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## Chargers Media Availability

Monday, November 14, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

### HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

#### **On injury updates for DL Christian Covington and DL Otito Ogbornia:**

“Christian Covington has a torn pectoral. He will be, likely, out for the season. That’s not a confirmed fact yet, but it’s trending that way. Otito Ogbornia has a patellar tendon rupture, and he will be out for the season.”

#### **On depth along the defensive line:**

“We’ll have to work through that over the next 36 hours. We’ll probably make some acquisitions, and then promote [DL] Joe [Gaziano] as some point this week. We have him currently on our team. We’ll be working over the next 36 hours to make a couple of acquisitions to get us to full strength.”

#### **On his message to the team regarding injuries:**

“What I what I told the team this morning is that after watching the film and having more time to reflect, it’s the exact same message that I had to him in the locker room, which was the level of toughness, the level of physicality, the level of discipline that we played with was the standard that we expect in a game like that against a quality team. That’s where the message was. The group that was out there in that game last night played to the standard of the L.A. Chargers. The reason why we didn’t win the game, there was some executional-type things in the game that prevented us from ultimately finishing that football game. But regardless of the circumstance, we’re going to be a connected team and a tough and rugged team that is going to try and figure it out. I like the way that looked last night in that way. We make no excuses. That’s how the whole season has been for us. When I say, ‘No excuses,’ we’re not really trying to go in that direction, in terms of our mindset. Our mindset is, ‘Are we playing to the standard of the L.A. Chargers?’ Then, are we figuring it out the best way we know how? I thought last week, with that group, we really had a good gameplan. I thought our guys really took the field and executed it, for the most part, and that’s what we need to take away moving forward to Kansas City.”

#### **On additional injuries:**

“If I could just kind of take care of this for everybody for this week; [QB] Justin [Herbert] and K9 [LB Kenneth Murray Jr.] were cleared this morning from the concussion protocol from last night, in terms of their postgame assessment, so that was positive. [T] Trey Pipkins [III] is going to be day-to-day with his knee. As you guys probably saw, he did work out pregame. We’re really proud of him, that he tried to give that thing a go. He did a great job last night for [T] Foster [Sarell], but he’s going to be day-to-day. I think that you’ll see him at some point in practice this week. [OLB] Chris Rumph [II] will be back in practice, full, this week. You will see [WR] Mike [Williams] and [WR] Keenan [Allen] back at practice this week. To the extent, we’ll keep you posted on that, but they will be back in practice this week. D.P. [TE Donald Parham Jr.] is still a ways off. [RB] Joshua Kelly is trending very positive. He has one game left [on Reserve/Injured]. [K] Dustin [Hopkins] is probably going to be a week away.”

**On the offense's performance in the second half upon further evaluation of the game film:**

"After watching the second half, I didn't think that our first-down efficiency was great in the second half. I didn't think that we got off to a good start within the series. Then, I thought on third downs, we had some guys open, but the protection just didn't quite hold up. There was just a little bit of pressure where I thought we had [WR] Josh [Palmer] open on a spear [route]. We had some routes that were getting separation but the pocket was just tight. Just didn't get into that rhythm of first-down execution, where you're getting some chunks, putting yourself in some favorable down-and-distances, that didn't happen in the second half last night. Then, on third down, we just weren't able to get those same conversions that we had in the first half. In the first half, we were able to knock down some of those third downs that really got us some momentum, and we weren't able to do that in the second half."

**On comparing the number of injuries the team has experienced this season to the 2010 Green Bay Packers:**

"Thanks for the 2010 Packers reference [laughter]. That was a long time ago, and a really, really good Super Bowl performance for [Packers QB] Aaron Rodgers. One of the all-time throws that you're going to ever see in that game. That's a throwback reference there, Joe [Reedy]. But no, I think what you're trying to do is keep your team week-to-week and knowing that what's most important is the day that's in front of you, I think our group has really embraced that from the beginning of the season. I think that what we've been able to do is when we've suffered some attrition, we've on-boarded some guys with the right makeup. I think that guys like [OLB] Derrek Tuszka, guys like [OLB] Jeremiah Attaochu, guys like [RB] Sony Michel, these guys that we've been able to join up with have become real contributing factors in our success — [TE] Richard Rodgers would be another. We've joined up with some guys that I think understand our culture here; what it takes, what we're trying to be. I think that that's important, that you keep going in that direction. We're going to have to do that now on the defensive line, that they just come into your team, they become a part of your team. I'm leaving out a couple guys — [K] Taylor Bertolet, [K] Cameron Dicker, guys like that that have joined up with us. That's just how it is in the NFL. What we want to be able to do is start to try and play our best football down the stretch. I thought, in a way, yesterday, I felt like that group really played a good game. That was a quality performance and gave us a chance to win."

**On an expanded comparison to the 2010 Packers:**

"That defense; [Pro Football Hall of Famer] Charles Woodson is one of my favorites, an all-time player. He has a Defensive Player of the Year season. He was unbelievable. That team had a lot of great players on it. They were high-flying in the passing game, now. That was a young A-Rod [Aaron Rodgers] with [former Packers WRs] Greg Jennings and Jordy Nelson. They were all sorts of explosive throwing that thing down the field. That was a big win for them against Pittsburgh in that Super Bowl."

**On the performance of T Foster Sarell and DL Breiden Fehoko last night:**

"Foster Sarell was solid. For his first start, playing against [49ers DL] Nick [Bosa], playing that type of defense, I thought that Foster held his own, which is what you would hope in that type of performance. His first real NFL game, to start against that type of team, I thought that he held his own. I thought that the film validates that, if you guys have watched it. I'm really proud of him. I thought that Breiden [Fehoko] held his own. I thought that he was a real factor in the run game. We finished the game with three D-lineman and they basically played every play in the fourth quarter. He laid it on the line, like he always does. He played rugged and tough, made some plays for us, and he was really steady for us. Really proud of both of those guys in how they played."

**On where the credit is placed for the field goal unit's streak of 16 consecutive successful attempts:**

"Really excited about that aspect of our football team. The snap and hold operation, I think you can't minimize that, just [LS] Josh Harris and his steadiness with [P] JK Scott. I think that there's a comfort zone. The culture of special teams with [Special Teams Coordinator] Ryan Ficken and [Assistant Special Teams Coach] Chris Gould leading the way, I felt like it's been a winning edge for our football team. I thought Cam [K Cameron Dicker] did a nice job last night. We blocked a punt last night and we didn't allow any return yards in punt return. We have to keep making that a big edge for our football team."

**On how WRs Keenan Allen and Mike Williams returning to practice affects team morale:**

"I don't know, I think you could probably be the judge of that. You guys are very observant, so I'll trust your observation on Wednesday."

**On back-to-back games on *Sunday Night Football*:**

"I think our team is getting to know one another. I think we know how we need to play, how we need to practice and prepare. I've seen our team respond time and time again this season and answer the challenge that's in front of them. There's a long time between now and Sunday night. We have to get our rest and we have to have a really good week of practice. Games like this, just like last night, when you play some of the best teams in the league, it brings out the best in you. I thought that happened last night. It brought out a really quality performance. I expect the same on Sunday."

**On the edge rushers:**

"Our guys played well. Our edges were secure in the run game, most importantly because that's where you have to play at a high level against a team like that. I felt like we had a good rotation with all four of those guys. I thought [OLB] Khalil [Mack] rushed the passer at a high level last night. He had the sack, his seventh of the season. I felt like we forced them to earn everything in the passing game. I thought everything was contested. [49ers QB Jimmy Garoppolo] made a couple of throws, but the coverage was there. I thought the rush, it was a good mix of three, four, five, six, seven-man rush. I felt like we had a pretty good mixture. My regret, just overall, was just a couple of those third downs that were tight in the second half. We just weren't able to make that play, that game-changing play that probably would have gotten us off the field, allowed us to play less plays or maybe get a takeaway. We just weren't able to do that in the second half."

**On adding defensive line depth:**

"Yeah, I think we're trying to mine the entire NFL and try to find the best fits. Maybe, we have relationships at certain places or maybe they've played in certain styles that are similar to ours and try to leverage all of your relationships to make good decisions, and bring guys in here that are healthy, that are ready to play football and you feel like can contribute at a winning level. Like I said, we're going to be doing that over the next 36 hours. The next time we talk, I'm sure we'll have a couple of moves made that we'll be able to talk about more in detail."

**On the disqualification of 49ers LB Dre Greenlaw:**

"No, I wasn't surprised because I saw it live. I saw. I think when you saw the game-tape, too, you saw No. 1 [49ers DB Jimmie Ward] and 57 [Greenlaw] go in with intent. I think the reaction afterwards reflect that, as well. We have full respect for their team. I know I have full respect for [49ers Head Coach] Kyle [Shanahan] and how he coaches. [49ers Defensive Coordinator] DeMeco Ryans and that group of defensive players, I have a lot of respect for those guys. It's part of the game. Our quarterback is a stud, as you guys know. He's a stud. Our team wasn't backing down. It's one of those competitive plays, where I think the competitors that are out there, we know what it is. Both teams aren't backing down either way. That's the way it should be in a big-time game with two teams that respect each other."

**On if the defense was 'trying to sub' on San Francisco's go-ahead touchdown:**

"It's just a third-down conversion. In that field zone, we just needed to get the group horizontal on the sideline a little bit sooner. I think, the guys going on the field were fine. The guys coming off the field were not quick enough. I need to do a better job of putting them through that even more in practice. I think that they saw we were in more of a designer defense and they were going to try to go quick and run it in there. We were trying to make that substitution switch and just didn't get there fast enough."

**On the San Francisco downed punt at the one-yard line late in the game:**

"I think, in terms of the interpretation, I'm aware of the momentum rule. I think, when it was blown dead, I think we could have checked with the official. If we had a do-over, I think we could have checked with the official and asked if we could challenge that, or if they were going to take another look at it. We didn't end up doing that because it was, I think, blown dead so quickly. Kind of decisively. I did watch the play. I watched it on the TV copy as well. We'll be able to take that moving forward and, hopefully, be able to learn from it."

**On if the aforementioned punt is a play that is 'even challengeable':**

"We would have tried to communicate down and see if we could. It would be one of those ones where I would, personally, have to check with them to see if we could. You'd have to be able to, No. 1, catch that the momentum went into the end zone and then I would have to personally go to the official and check with them. They do a good job with me before the game. Sometimes, they're going to say, 'Hey, if we feel like it's close, we'll come get you,' or, 'Hey, we're going to err on the side of communicating with you. We're going to communicate with you.' That's what they always say every official's meeting, if you guys could be there, but because of how swiftly it happened, we just didn't have that sense that we could do anything about it."

**On third-and-long defense in yesterday's game:**

"Our coverages played out how we wanted them to. The one specifically on the sideline, that's a tough throw-and-catch and [OLB] Khalil [Mack] got held on that play. That was a tough one because the intent of the play was to go front side and we were completely matched up. On the backside, he kind of made it back to the comeback or to the stop and [CB Michael] Mike [Davis] is right there. That's one that I can live with and Khalil was — we had a really good two-man game between [DL Morgan Fox] Foxy and [DL] Sebastian [Joseph-Day] on that play and then Khalil. You guys all see that. The one on [49ers TE George] Kittle, that was disappointing, too, because to the front side of the play in his first look, we had taken it away and then Mike [Davis] just kind of gets pushed a little bit. We should be underneath that route a little bit, but again, that was man-to-man and it was tight and we forced them to beat us. We had the one missed tackle inside-out, short on the third-and-eight with [49ers WR Jauan] Jennings, which was a tough one. Then we brought the zero [blitz] on the completion to [49ers WR Brandon] Aiyuk down there on the third-and-10. That drive was the tough one, was like the three third-and-seven-pluses on the drive. I would say that we were comfortable with the game plan. I was comfortable with the execution. They made a couple of plays and that was really the story. Like I mentioned a little bit before, we just didn't make enough plays on third down, but I thought that the execution played out about how you would hope, defensively. They just kind of made some plays."

**On if varying fronts helped limit the 49ers rushing offense:**

"I thought that was our best plan by far this season. I thought the execution was high. I thought we tackled pretty well. Missed a couple, but I thought our edges were good and thought our middle was good. They had 41 runs, but I thought from an execution standpoint, considering the caliber of the rushing attack — the best attack we have seen, certainly — I felt like, schematically, that was as good of a plan that I have ever had, to be honest with you, since I have been calling defenses. I felt like it was a quality plan. I felt like our guys executed it and knew what we wanted out of it. You need to have that type of mixture against them. I felt like we were able to keep them off balance to an extent and really kind of play that chess match, I felt. Give them some tough things to prep for and then make those in-game adjustments, kind of carry some things to utilize later in the game. It was a good game. There was high-level NFL football, I thought, both ways. The one takeaway for you guys is there weren't the explosions. I think there were 41 runs, but it was like 3.8 yards per carry or something like that and that's high-quality defense against the number one rushing attack in the league. We can hopefully take a lot from that. I thought that our guys really competed last night in the run game in all three levels. We need to build on it because our guys did play at a high level."

**On TE Gerald Everett's injury status:**

"He has a groin [injury]. He's going to be day-to-day, but made it out of the game okay. I think you will see him out there at practice at some point this week."

**On if it's good for a coach to have officials in New York correct calls 'instantaneously':**

"I suppose that depends on if the correction is accurate. I would hope that they would have that capacity. I think that it's a good process when they can do that. What has to happen though is, as my father used to tell me long ago, that there needs to be consistency of it. If there is consistency within your process, then I think everyone will be able to live with the result. That is what you have to establish relative to that topic — consistency within officiating. Then fans, you guys, me, will all be able to roll with it. That's the key."

**On if the new concussion protocols 'did its' job' with taking QB Justin Herbert out of the game and checking him:**

"I did. I think after the game, we spoke about it briefly, but I think in seeing the TV copy and then having some time to reflect, I thought it was a good process both for him and [LB Kenneth Murray Jr.] Kenny. I think that is what all of us want to see. All of us want to see these players getting taken care of, even if you are erring on the side of caution. Even if it forces you to have to go play your backup quarterback. If it forces you to — whatever, injury timeout, whatever the case may be. These guys' health is the No. 1 thing out there. You guys that are covering this team, you guys that cover the NFL that are down there live and see what's going on, you want to know these guys are getting taken of. I thought it was a good process last night and glad both of those guys are good."