

HEAD COACH JIM HARBAUGH

POSTGAME VIDEO CONFERENCE

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Chargers 40, Patriots 7

Q. Jim, how does it feel to clinch a playoff spot today?

JH: With humble hearts, move on to the next game. Just so proud of the team. All those that made it happen. The players, the coaches. I mean, there was so much great play. I mean, our offense our offense, great. Defense, great. I'm proud of our captains.

Justin Herbert played a near flawless game. Derwin James reached five and a half sacks, career high, but he does it every single game. Rashawn Slater and Brad Bozeman, I thought that was the best offensive line play we've had the entire season. The run block and the pass protection was so good, so good across the board. Khalil Mack, he's led us the entire season, and he had a great game.

Really proud of JK Dobbins, what he's been able to accomplish, career-high in rushing, missing four games, everything he's overcome.

Just, yeah, incredible feeling that the hand of God is really on this team. And we're going to keep grinding and keep moving forward. But super, super proud of everybody. Everybody. I mean, it's everybody in the family, everybody in the organization that just keeps doing anything and everything they can to help our team be successful and to win.

And, I mean, you got to be your best when your best is needed most. I mean, to do it when you have to do it, maybe some people expected it, but it's not easy to win any NFL game. And when the guys, when they gotta have it, they go out and play like they did, it's just a tremendous testament to who they are as football players and men, just highest character I've been around, and I love these guys.

Q. To have a win like this a convincing win like this, what do you think it can do for the team now as you head into the playoffs?

JH: Yeah, I mean, they just gave it everything they had, and that's all they were asking of each other was give us everything you have and give it your very best and do it for

each other. Play for each other. I mean that's a powerful thing. I think that bodes well for us.

Q. Ladd today set the two rookie receiving records, passing receptions and yards for a rookie. How impressed are you by what he's been able to do this season?

JH: Yeah. He's been incredible teammate. I mean, he's been humble and hungry from day one. He's a mighty man. He's a football player. Great to see. And there have been a lot of great receivers in Chargers history to set the rookie receiving record. Just phenomenal.

So much gratitude to Joe Ortiz, Chad Alexander, the entire personnel department. I mean, to do what Joe's been able to do is incredible and just -- just smile and say yes, you know. That's part of our team, part of our family. So great job. Great job by them.

Also, Justin Herbert set an NFL record in the history of the National Football League, the most passing yards of any quarterback in their first five years. And he, like I said, near flawless performance. And I can't think of one player, one throw or one check that he made that wasn't just -- one ball placed where it shouldn't have been. Just an incredible, incredible performance by an incredible player.

Q. Joe was leaving the locker room. You called him back in, give him a bear hug. That felt like a moment. Can you describe what you were feeling, why you decided to do that, the emotions of that?

JH: Yeah. I mean, I love the high five. I mean, the high five to me, that goes back to being one of the great inventions of all time. But I needed a hug from Joe. I needed to hug Joe. I just love, love Joe. He's the same brilliant guy every single day, and he is a team guy all the way. And he takes no deep, long bows, but he should. He should take a very deep, long bow for just how good he is and what he's been able to do with this team.

When you go back and look at the way he's put it together, him and his staff, it's incredible. I mean, look at the free agents that were brought in, the signings, the midseason signings, the workouts, the tryouts, the draft picks. I mean, it's just good, good, good, good, good, good, good, good, good, good, good, good. Good.



I mean, it's so many and so -- and we've all benefited, you know, from the guys that were here last year, the stalwarts like Justin Herbert, Derwin James, Khalil Mack. Joey Bosa, I mean, I thought he had a great game. He had a great game today. Tremendous series. And Rashawn Slater, Zion Johnson, Quentin Johnston. Quentin Johnston, you know, tremendous game, the way he came back. I mean, a little high, you know, maybe, but I thought it was a catchable ball. But then to come back and get us a first down on the next drive and then another and another. Joshua Palmer, another guy that -- for all the players that were here last year, they're the ones who have led us, and it's been their leadership that has motivated us, kept us going.

And, also, it's the antidote for complacency, great leadership. And that's what our players have given us. So now onward. It's onward and keep grinding and, you know, even -- never like the lighten up. Tighten up. Tighten up. Keep tightening up. As we move forward, that's our mission now. And, yeah, we want to get this -- 11 sounds better than 10 so we're going to go get ourselves prepared for our next game.

Q. You guys were able to convert a couple of fourth downs especially early. When the offense is clicking like that, how much confidence does it give you to be aggressive in those situations?

JH: Yeah. It was very -- when you've got Number 10 back there and the way the offensive line was performing, I mean, the big guys up front were getting the job done. They were handling their man. They were handling the movement. They were handling the games and the twists.

And great job Mike Devlin. Also what a fantastic job he's done. Had us really prepared for this game and our guys executed at a super high level. So, yeah, that gave me a lot of confidence that Justin was getting the protection. If he can finish a throwing motion, then I know that the ball is going to be thrown accurately.

And the way our receivers are playing, the way Josh Palmer, Quentin Johnston, Ladd McConkey, and Dissly, a couple of nice key first down catches and runs by him. Felt very confident that we would pick those up.

Q. Offensively, you talked a lot about this season about you've been grinding on that side of the ball, trying to find your best football. Did today feel like a turning point for you at all offensively in terms of sort of everything clicking?

JH: It was four quarters of really good football offensively.

Four quarters of really good football defensively. Great game plan by Greg Roman. He called a great game. I thought there was -- it was fastball, curve. Kept us in rhythm. We were efficient. We were able to make big plays. We were able to have some long drives.

The field position, there was some hidden yardage there that was hurting us early. But come off your own 8-yard line, own 6-yard line, 94-yard touchdown drive, 92-yard touchdown drive, 29 first downs. That was, I thought, it was a great master class of calling the game by Greg as well.

Q. Getting JK Dobbins back from IR, how big an influence did he have on the offense?

JH: Big. Really big. And all the backs. I mean, Hassan was making big plays for us. Kimani had big runs. But it was great. The backs, the way the backs are playing right now, very rarely are they getting less -- they're never getting less than what the play is blocked for, and they're getting more than what the play is blocked for.

Some big first down pickups in the run game as well. JK had a big one on third down. Hassan had a big one on third down. I think maybe JK had another or Kimani got one as well. Yeah, love the way our backs are running and holding on to the football. They've done a great job. Kyle McDonald has done a tremendous job with ball security.

So, yeah, just keep tightening up, find out -- there's things that we can improve, and we'll go about attacking those as well.

Q. Jim, big turnaround in San Francisco, big turnaround at Michigan. Here back in the playoffs. Is there a common thread? Different situations, different teams. But is there a common thread in the team that you see that allows for that?

JH: Yeah, I really just speak of this team. Very little to do with me. If it goes right, then it's our players. They're doing a great job. It's gone bad a couple times. That's on me.

But, yeah, this is -- I've been drinking the Kool-Aid here. From day one, it's really started with -- I mean, I can't give enough credit to Derwin James, Justin Herbert, and those two in particular. And Khalil Mack and Rashawn Slater. I mean, stalwarts. Brad Bozeman has come in. He's been a stalwart. There's a bunch.

There's probably, like -- I counted it up early. There was maybe 15, 15 stalwarts that we had, and it's grown since then. It's quite a bit higher now. But those guys, those

guys. And you talk to them, and there's more to do.

So, yeah. As a coach, I'll end it by saying, answering that question, there's no coach who could have it better than to be coaching these players. Nobody. Maybe the only one would be future us could have it better than us.

Q. Jim, Drake Maye had a pretty good game last week against Buffalo. What was the key to kind of slowing him?

JH: I thought we had really good coverage. He's a heck of a good player, no question about it, and was able to get out on a few scrambles. Made a great heads-up play on the offsidess. Pass rush was really good, but I thought it was just a really -- I mean, our team played one of our best games defensively, and that's saying a lot because Justin Minter and this defensive staff and defensive players have had some great games.

But to play a complete ball game, four quarters of tremendous defensive football, that was -- I think it was more -- I mean, that was a factor. That was the key factor. We played really good. Thanks.

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