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Chargers Media Availability

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HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On if he can ‘confirm’ an NFL Network report stating that CB J.C. Jackson ‘is still in a walking boot and is not expected to play in Week 1’:

“I can’t confirm that. J.C.’s boot is off, he was running yesterday, and he is day-to-day.”

On ‘how much’ Jackson will practice today:

“I don’t know that. I don’t know if he will, but he is out of his boot, and he ran yesterday. He is on the road to recovery.”

On if Jackson’s evaluation ‘will go up until gameday’:

“Yes, I do. But things are very positive.”

On ‘how things change’ for the defense if Jackson does not play in Week 1:

“For us. The real positive is that we’ve played with everybody in the secondary. We know exactly how to use them. I think that’s the exciting thing. For us, as coaches, that’s the comforting thing for us: we know who we are playing with. We know how to use the players that are going to be out there, so we have a lot of confidence in everybody that’s going to go play out there in that game of, whoever it is, and make sure that they’re in the right role to do so. Our guys have had a really quality camp, as you guys have seen. I think we’ve really built depth in our secondary. That progress is still ongoing, but like you said, it’s going to be a tough challenge against those guys.”

On Raiders WR Davante Adams:

“Several [challenges]. Davante is one of the elite special players in the league. I was able to compete against him in Chicago, and then at Denver. I think he has the full respect of every coach and player in the league, and fan. He’s a very complete receiver. Outstanding at the line of scrimmage against press [coverage]. He can play anywhere; inside, in the slot. Outstanding Level 2 movement. Just a multi-cut route runner. He can beat you deep. He can get the explosions in the deep part of the field. He’s really good after the catch. He has a really high football IQ. He has really outstanding body control. There’s a reason why he has earned all of the honors and the respect of everyone, then how he competes, too. A very, very, very complete football player.”

On RB Sony Michel’s ‘role’ in Week 1:

“I think that Sony is a complete runner. I think that he gives us a lot of flexibility in how we want to deploy him on all downs. One of the big reasons why we were attracted to him is because of that type of versatility, and that he would be able to fit in seamlessly in a lot of different roles, and wouldn’t have to get too specific with him. We really like that. I’m really glad that we have him, for sure.”

On if Michel ‘will be the RB2’:

“We’re going to see how this week of practice goes, but I think that any time that you’re up on gameday, you’re expected to carry the football and pass protect and catch the football. We’re looking forward to him having a big role in the game.”

On if he has discussed with the team the fact that they’re beginning this season against the team that they ended last season against:

“Both teams are completely different than the team that was at that last game. If you look at their team, they have brand new coaches, brand new players, a brand new scheme. Same with us; over half of our team is different. I’m sure that that game is going to mean a lot to some of the people that were there, but it’s not going to mean everything to everybody because there’s a lot of people that weren’t at that game. I think those of us who were at that game, that was as tough of a deal as you’re going to face as a competitor, but there’s just a lot that’s happened since then. Competition is about moving forward and being ready for what’s right in front of you. That’s what we’ve been working hard at all offseason, all of training camp, getting ready for this week. This week has a life of its own and our team is ready to go take it on.”

On ‘where the defense is with all of the new pieces’:

“Our defense has played at a really high level throughout training camp. I think we’ve been able to see a lot of different people fit the pieces in the right roles. I think, when we got [S] Derwin [James Jr.] back, and some of those linebackers healthy, it allowed us to really practice and kind of optimize where we were headed for Week 1 and for the beginning of the season. I have full confidence in our group. At the same time, you have to be ready to go out there and figure it out. There’s that element to the beginning where your guys have to figure it out together. The one thing I’m excited about this who I am figuring it out with. I really like who we’re going to go compete with on Sunday.”

On any additional players that he expects not to practice today:

“I think that [TE] Donald [Parham Jr.] will be limited today. Other than that, I think that we’re going to be in good shape.”

On his reaction upon seeing S Derwin James Jr.’s haircut:

“Every great actor has to change his or her look [*laughter*]. That’s part of it. He FaceTime’d me over the weekend. I’m in full support of that. He looks handsome. I told him, as long as your wife is good with it, that’s the main thing [*laughter*]. I said, ‘I’m going to be good with whatever you do.’ Again, it gives you kind of a fresh sense of the beginning. He looks good out there. He has a new haircut, has a new number, but is still the same Derwin. He’s rocked it before. He’s been with Kiah for a long time. He’s had that look before, that was his draft day look. He’s still a young man.”

On if last year’s Week 18 game ‘will personally have an impact on him at all’:

“No. It just happened a long time ago, a long, long time ago. Everything is different about right now, everything. It’s about this week and pouring our team into this week of preparation and treating this week like it has a life of its own. I’m really excited to go get into game week with this group.”

On Raiders Head Coach Josh McDaniels’ ‘coaching style’:

“Josh is a very complete coach. He’s a guy that’s been successful with a lot of different types of groups. He’s been able to take different types of offensive groups and get them to play at a high level, and I really respect that, coaches that really how to use who they have and what they have, but a very complete coach. He comes from my coaching family. His father is one of the great coaches from the state of Ohio, which is where we’re from. I grew up in Northeast Ohio and his dad is known as the legendary high school coach. I worked with Josh’s brother, Ben [McDaniels], in Chicago, who’s also an outstanding coach who coaches for the Texans [Wide Receivers Coach/Pass Game Coordinator]. Josh has just been trained the right way. He’s a very complete coach; offense, defense, kicking game. I’m very happy for him and his opportunity and excited to compete.”

On his approach to preparing the offense for Raiders Defensive Coordinator Patrick Graham's system:

"You just look at the coaches at their different stops, other coaches on their staff that they have maybe joined up with, and take a look at new players and where they've been before. Just try to piece it together the best that you can. You have to be ready to figure it out on gameday and have a lot of contingencies in place because once that game expresses itself, you have to be ready to go adjust and play to it. That will be a big part of Sunday afternoon."

On 'what makes the Raiders a great rival':

"Any time that you go back as far as this rivalry has, certainly this division, I think that I really like this part of the division, just how far it goes back with these teams. I think the history of the coaches, the history of the players, certainly with us being on the West Coast, it's important to a lot of different people here on the West Coast. Then, in terms of the NFL, I think the ingenuity of both organizations, I think that both organizations have had a real impact and footprint on the legacy of the NFL. I think that's also big. I'm really excited to be a part of it."

On 'good energy within the building' and if it 'feels any different than last season':

"I feel more connected, for sure, because we just know each other better. Any time you're able to have the same people doing a lot of the leadership-type roles in our organization, I think that gives you a lot of confidence in terms of attacking a plan. I think that has shown itself, just the alignment of our ownership and personnel department, coaching, business side, all of those things. I think we have just full confidence in how we're doing things. Then, what I think that does is it allows the players to play at a high level because they can sense that alignment. They can just go out and play and have fun playing this game. That's what we've tried to do; bring in the right people, not just players and coaches, but everybody with the team. I think that there is that vibe that we have the right blueprint and we have, more importantly, the right people."

On 'how better this team is than last year's':

"We're going to see here shortly, but I know that what's been out there on the practice field in the spring and summertime. It's a much different group of guys. I like the competitive spirit and the competitive stamina that this group has. I think that this group has what it takes to go into a game week and do what it takes to compete at the highest level in the NFL. That's what I'm looking at, as a coach going into game week, is do we have what it takes to you give the respect that a game week deserves in the NFL? I know that we have that right now."

On team captains:

"Voted on by their teammates today, and I'm really excited about this. Being a captain on an NFL football team, I can't imagine a higher honor. The few people who do get to play in this league and what that shield represents, all the people that have come before them — captains on other teams, captains on this team — and it's voted on by their teammates, and that's something that's sacred to me. Growing up the son of a coach, I think it's the highest achievement that you can receive from your teammates. We have eight captains: [QB] Justin Herbert, [WR] Keenan Allen, [RB] Austin Ekeler, [RB] Corey Linsley, [S] Derwin James [Jr.], [OLB] Khalil Mack, [DL] Sebastian Joseph Day and [OLB] Joey Bosa. Those eight guys will be captains on this football team. They will be wearing that 'C' on their jersey, but as I told the group, everyone on our team is going to have a hand in leading our football team. I'm really proud of the eight of those guys. I think they've certainly earned that mantle of having the 'C' on their chest. I'm excited for them to represent us this year in 2022."

On his level of confidence in the special teams units:

"I have full confidence. [Special Teams Coordinator] Ryan Ficken and [Assistant Special Teams Coach] Chris Gould have done a really good job with this group. The preseason is about evaluation, and we were able to do that. I think, starting with our specialists, I really think that the additions of [LS] Josh Harris and bringing [K] Dustin [Hopkins] back, getting [P] JK [Scott], bringing in [WR] DeAndre [Carter], that's a good place to start. Then, I think we have a lot deeper group of core special teams players. You will see starters on special teams. I'm excited to see what we do, but we've practiced well. Now, we have to go prove it on Sunday."

On his evaluation of Raiders QB Derek Carr:

“He’s one of the elite quarterbacks in the NFL. People who know what they’re talking about, they know that Derek is an outstanding player. He’s as good of a passer as there is, just from his stroke, he has a really pure stroke. He’s very, very accurate. He has a quick release. He’s as sharp as they come at the line of scrimmage. He has real toughness. You’ve seen what his performance is in two-minute throughout his career. He’s a very complete quarterback. I have full respect for him. I’ve been able to compete against him a number of times and he deserves everyone’s full respect because he’s earned it.”

On what OLB Khalil Mack and DL Sebastian Joseph-Day have ‘showed their teammates’ to earn a role as a team captain:

“The example that they set every day. The example that they set when they come into the building every day. Those two guys don’t need to say a lot. Now, they do, at times, but it’s just the example that they set on a day-to-day basis. It doesn’t take people long to see, and that’s why you’ll see some guys like them be elected captain, being new on a team, is because they’ve commanded everyone’s full attention. They’ve earned it.”

On Rafael Nadal losing to Frances Tiafoe in the Round of 16 at the 2022 US Open:

“This guy was really aggressive. Rafa’s not 100 percent, but this Tiafoe guy is really, really good. I told you, the future of men’s tennis is really bright. This guy, he’s really athletic, he can hit all of the shots to play like that on center court against Rafa. That’s as good as you’re going to play. Now, he has to do it again. You get that one big win, and now you have to go follow that up. I saw a little bit of that [Nick] Kyrgios match late and I was kind of bummed for Nick. I took Derwin [James Jr.] to Justin [Herbert] to Indian Wells and we were there with Kyrgios. Derwin was like, ‘Man, this guy is really good.’ Derwin, I don’t know how much tennis he watches [*laughter*], but he can identify who is good. It was easy for him to pick out Nick and how talented he is and what a good player he is. Nick has had a good season. But, Tiafoe, that’s great for the USA. It’s exciting where men’s and women’s tennis is in the United States right now. It’s really, really exciting where it’s going. Best of luck to Frances in the next round.”

SAFETY DERWIN JAMES JR.

On his new haircut:

"I just wanted to get it a little cleaner. I want to go back to the real DJ3."

On the last time he had short hair:

"Probably college was the last time I had it cut this low."

On 'who the real DJ3 is':

"Me. Come on, now [*laughter*]. I'm already showing it. That's me."

On his reaction to the Raiders trading for WR Davante Adams:

"I was excited. More competition to the division. Any time you can add players like that, it makes the game that much more fun."

On the challenge of defending Adams:

"He's one of the best at what he does. You have to be ready for kind of everything. One of the best receivers we're going to go up against this year."

On 'what makes the Raiders a rival':

"I'll just say being able to play them two times a year. The teams know each other very well. Like I said, there is always competition."

On 'how much the loss to the Raiders in Week 18 last year motivated the team in the offseason':

"For guys like [OLB] Khalil Mack, [DL] Sebastian [Joseph-Day], they didn't get to feel that feeling that I felt in Week 18. Our whole mindset is that we are a new team, the 2022 Chargers. We're just trying to go out there and compete versus the Raiders."

On Raiders QB Derek Carr:

"I think he's a good quarterback. I think he does a great job getting his guys open, finding and making the right reads, making the right plays. He doesn't turn the ball over that much. He gets the ball out really quick."

On his reaction to the schedule release and seeing the Raiders as the Week 1 opponent:

"For me, I was excited just for the opportunity to compete against anybody. For me, I just wanted to come out and just compete. To have it be the Raiders, I'm excited for that."

On 'if the amount of Raiders fans in Los Angeles motivates the team':

"More in the vain of the fans and all that, we have to go out and play ball. Whether we have more fans or they have fans, we just have to play football."

On what he remembers about the Week 18 game last season against the Raiders:

"What I remember about that game is walking off that field. For me, just that feeling. Like I said, we're a new team. Guys like [CB] J.C. [Jackson], Khalil [Mack], they didn't get to feel what I felt. We're a new team"

On 'what he was feeling walking off the field after Week 18':

"I was just a little disappointed. Nobody in the locker room wanted the season to end like that. Like I said, we get a new opportunity, new chance this year to make it right, where it doesn't have to come down to that."

On 'if he can carry over a bitter taste into a new year':

"That is too many months, too many new teams. They have a new head coach, new players like you said, Davante [Adams]. We have new players, so you can't really leave it on that. Every team has new players and it's a new team going out there to compete."

On what makes the Raiders 'a difficult cover':

"Their level two and their level three [*receivers*]. Just at the top of the route, being able to make everything kind of look the same. They have multi-cut guys. We just have to be ready."

On if C.B J.C. Jackson's absence in practice 'changes anything' for the defense:

"Nothing changes. We're the same people. We're going out there to compete. When J.C. is out there, we're all out there balling together. Like I said, it's going to be exciting."

On working with Mack, Joseph-Day and LB Troy Reeder, who were added to the team this past offseason:

"It's been amazing because those guys, they don't look for excuses. They don't complain about much. They just show up and work and they just try to help each other out on defense. It's a joy to play with them."

On if the new players have helped the defense with the scheme having played for Head Coach Brandon Staley in the past:

"Yes, sir. Like you said, Sebastian and Troy, they were just playing in the Super Bowl a year ago. With that experience, it's only going to help us. Guys like [LB] Kyle Van Noy, J.C. [Jackson], guys like that that have real Super Bowl experience."

On the defense using Van Noy and Jackson to gain intel on Raiders Head Coach Josh McDaniels' offensive scheme:

"It's everybody coming in and making a collective effort. I have to play my part in knowing the scouting report and [S Nasir Adderley] Nas has to play his part. The coaches have to bring what they bring. So, it's everybody. It's not just one person."

On what film the defense is watching to prepare for the Raiders offense:

"We're really just trying to make it about us. The more film we can make about us and line up and play, we'll be just fine. It's really about us. It's really not about them."

On how he feels physically:

"I feel amazing. I'm healthy, ready to go, and like I said, I got my hair cut [*laughter*]. I can't wait to go. I'm ready. It's like the first day of school. I can't wait."

On if the haircut 'makes him feel faster':

"I just feel good, overall. It's just good energy around the building, around the team. I just feel good."

On 'why this year's team is better than last year's':

"I don't even want to try to look at it as we are better than the team last year. I just feel like we get a new opportunity to start over, 0-0, and not let it come down to one game or we have to get in because if this team loses. We get to take care of every game, game by game, and leave it in our own hands. I think that is what's going to be unique about this season versus last season."

On 'what he means about there is good energy around the building':

"Coaches, players and even our owners, there is good energy from everybody."

On 'why he thinks there is good energy around the building':

"Just loving what you're doing. I love what I do. Coach Staley loves what he does. So, you have a collective of guys who love what they are doing every day. It's going to be good energy."

On 'if the good energy is the result of having a good roster':

"I don't think it has anything to do with that."

On how his relationship with Adderley has grown:

"It's grown a lot versus his first year to his second year because I didn't get to play with Nas. I was hurt when he was out there early in his career. Now, just playing with him, he's even making some of the calls back to me. It's amazing having Nas out there with me. He's more confident, too. I've got all of the confidence in the world in him."

On if 'it's a blessing or a curse for the AFC West to be good':

"A blessing. If you consider yourself the best, why not play against the best? It's a blessing to be able to go out there, play them two times a year. It's going to be fun."

On if there is more pressure on the team with the first two games being against AFC West opponents:

"I don't feel like there is pressure at all. I feel like if we just come out and execute, do what we need to do, it's football at the end of the day. We don't need to make it about the division. It's football. Let's go out and play Week 1."

On if he is excited to face Raiders TE Darren Waller and Chiefs TE Travis Kelce within the first two games:

"I'm definitely excited. I love the challenge."

On facing a divisional opponent in Week 1:

"Whether it's the Raiders, the Chiefs or the Broncos, we have to line up and play. It really doesn't matter. We have to play them all. We're excited that it's the Raiders, but it really doesn't matter if it was the Chiefs or the Broncos. It doesn't matter. We have to go out and play when the game kicks off."

On if he has 'bragging rights' over DL Breiden Fehoko with Florida State's win over LSU this past weekend:

"Oh yeah [*laughter*]. Florida State, baby. We're back, baby."