ll continue to build. If a team gets 100 yards, we’ll feel like we did what we’re supposed to. But we see the results, we’re continuing to get better. We just want to be hitting at the right time, but we know we’re building in the right direction. We’re not taking a step back. Guys are playing the techniques that we talked about in the bye week, they’re getting better at that and it’s expressing itself in the games. We just have to continue to work at it, and we’re hopeful we’ll get to the place where we want to get to.”

On new techniques against the run:

“The biggest thing we did was scrape it off. Scrape it from the start and build this thing over. Just hearing the verbiage again, we wanted to make sure everybody was on the same page — players and coaches. That we’re all talking about the same thing and how we’re going to play it. We talked about this yesterday and how we installed, being collective so everybody can hear it. Not just the guys up front — this is how they’re going to play it — but the guys in the back to understand how the guys in the front were playing it. From the front to the back, they hear it in detail what everyone needs to do in order to be successful in the run game. The other thing we talked about is the technique portion of it. How do we want to play something? Still, when you’re coming into a new team, sometimes there is some carry-over that you fall back on some of the things you did in the past. We wanted to make sure to describe it in detail, take it into practice, work on those guy points in order for us to be better.”

On preparing for Steelers QBs Ben Roethlisberger and Mason Rudolph:

“We take a snapshot of both of those guys, prepare, and do the reports for if both of those guys are playing. Making sure that guys know certain things that Ben does versus Rudolph. I think we prepare that way. And for the guys who aren’t here right now, we make sure we do a good job of making sure that those guys are tied into the Zoom calls, that they’re understanding what we’re doing as far as the classroom goes. Obviously, they can’t do the physical. Making sure that they’re tied into the details, making sure we recap to those guys what happened at practice and those corrections there. We’re hoping that it’s still early in the week and if we get those guys back, they’ll be ready to go from a mental standpoint.”

On improvements in the defense:

“It was pretty much the same, the techniques — knowing where your help defender is, using your helpers. The other thing that I mentioned to those guys is overcommunicating in those situations. We had them behind the sticks a number of times, and you’re really not expecting that. But you can’t lay off the gas, you have to make sure that you’re overcommunicating to guys to make sure we can get off the field and give the offense the ball back. Those were the key points we hit on — those techniques and overcommunicating in those situations.”

On CB Tevaughn Campbell's pass interference on third-and-15 against the Vikings:

"The biggest thing is the technique. We had help defenders, whether it was on top or inside leverage. The one on the holding penalty, we lost leverage with a help defender inside. Just knowing where that help defender is helps us and communicating. Making sure the corner and safety are on the same page. In the one on [Vikings WR Adam] Thielen, he had a help defender in the back end. That would've helped him play underneath that coverage. We have to iron those things out, and that's what we've been emphasizing — making sure that we overcommunicate in those situations."

On the cause of the penalty and progressing defensively:

"It was technique and fundamentals on that play. In order for us to move forward, we have to clean up. Obviously, [CB] Chris [Harris Jr.] was communicating with the safety. He knew what the play was, he knew where his help defender was. Sometimes we talk about just making a play as well, too. I think it's a combination of both, and we need to make sure that we clear it up as coaches for those guys so those guys can be in better situations on third down. He was doing a good job of communicating; we just have to make sure that the eye communication is there so that everybody's on the same page once the ball's turned over."

WIDE RECEIVER KEENAN ALLEN**On reaching 8,000 career receiving yards:**

"It means a lot, hard work is paying off. Seeing results from all the offseason stuff, all the grind, all the hard work. Obviously, my teammates showing up, my quarterbacks, teammates getting me open, coming up with schemes, coaches — all of that."

On continuity in the offense:

"We're still building, still looking for the whole togetherness for the whole game. Trying to put that together and still working, trying to get better."

On the offense 'not clicking' against the Vikings:

"I think just a lack of execution, missing a couple of plays."

On recent losses:

"There's definitely frustration because you want to be successful, and we're so used to being successful. When it doesn't happen it's like, 'What's going on?' We do feel frustrated, but you just have to stick with it. It happens. It's the NFL, they get paid, too. They're big-time guys, too. It just goes with it. We just have to live with it and keep getting better."

On WR Mike Williams:

"I think we have to do a better job of getting him the ball and often. Mike's obviously a production guy. When he gets it, he produces at a high level, too. He scores for us a lot. Obviously, we haven't been scoring and that probably has something to do with Mike not getting the ball. Just finding more ways to get him the ball, giving him fade balls, and hopefully just start making the plays. Obviously, he dropped the ball last week, so just try to execute."

On if the Steelers' defensive scheme is 'complex':

"A little bit but not really. Actually, when you watch it, it's not as complex as it has been. Obviously, with [S] Minkah [Fitzpatrick] in there they are running a couple different things. Outside of that, hopefully [LB T.J.] Watt doesn't play. If Watt plays, we'll have to scheme around him a little more. He is definitely a key player."

On where the offense can improve:

"Making plays. We didn't even have a broken tackle last week. Execution, we have to get better and play better together."

On players stepping up in offense:

"Anything at this point. We just have to put the ball in the end zone, help our defense out. The time of possession last week wasn't great. Like I keep saying, we just have to execute. It sounds easier than it is."

On Sunday Night Football:

“Every Sunday is fun. One o’clock game, four o’clock game, it doesn’t matter. Just to suit up and being out there with the guys having fun, it’s great.”

On keys for success:

“Playing together, helping each other out in whatever that may be. Offense, defense and special teams all coming together and making plays together, finishing the whole game”

On his level of comfort with QB Justin Herbert:

“I think we are very comfortable. I think we are confident. I think we go out there with great game plans and everything. Like I said, we just have to execute better on Sunday and put it on tape like I know we can.”