

## Chargers Media Availability

Monday, November 21, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

### HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

**On an injury update regarding WR Mike Williams' ankle:**

"He kind of had a reaggravation of it last night. We are going to find out a lot more in the next couple of days about his possibilities for Wednesday's practice, but not a significant re-injury."

**On if there is an 'updated timeline' regarding OLB Joey Bosa's return from injury:**

"I don't have one that is updated, no."

**On his message to QB Justin Herbert after throwing an interception on the final offensive drive:**

"You know that when you get put into that type of position, with that little time left, you know that you have to go make plays. I think that's just the nature of being in that type of situation. When the time and score is like that, you can't just be throwing check-downs to get yourself into field goal range. A lot of pressure on both of those plays in that two-minute [situation]. I thought that he gave [WR] Keenan [Allen] a chance, at least on that play. He kind of had to step up [in the pocket] and he gave him a chance, and that's part of playing quarterback. If that same play happened in the third quarter or in the first quarter, it is going to look different. In those last-play type of two-minute situations, you have to try and push it. He was trying to give us a chance."

**On the team's 'level of urgency' to 'turn this thing around and make the playoffs':**

"We're trying to take it one game at a time. Our focus is going to be on Arizona. We played two really tough games in a row in primetime against two, as you guys know, really quality teams, and they've been great games. I feel like our level [of play] has been high. I think we know exactly where we stand right now, in terms of the context of the NFL landscape. What we need to keep doing is making improvements on our football team, continue to get guys back and make that progress going into the next game. We have to put that one behind us. As tough as it is, last night, and the week before — that's real, those types of games — but you can't let those guys affect your next one. We have to come back on Wednesday with a lot of purpose for Arizona because they're a good team."

**On an injury update regarding LB Kenneth Murray Jr.:**

"He had a stinger that did not resolve last night, but he is better today."

**On TE Gerald Everett's questionable status entering the game was due to his groin injury:**

"That is correct."

**On if Everett 'had a reaggravation' of his groin injury:**

"No. He had a groin [injury] during the week."

**On the offense allowing five sacks of Herbert last night:**

“There was the one unlucky one off of the batted ball. That one, where he caught the deflection. But, there were a couple that just happened quick where they were on him fast and he couldn’t make a maneuver to either avoid it or throw it away. There were a few last night that he wasn’t able to create and make something happen, where, normally, he does such a good job of avoiding that. Those things happen sometimes against a team that can rush, a good pressure team. Sometimes things like that happen. The good thing is that he didn’t have any bad turnovers for us last night, when stuff like that happens. That’s a strength of his, his ball security.”

**On if Herbert is instructed to ‘bat it down’ when a pass gets deflected back to him:**

“We would, but your natural reaction, sometimes, it happens so quickly. I’m sure that the more that it happens, the better he will get at deflecting it.”

**On if Herbert ‘is getting a lot of balls batted at the line of scrimmage’:**

“No, he has a beautiful delivery, great stroke. He’s 6-foot-6. I think that it’s just the nature of it. Sometimes the defense makes good plays and gets their hands in the passing lane. I wouldn’t make too much of that, no.”

**On S Derwin James Jr. defending Chiefs TE Travis Kelce on the Chiefs’ final offensive drive:**

“Two special players who are going at it. Man-to-man, single safety. He made a good catch and was able to turn it up. Give credit to him. There is no one else in the world I would rather have covering him.”

**On the defense’s ‘gameplan’ for Kelce:**

“Things were contested last night. You didn’t see him catch anything wide open. We were on him. There was a good mixture of coverage. Lots of different types of rotation, man-to-man, zone. He was able to make a couple of big catches on third down. The one kind of on the breakout where we ended up missing a tackle, and then on the drive, again, he catches a five-yard shallow cross and should have had a rat in the hole, but we didn’t. He was able to break that tackle and then turn it up, and another guy misses a tackle. He had a couple of run-after-catch plays, which were big contributions to those three big catches. The two touchdowns, and then the breakout on third down. Outside of those three, everything was tight. We were on him, and we were forcing him to work, and that was the plan. We did a good job of that. Where he really hurts you is manipulating zones where there is no one there and he’s able to kind of sit down, break out. [Chiefs QB] Pat [Mahomes] eludes you, creates more time and space, and it’s not contested. I felt like we contested passes last night. I’m willing to live with that.”

**On his takeaways from the Chiefs’ final offensive series:**

“They made a couple of plays. The first one, I felt like that was a push-off on [CB] Bryce [Callahan], but we were, again, tight. It was a good throw and catch, but we were tight. I felt like we did a good job in the middle part of that drive. Then we had the penalty on third-and-four on Derwin [James Jr.] where I felt like we had a good rush, good coverage, which would have gotten it to fourth down. There was the killer scramble for 16 [yards] when everyone was covered and that is tough because you are playing the coverage that you feel like is the right coverage to play. Then, he was able to make it up the middle. Just rush and coverage at the end, I have to do a better job. Our guys left it all out on the field in that last drive. There weren’t any of these wide open zone completions where no one is there and no one is having to work for anything. They just made their way down the field. We were playing them nose to nose and they made some plays to finish it.”

**On the ‘rush plan’ on Mahomes’ first-down scramble on the Chiefs’ final offensive drive:**

“Just a four-man rush.”

**On G Zion Johnson:**

“He’s progressing. Any time you play a team that has an inside player like [Chiefs DT] Chris Jones, I thought in the first game against them, Zion [Johnson] did really, really well. I thought that last night he had some good snaps, and then there are going to be some snaps where he is learning. He is a rookie. He is seeing things all of the time for the first time and we’re glad we have him. He’s going to continue to progress. He’s one of us, for sure. Any issues that Zion has is purely going to be from an experience standpoint because he has all of the right tools to be working with. He is a great guy, a hard worker, and we’re going to keep playing well around him as we go.”

**On RB Joshua Kelley's injury status:**

"I think you should see him back in practice this week."

## **WIDE RECEIVER DEANDRE CARTER**

### **On his evaluation of the offense's final drive last night:**

"We just didn't execute — everybody, all 11 players on the field didn't execute. Those guys made plays and we didn't. We have to make sure that the next time we get into that situation, we're ready for it. Get everybody on the same page and go do what we have to do to go put points on the board and win the game."

### **On if having WR Keenan Allen and WR Mike Williams return to the lineup 'lead to more explosive plays':**

"Definitely. Having Mike [Williams] and Keenan [Allen] back, it obviously helps our offense. They're two of the best receivers in the league. Defenses will play us a little different when they're out there. We were able to take advantage of it early. I really wish Mike would have been able to be out there for the whole game, it probably would have been a little different story for us. Definitely, those two guys being out there helped us move the ball a little better."

### **On his impact on the offense 'after being signed primarily as a kick and punt returner':**

"I'm just grateful that [Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley and [Offensive Coordinator] Coach [Joe] Lombardi gave me the opportunity to be out there to help contribute to the offense. When I can, I just try to take advantage of the opportunities when they come my way. When [QB] Justin [Herbert] is looking for me, I make sure that I try to make those plays. At the end of the day, it's not about me. We are too good of a team to be 5-5 right now. We have to get our offense, defense and special teams all on the same page, clicking at the same time, so that we can go get this win at Arizona."

### **On 'working to get back into the playoff picture':**

"I think that every week, in the NFL, it's a sense of urgency. Guys lay it on the line every week, they empty the tank. We go out there and give it our all. We might not always execute the way that we want to, but we all go out there and play with our whole heart and try to make it go. I don't think that the urgency, necessarily, changes because we play with that every week. We definitely know that, right now, we are on the outside of the playoffs looking in. We have to go get this win at Arizona and, hopefully, put some wins together."

### **On 'the message from the team leaders this morning':**

"We're just sticking together. We know that we have a really good team. We have good players in the locker room. We believe in our culture, believe in our coaching staff. Like I said, we just have to put it all together in the same game for 60 minutes, and then we'll take off. Right now, it's easy in the NFL, when you go through these losing streaks, quote-unquote, to let people from the outside of the building try and break us apart within the locker room, but our biggest thing is just us staying together, continuing to work, continuing to trust and believe in our culture and our program, and we'll get it turned around."

### **On his favorite Thanksgiving dish:**

"I like ham, but on the second day [*laughter*]. You wake up in the morning, and it still has a little juice in there, and you put it in the frying pan, it's different."

### **On what he consumes on the 'first day':**

"I mean, you still eat the ham, greens, yams, all of the regular Thanksgiving stuff. I'm not a turkey person. My dad, he'll deep fry it, sometimes, and I'll have that, but regular turkey in the oven is not really my thing, but I eat everything else [*laughter*]."

## **CORNERBACK ASANTE SAMUEL JR.**

### **On defending Chiefs TE Travis Kelce:**

“They schemed us up with some plays. They knew we were going to run a lot of man [coverage], so they were kind of running a lot of man-beaters. He’s a great player and he is going to get his sometimes, but they were definitely scheming us up in man [coverage]. Other than that, that’s all it was.”

### **On playing ‘close games’ against the Chiefs:**

“The Chiefs are a great team. They have a great quarterback, great coaches. The NFL, it’s hard to win each week. It always comes down to the wire in most games. It’s really a couple of plays you just have to make. That’s all it is, is a couple of plays here and there. If we make those, it’s a different game.”

### **On ‘what needs to happen to make the playoffs’:**

“We just have to worry about one week at a time. We have Arizona this week. We can’t look past them. They are a great team, great players. That’s our one spot right there. We just have to focus on them and get the win against them.”

### **On the mood of the team after two-consecutive losses:**

“It’s encouraging, but disappointing at the same time because we’re kind of banged up right now and we’re still able to win these games against two of the best teams in the NFL. That gives us encouragement. We just have to get the wins and keep stacking and get better each week.”

### **On Cardinals WR DeAndre Hopkins:**

“I am definitely excited to go against DeAndre Hopkins. I used to watch him a lot when I was younger in college. Now I get to go against him and [Cardinals WR] A.J. Green, too. I used to watch A.J. Green a lot, too. [Cardinals WR] Robbie Anderson, too. I grew up with him in Broward County [Fla.]. There are a lot of guys that I used to watch growing up. That’s how it is like every week going against guys I used to watch. Now, I’m trying to make them respect me.”

### **On Hopkins:**

“He’s a physical guy. Great hands. Great player. He has been legit for a long time now. He’s continuing to do the same thing.”

### **On if the defense has ‘continued to meet as a unit after the bye’:**

“Yes, we are still doing that. I feel like it’s better for our defense because everybody is on one accord and everybody gets to see what each position is looking at and how they are getting taught and what they are supposed to be doing. I feel like it definitely helped us and it brought us closer as a defense.”

### **On ‘if the communication in the meetings is translating to the game’:**

“Yes, for sure. It’s all about trust. You have to trust your teammates and your coach. You have to trust everybody. Being in the meetings, sitting together, I feel like that brings us closer together. We’re together every other time of the day — lifting weights, running routes — so once we’re in the meeting room together, too, it’s like we’re together all day. Now, we kind of bond a little bit more.”

### **On his favorite Thanksgiving dish:**

“Everything [*laughter*]. The whole plate. Turkey.”