

Chargers Week 4 Media Availability

Friday, September 29, 2023 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On the 'plan' at the safety position and if practice squad S Dean Marlowe could aid the group:

"You said it, we'll have to go with [S] Dean [Marlowe] and [S] Raheem [Layne]. Those guys will be ready to play."

On an update regarding S Alohi Gilman:

"He was out there today. We'll see how he progresses between now and the game, but his status is to be determined."

On 'if the illness is just a bug going around':

"No, they're different."

On if he 'anticipates' CB J.C. Jackson 'being active' on Sunday:

"I do."

On Jackson's performance in practice this week:

"Good, solid."

On an update regarding OLB Joey Bosa and if this week is 'different than last week':

"Just different because of the toe, someone stepped on him. We'll see between now and the game."

On if Bosa will be a 'game-time decision':

"Yes, closer to the game."

On if the toe is 'more concerning' than the hamstring 'at this point':

"Equal."

On WR Keenan Allen commending WR Quentin Johnston and 'noticing a different vibe' from Johnston:

"Keenan [Allen] said it, Quentin [Johnston] had that little different bounce, and you do have a bounce when you know that you're a starting player. There's more expectation, there are more reps, there's more in the gameplan for you. That's just part of the progression of when you lose someone, someone else gets more, and Quentin is going to get more. As I mentioned to you guys, he has improved every single day that he has been here. He is going to be ready for this opportunity. He is going to make some mistakes. Again, it's not all about Quentin, it's going to be about our entire offense, our skill group of players, playing at a high level around Quentin, and Quentin just doing his part. He's plenty good enough and we're excited about him."

On the level of communication with Jackson prior to last week's game and continuing into this week:

"There was full communication before the last game about why he was going to be inactive for the game. Whether or not you agree with that, that's a different matter, but there was direct communication about last Sunday and there will be direct communication about this Sunday, as well, too."

On how Jackson has 'taken to the conversations':

"Like a pro."

On RB Austin Ekeler being listed as 'doubtful':

"We're going to do the right thing for all of our guys. He has made good progression in practice, but, ultimately, those game-time decisions, we have to make some tough decisions for our players and for the future of the team. We'll see where it goes between now and Sunday."

On if having the bye week upcoming helps 'err on the side of caution' with decisions pertaining to having certain players with injuries play in the game:

"I think that with the early bye, it's different, knowing that you have so much in front of you — the fact that we also have a Monday night game coming out of the bye, as well. Again, it's all case-by-case, but we're going to try and do what's best for the player in our team."

On if C Will Clapp will start at center:

"He will."

On LB Eric Kendricks:

"It's been good to have him back. Noticeable. He's fit right in. But, again, with him out of the lineup, we've been able to really learn a lot about [LB] Nick Neimann, and I think gained so much confidence in him. Then, we've learned a lot about [LB] Kenneth Murray [Jr.], we've learned a lot about him. That's what we expect on our team — when we do have injuries, and it doesn't matter to whom, but especially an important player, a captain, that you have your depth emerge. I think those are two good examples of it. Eric [Kendricks] has worked really hard to get back. It'll be good for us to have him back out there for us."

On which player will 'have the green dot' on defense this week:

"I think it's fair to say that Kenneth [Murray Jr.] will have the green dot because, again, we're still going to be smart with Eric [Kendricks]. It's not like he's just going to go play 65 snaps in the game. We're going to make sure that we're mindful of him and his return to play. He's ready, but we're going to make sure that we're smart with him."

On if he has 'noticed a change' in Murray since Murray has 'been the green dot':

"No, Kenneth Murray [Jr.] has been steady since he has been here. He's a competitor. He has improved, again, every year since he's been here. He's off to a really good start to the season. I think he's gained a lot of confidence and trust with his teammates. The last two weeks, he's had really, I think, winning performances — certainly, a game ball in the last game. He just needs to continue to make the progress. He puts in all the right work and I think you're seeing all the results from all that hard work."

On if LB Nick Niemann has 'done enough to earn linebacker reps' and if LB Daiyan Henley could 'work in' at linebacker this week:

"Nick [Niemann] has definitely done enough. We feel confident about that linebacker group, and that'll be competitive, but it's really good to have Daiyan [Henley] back for special teams. That's going to be his main role here early in the season. That group is working hard. It's definitely a deeper group than it was a year ago, especially when you add in [LB] Amen [Ogbongbemiga] and [LB] Tanner [Muse]. The depth and the quality of our special teams, we feel like it really kicks up with that whole group intact."

On if Jackson will start at CB on Sunday:

"To be determined."

On Bosa's game status following 'three days of not participating':

"He's just a veteran player. It's different than a young player. Joey [Bosa] has been able to go through weeks where he hasn't practiced full or practiced partly, and then he can play in the game. It's just different for a veteran."

On the difference between Bosa and Ekeler's different game statuses:

"Because Austin [Ekeler] has practiced this week and Joey [Bosa] has not. Joey's health is in a different state than Austin's. They are two different cases."

On Jackson's 'confusion' following being inactive last week:

"He probably doesn't agree with the decision, but the decision was communicated clearly, and the reason why. The acceptance of that is a different matter."

SPECIAL TEAMS COORDINATOR RYAN FICKEN

Opening Statement:

"Good afternoon. Obviously, it's great coming off a nice win last week, but all of our attention now is moving forward to Vegas. We had a good week of work. We're preparing for a really good team. We have to make sure that we're ready to go. They have really good core guys, obviously the specialists and, obviously, the returner, we have a lot of respect for those guys. With that, I'll go ahead and open it up [to questions]."

On if gross punting yards are 'overrated':

"I think it depends on the situation. We're looking at the net [punting yards] at the end of the day. Minimize the returns. Now, obviously, those two punts that we had are not ideal. He knows that. He just kind of mishit those. It depends. If you look just at the gross numbers on that, a lot of punters might have a lot of going in punts, where there's not opportunities for the big punts like he had on the third one, that don't play that roll. You can see a lesser gross. It depends if our offense is moving the ball, getting into plus territory and then, if we have to punt there, you're not going to have a big gross. You're looking for the net and the return [yardage]. He knows. On those two punts, we had a 37-yarder, kind of mishit it and it went back 10 yards. Not ideal with that. He knows he needs to be better and he can. He just mishit that. The second one, we'd like a little bit more on that. We'll get that."

"Then you have the net and the best athlete on the field going against cover guys. Also, maybe it hit and rolls. Maybe his 37-yarder hit and then rolled another 20. Are you going to say it's a good punt? You have the good gross, but not ideally in terms of the overall execution with it. There's kind of a little bit of good and bad at it."

On K Cameron Dicker's missed field goal against Minnesota:

"Just overswung. He obviously has the leg strength and everything. He's going to be just fine, I believe. He didn't think twice about it. He knew he was going to have that opportunity to go ahead and get out there, maybe win the game for us or get us into overtime. He was dialed in and ready to go. I'd have no problem trotting him back out there for that or even longer."

On if he's comfortable with Dicker at those distances:

"Absolutely."

On Dicker's mentality allows him to move past a missed attempt:

"Absolutely and that's a big part of what I like about him. I mean, he's very strong, mentally. He just moves onto the next kick, which, even if you make them, you have to move onto the next kick. The most important kick is the next one. We really stress that. He's great with that situation and he was waiting for his next opportunity."

On WR Derius Davis as a punt returner:

"I like what he's done. He's still young. We're still working with him on all the situations because you can't take that for granted. All of the nuances of special teams. He's coming along, he's developing. I'm very excited about where he's been and I'm really excited about the future for him."

On the punt return unit:

"Unfortunately, we were limited a little last week. Obviously, with the Titans, he showed his dynamic traits and where he can go ahead and have the ability to go ahead and take one to the house any time. It's also a testament, I think, to the core guys blocking for him. They believe, as well, how dynamic he is. They're really blocking hard for him because they know it could take one block where we can go ahead and break one. I think the team believes. I think that's very, very important for us."

On replacing DB Deane Leonard if he doesn't play:

"It's tough to replace a guy like Deane in any situation. He's such an integral part to our unit, for our success as a team. It's going to be by committee. It might be a rotation, see who's rolling on defense. We have a plan with how we're going to step forward. We've kind of worked it out here. It's going to be the next guy up, but it's going to be maybe by committee. Again, I can't stress it enough, it's tough to replace a guy like him. I have belief in our guys that are on the roster and they're going to do a great job."

On LB Daiyan Henley:

"It's been great. I'm excited. He just brings a different kind of speed element, a little bit, in his strengths. We still have to make sure we're taking it step-by-step and that we're not trying to go from step one to 10 right away. We have to make sure we're still building him and putting him in positions to be successful."

On Raiders WR DeAndre Carter:

"He presents a lot of challenges. This guy, obviously, we know that he was third in punt return last year in the NFL. He's a dynamic returner. He does a great job because he's a veteran. He's savvy as a returner, so he has a lot of confidence with that. He's a violent runner. He can break tackles. He has that acceleration and speed. He's a very dangerous returner. He definitely has our full attention. We have to do a great job covering him."

On the noise level in Minnesota:

"Yeah, it's loud. That was loud. That's the thing, you have to neutralize that crowd. We did early on. It's always difficult to play them on the road."