



## QUOTES

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### LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN

#### **Opening Statement:**

"Good afternoon. Well, we have our hands full this week. This team is a good football team — well-coached. They have a lot of talent. Can't say enough good things about this quarterback. They just continually find ways to win football games with what they have. They're very good at exploiting your weaknesses and they've had two weeks to prepare for us. So it's definitely going to be the toughest challenge we've had all year. We're looking forward to it. We're getting ready right now, but it's going to be a tough game."

#### **On preparing for a team that has a different game plan every week:**

"Sometimes you just have to go in and worry about yourself and make those adjustments as the game goes on. Sometimes, you don't know. I was in that division for eight years and saw that a lot, and that was our approach a lot of times, but like I said, they're well-coached. They'll have some things for us and we'll have to make adjustments, and I believe we will."

#### **On being sharp with execution:**

"Oh, absolutely. That's why this week is about us and our preparation and how we get ready because they do not beat themselves. We can beat ourselves. It's going to come down to execution and execution only."

#### **On the Patriots:**

"I see a team winning and figuring out ways to win. They'll go through the running backs, they'll go through the tight ends, they'll go through the receivers. The defense steps up when they have to step up and make critical stops. They'll challenge you. They play a lot of man coverage, and they're going to make it really challenging for us — and special teams are very solid. So I don't see their demise at all. I see a good football team, and it's playoff time. This team has been there so many times, they know how to win this time of the year. We've got to go in and play Chargers ball."

#### **On playing against an experience quarterback like Patriots QB Tom Brady:**

"You know, it matters because he knows what he's looking at. He can make changes at the line of scrimmage and he can get that offense in the right plays so they're not fighting uphill all day. He gets rid of the ball quicker than any quarterback in the league. So, in fact, that can negate a pass rush right there."

#### **On QB Philip Rivers' experience:**

"Having an experienced quarterback in these games helps a lot. Philip's play all year has been very consistent and [I'm] looking forward to watching him play on Sunday. Having Philip Rivers as our quarterback helps."

#### **On how Rivers' playoff experience can show in-game:**

"Well, with guys that haven't been in the situation and have veterans that have, you can kind of calm those guys down, helping those guys out. You can help in their preparation this week before you get to game day. Veteran players and the coaches job is to slow the game down for other players."

#### **On preparing for winter weather:**

"In California, you can't prepare for that. You know, 29, 30, whatever it's supposed to be, to me, that's good football weather. Last time I checked, there wasn't supposed to be any snow. So it might be cold, breezy, but we'll be fine. They have to play in it, too."

**On the New England running backs:**

"The versatility. They use three guys back there — [Patriots RBs Res] Burkehead, [Sony Michel] and [James] White. They use all three guys. They can run, they can catch. They do a nice job in protection. Like I said, a big part of the offense is going through the running backs. Right now they're running the football 50 percent of the time, second to Seattle. So a lot of that offense is going through the backs right now."

**On the special teams matchup:**

"They have a really good special teams. They have one of the best special teams players of the past decade in [WR Matt] Slater. So the situation is very stable and they have one of the best kick returners that I've seen in a long time. So that's going to be a heck of a challenge for our special teams. It's a good thing we have one of the better cover units in the league right now, but that's going to be a heck of a challenge."

**On NT Brandon Mebane:**

"He's working today."

**On if Mebane will play on Sunday:**

"I expect him to play unless something happens."

**On the dynamic between Rivers and Brady:**

"It's never one player against another player. I think anytime you lose that should bother you, but Philip is one of the most competitive guys I've been around. I know he wants to win this football game, and that's all that matters."

**On if Rivers is still having fun at this stage of his career:**

"Man, if you're not having fun with it, it's time to hang it up. That's what I tell the guys all the time, so I hope he's having a lot of fun."

**On RB Melvin Gordon III:**

"We're going to rest Melvin today, but he's feeling better, much better. We're going to rest him today. The goal is to get him to the game and we'll play him Sunday."

**On if the backup running backs will get more action this week:**

"We'll see how the game goes. Those guys are getting a lot of snaps in practice this week for sure, but when it's the game, we'll see."

**On the team's confidence:**

"This is a very confident football team, but at the same time, very humble. Once we stay humble, we have a chance to grow as an organization and as a football team — but it's a very confident group. I think some of the wins we've had this year, that stuff just breeds confidence. So I don't question their confidence at all."

**On New England's success:**

"Well, they're very good at finding your weaknesses and exploiting that. They're one of the best I've ever been around in doing that. I respect that a lot. We've got to be able to make those adjustments and keep up. Not only keep up, but get ahead."

**On his experience playing against New England while in the AFC East:**

"No, that's all in the past. Those old rivalries, they're old. They can't help me win on Sunday."

**On playing at New England:**

"They're just a pretty good football team, but it's definitely hard to play them. They have a great fan base. They're loud, and they're undefeated there this year."

**On the mystique and track record of the Patriots:**

"No, no. We don't have to overcome the mystique. The mystique is not going to win on Sunday. We have to look at what we still have on tape and evaluate that and figure out one-on-ones and go out and execute."

**On the importance of focusing on what the team can control:**

"Absolutely, absolutely. The more we stay focused on ourselves, our techniques, our concepts, our core values, the better off we'll be."

**On if the team can win in any environment if staying focused:**

"Absolutely, and I think they've proven it."

**On coaching against Patriots Head Coach Bill Belichick:**

"I do think he's considered the best. He's definitely one of the best, but I don't prepare any differently. I give all the head coaches the same respect. I look at their team, evaluate it, and try to figure out a way to win."

**On the importance of limiting mistakes on Sunday:**

"Yeah. We definitely can't make mistakes. That team cannot beat themselves, and I respect that about their organization. That's been taught, that's been trained, that's a skill. An advantage they've had for a long time. So we focus on ourselves."

**On Patriots TE Rob Gronkowski's injuries this season:**

"I'm expecting Gronk to be Gronk. It's playoff time, he shows up."

**On the team's veteran leadership:**

"We talked about that a little bit this morning. We said it's going to require some veteran leadership. Some of these guys haven't been here before. So just from a coaching standpoint, it also comes from some of our veteran players."

**On Patriots CB Stephon Gilmore:**

"He's playing well. Looks like he's lost some weight. He's lighter. He's a lock-down corner now. He's playing really well."

**On the team's success on the road:**

"I think we have a good routine. No doubt traveling on the road I think galvanized these players, and they do stick together. They do get tight. So I think that's part of it."

**On how the trip to London galvanized the team:**

"Well, we were together for two weeks every day. It was neat watching them from afar because you could see them going to dinner together, hanging out together. They definitely got to know each other a little bit better. When you can do that, I just think it builds that level of commitment and trust in our football team, and I see it in the players."

**On the team being together a lot on that London trip:**

"I think just because of the conditions and the circumstances we're in, they had to be together. They enjoy one another. They hang out anyway. That's kind of how that Cleveland trip went."

**On if there is an advantage playing last week:**

"No, we were trying like heck to get a bye week, you know. We would love to have that rest and go into this game, but it didn't happen for us. It happened for them. You know, kudos to them. I'm sure they're good."

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK PHILIP RIVERS****On harnessing the excitement of the postseason:**

"Yeah, I think that's one of the many challenges you have in the postseason. Your body says it's not quite ready yet, but you get excited for the next challenge. I just do what we did last week. We had the exact same schedule from the practice, from the travel standpoint, for the most part, and we just stick with what we've been doing. I thought we managed all those kinds of things very well last week and found a way to win. It's going to be a challenge again trying to find a way this week."

**On the 2007 AFC Championship game:**

"Yeah, we didn't score in the red zone. I think that's the biggest thing. If you watch these guys over the course of this year, they do a heck of a job. You see a lot of teams move the football, and they get down there and they don't score. Then you look up, and the score's 21-6. So I think that will be a challenge again. Obviously, we have to get down there, but when we get down there, we need to get touchdowns and set field goals. In that game there, we kicked four and we got beat 21-12. I guess the thing that stood out most — these Patriots teams, over my experience with them, is every little detail, every little thing is even more magnified. Of all teams in the league, they do a heck of a job of capitalizing on your little errors. We've got to be on all those details so we can execute at the highest level to score in the red zone, convert third downs and all those things that end up being the difference — protecting the football and more."

**On playing the Patriots in the postseason:**

"We've played them once — no twice in the postseason, actually. Both of those were obviously, tough, tough finishes, but we have another opportunity with this team. It's about this team. We have a chance. Again, we're 1 of 8 that are alive. As I said last week, somebody's going to win it. So we have a chance to get one step closer. You know, again, it's a heck of a challenge, but they all are when you get to this point."

**On Patriots QB Tom Brady:**

"What he's done at this level, at the highest level for 18, 19, 20 seasons whatever it is right there, he's been remarkable. You think about all the different teammates that have come in and out of that building, and he's still playing at the highest level and helping to lead that team to a bunch of championships. We know that this is when he and this team have always been the best."

**On the sustained success of the Patriots:**

"Obviously, they're changing and finding ways to get better. Obviously, that's why they've been in it so many years and won so many championships because they've found ways to get better year after year and game to game — but yeah, there are certain things, and the characteristics of their teams that are obviously the same. You have the same head coach and quarterback that long, and again, they've had some other really good players. They have some really good players on this team. Schematically, are there some things that are similar over the last decade? Sure. Just like we're still calling some of the same plays we called in 2004 — so some things you don't change, some things you do. What they've done really over the long haul is sustained, which is really what's most impressive."

**On his knee in the 2007 AFC Championship:**

"It wasn't really good."

**On the pain he felt:**

"Yeah, it wasn't crazy pain. Honestly, it wasn't crazy pain. It kind of buckled a few times in the game, but I really was thankful. Throughout the course of the game, I did feel like it hindered me as much as I anticipated. We didn't have our best day. It didn't help we didn't have our best day, and I really don't attribute it to that. Again, if we score those four touchdowns or even four of them, who knows how it changes the outcome."

**On the team being healthier than that 2007 AFC Championship game:**

"I think so, yeah. Certainly, gosh, we had a handful of us. Probably leaving out a few. We really were in bad shape going in there as a unit — a collective unit. So, yeah, we had some guys with some things. Obviously, [RB] Melvin [Gordon III] battled through some things last week. I'm sure he'll be preparing to battle through it again, but as a whole, I think we're certainly a lot healthier. Been a lot healthier all year. I think injuries are part of it, but we've had some guys with tough season-ending injury things. For the most part, we've been healthier than we have in years past."

**On his first down celebration:**

"Yeah, we've had a couple days to recover. So it's kind of died down and we've moved on, but, that was my — in my house, that was my favorite play. Yeah, the little 15-year-old boy came out in me. It was good. It was the first thing my wife said, 'I was just so happy to see you had so much fun.' It was a good day."

**On enjoying the process of the postseason:**

"Yeah, I think you have to. Again, it's a job, it's an important one. You know, families and the many people involved — as you see across this league with different jobs and things that get turned over, and coaches and everybody involved, and players as well have moved all over the place. Thankfully, I've been with one franchise for my whole career, but at the same time, if it's not fun, it's the wrong deal. It is a game. So I think that was important for us last week. Let's not say, 'Hey, we have to play a perfect game this week. This is the playoffs. Let's play a perfect game.' No, let's just play. We're going to miss some throws, miss some tackles. We're not going to play perfect because we haven't all year, but attention to detail, have fun, play how we've always played, that's when we play our best, and see if we can find a way to get it done, and we did. The challenge is can we do it again? Can we go 1-0 this week? I know it's a boring approach, but it is the one we have to focus on because that's only game we can win or we even have a chance to win, is the one on Sunday."

**On the importance of not letting the moment get too big at this time of year:**

"Yeah, I think so. Again, I think there's a fine line between playing reckless and saying I'm going to go out there and sling it all over the place, and whatever happens, happens. You can't do that, but you can go out there and say we're in this. I thought he was going to intercept this throw and I thought this, and then you don't make any plays. I think not just for the quarterback, it goes for everybody. You just go play. Go play. To me, you can do that if you prepare the right way. So that's our challenge. Have a great week of preparation and play free on Sunday."

**On the Patriots red zone defense:**

"I think, again, how well they play together. I think that's the key. How well they play as a group. You just see them. Their different fronts, their different personnel groups, and they play so well together. How they communicate, there are guys that switch things off, and hey, you just see how well from a cover standpoint how they — all the way around, they're on the same page. You don't see guys screaming running wide open. You don't see busted coverages. You don't see them not gap sound, all those things again, that I think are the fine details. It's funny, if you get to this point that, you know, you say the first meeting in high school, it comes down to the fundamentals. It comes down to blocking and tackling and protecting the football. Yes, we have to make some plays and there will be things schemed up, and they'll scheme things up — but who can outexecute the other, and that's what they've been able to do more than not in the last 15, 20 years."

**On the Chargers never having beaten Brady:**

"Well, I think you're aware of it, but this team is 0-0. We've never played them. Certainly, I was a part of all those teams that didn't win in those games, but this team right here has never played them, and that's the way I look at it. Again, those are all things that you're aware of, and shoot, we can't go back and win. We have a chance to win on Sunday."

**On what it will be like to walk into the stadium on Sunday:**

"I mean, it's awesome. It's awesome. I think, you know, there is a piece of you that goes it can't be any better. That's not because we think it's easier or we've got this. It's none of that. It's just, why wouldn't you, as a team, and individually as a competitor want to go to a place and a team that's been the best for, you know, over the last 20 years. They've had the best run, best quarterback, best coach and all that — and have a chance to go back there again? I mentioned after the game on Sunday, 11 years after we've had this opportunity to stay alive and 11 years exactly to have another opportunity is special. It's special. To get a chance from 11 years ago with another team, to go back in and have an opportunity, you have to appreciate it, enjoy it, and play the game."

**On the importance of veteran leadership:**

"I think in a lot of ways it means keep doing what we're doing. Guys are saying, 'Gosh, why is everything changing? Were we not doing it right in the past?' I think it's mainly stay with it. It's worked for 13 out of 17. So let's stay with what we've done. Again, I do think there is a way to be reminded, all of us, really, among each other, myself included, just the little details and fine-tune things. Everything matters is the best way I can put it. Everything matters. Let's not say, 'No, don't worry about it. You're the back side.' No, it might matter. If it's third-and-three, we're going to wish we had that conversation on the back side and we came back to it. So I think it's just the fine details, but keep doing what we're doing and go play. These are the kind of games you dream about playing in. These are the ones we all grew up watching. We have an opportunity, shoot, it's awesome."

**On being the younger of the two quarterbacks:**

"Yeah. I haven't had it much these days. I used to have it all the time, but I did see that. That was pretty cool. I guess the oldest combined two guys, right? I've never felt that it's quarterback versus quarterback, but I think the ones that I've always either was a fan of or had so much respect for, it is meaningful. It was when Peyton [Manning] came to the division after he was in Indy, there was a piece of me that was 12 years old. He came running out of the tunnel, and it was like, 'Oh, that's Peyton Manning.' Then we're leading on our two teams again. Obviously, Tom's worried about our defense just like I am theirs, but it is pretty special to have an opportunity again to go against a quarterback-led team in Tom Brady."

**On if he can keep playing into his 40s:**

"I don't know. I'm just keeping it right here for now."

**On fans in San Diego following the team:**

"Again, San Diego will always be special for me, and I know for many of us — and I'm still there. Every now and then, I don't go out and about very much this time of year, but I think you're — I don't know the best way to say it. You hope that some of those fans can be happy and be excited for the team they cheered for, and I know many of them may not. You know that's a hard decision and kind of position to be in, but certainly, people I run into have always been very supportive."

**On if younger players are asking him about the next step:**

"I don't think so. They just kind of go with the flow. I think even last week it was sorting through how the bracket works, things like that that they're not sure of until you're in it and knowing it's not exactly like the normal bracket. It depends on what happens with the Colts and Texans and all those things, but when it comes to this, I think our guys have done such a great job. We have veterans in each room and focus on the task ahead of us. Keep it the same. People ask about [Head] Coach [Anthony] Lynn, and the words I use probably doesn't do him justice, but steady. He's been very steady from day one since he got here. He's been steady for the moves. He had his start last year, was steady through some of the ups and downs we've had this season. I think when you get that all the time from the front of the room and the rest of his staff, and you have enough veteran guys in each position group, then it just kind of happens without there having to be a lot of you know meetings and conversations about all the ins and outs of it."

**On the longevity of him and TE Antonio Gates:**

"Yeah, I don't want to speak for him, but I would say it's probably special for him, too. He may have been in worse shape than I was with his toe in that game. Try to play tight end with a dislocated big toe, I can't even imagine. So, I'm sure it's special for him, too. You look last week, he's obviously still contributing, and he's been an awesome teammate in the locker room and on the field. So it is exciting. We found out he was coming back, that was one of the things we talked about, we have a chance. We've got one last shot at it, and here we are. In 12 quarters somebody's going to win it. Each team has 12 quarters potentially. We've got to win the first four to get the bonus four. So excited about the opportunity, and we'll prepare like crazy and be there, ready to go."