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Chargers Week 3 Media Availability

Friday, September 22, 2023 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On Vikings QB Kirk Cousins and WR Justin Jefferson:

“Kirk [Cousins] has seen it all. He’s played a lot of football, so he’s seen all the looks. He’s been in the system a long time. He’s one of those veteran quarterbacks that can really command the game. He’s seen a lot and can get them into premium looks. In situations — he’s been through it. Outstanding quarterback. Justin [Jefferson], his play speaks for itself. He’s one of the top young players in the league. He’ll have our full attention.”

On defending Jefferson:

“You have to be able to change the leverage on him. You have to try and make him operate post-snap as much as possible. The issue with Justin [Jefferson] is he’s such a smart player. Everybody knows he’s getting the ball and he still gets it. [Vikings Head Coach] Kevin [O’Connell] is an outstanding play designer, when you have a quarterback who’s accurate and a receiver who’s brain really works, you get the type of production that you’ve had. A big challenge in front of us and we’re excited about it.”

On RB Austin Ekeler:

“To be determined. He’s working hard to get back. We’ll see how it goes here in the next few weeks.

“No implication.”

On LB Daiyan Henley:

“It’s been good to work him back into practice. It’s been good to get him back in the workflow on special teams and on defense. We’ll see where it goes in the next 48 hours.”

On if Henley could possibly start at linebacker on Sunday:

“To be determined.”

On RB Joshua Kelley:

“I thought Josh [Kelley] has a good game last game. I thought he gave us a chance. It was a tough game running the football, but he was ball secure. He was good in protection — I thought he protected the passer well. We have the utmost confidence in him. Now we need these two young guys to step up.”

On OLB Joey Bosa:

“We’re going to see how he feels between now and the game. We feel optimistic that he’ll play. Just how he feels on game day. You can expect something similar to the last game.”

SPECIAL TEAMS COORDINATOR RYAN FICKEN

Opening Statement:

“Obviously, we’re playing Minnesota this week. It’s going to be a great atmosphere out there. We’ve been preparing for that with our guys. I know our guys are ready to go. Excited for them to go out there, go ahead and compete. I think it’s going to be a great challenge for our guys, it’s a really good unit. We’ve got to make sure we’re ready to go. Excited for Sunday.”

On returning to Minnesota after spending 15 years coaching there:

“I wouldn’t say it’s any more excitement than any other game. It’s going to be different being on the other sideline. Obviously, it was 15 great years, both professionally and personally, but the excitement is because it is the next game. That’s the most important game. It’s this week. There’s only one game out there for this weekend. We got to do what’s best for our organization and find a way to win this game, but no more added value.”

On the crowd noise in Minnesota:

“It’s a special stadium. They have a great fan base there. It’s really loud, obviously, and it’s a good environment in the way they go ahead and have those games. It’s a great challenge for us. It’ll be a great opportunity for our team to go out there, do what we can do and find a way to go ahead and win the game. It’s a special place.”

On the overtime punt:

“I thought that the kick and operation were great. We had a great hang time on that, it was over five seconds hang time and went 47 yards. The coverage, obviously, could be better. We had a couple guys in position to go ahead and make the play. At the end of the day, we ended up at the [39], not ideal. We wanted to go ahead and flip that field and help our defense with that field position. We will be better with that. I thought the punt was what we were looking for. A lot of the times, you get those fair catches, they ended up doing their job in terms of Tennessee. We’re going to improve with that. I thought it wasn’t bad.”

On the tackle by LS Josh Harris:

“Josh [Harris] did exactly what he was supposed to do. Just because he made [the tackle], it’s not that it was a breakdown with any of the coverage. What it does show that maybe they’re putting more emphasis on other players. They were doubling [DB] Deane [Leonard] outside on the left side. Deane was still able to get down there. They’re going to put a little more emphasis on other guys of our coverage unit because we’ve been covering so well. Josh is a player, a long-time vet, he has another dynamic in terms of just snapping the ball. He’s a very good athlete. His tackling right there was exactly what we’re teaching — driving the feet and keeping the head up. Having that extra value with him really helps our unit as a whole. It’s not a bad thing, by any means, by him going down there and covering because he did exactly what he was supposed to do. It was great.”

On if he showed the clip of Harris’ tackle in meetings:

“It was great. I love to see it because our tackling drills that we did in the offseason and leading up into training camp carried over. It was really good to see. You’re right, he kept his feet going and wrapped up. It’s a clinic tape. We put it in that clinic tape for him.”

On the Patriots field goal block:

“Actually, that has been going on for some years. They executed it really well that game. Hats off to them on that. I remember Denver had done it four or five years ago. The Raiders did something similar to that to us last year, but they didn’t rush them as hard off the edge. We’ve seen that around, just have to make sure we showed our guys that. You’ve got to be prepared for any situation and any opportunity that comes up for them to go ahead and get an edge. Just making sure we’re not caught off-guard and surprised. Great execution by that team.

“I’m not in their meetings and what they do. I know what we do and what our philosophy is and what we talk about. There is some of that to it. They just executed really well.”

On trying that type of field goal block:

“We haven’t done that on tape, but not to say that you wouldn’t put that into a game plan. It’s been around for a little bit and it’s always something that comes up and something that you always have to practice against, too.”