

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS vs. JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS POSTGAME TRANSCRIPTS

Sunday, September 25, 2022 ⚡ SoFi Stadium ⚡ Inglewood, Calif.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On the decision to have QB Justin Herbert remain in the game late in the fourth quarter:

“He wanted to be out there with his teammates. He felt good and he wanted to finish the game. He wanted to give our group some energy. We were going to protect him there at the end with really sound protection as best we could, but it was more about him wanting to finish with his guys.”

On if he ‘stepped in and reminding’ Herbert ‘that he has a significant injury’ late in the game:

“For sure. Believe me, throughout the entire game. That’s the first thought throughout the game and at the end of the game. Trust me, there’s no one that is thinking about it more than I am.”

On ‘taking that risk’ of having Herbert remain in the game:

“That was just the decision that we made. It was about us finishing that game as a team. It was important to us that we did it.”

On if he had ‘discussions’ with Herbert involving coming out of the game:

“Yes. There definitely was.”

On if Herbert ‘was adamant’ about remaining in the game:

“Yes.”

On if the discussions today were similar to what transpired during the week:

“For sure. We communicated all the way up until this morning. He was awesome. Our medical team was awesome. His agents, his team, we were together throughout the whole process. He did the best he could today.”

On injury updates:

“[OLB] Joey [Bosa] has a groin injury. [T] Rashawn [Slater] has a biceps injury. [WR] Jalen Guyton has a knee injury. [LB] Kenneth Murray [Jr.] returned to the game, he just had the wind knocked out of his stomach. Those were the four in the game.”

On Herbert’s ‘accuracy being off’ due to his injury status:

“He was throwing the football well. There was the protection. The rush was there today, which forced them to have to speed up at times, but he threw the ball out there today, throughout warm ups and in the game. We didn’t do a good enough job, as a football team, today, in all phases.”

On if he 'looks at the big picture':

"Of course. The big picture is always what we're thinking about. We're not thinking about this game against Jacksonville, we're thinking about our entire football team. We're talking about the whole season. Trust me, in the fourth quarter, we were definitely talking through it."

On 'what wins out between finishing the game and thinking long-term':

"What wins out, in the end, is always the long term, always. There was just that point where he wanted to make sure that he finished with his teammates, until you've been in that position, it's hard to explain, but it was important for us to do it. We were aligned the whole way. Moving forward, we're going to keep Justin [Herbert] at the front of all the decisions that we make."

On Herbert 'sending a message to the locker room being more important than the risk of potentially furthering his injury':

"I understand your entire line of questioning, I understand it. Justin [Herbert] is going to be feeling like this when he's out there playing. This injury is going to be there for a while. If you guys know the injury, it's not like it's going to feel better next week or the week after that. This thing is going to be present for a while. He felt good today. We're going to continue to manage it the best we can."

On 'at what point' he will 'step in':

"I'm sure there will be a point. I hope that we don't get into a game like this, but I'm sure that there definitely would be a point where we would do that. When that time comes, we'll make the decision."

On the defense's performance today:

"I felt like, in the first half, we hung tough. In the first half, we gave ourselves a chance. Then, that fourth-and-one run that split us for 51 [yards], that really took the air out of us. There were a couple of killer third downs that forced us to play a lot more plays. We played over 40 plays in the first half and I felt that in the second half. I felt like we didn't have that same energy, but we didn't execute on a couple of third downs. Then, you're out there a lot longer. We didn't affect the quarterback today. That also had a big impact on the game."

On why the defense 'did not affect the quarterback' today:

"We tried to mix up the rush plan. We just didn't win enough one-on-ones today. They did, and you have to give credit to them. They played a good game."

On 'the gameplan moving forward':

"There were there was a lot of good defense in that game today. There were some tough downs, but we just have to stay together. We'll keep improving. We have a good group. We just have to stay together and go back to work."

On the 'player-led' postgame remarks to the team:

"That's the way you want it to be, especially after a game like that. All that needs to be said needs to come from them. That's the way good teams are. There's a lot of pride in that room. Like I said, we have a lot of the right guys to be coaching. We have a group that's still coming together. This was just one game in the NFL. We have to come back together and keep it moving."

On DL Sebastian Joseph-Day 'leading' the postgame remarks as a first-year member of the team:

"Sebastian [Joseph-Day], he may be new to this team, but he's not new to the NFL. He knows what it takes. He was elected captain for a reason, because his teammates see him that way. If it had not been him, it would have been somebody else. It's not just him. That's the way you want your teams to be."

On 'if the season is at a teetering point':

"We're just three games into a 17-game season. That's how the NFL is, you treat it one week at a time. Sometimes games like this happen in the NFL. It's how you respond tomorrow, and the next day, and the next day after that. That's what the NFL is, is being able to overcome the tough stuff. Then, all the good stuff, too. We're going to have to respond from this one."

On the offensive and defensive gameplans entering the game:

“Obviously, they weren’t good enough. They weren’t good enough because we got outplayed today.”

On RB Austin Ekeler’s performance:

“We just haven’t established any rhythm offensively. Just haven’t blocked at the point of attack, or in pass protection, well enough. Because of that, you’re not going to see the production from the skill players.”

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On playing in the fourth quarter:

"I just did not want to quit on the team. It was, obviously, a tough day for us, but I did not want to go out. I felt like we were getting the ball out quickly. I did not want to quit on my team."

On what led to the decision:

"It's what the team needs, and sometimes you have to put your own goals and everything behind the team. I think that's what is most important. I felt like I was safe out there and I didn't want to quit on my team."

On 'how he feels physically at the moment':

"I feel good, thank you."

On how he felt during the game and if he had any limitations:

"No. I trust the medical staff, our training staff, and they felt like it was safe. I felt like it was safe. I would not have played had it not been safe."

On when he knew he was playing in the game:

"Probably right before kickoff. I had a feeling that I was going to go in and was just going to see how it felt. Before warmups, it felt good, so I was going to roll with it."

On how he knew he felt good before the game:

"Just through warmups."

On if he received an injection before the game:

"However I take care of my body, I think that is one of things that I'd like to keep private. I trust the medical staff. I trust the training staff. They are not going to put me in harm's way. I felt like it was safe, they felt like it was safe, so I was going to go out there and play."

On if 'that's a yes or a no' regarding an injection:

"I said I'd like to keep it private. I think that is some pretty personal information. Whether I choose to do it or not to do it. I felt like it was safe to go out there and play, so I played."

On if he threw the football before coming out to warmups in uniform:

"I just threw during warmups."

On how he 'mentally handles' the possibility of his rib injury lingering:

"It's part of the game, dealing with injuries and dealing with pain. A lot of the guys in that locker room do not feel great. It's all about how you react and how you respond. I'm going to do everything I can to go to treatment, take care of my body, until hopefully this thing can go away."

On playing the Jacksonville defense:

"They had a good game plan. Unfortunately, we didn't move the ball as well as we would have liked. [WR] Mike [Williams] had a nice catch on one of the go balls near the end zone. But just had to get everyone else involved. [WR DeAndre Carter] Dre stepped up. [WR] Josh Palmer stepped up. [WR] Jalen Guyton caught a nice couple of passes. I just had to find the other guys and do your best to move the ball."

On if he determined he was going to play during the team portion of warmups:

"Correct. Pregame warmups, we went out and threw, and that's how we felt."

On the rushing attack:

"We think really highly of our offensive linemen and we know that we can run the ball. We kind of got behind. That's the unfortunate part about the NFL is you have to keep throwing to catch up. Maybe we could have run the ball a little bit more early on, but we were down, and so we had to throw the ball and we didn't catch up. That's the unfortunate part."

On how he felt he performed today:

"It was not a great day by any means. Unfortunately, we lost, and that's the tough part about it. There is nothing we can do now to change that. We have to have a good week of practice, watch the film tomorrow, and get after it this week."

On if he feels like he 'will be able to manage the rib injury and keep playing':

"Correct."

On 'finding' WR Joshua Palmer for a 45-yard gain:

"It's just going through your reads. He made a nice route, made a nice cut, caught the ball and turned up the field. He's a really athletic guy. Any time you get the ball to a guy like that in space, something special will happen."

On the offense:

"We did not move the ball as well as we would have liked. We failed to convert on some third downs. We didn't get the ball moving in the first half and just had to play catch up. That's the tough part when you are in the NFL. They have a really good offense, a really good defense on that side of the ball. We did everything we could, but unfortunately, we fell short."

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS HEAD COACH DOUG PEDERSON

On today's win 'helping the franchise turn the corner':

"I think it's still too early to tell. I'm just so proud of these guys. The way they work during the week, they're beginning to see just what it takes to win in this league. It takes the hard work and preparation. They're starting to come together as a football team and that's all I can ask for. They played extremely hard. What I told them after the game is that if they continue to do these little things right, good things can happen to this football team. Today was an example of that."

On decision to kick the field goal to start the second quarter, rather than going for it on fourth down:

"We were kind of playing a chess match back and forth, [Chargers Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley and I, with personnel substitutions and different things. I was going to kick it all along, when we were down there and get the three points at that time. We were just going back and forth with some personnel in and out of the game, simulating like we might for it on fourth down. Ultimately, I had made my mind up to kick the field goal."

On if today's win 'sends a message to the league':

"I can't speak for the rest of the league; I can just speak for our team. This was a great win against a really good football team. This was a playoff-caliber football team. Again, we just trust our process and do the little things right. We're still young and we're still learning how to win and how to do all that stuff. I think this was just a great step in that direction."

On whether he 'sensed' RB James Robinson's touchdown run would break for a big gain:

"Typically, on fourth-and-one, it could pop like that because in that first half, or I guess it was the third quarter, they were kind of stacking, loading the box up. They had a six-man front, so they ran out a five-man front. Our guys did a nice job of caving that left side down and [Robinson] did an outstanding job of just hitting the edge and going. It happens that way, glad it happened to us."

On what he feels is the most impressive thing about the victory:

"I think it's how we finished. I think it's how we finished this game. The offense went down and scored when we had to at the end, and the defense stopped them at the end. That's something that, I think, hasn't been the case here, and these guys are playing with confidence. Winning can do that. At the same time, we understand that it comes down to the preparation during the week. That's what pays off on gameday."

On 'if learning how to win really comes down to the preparation during the week':

"It's 24 hours. You enjoy it for 24 hours, and you're on to the next. It's short-lived in this league, and it's unfortunate, but we're definitely going to enjoy this on the four-hour ride home and get some sleep and turn around and do it again."

On QB Trevor Lawrence's performance today and what he attributes that to:

"Offensive line. The offensive line gave him protection. When they give him the protection, and we have the skill guys to get open, he's going to find them. That's where it starts. I thought our offensive line really took control of this football game, did a nice job up front, not only in the run, but the pass. That's the reason he can complete that many in a row, is just the fact that the offensive line is giving him time and guys are getting open for him."

On if the defense 'set the tone' with two early turnovers:

"I believe so. Something we talk about quite a bit is creating turnovers with the defensive unit. We started the game again today with a couple of turnovers. We didn't get the points off of them - I would have loved to have gotten a touchdown off, especially the one down deep in the red zone. Listen, the defense, if they keep creating turnovers like they're doing, obviously it helps the football team and it helps the offense so we can score points, good things will continue to happen."

On maintaining control in time of possession:

“You need to be efficient on all downs. In order to possess the ball like that, you need to be good on first down, your second down stuff, and then you need to convert third downs. You need to do that on third down. There were a couple of fourth downs we executed. That’s all part of time of possession. We played hurry up a couple times during the game and just tried to keep the pace a little different for them. It’s a great defense. It’s a really good defense. It’s a good front. They can obviously put as many guys in the box as they need to stop the run. They’re good pass-rushers. But we have to be efficient on first and second down and, really, third down. Stay on the field and that all equates to time of possession.”

On if it concerned him ‘that the team didn’t finish drives in the first half’ and ‘what changed’ in the second half:

“Obviously, you’d like to finish with touchdowns, especially in the red zone there. It was good that we made the adjustments at halftime and really came back in the second half and finished those drives in the end zone. That’s what gives your team a lift. Of course, the fourth down there in the third quarter was big, obviously. And then right there at the end, being able to finish. All those lift the spirits of everybody – play with a lot more confidence.”

On whether he was ever questioning the decision to go for it on fourth down play in which Robinson scored:

“No, because where we were on the field, fourth-and-one, maybe a little longer, we were going to go for it there.”

On if he ‘sensed’ QB Justin Herbert wasn’t at full strength and if he was surprised to see him playing late in the game:

“I can’t speak for their coaching staff. I didn’t see anything in him. I know there was one shot that maybe he got up and winced a little bit. I thought he played tough, played strong. He’s a great young quarterback in this league; I have a lot of respect for him. He’s going to be OK and they’re going to win a bunch of games in the future.”

On LB Devin Lloyd’s performance and ‘what has clicked for him over the past couple weeks’:

“I think he’s fitting into the scheme, fitting into the defense. He’s understanding his role. I challenge the guys each week to understand the gameplan and understand their job and how they can fit. He’s doing that. Obviously, these games are valuable for him. He’s settling in. [He’s a] tremendous player. He had a heck of a pass deflection down the field late. He’s a good football player, kind of settling into his role.”

On if Lawrence ‘not forcing throws shows progress for him’:

“Yeah, it does. The guys are doing a great job up front, as we mentioned, with the protection. Guys are getting open and we had opportunities to take shots and we completed those down the field. I don’t know how many [explosive plays] we actually had, but there were some opportunities there and we hit them, and we were efficient in the passing game. That’s all we can ask of our guys. It takes 11 [players] to do it, but he was very efficient, very accurate. We talked about that this week, against a team that plays a lot of man coverages.”

On snapping an 18-game road losing streak:

“It’s everything for this team. That’s exactly what the guys have been talking about, the ones that have been here. It’s good get a road win against a great football team. Travel across the country like this; credit to the guys in the locker room for doing that. It’s, hopefully, the start of things to come and heading in the right direction.”

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS QUARTERBACK TREVOR LAWRENCE

On winning today's game:

"It's awesome. Two weeks in a row. I think that's the coolest thing, a big win last week, and to see that same focus and intensity, and preparation this week, I think that's the sign that we are headed in the right direction. Doing that week in and week out, obviously, every week is going to present new challenges, but we just have to come ready to play, and we did today. It was awesome. We are going to enjoy it the rest of the day, and like we said last week, tomorrow we are moving on."

On 'the message' today's performance 'says to the rest of the league':

"Obviously, the way we have played, you can't deny that we are a really good team. But at the end of the day, it doesn't matter what they say about us; we know who we are. Our only goal on Sunday is to win the game, and the way people think about us, it doesn't matter. Every week we are going to prepare the same way. We're going to be ready to play. We have a bunch of competitors, so it's been a lot of fun."

On the team's performance in the second half:

"The way the first half went, we were kind of finding our groove offensively and moving the ball well, but stalling out a little bit in the red zone, just trying to figure out what they were doing. They were doing some good stuff. We had to take some time to figure it out and settle in. Our defense did a great job of holding up and really just not giving up anything. The game stayed tight for a little bit, but in the second half, they scored to start. To see our offense respond and put together three scoring drives, and our defense on the flipside to stop them all the time, it was awesome. We played a complete game. To stack two weeks in a row is big to us."

On the confidence of the offense:

"Our confidence has been really high all season. Obviously, there have been times that we could have played better, but our confidence has always been high. You see that on the field and the confidence of the coaches, too. We went for it on multiple fourth downs and didn't get one early, but that's alright, still stick with the same plan and stay aggressive. The guys handled it really well."

On RB James Robinson's touchdown run on fourth down:

"It was great; something we talk about is being able to do that, especially at that point in the game, when you have controlled the clock and you have the lead. We are not in four-minute because it's still early in the second half, but being able to impose your will, no matter the box count. Just being able to pound the ball on fourth down is a huge play."

On WR Marvin Jones' touchdown catch:

"It was awesome. It was something we kind of planned in the second half when we got back down there. It was something we wanted to try in that area, and Marvin just does a great job,. We saw it last year and this year, just going up and making a play. That is when he is at his best, just making the play. It doesn't matter who is covering him or what the coverage is, just going up and making the play. I have a lot of faith in him. It was cool to be able to get him one. Obviously, he is such a team player every week. These past three weeks, he has had to block a lot in the run game and hasn't had a lot of touches, but he just comes to work every day happy. He is as happy as anyone when we win. To be able to get him a touchdown there at the end, that's awesome. The group we have is awesome."

On not committing a turnover:

"It's good. That, coupled with how well our defense is playing, is why we are 2-1 and had a chance to win the first one. We are putting ourselves in a position to win. The last two weeks have just been closing out games."

On scoring touchdowns compared to 'settling for' field goals:

"Obviously, you settle for a couple of field goals, and that's not ideal. That is something I talked about is us having to figure it out, settle in and what we want to do in the red zone with what they are showing us. They do a good job at showing a lot of different looks. You have to figure out what they are going to do that game, because they change it up week-to-week. That is always the battle. I think we did a good job at responding. Obviously, you want to make those touchdowns, and that is big moving forward. That is one thing we can grow in, so we can look at it and improve, but like I said, to be able to finish in the second half, especially that one drive when we had the QB sneak on fourth-and-one, to be able to finish with points there, that was huge."

On his first road win:

"To be able to have a win like this on the road is awesome. You have to keep building on it. We've shown that when we have a lead, just keep the foot on the gas and finish the game, which is huge against a good team. The next challenge is when the game is down to the wire, going down and being able to finish that. Every week there is a possibility of that. We keep preparing for that because, obviously, our preparation is paying off for us."