



Josh.Rupprecht@chargers.nfl.com ⚡ Jennifer.Rojas@chargers.nfl.com ⚡ Jamaal.LaFrance@chargers.nfl.com

Brock.Anderson@chargers.nfl.com ⚡ Danny.Markino@chargers.nfl.com ⚡ Jordan.Colquitt@chargers.nfl.com ⚡ Leonie.Strehl@chargers.nfl.com

Chargers Week 16 Media Availability

Saturday, December 24, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On S Derwin James Jr. returning on Sunday and the impact he has on the defense:

“He has had a good week of practice. I think that that is the main thing, that he is full-speed and he will be able to lead us, like he knows how, and that you’re going to get that same playmaker out there on the field. Excited to have him join up with everybody.”

On James Jr. gifting Christmas presents to the defensive backs and coaching staff:

“There are so many reasons why he is so valuable to our team, but I think, most of all, what he does for everybody for the building. He brings people together. It’s a very rare thing in the NFL that you have somebody that can unite so many people — offense, defense, special teams, coaches, players and staff. He has that way about him. His generosity is one of his staples because he gives so much of himself to everybody. I know that we’re all very grateful for him. For him to be thinking of others in that way is really special.”

On Staley’s reaction to receiving a Rolex watch from James Jr.:

“You’re never prepared for something like that [*laughter*]. What was more impressive was that he got the right wrist size — I don’t even need to take any of the links out, he had it at the right size [*laughter*]. That’s just who he is. I love him. Since my first press conference here, he was someone that I knew was going to help us build the team that we wanted to build. Every day since he has proven it.”

On not receiving a customized chain from James Jr.:

“Those days are long over [*laughter*]. I would’ve gone with 7, my number. I’m glad that the guys got that because that’s a special deal for the players, when they can wear their number in that way. For it to be of that type of value, too, it’s just special. Cool to see the guys’ reactions.”

QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On familiarity with the Colts' defensive scheme:

"We have a lot of respect for [Colts Defensive Coordinator] Gus [Bradley] and his defense. Having played with him for a year, I got to learn a lot from him. I have a lot of respect for him, as a coach and as a football mind. Some of the things that they've been doing the past couple of weeks might differ from what he's done usually. They've been able to switch things up and they've been playing really good football. Their record might not say it, but they have a really good defense and they're able to put some points up, too. They require a lot of attention from us and we've had to have a good week of practice, of preparation to get after it."

On the game being played indoors:

"I heard it's awfully cold over there. I really can't imagine that, especially being where we are right now. We're getting ready for whatever conditions we play in. We're thankful just for the opportunity to be playing football. Whatever the weather was like, we'd be ready to get after it. It happens to be in a dome this week, but we'll be ready with whatever happens."

On the coldest game he's played in:

"Mid-20s in Eugene [Oregon]. Nothing quite like they're experiencing over there. It still felt pretty cold. It wasn't raining, so that was nice. Those [conditions] are somewhat manageable, if it's not too rainy."

On what he learned about the push for a postseason berth last year:

"That's a good question. It's a good point that you bring up. You have to learn from those mistakes. It didn't go our way last year. We lost a couple there at the end and we, unfortunately, didn't make the playoffs. That's the whole purpose of playing football right now — to be able to extend your season and to play well after what you're guaranteed. Obviously, it was a tough, tough year last year, but you have to look at the film. You have to see what you did wrong. You have to make those games happen in December and November, when it matters most, and especially January. We have another great opportunity this year. You really have to take it week-by-week. The Colts are the most important game this week because it's happening in a couple of days. If you can focus like that, week-in and week-out, I think you'll like the way you end up."

On a potential clinching scenario on Monday:

"No, I didn't know that. It's good to know. That's cool to know."

On possibly scripting plays early in the third quarter:

"I think that's always a good idea. I think that's one of those things that you kind of have to adjust throughout the game and say, 'Hey, this is how they're playing us.' It's tough to script for the second half. When you get a different game plan that the defense is playing, you have to kind of change what you're scripting. It's kind of based off what the defense is playing. I think the defenses have kind of changed over the past couple of weeks with what they've been showing versus what they've played against us. [Offensive Coordinator] Joe [Lombardi] has done such a great job of getting us in the positions. We just have to go out there and execute it, as players. If he's able to do that, it's always a great idea. I think they're kind of crunched for time, especially with how many position groups that he has to get around to. If he's able to do that, I've got a ton of respect for him to be able to manage that, as well."