

## Chargers Week 2 Media Availability

Wednesday, September 13, 2023 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

### HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

#### On 'moving past' Week 1:

"You have to face the tough losses in the NFL when they happen, and you have to learn from them quickly. That was the big thing. Once Monday is done with, once you watch that film, it's on to Tennessee. Once you leave the building on Monday, our full attention is on the Titans. This group, like I told you, it's a great group to coach, a very close group. We're on to Tennessee."

#### On RB Austin Ekeler and if he 'could estimate his workload if he had been here':

"He had an ankle in the game. His status is to be determined."

#### On 'any concern' about Ekeler's game status:

"We'll know by the end of the week."

#### On if OLB Joey Bosa's hamstring injury 'was from the game':

"It was, yes."

#### On the 'significance' of Bosa's injury:

"To be determined. It was sore after the game. His practice status is to be determined."

#### On if tackling Titans RB Derrick Henry 'has to be a group effort':

"Yes, you have to play team defense on this guy. He is one of the toughest guys to tackle in the league. His resume speaks for itself. He has been a consistent player in the league for a long time. Definitely one of the big engines for their offense."

#### On LB Eric Kendricks' injury:

"Same comment as Joey [Bosa]. Just some hamstring soreness after the game."

#### On G Jamaree Salyer's performance at RG:

"A winning performance, for sure. We don't take his performance for granted because he kind of makes it seem that way because he can go anywhere and do it at a high level. To move to a different side, he has been a left-side player — that's where he trained in training camp his first year — and he went from left guard to left tackle last year, but to go to the right side seamlessly, it was a winning performance against a very quality front. Their three starters are outstanding interior players with [Dolphins DT Christian] Wilkins, [Dolphins DT Zach] Sieler and [Dolphins DT Raekwon] Davis. We have to keep building on it."

**On Titans QB Ryan Tannehill:**

"Ryan [Tannehill] is an outstanding player in the league. I have a lot of respect for his game. He showed real toughness last year when hurt his ankle and then came back into the game. They have won a lot of football games there in Tennessee with him as the starting quarterback. I think he's had a really quality career. He can do a lot of things as a quarterback. He can really access any part of the field. He's a very clean thrower of the football, accurate, tough. He is big. People forget that he played receiver in college. He's an outstanding athlete. He's a really smart football player, too. He has seen it all. We have a lot of respect for his game."

**On CB J.C. Jackson's performance in practice today:**

"Good. It was good to have him back out there. We have to continue to get him the work and the reps. He'll keep getting better and better."

**On the 'counter punch defensively to generate more pressure' compared to what the Dolphins' offense presented:**

"You have to be close to people. If the ball is coming out quick, you don't want to be far away from the receivers. You have to turn into pass defenders up front, you have to turn into blocked shots. You have to do a good job on first and second down so that you get into those third-and-longs, which we had plenty of them in the game. Just being more consistent to get third-and-longs. Our guys rushed a lot better than I think anybody is giving them credit for in the game. If you watch the game closely and don't look at the numbers — just how did they rush individually — I was very pleased with how we rushed. Joey [Bosa] rushed well. [OLB] Tuli [Tuipulotu] rushed well. [OLB] Khalil [Mack] rushed well. Our interior rushed well. You have to separate the process from the result. We need to continue to build on that performance because those guys are playing well for us and we're going to count on them this week."

**On LB Kenneth Murray Jr.'s performance in Week 1:**

"Kenneth Murray [Jr.] played a quality game. It was a winning performance for us. He has had a really good training camp and we're going to continue to build on it."

**On how the tight ends blocked in Week 1:**

"I felt like, when we were healthy — our first year — that that group really did a good job, a quality job, our first year. Last year, there was a ton of attrition. You don't rush for that many yards if your tight ends aren't involved at the point of attack. All of them that played in the game contributed — all four of them contributed to a big performance. With as good of an edge group as Miami has, you're going to need tight ends to be able to neutralize it and give your runners an avenue to run. I thought that all four of them did a quality job. [Tight Ends Coach] Kevin Koger is doing a really good job of coaching them. My hat is off to them because you don't get 240 [rushing yards] without good, quality tight end play."

**On 'if the tight ends were deployed differently' in Week 1:**

"I think how we deployed them was similar. I just think that those guys were connected. They were attached. They played very confident. I thought they were aggressive. They played with the right technique and right attitude, and they were consistent from quarter one to the last quarter. I thought that they were consistent with their attitude and their technique. We had a good game plan. My hat's off to [Offensive Line Coach] Brenden [Nugent] and [Assistant Offensive Line Coach] Shaun [Sarrett], [Running Backs Coach] Derrick Foster, that group of guys. It was a quality plan. Then, our runners ran really hard in the game. They broke a lot of tackles. It was a team effort."

**On 'the rule' when a defender intercepts a pass in the endzone:**

"Good question. We normally apply that kind the metaphor of, 'the city or the country.' If it's crowded, then stay in. If you can see, then you can go. Where you catch it in the endzone matters, and then, what your momentum is — if your momentum is carrying you out of the endzone, then that's a little bit more of a green light than if you're in neutral. It's something that he can learn from. We can continue to do a good job of coaching him and everybody else. Definitely a teaching moment because of the field position. I thought it was an outstanding play in the endzone to pick it off."

**On the Titans' rushing defense:**

"It's a big challenge. They did lead the league [last year], and there's a reason for it. They have big guys up front. They have solid edges. They have linebackers and safeties who can tackle. [Titans S] Kevin Byard is a heck of a player, a guy that I have the utmost respect for. To get [Titans OLB] Harold Landry [III] back, a guy that I think is really, really good — he didn't play in our game last year. Their inside group is really good, led by [Titans DT Jeffrey] Simmons. They're well-coached. It will be a tough challenge."

**On Titans WR DeAndre Hopkins:**

"DeAndre [Hopkins] has been as productive at receiver as there has been in the NFL over the last decade. I have had to go against him several times — Houston, and then with Arizona. [Dolphins CB] Jalen Ramsey, who I'm very close with, has had a lot of epic matchups with him. He's a proven player. He is one of the dynamite players in the league. He has big hands. He's really strong. He can really win on Level 1 and Level 2, and make it really tough on you. Outstanding after the catch, too. He can really create when the ball is in his hands. Definitely a good addition for them. He is a guy that we're going to have to handle."

## **QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT**

### **On what he 'didn't like' in Week 1:**

"We didn't win. That's up to us to put up more points, do a better job and take advantage of those opportunities when we get them."

### **On the rushing attack:**

"I thought there were some really good things that we did offensively. There's still room for improvement and still things to correct. Running the ball, I thought we did a great job of moving the ball down the field. That was great to see. I'm looking forward to building on that momentum."

### **On the offensive weapons:**

"I think that's the great thing about our offense, is that we have so many weapons. I think, just having people out there that make plays — that takes the pressure away, like you said. Having a run game and having guys to throw the ball to on the outside — [WR] Keenan [Allen], [WR] Mike [Williams], [WR] Quentin Q [Johnston] and [WR] Josh [Palmer] — they've done such an incredible job. My job is just to get them the ball in space and let them do the cool things."

### **On the Titans' defense:**

"They're really well-coached. They have some really impressive guys on that side of the ball. They have impressive guys on both sides of the ball. They have a really good defense. A great front seven and some cover guys that can really get after it in the back end. It's going to take a lot of preparation, film watching and having a good week of practice to get ready for the Titans."

### **On the intentional grounding call in Week 1:**

"I could have thrown it in a direction closer to a receiver. Obviously, I can be smarter in that position and know that, if we are hot, you have to be able to get rid of the ball in a safe manner. I, unfortunately, didn't do that, so that's up to me to learn from that, move on, correct the protection there and we'll get better because of it."

## **SAFETY DERWIN JAMES JR.**

### **On the Titans' offense:**

"They have a physical team. They run the ball, have a balanced attack and have some good players over there."

### **On 'stopping' Titans RB Derrick Henry:**

"Physics, it depends on who you are as a player. You've got to swarm — everybody has to get to the ball. You have to have 11 people to the ball."

### **On the biggest takeaway from the Miami game:**

"Not getting off the field on third down. Not making the plays in the deep part of the field that we needed to make."

### **On the defensive coverage in Week 1:**

"Being in the right position but not making the plays. We just didn't make the plays that we needed to make. Like I said whether it's third-and-10, third-and-12 or third-and-15, we didn't do a good job getting off the field."

### **On fixing mistakes:**

"Very fixable. We're not panicking, no one's putting their head down. We've got a new challenge this week in Tennessee. We're coming out here and getting better and we're working towards that."

### **On Titans WR DeAndre Hopkins:**

"He's a red line guy that can go up and get the ball one-on-one against anyone. Makes the contested catches. He's a great player. Like I said, we've got a challenge in that too."

### **On CB J.C. Jackson:**

"Mentally, I feel like he's doing well. I feel like he's going to respond. I told him, 'Don't keep your head down, we've still got your back. It's one game.' We need to come out here this game ready to go play and have a better performance on defense, especially."

"It's his first game coming back. Everyone handles their injuries differently. It's your first game getting back out there. I know he'll feel even better going into his second game being back."

"Overall, I feel like I know who he thinks he is as a player. I know who he is each and every day. I know he's going to work to get to where he wants to be. He's continued to do that and continued to get better. He's just not having the results that he wants as an All-Pro player that he can be. Each day he's come into work — if he keeps working hard, he can get there."

### **On the starting defense not playing together in the preseason games:**

"I don't like to try and pinpoint on, 'Is it the preseason? Is it this?' We didn't come out and execute, that's what it was. We didn't do a good job getting [Dolphins QB] Tua [Tagovailoa] off the field and guarding [Dolphins WR] Tyreek [Hill] and [Dolphins WR Jaylen] Waddle. We didn't do a good job doing that. Overall, we didn't do that, at the end of the day."

### **On Titans QB Ryan Tannehill and Dolphins QB Tua Tagovailoa:**

"They're definitely two different quarterbacks. Tannehill can probably run a little bit better. Tannehill is a veteran player in this league. They're similar in some areas, but they're definitely two completely different players."

### **On the Week 1 loss:**

"It was eye-opening for us on defense. It definitely woke a lot of us up on defense. Like I said, we just need to come out and execute and do what we need to do."

### **On the secondary:**

"Can't wait for Sunday. I don't want to get up here and talk about it [*laughter*], can't wait for Sunday to show you."