



POSTGAME TRANSCRIPTS

Los Angeles Chargers vs. Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Sunday, December 15, 2024 ⚡ SoFi Stadium ⚡ Inglewood, Calif.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH JIM HARBAUGH

On the second half:

"From my vantage point, I mean, this is life. It's football. We've seen the good times and today we're staring at adversity. It's how we respond. That's where my mind is on to, getting ready for this next game."

On message to the team:

"We didn't play well enough, we didn't coach well enough. It was pretty thorough. Very thorough and now we're staring at that adversity. It's how we respond."

On the running game:

"It's a response now. I'm not going to go through each play or each phase. We understand what took place and what our response is going to have to be."

On the second half:

"In all phases we didn't get the job done. I put that on myself, on the coaching and on playing. There's not one place we can point to and say we were good enough."

On punting on 4th-and-6 in the second quarter:

"It would have been a 60-yard field goal or go for it. Our defense had two good stops and turned the ball over twice. I envisioned punting them down in close and being able to get the ball back."

On preparing for next week:

"It starts with this recovery right now, which our players are doing. It involves the response."

On QB Justin Herbert's ankle:

"I felt he was limited some. He did anything and everything in his power to get it done, we just didn't get it done. Didn't have enough."

On the offense:

"Really not going to speculate on that right now. As I said, all phases – it wasn't good enough today. I put that on the coaching and on us all. We're all owning it."

On the secondary moving forward:

“Just the responses. There’s a response for all the different positions. We’re facing adversity and it’s how you respond to it.”

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On the short week:

"It is up to us to respond. Definitely not the way we wanted to play today, and it's all about what we can learn from this one and move on because we got beat today. We got a very important game coming up on Thursday and we have to be at our best for it."

On third downs:

"It's tough to put up points when we're 0-6 on third down. We definitely have to be better at that, whether that's communication or just being on the same page. We didn't execute the way we needed to today, especially when on third down."

On the run game:

"You said it right there. We've got to do a better job as an offense executing on third down, scoring points in the red zone and limiting those turnovers especially."

On third downs:

"It's always best being third and short and third and manageable. I thought we did a good job of putting ourselves in those positions, we just didn't execute on third down. We had our chances and our opportunities and we've got to do a better job as an offense and be able to execute and especially convert on those third downs."

On his mobility:

"It was alright, it's getting better. Obviously not to where I'd like to be, but we'll continue to do treatment and get everything right so that we'll be ready to go on Thursday."

On the short week:

"Just maximizing time. It's obviously a short week, not a whole lot of time, but you do everything you can and sacrifice in the next couple of days so that we're ready to go on Thursday."

On the Buccaneers' pass rush:

"That's just the nature of the game. I have to do a better job of getting the ball off quickly, understanding where the pressure is coming from and that's the looks that we've seen on film. We just didn't do a good job today of getting the ball out quick and that's on me. That's where I'll watch the film and I'll get better at it."

On different types of throws:

"It's just depending on the pass rush. If they get through the line and there's pressure, you have to do everything you can to get the ball out, whether that's completing it downfield, being smart with the ball or throwing it away and understanding that an incompleteness is not as bad as a sack."

On desperation:

"I don't think there's a time where desperation helps anyone. I think that's just up to us and our offense, and us as a team to go out and execute and play the way we need to. Obviously, they're all important games in December and January. This is where we want to be and we've just got to keep executing and we have to get better."

On defensive turnovers:

"I thought they did a good job of causing those turnovers, getting us the ball back and we've got to go execute. We've got to go capitalize on those turnovers and understand that we've got to walk away with points, touchdowns. We had those opportunities, we got two of them today from them and I think we only scored on one of them maybe, I'd have to look at it, but defensively a good job of forcing those turnovers."

On playing a divisional opponent on a short week:

“You can look back at the first game and watch as much as you can of it. Obviously, we have a healthy amount of respect for the Broncos and we know what they're capable of. Obviously a very good team playing very well right now, so we've got to watch as much film as we can, get our bodies back and keep attacking.”

On his streak of not throwing an interception:

“It is what it is. I always try and protect the ball and do my best to not put our team in harm's way. Unfortunately, got that one away from me.”

On finding balance:

“You play quarterback without fear. I'm going to take my shots, I'm going to throw the ball downfield. I've got to be smart about it and understand that maybe a throwaway is better in that situation. You can't take the aggression out and the aggressive mentality of throwing the ball downfield, especially to one of your playmakers. But I've got to do a better job there.”

On helping out the defense:

“Yeah, well we always talk about playing that complimentary football. There have been plenty of times this year where we haven't put up the points and our defense has come out and they've caused the turnovers, they've come up with big stops. They've played almost perfectly all year. It's tough, but we've got to do a better job of going out there as an offense and limiting the time that we put our defense out there and let those guys rest and relax on the sideline. We didn't do a good job of that today.”

On WR Ladd McConkey:

“He's a very good playmaker. He's definitely one of those guys that you trust out there. He goes and makes plays and understands the coverage, the leverage, how they're playing him and he definitely makes plays when he's out there.”

On moving forward:

“You want to learn from it. You go through a game like this and it's tough. You put all this work in throughout the week and we got beat today, we got beat badly. We have to do everything we can to learn from it and not let this one affect our next one. We understand that we've got a very good opponent coming here on Thursday and we can't let this loss, we can't let a couple plays, some mistakes that were made affect our next game. Because if we do, we're losing our focus. We're not dialed in and that's on us to be able to respond, understand that we didn't play the way we need to today, but we've still got a lot of football ahead of us.”

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS HEAD COACH TODD BOWLES

On the win:

"They didn't panic at halftime. We made some mistakes in the first half and turned it over twice. We understood the assignment and showed the growth from the second half of the season as a team; how we can come back and not panic in the second half and go ahead and try to take games away."

On the running game:

"That's huge. It's December football. We're trying to stop the run and we're trying to run the football. Today, we did a good job."

On the approach to the game:

"We knew they were good team. We're just trying to win the ball game. We had to execute. We had to play great on defense. We had to run the ball on offense and we did that."

On WR Mike Evans:

"He did a heck of a job every time we needed it. He came up big. We counted on him. He ran for a touchdown, almost ran for another one if his t-shirt wasn't so thick. We told him we got to get a short t-shirt. He's our bell cow. We are going to need him down the stretch and he showed up big for us."

On the secondary:

"It was huge. It was huge. They came in, they did a heck of a job, especially in the second half. The communication was very good. We gave up two or three plays in the first half and the second half they bottled-down and communication was great. Everybody understood the assignment."

On the response to turnovers:

"That was big for us, the growth of the team. Nobody blinked once the turnover came. Everybody went out there and did their job. We went in at halftime and talked about it and they came out and executed."

On the winning streak:

"Offensively, it starts with the offensive line when running the football, and then the running backs, wide-outs and tight ends blocking. Defensively, we haven't been giving up the points we gave up in the first half of the season. They have bottled down in the run game and everybody's not blowing assignments."

On RB Bucky Irving:

"It's been great. I mean, he looked good on Friday. On Friday, he looked like the old [RB] Bucky [Irving] when he practiced and that was different than he looked the week before. He was fresh, he had a smile on his face, so we kind of knew he was ready to go. He gives us a big boost, obviously. He seems like he breaks one a game for us and it ends up being a big play and we needed every ounce of it. [RB] Rachaad [White] and [RB] Sean [Tucker] came in and did some great things as well. So, the run game has been huge for us this year."

On WR Mike Evans:

"I think he's a guaranteed Hall of Famer. He steps up and plays big. You can't put a price on what he does for this team from a mental standpoint, from a physical standpoint and from a team standpoint. He is everything that a player aspires to be from a mental aspect. He's tough. He does great in the community. He takes care of his body. He comes up big with plays, whether they're singling him or doubling him, and he blocks. We can't ask for anything more than what he is giving us right now."

On the rest of the season:

"Well, we control our own destiny and we're trying to win them all. We're going to take it one day at a time. We're going to take it one game at a time and we're going to keep trying to correct the little things and harping on that and we'll get ready to play."

On ILB Lavonte David's pass rush:

"Well, it was more intentional depending on the package. He's one of our best blitzers, obviously, and he got home quite a few times. But to move him around some and give him some freedom while their eyes went other places, he's probably one of the few that can handle that type of volume from what we put in and he kind of executed perfectly."

On the offense:

"It's dangerous as long as we can keep it up. We have to keep our eyes on the prize and we got to keep doing the little things right, and those guys are playing very good football at the right time."

On the defensive success:

"Just the concentration and the focus. Everybody communicating with each other, playing for each other and understanding what they're looking at."

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS QUARTERBACK BAKER MAYFIELD

On playing at SoFi Stadium:

“Yeah, right next door to the locker room for the Rams. Familiar with the place, but this group that we have is really why we just had a good game. I mean talk about the two turnovers there that we had in a row there in the first half, defense stepped up, didn't let them score two touchdowns in a row and that was really the turning point. Came in to halftime, offense, said ‘If we don't hurt ourselves, we'll be alright.’ So the defense came out and stopped them and the offensive line took over and that was really the biggest difference there in the second half. Those guys played unbelievable up front. The defense, you know, complimentary football game.”

On the running game:

“Yeah, absolutely. That's a physical football team. That's what they pride themselves on is rushing the ball and being physical. So, to flip the script on that is huge for us.”

On WR Mike Evans:

“I mean obviously [WR] Mike's [Evans] always had the game-changing ability within each play, but I mean the scramble play where he works all the way across the field, he's the outside receiver on the right side, works all the way across, just trying to keep my eyes down field and he's always working. He makes that play, obviously he makes the catch, but then after the catch is the big difference there. He just keeps going. He just keeps going.”

On the offensive performance:

“Just trying to build, continue to get better and better on offense. Obviously would love to not be able to turn the ball over. [Would] love to have those back, but for us to continue to move the ball on whoever it is, just to execute. Obviously, I feel like we had a great plan going into it and the guys executed. So, just to continue to build that confidence is huge for us at this final stretch of the season.”

On reaching 30 passing touchdowns this season:

“Guys are making plays, man. We'll take touchdowns in any way, but yeah, guys are making plays. There was a few wide open touchdowns today and obviously I can credit the scheme for that. And then obviously just players making plays. [WR] Mike [Evans] had a couple of those and [RB] Rachaad [White] on the screen pass against zero blitz. Credit to all those guys. The guys up front and the guys making plays.”

On the balance of the offense:

“I can only imagine for a defense coordinator what it's like to scheme against us, because the personnel changes. We get into 13 personnel, 21, 11. How do you defend that? We have a lot of plays off plays in the same formation, so it's tough to defend that and it just comes down to our guys knowing the plan and executing it. We've just got to keep rolling.”

On what can be taken into the rest of the season:

“Complete, team, complimentary football. I mean special teams is obviously, it was a huge part today. [K] Chase [McLaughlin] was obviously 100 percent. Defense stepping up in a huge way when we weren't hitting our stride yet. That's what it's all about, is team football. Football is the greatest team sport in the world and our team grasped that and understands that way we really have to play together. So obviously at this time of the year, that's the most important part.”

On forcing a three-and-out after a turnover:

“That's huge. I mean, for them to step up, we obviously weren't having any success. I mean [RB] Rachaad [White] is going for extra effort. He's just got to be careful. He had the first down, just trying to reach out to it to ensure it. One of those that he wants back. He knows that. But for them to step up in that way so that we can go into halftime still having a one-score ball game, it's huge.”

On [RB] Bucky Irving's 54-yard run:

"At that point, just trying to continue to improve the lead. But like I said, those guys up front imposing their will in the second half was huge for us."

On the Offensive Coordinator Liam Coen's gameplan:

"The best part about it is the gameplan is great when we go into it. We all feel good about it. But the way he communicates, the way our whole staff communicates, what we're trying to get done, what we're trying to attack, the different looks and so that just gets everybody on the same page. That's the best part about it. When you're on the same page, all 11 are on the same page, good things are going to happen."

On WR Mike Evans' first touchdown:

"I mean they have a three safety defense. [S] Derwin [James Jr.]'s playing the middle of the field. They're basically playing a Tampa-2 invert. So, the two high safeties are rolling down, Derwin is going back to the middle. So when they do that, [WR] Mike [Evans] has got leverage on that route and he understands that. He knows how to win on leverage in certain routes and so just the timing of that, the guys protected, just bought some time in the pocket and get him the ball to catch and he's going to win."

On WR Mike Evans in scramble situations:

"[WR] Mike [Evans] works his tail off. He's always trying to get open, always trying to get the ball, which is what you want in a guy. It's not the ego part about it. It's part of when it's not going to be a pretty three-step, five-step drop and the ball out on time on every single play. So, he understands that things are going to happen and he's got to work to wherever direction I'm going and he did that."

On preparing for playoffs:

"I mean playoffs are down the road for us. We still have to take it one game at a time. That's the mentality that we have and that's why you see you guys executing and playing like we've been in playoff mode for a few weeks now. That's the mentality we have to have, but [we] control our own destiny at this point. One game at a time."

On personal success:

"I've always had self-confidence. I mean obviously there were ups and downs, that's just the journey of the NFL career. I just wanted to get in the right spot and Tampa's been home to me from the jump. I trust these guys and trust this group."