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## Chargers Week 18 Media Availability

Friday, January 6, 2023 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

### HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

#### **On having just one player listed with a game status on the injury report:**

“Hopefully, it will make for a quick press conference [*laughter*]. Sorry [*laughter*]”

#### **On how OLB Joey Bosa and S Derwin James Jr. performed in practice:**

“The practice quality looks good. The practice we just had was a quality practice. The guys are feeling confident in one another and starting to develop that chemistry because they have played together a lot now. There is a lot to play for and we also have full respect for our opponent and they have our full attention. That’s why I felt like today’s practice was one of the better ones we have had.”

#### **On being aware of outcomes pertaining to potential playoff seeding prior to kickoff on Sunday:**

“Yeah, that is going to happen how it happens. We’re aware of that now. We know that we’ll know what’s going on before we play. Any type of competitor knows that the mindset has to be on your opponent. We’re going to play the Denver Broncos, and our mind can’t be in two places. That is not how competition works. Our full focus is going to be on Denver and playing our best football.”

#### **On his plan for OLB Joey Bosa’s ‘usage’ on Sunday:**

“You are aware of the challenges he had on game day, but it’s just to continue to progress his game and get him the reps that he needs in order to be successful. I think that he got off to a good start. I was proud of the way he battled through that. Now, I think, as he probably told you, we’re going to get a more accurate picture of where he is at. I think that is important for him, is to get his timing, get his rhythm. I thought he had a good day of practice today. We have to keep building him up so that he can be at his best in the playoffs.”

#### **On ‘what factors into which players will play on Sunday and the amount of playing time that each player will receive’:**

“I have been through and have experienced this, when I with Chicago and the first-round bye was at stake in 2018. The Rams and us were playing at the same time. We were playing Minnesota, who needed to beat us in order to make the playoffs, so it was a really big game. We kind of knew at halftime that the Rams were going to beat San Francisco and that we were not going to get the first-round bye. We played a really good second half and we were able to win that football game. I think our approach to the football game was to go in and play well. We went into the game on a big winning streak, when were in Chicago, and we were committed to going to play that game at a high level. I think that we played a really high-level game against Minnesota because of it. That is certainly going to be my approach to this game, is to go play a high-level game. I know that last week, Denver, played a really outstanding game against the No. 1-seed in the AFC on the road. You know that they are going to demand our full attention, and our players know that. Going into this game, they know that, ‘We’re going to play our players and we’re going to play well.’ As the facts on the ground change within the game, then yeah, things could change, but we’re not going in with the mindset like, ‘Oh, well he’s not going to play. He’s not going to play.’ We’re going [to Denver] to win this game and play our best. Then, as the game unfolds, we’ll see what happens.”

**On the benefits of playing in a cold climate the week before the postseason:**

"I think it's a non-factor. Pro players play where they are supposed to play. We're excited to go compete."

**On if 40 degrees is 'cold':**

"Not in my view [*laughter*]. I think cold is probably different for everybody, but I wouldn't characterize 40 [degrees] as cold."

## **QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT**

### **On if he is treating this game ‘as if it is a regular game’ and mental preparation this week:**

“I don’t think we’re going to be too worried about anything other than our game. We are doing our best to just focus on us, the Chargers, and doing everything we can to play our best on Sunday. A lot can happen outside of it, but as long as we’re focused on what we are doing here, I think that is what is most important.”

### **On how ‘cognizant’ he is of teammates reaching potential milestones and accolades:**

“I am aware of [RB Austin Ekeler] Ek’s now [*laughter*]. I will do a better job of asking around the team if there is anything else. Our first focus is to win the game and do everything we can to score and put up points. If there is anything like that, I would love to be able to help out those guys because Ek, he deserves everything. He has put in so much work for the past few years, and for him to be able to accomplish something like that, I think that would be really cool.”

### **On if he is aware that he needs just one touchdown to surpass Hall of Fame Quarterback Dan Marino for most combined touchdowns through a player’s first three seasons in NFL history:**

“Now, that is something, but like I said, our first focus is to win the game and do everything we can on Sunday. I think it is always cool for those guys on our team to be able to accomplish goals like that, especially Ek. I am sure [WR] Keenan [Allen] and [WR] Mike [Williams] have been near a lot of those records, so it’s really cool to see for those guys.”

### **On Bills S Damar Hamlin:**

“It’s an incredibly tough situation. We were all rooting and praying for him. It’s great to hear that he is doing better. The work is not done and we are still pulling for him. If there is anything we can do as an organization, I know that we are able to and we are going to do everything we can to help out.”

### **On if he ‘can sense when momentum and confidence is building within the team’:**

“I think there are a lot of things that we have been able to clean up over the past couple of weeks. As long as we are watching the film and we’re getting better and we’re being honest and being real with ourselves, we feel really comfortable with the talent that we have around us. The offensive line, the receivers, running backs, they have done an incredible job all year. If I can just keep getting them the ball, limit turnovers, convert on third down, do the same thing week in and week out, we feel like we have gotten a lot better this year.”

### **On what the team would like to focus on in the last regular season game:**

“I think continuing to execute the red zone is huge for us. I think being solid on third down in the red zone, as well, has led to some good scoring drives. I think being able to run the ball down there, as well. The past couple of games we have been able to run the ball pretty well in the red zone. We have been able to put up some points. As long as we are able to do those things, I feel pretty good about our offense.”