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Chargers Week 2 Media Availability

Tuesday, September 13, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On CB J.C. Jackson's injury status:

"Same comment as yesterday with J.C. He's improving. We put him through a workout today. We'll see how he feels. Then, tomorrow, at the jog-through, we'll be able to learn a little bit more. I think he's headed in the right direction, but I think there is still a lot to be decided before game time on Thursday night. [WR] Keenan [Allen] is going to be a guy that is going to take some time, I think, with his hamstring. I don't think it's looking great for this week, but you never know. I wouldn't put anything past Keenan, so we're not ruling him out, but a different situation than J.C."

On Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes:

"He's just a very complete player at the position. He has outstanding football intelligence, smarts, command at the line of scrimmage. He can really hurt you post-snap. He has outstanding field vision, so he can really see the field. He's accurate at all three levels of the field, both from inside the pocket and outside the pocket. I think people are aware of his creativity outside of the pocket and his ability to conduct a completely different play outside the framework of the first one, and I think that's a real gift of his. I think he really sees the game like a point guard. When I think of him, I think of a guy that can really distribute the football. He's a lot bigger guy than anyone realizes. This guy is a really hard guy to tackle because he is bigger than people think. He's a winner. Since he's come in the NFL, he's won a lot of football games. He has real toughness. They follow him. He's as tough of a cover as there is in the NFL."

On OLB Khalil Mack's impact:

"You need a team to be able to defend an offense like this, and certainly a player like Patrick. Any time you are facing an offense that has weapons — running backs, receivers, tight ends — and that has an outstanding offensive line, you're going to need the same thing on defense, that same type of formula. What Khalil does is he gives you that chance up front, both in the run game and the pass rush, to be able to impact the game. You need a lot more people than just your starting 11 to be able to defend a team like this."

On TE Donald Parham Jr.'s injury status:

"Still fighting the fight. Not going to play this week, but hopefully the long rest between this game and the next game, we can get him closer to being out there."

On how Parham's absence 'diminishes' the team's use of 12 personnel:

"I don't think very much. I think that you saw some of it in the game the other day. We're catching [TE] Richard [Rodgers] up. Richard's played so much football in this league and we really respect him. He's joined right up with us. We feel like we're going to activate the groups that specific week to give us the matchup. Certainly with Donald, he gives you that passing threat that's unique, run after catch, but we're excited to get him back. Those three guys did a good job on Sunday, and I think you guys all saw what [TE] Gerald [Everett] can do and why we're glad he's here."

On similarities between QB Justin Herbert and Mahomes:

“They are two of the special players in the league. They are as good as it gets. I think you are seeing, in the NFL, the quarterback position is in a great spot for the NFL. It’s exciting for the league when you have this many good quarterbacks all at once, and a lot of them are really young. The future of the league is really bright. It makes it really tough to cover them, but the future is really bright. These two guys being in the same division, both being young players, it’s great for the game. Any time you have rivalries within a division, and then two quarterbacks like this, it’s really good for the game.”

On if RB Austin Ekeler’s 49 percent snap count on Sunday is a result of preparing him for Thursday’s game or if it is ‘around where they want him to play to remain fresh through the season’:

“You are accurate on both points is thinking about the long game and try to utilize all three of those backs to really force the defense to defend different types of people. We felt like Austin was really shouldering that load by himself last year and we want to be mindful of how that position is. That’s an attrition position, and he’s such a valuable player for our football team, a captain of our football team. We want to be always thinking about the long game. It was really good to feature all three backs. I think we needed all three of those backs in order to win that game on Sunday.”

On if WR Michael Bandy will be activated prior to Thursday night’s game:

“I don’t know that. We’re still working through that for the next couple of days. We can decide to go with four wide outs, bring somebody else up in another position, or we could flex a receiver. We’re still working through the initial stages of the plan, but I do think that we have receivers who are capable of being elevated and performing well for us. We’re going to see how it goes today.”

On what the offense misses if Allen misses the game:

“Just a real presence. He is a captain. He’s seen it all. He’s performed against it all. You’re talking about one of the premier players in the league. You’re talking about a guy that is on a historic run right now and a guy that gives you so many things on game day that go beyond just him catching the football, the confidence that he gives your whole team, not just your offense. If he doesn’t go, then we’re going to miss that, but then he can contribute in a different way because Keenan, he is the type of guy that he’s going to be out there whether he is playing or not. We’re going to feel him, and that’s why he was elected captain for our team.”

On Allen’s mindset since sustaining the injury on Sunday:

“He’s been in this league too long. He’s been hurt before, so he knows how it is and you just have to take it one day at a time. He’s a hard worker and a fast healer, so we’ll rely on that and all of his experience.”

On WR DeAndre Carter:

“He’s a coach’s dream. My mom used to that as a teacher, a teacher’s dream. That is kind of how DeAndre is. He is such a hard worker. He’s so unselfish. He does so many different things from a role standpoint. I think he works extremely hard no matter what he’s doing throughout the day, whether it’s in a meeting, in a lift out at the walk-through, out at practice, and he’s a good player. When you put all that together, we’re very fortunate to have him, and he’s done a really good job for us.”

On Carter’s ability to contribute both offensively and in the return phase:

“I don’t know if we knew that he was going to be this type of impactful receiver. I think that’s been a pleasant surprise for us. We felt like he was a quality return man, which was the first reason why we wanted to join up with him, but then, I think, we quickly saw in the Springtime that he was going to be a lot more than that. When I think of Dre, I think of a football player, I think of a guy that can do a lot of things well. He’s done a nice job for us.”

On the Chiefs’ ‘use of heavy personnel’ offensively:

“They’ve played it before with three tight ends in the game. Last year, they had the same amount of guys, it was just [Chiefs TE] Blake Bell doing the job with [Chiefs TE] Travis [Kelce] and [Chiefs TE] Noah [Gray]. [Chiefs Head Coach] Andy [Reid] always been a guy that is going to activate his best players. If he feels like that group gives him a good chance to be successful, then that is what he is going to do. A lot of it is just driven on matchups, and then forcing people to defend you and seeing how they’re going to play a certain type of grouping. They do an excellent job of that. I think what you’re seeing with the team is they just have a lot of options, in terms of how they can go into a gameplan.”

On the challenge that the Chiefs' offense presents in the red zone:

"They're definitely a good red zone team because you have to defend all five people and the quarterback. Any time all five people are a legitimate threat to do something with the football down there, and you have to account for the quarterback, you're maximizing your chances of being an outstanding red zone team. They run the football well down there because they can run it and they can get the RPO version of the game, so they can change the math, even the math out down there. They're an outstanding screen team. A very, very tough cover. That's why they're such a good football team."

On the challenge of playing the Chiefs at GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium:

"I think any time you go up into a matchup like this, when you feel like you have the quarterback to go into any environment and be able to win that game, you have the confidence to win it. I think on the road is the biggest place where you're going to determine your success, I think, in today's football, if you don't have an elite quarterback then you better be loaded everywhere else. That's hard to do nowadays with the way the [salary] cap is, to engineer a team that way. Justin [Herbert], guys like Patrick [Mahomes], they give their teams a chance in every single game, regardless of the circumstance, regardless of the score. Their team believes that they can win the game."

On OLB Joey Bosa's performance on Sunday:

"I thought that he played a tough, rugged game. I thought that he played a team game. I thought that the way that he played was what we expect from him. I thought he did a lot of little things well, and again, and I appreciate that, because everyone knows what he's capable of rushing the passer. He did a lot of little things in the game that are going to be a big reason why he has a very complete football season this year. He was very productive in the game. He's very hard on himself, but I thought it was a tough, rugged game for him. That's a good thing. It's a good thing for him. I thought he played the game the way it needed to be played. I thought that he played hard, was still productive, as usual. You guys saw the forest fumble at the end, but on that play, he hits the back, and that's doing a little thing on a good back that makes a big difference. He hits the running back there to give the linebacker a better chance to cover him, and then he comes around the corner and does what he normally does, which is finish the play. He's just doing little things at a high level and we really appreciate that from him."

On utilizing a Dime sub-package with two inside linebackers:

"We just try to go into every game and try to match it up the best we can. Try to change the look, try to put our guys in positions to be aggressive and successful. We're just trying to take the group that we have and maximize it. Then, knowing who you're going to face and what you're going to need in order to truly defend, and be able to make plays consistently. I thought that our guys competed at a high level on Sunday, but we can play better than that, for sure. We can play a lot better as a unit."

On LB Kyle Van Noy's versatility:

"Kyle is such a fantastic player. He does so many little things that won't ever show up in a stat sheet, but as a coach, you know that they're all the big things in determining winning and losing. That's kind of what he's famous for. Then, he just has a lot of leadership at the game, knowledge of the game, knowing that he has seen so many different things. His communication on the sideline, his communication on the field, he's a real general out there. He just makes a lot of winning plays for your team. We're really glad that we have him."

On 'being in the spotlight of the NFL' with the first regular season game exclusively on Amazon Prime Video:

"I feel like every game we're in the spotlight, in the NFL. You better feel that way when you're in the NFL because you are only one of 32 teams playing. I feel like every time we play, we're in the spotlight. I think what Amazon is doing for the game is going to make the NFL even a better product, it's going to create even more competition, which brings out the best in everybody. As you see who's joined up with Amazon, they've been able to join up with a lot of, the most successful people in that industry, and there's a reason why. I think it's going to be great for the game, two great teams playing, and it's going to be exciting for the NFL."

On FB Zander Horvath and ‘not expecting the ball to go to him on the touchdown’:

“The play that we called for him was designed to go to him, so I don’t know if that’s true [*laughter*]. Zander has just been a hard worker, unselfish. He’s a good athlete, has toughness, smart. He’s doing a really good job for us on special teams. He’s one of those guys in the draft where you’re late in the draft and you’re looking for good football players that can help your team, and I think he can help us in a lot of different areas. He’s at the beginning, at the very beginning as that comment would suggest [*laughter*]. I don’t know how much he’s like aware of what’s really going on, but I know that he’s trying his best [*laughter*]. We’re glad that he’s on our team.”

On the difference this year in preparing for the Chiefs without Tyreek Hill on their roster:

“As you guys saw in the first game, not a lot different because the formula is still there for them, and it starts with Patrick [Mahomes] and it starts with that offensive line, to me. When they built that offensive line the way they did, I think that they gave their quarterback an even better chance to be the best version of himself. What they do is they have eight to 10 players that they can get the ball to now. I think that that makes you even more difficult to defend because you have to be aware of everybody. Sometimes when there’s a spotlight on an individual player, you can put a roof over that guy. I just think that they’re a complete offensive football team, and since Andy [Reid] has been coaching, that’s how it’s always been. We have full respect for their team, and I think that they certainly have earned it. They showed me first game why they should have everyone’s full respect.”