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## Chargers Week 12 Media Availability

Wednesday, November 24, 2021 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

### HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

**On DL Linval Joseph's game status:**

"He will be out for Sunday."

**On the injury statuses of S Alohi Gilman and DB Mark Webb Jr.:**

"Alohi is day-to-day. Mark is going to be out this week."

**On if LB Kenneth Murray Jr.'s ankle injury will 'hold him back' this week:**

"It won't. He'll be at practice today."

**On if DL Jerry Tillery and Christian Covington will be activated off of Reserve/COVID-19 'at some point this week':**

"They should be, yes."

**On Tillery and Covington returning to action 'right away' once activated:**

"We're taking it case-by-case. Both of those guys are feeling fine right now. When they get back to doing football, we just want to be aware of their overall conditioning. We want to be able to assess that. How much they play, or don't play, will be kind of predicated on their endurance and all of that stuff."

**On CB Asante Samuel Jr.'s injury status:**

"Asante is in the [concussion] protocol. He's day-to-day."

**On if Murray's injury occurred on the same ankle as earlier in the season:**

"Yes. On a run play, he just kind of rolled it. It's sore. We were keeping an eye on it during the game. We'll watch it this week. He'll be at practice today."

**On if ankle injuries 'never quite get to 100 percent during the season':**

"It can be. That's why we have to do our best to make sure that we're practicing the right way, making sure that that thing can get as healthy as it can be week-to-week and really building that strength and mobility as the season goes. [Murray] will be out there at practice today. He'll be going during individual, and then after that, we'll tone it down to a jog-through, walk-through."

**On defenders going for takeaways:**

“Our philosophy, defensively, is that the second man is the guy that’s responsible for attacking the football. The first guy in is the tackler. He’s the aggressor. Then, the second guy is the ball hawk. Whenever we have multiple people at the football, that first guy in is responsible for the runner, and then the second, third, fourth guy in is responsible for the ball. I think that we’re doing a good job of attacking the ball. At the midway juncture, we were leading the NFL in forced fumbles. I think that we’re trending positive. I really like our mindset of being ball-aware. I felt that last week that we tackled really well, in the Steelers game — better than in the Minnesota game, for sure. We’re going to continue to emphasize that because we all know that the team with the ball wins, the team who attacks the ball and takes care of it wins. We’re going to continue to try and do that. I think where we’ve made real progress is the strip-sacks on the quarterback. We were able to get another one against [Steelers QB] Ben [Roethlisberger]. He got the bounce, but we’re doing a much better job in pass rush of getting the football, too. I think that is going to be really important for us as we go down the stretch.”

**On Broncos Head Coach Vic Fangio:**

“Vic means a lot to me, as much as anybody in the NFL that I’ve been able to work with. He’s made a huge impact on the way I coach, the way I view the game. He certainly has stood the test of time in the NFL. I just really admire his path. He didn’t have an easy path to coaching. He just has an incredible work ethic, incredible focus. I think he’s really global with the game, being able to change with the game. Wherever he’s been, they’ve had incredible defenses, starting with the [Saints] Dome Patrol. That linebacking crew that he had with the Dome Patrol, I don’t think people remember that that group of four guys were his guys; [former Saints] Vaughan Johnson, Sam Mills, Pat Swilling, Rickey Jackson. Rickey Jackson is a [Pro Football] Hall of Famer and Pat Swilling was an NFL Defensive Player of the Year. Then, he became the defensive coordinator with the Carolina Panthers, an expansion team. They led the NFL in sacks. [Pro Football Hall of Fame DE/OLB] Kevin Greene was an NFL Defensive Player of the Year, a Hall of Fame player. He’s just stood the test of time. Obviously, those San Francisco defenses he had in the 2010s, those groups were as good as any in the last 20 years with [former 49ers] NaVorro Bowman, Patrick Willis, Aldon Smith, Justin Smith, that group of players. What he’s done is he’s been able to evolve and grow as a coach, wherever he has been. He’s been able to move with the dynamics of the NFL, in terms of the offensive explosion in the league. That’s something that I’ve always taken away from him. I was fortunate to be with him in Chicago. A lot of people talk about our group at the end of Chicago, where we were number one, but when he got there, they were the worst defense in the NFL. Then, he got kind of midway, halfway, in his first two years, and then we were in the top-10 my first year with him. Then, we were the best defense the second year. Then, we went to Denver, we were in the top-10. He has another top-10 group this year. Consistency and performance. I was a Division III assistant coach. For one of the best coaches of the last 30 years to see something in you and to take that chance on you when so many others wouldn’t, in a place like Chicago that’s known for defense, to be able to say, ‘Hey, I’m going to hire this guy that no one’s ever heard of to coach the position that I coach.’ He’s an outside rusher coach, so I always took that really seriously, that I’m coaching the position that he coached. I had a front-row seat to an incredible football coach. He’s certainly the reason why I was able to become a defensive coordinator with the Rams because the amount of respect that [Rams Head Coach] Sean [McVay] and all the offensive coaches in this league have for him. I wouldn’t be where I am today without him because I wouldn’t have gotten that opportunity with Sean if it weren’t for Vic. All of those guys mean a lot to me, not just Vic, but [Broncos Defensive Coordinator] Ed Donatell is a huge mentor for me. He’s a guy that’s as good of a coach as I’ve ever been around. That group of coaches; [Broncos Linebackers Coach] Reggie Herring, [Broncos Defensive Pass Game Specialist] Chris Beake, [Broncos Defensive Line Coach] Bill Kollar, [Broncos Assistant Defensive Line Coach/Assistant to the Head Coach] Mike Hiestand, [Broncos Defensive Quality Control Coach] Nathaniel Willingham on defense, those are guys that I spent a lot of time with. On offense, [Broncos Offensive Line Coach] Mike Munchak, [Broncos Wide Receivers Coach] Zach Azzanni, [Broncos Running Backs Coach] Curtis Modkins, those guys mean a lot to me, too. It’s something that’s special about the NFL, being able to go head-to-head with people that are close to you. That’s part of that fraternity. We’ll have to be at our best because they’re going to be ready to play.”

**On if his familiarity with the Broncos' defensive system 'changes his approach' this week:**

"No. I just think that we have a strong sense of how [Fangio] assesses things, how they do things. What makes him such a great coach is that he can morph week-to-week into something different. That's why he has stood the test of time, because just when you think that Vic has settled into something, then he ambushes you with something different. I had a front-row seat to that. It's that evolution, as a coach, that makes him so unique. Then, he has the principles that are never changing about tackling and taking the ball away and playing blocks, physical. The scouting report, knowing the opponent's tendencies, he's as good of a scouting coach as there is. He has those staples that don't change. They're going to be very well-prepared. He has this group playing really well. This group is playing differently than we did when I was there. He's playing to the strengths of that group that they have now. He's doing another great coaching job, for sure."

**On 'comparing his measurement of growth to the time he was with the Bears':**

"Every circumstance is unique in the NFL. You can't just say that it's the same. You can't just say, 'Hey, this is the way we did it here and I'm going to do it here.' You have to be able to evolve with the pieces that you have. Then, over time, you can grow to maybe get it exactly how you want it. With the NFL the way it is now, it's just so dynamic. The way you were able to build a team 10, 15 years ago isn't the same because of free agency and the contract length and all that good stuff — the way that the salary cap is, the way that the draft is. You truly have to treat things year-to-year, week-to-week. That's something I learned being with him. That's something that we did in Chicago. That group that we had in Chicago, it started off much different than what he had in San Francisco. As a guy that studied him extensively, when he first got to Chicago, it was very different. Over time, he was able to build it. We were able to look the way you need to look in this league. That's why we had a great group. We had a bunch of really, really good players that were invested in how we want to play. That's something that he's good at; when you get that type of time to build a defense, and you're as good of a coach as he is, then you're able to achieve the results that he's been able to achieve. I think it's really about the principles that he has, because if you go back to the way he coached in 1985 with New Orleans and how he is now, he's really grown as a coach. That's something that I really respect, the coaches that evolve over time, because the NFL is changing. I think that that's something that makes him such a unique guy."

**On Broncos WR Jerry Jeudy:**

"Jerry Jeudy is a separator. They have an outstanding receiving corps. [Broncos WR] KJ Hamler is hurt, but he has real juice. I was with [Broncos WRs] Courtland Sutton and Tim Patrick. Those guys just signed extensions this week, and they deserve them. Those guys are really, really good players. I have a ton of respect for them. I coach [Broncos OLB] Bradley Chubb, who is really tight with those guys, and I got to know both of those guys. I have a lot of respect for them as competitors. Those guys are 6-foot-4 and play on the outside, and then you get Jerry who is a first-round separator. He's an engine that can play in the slot or out wide. He's good after the catch. They have a very complete receiving corps. Then, you add in a guy like [TE] Noah [Fant] that can really stretch the field. The other tight end, Albert [Okwuegbunam] from Missouri, he's a stretch tight end, too. He can get vertical in the seam. Then, they have two really quality backs. They're a very complete skill group. They're definitely a difficult cover. Then, they have a quarterback that has played a ton and has seen everything. He's been a starter at three, now four, different teams. He has an outstanding pedigree. This is a very well-coached team. The receiving corps and their skill players are really, really good."

**On interviewing with Fangio in 2017:**

“It was big. Again, I was kind of fortunate that I had been studying him for a really long time. When he got to Stanford, I was in junior college. He had taken that Stanford group from like, in the 90s [ranking], in the 100s, to in the top-20, at a place like Stanford. He caught my eye then, when I was in junior college. Then, we went to the 49ers, right away, there was an explosion there. In 2011, after the lockout, right away, that defense, they hit it, and then they go on this four-year run. I really liked the way that they played. I studied all of their film. Just like in Good Will Hunting — the Harvard education for \$1.50 in late charges at the public library. I just took that approach. I was going to study everything. What I did was is I had a lot of his examples from San Francisco in my teach tapes at [John] Carroll [University]. I brought a lot of my install tapes from Carroll showing our Carroll film, and then showing his film and how we taught our players. I felt like it was an authentic way to go into an interview, saying, ‘Hey, this is what I’ve been doing.’ The thing about Vic is that he appreciates people that do the work, that are really studying. He knew that I had gone back a long way in getting these examples. They were good teaching examples. They were worthy clips of little things that mean a lot to him in several different areas. During the interview, he didn’t say anything to me. It was a really tough deal because I’m not getting any feedback on what’s going down in this interview. Silence. Nothing. He’s the type of guy with no expression, nothing. I have no idea how I’m doing. I’m trying my best. I feel like I’m killing it. But, I got nothing from this guy. We take a break, they ask me and I tell them, ‘I have no idea what’s going on with this guy.’ They’re like, ‘That’s a good thing.’ We got to the end, the very end, and then I realized that it was going to go down. He made me earn it. That’s why he is special. Again, that interview was a big moment for me. I was ready for it, and he had a lot to do with it because I had been studying him. That gave me a big edge.”

**On if he is similar to Fangio in how he interviews assistant coaches:**

“Vic has kind of a flair for candor. That’s one of his endearing qualities. I’m a little bit different that way. Maybe I’ll become that, but I’m not that right now. I think the one thing about what I’ve learned in the interview process is being open-minded because I was a Division III college assistant sitting down with one of the best defensive coordinators over the last 30 years. The odds of that aren’t good. Casting a wide net and having your eyes open, your ears open because you can find coaches in a lot of different places, if you’re looking in the right spots and you’re willing to open your mind. I’ve kind of learned from that and hoping to embody that moving forward.”

**On Defensive Coordinator Renaldo Hill and his experience with the Broncos:**

“It’s an advantage, for sure, because of the language and because of the philosophical approach. You understand the context, you’ve been exposed to it. We have two guys that played in that system — [Alex G. Spanos Coaching Fellow] John Timu and [Linebackers Coach] Michael Wilhoite, who are coaches for us. They’ve lived it. They’ve profited from it, as player. They know that this can help you. When you have that type of foundation, that type of framework, and then [Run Game Coordinator/Outside Linebackers Coach] Jay Rodgers was with Vic [Fangio] in Chicago — we worked together in Chicago. What you’re trying to do, in coaching, is create a staff where you have philosophical alignment. Then, you let the competition of ideas take over. But, you have to have a philosophical alignment in how we do things. When you have people that have been a part of something like that, it allows you to take things further faster. That’s what we’re doing here. We’ve joined up with a bunch of really, really, really superstar coaches. That’s just the truth and. That’s helped us become what we’re capable of being.”

**On DL Breiden Fehoko being a ‘multiplier’:**

“He makes people better. He is the commander for us inside. Our nose kind of orchestrates things up front, with our front mechanics. He’s running the show to the guys to the right and the left of him, subtle things within our front. We have that guy as kind of a general for us. That aspect of it. His leadership, his energy, his toughness; he’s a guy that affects you in a positive way at the game because he’s a fearless competitor. That’s what I mean by that, by a multiplier. He’s making more things happen for you than just with his own performance. He played really well the other night and I’m proud of him. He has to keep getting better for us.”

## **DEFENSIVE LINEMAN JUSTIN JONES**

### **On defensive improvements at home:**

"I think everybody has settled down into their role and understanding their piece in the defense — and how big their role actually is and taking ownership of that. It's night-and-day, literally."

### **On the performance of the defensive linemen on Sunday:**

"Oh, I think they played extremely well. They exceeded expectations for a lot, not for me, but for a lot of different people. I mean, I see them every day. I see how they work, I see the preparation. Each one of those guys prepares as if they were playing that week and it was amazing to see all their hard work being shown on *Sunday Night Football*. It was amazing. I was just the happiest for them."

### **On the defensive line combination in the fourth quarter:**

"When we can get our best rushers on the field, that is what you want to do. Get our good guys isolated on their guys, showcase their abilities, show what they can do and that's exactly what we did. We put [OLB] Joey [Bosa] one-on-one with a guard and Joey got the best of him. We got [OLB] [Kyler] Fackrell one-on-one and he got the best of his defender. [OLB] Uchenna [Nwosu] had a sack and caused-fumble on the tackle, that was a one-on-one. Things like that, we are trying to put together in our defense to take advantage of those matchups."

### **On playing more than 80 percent of the defensive snaps:**

"I felt fine, honestly. I didn't even know I played that much until after the game. My coach came to me today and he said, 'We are going to cut your reps today,' and I said, 'For what?' He said that I played a lot and I said, 'I'm pretty sure I played about the same that I normally play, it was just that we had less reps on defense.'"

### **On what the team has seen from Broncos RBs Melvin Gordon III and Javonte Williams on film:**

"Melvin has always been a good running back. He was a good back for us. He has been a good back for Denver. Obviously, they have a good duo back there. Just trying to cage them in, keep them inside our tackles, try to make a play in-between the tackles and know when to hit our edges. That'll make the game play out in our favor, so that's the plan."

### **On staying integrated with the team while on Reserve/Injured:**

"I wouldn't say [that I was] reintegrated because I had been around the whole time. In the meetings, I had been preparing as if I am going to play. Honestly, it's just the psychological aspect of the game. It's actually going out there and performing. That's the only difference between now and me not playing, is the psychological aspect. I prepare the same exact way."

### **On DL Breiden Fehoko:**

"I've always thought Breiden was a good defensive tackle, especially with him coming out of Louisiana State University. I feel like we were very fortunate to get him on the Chargers. He's been really great for us by helping our offense out, getting his practice squad reps and getting his opportunity in the game. That's one guy I can honestly say knows the playbook like the back of his hand. I'm really proud of him for being able to go out there and showcase his ability, show that he can play on this level and really be a baller. That was big for him.

"Breiden is a really enthusiastic guy. He really has fun being around the guys. He is one of the guys. He loves the team. He loves being around the team. You can see it when he is on the field. You can see it when he's in locker room playing ping-pong with the guys or talking about college football or LSU. You can see it. He loves being around and that is something you can't take for granted."

### **On the loss in Denver last season:**

"I didn't even think about it until you said something. It's a whole different team, whole different scheme, whole different coaching staff. The team we had last year is not the team we have this year. Going into this game, you are preparing for this one like it's a whole new entity. We have never played these guys and they haven't played us. We are a different team. They are a whole different team, so I don't even think about what happened last year."

**On Broncos QB Teddy Bridgewater:**

"I think he's a better quarterback than he gets credit for, in my opinion. That's something we can't take lightly because he really is a smart quarterback. He's always been that way and we have to prepare for him how we prepare for every quarterback, every week."

"He is a dual-threat quarterback. He can run with his feet and he can pass. He is not afraid of the takedowns. He's smart with the ball. We have to take all of that into consideration, knowing he has the ability to make these good decisions with the ball."

**On playing against his former college teammate, Broncos OLB Bradley Chubb:**

"It's definitely special, but at the end of the day, I am trying to win. I am trying to beat them down pretty badly. Take no prisoners. It's going to be a good game for everybody. Our coaches, our players, myself obviously. Some of our coaches coming over from Denver, it's going to be a real emotional game. Everybody wants to go out there and play their hardest and coach the best they possibly can to try and win this game."

"I don't know if he is playing this week or not, but if I had to go against [T] Rashawn Slater, I wouldn't either."

**On improved defensive mindset:**

"That can get taken out of context, too. That's not just the psychical aspect of the game but the metal part too. We have to take the time outside the facility to sit down and study your position. Study the guys next to you. Understand your role in the defense and understand how your part is important to our defense and how we can play as a whole. If everybody is doing their own thing then the defense isn't going to be as good. That's what [Coach] means by sitting down and punching people in the mouth. You have to really understand your job to play as well as you can. That is where we are trying to get to."

**On participating in the Inglewood Turkey Giveaway on his day off:**

"I mean, fans come out to see us play every home game on Sundays. The games are three hours and it is packed and loud. There is a bunch of people you don't know, and you have the risk of COVID because it is still out here. Whether we win, lose or draw the fans are still out there supporting us. With that being said, on the day off, you should be able to give something back to show our appreciation, especially around Thanksgiving time when a lot of people don't have the funds to get what they need. Being able to give back is huge for our community."

**On his favorite Thanksgiving sides:**

"Mac and cheese, cornbread, little bit of stuffing, collard greens, maybe. The sides make Thanksgiving."

## **LINEBACKER DRUE TRANQUILL**

### **On Broncos RBs Melvin Gordon III and Javonte Williams:**

“I think they are both two fantastic backs. Obviously, I know Melvin very well and have played against him, but I think Williams leads the league in yards after contact. He’s a very good runner, so we’ll have our hands full with them.”

### **On practice squad players stepping in:**

“Man, [DL] Forrest [Merrill] , [DL] Andrew [Brown], [DL] Breiden [Fehoko], and all those guys stepped up tremendously. I think we had 53 or 58 rushing yards against us — that might be a season best. They just played tremendous and I couldn’t be more proud of those guys.”

### **On his return to play:**

“I felt great for having not been able to practice for two weeks. I was able to keep running and doing things to stay in shape while I was at home. That showed itself on Sunday and thankfully I felt good.”

### **On players on Reserve/COVID-19:**

“I think we just have to stick to the protocols, which we have been doing. Guys have been doing a tremendous job at that. I think we are getting in that season where you are seeing spikes all across the country, so hopefully we are able to limit it there and just keep following the guidelines and what we have been taught.”

### **On his symptoms:**

“For me, I had some mild symptoms, the worst has been losing my taste and smell. I can’t taste or smell anything. I had a bit of a cough so I decided to get tested and, obviously, that came back positive. [I’m thankful because] I know a lot of people have had a lot worse cases than I did.”

### **On his health during game:**

“Nothing unusual, no. I was very pleased with how I felt conditioning-wise”

### **On Broncos QB Teddy Bridgewater:**

“He is a consistent competitor. He’s a guy who has done it for a long time with multiple teams in the league. He’s a guy that can get out of the pocket on a play-action pass, in the boot game and extend the play that way. He’s just a really poised guy who the team trusts. He’s going to be a good challenge for us and we look forward to it. He is absolutely underrated. I think he is one of those guys that probably doesn’t get talked about as much as he should, he is out to prove that, obviously, every week.”

### **On the leadership of DL Justin Jones:**

“Justin has been a guy I have been with for the past three years and just continues to grow in that role. His voice, his leadership — we can all talk about his play for hours, he’s played tremendously for us. He’s been a solid core guy for four years now. He continues to step up in that leadership role and it was huge for us on Sunday, played like 80-something percent of our snaps as an interior defensive lineman, which is crazy. It just speaks to the guy’s work ethic, his conditioning, his commitment to the game. You see him out there leading those young guys, practice squad guys and able to put on the performance they did, I think it speaks to the leaders of that room and Justin is certainly one of those guys.”

### **On keeping composure during the fourth quarter:**

“It was a bizarre fourth quarter there — had the block punt lead to a touchdown, the interception which lead to a touchdown. We had like a 17-point lead and then we were down by three or four. It was wild, but I think it speaks to the composure of the team. We were able to gather ourselves with all the momentum against us and be able to come up with a few big sacks there on that last two-minute drive to likely stop a Hall of Fame quarterback, Ben Roethlisberger, from going down the field and putting points on the board. Really awesome to see those guys come up with those plays there on that last play drive.”

### **On the linebackers:**

“I think we have three great guys in that room, and we got great younger guys as well. So, we are just trying to compete against each other every single day and however the cards fall, they fall. I think we are making each other better every day at practice and certainly hope to continue to do that.”