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Chargers Week 10 Media Availability

Wednesday, November 9, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On WR Keenan Allen's injury status:

"Keenan [Allen] is day-to-day. He's working back. I don't think you will see him out there at practice today, but day-to-day."

On if Allen 'has a chance to play this week':

"We'll find out a lot more as the week goes on. That's kind of what it's going to be here for a while. It's not going to be weeks, but it will be day-to-day."

On 49ers RB Christian McCaffrey:

"Christian [McCaffrey] is a very complete football player. He's a complete back because he's an outstanding runner, runs with pace, vision. He can break tackles. He's a very elusive player, a powerful player, and then he's an outstanding pass-receiver. He's a dangerous weapon out of the backfield and he can split out as a receiver. Sometimes there are good pass receivers out of the backfield, but he can truly split out wide and be a factor, too. Then, as you saw last week, now he is throwing touchdown passes out there. He's a very complete football player. A lot of respect for his game."

On how the defense can 'limit' McCaffrey:

"I think the story for us has just been a couple of those explosive runs this year. Outside of those, the numbers look a lot different, and that is what we have to prevent in this game, our explosive runs. You have to do a good job of vicing the football and making sure that it doesn't come down to one guy because when they can really create those isolations, where it's a back versus one person, those are the runs that go a long way. We have to have great penetration at the line of scrimmage, edges, and then our second and third level, we have to get multiple people to the football and we have to tackle well. It's going to be an 11-man operation, which is how defense is, but especially against them. They are trying to make it where one guy has to make the play. We have to play team defense and get a lot of people to the football."

On preparing for the versatility of the 49ers' offense with McCaffrey, WR Deebo Samuel and TE George Kittle`:

"That's where the game is now, to have those type of chess pieces. You try to have them on all three phases of your team. I know, defensively, that's how we have always tried to design our defense. Since I have been a defensive coordinator, you have to have those chess pieces that give you the flexibility to match up with offenses like this. These guys can line up anywhere and they can do a lot of different things. They can catch the ball, they can run the ball, they can block. You need to have players on your team that can mirror that and you can use your players as chess pieces to be aggressive. We're lucky that we have some players like that on our team and we're going to need them because those three guys you mentioned are really good players."

On ‘if the defense prepares differently in practice when facing versatile players’ and how that impacts S Derwin James Jr.:

“It’s the same for him, but I think what you are trying to do is get the players on your work team that can best emulate those types of players. That’s easier said than done because those players are so unique and that’s why they are paid accordingly. But you’re just trying to make sure that your players are aware of all of the things that they can do. Again, those three guys together, there are a lot of options for that football team. You can’t practice everything that they can do, but you just have to have kind of the inventory, the library of, ‘OK, this is what they can do. This is what they have shown. This is what are possibilities.’ Then, go let your guys go play fast. You can’t be thinking out there against a group like that. You can’t be thinking. You have to be playing.”

On preparing for McCaffrey in a new offensive system after recently joining the 49ers:

“[49ers Head Coach] Kyle [Shanahan] has done that with his backs throughout his career. That’s why they went and aggressively made this move because when you have a back like that, it changed the math. Then, they have [49ers WR] Deebo [Samuel], who can also play in so many different places. You’re just taking a look at the past and how they have utilized players like him. They are running their offense. They are eight games into the season and they have played two games with him. Again, it’s more about us and what we do, not what they do.”

On T Trey Pipkins III’s injury status:

“He’s going to be day-to-day. Sore. It will probably be a game-time decision for him, but working his way back.”

On if Pipkins III will practice today:

“I think he will be out there. I don’t know if he will be doing anything.”

On if CB Michael Davis will cover 49ers TE George Kittle on Sunday:

“One of Mike’s strengths is his size and his length. He can play well against those bigger players, whether it’s a bigger receiver or a tight end body-type. He does give you that flexibility. As we said after the game, Mike had a quality game last week. He’s played good football for us and we’re going to need that. He has a lot of experience and we’re going to have to leverage that the best we can moving forward because an offense like this, it provides you a lot of challenges from a look standpoint.”

On S Nasir Adderley and S Alohi Gilman ‘playing as a tandem’ when James shifts around:

“I think both of those guys, they have played a lot together. Last year, when we put Derwin [James Jr.] in other places, those two guys were playing together. Using that chemistry to our advantage. I think they both played well. I think Nas [Adderley] in the last three weeks has played really good football for us. We’re really pleased with where he’s at. Lo [Gilman] is just steady for us. Has done a good job on special teams. We’re going to need their experience to play well in this game.”

On if ‘benching’ Adderley win Week 5 ‘was a kick in the pants’:

“I don’t look at it that way. I think that we have a lot of confidence in him and we just wanted to make sure that we re-centered him because he has played really good football for us since I have been here. Sometimes, we all need that. He’s responded really well. He’s been really good in practice. He’s really taking charge in the game. Last week against Atlanta, he made some really big plays that allowed us to win that game.”

On the kicking arrangement for this week’s game:

“It will be the same as last week. Going into it with the thought of [K] Cameron [Dicker]. [K] Dustin [Hopkins] is working his way back, making progress, same as [K] Taylor [Bertolet].”

On if OLB Chris Rumph II will return to practice this week:

“He’s day-to-day. There is a chance that he can play in this game, but he’s going to be day-to-day and it will be more of a game-time decision.”

On the difference in QB Justin Herbert from Week 3 to Week 9 in relation to his rib injury:

“He feels a lot better [*laughter*]. He feels a lot better, and that counts for a lot. I really felt like he was playing the way that he can play. He just felt really in control of the game plan. Throughout the game, I thought he made really good adjustments. He was a really good decision-maker, made fast decisions and played really well in the clutch. The third-down numbers, some of those tight window throws to [WR DeAndre Carter] Dre, specifically, those were all tight throws and accurate throws. He made some plays with his legs. Both two-minute drives, that’s kind of textbook Justin [Herbert] playing really well at the end of the game. I just can’t say enough about him. He’s practicing well. I think the big difference between then and now, too, is that he’s been able to practice full and being able to get that full timing and rhythm. He is showing a lot of toughness and he’s been a good example for all of us.”

On if there are other players who will miss practice today:

“I don’t think so.”

On OLB Joey Bosa’s ‘timeline’ for return from injury:

“I just know that he’s back in the building. It’s good to see him. He’s not there for practice yet. We’ll let you know when he’s going to come back to practice. He is in good spirits. I think that we’re getting closer to that practice point, just don’t know exactly when that is going to be.”

On the similarities between Bosa and his brother, 49ers DL Nick Bosa:

“Yeah, they wear the same number, they have the same name [*laughter*]. They are both dominant players, complete players. They are different players, I think, in terms of their style, but the result is that same. You have to be aware of them every snap, run game and pass game. Nick [Bosa], he’s an outstanding, complete edge player. He’s very physical. He makes a lot of big plays. He plays with a motor. I think that, sometimes, when you have special players, you don’t ever take for granted that they play really hard. Nick plays really hard, just like Joey. That’s a superpower of both of theirs. A lot of respect for Nick, I have been watching Nick for years. He’s going to bring out the best in us, for sure.”

On if any aspects of Nick Bosa’s game ‘imitate’ Joey Bosa:

“They are kind of similar. They kind of look similar in their three-point stance. They kind of look similar. The way they have that back hand in that sprinter position, ready to get out of the starting blocks. They are different players, stylistically. I think they both would tell you that. I know how close they are. I know they train together. I know they work together. I know that they study together. A pretty amazing bond to have two brothers that are as special as they and playing as well as they are. I know, being on a practice field with San Francisco last year when they came here, that was really cool to see them on the same field. I really wish Joey [Bosa] could be out there for this game because that would be pretty cool.”

On if Bosa has ‘expressed emotion about not being able to play on Sunday’:

“You guys know Joey [Bosa], emotion isn’t really a part of his equation [*laughter*]. He’s pretty flat-lined. I know that he would love to be out there to compete and give our team a chance to win. There is that brotherly love that, ‘Hey, I’m going against my brother and I want to show the world that I’m one of the best.’ Hopefully, we’ll get that opportunity again for him. I think it’s a cool storyline. They’re both having great careers.”

On if the team has signed DL Breiden Fehoko to the active roster:

“Yes.”

On if the team has placed DL Austin Johnson on the Reserve/Injured list:

“Yes.”

On Special Teams Coordinator Ryan Ficken:

"I think Ryan [Ficken] and [Assistant Special Teams Coach] Chris Gould have really just transformed our special teams culture. I think making everybody on our team, including coaches, just included in that, building that team culture in that everyone has a role that is important. I think we have been able to get a lot of starters on special teams, where that was always a vision of mine. I think, now, you have a deep enough team that you can play like that and I think that has been good. I think just from a specialist standpoint, I think they have worked really well with our specialists. That's where it starts. We were able to get Dustin [Hopkins] back, bring in [LS] Josh Harris and [P] JK [Scott], and then you get [WR DeAndre Carter] Dre as your returner, and that is a good place to start. I think that those guys are all having quality seasons. What you have to do, I think, as special teams coordinators now in the NFL is you have to develop young players. That's such an integral part of your team is taking these young players who have maybe not played special teams very much in college and getting them up to speed, fundamentally, in understanding the pro game. I think that they are both excellent teachers. They set great examples. We're halfway through the season, almost, but as you guys have seen, it's a much different looking movie out there. I'm really happy that they work for us."

On 49ers T Trent Williams:

"Trent [Williams] is one of the best in the game. I've competed against him in the past. He's as good as it gets. He's playing as well as he ever has. He's one of those rare NFL players who has rare engineering. He has really played his best for Kyle [Shanahan] and that's where it all started for him, back in Washington. One of the best players in the league at his position."

On 'what is an illusion' for the team this season':

"Good question; pretty high-level question for a Wednesday [*laughter*]. I wish you'd give me more time to Friday. I think, for us, the season is nowhere near the finish. I think you have to understand that there is a long way to go. I think that just because we have been through a lot doesn't mean there is not going to be a lot more that happens. We have to be ready for a lot more to happen. A lot has happened and a lot more is going to happen, and that's what I want our team to be ready for is that that is going to be a fact in the last part of the season, moving forward."

On 'stressing performing better' in the first offensive and defensive series:

"I think I made the point after the game, but just structuring your practice. Making a couple of adjustments where we are out there as a team faster and making a couple of adjustments that way where early in the practice, you are in team [drills] and you are going. Maybe do that a little bit more, I think. Starting today, we made a couple of adjustments that way to focus on it, just like we had some adjustments that we made coming out of halftime. I want to make sure that our players know that we're going to make that a point of emphasis. Hopefully, we can start faster. I know that hasn't happened in the last four games and I think our guys know that, 'Hey, we made it tough on ourselves and why did that happen?' I think it comes down to the execution early on in the game and being aggressive — being aggressive early in the game and bringing that mindset. Not that, 'Hey, just because you are aggressive and just because your mindset is good doesn't mean that the results are going to be there, but you're going to feel differently.' We're going to be practicing on it. We're going to be working on it. Hopefully, it will translate."

On if the team will elect to receive the ball if they wins the coin toss on Sunday:

"Not at this point, no. Weather and all of those things being under consideration, but no."

On which defensive lineman will 'fill in' for Johnson:

"We're going to let guys compete during practice and see how practice goes. We're going to be looking from within our team, but we want to get those guys a fair chance to compete, get them the reps so that we can see them, and make our decisions later on in the week."

On if RBs Sony Michel and Isaiah Spiller 'will continue to split the backup running back role':

"I think those guys are both role players for us. I think we're both going to need them in similar roles that they were in last week. We really feel like those guys are improving. I think we're finding out different ways to use them, and Austin [Ekeler]. I think that group is making progress. It was good to see Isaiah [Spiller] out there in an NFL game because that's how you improve. He looked ready, to me, and he's going to get better as he goes. Hopefully, that first experience will help him in practice this week."