



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 Training Camp Media Availability

Saturday, July 29, 2023 ⚡ Jack Hammett Sports Complex ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On T Trey Pipkins III not participating in team periods today:

"Just precautionary. We'll know a little bit more after practice, but just precautionary."

On the timing of determining that Pipkins would not participate in team periods today:

"In individual [period] today."

On the first three practices:

"I think that there has been really good competition on both sides of the ball. I think you're seeing really good effort and energy. I think that the execution has been really good. What it has forced both sides of the ball to do is make plays. Both sides have been able to consistently make plays in all three days. Our kicking game work has gotten better all three days. I've been pleased, for sure."

On going against Offensive Coordinator Kellen Moore's defense during practice and how that benefits the defense:

"It's getting you ready to play against the best in the NFL because of the scheme, the fundamentals, the play style. Then, you're defending a really, really good group over there. It's getting us ready to defend all of the people that you have to defend nowadays to make a run. The NFL, now, is an offensive league. He has definitely made it competitive on the practice field for all of us."

On WR Keenan Allen:

"Keenan Allen looks like he always does. He's been so consistent. For Kellen [Moore], who has worked with a lot of good guys, he's that guy that you know is going to be able to get open no matter what the situation. He has been a great mentor for the young receivers, but he's still making plays at a high level. He's still being able to get the separation. You guys know what a big threat he is on third down, but I think on early downs, we're trying to get him going a little more than I think maybe he has been in years past. He has just been very consistent. He's showing a lot of leadership, too. This being his 9th or 10th season, you can just really see the impact that he's making on the whole group."

On the 'connection' between Allen and QB Justin Herbert:

"There's just that unspoken chemistry on the field that you need, based on all of the different things that you're going to see — little things that you can't see from 10,000 feet, but when you're out there, and it's moving fast, you have to have that special connection. That anticipation and that trust, they have all of that. You need it. I think what's been good is Justin has developed that trust with a lot more players now, too. He has that same trust for several other guys now, too, and I think that's going to make us even more challenging to defend."

On WR Mike Williams and his potential as an inside receiver:

"When we first got here, we had that vision for him. I think each year, he has grown. [Wide Receivers Coach] Chris Beatty has done such a great job with him. Chris and I have always believed that, with Mike, that he was a complete receiver. I think with Kellen [Moore] being able to come in here and see it for himself, we just know that that's going to be more challenging for people to defend. When you're putting him in the slot versus a smaller guy, depending on what the coverage is, it's not just Keenan [Allen] who's always there. We can exploit mismatches the other way. Keenan is kind of a mismatch for a lot of people in the slot, but when you can get Mike, who can give you that deep part of the field element, or the body position element on slants where he's a power forward going against the point guard, we think that's an advantage. Mike can run the full route tree. Like I said, Mike's one of the top players in the league and he's had a really good camp to start off with."

On an 'explanation' as to why Allen 'hasn't been able to get going early':

"When you have over 100 catches for like five consecutive years, you're getting going. I just think that different ways than he has in the past, and then similar ways than he has in the past, maybe when it was earlier in his career. I just think that we've been able to explore a lot of those things. As I told you the first time we did this, we're going to take training camp to try to find that right combination, that right mixture, so that we feature everybody in the right way."

On expectations for OLB Joey Bosa 'playing at an increased weight':

"I expect a lot. For him, as he told you, that's where he's most comfortable. You have to be able to establish power as a rusher, that's what's going to make you really, really dangerous. He has some of the best hands in the NFL, which is kind of what he's famous for, but to set those hands up, you have to really establish power. It's going to help you in the run game and in the pass game. He's feeling as good as he ever has. He had an awesome offseason working with [49ers DL] Nick [Bosa]. I think him being here the whole time in OTAs just shows you that commitment that he has. He's looked really good out there."

On the offensive line:

"That starting five has really good chemistry together. That's exciting for us. You've seen [T] Rashawn [Slater] out here the first three days, he looks really, really good. He had a really good offseason. The two young guards, the amount of experience that they were able to get last year, I think that really gives us an advantage. For being so young, they've played a lot of football. Starting every game last year, [G] Zion [Johnson], and then, [OL] Jamaree [Salyer], after that third game on, he started every single game at left tackle. You factor that in with [C] Corey [Linsley] and his experience, we love our starting five. But I think where we're a lot better is six through 10. I think we have guys like [T] Foster [Sarell] and [C/G] Will [Clapp], those guys have started games for us — [G/T] Brendan [Jaimes], [OL] Jordan [McFadden], [T] Zack Bailey, who we're really high on. There's going to be really good competition for those six through 10 spots."

On Defensive Coordinator Derrick Ansley:

"Like I told you guys in the offseason, D.A. is one of the top coaches that I've ever worked with. I think he's one of the best defensive coaches in the NFL. You guys are going to get to know him more and more, but we've known each other a long time. I think we complement each other very well. He's doing an excellent job leading our group. I think, in tandem, we've been able to really put together a good plan for training camp. Our defensive staff right now, I really like how they're working together. I think you're seeing it on a football field."

On LB Eric Kendricks:

"There are a lot of things I like about Eric Kendricks. You see them every single day, they're little things, they're big things. He's calm, and you need that out there in the middle. He has full command. He can see the game. He's a complete player at linebacker, in the run game and in the pass game, and as a blitzier. He has outstanding feel in zone coverage for patterns. As I've told you guys, that's kind of what he's known for, is being able to play the passing game at a high level. Then, that stuffing tackler, where it doesn't matter what type of tackle — in the box, out wide — he's an outstanding tackler. You factor in that play style, he was the engine for one of the top defenses in the NFL for a very long time. He has played in a lot of big games, playoff games. I just can't say enough about the impact that he's made. Now, it's us working together and finding that perfect partnership, and that's what training camp is for. He's a total stud."

On CB J.C. Jackson's progress:

"Today, he got a little bit more work than he did the first couple of days. As long as he keeps progressing, then that's going to be the plan. [Director of Player Health, Wellness and Performance] Marco Zucconi and [Head Athletic Trainer] Sal [Lopez] are doing a really good job working him back into practice. He has looked strong and healthy. He's been on top of his assignments. We're a much better team with him out there."

On S JT Woods and evaluating the defensive players:

"You know what I'm going to say, the pads are not on yet [*laughter*], so we don't know that much more. But he's done very well through three days. I think you felt him out there. You felt his range. He has command of his assignments. It's just about him continuing to improve. He's the right guy to be coaching, as I've told you guys. But again, he has a lot of prove in pads. Really pleased with how he's working, the professionalism. Now, we'll see, in a couple of days here, what he's made of."

On Herbert 'playing fearless':

"That's what you want from your players. I can't think of someone I would rather play fast and free than him because the quarterback has so much pressure on him. There's so much day to day and game to game, season to season. The fact that he feels that way, that's exciting for me. I think that shows his experience. It shows what he's putting into his game and the fact that he feels that confidence, not only in himself, but his teammates and his coaches, that's what you're looking for. He's improving every time he goes out. I told you guys at the first press conference when he signed the contract, that's his secret, is just being able to fiercely work at his game. He's improved so much as a player. Today, there was a couple of things that he did that just really show that progress. As long as he can continue to play fast and free, it's going to be good for us."

On the kicking competition:

"Long way to go. There's no pressure, there's nobody here, so we don't know much right now."

On 'which player has stood out most through the first week of camp':

"What I've been impressed with is the playmaking on both sides of the ball. It's not been one of those medium, dull training camp environments. You're seeing really good competition. You're seeing plays being made on both sides of the football. I think you've seen the play speed. If you're a fan out there, I think you can appreciate that through three days, that both sides of the ball have been making plays. That's what you want, you want your team playing with that type of confidence. That's what we're trying to create here is that confidence through the competition. I've been impressed with that on both sides of the ball, so far."

On evaluating each side of the line without pads:

"I think you're really looking for the playstyle through the whistle, you're looking for that. On offense, your O-line covering the runner, the receivers. On D-line, the pursuit and the swarm, coming out of the stack and chasing the football. You want to really create those habits when you're not in pads. Then, when you're in pads, that's when you establish the pad level, that's when you establish really fitting your pads in your hands. You don't really get that until the pads come on. I think those two things are really important to us and something that we really emphasize when we're not in pads. I think that culture on both sides of the ball is much improved from last year, in terms of covering in pursuing the football."

WIDE RECEIVER KEENAN ALLEN

On training camp:

"[Number] 11, it's great. I feel good."

On 'if it feels like his 11th training camp':

"It's only Day 3, so not yet. It feels good, honestly. Feels good."

On early impressions of the explosiveness on offense:

"It feels good. Everything feels good right now. I feel like we're doing pretty good going from where we left off in OTAs. Just trying to put it all together. [Offensive Coordinator] Kellen [Moore] is definitely opening the playbook up a little bit early in camp and letting [QB] Justin [Herbert] throw it down the field."

On the connection with QB Justin Herbert:

"It's what it looks like. We work hard, man. It's what we do. He's a great passer. I play receiver pretty well [*laughter*], you put those two together and you've got a pretty good little combo. The other guys we have [WR] Mike [Williams], [WR] Joshua [Palmer], the new additions, Q [WR Quentin Johnston]. We have some good stuff."

On Johnston:

"Q is definitely explosive. He's strong to the catch, he's making some crazy catches out here; jumping up and getting them. He's fast. I'm excited for him to keep growing."

On his catch in practice today:

"It was just a dime. [Herbert] kind of made it easy on me, he threw it to the back of [the defender's] head. He put it up high and let me go up and get it. That's what you want."

On the structure of the offense and pushing the ball deep:

"It's a little bit of both. Obviously, we have to run downfield to get downfield, so that's half the battle. We have to call the play to get downfield, then putting the guys in the right positions to be able to do that. So, it's a little bit of both."

On where he was when he heard about Herbert's extension:

"In the hot tub [*laughter*]. Actually, we were talking a couple days before on the golf course — we went and played when he got cleared [to play golf] and we were just talking about it, so I already knew."

On his reaction to the extension:

"Savagery. Much deserved. Can't wait for him to continue going in his career. He's just getting started, this is his first contract."

On Herbert's growth:

"By putting on a clinic [*laughter*]. He's not really missing, he's not missing passes. He's able to see things at the line of scrimmage now. We're doing these check calls and he can kind of see the defense, see them do things and get into his own play. He's growing a lot."

On Palmer:

"He's hungry. He can definitely feel that he knows what's going on, he doesn't want to let that diminish what he did last year. He was big for us last year, given when me and Mike [Williams] went down, he became number one for several weeks. He's definitely a guy who can step in and play with us, as well. He's definitely going to work hard and do what he can to make sure he's still that guy."

On Palmer's 'hunger':

"The way he works, he's still asking me questions and stuff like that. He shows up early to practice; out there working on his routes and getting in-and-out of his breaks before we even start walkthrough. A guy like Palmer, you know he is going to put in the work."

On 'if the energy and level of competition is raised this year':

"Yes, I would say so. The early days in camp are always like this, it's high energy. There's no pads, so the defense is going to talk junk [*laughter*]. It is what it is."

On what he did over the break to prepare for training camp:

"I ran a lot this offseason. I wanted to come in and make sure I was in shape to still be able to do what I can do. Just make sure I'm still explosive and do what I need to do to make sure that I'm me and try to help the team in the best way."

On Moore's personality:

"Quarterback. He's a guy that understands the game. He's player friendly. He lets us be free and whatever we feel. Obviously, with Herbert, he's a pass it downfield guy, so if that's what he wants to do that's what we're going to do. He's a calm guy. He's not tripping too much, probably never seen him yell. I don't think he can get mad [*laughter*]. Good guy."

On if he reached out to Cowboys receivers to learn more about Moore:

"I haven't. I've been around the game for a long time. It's a lot of copycats, piggybacks, all the same stuff. Just got to find your way in the field."

On 'coming out strong after injuries in the past':

"Absolutely. I still think I have a chip on my shoulder, still something to prove. With the Madden ratings going out, obviously got to go out and prove some more stuff [*laughter*]. Let them know that I can do and what I can still do."

On Williams:

"Mike [Williams] is a different guy, he's a guy that can play any position. He's huge. Running across the middle shouldn't be a problem for him. He's used to catching the ball around people, jumping up making catches with guys on his back. Being around people won't be a problem for him. He has to learn the zones, which he knows how to do, as well. I think he'll be fine."

On if he can benefit from Williams playing in the slot:

"I don't know, maybe Mike [Williams] with get the double-team and I can get a one-on-one [*laughter*]."

LINEBACKER ERIC KENDRICKS

On the start to training camp:

"It's been fun. It's been fun to get to know the guys. Obviously, I'm getting a deeper understanding of the defense. I got familiar with it in the spring a little bit. It's been better for me this camp. I'm excited to keep learning."

On hearing his teammates say he's had an instant impact on the defense:

"That's how it should be. I haven't made, really, any big plays, for me, personally. I'm just doing my job. I'm trying to do it at a high level. It's kind of easy when you have a bunch of guys doing the right thing. It's easy to just get along with that."

On being the 'green dot' defender:

"It's getting better. Like I said, once I get a bigger understanding of the defense and as we continue throughout camp, we get different looks. We go deeper into situations, I think that will come about. Game planning for different teams is also another adjustment that we're going to have to make. So far, it's been great. I've been getting the calls out quick. We've been getting lined up and playing football."

On lining up with the defensive personnel:

"It's a blessing, for sure. Me and K9 [LB Kenneth Murray Jr.] have been working really well together. It's been really good playing with him. I feel like we're feeding off each other. We're going to continue to get better with our non-verbal communication throughout camp, as well as the safeties when they rotate. Our disguises and things like that. The next level, that's what we've got to get to."

On LB Kenneth Murray Jr.:

"[I knew] he likes cars. I love cars. We were Instagram friends because of cars, not necessarily linebackers. Now, we're teammates. We're still car connoisseurs."

On what Murray is capable of:

"The sky is the limit. I really don't think I've seen a linebacker that's just built like him and capable of doing the things that he's able to do behind the ball, and also in pass rush and stuff like that. He's very versatile. He can cover receivers one-on-one. He has that speed to go downfield with them. He's a really good player and he's really smart. I think going forward, him being 24-years old and having a couple of years under his belt, those years matter. Those years of experience. He's seen a lot of football out here in the NFL, now. He recognizes things just how I recognize them. Going forward, we're going to have to use that to our advantage and take advantage of the fact that we play with instincts as linebacker. Sometimes, we have to fall [back] on those instincts. We have to do our job, but when it comes time for our instincts to take play, I feel like there are very few people on the field that can match up with him."

On when it 'clicked' as an NFL player for him:

"Yeah, I feel like years three, four, five, six. It was just kind of like, 'Ohhh, ohhh, ohhh.' You know what I mean? It was just like, you see more and more. Now, it's just like, when I see splits and things like that, it just triggers. You know the draw, down-and-distances. Third-and-one, you're looking for the personnel. All of that kind of stuff is kind of second thought, especially when you're coming out of college. I feel like he's on that level now, for sure."

On picking up the defensive scheme:

"I don't know necessarily yet [if there's anything particularly challenging]. The whole learning the terminology, the switching over is a little bit different. I feel like they've been very good at explaining why we do things and having reasons for them. When you have a reason for why we do stuff and you pair it together, you can understand better."

On returning to Southern California:

"It's a huge part of me. I've just been telling my wife, I've been having so much fun. Just smiling in the California sunshine. It's crazy how everything works out. I really feel blessed."

On similarities and differences between the defensive scheme and his previous scheme:

"That's what I like about it. I do have some familiarity with last year, as well, with some of the run fits, how we line up and disguise elements. Also, we do a ton of different things at the line. We have different blitzes, we have different types of covering things, when we need adjustments on certain matchups. It is way different, but at the same time, there is that familiarity with behind-the-ball defense.

"Also, it's the personnel. If you have different personnel on the field, it's a whole different team than I played with last year. If we have different personnel, people have highlights and weaknesses, we can use those to our advantage, as well."

On QB Justin Herbert:

"I mean, he's made some crazy throws these past couple of days. I've played against him, but it's been different practicing against him. It's good to see the confidence. I want him to be a little arrogant going into this year. He deserves that, he's earned that."

On how Herbert can continue to improve:

"He definitely can. I feel like he'd be the first person to tell you he could. This game is ever-evolving. Defenses are always changing. Offenses are always changing. You're constantly learning. I'm always learning. As soon as you stop, I feel like that's when you're done. That's when you call it. Until then, you have to keep learning."

On the battle of offense and defense:

"It's going to be great. I'm looking forward to some more. I feel like I haven't gotten enough yet, so let's do it."

On LB Daiyan Henley:

"He's a rookie at the end of the day. He still has some rookie things going on. It's super hard [to make that transition] playbook-wise. He's really smart, you know what I mean? At the end of the day, he has a great attitude and he has motor. At linebacker, you run to the ball and you have a good attitude, short memory, the sky is the limit."