

Chargers Training Camp Media Availability

Tuesday, August 1, 2023 ⚡ Jack Hammett Sports Complex ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR DERRICK ANSLEY

On the first two days of padded practices:

"I think that the energy has been really good. The fundamentals has been good. The toughness has been good. We're working through some schematics there, but I thought the guys had a really good pace. I think they have digested the first two days of pads very well."

On OLBs Joey Bosa and Khalil Mack 'playing at a heavier weight' and how that benefits the front:

"I really haven't noticed that they've gained weight [*laughter*]. Both of those guys, their get-offs are as good as ever. I was talking to Joey a couple of days ago and he said that he put on about 20 pounds and is feeling stronger. It's noticeable once you get up on him. Both of those guys are changing their bodies for a good thing."

On his evaluation of the competition at Star:

"I feel like we're at a good spot. We have two really good players [CB Asante Samuel Jr. and DB Ja'Sir Taylor], plus DJ [S Derwin James Jr.] and [CB] Kemon Hall. We have a bunch of guys working in there. I feel like we have really good depth at that spot. It's a com competitive spot, it's an important spot. I think the guys that are working there have taken the challenge very personal, to compete and put good things on tape."

On if Star is an 'open competition':

"Yeah, I think a lot of positions are open right now, that just being one of them that guys are kind of focused on. We have really good young players in there. Both of them are working hard, they're digesting the schematics. They're playing with good toughness and executing at a high level."

On Samuel's development:

"I think that, with all of our DBs, we try to cross-train them to multiply the roster. We've been doing that for the first two years and we continue to do that now. Zont has played a lot in there [at Star] in the preseason, he has played is a lot in practice, and he plays a lot in there when we've played some certain coverages in the past. We just have to continue to go out there and have him be him, get the ball and be productive and add energy, like does every day."

On OLB Tuli Tuipulotu:

"I think the first thing is, it says a lot about his character and his makeup and his respect for the game, approaching Joey [Bosa] and Khalil [Mack] with, 'Sir.' He's a student of the game. He knows what kind of impact those two guys have had in the NFL in the decade. He's willing to pick their brains and soak it all up. He's very mature. He's working very hard. He's a quick study. He's one of those guys that are just running around for two hours and you think it's the first 10 minutes of practice [*laughter*]. He's been a pleasant joy."

On if Tuipulotu calls him 'Sir' also:

"[*Laughter*] I'm not in their meeting rooms all of the time, I kind of pop in and pop out. But he is a really good kid — yes, sir and no, sir. We knew that in the process of drafting him. [General Manager] Tom [Telesco] did a really good job picking them, with [Head Coach] Brandon [Staley], and we're happy that we have him."

On Taylor:

"Ja is Ja. We liked Ja a lot in this training camp last year, he showed us some things that that can play winning football. He has continued to do the same thing this camp. He's playing really good football in there. He's playing tough, he's executing, he's communicating. He's a really good kid, a really good kid — a really good young man, I should say. He's a joy to have in the meeting room and he soaks up everything pretty quickly."

On Taylor 'getting beat on some plays':

"Welcome to defensive back in NFL [*laughter*]. It's a challenge for us every day to go against our offense, those guys are really good. They put a lot of pressure on us, which is making us better. He's not the only person who has gotten beat, a lot of people have gotten beat. You just get back in the huddle and get the next play called and go make something happen. He's done a really good job. He's working, he does everything we asked him to do. We're glad he's here."

On CB J.C. Jackson:

"He's looks fine, looks lean. He's working hard. It's a credit to him and our medical staff to get him to the point where he can come out here and actually practice. He really doesn't have any issues so far. We're thankful for that. He's going to continue to work hard."

On the linebacker group led by LB Eric Kendricks:

"It's been really good. It's been a crash course and he's taking it all in very well. He's a communicator. He's an input-output giver, he's not a seeker. He takes command in the middle and has been a calm presence in there. It's been really good for us."

On 'toeing the line between playing with energy and playing composed':

"From a defensive perspective, there's a fine line between being too animated and being a professional, as well. We want to make sure that we have total respect for each other, which we do. Sometimes, the competitive nature of an individual or two may spill out. We're all teammates, we're all in this thing together. Everybody loves each other. That's just competitive football. But you always want to make sure that you keep the professional brand intact and move on to the next point."

On S JT Woods:

"He's competing, competing and working hard. JT is another guy that takes everything in quickly and can apply, can come out here and execute and function at a high level. He's competing, doing a really good job right now."

On evaluating Woods' tackling:

"Our whole defense needs to improve in tackling. That is a point of emphasis for us in this camp, so not just JT. The way that you become a better tackler is to tackle and put your pads on people. We obviously cannot tackle to the ground within our scope of our practices, but we can thud. We can get in proper position and bend our knees, get our hands around people, wrap up and strike people. He's doing a really good job of trying to do that the way that we ask him to do it."

DEFENSIVE LINEMAN SEBASTIAN JOSEPH-DAY

Opening statement:

"Ask me all of the questions you want. Offense? Great. Defense? Great. It's all competitive."

On injuries:

"Honestly, I'm not aware of any of that because I've just been practicing. I'll let the coach [handle that]. I have no idea."

On when practice gets 'chippy':

"Of course, it's going to get chippy. You're passionate about the game. If you love what you do, it's going to get chippy at times. Listen, there are guys competing. They're trying to be great. They're trying to do their jobs. When two forces meet, sometimes that happens, right? It's nature. It's part of it. It's just all about it. It's a good thing. I think it's a great thing. Competitive excellence."

On LB Eric Kendricks:

"I think Eric has been great for us. I think he has done such a great job communicating. As a defensive lineman, that is something that is crucial for all of us. Just that confidence of having someone in the middle that is able to communicate and stay even-keel and steady throughout highs and lows, with whatever the offense is presenting us, has been really helpful. We've definitely improved because of that. I'm super excited. And shoutout to K9 [LB Kenneth Murray Jr.], too. K9, I feel like, has had a great camp so far. He's very comfortable as well. He's been communicating very well, too, communicating at a really high level. Shout out to both of those guys. They both have been doing a really good job. I can tell because I was here last year with K9, I can tell how much he's growing. He's growing a lot, so I'm happy for him, too."

On facing the offense of Offensive Coordinator Kellen Moore:

"Oh yeah, it's great. Kellen does such a great job. The proof is in the pudding, that's all he did over there in Dallas. He's doing a great job right now with us. He's making it really competitive and hard."

"I don't really want to give anything away, but I'll just say that it's really challenging. He's making it really challenging for us. He's making us work, let's just say that [*laughter*]. He's making us work for it. Nothing comes easy. I think it's great because if you look at the people in our division, that's how it's going to be. Nothing is going to be easy. All of the teams are great. The Chiefs, us, Denver with [Broncos Head Coach] Sean Payton now, and Las Vegas with [Raiders QB] Jimmy Garoppolo, right? All of those teams are going to make us work. It's going to be a dog fight each and every week and that's not even including our other opponents that are in the AFC, you know? I think having that each and every day gets you battle-tested. It builds kind of a callous, that bend-don't-break mentality of a defense. It's going to be good for us, I really do think so."

On Kendricks helping the run defense:

"I think it's just more communication on the calls. Then, the checks and then being able to check it back. He gives you that range because he's a smart player. He's able to see what the offense does. We're able to kind of play that chess game where guys won't be out of sync, guys won't be out of whack. Some guy gets this call, some guy still thinks it's this, you know? He communicates it, again, it's also K9 [Kenneth Murray Jr.]. K9 has also done a wonderful job. They both have done a wonderful job this camp. K9 has really stepped up big time. Then, obviously, [S] Derwin [James Jr.] in the back communicating. He's done an awesome job back there communicating with the secondary. It's been a real positive. Up front, we have our checks. The D-Line controls that stuff. We talk among ourselves. That's another thing. It's been really good. It's been a really productive camp so far. There's still a lot of room to improve. Getting rugged, I love it."

On OLB Tuli Tuipulotu:

"Tuli? I love Tuli, man. Tuli is a great kid. He's so humble, so respectful. He comes itchy every day, keeps his mouth shut and just goes to work. He doesn't say much, but you see him in the film room. You see him hustling. You see him work on his craft. You see him always picking the older guys' brains, [OLBs] Khalil [Mack] and Joey's [Bosa] brains. I'm really excited for him. He's going to be a great player. The sky is the limit for him."

On if Tuipulotu has called him 'sir' or 'Mr.':

"No, he didn't drop that on me [*laughter*], but he dropped that I think on Joey [Bosa], I think the first time he met him or something like that. I think Joey told him like, 'Bro, don't say that.' I think he's chilled after that. But even then, he was like, 'Hello, Sebastian.' I was like, 'I'm down, bro, just call me Bash.' [*laughter*] He's so respectful. He's a great kid. Obviously, was raised amazingly well. You can tell. The sky is the limit for him. I'm super excited for him."

On the run defense:

"I think, this was something that I was taught. The enemy of run defense is space, right? So I think the biggest thing is closing down that space. It truly takes everyone. The run defense takes everyone from the corners to the safeties, to the linebackers, to the D-Line. It takes everyone. Just being able to minimize that space, closing that space down in areas where they're trying to run it and make it really hard by shrinking those areas, right? That is the enemy of offense running. That's the enemy, space being [*claps*] closed. That is the enemy of run defense, space. Closing it down. Closing it down fast and being able to react fast and play fast. Just play rugged. That's what I feel like we're harping on this camp. It's been very physical. It's been very fun. We're getting better. We're getting better. [OL] Jamaree [Salyer], [G] Zion [Johnson] are competing their butts off. They're doing a great job. It's fun going against them every single day. I tell them every practice, I shake their hand [and say], 'Brother, thank you for making me better.' It gets chippy, but it's supposed to be chippy. That's the only way it's going to work. That's the only way you're going to improve. That's my answer for that."

On the young defensive lineman:

"[DL Christopher] Chris [Hinton], you already saw what he did for us at the end of the season. He came through clutch for us at the end. [DL] Scott [Matlock], he's doing a great job as a rookie. I think he's done a really good job of picking up everything that we're asking him, what [Defensive Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line] Jay [Rodgers] is asking him. He's smart, very smart. He picked up on the defense really fast. All the rookies, honestly, have picked up really fast on it in the defensive line room. Scott is doing a really good job. He has good instincts, good hands. He reads his keys fast. Chris has done a wonderful job. Chris has been playing really well. I'm not surprised, he played for us last year down the stretch and he had some really great plays for us. He keeps on improving. I'm proud of Chris, especially with his journey and how he started, bouncing around and then getting here. Then, [DL] David Moa as well. David Moa has been working his butt off each and every day. I'm just proud of those guys. I may not know exactly what it's like to be a free agent [that went undrafted], but I know how it's like to be a late-round pick and having a lot of chips against me being in a stacked room with a lot of good players and making it. When I see guys like Chris and D-Mo [Moa] and seeing them improve every day and seeing them improve and playing really well out here in practice, it makes me really happy. It's a very humbling experience. A very *deja-vu*-esque because I can see myself, you know, as those guys. That had to go through a tough route to get to where they are. They're doing a great job, but we still have to improve. There is still so much more to improve on. You just have to take it one day at a time. It's a marathon, you know what I'm saying?"

On QB Justin Herbert:

"He's been ripping it, he's been running it, he's been doing it all. Justin has been doing great."

"I think, as a player, there's always more that you could do. There's always more that you could add to your arsenal. I feel like Justin, you know, that's who he is. His character. He always wants to get better. He always wants to improve. He always wants to look at ways to better his game. A guy like Justin, man. He deserves it all. He's so humble, so kind. He hates to talk about himself. When you have a guy like that, that's so selfless, cares so much about team and cares so much about winning, it makes it easy for you to go to war with that guy each and every week. I'm happy for him. Congratulations, Justin. You owe us some dinner [*laughter*]."

TACKLE RASHAWN SLATER

On if he 'did anything different this offseason to get ready for training camp':

"I did a lot more prehab-type of stuff. Usually, in the past, I've trained a lot more just for performance, but now, I've kind of had that experience of last year, I'm doing a lot more pre-emptive, preventative work on other areas that might be vulnerable. A lot of strengthening, trying to mitigate injury, if possible."

On going against OLBs Joey Bosa and Khalil Mack in 1-on-1s:

"I take away a lot from those like. Joey and Khalil, they're so smart in the way they play off of O-linemen. Every training camp it's like, if you have just one little mistake in your technique here, they're going to find a way to exploit that. They really keep you honest. The margin for error is so small, I think it really teaches you quickly what you're doing wrong and what you need to fix because once they see something, it's over. They take advantage of it so well."

On if he 'noticed' that Bosa added 20 pounds:

"Yeah, I noticed that right away [*laughter*]. I feel a little extra pop with him this year, for sure."

On if he 'picks the brains' of Bosa and Mack:

"Definitely. We spend a lot of time, especially in the afternoon walkthrough when we have a little more time in between plays, we'll have little conversations about hand placement, timing, stuff like that. I think we get a lot out of it on the field and in our conversations."

On if he 'expects' to return to 'All-Pro caliber':

"I definitely want to be like the best version of myself. I think I've improved as a player since then, just in the way that I see the game and in my technique. I definitely think there was a lot to improve upon that year. I don't anticipate taking any steps back, that's for sure. The nice thing about this is that it healed up really well, so it shouldn't be an issue."

On if he has any 'mental hurdles to get over':

"No. Very early on, I was thinking about it. But by the time it started feeling better, I've shaken all that a long time ago."

On G Zion Johnson moving to left guard:

"It's great. I cannot wait just to get rolling. Zion is a freak athlete. Naturally, any double-team we have, it just happens like that I feel like. Very explosive, very smart. We're going to be having a really good time, I think."

On if Johnson is 'more comfortable' moving back to left guard:

"Yes, a huge deal to move left and right. It's really not comfortable at all because everything you do, you're learning it on the other side. I think people underestimate how big of a difference that can be. He's expressed to me that he feels more comfortable on the left. I think he looks great so far. It's still early on in camp, so there's still so much time to build. It's looking good. He's looking really good."

On utilizing the 'athleticism' across the offensive front:

"I think it looks like just doing what we normally do, only hopefully a little more explosive. Backside double teams and stuff like that, just running off the ball and really looking to maul people. Me and [former G] Matt Feiler had that relationship, definitely, too. But it's always fun to just be with a great athlete. Everything we do, we're just trying to try to be as clean and precise as possible. It's a lot of fun."

On Offensive Coordinator Kellen Moore:

"It's been great. Kellen's obviously very smart. We could tell that from the jump. I think he does a really good job of letting the O-line operate within our parameters, kind of allowing us to do things our way, make things a little bit easier for us so that we don't have to think so much and, and still be efficient. He really gives us that freedom. I really like the scheme and everything that we're putting in."

On Moore's 'character and demeanor':

"Very calm, I would say. Intense, for sure. Very intense and very precise in how he wants everything. Very detail-oriented. He's not a yeller or anything, I don't think. He's pretty calm. I think, as professionals, we all appreciate that approach."

On Moore's implementation of the run-game scheme:

"I love it. Obviously, a limited amount of work that we've been able to do so far, but so far, I think it's looking really good. I think we're coming out and, as an O-line, we're setting that tone, for sure. I think we've done that these first few days, and it's only going to get better."