



POSTGAME TRANSCRIPTS

Los Angeles Chargers vs. Cincinnati Bengals

Sunday, November 14, 2024 ⚡ SoFi Stadium ⚡ Inglewood, Calif.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH JIM HARBAUGH

On winning the game:

"Great win. Great team win. It was awesome."

On the his message:

"Just respond. Just because we lost the momentum didn't mean they had it and we were going to get it back. The guys didn't flinch, didn't buckle, didn't even stumble. They just kept right at it and responded."

On the team's resilience:

"It says a lot. It was like two heavyweights going at it. They're a great football team. Our guys just kept playing. I've just been having this feeling really since the beginning back in April, May and June, that we've got the right guys at the right time and that's all a coach can ask for. Just keep building."

On the teams performance:

"All three phases, I'll go through them. On offense, we were at our best when our best was needed. Defense was at our best when our best was needed. Special teams, we were at our best when our best was needed. It's a complete team effort in doing that. But all three phases stepped up and played their best football when our best football was needed the most. [RB] J.K. [Dobbins] was incredible. The touchdown run, early in the second half that ended up setting up the field goal. That was a no gain or a one yard loss and [Dobbins] spun out of it Walter Payton-style and got a great big first down for us. So guys just stepped up. [WR] Ladd [McConkey], [QB] Justin [Herbert], [LB] Daiyan [Henley], [Edge] Joey [Bosa], [CB] Kristian Fulton. Guy after guy after guy, when our best was needed they were at their best."

On S Derwin James Jr.:

"It's every game. When I say we've got the right guys, he's at the top there. He can not only do his job, but he'll make up for, he's like a cleaner, an eraser, a fixer. That's also the kind of guy that Khalil Mack is, Justin Herbert is, Joey Bosa is, and J.K Dobbins. They're that kind of teammates. Superstars. I just can't say enough about [S] Derwin James Jr. I've been saying it since one and a half practices in. I'll usually say it like 'Nobody loves football more.' Or 'Nobody has more passion.' You're saying it like there's some ties along the way. I've never met a guy who loves football as much as him or is a better teammate. He's the best. He's the best I've ever been around as a player or a coach. Just complete respect. And when I say football player, that's what I'm thinking right there. [S] Derwin James Jr. Football player."

On QB Justin Herbert:

"I could tell with [QB] Justin [Herbert] it was in pregame. I'm around it every day but every ball was tight and coming out so good, so accurate. I just could feel it and see it, that he was going to have a big night for us."

On the offensive performance:

"We were at our best when our best was needed. That's what I saw. Whether it was the offensive line or [RB] J.K [Dobbins] in protection too. I mean, look at some of the chips in this ball game, it was big time. [WR] Ladd McConkey, we saw him getting open darn near every play. [QB] Justin [Herbert] made some amazing throws. [TE] Will Dissly had a big game, [WR] Quentin [Johnston] had a big game, [WR] Joshua Palmer made some incredible clutch catches, so that's what I saw. Clutch. Never flinched. We were at our best when our best was needed."

On motivating the team before the game:

"We got the right guys at the right time. I've been to this movie a few times, so I know what it looks like. There's nobody we'd rather have. No other defense we'd rather have than our defense. No other offense and we'd rather have than our offense. No other special teams unit, kicker, punter, snapper. We just feel like we got the right guys at the right time."

On QB Justin Herbert's rushing:

"Phenomenal. It really ignited us, got us going. We picked up huge chunks on the ground. I think one was a 30-yarder. All those touchdown drives, he was generating through his arm and with his running ability."

On the victory and moving forward:

"It'll be on to the Ravens now. My thought is we got the right guys at the right time. I think guys in the locker room believe that, deep down. If they have it, if they weren't sure or they weren't convinced I would present this as exhibit A to them. We'll move on with humble hearts and just keep building and understand this is a one week league. Couldn't be more proud, as I said. I mean that's all you can ask for as a coach, get the right guys at the right time."

On facing his brother, Ravens Head Coach John Harbaugh, next week:

"It's going to hit me. It usually hits me about six hours after a game. I'm just going to enjoy this one, but maybe it'll hit me at about the four or five hour mark. John Harbaugh, coach of the football team the Baltimore Ravens. They're as tough as they come in terms of competitors. Watching [QB] Lamar [Jackson] up close, I mean he's a competitor at the highest level and there's a bunch of them on the Ravens. I know my brother, he just pulls it out of you. He's so tough that it just demands that you measure up. So, I'm sure those will be the thoughts hitting me here in a few hours."

On another opportunity to coach against his brother:

"I wouldn't say that. I mean everything I just said is what I think. The Ravens, I mean, they're tough. My brother is as tough as they come. He pulls it out of you. So, about four or five hours from now I'm going to turn all of my attention to that."

On the crowd tonight:

"Thanks for asking. Better. Last week, I thought it was really, really good. Definitely better than the week before that. This week was better than last week. Hopefully next week will be even better. I hope it is. I think it is. We just want to put the kind of football out there that people get excited about and I thought our fans were excited about it, watching this team. It definitely gives us a lot of juice and a lot of energy. Sure does."

On QB Justin Herbert:

"There was no flinch. He's just as cold blooded as anybody could possibly be. It's like '3, 2, 1, let it go.' And he's on to the next play. Whether it's a holding penalty or something, whatever it is. Things like that happen, but it's hard to describe. He's that player like [S] Derwin [James Jr.], like [OLB Khalil Mack], like [RB] J.K. Dobbins. I don't know exactly how to say it yet, but I'll get back to you on that. I'm still marveling at it. There's something there. I don't know, I can't put my finger on it. It's not of what my understanding is, how he does it. The kind of fierce competitor he is, but yet, there's a real genuine confidence he has in his ability and his teammate's ability. He's not looking for calls from the officials. He's just looking to do. I'll try to be more articulate about that, but it's just something I just don't understand in my comprehension of being around it. It's like being around greatness every day with him. So, exactly how he's able to do it: I mean he's a superstar."

On nicknames for QB Justin Herbert:

"No, I don't. I'm at the point where I'm out of adjectives to describe him. He's incredible. He is incredible."

On QB Justin Herbert's physicality:

"It's otherworldly. It's something, being around greatness."

On coaching QB Justin Herbert:

"Just go play. I think the best thing I can do is not make him a victim of over-coaching and just go have at it. Go let it rip. He's great."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On game-winning drive mentality:

“We just went out there and had another opportunity. Shout-out to the defense for giving us that opportunity and we knew that we had to go make a play. It came down to that drive. [WR] Ladd [McConkey] had a couple great, big catches and [RB] J.K. [Dobbins] had that huge run. Props to the guys sticking through it, staying patient and getting the job done.”

On the second half:

“Staying focused. Understanding that it’s a 60-minute game and we’ve got to do a better job of playing consistently all throughout the game. I thought when we needed an answer, [WR] Ladd [McConkey] came with some big catches, we moved the ball and got the job done.”

On the offense shining:

“I would say the defense played a heck of a game. They did a great job getting stops when they needed to. They got us the ball back and held them to a couple missed field goals there. For them to be able to get that done, get us the ball back - they really got the job done.”

On opposing quarterback Joe Burrow:

“Unfortunately, we don’t play at the same time. So it’s us versus the defense, him [QB Joe Burrow] versus our defense. I’ve got a lot of respect for him, he’s an incredible competitor. I have a lot of respect for his game as well, but our offense went up against their defense today.”

On his rushing performance:

“I think it’s just seeing those rush lanes and when the pressure comes, understand that you have that ability to step out of the pocket – a throw away is not always the best option. So to be able to continue and extend plays. I have to be better with the ball, more ball security. I think it helps our offense.”

On closing close games:

“Well, I’d say there’s plenty of games over the past five years that we have pulled out and we have closed. It’s always part of the NFL. You’re going up against really good teams and they’ve got an incredible offense that we saw. It’s all about playing consistently, playing complimentary football and I thought the defense did a great job of coming up with some big stops. So, it’s on us to be able to execute in the third quarter, fourth quarter. It was really good to see from those guys playing.

On running the football:

“I always enjoy running with the football. It’s an opportunity to go make a play and I think it shows the team that I want to do anything to win – whatever that may be. Whether it’s running the ball, throwing the ball – whatever we need to do to extend drives, convert on third down and score points in the red zone.”

On running at defenders:

“It was a play-action rollout. I was trying to work right, left, back to the right. I felt like I didn’t really have time to slide and so it was just one of those things I braced and did everything I could. I just have to be better with the ball.”

On relationship with TE Will Dissly and WR Ladd McConkey:

“I think it’s been really cool for them to write their own stories. I think [TE] Will [Dissly] has done such a great job of being a complete tight end where we ask him to catch passes, then run block, to pass block and he’s able to do everything. To have a guy like [WR] Ladd [McConkey], who stepped in so early. We knew how special he was going to be. He came up with some big plays for us today and thankful for that guy. He’s definitely made my job a lot easier.”

On Cincinnati’s second-half adjustments:

"I think it's just up to us to execute. We have to keep doing a better job of staying focused and executing on third down. There are a couple balls that I'd love to have back and be able to re-throw. We'll take a look at the film and understand that it's up to us to keep playing"

On long touchdown to TE Will Dissly:

"We've had our targets hitting downfield. I think in the previous couple of weeks, they've done a good job of covering him [TE Will Dissly] downfield. I think it was just one of those plays that you see the coverage, you see him open and you do everything you can to get the ball down there. You want to be smart with it. He came up with a great catch, way to get rolling in the endzone. It was a really good to see from him."

On four-game winning streak:

"We really do take it one week at a time. That's what's most important about this football team is understanding that the job's not done and we have to do everything we can to look forward to our next opponent. We've got a really good opponent coming up on Monday Night Football next week. So, we're going to have to have a good week of preparation at practice and stay dialed in."

On offensive line:

"We've got a lot of respect for their front seven and they've done a great job of getting after the passer. To have the offensive line like we do, they gave me enough time to get the ball off today and I think that's huge. They did such a great job run-blocking as well. It's up to us to be able to continue to execute in the third and fourth quarter, but I thought they did a great job today."

Cincinnati Bengals Head Coach Zac Taylor

On the final minutes of the game:

"It's a disappointing loss because I don't know if many teams are going to hang in at 24-6 at halftime and dig their way back, fight the way our guys did. We were going to fight back and there was going to be some opportunities we had to finish it off and it didn't go our way. Proud of our guys, sick for our guys. I mean those guys left it all on the field and gave us everything they had. Stuck together, made play after play to get us back in that thing and they just made one more on the play than we did. That's kind of been the story of our season so far. By no stretch is our season over with. We have a chance to use a bye to kind of get back and get into a groove here in the last part of the season. We're going to have to win a lot of these, obviously, we put ourselves in a tough spot. But I believe what I just saw from our guys, I've seen it every single week. We're going to be right there in the end and just got to finish these games off."

On what changed in the second half:

"Our guys were just confident. I mean, over the years we've been in these situations before and you've just got to take it one possession at a time. That's all we preached at halftime. That's what we preached after every possession to start the third quarter. The defense just kept making stops, the offense just kept scoring points and guys kept stepping up and making plays and you thought, with no doubt, 'we're going to finish this thing off.' We had our opportunities, we crossed the 50 a couple of times and just couldn't get seven or three on the board. They got one more possession and then they knocked it in and that's just the story of the game."

On the missed kicks:

"We expect to make them, certainly. We've got a lot of confidence in [K] Evan [McPherson] and it just wasn't his day today."

On defensive performance in the first half:

"They got all the momentum. We started getting some three and outs on offense and we gave up touchdowns on several back-to-back drives there. Just needed a break, needed halftime, needed to readjust and just get our feet underneath us and get guys confidence in each other. They stepped up and guys were flying around making plays. That's the defense we expect to see. Momentum turned our way and guys were just stepping up. I mean I saw so many guys make big plays there in the second half and that's what we're counting on. Just couldn't get it done."

On coaching during the first half:

"It's emotional. When you're down like we were down and we weren't generating a lot of momentum our way, guys are frustrated. We get into halftime and settle down. It's okay for guys to show emotion. It's okay for guys to be frustrated. That doesn't bother me. We just got to take a deep breath, and we did, and there was still confidence in the locker room. You had to see it because you saw in the second half the way that those guys came out and played."

On the upcoming bye week:

"Just gives us a chance to be healthy. There's not a lot of wholesale changes we need to make. Every game we lose comes down to the last play of the game. We've just got to find a way to win these and generate some momentum for ourselves. So, bye week get healthy, and then come back and we've got a huge divisional game at home and we've got to find a way to create some momentum for ourselves."

On putting in CB Josh Newton for CB Cam Taylor-Britt:

"Consistency."

On CB Cam Taylor-Britt's consistency:

"He's working on it, we talk about it a lot. We still have high expectations for him."

On K Evan McPherson:

"We've still got confidence in him."

On the offensive performance:

"Just the three and outs. We just were putting ourselves against the sticks. We had some 2nd-and-10's, some get back on tracks. They were playing with a lot of confidence because we weren't doing a lot to take that confidence from them. After those first two or three drives when we got points on the board, again, they just got us in some three-and-outs and our defense was stuck on the field. We just needed to readjust at half time and our guys did a good job at that."

On the third quarter:

"That first first down is usually key for us to get a chance to get some momentum, get some flow. Got a better feel for what they were trying to do to us. I thought the coaches did a great job. Great job adjusting as the game went to what we were expecting to see coverage-wise. Linemen did a great job holding up for [QB] Joe [Burrow], who threw the ball 50 times again. Got us enough in the run game, we were keeping ourselves on track. I thought the linemen and [RB] Chase [Brown] did a great job there and the protection was good and we were able to score some points."

On CB DJ Turner II's injury:

"Clavicle. I don't know how long that will be."

On explaining close losses:

"I can't. I can't. I wish I could. It's a team we believe in, a team that believes in each other. It's sick. the way that these games are ending and the way that we come off the field every week. The feeling I got when I have talk to the team in the locker room after all these endings this year. You know, what I just keep telling the team is, 'at some point, this has got to help us. At some point we got to find some momentum and we got to get on a run. We've got to find ourselves in a good position where we reflect back.' We don't ever want to use a loss for good, but it's got to help us in some way. We've played some really good football teams and we just got to find a way to finish it. I keep saying that and obviously, we're a play away every time I say it, but I still got the confidence that we can get this thing done."

On making changes:

"I think we all watch the game. We can see it's just coming down to one play in every single game. So why would you make a big wholesale change when it's just coming down one play? To me, that's just panic. That's not what we're about. We believe in what we're doing. We're not going to be those people that just panic because the record is four and seven and we start making all these significant changes. That's not what the answer is. We play good football, we're a good football team, we believe in our guys. We've got good systems in place and again, we're going to hang in there and support each other and try to find a way to get this thing done. And if we can get it done, it's going to be a dang good season. Again, it's not so far what we would've written for ourselves, but I'm telling you I stand here today with the utmost belief that we can still get this done on the back half of our schedule."

On chances of making the playoffs:

"Yeah. I'm not just saying it to convince others. I say what I believe right now. When you watch this team compete, the guys we got and the coaches we got, I love going to work every single day. It's not something you dread. You're four and seven and you don't want to be around these people, it's the opposite of that because I can see that something special can still be there. People may not believe it. That's okay, I get that. But I've seen this group do some really good things before and I still believe that we can get this thing turned around and do that."

On the team's mentality:

"We still have the same mentality, that we're just taking it one game at a time. That's the way this league works. We've got a lot of experience doing it this way, where you're just focused on one game at a time, you find that win and next thing you know you catch some momentum, the team's got confidence and people rally behind you. You can still have a pretty special season."

Cincinnati Bengals Quarterback Joe Burrow

On one-score games:

"I missed some throws down the stretch that I usually make, so that was disappointing. Gotta make winning plays at the end."

On the offense in the first half:

"It's tough to say. We moved the ball, we settled for two field goals and then their front was disruptive today."

On his words to teammates:

"Nothing."

On the season:

"Just got to make the plays. Just got to make the plays. We have it down stretch and we're not a good enough team to – our margin of error is slim, so we got to make those plays. I got to make those plays. We all got to make those plays."

On a singular play:

"I missed [WR] Ja'Marr [Chase] on the go, I missed Ja'Marr on the slant."

On second half adjustments:

"We got a turnover. We hit some shots down the field. Started to run the ball. We didn't really make any adjustments, we just started executing better."

On making the playoffs:

"Hope so."

On making the playoffs at 4-7:

"I guess we'll find out. We know where we're at. I'm not happy with where we're at. I don't think anybody is, but all you can do is come back tomorrow and try to get better."

On if this is the most frustrating season he has had:

"Yeah."

Why:

"Pretty self-explanatory."

On his confidence in Evan McPherson on the second kick:

"I was."

On the second touchdown to Ja'Marr Chase:

"They doubled him. Any time I was able to sit back there and kind of direct to where I wanted to go and he made a great play. I didn't see what happened, I was on the ground – but it sounds like a good play."

On the bye-week:

"It's a tough one to end on. Going into the bye week, I'd prefer to go and play but it will be nice to get a little break."

On the season:

"It's not making plays to end the game with a win."

On the weight of the loss:

“I wouldn't say that. I just think it was a tough loss. First half didn't go our way, we fought back, had our opportunities to seal the deal and we didn't.”

On his message to the fans who traveled:

“We always appreciate the fans. They're a big part of what we do and we always appreciate the support. Hopefully we can come back from the bye and get a win at home.”