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## Chargers Training Camp Media Availability

Sunday, August 7, 2022 ⚡ Jack Hammett Sports Complex ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

### HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

#### **On tonight's practice:**

"I thought that it was a clean operation. We got a lot of work in today as a football team in all three phases, and that's what we were shooting for, is for all three phases to get a lot of work. I felt like it was a really clean operation. I think everybody around the Chargers did a really good job making this clean for our fans. I love the transitions and the flow of the scrimmage. We came out of it really healthy and we came out of it a better football team, for sure."

#### **On injury updates:**

"I'm just going to go through it in order. [LB Drue] Tranquill, [LB Nick] Niemann, [LB Kenneth] Murray [Jr.], [OLB Kyle] Van Noy, those are the of the soft-tissue nature. Drue is trending positive. Nick is new and will be day-to-day. Kyle Van Noy is day-to-day. Murray is trending positive. [TE Tre'] McKitty is trending positive. [TE Donald] Parham [Jr.] is new, soft-tissue, hamstring. He should be out, for sure, this week, I believe. Then, we're hoping to get him back after that. [WR Jason] Moore, trending positive. [DB] Mark Webb [Jr.], day-to-day, getting better. [OL] Andrew Trainer is going to be out. Then, T.C. [CB Tevaughn Campbell], at the scrimmage, he was the one guy who banged up the knee. It's nothing serious, but I have to learn more about what happened."

#### **On an update to S Derwin James Jr.'s contract situation:**

"You guys will be the first to know if something happens [*laughter*]. It's same as."

#### **On if any part of him is 'itching' to have James Jr. return to team drills:**

"A huge part of me wishes that he was out here. It would make everybody a lot better. But this is just part of the process. This is a big thing for him and we're working through it, and we've done a really good job, as an organization and with his team, of working through it together. I can't imagine it going any better. Things are going really well. We'll make sure that we let you know when something happens."

#### **On QB Justin Herbert's 'role in clean operation':**

"The biggest part. Your quarterback is going to define how you play in and out of the huddle, in and out of personnel groupings, the tempo that you play, the menu that you can activate. The more plays that you can activate, the better. You saw him tonight, he threw the ball at a really high-level tonight. He operated the two-minute drill, used his legs. He's had of quality camp. His teammates, he's really elevating his teammates, too, and his teammates are elevating him. That's what you want to see; want to see an offense that's playing together. I think that's what you're seeing."

**On if today's practice was 'crisper' for the offense:**

"When you're not tackling and there are no consequences of sacks and stuff like that, it should be that way. But I thought all three of our quarterbacks today operated at a high level. I thought they both threw the ball extremely well, were accurate and made good decisions. They really moved the team. I really love this quarterback room. They're really good friends. They continue to improve, even [QB] Chase [Daniel] — Chase is continuing to improve. I thought you saw [QB] Easton [Stick] do a lot of good things out there today. Easton really thrives in 11-on-11. I was just really happy with how all three guys moved the team today."

**On Stick's role on the roster:**

"I think he has a huge role on this football team. I thought he had a huge role last year. Easton is really improving as a player, and I can't say that enough. I'm really proud of his progress as a passer. I think he's really, really improved as a passer. I think everyone knew that he could make plays. Everyone knew that he has a lot of intangibles, a lot of quarterbacking stuff that way. But I think as a passer, he's just worked so hard at his fundamentals with [Pass Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks Coach] Shane Day, [Offensive Quality Control] Chandler Whitmer and [Pass Game Specialist] Tom Arth, that group. I'm just really proud of his progress. I think you're seeing a confident player out there, a guy that can move a team. He's going to have a big role. Him and Chase play a big role with Justin, and we feel like our quarterback environment is a big edge for our team."

**On DL Sebastian Joseph-Day:**

"Sebastian is one of the top interior defenders in the league. We brought him here because he's made up of all the right stuff. He's an intense competitor. He loves the work. I think that what is going to happen between the white lines is Sebastian Joseph-Day is going to be turned up to play football every time he's out there. What that does is it elevates not only his teammates on defense but that other side. That's what you're seeing. He knows that we have an outstanding offensive line. I think that that's what we're looking for, is to be a line-of-scrimmage team. You need guys like Sebastian in order to be that. There was a lot of good competition out there today on both sides of the ball up front."

**On the performance tonight out of OLBs Joey Bosa and Khalil Mack:**

"Those guys are playing well together. That's what we were looking for, is to really find that style that these guys can really commit to together and find that rhythm for both of them. Every time you see them out there, you see two difference makers. I thought you saw a bunch of plays. Joey kind of had this blister on his foot that was nagging him. Khalil made a bunch of plays tonight. If you were to have a game tape of this, there are a lot of close-call sacks and rushes that aren't whistled. Those guys are really playing the way we want them to play. I think you just know that, with both guys, that you're trying to build for a long season. Where they're at now is nowhere near where they're going to be. We're really trying to be purposeful in how we build both of those guys up this training camp."

**On WR DeAndre Carter and how he 'keeps scoring touchdowns':**

"It's not an accident. Our guys like throwing to him, it's been that way since the springtime. He has fit right in. He's an outstanding teammate, versatile player, and plays in a lot of places. Then, in the return game, he has been a stud. He's going to be a guy that makes an impact on our team. He is much more than just a return guy. Our quarterbacks have ultimate faith in him. I know that our coaches have ultimate faith in him. [Wide Receivers Coach] Chris Beatty has done a great job bringing him along. He's been one of those pleasant surprises for us."

**On 'if any of the starters will play in the preseason':**

"I think that it will be similar philosophically as last year. If we know who you are, and we've, from an evaluation standpoint, we don't need to evaluate you, then you're probably not going to play in the preseason, but if there's — whether it's a role or whether it's a young player that we feel like those experiences are going to benefit them, then that's the direction that we're going to go. Then, your health is a big, big factor in it, too. We'll be able to let you know that a little bit closer to next week."

**On RB Joshua Kelley's performance in training camp thus far:**

"Just improvement. As a player, I think that he's just become a more complete back. Physically, he really has come in in outstanding shape. I think he's much stronger, much more compact, and has done a really good job earning our players' trust in pass protection. Then, running the football, making people miss, breaking tackles, being physical on contact. It hasn't been to the ground yet, but he's been very steady, very steady. He's had a good quick cam and I'm excited to see him live in this preseason."

**On what RB Isaiah Spiller 'adds to the offense':**

"Just great competition. I think the one thing about Isaiah is he's not impressed by the NFL. He feels like he belongs. He has confidence in himself. I think he carries himself that way. I think what we've seen in him is his competitive nature come out through camp, trying to become a complete running back, taking pride in all of the little things that make good runners, especially young runners in the league, and then being an impact player on special teams. That's not something that he did at Texas A&M, but he's really shown the willingness to get better at that. These backs, we're going to find out in the preseason, but I really like the progress of all of them. I think the competition is bringing out the best in them, because it's a real competition, and I'm excited to see them next weekend, for sure."

**On DL Otito Ogbonnia's performance in training camp thus far:**

"I think Otito has come in and really fit right in with that group of guys up front. I think anytime that you're a young D-lineman, you're trying to fit in with your teammates. We have a lot of guys who have played a lot of football — Sebastian [Joseph-Day], [DL] Austin [Johnson], [DL] Christian [Covington], [DL] Jerry [Tillery], [DL] Morgan Fox, these guys have played a lot of football. For him to come in and kind of earn their respect, he's a big man. [Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line Coach] Jay Rogers is one of the best coaches I know, he's developing him. He got some reps with the ones this week because we wanted to show Otito what it's like to play against the best center in the league, and what that actually feels like, because that's how he's going to improve. He's shown that he can hold his own out here. He just needs to keep improving. I like his mindset, though. He's been a guy that we're sure glad we drafted."

**On 'translation and communication in walk-through' benefitting James Jr.:**

"I think that Derwin is doing everything he can within the situation to be the type of leader that we know that he is. It's giving other guys opportunities, and at the same time, the center of your defense is where all the communication happens, so the fact that one of the best players in football isn't there, it's going to have an impact, certainly. That's why we're excited about where we can go, when you get Drue [Tranquill] and [Kenneth] Murray [Jr.] and Kyle [Van Noy] back because those guys play in the middle of your defense. But it's given young guys really big opportunities. I think that is a part of training camp that we're excited about; we're finding out more about guys that we don't know as much about, where if Derwin was out there, like, we know what that's going to look like, we know what that is. Training camp is more about the discovery of other people and the development of other people. We'll get him back and that'll be a big lift for our team. I can't wait for that to happen."

**On if he is 'worried about chemistry' within the defense without James Jr. present in team drills:**

"I don't. Our guys are really tight. When they get out there, you'll be able to see it. There is going to be that element of everyone playing together, for sure, but in terms of that chemistry, they're building that every day. It's been ongoing since most of these guys got here in the springtime. Like I said, when he goes back out there, it's going to be a big lift for our whole team because we all know what he brings to the table."

**On LB Damon Llyod:**

"He's a guy that's really fun to coach. He's worked extremely hard. He had a significant knee injury, really showed his resilience coming back way earlier than he was supposed to. He's one of these guys that is a great story, scrapping and clawing and trying to make his way in this league. I know that we enjoy coaching him. He's made a good impression on us. He just has to continue to improve and use these preseason games as a real avenue to see, where he can go with his game."

**On if G Zion Johnson ‘is progressing as he anticipated’:**

“Yes. Zion is right on track. We’re excited about him. He’s a very complete football player. We felt like that’s what we were getting when we drafted him. He was a complete football player — a rugged, tough, versatile offensive lineman, and that’s exactly what he’s been. He puts his head down every day and he works, he competes, he improves. We’re sure glad that we have him. I know that our offensive line group has really embraced him and helped him kind of accelerate his improvement, just like last year. I think that was something for [T] Rashawn [Slater], being able to come in with some veteran guys that have played a lot of football and really help him along and find his way. Normally, it’s not big things, they’re just little things. Just be yourself. I see that exact same thing happening was Zion. It’s cool now that Rashawn can impact Zion. We’re going to find out even more as we go in training camp with Zion, but he’s off to a good start.”

**On if Johnson’s confidence ‘has grown’:**

“For sure. That O-line is really tight, you can see it. We’re so much deeper than we were a year ago. I think you can see the operation of really all three lines. You’re able to practice at a much different level. I’m really looking forward to seeing our young offensive linemen get a chance to compete in the preseason.”

**On if DL Jerry Tillery ‘not getting a ton of reps tonight was by design’:**

“I don’t know. We were really trying to balance it out. We were really trying to like cycle those guys through upfront. Jerry had a really high-level practice yesterday. He’s improving in competition and our D-line is bringing out the best in him. He still has a lot to prove because we think he can improve a lot. I think he has really taken this offseason and made some good improvements, but we’re going to continue to see more when we go against different people.”

**On CB Michael Davis ‘working in with the Dime sub-package’:**

“Just trying to figure out roles for guys. He has a lot of Dime Money-type of characteristics because he’s big, he can cover and he’s a good tackler. We’re just trying to get guys in as many roles as possible and experiment. He’s having a good camp at a lot of different places. He’s been outstanding at gunner. I know that he’s another guy that has come in with the right mindset. He has really improved as a player. Excited to see him these next three, four weeks.”

## **OUTSIDE LINEBACKER JOEY BOSA**

### **On tonight's practice:**

"It was good. It was alright. It felt like the energy was a little low. It's been two weeks of grinding out here, so a lot of plays. Of course, I have two fat blisters on my foot after warming up [*laughter*]. I'm limping, but it's not too bad. It's just a couple of blisters, so that's fine. I felt pretty good out there. I think these are the best two weeks I've had in any of my years, so far, coming into camp. I remember after the scrimmage last year I was like, 'Dang, I suck.' And then it started coming to me. I feel like I'm really feeling it. My moves are coming nice and naturally. My body is feeling good-ish, good enough. I am dealing with things in Year 7, but I feel much better than I did last year. I think as a defense. We've got to get some guys back out there, dealing with some injuries and stuff. I think it's good. It's still only the second week. We're so early in the process that it's definitely not time to worry or anything. We just have to keep coming out here and working."

### **On if he feels better about himself or the defense:**

"I feel better. I don't know how well the cornerbacks are playing or the linebackers. You see them make a big play here and there. I know my scheme, but I'm pretty hyper-focused on myself and my guys in my EDGE room. I like the way they've been improving. I think the young guys have been improving a lot. [OLB] Chris [Rumph II] has been rushing a lot better this year. [OLB] Ty [Shelby] had some really nice moves today. Everybody, I think they're coming out here and working really hard. [OLB] Khalil [Mack] is obviously working back and getting that foot stronger. I just keep trying to tell him he's so hard on himself as you can imagine a guy like that would be. I just keep telling him that it's going to take time and I'm sure a few weeks into the season, he's really going to be rolling and feeling great. We still have plenty of time until that first game comes. We just need him to be safe and keep working hard like he always does. Just having a guy like that to motivate me, always being first running to every drill, I'm like, 'OK, I have to keep up with him, I guess.' But, he's the man."

### **On DL Sebastian Joseph-Day's intensity:**

"We're using the word rugged. [Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line] Coach Jay [Rodgers] likes that word. You have to be smart, obviously, but it's a violent game. If we want to play for a championship, we've got to get rugged and kick some ass. You can't be afraid to get after each other sometimes. I think [G] Zion [Johnson] has that in him, for sure. What I've seen, he's a tough player. Especially in the front line there, going against each other, you've got to get down and dirty sometimes."

### **On 'if the scuffle in today's practice was from the intensity':**

"I think so. You have to set the rookies straight sometimes. I think he's been playing great. He's surprised me a bit. I haven't seen any of his film or anything, but he's a brick house. I think people describe him as he's got a great build. I think he's been having a really good camp so far and we've needed that inside."

### **On why it has been the best two weeks of training camp in his career:**

"I think I've built on last year. I think towards the end of last year and through all of last year. I think my moves were getting better. I figured out some things, how I wanted to rush. I think I had a really good offseason compared to last year and last eight weeks coming into this offseason. I was just stacking every single day, getting stronger. Me and [49ers DL] Nick [Bosa] had some good pass rush days. The last day we had a really, really good day out there. It was like 104 degrees outside, dying. I feel good and I feel like I've always gotten better every year, even in college. Every year I learn more and you kind of show up after not playing and you're like, 'Shoot, I feel good.' There's a lot of carry-over to pass rushing. I don't know. I feel good. I think, mentally, it's a big part of it. I feel good. I'm really attentive in meetings. I'm excited to be out there in practice. Just trying to keep it rolling because you definitely get punched in the face with a wall halfway through the season at some point. You just want to keep this feeling going."

**On having OLB Khalil Mack as a teammate and raising the competition levels:**

"I think as a rookie, or a few years into my career, it would have been a negative almost in a way where I'm too in my head, too hyper-competitive in that sense. Now, I just love to have a guy like that to lean on, ask questions, whether it's about football or just life in general. It's great. He's just a great guy and I feel like we've been talking for the last two weeks every single day. We're always taking a knee next to each other, laughing, talking. It's just a huge benefit and like you said, the competition, having an elite guy like that to look at and be like — just keep you on your toes. It's like every day in the offseason, I have to be ready to train when I'm training with Nick. So, it's just great to have that guy to compete with and lean on."

**On if he and Mack are learning from each other:**

"For sure. Half the time, it's just throwing ideas at each other and the other half of the time it's just shooting the stuff with each other and just talking about life. Like I said, just asking him for advice because he's a vet and it's nice to have a guy like that to lean on. In certain ways, he reminds me of Mel [former Chargers and Dolphins LB Melvin Ingram]. It's good to have a guy like that back. But, as I've been saying, we have two different rush styles, so there is a lot to learn from each other. It's not like we're out there doing the same things. We really complement each other well and we can learn a lot because we do things very differently."

**On film evaluation of Nick Bosa's sack tape:**

"It was good. We watched him. We watched some [Raiders DE] Chandler Jones the other day. We watched some [Browns DE] Myles Garrett. You just take what you can from them. We try to learn. I think the real benefit is when we get down and we start watching the opposing O-line. I think he's great at watching film, which is something I've mentioned I need to get better at. So, having him to help me point out the things that you should be looking for and what really to study is going to be very beneficial. And then, I think watching each other and ourselves and really being hyper-critical will also be a benefit."

**On his blisters:**

"I don't know. I've never really had one on my foot before, but I was doing some warmups and I've been trying to make these cleats last, but I think they're ready for the garbage. But it's not a big deal. I'll just pop them and get them wrapped up and be back in action."

**On the right tackle competition between Storm Norton and Trey Pipkins III:**

"It's been a great competition. I think that will bring the best out of both of them. I really don't know where they stand right now because every time I get ready to rush one, the other one is in there. So, I'm like, 'We've got to mix it up.' It's great to see them compete. They are two great guys. I wish the best for both of them, but, obviously, there's going to have to be one."

**On if the defense is 'losing anything' with S Derwin James Jr. missing during team drills:**

"I wouldn't say we're losing anything. Obviously, he'd like to be out there to get those practice reps. I'm sure it's eating him up. I tell him every day, 'You have to be smart. Anything can happen out there.' He deserves everything that he's going to get like I've said already. I think it's just important to focus on who we have right now out there and just prepare as well as we can. He's out there every walkthrough, every warmup, so it's not like he's missing reps and he's staying — I mean, missing all of the reps. But, he's staying in shape and he's a guy that is going to get it quickly when he gets back in and you'll feel his presence. I think, if anything, it could be a benefit to try to be better as a team without him in there. And then you plug him in and it's like, 'Holy cow, we're really rolling.' I haven't really thought about it too much. I just try to be supportive of him right now."

## **QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT**

### **On the scrimmage:**

"I thought there were a lot of good things. There's always room for improvement and things that we can fix. I thought, overall as an offense, we moved the ball well, we converted well on third downs and that's what is important to us."

### **On getting a feel for the offensive progression:**

"I think if you treat every [practice] rep like it's a game-like situation, that you can handle that. That's what we do here. We might not be live, as quarterbacks, but we treat it as if we were live and get the ball out quickly. If there's a free rusher, you try and find your check-down or do anything you can to avoid the sack."

### **On training camp:**

"I think, as an offense, we've done a lot of good things. We've made huge steps as compared to last year at this point, but like I've said, I think there's a lot of room for improvement. We continue to build on our timing. Just being out there timing with routes. I think with protections that we can continue to be even more solid than we have been. I've seen a lot of good things from the offense."

### **On C Corey Linsley:**

"I think Corey has done a great job. I haven't tried to coach him too much [*laughter*]. He's been an incredible center. He's done such a fantastic job, I let him and his coaches handle him [*laughter*]."

### **On the running backs:**

"The competition has been great. They've really gotten after it. The young guys — Isaiah Spiller, he's stepped up big time. Josh Kelley, Larry [Rountree III], they've done an incredible job all camp. They're really figuring it out. We're seeing them run the ball really well."

### **On if he's helping RB Larry Rountree III make jumps in his second season:**

"I think the positions are pretty different. The things that I faced going from my rookie season to the second year were probably different than he is. I never had to try and block a 250-pound linebacker. His job is incredibly tough. [Running Backs] Coach Derrick Foster has done a great job of getting those guys right. Larry has handled that very well. He's picked up the offense very well. So has Josh Kelley. I'm really looking forward to seeing those guys continue to compete."

### **On WR DeAndre Carter:**

"He's been very patient with his routes. I think that's one of those things that is able to kind of separate him from the defender. He knows when to attack leverage and when not to. He's just a very smooth route-runner. He's comfortable and easy to throw to. He's very friendly to the quarterback and he makes plays. Like you saw today, he finds a way to get the ball and make something special happen."

### **On how a receiver can be 'friendly to the quarterback':**

"Like on an in-breaking cut, if the receiver runs straight down the line, a DB can undercut it. Some of the best receivers are able to bend back toward the quarterback to prevent the DB from undercutting it. So, you get [WR] Mike [Williams], DeAndre Carter, those guys are very friendly and make it easy on the quarterback."

### **On TE Gerald Everett:**

"He's done a fantastic job. This isn't an easy offense to pick up, but he's done it pretty quickly. He's a play-maker. He's able to beat man coverage very easily. We've seen all camp that he's making plays and he's picking up the offense. He's a quick learner, wants to work really hard and has done a great job with that."

### **On practicing against OLBs Khalil Mack and Joey Bosa:**

"It's great competition. They make us better. They're two of the best in the league. For us to be able to face those guys every day makes us better. That's what you ultimately need, is to be able to compete against the best because that's who you want to play with."

**On CB J.C. Jackson:**

“J.C. has done a great job. I think highly of all of that secondary. I have so much respect for my teammates. They make us better. For us to be able to compete with those guys and for them to push us, I think it’s great to our offense. I have a lot of respect for my teammates and the guys on the defense. I think very highly of those defenders, especially the secondary that they’ve brought in — [CB] Bryce [Callahan], J.C., [CB Michael] Mike Davis and [CB] Asante [Samuel Jr.]. They’ve all done an incredible job this offseason.”

**On the quarterback room:**

“I’m very fortunate to be part of that group. They’re incredible human beings. I love being part of that QB room because they’ve done so much and they’ve helped me so much. Hopefully, I’ve done the same for them. They’ve just done a great job supporting me and helping me. I’ve learned so much from them. I’m really looking forward to this year with them, especially. [QB Easton] Stick and [QB] Chase [Daniel] have seen the game a lot. They know what they’re doing. To have two guys like that around me, I’m very fortunate.”

**On how QB Easton Stick has helped his development:**

“Easton is very smart. He picked up the offense immediately. Whether it’s defense or whether it’s our own offense. I have so many questions for him and he’s able to answer them. He’s another guy like Chase that is very smart and very intelligent, who’s picked up the offense incredibly quickly. He’s very close to [Offensive Coordinator] Joe [Lombardi] and [Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks Coach] Shane [Day]. All of the quarterback mechanics, anything that I ever need. And, they’re pretty athletic, too. I love spending time with those guys and hanging out, as well.”

**On Offensive Assistant Pat White:**

“He’s been with the receivers for the most part. Anytime out at practice when we get to chat or talk about his playing days, I try to pick up as much as I can from him. Unfortunately, I’m not the scrambler that he was. I’ve got plenty of room for improvement on that.”

**On T Trey Pipkins III:**

“Trey has been a very solid guy. We thought really highly of him last year, as well. He and [T] Storm [Norton] have done a great job competing. That’s kind of the spot that they’re kind of going after, that right tackle spot. Both of those guys, I think very highly of. I know [Head] Coach [Brandon Staley] thinks very highly of them as well. It’s exciting to see them compete and push each other, but Trey has done an incredible job.

**On if he saw an improvement from Pipkins last season:**

“I think that’s always part of growing and developing in the NFL. Personally [for myself], I’ve never seen that ‘light’ [bulb moment] and things slow down. Hopefully, he’s seen that and been able to pick things up quicker, but the NFL is always tough and it’s always changing. I think that’s the adapt or die [mentality]. He’s done an incredible job of picking it up, improving and going after it each week.”