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Chargers Safety JT Woods Introductory Media Availability **Friday, April 29, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.**

On his emotions upon being selected by the Chargers:

“It was just an amazing moment for me. I was actually in the kitchen just kind of chilling, watching the draft, when I got the call, so I was already around a lot of my family. My best friend was sitting right next to me, so I showed him the phone. He just looked at me and said, ‘We’re going to California.’ It was just an amazing moment.”

On if he was surprised at all by the selection:

“Not necessarily shocked. I had talked to quite a few teams, honestly, throughout the entire process. I kind of know how the draft works. A lot of trading happens, so there’s not really a particular team that you can think you’re going to go to. I had that mindset going in, so it wasn’t shocked at all.”

On how he would describe his game:

“I would say that it’s very unique. I do have you know the size and the speed, but I really use my intellect to drive a lot of the plays that I make, so my intellect and my instincts are what help me use my speed and my size to make the plays that I make.”

On the ‘Heartbreak Kid’ nickname:

“It was kind of something that built up through a fall camp that we had going into the 2019 season. Me and another DB, [Texans S] Grayland Arnold [Jr.], who is currently on the Houston Texans, had a bunch of interceptions in camp. It was just kind of a joke that I’m breaking the hearts of the quarterbacks, so the name, ‘HBK,’ kind of came about when [former Baylor Associate Head Coach - Outside Linebackers] Coach Joey McGuire first started calling me that name, then is just kind of grew into something a lot bigger than what it was at the time.”

On if the name ‘grew’ due to interceptions he gathered in games:

“Yes, sir. I started breaking hearts of quarterbacks across the country, not just the ones in the practice facility [laughter].”

On his ‘fit’ within the secondary during his time at Baylor:

“I predominantly played in the deep end of the field as the free safety in our defense, but I did have a lot of box work, as well — I would drop down and be a flat player. I was able to do a lot of things. A lot of the times I was guarding tight ends, and also guarding slot receivers, so like you said, pretty versatile. But for the most part, I was on the back end of things.”

On if the Chargers ‘gave any indication’ of where he would play in the secondary:

“No, sir. Nothing specific, but I’m sure that we’ll get into all of that stuff really soon here. Just excited to even have the opportunity to be on the team. A great team in itself, and in a great division, as well, so I’m really excited to get out there.”

On if his intellect entails scheme knowledge or instincts as a play develops:

"I would say both. They kind of go hand-in-hand. Just having a general concept of the schemes and the things that you're going to go against, and then being able to just pick apart different stuff that's happening as the play is developing, or even pre-snap, just kind of helps you communicate the play. I was able to do that with my teammates before, and I know that I'll be able to do that with my teammates that I'm about to have real soon. They go hand-in-hand together."

On his ball skills:

"I'd say I have pretty good ball skills. I led the nation in interceptions, so I'd say they're not too bad. They're OK."

On if he had any connections to the Chargers' roster or coaching staff prior to being selected:

"No, sir. Not anybody specifically."

On his familiarity with the Chargers:

"I haven't gone strictly in-depth with just them. I'm kind of new to the NFL. Growing up, I always watched college football, so as I got a little older, that's when I started to get more into the NFL aspect of things. As I've been getting older, really — I would say within the last two to three years — is when I really started watching the NFL."

On his contact with the Chargers in the pre-draft process:

"Yes, ma'am. I talked to them a little bit. Like I said a little earlier, I was blessed enough to be able to talk to pretty much every single team with the Senior Bowl and with the Combine, as well. So I talked to them a little bit, just like I did everybody else."

On the solitude currently in the room:

"That's just because I'm upstairs and they're all downstairs. I'm like in a secluded place of the house so that I can get a little bit of peace and quiet. But yeah, they're all going crazy."

On if his performance at the Senior Bowl 'helped raise his draft stock':

"I would assume it helped me quite a bit. I kind of have a knack for getting to the ball, so for me to be able to do that at the Senior Bowl against the greatest players in the nation, I think that helped me a little bit, as well. Then, also being able to be coached by NFL coaches. I'm sure they all talked in that circle about how coachable people were, and I'm a very coachable kid, so I'm sure they helped me, as well."

On who he models his game after:

"That's a little hard question for me. Somebody that I think I'm close to is [Bengals CB] Tre Flowers. He's somebody who played safety, and then made the transition of corner. But when it comes to just pure safeties, I don't think a lot of safeties in the league now kind of match my prototype, being 6-foot-2, 195 [pounds] and having the speed that I have. It's a little bit rare, I'd say. Finding specific people who match me is a little difficult."

On who he had to 'kick out of the room' before starting his media availability:

"My dad is really the only one. Everybody was kind of downstairs when it all happened and I kind of stepped away to just take the call. After I was actually told that I was going to be drafted, to just get the strategics and logistics of getting on this Zoom call, I was kind of able to step away from everybody. They probably didn't even notice I kind of stepped out because they're all going crazy still downstairs."

On S Derwin James Jr.:

"Just an amazing ball player and an amazing athlete. I know he's even more of an amazing person, so I just can't wait to be in the same locker room as a dude like him and be able to learn so much from a dude like him; a multiple-time Pro Bowler. Who else wouldn't you want to learn from?"

On tackling skills:

“Tackling is the utmost important thing, I think, especially when you play free safety, like I did in college. My philosophy is that I’m the eraser of the defense. So, it doesn’t matter what mistakes the 10 people in front of me and next to me had, it’s my job to get the ball down so that we can live to fight another day. That’s of the utmost importance. I think every defensive person knows that no matter how long the play is — if it’s 99 yards and they started at the opposite goal line, they still have that one yard to go. At Baylor, as a defense, we literally attested to that in the Big 12 Championship [Game] when we had Oklahoma State on the 1-yard line to win the game. I think tackling is just huge. It’s obviously something that I can work on, I’m sure everybody knows that every defender can work on tackling, and so that’s something that I’m always passionate about and always wanting to get better at my game.”