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Chargers Week 9 Media Availability

Friday, November 4, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On being without WRs Keenan Allen and Mike Williams on Sunday:

“It’s the NFL. We’re ready for this football game. We’ve had a good week of practice. Our guys know that that’s part of the game. You have to stick together through situations like this. That’s why you have to fall back on the culture that you’ve created, the brotherhood that you’ve created. That’s how you make your way through it.”

On WR DeAndre Carter’s illness:

“DeAndre [Carter] just didn’t feel right at practice. We’re just being careful with him. He’s questionable for the game. We’ll know more tomorrow.”

On if WR Joshua Palmer is out of the league’s concussion protocol:

“Yes. Josh [Palmer] is full [participation]. He practiced well. He’ll be in the game.”

On TE Donald Parham Jr.’s hamstring injury:

“He tweaked his hamstring in practice.”

On if Parham’s injury occurred to the same hamstring that was injured during training camp:

“That is correct. It’s significant enough; it’ll be a matter of weeks, not days.”

On the amount of injuries the team has sustained this season:

“I think it is part of the NFL, part of sports. We’re trying to do everything we can to make sure that that doesn’t happen, and when it does, take a good look at your program and assess it the best you can. Right now, our team is prepared for Atlanta. Those guys that are going to be wearing Chargers shoulder pads and helmets are going to be ready to play that game.”

On the amount of injuries this year compared to last year:

“We just didn’t have injuries at the beginning of the year. We had injuries on defense in a big way after the bye, we just didn’t have any early on. We had [former Chargers T Bryan] Bulaga and [former Chargers G] Oday [Aboushi] last year on offense, and that was it. Our offense stayed really healthy last year. That’s part of the NFL, in terms of some seasons being different, some sides of the ball are different. You have to be able to figure it out.”

On when and how DL Jerry Tillery’s back injury occurred:

“From a workout, from a lift.”

On if Tillery’s injury occurred over the bye week:

“No, this week.”

On the depth of the wide receiver group:

“[Michael] Bandy and J-Moore [Jason Moore Jr.], we have some young guys that we brought in; Keelan Doss, Joe Reed, John Hightower. We’ve been able to get a good look at those guys, whether it’s been on the work team or working with our offense. We’re learning a lot more about those guys. I think Mike [Bandy] has done a really nice job with this opportunity. You guys know Jason Moore, he has been here for a couple years and has been a very dependable player for us. I know that our quarterbacks feel comfortable with both of those guys. Then, what you have to be able to do is spread the distribution in other areas to where you’re strong — tight end group, running back group — and then come together and put a great plan together.”

On which practice squad wide receiver could get activated on Sunday:

“We’re going to work through it. All of those guys have been prepared to play. We’re going to decide on that before we leave here.”

On RB Austin Ekeler’s limited status on Thursday:

“It’s really more of his oblique, but you can’t list oblique because it’s not available as an option. It’s his oblique.”

On if the offense will be able to ‘field five receivers’ for Sunday’s game:

“Yes, for sure. Definitely.”

On K Cameron Dicker:

“Cameron Dicker, University of Texas. He got here this week. He has practiced well. Our special teams coaches are very familiar with him, coming out of college and what he’s been able to do in the NFL. He was with the Rams and then with the Eagles. He was a teammate of [G/T] Brenden Jaimes at Lake Travis High School in Austin [Texas]. We’ve been able to fit him right in to practice. [K] Taylor [Bertolet] hurt his quad there in practice on Wednesday, so we’re able to get Cameron here, get him a full day of practice yesterday and today. He’ll be out there kicking for us on Sunday.”

On if Ekeler will have ‘any limitations’ on Sunday:

“I expect him to be able to go for the game, full.”

On if utilizing the third different kicker this season potentially ‘changes the gameplan’ on special teams:

“I think that we have enough of a sample size of who he is as a kicker to feel confident in his range and his likes and dislikes, in terms of ball positioning on the field, and then his kickoff and all that. He has a strong leg. He’s built well. We’ve been able to learn about him a bunch. The good thing is that we’ve seen him out here on the field kick for us, so I think that we have a pretty good idea. This is the NFL, we’re living it. He’s gets a great opportunity on Sunday.”

On if Dicker is able to execute kickoffs:

“Oh yeah, for sure.”

On if RB Isaiah Spiller will be active on Sunday:

“Yes. Isaiah [Spiller] will be active for the game. He practiced well this week.”

On if he has noticed players wearing polo shirts on Fridays:

“I have, it would be hard not to notice it [*laughter*].”

On his reaction to the Business Friday look:

“That’s what you see, you see a team that’s having fun. You want to see that. When your guys are doing things like that, that means they like each other. The fact that the guys wearing polo shirts are good players, that’s also a good thing. I like that part of the week. Those are the things that you don’t orchestrate, they kind of happen. Those guys have done a really good job for us. We’re going to need all of that, the brotherhood and our culture coming to life to play winning football down the stretch here.”

On if LB Amen Ogbongbemiga’s injury occurred in practice:

“Yes, it was kind of in a drill. He felt a little bit sore, but he’ll be active for the game.”

On switching the defensive signal-caller from S Derwin James Jr. to LB Drue Tranquill:

“A little bit was just with where we were at, bringing [CB] J.C. [Jackson] back. We wanted to take a tax off of Derwin [James Jr.] calling the plays to kind of help him out, communicating with J.C. Then, we just kind of felt like it freed up Derwin a little bit more. The way we move him around, it’s just one less tax on him. Drue [Tranquill] is outstanding. Drue has always been our second option. It just seemed natural. It’s been natural. In the last game, Drue’s headset went out and Derwin called a couple of plays. You just feel good about both of those guys. [LB Kenneth Murray [Jr.], [LB] Kyle Van Noy, those guys have all been signal-callers, so it’s good to have multiple options.”

On his confidence level in CB Michael Davis:

“Back in the spring time, through training camp, we considered Mike [Davis] a starting corner. Mike has started for three years here. Counting this year, that’s four years as a starter in the NFL, so we have a lot of confidence in him. We’ve won a lot of games with him, just since I’ve been here, and then even before. You need depth like that in order to sustain an injury like J.C.’s. That way, you feel like, ‘Hey, man, you still have a starting secondary out there with Mike [Davis], Bryce [Callahan] and Asante [Samuel Jr.]’ He’s played well for us. He played well in the last game. I think he’s had a really good season for us, and we’re going to need him to continue to play even better down the stretch.”

On his relationship with Falcons Offensive Coordinator Dave Ragone and the matchup on Sunday:

“He’s doing an excellent job. Dave [Ragone] and I are very good friends. He’s one of the guys who really helped me get into the NFL, to Chicago. We’re both Cleveland guys, go back a long way. An assistant on my staff, [Pass Game Specialist] Tom Arth, who was the head coach at John Carroll [University] when I was there, we’re all Cleveland guys. Along with [Eagles Defensive Coordinator] Jonathan Gannon, they all went to [Cleveland] St. Ignatius together. We’re all good friends, go back a long ways, and [Falcons Head Coach] Arthur Smith, too. They’re doing an excellent job coaching. Dave’s doing a really good job coordinating that offense. His first opportunity, I’m not surprised. I’m happy for him. We’re going to have to be at our best on Sunday.”

On James Jr.’s impact ‘inside of the building’:

“He has the rare, magnetic qualities. From the time that I got here, at my introductory press conference when I met him for the first time, there’s an energy that you feel around Derwin [James Jr.] that is different than the rest. I think that he has a lot of those heart and soul qualities that are very hard to find in sports, where you can say that that is the heart and soul of your program. It’s the type of player he is, but more importantly, the type of leader, the type of person and competitor, that he is. He’s just made up of all of the right stuff. That’s why he is one of the rare players of the league.”

On James Jr.’s ‘commitment’ to the team:

“There’s no one that is responsible for more on the field. He does the most jobs for us. He plays both safety sports. He plays Star, he plays Money, he’s our X, he’s been our signal-caller. We’re asking him to literally do more than everybody on the field. For him to have full command of that, and to be able to play at such a high level, it says so much about him. Then, he’s leading our football team, too. He leads our secondary, for sure, but then, when our defense comes together, him, [OLB] Khalil Mack, [DL] Sebastian Joseph-Day, [LB] Drue Tranquill, they’re leading our defense. Then, when you join up with the full team, everyone’s eyes are on Derwin James because they believe in him. They know who he is in the weight room, in the meeting room, off the field, on the field, win, lose or draw. It’s that type of consistency of excellence that, I think, draws everyone to him.”

QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On being without WRs Keenan Allen and Mike Williams on Sunday:

"It's definitely tough to lose guys like that. We're very aware of how special they are, but we think really highly of the guys behind them. They have done a great job stepping up all through camp, all throughout the season. It will be a good challenge for us."

On 'weighing injuries with the performance of the team':

"I'm just doing my best to be the best quarterback that I can be. If you start worrying about things outside of your control, you won't like the result. I'm just doing everything I can to be the best quarterback, the best teammate that I can be."

On if injuries 'limit what the offense can do down the field':

"It's just tough losing guys that we think really highly of, like Keenan [Allen], Mike [Williams] and Jalen Guyton. We think really highly of the guys behind them and they have done a great job stepping up all throughout camp and all throughout the season, so far. We're going to do our best to get them the ball and hopefully make things happen."

On the team's 4-3 record despite the injuries:

"They are a bunch of competitors. It hasn't been easy. It's definitely a tough game. That's kind of what we signed up for in the NFL. Everyone has shown up to work and is giving their best effort. I respect that so much about all of our teammates. No one is ever going to give up or quit. It's been awesome to see, so far."

On his bye week:

"It was good."

On what he focused on over the bye week:

"It's been for everyone to get their bodies back, relax and get after it, in terms of treatment."

On 'throwing after practice' on Friday and the impact of his injury:

"The past couple of weeks, I could have thrown after practice. Kind of like I said earlier, if it's not ready to go out and play and it's not safe, then I wouldn't have done it. Just being able to throw and do all of that stuff, it has gotten a lot better since then."

On if he did a 'self-assessment' over the bye week:

"I really have not spent too much time worrying about my individual stats or anything like that. Each week, you have to be the best quarterback you can be and try to learn from all of your mistakes. We do that every week, so it's not just a bye-week type of thing. It's every day."

On Falcons QB Marcus Mariota and their connection of both being former Oregon quarterbacks::

"He's a special competitor and he's a special player. I witnessed that first-hand for many years. It's always a great opportunity and a great challenge to go up against a player like that, and so I wish him nothing but the best. It will be fun to watch him."

On if Mariota tutored him while he was at Oregon:

"I missed him by a year. He was gone before I got there."

On if he participates in Business Friday by wearing the polo shirt:

"That's a good question. I would probably just say that I'm doing my best to go out and take care of business on Friday. Maybe that is something we can address later, but not as of now."

On if he is wearing a polo shirt under his jersey for Business Friday:

"Not as of now."

On 'if Year 3 has been a crash course of learning':

"One of the things that we have talked about is the NFL is full of problems. You're going to deal with injuries. You're going to deal with adversity, losses and things like that. It's just part of the game. Football is tough on your body. It is tough mentally and physically, and you have to do everything you can to be at your best on Sunday. We might not have everyone, but everyone that has shown up and has been here is giving their best effort and that's the way you have to treat it. Week in and week out, it's not going to be always pretty. It's not always going to be super easy. In fact, it's going to be really hard. That's kind of what we have talked about this week, just going out there and giving everything we have with who we have out there and let the results talk for themselves."

On S Derwin James Jr.:

"He's a really special leader. He's a great teammate, works hard, does everything the right way on and off the field. We're definitely thankful that he's on our team."

On James Jr.'s 'commitment' to the team:

"He's a special leader. He shows up to work every day, works his tail off. He's the first guy in, last guy to leave. He's a special player out there on the field. Great leader and a great teammate, as well."