

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 Head Coach Brandon Staley Media Availability **Tuesday, October 18, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.**

On an update regarding C Corey Linsley:

“Corey [Linsley] is back in the building today. He’s progressing well. He was able to get his hydration and diet where it needs to be. He got a little bit of a modified lift in this morning. We’ll work him back into practice this week.”

On injury updates following last night’s game:

“[RB] Joshua Kelley has an MCL sprain. His return to play will be weeks, not days. He’ll be in that two-to-four [week] range. [K] Dustin Hopkins has a hamstring strain and his return to play is two-to-four weeks. [C] Will Clapp has a quad contusion. He will work into practice this week. [TE] Donald Parham [Jr.] is in the concussion protocol. That was it from the game.”

On his level of concern with Parham Jr. entering the concussion protocol:

“Always a concern. We were on top of it last night. We’ll make sure that we take our time. I think that we have the advantage of the bye week coming up here, and we’ll make sure that we take full advantage of whatever time frame is needed for him to feel his best.”

On if K Taylor Bertolet will serve as the team’s kicker until Hopkins returns:

“Yes, sir.”

On the offense’s performance last night:

“On the positive side of things, I think that we were really good on third down, which allowed us to possess the ball. We had 22 third downs in the game and converted half of them, and that really allowed us to possess the ball and, I felt like, control the game. It was tough everywhere — run game, pass game — it was tight. Our guys hung tough in that football game. That’s what was required in the game. I thought that [QB] Justin [Herbert] was really, really smart with the ball because it was tight. For you to have 57 pass attempts, and, really, there was a tipped interception, but he kept us out of trouble so many times. I thought that he was a bright spot. We just had far too many penalties last night. We had nine penalties. I think that there were five or six first and second down and 15-plus. That’s going to be really tough against a team that is that good on defense. I thought that the penalties were a big story last night in the entire football game, but certainly for our offense. We were one-of-four in the red area. You go one-of-four in the red area against a good defense, you’re not going to score the ball, and then, affect the momentum of the game. I thought that those were a couple of areas that we needed to improve, but I really felt like our guys hung tough. I really felt like that was what was required in that game. You saw the resilience. [C] Will Clapp goes out, [G/T] Brendan [Jaimies] comes in. I thought that that group of guys just really battled. [T] Trey [Pipkins III] was really battling last night. I think that those guys really hung tough, and that’s what it took. Those guys came up clutch on that last drive of the game. It was third down and Justin [Herbert] made, what I thought, was one of the plays of the game, finding [WR] Mike [Williams] to get us nine yards closer, and we needed all of it. It was just a gutsy performance by the guys.”

On Herbert's interception off of a deflection:

"[Herbert] wasn't late, for sure. He started on the first side of the progression, and then he worked the inside spacing, so he wasn't late. Just one of those things, in the middle of the field, when you do have a tip, that's not the place that you want it to happen. It's a play that we run often, but kind of unlucky at that type. A good play by them."

On 'the third-down corner route near the end of regulation' by TE Gerald Everett where Herbert 'went off of it for whatever reason' and if Herbert 'could have made that throw':

"We had that high-low where you have Gerald [Everett] and [FB] Zander [Horvath] in the flat. When [Broncos OLB] Bradley [Chubb] knocked Zander off of his course, then his sightline was kind of affected. I think that kind of got him off of his sightline. I don't think that he wanted to take a sack, have anything bad happen, so that's why he paused for a minute — to make sure that everything was OK. Sometimes, there are some things where you're out on the field where if you guys watched it again and you put yourself in his shoes, there are things that affect your vision, where it seems obvious from a fan's perspective, like, 'Oh, he was open.' But, Justin [Herbert], what he sees, it could be different. When Bradley hit Zander, it knocked him off of his course a little bit. We were able to hit Zander, and then we were able to finish the game with the ball, which was a good thing."

On his level of concern with CB J.C. Jackson:

"We just need to stay patient. Last night wasn't up to his standard, or ours. We felt like we had to go in a different direction. We're going to stay with him, keep coaching him, and see if we can get him comfortable."

On Jackson's press-coverage prowess and 'how that skillset fits in with the rest of the defense':

"Good question. He came here to press, that's what he's been doing most of the time for us, pressing. Now, there are some times where you can't press, where a team that gets into a bunch of cut splits, they can really affect your leverage on the formation. Sometimes you want to play off [coverage], just like every defense in the NFL. You can't press every split because it's going to put you in a disadvantage. He came here to do the job that he was designed to do. His performance, it has nothing to do with that, fitting in or scheme fit or any of that. He's here to do what he does best. We need to make sure that we continue to work with him so that he's focused, consistent and being the player that we know he can be."

On if Jackson is committing 'mental errors':

"I think that's fair to say."

On Williams' reception to 'bring Hopkins into field goal range' in overtime and if Williams does not make the catch, would Hopkins have been 'out of range' due to his injury:

"Good questions. To answer the last one first, Dustin [Hopkins] was going to give that a go if we had not converted. I told you guys that at the beginning of the half, when we went for it on that fourth-and-two, initially, we kind of set that line at the 25 [-yard line]. We were trying to be careful with him, but at the end of the game, we were just going to give it a go, he was going to give it a go. Credit to him for being such a resilient player, tough guy, competitor. You can't say enough about him because he was hurting, obviously, because he's going to be out for a second. I thought Justin [Herbert] made a lot of winning plays last night. To you guys, when you look at that stat sheet, there were a lot of winning plays that happened in the game that he made. The one to Mike [Williams] was, obviously, a big play. There was like a second-and-13 screen that he scrambled and got five yards, and then it was a third-and-eight, there was a scramble, then we drew a DPI [defensive pass interference] where he was able to get out of trouble. It was just one of those games where it's tight and you have penalties and the rush is coming and it's tough all night, you just need to kind of grind it out and stay patient, stay disciplined, and I thought that was what he did last night."

On LB Drue Tranquill's third-down sack in the fourth quarter:

"We wanted to make sure, in the timeout, that we didn't give away the pressure. They were kind of in a wrong motion, kind of late in the sequence, so they took one. I just wanted to make sure, from up top, that — optics-wise — we didn't give it away. I kind of knew that because I was watching the guys who would be blitzing. Then, wanted to make sure that our guys felt good about going at it again. Those guys did a great job of timing it up and executing, and the coverage players did a good job of executing. Drue [Tranquill] hit that thing flying. That is going to be one that he is on his podcast talking about [laughter]."

On the mindset of the team:

“Just week-to-week. Not making more of it than what it is. It’s the NFL. Week-to-week, you have to be ready to play. Our guys did a good job being ready to play Monday night against a quality team. As you guys know, a division game, big game, at home, and so our guys came ready to play and did what it took. We were able to get out of there with a W.”

On WR Keenan Allen’s injury status:

“You can expect him to work back into practice this week.”

On the possibility of signing WR Michael Bandy to the active roster:

“We’ll be working through that this week, but we feel good about J-Moore [WR Jason Moore] and [Michael] Bandy. Those guys have stepped in and done a nice job for us. We’ll work through all of those mechanics this week.”

On which running back will be utilized during Kelley’s absence:

“[RB] Isaiah [Spiller] and [RB] Larry [Rountree III] will duke it out in practice this week. We were kind of doing that last week, as well. I think one of those two guys will be going into the game. Special teams will factor into it, as well. Isaiah has been doing really well in practice, as I have told you guys. Larry has, too. We’ll let those guys compete and we’ll let you know at the end of the week.”

On WR Mike Williams’ ‘catch that was called out of bounds’:

“I definitely have seen it. I feel like I had a good look at it. You can kind of see the ESPN replay, you can see where I was located. Looking at it, it was closer than maybe I thought on the field, but I didn’t think watching it on the replay that there would have been evidence to overturn it. I think it was just really close. It was an incredible catch. When the ball left Justin’s hand, I thought that thing was out of bounds. This Mike Williams guy, you can never, I think, get bored of seeing special things happen. That was, like, a really special catch by Mike. Those two feet were almost in, but I didn’t feel like it was enough to throw the red flag.”

On if ‘missing time’ due to injury impacted Spiller’s progress earlier in the season:

“A little bit. The thing Isaiah [Spiller] has done a good job of is earning the trust of the coaching staff and the quarterbacks. He’s a well-rounded player, a smart player from a protection standpoint. I think with kills and alerts within the play, I think he’s earning the trust of his teammates and coaches. I think where you really benefit is just by being out in the fire. Any time you are a young player and you miss time, you guys have all covered young players that miss time, it gets you out of rhythm a little bit. He’s been in practice full from the beginning. I think we’re really seeing him make the progress, make the improvements where he’s making a push. Again, this week in practice will be no exception. Have a good week of practice and see where it goes.”

On his level of concern with ‘giving up explosive plays’:

“You’re seeing it well. The snapshot of about 10 plays this season — maybe 12 to 14. Without those 12 to 14, let’s just say like my Dad used to say, you cut a third of them, you’d see a lot of defense that you would love. Last night, without those plays, that’s as good of a defense as you’re going to play. That has to continue to be a focus. It’s about consistency of assignment more than anything. I think that once we continue to play together more and guys continue to do their jobs, that you’ll see them go. Last night, in the second half, we were just really connected in that entire second half, and you saw the results. We’re a work in progress, but last night was definitely our best night for sure — that or Vegas [Week 1].”

On the pass-rush:

“I think anytime you lose a top rusher like [OLB] Joey [Bosa], you’re going to have to pick it up through other people. Like you said, that’s what we’ve had to try and do is pick up that production with a lot of people, and that’s not exclusive to people that are on the D-line or the front, bringing people from other places that can rush. Whether it’s been linebackers or DBs, I think we picked up a nice variety and that’s what you have to do. I talk to you guys all of the time about kind of figuring it out and that’s what you have to do. Then you just know that you are one day closer of Joey being back. I thought [OLB] Khalil [Mack] was outstanding last night, as you guys saw. I thought Khalil was a real factor. I thought that guy could have had three last night maybe. I really felt like we rushed the passer at a high level last night. We’re pretty consistent outside of that one loose play on the third down to [Broncos WR Jerry] Jeudy on the sideline. [OLB] Chris Rumph [II] got chipped outside-in and we lost the edge there. Outside of that, I thought we did a nice job.”

On the run defense in yesterday's game:

"Consistent from the beginning. I think we gave up 75 yards to running backs. I think [Broncos QB] Russell [Wilson] had 20-something yards, or something like that. It was consistent. The middle was really firm. The edges were good and we tackled well. I thought [LB Kenneth] Murray [Jr.] and [LB Drue] Tranquill were really good in the middle last night."

On what Tranquill 'brings to the defense':

"Consistency of performance and production in that consistency. You can be consistent in your job, but are you producing? I think he is doing both of those things. He's communicating at a high level, playing with a lot of energy, being a factor in run game, pass game, pass-rush. He's having a really nice season and I think him and Kenny [Murray Jr.] — I think we talked about it maybe last week — I think he and Kenny are playing really well together."

On G Zion Johnson's performance in last night's game:

"I think a little late off the ball. If you watch the game copy, just a little late off the ball. I think that gets you in some disadvantageous situations from a fundamental standpoint. He's having a really quality season. He's battling. He's a big asset for us. I think we have to continue to do a good job around him. I think he'll learn a lot from last night. He has all of the right stuff, as you guys have seen. You're going to go through some tough moments like that. There were 19 penalties last night. You guys got home late, just like I did. We have to learn from it, though, because that is a quality front. I think the big thing is when you go against a quality front — because they have good inside players and outside players — you have to make sure that you're winning the line of scrimmage at the snap. You're creating an advantage for yourself at the snap at home. I thought he was late a couple of times off the football."

On 'how often he would take more chances for big plays with the officiating crew calling pass interferences more frequently':

"It's big. Trying to do as much as you can within reason. As you guys know, the deeper the throw, the lower percentage. If you feel good about the matchup, and hopefully, at the worst, it's incomplete, but you can get a catch, DPI [defensive pass interference], holding. That's always a motive to attack the deep part of the field and force people to play the ball with their back to the ball. I thought we had a fair amount of that last night. We were able to draw quite a few. I thought even Mike [Williams]'s one that you guys saw on the sideline, the catch that we talked about, that was an opportunity to go attack in a second-and-14. Always trying to do it, especially when a game is being officiated like that. I thought a winning edge for us last night was how we played on defense in the deep part of the field. I felt like, defensively, I thought that we really played clean football in the secondary from a technique standpoint, and I thought that was a big story in the game."