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JOSH.RUPPRECHT@CHARGERS.NFL.COM | SKIP.POWERS@CHARGERS.NFL.COM | JENNIFER.ROJAS@CHARGERS.NFL.COM | JAMAAL.LAFRANCE@CHARGERS.NFL.COM
BROCK.ANDERSON@CHARGERS.NFL.COM | LAUREN.MEYER@CHARGERS.NFL.COM

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS vs. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

Saturday, August 25, 2018 | ROKiT Field at StubHub Center | Carson, Calif.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN

Opening Statement:

"Let me tell you, I've never played a game where I've lost by that margin and feel so good about it. I love the way the first unit went out and played against one of the top rush teams in the league, and they held them to under four-yards a carry the whole first half. Offensively, they moved the ball on the ground. We know we can throw the football on anybody, and they averaged over six-yards a carry in the first half and doing all of that with no penalties. That's been one of the things we've been focusing on—stopping the run, running the football, and not beating ourselves. I thought that was an improvement. Now the second half, that's a whole different story. I thought our reserves go outplayed. We couldn't convert on third downs. We couldn't stop them on third downs. We have a lot of work to do right there."

On if they managed to go injury free this game:

"I think so. There are some guys with some bruises. Corey [Liuget] came out. I think he's going to be okay. Russell [Okung] came out, but I think he's going to be okay. We're just trying to manage those guys and get them through the regular season."

On G Forrest Lamp participating in pregame warmups:

"We're being very cautious. He's going to play next week. He looked very good in practice and it was hard to not put him in this game, but our plan was to get him in next week."

On how long that plan has been in place:

"We tried to target this game to get him back, but he didn't come back as quickly as we thought. I hate to put timetables on players, so that's why we're going to wait to play him next week."

On if he feels confident enough in Lamp with only one preseason game played:

"It depends on how he plays. From what we've seen in practice, he's getting better. I think when he takes that step next week, we may play him a bit more."

On the offensive line:

"I thought Mike Pouncey up front—he's one of the leaders on that o-line. I feel like this group is starting to gel at the right time. I feel like I saw that tonight. When they came off the field, they really didn't want to come off. They wanted to go back and play, but I saw that in their eyes. I saw that in their face. That was different."

On LB Kyzir White:

"He's an explosive young man. He can make plays. He's had a great camp and he's competing for that starting lineup."

On S Derwin James:

"I don't know yet. I'm about to watch the tape and find out. He didn't make any plays that I know of, but I can't say right now."

On James' interception at the beginning of the game:

"I forgot about that one. The only turnover of the game. I can't believe I overlooked that one, but he just made a good play. We've been working him in the middle of the field and line of scrimmage. He just showed his range in the middle of the field on that play. It seemed so long ago. I forgot about that one."

On what he hopes to see in the last preseason game:

"In game four, we're going to play our backups—our second unit. I want them to compete better next week than what they did today. I definitely want to see that. I think that backup defense—it's been pretty dominant all camp. I thought today we lost a lot of one-on-ones."

On DE Joey Bosa's absence from playing in the preseason:

"You know, he's a veteran and he's been in games. I'm not really concerned about him not playing next week."

On Bosa being ready for Week 1 of the regular season:

"[For the] regular season, probably so."

On the growth of RB Detrez Newsome:

"That's a good little competition right there [between the running backs behind RB Melvin Gordon III]. I mean, we don't talk about that very much. But, he's doing a good job. But there's [also RB] Russell [Hansbrough] - he's a good runner. And then we just brought in this new kid [RB Terrell Watson] who's been in for a couple of NFL plays and he looked pretty good. So, we'll get to see [Watson] all of next week and will let those guys battle it out on the football field."

On the backup quarterback competition:

"Well, we pulled [QB] Cardale [Jones] early. He has a little groin strain, and I could tell it was bothering him when he was leaving the pocket. And I didn't want him to hurt it any further because I want him to play next week and continue to compete for the backup spot. [QB] Geno [Smith] went in and I thought he handled himself well. He threw some balls right on the money on third down and we dropped them. Obviously, he had the pick-six, that wasn't good. But other than the pick six, I thought he was solid."

On thoughts about keeping three quarterbacks on the roster for the regular season:

"We'll see. We'll take a look at the roster and see if that's possible."

On the limited reps of K Caleb Sturgis:

"He kicked off and I thought he showed some good leg strength. That's something he hadn't done, so that was encouraging."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK PHILIP RIVERS**Opening statement:**

"I thought we had some good plays, enough to be excited, but not enough to relax. Either way, it went pretty well. If it didn't go good, we shouldn't panic because we're going to be great. Our tempo was great and our offensive line — they really ran the ball. If we can be balanced and run the football the way we did tonight, we have a chance to be special offense."

On RB Austin Ekeler:

"He's young. He's arguably the strongest guy on the team, so he's definitely the 'team-tackle' guy. He and [RB] Melvin [Gordon III] really complement each other. They're different. They run with different styles. Austin, keeping him healthy is important. Keeping both those guys [healthy] to have the one-two punch, it's big."

On if he feels ready to play Week 1 right now:

"Physically, yes. I'm excited. I need these two weeks to get dialed in. I feel good physically. I think our team is growing to seem really close [to being healthy]. Guys are getting healthy, like [CB] Trevor [Williams] and those guys. They're getting close and two weeks from tomorrow, we'll be ready to roll."

On how he will spend his time before next game day:

"I'll jump straight to Kansas City. Now's the time — maybe you're better now with your cardio and you can spend a little more time in the weight room [and] those kinds of things. Just make sure you're physically as good as you can be this week. Take care of yourself and be ready for game day come next week."

On the importance of keeping everyone healthy through preseason:

"It's almost turned into that it seems that's most important. There are things we want to get done, but let's get healthy to Week 1 and hopefully — it looks like for the most part — we have done that. We'll be good."

On mentally preparing for the grind:

"Yeah it is. I think, even though I'm not in the game as much in the preseason, we still try to do something similar to the routine as far as how we do it in the regular season. Just to get our minds used to doing it, so we don't say, 'Alright [it's] game week, turn on the preparation.' It's not as extensive, but we try to do some of that."

On how he feels about his performance:

"I hit the ground twice, which I like to get back in the groove. You don't want to get too big of hits. I hit the ground twice and was able to spread the ball there a little bit — throw the ball down the field a few times. I feel good about where I am."

On C Mike Pouncey's leadership:

"Real good. He presses the tempo. He keeps the pace going [with] his presence. Obviously, his play is good, but his presence [when playing] at home [is key]. He brings a little bit of an energy and nastiness that is contagious. I'm excited to see how it is when we're both out there."

On how the atmosphere compares to last preseason:

"We know what to expect now. I thought for the last two preseason games it's been exciting in here. I thought that the atmosphere is pointing — to me, this could be an awesome year here at home [with] the way we finished last year. We just have to do our part, and that's winning games at home. I think if we can do that, especially starting Week 1 against Kansas City, we can kind of jump-start the whole thing as far as [the] home atmosphere."

On playing against Saints QB Drew Brees:

"It's always good. I love seeing Drew. I have nothing but good memories from those two years. Seeing the career he has had is really unbelievable. We were able to share the practice field for a couple of days and I always enjoy that."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS RUNNING BACK AUSTIN EKELER**On first quarter not being reflective of final score:**

"It's not what we want to see at the end of the game — starting out we had a good start and we were hoping it rolled out like that. It didn't work out like that. The past couple of games we've been doing solid, we have to get back to it. We have one more game to solidify ourselves."

On if he realized he would get so much run on the first drive:

"I did not. You go out there expecting anything - you like to [gain yards], if you can."

On feeling comfortable about the offense for season opener on September 9:

"I feel like we are starting to come together — that's just what you want coming into the fourth preseason game. We feel like, if we didn't play at all or if we did, we're all ready for Kansas City."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS SAFETY DERWIN JAMES**On his interception:**

"It felt great. Came out and trusted in what my coaches have been telling me. They put me in position. The play was there for me to make and I made it."

On being a part of the first team:

"I feel great, I'm honored. Whichever way I can help. I'm trying to come in and contribute to the team. Help us get on track and help us win some ball games."

On current comfort level:

"Way more comfortable. It's slowing down a lot. Every day, every practice, every practice, it is slowing down."

On preseason coming to an end:

"Continue to get better. Come Monday, get better. Go home tonight, watch film and continue to get better every day."

On being ready for the start of the season:

"I feel like I will be ready come Week 1. I feel like there is always room for me to grow. Especially coming in as a young guy, I still want to learn and continue to learn every day. There is still a lot I don't know as a player right now. I'm just going to learn as much as I can and hopefully come Week 1, I'll be ready to go."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS LINEBACKER KYZIR WHITE**On his performance:**

"I felt good out there. There are still some things I want to clean up, but for the most part, I felt pretty good"

On being in the starting lineup:

"I learned about a day before. I was excited but it's still football at the end of the day. I still have to go out there and do my job and perform. Try to stay even keel and not get too excited."

On the speed of the game:

"I feel like they have a great offense. I feel like it was faster than week one, but I still feel like I did a good job managing it"

On his growth through the preseason:

"With my assignment and getting in my playbook. I still feel like I make mistakes here and there that's a given, but I feel I know my mistakes right when I make them"

On the rookie class:

"I feel like we all have been doing a pretty good job. From rookie minicamp to OTAs to now we've made a big jump."

On S Derwin James's interception:

"I just saw Derwin make a good play. I just see him go up and make a good play."

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS HEAD COACH SEAN PAYTON

Opening statement:

"I just finished saying this very thing to our team. It didn't start off like we wanted, obviously, with the turnover. Fortunately, we were able to force a four-and-out, but then I thought as the first quarter continued, we were able to turn the momentum in our favor and we did a lot of things that were encouraging. I'll look at the tape tomorrow and probably have a little bit clearer picture of how guys did individually. I thought they played with good energy in all the phases. I thought the kicking game, particularly, was solid. Our situational football, I thought, was good. At the end of the half, we were able to get a short field with the punt and then convert it into a field goal, but there will be a lot of things to coach in this film and we will have time to do it."

On his impressions of DE Marcus Davenport:

"We will look at the tape. I think it would be hard for me to say without us watching it. I think he played 15 to 16 snaps, which was our goal. We'll see."

On the fake punt and QB Taysom Hill:

"It's the time of the year to do that. We feel like he's one of those players—he does a lot of things well. He's a threat as a runner. He's one of the faster guys in the field. He played a good game tonight. He was being double-teamed as one of the core guys of the kicking game. He made a good play on that, (which) changed the field a little bit."

On Taysom Hill's play at quarterback:

"I felt pretty good. It's a little bit easier to have an impression on a quarterback than some other positions, but both he and [QB] Tom [Savage], I think, did a pretty good job."

On Taysom Hill's ability to bounce back after last week:

"Listen, both of those guys have a little bit of something to them. You can expect that those guys will play better. So often, at that position, it's important that the surrounding cast plays well to allow them to do that."

On if the run defense is progressing how he'd like:

"I think it's still a work in progress. I was disappointed early in the game, particularly with our linebacker play. I didn't think that was very good. We'll watch the film to make the corrections."

On LB Demario Davis and LB A.J. Klein still playing in the second half:

"We still needed numbers. They weren't at their pitch count."

On WR Austin Carr's performance:

"He's been steady. Yeah, he's smart. He knows our system well. He had a number of opportunities tonight, so he's competing."

On DB Marcus Williams and his pick-six:

"He's a smart player. He's extremely intelligent. Good instincts and ball skills. He's one of those players that can very quickly pick up the scheme. He's been a good signing for us."

On why he decided to go for two every time:

"We just felt like and I felt like just getting some work and changing up some looks. I am confident enough with our PAT operation and when you're trying to get snaps for the quarterbacks which we are trying to do here, there are just more opportunities to look at both that position and the running back position and just more snaps to evaluate. We didn't talk about it but once we got started we felt like doing it."

On Austin Carr's early start and if you still looking for the role of starting wide receiver:

"Absolutely. That depth chart is written in chalk, it's not permanent ink."

On what he is seeing from WR Cameron Meredith:

"He is getting a lot of work now. This is his second week back after missing a little time but I am encouraged with his progress and I'm encouraged with his conditioning level. It's gotten better and he is going to play a bunch during this week. There will be a number of guys that will play next week that are minus snaps because they weren't getting some of the work early in the preseason."

On what he was hoping to get out of QB Drew Brees tonight:

"It is just an opportunity for him to get out there, move the ball, be sharp and for the players around him to feel the tempo with him. You are not going go through a whole preseason then just start. Regardless of how long you've played, there is

still that element of getting out there in a game. Everything from our meeting last night, going through the game plan and all the things we would do in a regular season game, we did with this game.”

On if it was the number of plays he expected Brees to play:

“Yes. Fifteen, 17, somewhere in there, that was the goal. We had a few, Terron [Armsted], Drew [Brees], that had an early out.”

On what he likes about RB Boston Scott:

“I think he has good balance. I think he is someone who has pretty good vision when he runs. We were trying to get him, [RB Jonathan Williams], [RB] Shane Vereen, those three guys the whole second half and we will continue to do that this week and going into the Thursday night game.”

On how important the pick six was for Marcus Williams after getting a penalty:

“We will correct the penalties, we will try to correct the pre-snap alignment errors, we will try to correct all of those things. Still, to make a play in a situation like that is important for him.”

On how important it was to see his team function well in the last two minutes of the first half due to the fact that is something they work on in practice:

“We rushed the punter on that last snap, so we rushed eight. We forced an early punt and he didn’t hit it well, so very quickly the field position with about a minute and a half all of a sudden we have advantageous field position and we were able to move it in and get a field goal. Those type of things during the regular season are significant. I thought we handled some of those situations better tonight, we certainly spend a lot of time on them.”

On if there is potential to have Drew Brees and Tayson Hill on the field at the same time:

“One of the things we have always tried to do is look at our personnel and try to do the things that we feel like they do very well. We haven’t gotten that far relative to packages. He is a good football player and there is something he brings to the team that carries and permeates through the sideline when you see a quarterback who is down making a tackle and who is one of the faster players in your coverage units. There is a spirit about him that is contagious and good. I think those are really good traits.”

On what it has been like this week practicing and playing against the Chargers:

“Anthony [Lynn] and I have obviously worked together before in Dallas with Bill [Parcells]. We have had two good years now of three days full-padded, shoulder pads and walk-throughs. Both teams handled themselves really well. It benefits both of us and I think both teams understand that. I think the relationships between the staffs is good and you see it in the type of work we have. I think it is something that benefits both teams so hopefully it is something we can continue to do. For us, it is a good chance to get out of the heat a little bit. I know they thought it was hot here but I think it is all relative. It is all relative, but it is good work. It is good to get different looks in practice with someone after you have been working against each other for quite a while.”

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS QUARTERBACK DREW BREES

On how the game started and his performance:

“It was fine. It was a little sluggish start. It took us a little while to get going but it was nice to punch one in, in the beginning of the second quarter. We had a plan in place for me to play a certain amount of snaps and that’s the amount of snaps I played. You know, once you get in the flow of things you start having fun. ”

On being taken out after throwing the touchdown:

“You want to end on a high note. We got a lot of work done at this camp. We got a lot of work done this week with the Chargers and practicing with them for a few days. I would have liked to have scored more than once tonight. We had a couple opportunities but it took me a few drives to get going. [I am] glad we were able to get the points we got and spread it around. Everybody got some touches and overall I think it was a good night.”

On his pick in the first quarter:

“I forced it. I got a little aggressive to start the game.”

On the wide receiver depth chart:

“You wish you can keep seven or eight. I think there are seven or eight that deserve that. I don’t know how many we will keep in the receiver position. Some of that depends on what is happening elsewhere and what type of special teams contributions or return contributions they make as well. We will see how it all shapes out. Whoever we do decide to move forward with, the roles will be clear and define and we will be ready to move forward.”

On the seven to eight wide receivers he wants to keep and how that compares to past seasons:

"I feel like there are some guys who have been in the system a little bit and maybe they have two years of practice squad experience under their belt or a year of playing of a limited role. Bottom line is that they have a couple years in our system and they become more confident and have more of a comfort level, not just in the system but with me. I feel like I have good chemistry with a lot of guys and I wish we can keep them all."

On WR Austin Carr's performance:

"I think he has come along ever since last year. Even though everything was pretty much set with the depth chart last year, he had a few opportunities last year, not many. I think he has made the most of his opportunities this preseason. He made some good plays tonight."

On the sluggish start and if he was referring himself or the team:

"I think all of us. I know I did, but just talking with some guys to start it didn't feel like we had the tempo that we usually do. The execution wasn't on point like we wanted, so that's what I meant by that."

On if being sluggish during preseason is normal:

"Yeah, I think you've got to shake off the rust a little bit. You know, get in the light and start playing games again."

On how much work he needs to be ready by the time the regular season rolls around:

"However many snaps I get."

On if he would be able to be thrown in week one without any preseason snaps:

"No. I like getting reps. I like my reps in practice and in the preseason and we've had a very good plan ever since I've been here. I think the preseason strategy has changed as I've kind of made my way through my career with the Saints. Last year was the first year where I only played one preseason game and that's kind of what we did again this year. This preseason, I'm not sure if I'll play in the fourth one or not. In years past there, was a time when it was all four, and then it became three, and then it became two and now it's one. So just understanding that there's a lot of young guys trying to get reps, they're trying to get [QB] Taysom Hill some reps, [QB] JT Barrett will probably get a lot of reps next week, so there's just a lot of guys that need to get reps and evaluate and help get some experience."

On QB Taysom Hill's performance:

"Real impressive. It was funny because before he went in the game, I had watched him make a special teams tackle. I had watched him convert a fake punt for a first down. He gets in there and I say to [RB] Mark Ingram, "Hey, if he can run for a touchdown and throw a touchdown, he will have done all these things in this game." Then sure enough, he runs for one and he throws for one. Can't say enough about him. Just his contributions to the team and his mindset, his work ethic, his unselfishness, whatever he can do to help this team. He wants to play quarterback. He loves quarterback. He's making strides in developing a comfort level with this offense and with the guys that he's playing with, but can you imagine the load that's on you as a quarterback and then couple that with being a four core special teams guy. You know there's a lot on that guy's plate and he has handled it as well as anybody can handle it. I think that's why he's so respected by the entire team and I love being in the same room with the guys."

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS DEFENSIVE END MARCUS DAVENPORT

On what he could have done better:

"I'm a really tough critic, so I would say I did okay. I could have done some things better like finishing on the quarterback, closing better and using more rush moves."

On if the speed of the game surprised him:

"No, it was fine."

On how good it felt to be in his first game:

"I was nervous pregame, but actually getting out there helped me calm down and I was really just happy to go play with my teammates, like actually play."

On if it was a surprise going in earlier than scripted:

"It's kind of weird, it happened exactly like my freshman year in college. We were driving down the field and something happened, and then they called me up and I was like dang that's cool, I'm in it."

On adjusting to a three-point stance:

"Yea, I still have to work on it. Sometimes I have to refine my technique because of how I change it up, sometimes I make adjustments in the game but it's going pretty good."

On making a play early on:

"Honestly, I saw it and was like wait, they did the same thing in practice. I was running and was like he's not going to get me this time, then he cut up and I was like oh no, but I was able to make the tackle and it was cool."

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS QUARTERBACK TAYSOM HILL**On what he'll remember most about the way he played tonight:**

"I think overall, in the long run, I want to play quarterback. I think being able to operate efficiently and effectively inside this offense has always been my mindset this training camp. It's fun to be able to go and add value. I think it creates some unique bonds. I have some great friends on the team and being able to run down on kickoff, punt and punt return, all that stuff, is a ton of fun. I think, overall, just being able to be out on the field in different capacities was really memorable tonight."

On his emotions this week and last week:

"I think everyone that has played the position in their career can look back and see highlights and can see games where they think 'man, I'd love to have that game back and I can do better.' I'll look at this tape and say the same things. I can do better but look at some things to say I did well. I think, overall it's having the same mentality in staying cognizant is something that [QB] Drew [Brees] does really well. I had the unique opportunity to see him do that all season last year. He's been a great mentor."

On what goes through his mind during the punt fake:

"Get the first down. I think as a player you dream of those situations. I know it's a preseason game but to be able to go out and add value to keep the chains moving and to give Drew the ball again just makes us really tough to beat when you can steal possessions that way. I know that if we get the first down we'll continue to call fakes. That was really my mindset. I think everyone here knows Coach Payton is aggressive and Coach Westhoff and Coach Banta show that same mentality."

On the option plays:

"The first one definitely was an option. [Los Angeles] played it pretty well. I think they saw it in preseason crashing in and the backer spilled. I was able to get it in the end zone. The second one was more of let's run the ball here. When you have that threat and see the contained player come off the field, [it] allowed [RB] Boston Scott to get through an arm tackle and convert. It's just keeping the defense on their toes and giving them different looks. It's effective."

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS DEFENSIVE BACK MARCUS WILLIAMS**On his pick-six:**

"I saw the receiver and he was running toward me like he was trying to set the deep route, I knew the ball had to come out quickly so I just stopped on it, looked back at the quarterback, made the play, ran for the touchdown and celebrated with my teammates in the end zone."

On how he picked up that play:

"It's something that you've seen if you watched the teams last year, it's something they did and we did it in practice when we were going against the Chargers, they did it against us as well so I know if I got the opportunity I was going to bring the whole team with me to celebrate together."

On training camp:

"It's playing catch-up, it's difficult at the beginning but we have some great coaches who just help you out and put you in places where you can make plays. They're helping you after practice, after meetings they're keeping you in there just so you can catch up and be on pace with the other guys. I mean, it's difficult at first but once you get going, I've been playing for a while so I can pick up on certain things very quickly so it helps out a lot."

On his past year:

"It's been a grind but I mean I always have faith that if I just keep working hard, if I keep doing my job, something is going to happen and when I got that call from the Saints, I was like I want to make sure I make the most of it and they kept me here and I love the guys, I love the coaches, I love my teammates and they brought me in coming off the market so that was pretty funny at the time when I first got here everybody was looking at me like, 'who are you?' It's cool though. I like it when we are all in the locker room. But like you said, being from the Jets, being with Houston last year, to here now I mean it's just been a movement from state to state really. I don't want to say it's been hard but it's just been a little process that you know happens in this league."

On being let go from the Jets:

"At the time I was but I can't dwell on it, I mean I just have to keep pushing forward and just keep getting better and keep working on my crafts so that the next team can see what I have"

On taking away the thunder from the other pick-six:

“Well, I actually came to him. I said I feel bad because you never want to take away a guy’s touchdown, I mean, me personally, I thought it was a bad call. I thought I got there right on time, but [MLB] Craig [Robertson] looked at me when I got the interception and he said, ‘Man, you made up for it and that’s all that matters.’”