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Chargers Week 15 Media Availability

Wednesday, December 14, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

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

"No update yet."

On if there is a 'possibility' that Bosa 'could be designated to return as some point this week':

"It's possible, but we'll let you know. We'll let you know as soon as possible."

On S Derwin James Jr.'s injury status:

"Day-to-day. Today would have been a rest day for a lot of guys. We're going to try and get him back, but we are definitely going to err on the side of patience. We'll let his body talk to us."

On James Jr. 'finishing' the Raiders game in Week 13 after sustaining an injury:

"He wasn't 100 percent going into the game, that's for sure. I think that if you watch the tape, it would show you the same thing. He just battled it out for us. We're going to make sure that he gets the rest that he needs so that he can come back and finish the season strong."

On Titans RB Derrick Henry:

"One of the top players in the league, has been one of the top players in the league since he got into the league. He's as good of a college back as there's been. He's the engine of that team, whether it's running the ball, whether it's catching the football. He's outstanding catching the football, too. He'll catch a check-down off of play-action and take it a long way, catch a screen. He's very difficult to tackle in space, where they can kind of clear some things out for him. He just does it all at a high level. For a guy that's as big as he is, people don't realize how fast he is. He has those long runs because he has elite speed, too. He just runs with power, runs with good pace. He's been a productive player every year. He's at the top of the league. Very difficult to defend."

On 'comparisons' between Henry and Raiders RB Josh Jacobs:

"They both went to Bama [*laughter*]. I don't know how [Alabama] gets all of those guys. They're very different runners, stylistically, but the thing that they do that is the same is they break tackles. They create a lot of yards after contact. I think that's where they're the same, they're very good at that. We've faced our fair share of backs, but Derrick [Henry] is certainly at the top of the list in the league."

On limiting Henry's ability to 'break off explosive runs':

"You can't let good running backs get started. It doesn't matter what their style is, if they can get started within the play, then they're going to have a chance to be successful. It starts at the front of your defense, at the point of attack, establishing the penetration — the knock-back at the point of attack, making sure that you have edges in your defense. You guys have heard me talk a lot about when the ball gets to the DBs, that's when you see a lot of the long runs happen in the league. You have to have really good edges. Then, your second level has to be fitting where it needs to. Then, you have to go attack and you have to go play team defense and tackle the guy with more than one guy. That's what we're going to try and do on Sunday."

On the challenge of red zone offense and areas of improvement:

“There’s not a lot of space to throw it down there. You lose the vertical space down there. Going that way is a great way to be an effective red zone team. Running the ball is different, in terms of how people do it — some people get in big groupings, some people spread you out. To be able to hand the ball to your back, I think that is a great way to do it. Just finding that consistency, for us, in how we run the football down there, I think is important. We’re working hard at it and it needs to improve for our team.”

On ‘facing difficulty scoring’ in the third quarter:

“That’s been a reality for us. The common theme for me is just execution. When I think of our lack of production, that’s what I think of. I think our guys are aware of it. We’re working hard to correct that, for sure. It comes down to execution for us and staying out of negative plays, sacks, penalties — those are killers. Then, you have to be able to get the explosions and convert third downs. It just has to be cleaner coming out of the second half. Our guys are aware of it. We’re going to work hard to improve it.”

On if having WR Keenan Allen and WR Mike Williams both available with aid the red zone offense:

“That will certainly help things.”

On TE Donald Parham Jr.:

“I’m excited to get D.P. back. I’m really proud of him. He’s been extremely patient. His patience has been tested. To get him back, it’s going to be great to have him back in there. He has been a very productive for us. He has size. He has run-after-catch ability. He’s been a good blocker for us, which, as you guys know, last year, was a very important part of his job. That was kind of a surprise for us. To get more tight ends in the game, adding him into the mix with [TE] Gerald [Everett], [TE] Tre’ [McKitty] and [TE] Stone [Smartt], we think that that is going to hopefully be a thing that helps us down the stretch here.”

On if the ‘expectation’ is that Parham Jr. will play on Sunday:

“Yes.”

On DB Ja’Sir Taylor’s performance last week and the impact that has on CB Bryce Callahan and coverage in the slot:

“Bryce [Callahan] is one of the top players in the league, so if he’s healthy, we want to be able to use him. I think what Ja’Sir [Taylor] proved, that I think is important, is that he can play in the slot. You don’t know until he’s out there, whether he can do it or not. To do it against those two guys who are as good as anybody in the league, now we know that you have another slot defender, like we know for sure. That is awesome in the NFL, to know that you have a backup Star that can play, that’s a starter. We think that that’s a winning edge for us because when you’re trying to play DB groupings, and you have to go cover people, the more coverage guys you have, the better. The fact that he can cover the slot, maybe he could play somewhere else, maybe he could play Money and cover somebody. He can play outside corner for us, too. We’re just going to try to continue to get our best players on the field. It was a performance last week that we were really excited about because you get an opportunity like that against the good offense, against two receivers like that, you really get to see what they’re made of. He was up for the challenge. He tackled really well. To see that, that tackling, is so important to defensive football, and he did that well. He was assignment-sound. He’s going to continue to be a factor for us on special teams, as you’ve seen for us. Our young guys are doing really well for us on special teams. That’s going to continue to be a big role of his, as well.”

On if the Titans’ offense ‘is more unconventional than most NFL teams’:

“I wouldn’t say that. I would say that [Titans QB] Ryan [Tannehill] is experienced as a quarterback as you’re going to find. Ryan has played in the league a long time. He has been very productive in Tennessee. He’s made a lot of winning plays for them. When I think of him, I think of mobility, I think of accuracy. He has a very good arm. He’s a very accurate player. He can really get outside the pocket and make things happen, as well. They have good skill players. I was with [Titans WR] Robert Woods with the Rams, and I know what a great player he is. He is as tough of a guy that you’re going to go against. [Titans WR] Treylon Burks, the rookie, has come on. They have good tight ends — [Titans TE] Geoff Swaim, [Titans TE Austin] Hooper, Chig [Titans TE Chigoziem Okonkwo], the rookie from Maryland. They’re a very good offense. They just play a style that’s different than most nowadays, but it’s a very difficult style to defend. They’re a team that’s had one of the top records in the AFC, now, for five or six years. They’re a team that’s gone deep into the playoffs. They have our full respect, and a big reason why is how they play on offense.”

On OLB Kyle Van Noy:

“Kyle [Van Noy] has been an incredibly important asset for us on this football team. He’s providing that experience, providing the versatility. When you go down a bunch of injuries, he is able to step in and really play a role that we weren’t counting on him playing in terms of just being a starting edge player and playing on the edge every single snap. He has been able to fill in and do that at a high level. Had a big time rush the other night. He’s playing the run tough. He is doing his job on third down, which is kind of what he is famous for, what he has kind of trademarked. We’re going to need all of that down the stretch. As we get guys back, he is going to be one of these guys that we lean on heavily within the game planning process. Off the field, he has that championship experience. He can really talk to guys about how to play deep in the season and how to play your best football because he has been a part of it. He has been a part of all different types of teams, veteran teams, young teams, and anywhere in between. Teams that start hot, get hot, whatever, you can lean on all of that with your team and that is one of the big reasons why we wanted him here. He has been great for me. He has helped me tremendously and you can’t have enough guys like him. He has been able to team up with guys like [OLB] Khalil [Mack], guys like [S] Derwin [James Jr.], guys like [DL] Sebastian [Joseph-Day], [DL Morgan Fox] Foxy, [CB] Bryce [Callahan]. Guys that have a lot of experience at other places doing it at a high level. Now, you are seeing him bring those guys together and then our young guys. He has been fantastic for us.”

On the passing of Mississippi State Head Coach Mike Leach and the Air Raid offense:

“Number one, I want to send my deepest thoughts and prayers to Mike Leach and his family. When you think of Air Raid, you think of Mike Leach and the impact that he had on college football and pro football. He is one of those guys where you will remember what he brought to this game forever. You will. It impacted college football, pro football, the lives of a lot of players, a lot of coaches. I think that is what has been incredible to see over the last couple of days is the impact that he had on so many people in the game of football. There are not as many true innovators out there as you think and he is certainly one of them. When I think of offensive football — there is a simplicity to the air raid. There is a simplicity of how they get lined up. There is a simplicity in the types of plays they run. I think of execution. I think of production. I think of getting the ball to your best players. Playing a certain style and believing in that and getting people to believe in that. Just one of those special, special coaches. Again, I know some guys who have worked for him. I know some guys who have played for him and they all say the same thing and I think it is great to celebrate his life. As a football historian, as someone that loves this game so much, as a former quarterback and now defensive coach, you see all of the staples of that system everywhere in football. From my kid’s youth seven-on-seven leagues at the youth ages, all of the way to the highest level in the NFL and then everywhere in between. That’s when you know that you have made your mark on the game.”

On if he had ever met Mike Leach:

“I did not, unfortunately. I would have loved that because I am sure that he would have made my game better, because he did it for so many other people.”

On ‘challenging’ CB Michael Davis ‘to use his physicality and length’:

“I talked about the discovery process a lot. Sometimes, you have to have time on task and I think he has been with us now where he can take all of those coaching points that have kind of been there since the beginning. He can really make them come to life now and I think that he knows how much it can help his game. I think he can see it. Sometimes when there is a big transition for you, like a big system transition and then a technique transition, it just takes time. He has really taken on the challenge of playing that style and then taking that style against some great players and just playing them nose-to-nose. I am really pleased with how he has played. As you guys have heard me say, defensively, if your corners play well, you are going to have a chance. If your corners play well in this league, you are going to have a chance. That’s why we had a chance the other night against that group is our corners really, really played well. When we have played well here since I have been here and everywhere else I have ever coached, and any other box score that you see, if the corners play well, you will play well in the passing game. He has been doing that for us.”

On what he learned about himself and the team last year in the final weeks of the regular season and ‘where that can be different’ this season:

“You really learn how to manage the last part of the season. Last year was a little bit different because of COVID [-19]. That was something that we had to navigate and it happened to us at the end of the season. That was very unique. You have to be playing your best at the end. It’s about how you finish in this league. Last year, the record was 1-3 down the stretch and we didn’t finish our season. I thought our guys competed, laid it on the line, but we didn’t get it done. After last season, I knew that you have to engineer your whole program for this time of year, for December. We tried to do that last year, but just making the subtle tweaks to the schedule and getting the guys fresh and playing well and the focus. Their routine at the end of the year I think is really important. Bringing them together the best you can and I think hopefully getting healthy at the right time. Getting your guys back healthy at the right time. Getting that addition that can help you go play well on Sundays. Learned a lot, for sure, and we will see.”

On if the defensive scheme being successful against the Dolphins ‘encourages him to play it more’:

“We play the things that we play. How we expressed it in that game plan was unique to them. Our guys will tell you, we play the stuff that we play all of the time. I think how we wanted to make it look and some of the specifics of the game that are just specific to Miami, those things are part of every plan. I thought what happened in the game plan is our guys had full command over it. They knew the chapters that we were going to have to reach within that game plan in order to play at a high level throughout the game. Not just how we started the game, but how we were going to play in the middle and at the end. That’s what I thought you saw is just command over the game plan. From the football standpoint, the Xs and Os standpoint, I am proud of that and I loved it. I loved it all, but the best thing our guys did is they played so hard. That is the best thing our guys did the other night. The scheme, that took care of some things. How hard our guys played and the technique that we played with, that is what won us the game and our players deserve all of the credit because they took the field and they made all of the winning plays.”