



QUOTES

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LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN

On the difference between the 2017 and 2018 Chargers:

"I thought we were a tough team when we finished the season last year, but this year I think that culture kind of carried over. 8-0 [in games played away from Southern California]. Obviously, we were 12-4 this year, so we did something better. Thought the execution with the offense, our balance was much better. Defense did a heck of a job setting up and stopping the run. This year, we improved in those areas. So it was good to see all season trying to improve upon things and we did."

On potential adjustments by Baltimore for this game:

"I'm sure they'll have a couple of adjustments. We played them less than two weeks ago. So if they have something for us, we'll have to adjust — but I think it's two teams that have played one another, this game's going to go down to execution and winning your one-on-ones."

On preparing for the Baltimore offense:

"You know what they're going to do, but you still have to play disciplined and sound football because you play 11-on-11 with the quarterback's versatility."

On the team's success outside of Los Angeles this season:

"These guys, you know, we travel. [There is] something about playing in hostile environments — they just come together. They keep it tight. They have a unique skillset of eliminating distractions and staying focused. I have to give them credit for that."

On how the team did containing Ravens QB Lamar Jackson in the last game:

"I think he had less than 40 yards rushing in the first game, so I thought we did a pretty good job of containing him, but the other guys got loose at different times. Overall, our defense held them under what their rush total was. It still wasn't good enough, but we can improve on that this week."

On how playing in the Sunday playoff games versus the Saturday games:

"It helps to be in your regular routine. Anytime you can get the extra day for recovery, you know, that always helps. It gives you another day to prepare and plan. So they have the same advantage. I don't really see that as being an advantage, to be honest with you."

On RB Melvin Gordon III:

"You know, we're going to look him [during] the individual [portion of practice] and see where he is. I think he's gotten better every single day, so we'll see."

On if it's an advantage or disadvantage to play a team that was played so recently:

"I don't think it's an advantage or disadvantage. Like I said, they have to prepare for us, we have to prepare for them. We're both familiar with one another. I think this game's going to come down to who executes best."

On teaching the team what to expect for a playoff game:

"I don't think I can do that in a week. I want to approach this game just like any other game — but understanding that it is a playoff game, it's going to be a little more exciting. We've talked about it, different ways of handling anxiety and things like that. I just want guys to execute, focus on their fundamentals, their techniques and just execute."

On if this is a time to prove this is a special team:

"I think so. I think this is why you do what you do in the offseason, when you train together ask do the team-building exercises. Our guys keep it tight and they're close, and it can show in the playoffs for sure."

On the Baltimore blitz:

"Yeah, they do blitz more than any team that we've faced, for sure. They like to attack, but you have to make them pay. We didn't do that the first time. If we can get that done this time, we'll be good."

On game planning for the blitz:

"They've been blitzing all year. They blitz more than anybody in the National Football League, so we know where they're blitzing from and what they're doing, but you have to stand in front of them and block them. You have to win your one-on-ones and give us time to throw the ball down the field, give Melvin [Gordon] time to get on the safeties. We have to be better at those things this week."

On if there is more focus placed on the blitz this time around:

"No, just this is an execution game to me. We talked fundamentals this morning. The guys just went through a walk through. The fundamentals were really good. Even in a walkthrough environment, you see the leverage and guys are just that focused and thinking about their assignments."

On if losing LB Jatavis Brown for the season was helpful to get reps for backup players:

"It doesn't help us with Jatavis being out. Jatavis has been steady all year long. He's one of our best linebackers and we're going to miss him. It's going to be hard to replace him."

On the importance of good defensive line play:

"It's interesting you say that because we are counting on our defensive line [a lot]. They're going to have to get off blocks, make plays and play two gaps at times. So, yes, our defensive line will have to play well."

On if the defensive line played well in the last matchup:

"Like I said, our defense held them to less than their normal numbers. I think the defense did play well enough, but obviously, we can improve."

On if S Derwin James could play linebacker:

"Well, he's always been in the box. DJ, he's not a linebacker, but he's always around the box. You don't want to take him out of his role because I think he's pretty good at his role. You may see [S] Jahleel [Addae] down more, but we have backups. Those guys have to step up and make plays. Just like we've been doing all year, it's a next-man up mentality."

On if he was surprised by Jackson's throwing ability in the first game:

"No, not at all. I watched this young man in college. He threw for over 9,000 yards. He's a quarterback. He can throw the football."

On if a more effective running game can ease pressure of the Baltimore pass rush:

"Anytime you can run the ball in January, it's good. If you can run the football, there's nothing that you can't do. We need to be more efficient in the running game when we get our opportunities, for sure."

On what it means for the team to keep it tight on the road:

"I don't mean tight as in tense. It's just they're like brothers. They love one another. They play for one another. It's cool to watch the relationships we have in our locker room and on our football team."

On TE Hunter Henry:

"As I said earlier in the week, we're going to give him reps this week, evaluate him at the end and see where he is."

On if he believes in holding some plays back for a possible next game:

"No, there is no next week when you make it to this tournament. If you've got something — I'm not holding anything back, I'll tell you that."

On if Henry would be on a pitch count if playing on Sunday:

"Sure, he would be on a pitch count. He hasn't been on a football field since April."

On the type of players on this team with playing in a temporary stadium:

"They're tough and they're good football players. We don't care when we play, who is there — we show up and play ball. Those guys compete and that's what they've done all year."

On playing in Baltimore:

"It's a hostile environment. They have a great fan base and they're loud. I've played in the playoffs there before. It's pretty cool. I think the guys are going to enjoy it. It will be fun."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK PHILIP RIVERS

On the team's success in games outside of Southern California:

"We've found a way. We've won in a lot of different ways on the road this year — in some tough environments. We've won with big defensive stops and a couple of two-minute end-of-game drives. Kind of all different ways. Kind of handling everything that we needed to handle in Cleveland. Each game is new. It's a new season as we all know. Everybody starts 0-0. It will be a heck of a challenge heading into Baltimore. It's been a few years since we've been there. It's a tough place to play and it's a tough opponent that we saw just ten days ago or so. It will be a heck of a test for us."

On if the team thrives in hostile environments:

"I think so. I think, yeah, we've handled the environment well from a noise standpoint — from the travel and the whole deal with Saturday walkthroughs. We kind of handled all that well. So we need to handle it well again this week."

On the feeling in the locker room for players who haven't been to the playoffs:

"I think everybody is excited. It's important for the guys that have been in it not to make it sound frightening or anything crazy. I mean, it's what you, dream about playing in offseason, in spring and during training camp you're excited about this time. The thing about playoff football — playoff in all sports, in the playoffs — you never expect it to be over. You're always preparing to keep going and going and going. The reality is it's one week at a time. Somebody will be done on Sunday afternoon at 4:30. We just have to have a good week of preparation, not do anything different, but know that every little detail matters and is the difference in playing again next week or not."

On playing with aggression and caution in the postseason:

"I think it's somewhere right between. Certainly, don't want to be reckless, but I think you definitely don't want to play — you play careful. You always want to protect the football, but you don't think you want to play scared to make a play or make a mistake because then you won't make any plays and you'll go, 'Gosh, we should have done this or should have done that.' So you've definitely got to cut it loose, but at the same time manage all those situations — that whole situational football stuff that we work on all the time and have been in many games this year. You've done something very well, done some things not so well. We learn from those and you go prepare so you can handle whatever comes our way on Sunday."

On Baltimore disguising blitzes:

"Yeah, they're as good as anybody in the league in doing that. Just playing defense period as the numbers stand to back that up. They just never let you get comfortable as an offense. Oh, we know what you're doing? Okay, we've seen that for four quarters. It's always something trying to keep you off balance. That's part of it. It's the NFL. Especially getting into January. All teams are going to be good. So it's our ability to, again, adjust on the run, react, and make quick decisions and handle all that stuff. It's not going to be a case where we've got them figured out. It's going to be back-and-forth. There will be times where we pick everything up just right and do everything just right. There will be other times where we're going to have to, again, manage all those things that they do so well."

On running quarterbacks:

"Yeah, well, shoot, I certainly don't know from personal experience. They're fun to watch when you're not going against them. There's been a handful of guys with just that ability to extend plays with their legs. When I move around, it's moving around hoping somebody comes open in a hurry. You know, he, not only can throw it while he's moving around and escape in the pocket, he's almost more dangerous when he pulls it down and he can run with it. It's not just getting five or six [yards] and slide. He's turning them in big plays. Those guys that can do both, certainly, are dangerous."

On the type of players on this team with playing in a temporary stadium:

"really think last year was probably more of that, more of kind of an adjustment period from a players standpoint. I feel like this year at least in training camp, having the whole season at [ROKiT Field at Dignity Health Sports Park], I feel like we were more acclimated. I don't know that there were as many distractions in that sense this season, but I think all of those things added together with the tough road trips and how we've won games have kind of combined all those together hve added to our resilience and toughness and all that stuff. All those words you hear, I do believe we have that. Again, all those things sound good on Wednesday. Then you see how it transpires on Sunday. It's the boring one day at a time, one game at a time, prepare and go cut it loose on Sunday."

On interceptions on opening drives:

"I think they're just all bad throws. I think I would certainly throw the one in Kansas City again, just 15 yards further. It might have been a touchdown. Against Baltimore, I would throw the same one again, just a little bit further and it would have been a big chunk to start the game. Then against Denver, it's just a bad throw again. I put it out on the boundary and we probably would have punted because they were covering it pretty well. I think it's just the way they've come up. I hope not to keep that streak going, obviously. There wasn't anything we were trying to overdo, just lack of execution."

On areas for improvement from the first matchup with Baltimore:

“Yeah, no question. I think the feeling was on our side — they probably feel differently — but I felt like even all that went down, we felt like we were going to win that game there with three minutes left, as bad as it was from our standpoint. Again, as good as they played — and they have a lot to do with our mistakes — but we were sloppy, sloppier than we've been. I think we've got to be better in third down and keep ourselves out of those third-and-nine-plus [situations]. We had a bunch of those. We've got to handle all their pressure. They brought the fight to us. We've got to do a better job of handling that. I need to do a better job of throwing completions. That was, again, another game where there were just too many balls on the ground. [I have to] get the ball to our guys and see what happens. I think just better on third downs, which means better on first and second down. They really had us behind. We had three conversions that we had called back. Just overall, we were just not in a groove. Again, credit to them for causing on that. Like I said I think on Sunday, it's kind of a ten-day, 13-day halftime kind of for adjustments and counter moves that both teams make. Knowing this defense, it could be something totally different than we've ever seen. We'll want to adjust on that, but certainly we have to prepare and counter what they did well to us and what we can do better against them.”

On the regular season:

“It's been a fun year. It's been a fun year. I think it's most fun when our team has had the success it's had. You know, I never discount and say it's all void. Now we'll see what happens. I'll tell you how it's been. There is an element of that. I think when everything settles, you look back at the regular season and be excited about a lot of things that we did, but I don't know that anybody has time to feel that yet now that it's this new season that we have here. We're starting on Sunday. We've given ourselves a chance and we'll see what happens.”

On how the running game can alleviate the Baltimore pass rush:

“Yeah, you've just got to be efficient. On offense, we've got to be efficient. Again, I thought our defense did a heck of a job against this team, really holding them to 16 points and then creating a huge turnover that got us the ball there at [the Baltimore] 20-yard line. It was our only time that we really drove it and scored. With that being said, we know what this offense tries to do. They keep it from you. They sustain long drives and they keep it from you. I guess they had almost 300 yards of rushing again last week and had it 38 minutes or something. We've got to be efficient. I don't think we need to press, but just be efficient and play our game. Really, that's our game. We're up there high in the league in explosive plays. We also had plenty of drives [that went] eight, nine, ten, 11 plays to sustain those drives and getting first downs. So it's key in every game. This game will certainly be huge for us to be able to sustain some drives. I think I said this before the game last time, even drives we don't score, let's get some first downs before we punt it back to them and make them have to go the distance, so we don't have as many three-and-outs like we did last time.”

On entering the playoffs with this team:

“It's always exciting. You always have a chance. You know, I think if you asked all 12 teams that are in, they'd all tell you they're going to win it all. You have to win the first one before you win the second one. Again, it starts against a tough opponent as we found out ten days ago. We're going to prepare like crazy and see what happens on Sunday.”

On how much he has grown since his first career playoff game:

“Yeah, I mean, yeah. Gosh, I think, too, just early on we won — gosh, even when I was backing up [Saints QB] Drew [Brees], those two years we won the division one year and didn't the second, and then we went on to win four in a row and just got in every year. I think you come to — when you're younger you think this is it. You get a shot every year. Then when you don't go once in the last nine or ten years, you realize how fleeting it is and how hard it is to get in. I think just excited. Excited about the opportunity and I think from the experiences I've had, both positive and negative, you take that with what you can, and you just go play. I think you know it's like thinking back to the high school playoffs. Somebody's moving on and somebody's not. Once you understand the reality, what's at stake and all that, then you move that ahead, shoot, you go cut it loose for three hours and see what happens.”

On playing in Baltimore:

“It's tough. Postseason even adds to it. It will be almost full, I'm sure, during warmups. That's just what the playoff atmosphere is about. Shoot, the times we've been there in the past in regular season, it's been awesome. You're talking about a team that's won two Super Bowls in 2000s. This team has a tradition. They're tough, they're in the AFC North. It would be silly to say we're going to get their best shot and all those things that you say in the regular season. All those things are obvious. It will be a heck of a game. Two good teams, and every team has a chance. It's funny, two weeks ago we were the hottest team in football, and the front runners, — and now it seems like the scenario is all flipped. Who knows? We'll find out. We've got to talk about something for the next five days. Then, we'll talk about what actually happened when it happens.”