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## Chargers Week 12 Media Availability

Wednesday, November 23, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

### HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

**On placing K Dustin Hopkins on the Reserve/Injured list:**

“He just didn’t make enough progress to get back. Just wasn’t making good enough progress for him to come back and kick. We had to make the move to send him to IR and keep [K] Cameron [Dicker] as a part of our football team.”

**On if K Cameron Dicker’s performance ‘played a role in the team signing him to the active roster’ along with Hopkins’ recovery process:**

“Both things are true.”

**On if Hopkins could return this season:**

“I don’t know. I’m not going to speculate on that at this point.”

**On if Hopkins suffered a setback ‘after kicking at practice on Friday’:**

“I think that’s fair to say. Yes.”

**On WR Mike Williams’ injury status:**

“He’s making progress. I think you will see him in practice in a limited fashion. We’re just going to kind of take it day-by-day with him, but nothing significant after the game.”

**On if TE Gerald Everett will practice today:**

“Gerald [Everett] will [practice] in a limited fashion this week in practice.”

**On if there is a possibility Williams could play this Sunday:**

“That’s right, yeah.”

**On LB Kenneth Murray Jr.’s injury status:**

“He will be at practice today, full [participation].”

**On if ‘the plan’ is to bring RB Joshua Kelley back to practice this week:**

“It is. He will be there at practice today, and then we’re going to see the type of progress he makes. If he is good to go in the game, if we feel like he’s had a good week, then he’ll certainly be active for the game.”

**On if the decision on Kelley will be made on Saturday:**

“Yes. We’re going to have a full week and see him go and see how he responds to each practice. Like you said, you open that practice window, and we’ll try to take advantage of it and let his performance kind of guide us, in terms of being up this week or not.”

**On Cardinals QB Kyler Murray:**

“A very dangerous player, a very productive player. He has really transformed that offense there since he came into the league. I had to face him twice in 2020. He’s just a very dangerous player. He’s an outstanding thrower of the football. Everyone knows about his legs, but he’s an outstanding passer. He can really rip it. He can really spin it. He has a lot of weapons to throw to. They create a lot of space for him. He’s a dangerous player.”

**On ‘why it’s hard to bring Murray down’:**

“He’s faster than most of the people on the field. He’s a legitimate 4.30 [40-yard dash] guy. He may not be tall, but he has strong lowers. He’s a lot bigger guy than you think in person. Just a very dynamic player.”

**On if the team will have to ‘manage’ Williams’ ankle injury for the rest of the season:**

“I don’t know that.”

**On if he is ‘surprised’ by the Cardinals’ performance this year:**

“I think that they have encountered a lot of challenges this year, in terms of being cleaned out by injuries. They are still a very dangerous team. They have played everybody really tough. The season is not over yet. They still have a really good team. They are getting some guys back, starting with [Cardinals QB] Kyler [Murray]. They are a very dangerous team and there is a reason why people thought of them that way, because they have a good enough team to beat you. We’re going to have to be at our best on Sunday, for sure.”

**On the practice schedule this week ‘to make sure that the team stays on track and stays focused’:**

“We don’t have to worry about our guys’ focus. I think the way we manage the schedule, making sure that they can have a full Thanksgiving with their family, I think that is really important that you don’t lose out on an opportunity to be with your family because you are putting football before that. We’re going to make sure that tomorrow’s schedule is suitable so that they can have a full day with their families — that’s coaches and players — and make sure that when we are here at the practice facility, that we put in the right type of preparation, like we always do, so that we are ready to play. But, Thanksgiving is a really special holiday. It involves a lot of people. You want to make sure that your players, coaches, everybody within your team can experience it to the fullest.”

**On his message to the team today:**

“The big picture is just about what is happening in front of us right now, which is today’s practice, and then who we are playing this week, which is Arizona. You have to be able to put losses like the last one behind you. I think that there is a lot of energy that goes into all of these games. What you have to do is be able to get your energy back so that you have the right type of preparation today. There were a lot of good things in that football game that we can take into this game, and then the things that didn’t happen in that game for us down the stretch, we’re going to learn from those. We have the right guys on this football team. What happened last week and the week before that, it’s part of the league. You’re going to have stretches like that where you have really tough ones that you feel like you are right there and you don’t make them. It’s what you do moving forward. For us, it’s about today. That’s what we have to focus on is today. Our group is in a good frame of mind. We have to go out there and practice really well today, and that’s what we have done all season is practice well. If we keep doing that, then we’ll make the progress in the areas that we need to moving forward.”

**On Cardinals WR DeAndre Hopkins:**

“DeAndre [Hopkins] is one of the top receivers in the game, one of the top players in the game. He has been for a long time. Rare ball judge, strong hands. He’s a bull. Just being with the Rams and being with [Rams DB] Jalen [Ramsey], who had so many great battles with him, just a lot of respect for him, as a competitor. He has done a lot to give that offense a lot of production since he has gotten there. Full respect for his game. We’re going to have to be at our best.”

**On ‘the discrepancy between scoring in the first half and the second half’:**

“I don’t know if it’s any one thing, but I think that to score the ball, a couple of things need to happen. You have to have explosions. Driving the ball 10 to 12 to 15 plays. That’s really tough to do in the league. You have to get explosive plays, and you have to stay away from negative plays. I think that in the second half, our execution just needs to be better. It’s not any facet of the run game or the pass game or what type of plays, you have to get the explosions no matter how you get them, run or pass. You have to stay away from negative plays. I think that has inhibited our progress in second halves this year. You know it’s not just about your offense, it’s about your defense too. It’s about how your defense and your special teams play; creating field positions. Do you score on defense? Can you create an advantage for your offense where they don’t have to drive it as far? There are a lot of factors besides just your offensive output. I think that’s where my focus is, is just our team coming together and playing that complementary football so that happens for all of us in every phase, not just one.”

**On ‘if there have been adjustments from opposing defenses that the team hasn’t dealt with’:**

“I don’t think that is the case, in terms of us not being able to make the adjustments. You go into every game knowing that you have stuff that you are going to carry later in the game. It hasn’t happened yet for us, offensively, in the second half, in terms of the explosion of the output and stuff like that. We just have to make sure that we are focusing on those key points that I just mentioned because those are really, I think, at the essence of scoring the ball. I think having the type of offensive output that everybody expects and that we expect, that we have shown. I think if our focus continues to be in those places and how to get that done, we know that we have the group to do it, coaches and players. Like I said, that’s where I think our focus is right now, just on us and taking care of our team and making sure we get everybody healthy so that we can go execute.”

**On ‘how closely’ the team monitors the waiver wire:**

“I think we’re always going to be doing that throughout the season. We have had to do that. You are always trying to figure out the best combination of players for your team. I think that we have done a good job of that. If we think that there is an asset out there that can help improve us in the short-term and the long-term, then we are going to do that. If and when an opportunity comes up, I know that myself, [General Manager] Tom [Telesco], we’ll make sure that we make those moves. We’re not at that point right now.”

**On if RB Melvin Gordon III ‘would be an interesting addition’:**

“I don’t have any comment on him, specifically, but we feel good about our running back room right now.”

**On C Corey Linsley’s experience ‘shines the most’ when facing a high blitz rate team like the Cardinals:**

“They are a signature pressure team. They have always done a good job with that. [Cardinals Defensive Coordinator] Vance Joseph is a quality coordinator and had a lot of success throughout the years. I know, being in the division with them, and then studying him from afar, that’s a big part of how they play. They have a lot of good blitzers. They have good front players, but then they have good linebackers and secondary players that can blitz as well; inside linebackers, safeties, Nickels. That’s a big part of how they play. You definitely need experience because there are a lot of looks that they give you. The more looks that they give you, you have to be able to comprehend all of that, process it, and make sure that we are in the right thing. Having Corey [Linsley] and [QB] Justin [Herbert] playing together, having two guys like that, really helps.”

**On his evaluation of the defense through the first 11 weeks of the season:**

“I think we are a work-in-progress. I think a lot of the people that you are mentioning that we joined up with, not all of them are at our games right now. That’s part of it, just being able to manage new people and find the right combination of players and the right combination of schemes. That’s what we are doing right now. We have played quality football that has given our team a chance to win. We have to make the improvements, just like the rest of our football team in that phase, for us to be able to contend on the stretch and be what we are capable of being. I look at it game-to-game. Are you maximizing that group? Because expectations, in terms of starting a season, those are just what they are, is expectations. There is a reality to the NFL and you have to change with the facts in the ground. Where you have to live in the NFL is week-to-week. I know that our defense has given us a chance to win every week and that’s all you can ask for. In terms of making progress where you are playing at the high standard that I believe in, that I expect, that takes time, and that’s certainly where we are at right now.”

**On if defending the run ‘remains a concern’:**

“Definitely a concern. Just haven’t played well enough in that phase. Like I said, we have just been working hard to find the right combinations to do it. I think that what you are looking for is how you are playing, more importantly than what statistics tell you. For us, it hasn’t been consistent enough all year and we are working hard to improve it.”

**On if there is a ‘timeline update’ on OLB Joey Bosa:**

“No update.”

**On S JT Woods:**

“The way you are going to learn, as a player, is by being out there. That’s one thing that we believe in is they make experience some tough downs, but the progress that they make by being in the NFL game is more important than just practicing. We felt like he was in a good spot two weeks ago to start working him in to the rotation. That’s what we’re going to continue to do, find the right places to do that. He’s making good progress and we have to continue to keep working with him.”

**On ‘what he needed to see’ from Woods in practice before playing him in games:**

“Command of his fundamentals, command of the scheme. Is he making plays in practice where you feel like, ‘Hey, this guy is ready to go.’ That is different for every player, but we believe when that player is ready, then it’s not like, ‘When is that right moment?’ You just know what you see in practice, and then you just know that these guys make the most progress in the games by being out there. If they experience any tough downs, that’s part of the process of developing players. He’s in that process, right now, as a player.”

**On Cardinals RB James Conner:**

“I have so much respect for him, even going back to back to Pitt. I know where he’s from back in Western Pennsylvania. We had the same type of cancer. He has a great personal story. Since he has gotten to Arizona, he’s added a lot to their offense. A guy that you can truly hand the football to. He’s dangerous, can get the tough yards and he can score the ball, like you mentioned. He has always had a nose for the end zone and runs with real toughness. He can break tackles. A lot of respect for his game.”

**On players volunteering in the community yesterday leading into Thanksgiving:**

“As an NFL player, you have this huge platform. You have this ability, especially being in L.A., Southern California, to affect so many different people. We have a bunch of guys that are made up of the right stuff. I know that I never take that for granted, as a head coach. is that we have a team full of not only special players, but special guys that are trying to affect a lot of people through their pro football experience. Like I said, Thanksgiving is one of the special holidays. It’s one of those holidays that you have to share with people. I think hearing stories like that, that is sharing your gifts with other people. You can’t get enough of those type of stories in the NFL.”

**On his favorite Thanksgiving dish:**

“I would say that our favorite Thanksgiving dish, for me, is breaded cauliflower. It’s my grandmother’s favorite. It’s a special Thanksgiving side dish. Everyone kind of does the same thing with the main dish, but, for us, it was always my grandmother’s famous breaded cauliflower. We were never turkey people growing up [*laughter*]. My grandfather didn’t like it, so we were chicken people. I didn’t even discover that that was like a thing until I was older [*laughter*]. Now, were kind of back on the turkey train. He may be disappointed in me, but were back to turkey, stuffing, green beans. Green bean casserole is a big deal. That was my mother’s signature dish on Thanksgiving. I would go with those two; Green bean casserole from my mom’s side, and then, breaded cauliflower from my grandmother.”