

Chargers AFC Wild Card Round Media Availability

Thursday, January 12, 2023 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On an injury update regarding WR Mike Williams:

“He is progressing. He’s getting treatment. Just trying to get him as much rest as possible for Saturday. We’re hoping that he can make it to the game.”

On if Williams ‘had a change to his recovery this week’:

“I think what changed was just trying to get him as much rest as possible because of the short timeframe of the week. We are at that point of the season where the reps aren’t what matters. The rest is, in his case. Just trying to get him as much rest up until game time.”

On if Williams ‘will work out pregame to judge his game status’:

“I am sure that that will be the case.”

On if Williams will travel to Jacksonville:

“Yes.”

On ‘how close’ Williams was to being able to practice this week:

“He is working through the treatment part of it. I don’t think that when he got to the facility today, that was going to be the maneuver that we made, in terms of him being out there at practice. We just felt like the treatment part of it would be the best thing for him. Like I said, just the nature of the week and being a tighter turnaround, just trying to get him that type of rest before the game on Saturday night. We have a long time between now and the evening on Saturday, so just trying to maximize all of that rest time for him and get him all of the treatment necessary.”

On ‘if there is a hurdle’ that Williams ‘has to clear’ in order to play on Saturday:

“Just how he feels on game day, and then just being able to go out there and work out and feel good. In terms of the game plan and stuff like that, that’s not a problem, but just being able to go out there pre-game, workout, feel good and give it a go.”

On ‘if he can trust a player more than his eyes can see’ due to this being a playoff game:

“I have been with Mike [Williams] now for two full years, and I have also been with him through some injuries. We trust Mike and his toughness. Again, there is a long time between now and gameday. We’re just going to try and take advantage of all of that time. Mike is as tough as they come. If he can play, I know he will.”

On if he has thought about the Broncos game and 'if he would do anything different':

"I stand behind what we did in that football game. All of my players are really important to me. There were a lot of players that were playing in that game that were in harm's way. That is just the nature of football. It's very difficult to decide who plays and who doesn't, and who is more valuable than the rest. What you are trying to do is set a standard for your program about how you do things. That is what I believe in. I didn't want anybody to get hurt in that game, regardless of their status, because everybody is important. We're just hoping [WR] Mike [Williams] gets back. We're going to be ready to play on Saturday."

On 'clarifying the potential' of Williams returning to last week's game:

"The nature of it, I didn't know how serious it was. I wasn't given the indication that anything was significantly wrong with him, so that was what was told to me. What I was intimating was that there wasn't anything serious, in terms of a fracture or some type of X-ray that was positive. That's all I was inferring at that moment in the post-game [press conference]."

On if 'something happened' with OLB Joey Bosa in last week's game and Bosa being listed on this week's injury report:

"No. It's typical post-surgery soreness and just playing in a football game. We were just making sure, after the football game, that he was OK. Confirming with our doctors, and his doctor in Philadelphia, just to make sure. That is just how it goes after major surgery. You are just making sure that everything is OK, but he did not get hurt in the game and he was full in practice the whole week, and he is going to be going at a high level on Saturday."

On Bosa being listed on the injury report this week:

"Just the nature of the injury report and what you have to do, it's like [QB] Justin [Herbert] and his shoulder last week, sometimes you have to list things from an injury perspective because of the league's protocols. It doesn't speak to the nature of the player and their actual health for the game. He is going to be playing full in the game and that is the truth."

On this week of practice:

"The vibe is good right now. Focus is good, where it should be. We have prepared well. This is a really good group of guys that has played a lot now a lot together, been in the fight. Our preparation has been premium all year long. One of the strengths of our football team is the consistency of it. This week was really clean. I know our guys are excited to play and that is what you want for your team. You want them excited to play. I know we'll be ready."

On what the team does before a night game:

"You rest. At this time of the year, it's just trying to get some sleep, and then get up in the morning and kind of going to your normal gameday rhythm. Being in a bunch of primetime games, we know what it is like to be in the hotel. We have been in some East Coast games, as well, so we know what that is like and that is the thing about routine is you have one for a reason. We're going to try and take advantage of it. I like the night game. It gets you some rest. Everyone likes to play under the lights, so we'll be there and we'll be excited to play."

On if he leans on veteran players who have playoff experience:

"Experience can help you, but I don't think you need it. I think what is more important is just the make up of your team, the makeup of your guys, but certainly the guys that have been through it. Those guys are going to share their experiences, coaches and players. I think more than anything is just you have to trust your process. You have to trust your routine, your rhythm and that is what we have done here the whole season and that is what we're going to do for this game. It has gotten us this far. We have, most importantly, the makeup that you need in order to be successful. That is what has gotten us here. I have just been proud of these guys all year in how we have prepared and this week has been no exception."

On the postseason:

"It's a new beginning. It's a chance to prove yourself. You are playing against the best of the best at this time of the year. You really get to show the world what you are about. That level of competition is going to increase, it's going to demand a lot more from you, because every play, every possession is at a premium. It brings out the best in your team. We're excited to compete."

QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On if this week of practice has 'felt different' than a regular season week:

"No. The great thing about this team is they take every week like it is the most important. We have been doing that for the past 18 weeks. I think it has been a great mindset for us to keep our focus, to stay dialed in."

On preparing for the Jaguars defense for the second time this season:

"They are a really good football team. You know they have a really good defense, too. It's going to take a good week of preparation, of practice from us. They have a really impressive front seven who have been able to get after the passer and disrupt them. It's up to us to have a good protection plan to stay dialed for as long as we can."

On if he knows Jaguars QB Trevor Lawrence:

"We've met maybe once or twice. I have a ton of respect for his game and what he has been able to accomplish. Haven't met him quite enough."

On 'if there is anything cool' about Lawrence and him making their first-career playoff appearances in the same game:

"Just that I have a lot of respect for his game and what he has been able to accomplish. The NFL is a tough game and he has been able to pick it up so quickly. We have watched as much as we can of him and pick up whatever you can. He's an incredible athlete. Sounds like a great teammate, great locker room guy, so a ton of respect for him."

On if there are things he can use from what he learned in the teams' first meeting to this game:

"A bunch. We watched that film and we tried to pick up as much as we can from their defense, from what we did wrong, what went right. We did our best to pick up as much as we can from that. Obviously, there is plenty more film since then, so we have been watching a lot of film from their defense. They are fast, athletic, and they really get after the passer."

On the challenges of facing an 'opportunistic' Jaguars defense:

"It's knowing that they have guys on that front seven that are able to make those plays and you have to have a good protection plan going into it and knowing that you have to limit turnovers. You have to be able to convert on third down. It's the same thing we say every week and that is what is most important about going into a matchup like this is sometimes you can't make a bad play worse. Punts are OK. Making sure that you are getting the ball and being safe with it."

On the importance of the running game this week:

"It is very important. To be able to marry the offense between the pass and the run game is very important for our offense and doing everything we can to get him the ball because something special will happen."

On 'if there is anyone he leans on' to learn about playing in a playoff game:

"I think a lot of the guys that I would reach out to would be [WR] Keenan [Allen], having been playing in some pretty big games before and having been to the playoffs. He has had so much success in the league over the past few years. Anything he has to offer up, we try and listen and do our best to pay attention to."

On if WR Keenan Allen has offered any advice:

"Just the same thing that he always says. 'Go out there, have fun, relax and play the game.' Keenan [Allen] has been such an incredible leader for our team and for this locker room. Guys look up to him and especially that receiver group because he has been such a great inspiration and teammate to all of those guys."

On 'how much extra fire' he has to play in a playoff game:

"That's a good question, but if there was extra fire in my belly this week, it would imply that I didn't have enough during the regular season. I think we're treating it like another game because we gave our best effort week in and week out. This is just another great opportunity to go play football and this team is special. We're looking forward to the challenge, the opportunity of going out there and playing football."

On if he has memories of watching playoff football growing up:

“Nothing specific. I think it is always fun playing in January and hopefully in February. That is when the memorable football happens. We’re doing everything we can to just be our best, go out there, have fun and give it our best shot.”

On how prepared the team is for the environment of playoff football in Jacksonville:

“I feel like we have been able to work our silent count for most of the year. We have been pretty comfortable with that. It’s always a great opportunity and challenge of going into a place like that. We have so much respect for their football team, for their fanbase. We know it’s going to be loud and we have to do everything we can to have that mentality of being prepared for that.”

On if he has family that will be in Jacksonville for the game:

“I think a few of them will. I think a couple will be out there. We’re leaving on Friday, so hopefully, I will be able to see them.”