

Chargers Training Camp Media Availability

Tuesday, August 15, 2023 ⚡ Jack Hammett Sports Complex ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR KELLEN MOORE

On S Derwin James Jr.:

"Derwin [James Jr.] is one of the best in the league. He can do so many things. I think that's, obviously, the rarity of him. What makes him so special is his ability to line up in so many different places, so you can't assume that he's going to line up in one particular spot. It sometimes makes it challenging on some of the communication declarations, as far as knowing in the game, who are we responsible for in protections because sometimes he's a safety, sometimes he can be in a backer alignment, sometimes he can be in a nickel alignment. He has all of these different roles and it makes it hard."

On joint practices:

"I think it's just a continuation of what we've emphasized. It's another opportunity against a different defense. Structurally, it's always good. This is what makes these joint practices awesome, is that it's a different structure than what we've practiced against. It will be good for us to see that stuff. At the end of the day, it's about operation, execution and just continuing to refine everything."

On importance of joint practices to the starters:

"Certainly, these joint practices historically, for most of us, really emphasize the ones. You get a ton of reps in there. It's huge."

On QB Easton Stick:

"I thought Easton just operated at a really good level. I thought he did a nice job. We had a three-and-out, and then after that, just settled in there and just played ball. I thought his two-minute drive was phenomenal. Picking and choosing when to use his legs, made good decisions with the ball, aggressive when he needs to be and then take some completions. I thought he did a really, really nice job. I just loved the way he operated the whole thing."

On if the preseason game can lift Stick's confidence:

"Oh, certainly. For Easton to be in this situation and take advantage of that opportunity, continue to build off what he's done throughout this whole offseason, I think, is huge. He's in a really good place."

On QB Justin Herbert:

"I think Justin is obviously one of the best in the league for a reason. We know the physical [traits]. I think the really fun aspect of it when you're an outsider is not knowing just the level of his understanding of the game of football and his ability to process. It's rare. It's special. He's done a really nice job with it."

On if he will 'be on the sidelines during games':

"Yes, I will be on the sidelines."

On what he 'likes about being on the sideline during games':

"Just the communication aspect of it, being able to communicate throughout a game with the players. When you have to make little adjustments here and there, we can all kind of be there right together and go through that process."

On the wide receivers:

"The receiver room has been awesome. It's a really cool group because, again, it has a balance. It has the veteran experience of Keenan [Allen] and Mike [Williams], then you have Josh [Palmer], who took advantage of last year and is continuing to build on his role. Q [Quentin Johnston] and the other guys, certainly, in that room that we'll count on. It's a really deep group. They do a lot of different things. I think they complement each other really, really well. It's been fun just kind of giving them different opportunities throughout camp and just seeing how it all progresses."

On WR Quentin Johnston:

"I think it's awesome for Q to have those guys. It's a great resource in that room to lean on those guys who have played a ton of football. For Q, it's like any rookie. You're exposed to a lot of football during training camp. That's the awesome part. He's done a great job of just handling that and continuing to build each and every day, get better, and then we kind of see as it progresses where all these roles settle down into."

On Johnston improving:

"There's both sides to that thing. Certainly from a player's aspect, they're going to do everything they can. Coaches, we're always going to try to navigate this thing and find different ways, can we help any player in whatever circumstance it may be. Q had a couple [of drops] in there. I thought he responded really well. I liked his demeanor. I liked the way he handled those things because those things will happen in games. We're not immune to those things. They happen. You just have to keep playing."

On the competitiveness of practice:

"It's certainly been really competitive. We got in some really tight situations, as far as overtime and some low red zone stuff. I thought there was some really good work in there."

On RB Elijah Dotson:

"A lot of times when you come into a situation like he did, you get a couple of [opportunities] and then you kind of take advantage of those and get a couple more, and a couple more. I think he's just done that awesome, stacking those days. Certainly, as opportunities continue to progress for him each and every day when we do give him more, he takes advantage of it in the run game, in the protection. All of the things that we ask running backs to do. It's been really good."

On Johnston in the red zone:

"Q has a history of using his size and strength down there. We'll continue to definitely try to emphasize that as we build these things out."

CORNERBACK J.C. JACKSON

On training camp and how he is feeling physically:

"I'm excited to be back in training camp with the team. I'm working each and every day. There are going to be some good days and some bad days, but I just have to keep working, keep going. It's going to be a big year for the team, especially on the defensive side of the ball. I can't wait to see what we have this year."

On his level of confidence:

"I'm still working on it. There's still a lot of room for improvement, a lot of room to grow with the teammates — on the back end especially. It's still early right now, we're still in preseason. I'm getting there. I'm working my way there."

On 'building up trust' with his knee:

"It's just work. It's nothing bigger than a challenge to me. I look at it as just work, becoming who I need to become — coming out here each and every day, being a good teammate, and working my ass off [laughter]."

On 'coming off of the field' earlier in camp:

"Just a little soreness. Things like that are going to happen, coming back from a big injury like I had last year. I just needed to take a day or two off to rest it and recover. Now, I'm back, and I'm back practicing."

On if the 'soreness was frightening':

"No, I just needed to relax it, let it cool off for a little bit. That was it, nothing major."

On his 'growth in the classroom':

"I would say that this year, it has slowed down for me way more than last year. Last year was my first year. I was still trying to understand the defense, still trying to understand my teammates, the coaches. This year, I feel like I'm at home, and I'm playing way faster — you can tell that I'm on it. The coach says the call, I'm already on it. I get it this year. I just get it, I understand it."

On upcoming joint practices with the Saints:

"I'm excited. I can't wait to see where I'm at. I get to compete against not just my teammates, now it's against another team. It's going to be fun. I love to compete and I can't wait until they get here."

On if he is 'projecting himself to be out there Week 1':

"I don't to put a projection on myself for right now, at the time. Like I said, I'm working each and every day to be ready — Week 1 or Week 3, whatever week it is, I'm going to be ready, mentally and physically."

On using practice to build his confidence:

"I would say that building confidence, it starts in practice. You have to build good habits and create good habits on the practice field for it to carry on to the game."

On competing against the Chargers' offense every day:

"We have the best receiving corps and one of the best quarterbacks throwing the ball. This is how I'm going to build my confidence, just practicing against these guys. I don't think that I'm going to see a better offensive team than I see every day in practice."

On 'if there is a percentage that he can put on how he feels':

"I don't want to put a percentage or anything like that, but I feel good. Honestly, I do feel good. I'm ready to play football."

On if the 'expectation' is that he will participate in joint practices:

"Yes."

On if he will play in the preseason:

"No."

On goals for the season:

"Just building back my confidence, practicing every day. This is the only way that I am going to get better, just practicing every day. Not only on the field, I have to study hard, too, off of the field. I have to take all of the meetings serious, getting together with my teammates, learning each other, communicating, all of that is about training camp. That's what it is about."

On S Derwin James Jr. and 'what makes him a great safety':

"Just how fast he gets to the ball. His instincts, he just has something that you can't coach. The way that he plays, the way that he thinks — and not only that, he is smart, too. Derwin [James Jr.] is a smart football player. His communication, sometimes he just calls out the offense [before the play]. He knows the system. With him being here, already in the system for Year 5, Year 6, it's good to get with him. He helps me, he brings a lot of help to my side. That's how I look at it."

DEFENSIVE LINEMAN CJ OKOYE

On the reactions of his teammates after his sack on Saturday:

"It was an amazing moment for me. Watching it is like putting all this together, in one, it was a moment for me. It was an amazing moment seeing my teammates, see my D-line room go crazy like that. I wish to go back there again."

On how the play unfolded:

"It was the play we normally run, so we just need to run and twist. We communicated and [DL Jerrod Clark] said, 'I'm going in, you just wrap around.' He did a very good job, I just needed to finish it."

On what the support from the defensive line room means to him:

"Teaching someone something and seeing them make progress shows that you're a good teacher. I believe — I know I need to learn more but seeing them go crazy like that for me it means a lot. I know if I asked them for more, they can give me more. It's an amazing feeling seeing my D-line room go 100 for me cause they know I would do the same for them."

On the biggest lesson from being with the team:

"Learn more, you don't know where someone holds — I don't even know if I'm going to play the next snap so every opportunity I get, I go 100 percent."

On being 'surprised' by his progress:

"This time last year, I was in Nigeria. I didn't even know if I would come to the [United] States or play football. Sometimes it hits me, 'You're in the States with the Chargers in the NFL. You need to make the most out of it.' I'm shocked every day, but I still need to go out and do my thing."

On 'getting discovered':

"I started playing basketball — I played soccer when I was a little younger, not this big though, I was skinny [*laughter*]. When I started getting big and tall, I switched to basketball. I played in some leagues in Africa. In the game — I can remember like it was yesterday, it was February or March last year. I was in the game, and we won and I was going out and he just walked up to me — he was an ex-NBA player, he played for the Cavaliers in 2006 — he walked up to me and said, 'Look I have a tryout coming soon, I don't know if you can come.' I told him I don't do tryouts anymore and he said, 'No, not basketball, it's football.' I thought about it, and I said, 'Well I don't have anything to lose. I'll show up, do my thing. If they like me, fine. If they don't, I'll go my way.' I went, and I won't lie, I barely made it but seeing guys go crazy doing one-on-ones, I didn't know what I was doing but I knew I'm an athlete and I have to do what I need to do. If they say run, I run. I don't ask. If they say jump, I ask how high, just jump and do my thing. The camp was called The Uprise, from there we went to NFL Africa we did our thing, and we were selected for the international combine that was held in London. That was my journey. After the international combine we came to the States in January. I started playing football in January, pads and all."

On 'being a celebrity':

"I don't think I'm a celebrity yet, it's just my story. I have never played football, just magically got a sack. I won't lie, it's an awesome feeling but you don't go too high, you don't go too low just stay in the middle and do your thing. For me, it's just learning the most I can do, go out there and learn because we have the best d-line in the entire league. I want to learn more plays and learn more techniques."