

Chargers Training Camp Media Availability

Tuesday, August 9, 2022 ⚡ Jack Hammett Sports Complex ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR RENALDO HILL

On the defense's performance in Sunday night's scrimmage:

"I thought guys played hard, but I thought the execution, the way we wanted it to run, it wasn't up to our standards. You felt the energy a lot differently today when we come back out here in practice from the defensive side. I thought they played a lot more together, and it shows. We have to get those scrimmage performances, those preseason performances, looking like how we practice out here today. I'm looking for that improvement Saturday."

On his expectation for the defense:

"The biggest thing, just leading off what [Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley talks about, is becoming a complete defense, and that's at all three levels. We definitely want to be a team that stops the run. We want to be a team that, on the back end, takes the ball away. But, we know it starts up front with the run game. When we talk about it being a complete game, it's going to take all three levels. We all have to be connected. That's why these practices are so important, so we can get the guys out here and get them communicating and feeling each other out because there are a lot of new pieces on this defense. We know it's going to take some time. These practices are what we need right now."

On calling the defense today in the absence of Staley:

"It felt good. I usually do two-minute [situations] throughout parts of training camp, so it was pretty smooth. Just trying to be loud and communicate with the guys and give them the details that they need to go out there and play at a high level. It felt like a norm; I don't feel like it was anything different. It's kind of like what we go through throughout. I usually pick a period or two out where I'm usually calling it, so it was easy."

On which defensive players have had the Green Dot communication system in their helmets:

"We have all the backers up with Green Dots right now in practice. They all get a feel for it. We're trying to get the young guys to calm their tone down because the offense can pick up on a few things, but they're doing great. They're doing a great job whenever they have to be the signal callers, and then making sure everybody gets the information, getting everybody back in the huddle. Those are the things that we're emphasizing, but I'm happy with how the young guys have been controlling it out there."

On which linebackers have predominantly been relaying the defensive call:

"[LBs] Troy [Reeder], Cole [Christiansen], Damon [Llyod] and [Tyreek] Maddox [-Williams]. They all had the Dot at some point today. Felt good about how those guys were operating out there."

On if the acquisitions on defense not playing in the preseason is a ‘concern’:

“That’s why I mentioned that these practices are so important. The times that we can get live action and play in pads and get everybody out there together, those moments are important, and we need those. When those days come up, we have to have everybody ready, but at the same time, it is allowing these young guys to get experience. A lot of times, that’s how the season goes. You’re expecting to have all of your guys up and ready to roll, but then, in the NFL, something happens. It’s important that we all jump into this thing and make sure that we are locked in because, at some point, you don’t know who could be out there for you. It’s important that we get these good quality reps for everyone out here.”

On DB Ja’Sir Taylor’s development:

“He’s a savvy guy. He’s one of those guys that if he made one mistake that day, he won’t make the same mistake. You see a lot of growth in him, just sitting right next to [CB] Bryce Callahan, picking his brain every day in meetings. His growth potential, it’s really high right now. We expect some good things from him. Once those lights come on, we really want to see him perform at a high level because he has the mental and the physical to get it done. I’m happy with how he’s been performing.”

On S JT Woods’s development:

“The biggest thing, you play in that spread [offense] in the Big 12 and the run game is there, but they’re not asking them stick their face in it right now, and we’re asking him to read keys, see his key, then be able to react. He’s coming along. These last couple of days, he’s really progressed. He’s run some with the ones. We’re just mixing him in there. We’re trying to see if we can speed that development up, just like we were talking about the last time we’re out here. We know there are going to be steps. He’s working with [Assistant Secondary Coach] Tommy Donatell on fitting our blocks, using his length. All of those things matter to help him speed this process along.”

On Woods developing run defense techniques ‘considering what the Big 12 is’:

“They do play football over there [*laughter*]. But we know that it’s spread [offense] and we know that they’re chucking the ball around. It is a good conference. But, at the same time, he has never really had a full offseason to develop. He would go from football into track [in college], so he missed some of that development that you would get over there, whether that’s in the weight room with the other guys or doing the offseason program. Now, he’s a football player. He’s a National Football League player. He gets offseasons now, but he gets this time, even in the downtime — he doesn’t have class anymore — he can go over there and get some more work in. That’s what we’re hoping. We’re going to keep pulling him close and seeing what he can bring to the table because, when you look at his college film, he can get the football and he can run. He has range. We want that to be the highlight for him. We’ll continue to develop the things as we go.”

On the interior defensive line’s performance in Sunday night’s scrimmage:

“The run game, I didn’t feel like it was a big problem in the scrimmage. Those guys are doing what we’re asking them to do; to play square and get off blocks and separate and make plays. I saw that the times where they ran the football, so they’re doing the things that we ask up front. We just have to keep bringing the younger guys on, like [DL] Otito [Ogbonnia], keep getting him some live reps with the ones so that he can see what good looks like and feels like so. I’m happy with where the D-line is at. We just want to continue to progress and, hopefully, get better here.”

On if he is ‘starting to see some any separation’ among the competition along the defensive line:

“It’s still not a lot of separation. Those guys are playing hard. I think they know it’s competition and they’re laying it all out there. Not a lot of days off for those guys up front, they’ve been pretty much available all practice. We have some good competition with Foxy [DL Morgan Fox] and [DL Jerry] Tillery and [DL Christian] Covington. It’s going to be a dog fight until the end, and that’s the way we want it.”

On OLB Khalil Mack's influence on the rest of the defensive front in run defense:

"We feel good about both of our edges. When you see Khalil, he does such a good job in his pass rush of going from power and converting it his pass moves. He's starting there, so when we're talking about run stopping, he does a great job of using power and setting edges. That's not a concern for me, he's done that his whole career, and he'll continue to do it. He's shown that when he's been live out here. I like where he's at. I know he wants better, and that's always a good thing when he wants better when I already see good. But we're happy with his development and we're just going to keep this thing moving. He has a comfort level from being in this scheme before, so it's not taxing in there, as far as the mental, it's just allowing him to play fast when he is out there."

WIDE RECEIVER DEANDRE CARTER

On his role within the offense:

“Obviously, the majority of my career, I’ve been a returner. But as people can see, I can play receiver, too. That’s how I came into the league. I love our offense. We have a lot of freedom. Just trying to get on the same page with [QB] Justin [Herbert] and the quarterbacks. It’s been good. Just putting in the work.”

On his ability to ‘bend routes to gain leverage’:

“It’s really just receiver fundamentals, like Receiver 101. You always like in-breaking routes or out-routes. You kind of want to shave a little at the top so DB can’t undercut you. It’s kind of just basic wide receiver fundamentals and, obviously, I’ve been in the League for a while, so it’s something I’ve been working on for a while. But, you always want to protect the throw.”

On what he has learned about QB Justin Herbert off the field:

“Cool guy, real chill guy, from Oregon. They’re kind of chill up there, I would say. Real similar to the Cali vibe, I would say. So, he’s been really chill, a real good guy. Really good guy in the locker room, a great leader.”

On what he has learned about Herbert on the field:

“You guys see it every day. He’s that guy. He puts the ball on the money and throws dimes day in and day out. There’s not a throw on the field that he can’t make. I’m excited to be able to work with him and see how far we can go this year.”

On if Herbert’s accuracy ‘makes it easy for a receiver to adjust to a new offense’:

“Definitely. Sometimes when you go to a new team, there’s always a period where you’re trying to get used to the quarterback, their throwing motion and stuff like that. But Justin hits you in the chest every time. It’s not too much to get used to. Just catch the ball when it comes. It definitely makes it easier.”

On how hard Herbert can throw:

“He can throw that thing in there [*laughter*]. Probably about 102 miles-per-hour if he played baseball.”

On ‘coming to a team with quarterback stability’:

“It gives the offense a chance to gel and build that cohesiveness. We know who’s going to be the trigger man week in and week out. We know what he likes, how he likes to throw, how he likes us to run our routes. So, it just helps us build our camaraderie, and it allows us to add more stuff to the offense week in and week out because you know who is going to be back there playing quarterback.”

On ‘if his experience playing with multiple quarterbacks has helped him get up to speed’ with Herbert faster:

“Definitely. Not even just the quarterbacks, but just being in so many different offensive systems, everybody kind of runs similar concepts. They just call it something different. So, it’s easy for me to come in and associate, ‘OK, this play is called this in this offense here.’ So, it’s easy for me to pick up offenses. Quarterback-wise, just being able to adjust on the fly.”

On his adjustment to the wide receiver group:

“It’s been great. I actually have been working out with [WR] Keenan [Allen] for four years now. We have the same receiver coach in the offseason. But, being able to get out here and see him work day in and day out, it’s incredible. He’s the best route runner in the League, in my opinion. Every year since I’ve been in the League, I pull up his target tape at the end of the year and just watch him work. So, it’s been amazing for me to be able to get out here and watch him day in and day out. And then [WR Mike Williams] Mike Dub, big body, throw the ball up. There’s no ball he won’t be able to get to. We’ve got a special group. I’m excited to see what we do this year.”

On 'if he can model his game' after Allen:

"I'm not going to lie, I've been stealing Keenan's moves for some years, trying to anyway *[laughter]*. There is some stuff that you just can't do, just his body control, the way he moves. I've seen guys go out there and try to implement it. It doesn't necessarily look the same, but he's different, for sure. Anything that I can learn from him, take from him, I'm definitely trying to do."

On working with Special Teams Coordinator Ryan Ficken and the other returners:

"It's been great. Coach Ficken had a lot of success last year in Minnesota. He was one of the main reasons why I decided to come here. I was excited to be able to work for him. We've got a great return room. [WR] Joe Reed back there, [WR] Michael Bandy back there. We have a great unit. A lot of return units, the returner gets a lot of the credit, but you have to have 10 other guys that block that are willing to put their body on the line to set up the return to give us the holes to hit. So, the success of our return unit, while I do play a factor in it, it's going to be largely on the other 10 guys on the field."

On 'if the special teams last year improved over the last half of the season':

"[Former Chargers WR] Andre Roberts, he's one of the best returners in the history of the league. When he got here, I think that's when the return game kind of started to take a turn and go in the positive direction. A big credit to Dre, but like I said, it's also a big credit to the other 10 guys. You've got to buy in, especially on kickoff return. You have to buy into the scheme. You've got to buy into the return and then you've got to be willing to put your body on the line. I appreciate those guys. They're back there trying to protect me, trying to keep me safe. So, without those guys, there is no return game."

On 'the importance of the player to keep moving things forward' with Head Coach Brandon Staley missing from practice today:

"It's very important. I think we have a lot of veteran leadership on our team that we can handle situations like this with Coach not being here and us being able to go out there and start executing and keep practice the way it's going. That's a big testament to the coaching staff, as well as the veteran leadership on our team."

WIDE RECEIVER JOSHUA PALMER

On his evaluation of training camp thus far:

"I've been learning a lot, which is pretty much what I wanted to do; just be consistent."

On level of comfort with the offensive scheme in his second season:

"It's slowing down a lot. Learning it the first time, you're trying to learn every position, but now, I kind know everyone is doing. Now, it's the little things like alignments or exact spots on the field that I'm supposed to end up at. For the most part, I pretty much know what everyone has, which is one less thing to worry about."

On if he has 'set any individual goals yet' for the season:

"I haven't got that far yet. The only goal right now is to just make the team and make plays in practice. Once the season comes, then I'll figure it out. Only thing that I'm focused on right now is camp."

On working at gunner on punt coverage:

"Doing what I have to do to help the team. That's pretty much it."

On 'parallels' between wide receiver and gunner:

"It's like a Go route, except I don't have to worry about getting open [*laughter*]. I just have to run straight as fast as I can."

On 'areas' in which he 'focused on improving' over the offseason:

"Releases and at the top of the route."

On building off of last season:

"I feel like I've learned a lot more, just at the receiver position. Within the offense, it's slowing down because I know where players have to be. Now, it's just the little things of where you have to end up. From last year, it's pretty much just learning more about the receiver position by hanging out with [WR] Keenan [Allen] a lot."

On if 'staying after practice a lot last year' to catch passes from QB Justin Herbert 'is paying off':

"For sure. It's just getting used to how he is throwing the ball and how I'm running my routes, when I'm stopping, and when I should expect the ball from him."

On if he spent time with Allen over the offseason:

"Yeah, I did. We both trained at our respective places, but I did."

On if he watched film of other NFL receivers 'with a similar body type' over the offseason:

"Going over my tape from last year and watching Keenan [Allen] a lot. I watch his tape almost every day. This offseason was pretty much just reviewing what I did last season and seeing how much better I've gotten."

On if he still watches film of Allen:

"Yeah. I showed him his own film this morning [*laughter*]."

On any other receivers that he studies:

"I watch [Buccaneers WR] Julio Jones. I watched Julio Jones a lot in college, just how he comes off the ball, how fast he runs and how fast he can come to a complete stop. A.B. [former NFL WR Antonio Brown], just because he's probably one of the best over-the-shoulder catchers in the league. I pretty much watch different guys for different things in different areas, but I watch Keenan a lot, both in person and on tape, and then try it on the field."

On what he evaluates when watching Allen's film:

"I'm looking for how he gets off the ball, how he releases, his top of the route, his in-between the route. It's pretty much un-matchable. If I could get as close as possible, then I'll be good. Just add it to my game and what I have."

On what he showed Allen today from his past film:

"I showed him a play from 2018. I was asking him a question about it. I've been looking at certain releases, asking him what he was thinking on them."

On Allen's reaction upon finding out that he's watching his film:

"I don't know. I mean, he's open to the conversation, especially from me — he's probably tired of me by now [*laughter*]. I'll bring up something and then I'll be like, 'Oh, I can show you,' and then I show him his own stuff. I'll do something, and then I'll tell him who I got it from, then I'll show him his own tape."

On who assembles the film:

"It's from the staff. I just ask them for cut-ups. It's on the iPad. I'll record it so that I have something to look at whenever."

On 'how far back' he has gone in evaluating Allen's film:

"What was his rookie year, '13? 2013. I did that last night. His whole career."