



## QUOTES

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Wednesday, December 5, 2018 | Hoag Performance Center | Costa Mesa, Calif.

### **LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN**

#### **Opening Statement:**

"We had a good practice today. We're getting focused on Cincinnati, as we should be. This team was 4-1 at one point in the season. They're a good football. They've had some injuries. They're battling through those injuries and have lost a few lately, but this team has enough talent to challenge anybody on any given Sunday. Our focus definitely needs to be on this game and that's where it is right now. Really, the highlight of my day was that [NT] Brandon Mebane was back today. He's back in practice, he's doing well. He's back with the team. It was good to see Brandon."

#### **On having NT Brandon Mebane back in the building:**

"He's one of our leaders. He's a captain for a reason. Our team, these guys voted him that. They've missed him. His leadership is very important, not just his ability on the football field, but he's a good man."

#### **On Mebane's focus:**

"He was absolutely locked in. He was focused."

#### **On the Cincinnati offense:**

"[Bengals QB Jeff Driskel] can do all of those things, the zone-read, run-pass option. I'm sure they'll do more of that this week with him, but he also has a big arm. He can throw the ball around pretty well, too. He has two good receivers in [Bengals WR Tyler] Boyd and [Bengals WR John] Ross. Ross can score from anywhere on the field. He's probably the biggest deep threat in the National Football League right now with his 4.22 speed, or whatever he ran at the combine. It was the fastest 40-yard dash I've ever seen at the combine, I can tell you that. They have some weapons — and those two running backs, my goodness. It's hard to find two running backs that good in this league."

#### **On if there is a dropoff in quarterback play with Bengals QB Andy Dalton on injured reserve:**

"Well, I think that Dalton was the starter for a reason. [Jeff Driskel] is a young quarterback in this league. He has a lot of ability and a lot of talent. He doesn't have the experience of Andy, but he's a heck of an athlete. He can run around and make plays with his legs. He can throw, he has a big arm."

#### **On Bengals RB Joe Mixon:**

"He has power, he's elusive, he has good hands. He's a good blocker. He's a physical guy and makes a lot of yards after contact. [Bengals RB] Giovani [Bernard], he's the scat-back, but my goodness can he create [plays]. He's like a receiver coming out of the backfield."

#### **On the Cincinnati defense after Bengals Head Coach Marvin Lewis took over the defensive play calling:**

"Not a whole lot [has changed], to be honest with you. You can see Marvin's style from back when he was a coordinator — you can see that in some of the things that he's doing. That defensive line is as good as any that we've seen all year with [Bengals DT Geno] Atkins, [Bengals DEs Carlos] Dunlap and [Michael] Johnson and all of those guys. They're making plays. I think they have 14 sacks between [two] of them. Anytime a three-technique [lineman] has seven sacks at this point in the season, he's doing something right. They've had some injuries at linebacker, so they've rotated some guys in at linebacker. They have three first-rounders in the secondary. This team has talent."

#### **On RB Melvin Gordon III:**

"You know, Melvin is getting better. He ran around on the side today for the first time. So he's getting better."

#### **On if Mebane can immediately return to his starting role:**

"He's been gone for two weeks, so we will have to watch his reps a little bit, but he will start the game."

**On if Mebane trained during his time away from the team:**

"Yeah, I'm sure he did some things. I think there's a gym somewhere around where he was. He didn't do nothing, but football is football. He wasn't on the football [field], so we have to be careful with him."

**On the rushing defense on Sunday:**

"I thought our rushing defense was good in the first half. In the second half, it was even better. We made some adjustments, but they were pretty consistent. Right now, the only run defense I'm worried about is going against Cincinnati. We have those guys in three or four days, so that's kind of where my focus is right now."

**On if the time away from the team can help Mebane stay fresh for a potential playoff run:**

"It could. With his experience and his age, having a couple of weeks off, he could come back with fresh legs like [RB] Justin Jackson out there. You never know."

**On avoiding a letdown after an emotional victory:**

"We address it every week. It was an emotional game last week, nationally televised and all of that, but that's behind us now. We have to lock in this week. These guys have done a really good job of staying in the present. Right now, the one thing that we can do is work on the team that we have on Sunday and do the best we can to beat Cincinnati."

**On what he needs to see from Gordon to feel comfortable playing him:**

"For a running back, it has to be his change of direction. He can protect himself if he can change direction."

**On needing to see Gordon's change of direction in a team setting at practice:**

"Absolutely, yes."

**On RB Justin Jackson:**

"Surely, he'll be more involved [early in the game], but we didn't run the ball as much in the first half last week. It just depends on how this game goes. [RB] Austin [Ekeler] will start the game if Melvin's not there, then Jackson will come in and [RB] Detrez [Newsome] will play some, too. He's a good, young back as well."

**On facing a team with Hue Jackson on staff for the second time:**

"No, we do self-scout and change up [signals and calls] like every team anyway. That's not a big deal."

**On facing teams that may soon be eliminated from contention:**

"This is the NFL. Guys have pride. They're NFL players. You have to prepare for them like everybody else whether they're in it or out of it. This team is dangerous because this team needs to win out to get in as a wild card, probably. Their playoffs basically start this week. We have to be aware of that. The urgency that they're going to play with and what they're going to bring to the table."

**On his relationship with Lewis:**

"It's good. I've known Marvin for a long time. He's a good football coach, obviously, he's been in Cincinnati forever. It's a good relationship."

**On if they have played golf:**

"You know, we haven't played golf together, but I hear he's pretty decent."

**On if his relationship with Lewis is helped by their mutual friendship with Rex Ryan:**

"I knew Marvin before I knew Rex, to be honest with you. We have just known each other for a while."

**On if the Cincinnati run defense is susceptible with injuries at linebacker:**

"You know, it could, but their backups have come in and done a quality job. Their defensive line, like I said, is pretty dang good. They're getting up in age a little bit, but that group at one time was the best in the league and they're not far from it right now."

**On Offensive Coordinator Ken Whisenhunt:**

"No [updates], not at all."

**On if the upcoming short week could affect the decision to play Gordon this week:**

"He'll get back on the field as soon as he's ready because we miss him. We need him. We're going to make sure he's right before he gets back on the football field."

## **LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK PHILIP RIVERS**

### **On Offensive Coordinator Ken Whisenhunt:**

"I'll let [Head] Coach [Anthony] Lynn and Whiz do any talking on that. I think Whiz addressed it briefly and Coach Lynn did as well. He's been great. Our time together has been great. Hopefully, it's going to be continued for many more years, but again, I don't know any other details other than that."

### **On Whisenhunt as an offensive coordinator:**

"Gosh, Whiz has had a ton of success in this league. Really, offensively when you look at where he's been, he's able to kind of tailor things for the personnel and what they do best. He's very flexible. He asks a lot of the players, but yet allows the players to be themselves and add their touch to things as long as it fits within [the scheme]. He's a heck of a football coach."

### **On if shutdown cornerbacks still exist in the NFL:**

"Yeah, I think so. It's harder and harder because, obviously, they have to get their hands off sooner and they can't be quite as physical as they used to be able to be. Yeah, there are still a lot of good corners and we've seen quite a few of them. Yeah, I think so."

### **On what cornerbacks are most difficult to game-plan for:**

"I don't know. Quarterbacks will tell you different things. For me, first of all, ones that can catch. Then, it's guys that are unpredictable. A guy that you know what he's going to do, how he's going to play everything and plays it by the book — they're not as scary. That doesn't mean they can't completely shut down someone or make it hard, but they're not as scary. It's the ones that are unpredictable and can catch and you know they're smart players — the ones that can read routes and you know they feel what's coming at them. They're not just kind of locked in on their man. I think, over the years you've seen a lot of different styles and different kinds of cornerbacks. To one quarterback, he may say, 'I don't know if that guy is that good,' and then the other guy might say, 'Golly, that guy scares me to death.' I think it kind of depends on the throws you like, different guys' body language, any history you've had with the guy — a lot of things count and factor in."

### **On the Cincinnati defense:**

"Those guys [Bengals DT Geno Atkins and DE Carlos Dunlap] have been there for some time. They're good players, Pro Bowl players. They've had some injuries. There have been some guys shuffling in and out and in some other places. They have a handful of first rounders in the secondary. This is a team that started off, shoot, at the top of that division and hit a bump in the road. Obviously, they've dealt with some injuries on the other side of the ball as well. This is the team that we have a lot of respect for. As you hear me say every week, it's the NFL. This is a defense that we have respect for and we know that AFC North is a tough division. They're physical, they fly around and are competitive. We'll have to rise to the challenge on Sunday."

### **On facing teams that may soon be eliminated from contention:**

"Well, it's pro football and professional football players. Not speaking necessarily of Cincinnati because I don't think that they're necessarily out of it, but just in general terms, pros will be pros. The guys that aren't pros, they won't be in that situation. We were in that situation there for two years in a row. At some point in the year, when we got to that point where we were mathematically eliminated, it's tough. I think we saw the character of our locker room and how we continue to fight and play the whole way through. Again, I'm not putting Cincinnati in that [category], but you asked me in general terms and, so, I think you're always prepared to play an NFL football game regardless of what the other team has riding on it."

### **On the dynamic between WRs Mike Williams and Keenan Allen:**

"Yeah, I think [that helps Mike play off of Keenan] and, I hope it's evident, the trust that I have in [Mike] as well. Those were, like you mentioned, crucial situations where he made some big plays. Those were really chuck plays, 15-plus [yard] plays to us are chunk plays. I think all of his catches were that. Mike, he's going to have his day where it's eight or nine catches at some point. Obviously, he's gotten into the end zone I think seven times now. What he is bringing to the offense week-in and week-out, he's having a lot of impact."

### **On rating the win against Pittsburgh:**

"It was definitely up there as far as regular-season wins [in my career]. That's about as exciting as it gets until about 9 a.m. on Monday morning and you start looking at Cincinnati. That's the way this league goes — it's week-to-week. As exciting as it can be to win like that, we've lost some like that and you have to move on in a hurry to get ready for the next one because this one this week becomes the only one that matters."