



QUOTES

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LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN

On the progress he's seen from the new guys:

"It's night-and-day from day one. All of those guys have gotten better and they continue to get better every week. Come September 9, we'll see where they are. Some of those guys, you might find them in the starting lineup."

Opening Statement:

"I thought it was another productive practice with the Saints. Like I said, we were working a plethora of situations, putting guys out there and just seeing how they were responding. I thought they competed well the last couple of days, and anytime you get to go up against a team like the Saints — it's a playoff team — you get to measure yourself as players and coaches. I think [Saints Head Coach] Sean Payton — he's a good coach. He's a great coach. He's won the Super Bowl. We used to work together. I know this guy personally. He's a hell of a guy and I thought his players came in here and were first class. I thought they were very professional, and like I said, there were no fights. This was one of the few joint practices where there were no fights, and I think that's a credit to the Saints and the Chargers."

On having the Houston Astros at practice:

"It was cool to see them come out. We had some [Detroit Tigers] out here a couple weeks ago. Any time we can get some professionals out here from other sports, interact with them, pick their brains a little bit — it was cool."

On if scrimmages are better than exhibition games:

"I wouldn't say it's more productive, but it definitely helps because we can set up all those situations like we wanted to that may come up during the course of a season. I think it's always better when you're playing a game and those situations just happen and you can see how people respond. I know the more times you put them through it, the better chances they're going to execute."

On practicing against the New Orleans defense:

"It was good because we got to see different looks, different pressures than what [we] see every day from [our] defense. Sometimes it looked pretty bad, but you get to go back, watch tape and coach off of it."

On possibly playing the starters less against the Saints:

"It just happened to be the third preseason game. You like to play the starters first half, so that's still our intention as far as playing our starters the first half. We'll see how that goes."

On if QB Philip Rivers will play the first half:

"We will see."

On why he is still playing the starters a lot:

"Like I said, we're still going to play our starters 30 plays — a half. We still want to do that, so it just happened to be the third game. Usually when you practice against a team, you can pull them back a little bit, but we need to see those guys play a little bit because they won't play much the following week."

On dialing back reps today for the starters:

"I had to dial it back because we've been going [hard]. [The Saints] played Friday. They basically had Saturday off, Monday off, flew out here on Tuesday, so my guys have been working."

On letting the kickers still kick one more game each:

"That's exactly what the plan is, but like I said, if a guy gets two or three kicks in the first half, I'll let the second guy kick the second half."

On which kicker is starting this game:

"It's Caleb [Sturgis] this week. Roberto [Aguayo] is the following week. Roberto will kick off and Caleb will kick field goals."

On if the kicker decision will come down to the final day:

"It doesn't have to. We want competition at every position. We brought Caleb in here to be our kicker and Roberto to challenge him. I think that Roberto has stepped up here and done a nice job of challenging Caleb, but Caleb is having a fine camp."

On RB Detrez Newsome getting reps today as a kick returner:

"He did it some in college. He's got great instincts on the field. It's always good to have a guy back there that may make the team as an emergency guy."

On if Newsome would be his first option as a kick returner:

"I wouldn't say he's the first option right now."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS RUNNING BACK MELVIN GORDON III**On the NFL's new tackling rule:**

"It's hard. With some of the calls, they've been calling it's tough. Just to play this game so physical, but I get why they are putting the rule in — just to make it a safer game. You hear about schools and parents stopping their kids from playing football. We are just trying to prevent all of that. I understand, but some things are just going to be hard to change."

On how he is adapting to the new rule:

"I'm more cautious when I make contact. Our whole life we have led with our heads down a little bit, so it's tough. You have been doing something for 15-16 years and out of the blue one day they say you can't do it anymore. It's going to be tough. We have to try and adjust to it. We do gauntlet drills and things like that. [Head] Coach [Anthony] Lynn is on us about keeping our head up. When someone is on you constantly about it, that kind of helps."

On trying to change his instincts with his helmet:

"I think so. You try to make it second nature, that is why [Coach Lynn] tries to really coach it to us. You try to, but you can't think about it too much because there is a chance you can get hurt out there."

On the value of running backs:

"We just do so much as far as blocking and catching, running the ball. We have a lot to do, so our value should be high. I'm glad we are the type of back that can change that."

On his goals for the preseason:

"Just improving your craft [and] getting live reps while it doesn't count. This is a time to work on your craft and build as a team before things get real."

On RB Detrez Newsome:

"He's been balling. He's been doing his thing. I'm excited to continue to watch him grow. He has some things here and there where he can get better, but that is every rookie. I feel, if he stays at it, keeps working his craft and stays humble, he will get to where he needs to be."

On RB Austin Ekeler:

"He's just a playmaker. You expect him to come out here and keep making plays. He is just that type of player."

On entering his fourth year:

"It is just detailed. You see something they [the young players] aren't doing right and you do your best to coach them up. You just have to be there with them when mistakes happen. We just hate to make mistakes. We try to be perfect, but you can't. We have to motivate each other and help [each other] get through those mistakes."

On the upcoming season:

"We can be great. I feel like we could be special. We have all the tools and all the pieces, but it's all about staying healthy."

On continuing momentum from last year:

"I feel like we started a formula to winning, but you can't think about last year because it's a whole new season. It's a different team than last year, so you can't really speak too much about last year. I know we ended off pretty hot and obviously that left a taste in some people's mouths — okay, these guys could be great — but you can't think about it because like I said, it's a different team so we're just going to come out here and do what we need to do. We feel like we have a formula. We're going to put it together and see what happens."

On if expectations of the upcoming year motivate during offseason:

"Yeah, it does, but I feel like every year since I've been here we've been special. We've just had that injury bug, which that kind of hurt us here and there and stripped us a little bit. We lost some key players, but I've always felt like we could be special. There's hasn't been a time when I was going into the season with the Chargers and was like, 'I don't know about this year, I don't think we have the team.' I've always felt like we've had the team. It's just about being healthy, that's the biggest thing."

On the difference between preseason games and joint practices:

"It's still different, the guys will tell you, it's different from the game. The intensity is different. Guys are flying around. It's not just you're just tagging off or thudding, you never really know. A guy could tackle you and you could break it. When you get thudded, the refs consider it down so there are more explosive plays to be made or be had and you just don't know what can be done until gameday. So it's good in a sense just because we're out here battling against a different team. You still pick up the tempo a little bit, but it's still not the same as game day."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS NOSE TACKLE DAMION SQUARE**On thoughts about preparation during the offseason:**

"[It's] really just [something you] never really get away from. You don't keep the full workload on all offseason, but you stay touched up on your technique, touching up on your craft and staying in shape for the most part — running, and things like that. Also, [it's important to] spend some time with the family and things like that, but like I said, just continuing to do the little things and not doing too much. But doing enough to make it out here safe without injuries and put some work in."

On whether his approach towards training camp is different now as veteran:

"Of course, especially from a health standpoint. You understand that you can't make the team in the training room, so you approach practice differently as you get a bit older. I think there are certain things you can pass on in practice with certain positions and certain situations."

On the value of a preseason game:

"Going against [a different opponent]. Going at that level. We practice really hard out here and have a few plays at a high-intensity level. In the game, I don't know if it's magic or something, but the game is just different. It's a little bit faster, little more intense and a lot more spectators. So, I think that changes the way people perform."

On QB Philip Rivers:

"I don't think Phil [QB Philip Rivers] is different [from when I first played with him]. I think he's the same guy who prepares the same way. The locker room changed a lot in this organization, as it changes a lot [in the NFL]. But Phil just learns how to adapt with everybody. You know what I mean? He gets in with the young guys and the guys who have been here for five to six years like me. He's probably a lone ranger, who has been here as long as he has, minus [Antonio] Gates right now. He's still a locker room guy and doesn't separate himself from [the rest of] us. I've been in places where I've felt like that was the situation. One thing about Phil is, he's in the mix with us, a team player, and part of this organization. He's a kid man, he's a kid."

On Rivers ability to communicate with the younger players:

"That means he takes it every day for the day. He comes in and approaches the day for what it is and talks about what we did yesterday and need to fix. I think he does a great job for accepting everyone for who they are. You know, figuring out a way to laugh with all the guys and get in on the jokes, and all of the other things. He's been the same guy, I haven't seen anything change with him. Same guy."

On the dynamic of how players handle a locker room change:

"Everything has order. Everybody's first in the room that's for sure. We might not speak about it, but someone's first. When those positions change, some guys handle it better than others. Everyone has the right to handle it, but I feel like this team does a great job handling those situations."

On the value of having teams scrimmage in joint practices as opposed to a preseason game:

"You can't create your own situations. Versus in a game, you can adapt to what happens in a game. You might go into a game and there might be something set up where you want someone to play a certain amount of reps, but then someone takes a kickoff return back [for a touchdown]. Now you've missed a whole series for someone you wanted to get in the game. It's really beneficial for everybody on the roster to have practices like this [joint practice], [especially] for a guy who didn't that many reps in a game, or a field goal block, or a goal-line situation. Whatever the case may be, we can create those situations out here [in practice] to get those reps and evaluate those guys."

On how great of a test the joint practice serves:

"We did it last year, so it's always good. Now remember, some of these guys have changed but most of these guys over time, and if not, you've played with them in college. You don't forget the skill set and the things that did and did not beat [the other] team. So, you try to come back and see if you can pull some of this [practice] out and win that day or rep. All of that 'good on good' is always better for your team. You want the best to go against the best, it's the only way to get better."

On thoughts about the team's depth:

"[It's] solid. We've got some guys who haven't been practicing for whatever reason, but the skill set, the upside of these guys is crazy good. If everybody can reach their potential in our room and sustain it without injury — it's going to be a really good year."

On DL Justin Jones not having played a preseason game:

"Oh, he'll be fine. We'll bring him along, it's just football. He knows how to play football. It might take him some reps to get used to the speed of the game, but we'll communicate with him with the things we know and experience that we have. He'll get as much of it as he needs and will go out there and perform at a high level."

On the resemblance of Jones to another player in demeanor:

"No, he's him. He's Justin. [He's] fast, big and can bend really well. Very competitive and you can tell he's played with guys that got after the quarterback in college by the way he rushes the quarterback. I wouldn't say he's 'one of a kind,' but he's definitely a different guy."