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Chargers Week 4 Media Availability

Wednesday, September 28, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On QB Justin Herbert's injury status:

"Justin [Herbert] came out of the game positive. He felt good throughout the game. There were a lot of unknowns going into the game of how he was going to feel. I think that him getting past that first quarter — first half, for sure — you just know how your body is feeling. I thought that he finished the game well. Normal soreness after the game. This week, we just have a lot more certainty in terms of how to manage it moving forward. I think that is the big thing, it's always going to be day-to-day, but getting last week out of the way, I think that we have a much better plan of attack moving forward."

On if Herbert's 'long-term' injury 'changes his weekly rhythm'

"We're going to try and get into a new rhythm, but I do think that it is still in that day-to-day, because we're still at the beginning of it. But, I think, as much rest as we can, with him maximizing his walk-through opportunities. Then, making sure that he gets enough game reps. Those game reps will probably increase, as long as he is feeling OK. We're still in that phase of figuring it out. I think that we're in a much better place than we were last week."

On OLB Joey Bosa's 'timeline of recovery':

"We're going to put Joey [Bosa] and [T] Rashawn on IR [Reserve/Injured]. Joey is going to have surgery. We expect him to return this season. It's going to be a ways, but we expect him to come back. I know that he's optimistic and ready to attack it. He's in a really good frame of mind. It's never easy when you have an injury like that because he was playing so well, but we got good news on that front, that it wouldn't be a season-ender and that we're going to get him back later in the season."

On if Bosa's groin 'is torn' and if that is the reason why surgery is required:

"That's correct."

On if he is certain that Bosa 'will return this season':

"It's possible, barring a setback. The doctors have given us that indication that he will be able to return at some point. But, he is going to be on IR. Like I said, he's not returning in the near future."

On level of disappointment of being without Bosa after trading for OLB Khalil Mack:

"That's just a movie script. That's not the NFL. Those guys were playing so well together, so that's that part is tough. That goes for all of the groups on our team. The good news is that we're going to get him back at some point this year. The good news is that we do have Khalil Mack. That's the thing about building a team, you want to build a team that can withstand the NFL because that's part of it. Our team is going to rally together. We're going to have to make some adjustments, but I think we definitely have the guys to make adjustments with."

On OLB Chris Rumph II:

“You were here last year and saw his evolution. For you guys that were here last year, you’ve seen how much he has improved as a player. He’s ready, he’s ready to play on the edge. We’re fortunate that we have [OLB] Kyle Van Noy. That was a big motive for us, bringing Kyle in here to give us that flexibility, but we think that Chris is ready to be out there. I definitely feel confident in those guys. Then, as you guys saw, we made a move. We acquired [OLB] Derrek Tuszka. He’s from North Dakota State and has been with the Broncos and Steelers. We acquired him to solidify some depth of deposition.”

On Tuszka:

“He played in similar systems. He was in Denver with [former Broncos Head Coach] Vic [Fangio] and a part of that group. [Defensive Coordinator] Renaldo [Hill], [Offensive Assistant] Mike Hiestand, and [Assistant Special Teams Coach] Chris Gould were with him. He played special teams at both Denver and Pittsburgh. He comes from a great program at North Dakota State, the Bison. He fits that edge rusher that we’re looking for, that type of player. Looking forward to getting him here and adding him to the group.”

On the possibility of DL Morgan Fox moving to EDGE:

“Kind of like how it has been for the first three games, he’s an option there, but not a primary option. He will continue in that emergency, hybrid, at times playing out there, but that’s fair to say.”

On the arrangement along the offensive line:

“What we’re trying to do is keep the sides the same, trying to keep continuity of right side and left side. We’re going to attack this week with [G/T] Jamaree Salyer going into this game. How that expresses itself, and who is playing where, we’re going to determine that throughout the week, but we’re going to make sure that we go through this game with the plan of Jamaree playing on the left side.”

On the ‘plan’ is for Salyer to start at left tackle:

“That is correct.”

On Salyer’s experience at left tackle and ‘how much he played left tackle during training camp:

“He played enough. He played a good bit. That was the position he played in college. For us, right now, we feel like that’s the best option for us going into this game plan, knowing that we have [T] Storm Norton as a swing guy and knowing that [T] Trey [Pipkins III] and [G] Matt [Feiler] have played tackle. We’re going to try and attack this week, heading into the game that way, and we’re excited about that. Jamaree has done a really good job during training camp. He has stayed ready. He’s going to be ready for his opportunity.”

On if WR Keenan Allen will practice today:

“He’s going to be in individual [period]. You’ll definitely see him in individual. Then, we’re going to try to progress him as the week goes on and see where he’s at. I would say that he’s day-to-day, but you will see him at practice.”

On RB Isaiah Spiller’s development:

“Isaiah [Spiller] is doing a good job. He’s definitely in that category of competing for a spot. A lot of it is going to be determined by how he does in the kicking game, too. We really like what [RB] Josh Kelley is giving us right now in the kicking game. He’s going to have to beat one of those two out, [RB] Sony [Michel] or Josh [Kelley]. We’re still at the beginning stages, but Isaiah [Spiller] is improving. He’s healthy, fully healthy, and competing.”

On ‘level of concern’ with the amount of injuries on the team currently:

“Well, it’s definitely not going to end right now [*laughter*]. We’re going to have to keep playing. What you’re trying to do is build a team that can absorb it. You have to be able to do that in the NFL because no team goes all the way through with their team intact. Every team is losing premium players. I know that the type of players that have been out of the lineup for us, so far, this season, that they’re very high-profile profile players, but you’ve seen us play very well without them. Now, what we’re going to have to do, when we have some guys that are going to be out for some time, so we’re going to get some guys back. That’s part of the NFL, when you get your guys back, now you have to get moving and you have to make those adjustments within your team. Then, week-to-week, form an identity. That’s what we’re doing, so far, this week.”

On if Salyer has ‘played more at left tackle’ since training camp:

“Yes, and he’s been training there the whole time. The fact is that Matt [Feiler] and Jamaree [Salyer] have played more guard than tackle throughout practices, but they’ve both played tackle. What we feel like the best strategy going into this game is for someone to play his natural position. He has been on the left side, in a left-handed stance. That’s what he played for four years in college. Matt [Feiler], what we don’t want to do is put him in a brand new spot, outside. He has played right tackle in the NFL, but to now not put him in a brand new spot and a brand new stance. That’s our thought process going into it.”

On Salyer seeing action at left tackle over Norton:

“So far, this year, Jamaree [Salyer] is earning this opportunity. Coming out of training camp, that was what we felt had happened, and then Storm [Norton] had an opportunity to play. Now, through three games, we feel that we have some evidence that we have to make a change. That’s what we’re doing, we’re making a change to put the best five guys, that we feel like, give us a chance. We’re excited about this.”

On CB J.C. Jackson’s injury status:

“Same comment as Keenan [Allen]. [C] Corey [Linsley], J.C. [Jackson], Keenan [Allen] and [TE Donald] Parham [Jr.], they will all be in practice this week, and they are day-to-day.”

On if Slater will have surgery:

“It is. It will be a bicep tendon surgery.”

On his level of confidence in the offensive line with Herbert’s injury:

“We have confidence in the O-line and the protection plan that we have. Last year, we got banged up on the right side — our right tackle went out and our right guard went out — and we were in the top-10 in the NFL in fewest amount of pressures. We take a lot of pride in that. We’re going to make the adjustments accordingly now. Fortunately for us, we’re having to replace one position, not two. Getting Corey [Linsley] back will be big for us. This is what you have to build a team for. This is why you have to put good plans together. This is the part of sports that you like, when you have a challenge like this, to go attack it. We’re going to make sure that we do it together.”

On Herbert ‘avoiding pressure situations’:

“He avoided a bunch of pressures on Sunday, if you watched that tape. Justin’s legs are still intact, he still has his legs underneath of him, and that’s what you need in order to get away from trouble. He still has his brain, which helps him, too. He did a really good job of evading pressure against Jacksonville. We need to make sure that we get off to a better start so that we’re not facing some of the situations that we faced in the game. As it relates to him avoiding pressure, there’s nothing within his game that’s going to prohibit him from doing that.”

On if Herbert is ‘improving from last week’s injury’:

“Going into last week, there was just a lot of unknowns because this had never happened before. He’s never had to practice like that. He’s never had to prepare like that, where he’s not taking all of the reps. Then, before the game, you don’t know exactly how you’re going to feel, how you’re going to respond. I think there was a lot of first-time stuff going on for him. Now, I think that he has a much better sense of how he’s going to feel and how it’s going to feel during the game. Now, he can prepare better, and then now he can go into the game and play better because he’s aware of how it’s going to feel.”

On if he ‘sensed any hesitancy’ out of Herbert ‘in the first quarter-and-a-half’:

“You’d have to ask Justin [Herbert], specifically, how he was feeling. I’m not going to speak for him. I know that in observing him throughout the week, and during the game, it’s natural to feel your way through the beginning of something that you’ve never felt before. I think that that was just natural and I thought that he handled himself really well in the game.”

On if his 'style' is to 'quickly move forward or re-hash' the previous game after a loss:

"You have to attack what happened. You need to learn from it. We're at the point of the season, because it's at the beginning, where there's still a lot to learn. I think that we did that the game after, we always do that, unless it's like some type of super, super short week, which we'll still go over, but it has to happen faster. Any time you go into a major competition, you want to learn, whether it went well or whether it didn't, or it's someplace in the middle. I think sometimes what you find is, after a game like that, that there's more that you'll like than how you felt after the game. There's going to be more that you liked about the game than you expect. Then, the stuff that you didn't like, you can make those obvious corrections. Then, you can get together with your teammates, your coaching staff, your organization, and then you make those changes. Every time you go out, in the NFL, is an opportunity to learn. Then, once you do, you have to get past it. That's what we're doing, that one's behind us. Now, we're facing the Houston Texans. Today is all about Houston and we're ready to do that."

On Texans QB Davis Mills:

"I think there's a reason why they have stayed with him. They, very easily, could have drafted someone or tried to trade or acquire someone in free agency. They definitely could have done that, and I think that you're seeing why. I think he's a quality player. I felt that way last year. He played very well against us last year. He has a good pocket presence. He's very accurate with the football. He has mobility. He's just at the beginning, but you can see that he's giving them a chance every Sunday. He's improving as a player."

On Texans CB Derek Stingley Jr.:

"Outstanding prospect. He's a very complete corner. He has man-to-man cover ability, bump [coverage], off in slot. He can judge the ball deep, outstanding at judging the ball deep. Instincts, open-field tackling. You saw him cover a lot of the premier receivers in the game, and then on his own team. Outstanding prospect. I think that he's off to a good start. They're having him travel with the premier guys, so they clearly have the confidence in him to do that, as a rookie. I enjoyed scouting him. Good player."

SAFETY DERWIN JAMES JR.

On OLB Joey Bosa being placed on Reserve/Injured:

“It’s a tough loss for our defense, for our team. Joey means a lot to us. [He’s] a guy that we count on and we’re definitely going to miss him out there, but it’s on us to have his back and hold things down until he gets situated.”

On the mentality of the team:

“Right now, everybody is disappointed by the loss last game. That wasn’t sitting right with me, especially, that loss last week. We’re moving on. We have Houston this week. We can’t point and blame because there are other teams that are dealing with the same problem. They are dealing with injuries to players, too. We just have to overcome it. Next man up. We have to keep playing.”

On the emotions of the locker room after Sunday’s game:

“We were just disappointed as a team, not just as a defense. We just felt like we didn’t come out and play the way we needed to play. A few guys went down and we can’t make excuses, but we really didn’t like the way we played in that game.”

On how the team ‘turns the page’ after Sunday’s game:

“Just take it day by day and control what you can control. I think that is the main thing. Showing up to work with another week, a new challenge in Houston coming into this week. We can’t think too much about the past and Jacksonville and what happened in past games. We just have to look forward to Sunday to get a win.”

On the defense playing 41 snaps in the first half:

“As a defense, we don’t try to go out there to say, ‘Hey, we need to play 20 plays. We need to play 40.’ That was what was required in order for us to have a chance in that game. We had to come out and just play. I feel like whether it is 40, 20 or 30, we have to execute and have that mental aspect to sustain it that long and not have any lapse or anything out there.”

On the Houston Texans:

“They are playing as a team in all three phases of the ball. Special teams is playing well. The quarterback [Davis Mills] is getting the ball out well, and they’re running the ball, too, with the rookie [RB Dameon Pierce] and some of the older guys they have over there.”

On if the team has discussed last year’s game against the Texans:

“Of course, the guys that were here on the team before that already kind of went through that last year, they know the feeling that we have from that game. Guys like [OLB] Khalil [Mack] and those guys, we’re just trying to get over what happened this last week and just get better from that. We’re not trying to really dwell on too much of the bad that happened.”

On the mentality of the team:

“Just keep playing hard and just make our plays that we are supposed to make. I think that is the main thing, especially for me, too. Making more plays for the team to help us win. I feel like it’s just going to help us overall.”

On if the injuries sustained to the team ‘feels similar to the 2018 Chargers team’:

“I wouldn’t say it feels the same, but like you said, having that same mindset — that next man up mentality. I feel like we need that, too, this year.”

On OLB Chris Rumph II:

“A lot of growth. He is stronger. He is weighing more. I used to always pick on him all of the time and tell him he is a DB. That’s like my little brother. I love him a lot. I used to always say, ‘Man, you’re a DB.’ He’s come back this year, he’s stronger. He’s got his weight on and he’s more confident. He’s going to help us, too.”