

Chargers Week 2 Media Availability

Monday, September 12, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On an injury update regarding WR Keenan Allen:

“We’re working through that right now. 11:30 [a.m.] was when we were meeting with the doctors and stuff like that. It’s kind of in-progress as we speak.”

On an injury update regarding CB J.C. Jackson:

“I saw J.C. this morning. His spirits were high. Today was kind of a recovery day for him because we put him through a pretty extensive workout yesterday. But, we’ll work him out tomorrow, and then we are going to try and get him on the practice field on Wednesday for the walk-through, jog-through thing. We’re not doing anything tomorrow, it’s truly nothing. We’re going to put him through an individual workout. Then, I think that he should be on the field Wednesday to kind of see exactly where he is. But, he’s in a better spot, I would say, than yesterday, or the day before. I would say 50/50 for the game.”

On when the staff began evaluating Chiefs film in preparation for Thursday night’s game:

“We took a look at their preseason because they played some of their starters. Just looked at some of the preseason stuff. Then, obviously, we have their film from last year. Then, their game from yesterday. The main part of it was just this morning, in terms of what they did yesterday versus Arizona, because they have a new team. They have a new team, and there are going to be elements that, maybe, were the same from last year, but they have a really different cast of players. I think that we were just trying to look at that game and learn as much as we can.”

On preparing to defend TE Travis Kelce:

“Travis is an outstanding player. I think that you have to make it tough on him. You can’t let him get comfortable in a matchup. You can’t give [QB] Patrick [Mahomes] too much of the same thing, where he is in a comfort zone and he is really operating where he is really playing on cruise control, where he can identify the coverage, he can identify the matchup, and really play fast, play quickly, especially when he has a guy like Travis, who is such a matchup guy. Those guys have such great chemistry. What you try to do is try to mix it up and make it tough. It’s ongoing, because against guys like that, you can keep them quite for a while, and then, all of a sudden, they just get hot quick and they can really heat it up quickly together with the way that those guys play. A very, very tough cover. They, obviously, got off to a good start yesterday.”

On if the offense would ‘change’ without WR Keenan Allen in the lineup on Thursday night and ‘how fast’ the unit can adjust on a short week:

“Good question. You just have to move the downs around. Who is playing what position? You just try to move it around a little bit, maybe activate a couple of more players than you would normally, where you’re featuring Keenan. Fortunately, we feel like we’ve built a receiving corps, for sure, that guys can move around, where you can put [WR] Josh Palmer in that spot, [WR] DeAndre Carter in that spot, [WR] Mike [Williams] can play some in the slot, so can [TE] Gerald [Everett], so can [RB] Austin [Ekeler], all of those guys. Everyone just has to do a little bit more, but we feel like we have a diverse enough cast where we can kind of share the load with that group.”

On WR DeAndre Carter's performance yesterday and 'when he knew that Carter could provide an impact offensively':

"I think in the Springtime. Our quarterbacks, they have sort of that instant chemistry with players, and it was really all three of our quarterbacks in the Springtime, having that instant chemistry with D.C. I think that we knew in the Springtime that he was going to be a lot more than just a return specialist. I think that [Wide Receivers Coach] Chris Beatty has done a phenomenal job coaching him. He proved himself in a very short time in the Spring. Then, throughout training camp, as you guys were there, he made plays all throughout camp and was a really tough cover for us. I think you can deploy him in a lot of different ways, as I think you saw it yesterday. He's just a really tough football player, tough football player, instinctive football player. I think our quarterbacks really trust him."

On giving out five game balls after yesterday's game, three of which were to players who were not on the team last season:

"That's a responsibility that I don't take lightly. It's one of my favorite things about the NFL, game balls. I try to breathe and try to clear my head and be able to really kind of assess the game. I think it's really important to do that. You make sure that when you give them out, that they're meaningful. You're trying not to leave anybody out. You're not trying to give it to everybody. Sometimes it's just one, sometimes it could be like yesterday. I felt like, yesterday, all five of those people deserved it. I feel like they earned it. That's what I want our players to respect; if we give one out, then everyone's like, 'Yeah, that guy definitely deserved one.' I felt like, for all the reasons that I mentioned in the postgame, I felt like all of those guys were very deserving. I was proud of all those guys. You're always going to leave some people out and you feel terrible about that, because you know that it's such a team effort. In every game ball, it's a team of people that are responsible for it. I love that tradition in the NFL, for sure."

On a report regarding signing DL Christian Covington to the active roster:

"That's accurate. We are going to be signing Christian Covington to the active roster and trying to get [DL] Breiden Fehoko to the practice squad."

On S Derwin James Jr.'s impact on the game yesterday:

"I don't know if you've seen the game copy yet, but one of the rare matchup guys in the league. I felt like we needed all of that. The things that you just mentioned, we needed all of it yesterday, against a team like that, that has so many different weapons, both run and pass. On a stat sheet, you may not see the impact that he has on a stat sheet, but what you do, when you've watched the game, you'll see the impact that he makes. If you're watching the game live, you feel the impact that he makes, too. The amount of energy that is required for him in a game plan like that, you can't minimize; physical energy, mental energy. It's one thing to have the versatility to play all of those different places, but can your mind allow you to do that? Can you play all those places and do those jobs well? That's why he's that rare combination, and rare leader. He played fantastic yesterday. He played a beautiful game for us. Really proud of him."

On the thought process behind the bracket coverage on Raiders WR Davante Adams on the final fourth down:

"We were going to make sure that the guy who was covering Davante was one of our premium guys. That was the thought process, to get up one of our premium guys on him with a guy, sort of, over the top of him so that we could attack leverage and make sure that if we went down in that down-and-distance, it wasn't going to be him. Sometimes, that's what you have to do, you have to mix coverage, you have to throw different body types at players like that. You're always trying to make it tough on him and change the look up. That was a big down, rush and coverage working together. We were fortunate to close it out."

On if Offensive Coordinator Joe Lombardi ‘got conservative’ with his play calls in the second half yesterday:

“I think we wish that we would have been able to, especially with all the takeaways, to be able to kind of run away with that thing. I don’t view his play-calling as conservative because we were getting the runs off, and we were getting good runs off that we’re kind of putting us in like a second-and-six, or a second-and-fourth. It’s not like it was first-and-10 or second-and-10 and these were runs that aren’t making any yards. I felt like we were able to gain a healthy amount of yards. Then, what that was doing was keep keeping the clock moving, and still putting us in a really favorable down-and-distances. We had a third-and-two and a third-and-five that we felt like were favorable. We had a keeper on one of them. It didn’t end up working out. I was comfortable with how he called the game because I felt like there’s nothing worse, as a fan or as a coach or a player, when you’re just beating the head up against the wall against a loaded box or something like that and you’re not making any yards, but that wasn’t the case. We had some real effective runs that were coming off and felt like that would achieve a couple of different things. The rushers, obviously, slowing them down, but then you get the clock moving, and then putting us in a favorable third down, which is what we got. We were in some really good third downs there and just weren’t able to convert. It felt, probably to you and us on the sideline, was that those three-and-outs were kind of a bummer there, but I wasn’t displeased with the play-calling, not one bit. I really liked the way he called the game. I felt like, on the third downs, we definitely had the matchups that we were looking for and just didn’t hit him. To truly finish that game, I think, the right way is that we want to take advantage of those takeaways and score touchdowns and put that thing away.”

On the performance of G Zion Johnson and T Trey Pipkins III:

“Just a really tough and rugged performance. It wasn’t one of those poetic, 450-500-yard output, check-mate type games. It wasn’t like that. It was a tough and rugged football game. That’s what it’s going to be when you play against a good team that is well-coached and that has good players. I thought that those guys did a nice job for us. I thought that Trey Pipkins’ performance can be summed up on the third-down run to close the game out. He has a base block on a direct run and he’s able to get the movement, win that battle at the point of attack, and [RB] Sony [Michel] is able to buck it up in there to close it out. The thing about Zion, no pre-snap issues, no penalties. I felt like he just really was solid the whole game. It was ended the game. Listen, those two rushers are fantastic players. I think people forget that [Raiders DE] Chandler Jones has like 107.5 career sacks. [Raiders DE] Maxx Crosby is a 100-million-dollar rusher. This guy is a freaking Ball Playing Jesse, now. Those guys were able to fight and compete. They won some, they lost some, but we stayed together. It was just a tough, rugged NFL game. That’s what you have to be able to do in the NFL, you have to have an O-line that is tough and rugged that can just go fight the fight. I think that’s what we did yesterday.”

On the receiving corps ‘filling in’ following WR Keenan Allen’s injury:

“A sign of the depth of the players that we have, from a skill position standpoint. Then, I think that our coaching staff, really being able to cross-train several different people so that if a guy goes out, as special as Keenan Allen, that you can hold the rope with other guys and be able to activate things and continue with your gameplan. I think that it was good agility by our coaching staff; [Wide Receivers Coach] Chris Beatty, [Tight Ends Coach] Kevin Koger, [Running Backs Coach] Derrick Foster, from a skill position standpoint. Then, [Offensive Coordinator Joe [Lombardi], [Pass Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks Coach] Shane [Day], [Pass Game Specialist] Tom Arth, [Offensive Quality Control Coach] Chandler Whitmer, that group, being able to get to the next chapters in the plan, being able to get these guys, ‘OK, now you’re here, now you’re there,’ and just keep it moving. We want to be a team that spreads the ball around. That’s the best type of offensive football. I felt like we accomplished that yesterday.”

On the impact DL Austin Johnson and DL Sebastian Joseph-Day had on the game ‘despite not filling the stat sheet’:

“You need to watch the game. It’s like [S] Derwin [James Jr.]. I think that Derwin had six tackles, he had six tackles. I guess he did have the sack, which was cool, but the impact that he had on the game, the stats don’t tell me anything about the way that he played. It’s like when [former NFL CB] Darrelle Revis was playing corner and he wouldn’t have any ball production. Well, the ball is not going there, so he is not going to produce anything, but the impact that he is having on the game is much different. I just know that those runs look a lot different than they did last year. Those runs that happened yesterday, they look a lot different. In the pass rush, the middle of the pocket, the reason why those edge players were able to get off yesterday is because the middle of the pocket was the way it should look. The middle push was powerful. It was a collapsing rush. It allowed those guys to really attack and be aggressive on the edge, where you have a rush plan that’s four and five as one. Those guys had a lot to do with that. If you take a look at those six sacks, you’re going to see a lot of interior players that were just as responsible for that as [OLB] Khalil [Mack] and [OLB] Joey [Bosa] and [S] Derwin [James Jr.]”

On if yesterday’s performance ‘was the quintessential Derwin James game’:

“In terms of the blueprint for how to use a guy like that, yeah.”

On James Jr.’s sack:

“With guys like Derwin [James Jr.], plays like that don’t surprise you, but you don’t take them for granted. He’s a play-maker. A lot of DBs can’t blitz, they can’t rush. Even though some schemes are good when DBs blitz, if they can’t blitz, it doesn’t matter. He’s one of the guys that can truly rush and truly be a matchup guy in pass rush. Derwin is at his best when he’s attacking, and we tried to do that. We try to do that when possible.”

On P JK Scott’s consistency punting yesterday and the support of the protection and coverage aspect of the punt unit:

“I think it really started for me with the accuracy of the snaps. When you think of the punter, you’re missing the step before the punt, you’re missing the snap. When you have accuracy from the snap to the punter, that gives him the rhythm. It’s like [C] Corey [Linsley] to [QB] Justin [Herbert], when you have an excellent center, now you’re getting this thing off the ground the right way. I think [LS] Josh [Harris] has been very, very, very impactful for JK, but I think the strength of JK is just the height, the lift that he gets on the football. Then, what that allows the coverage to do is truly express itself. I think what we were able to do yesterday, from the gunner position, was our gunners performed at a high level. We had [DB] Ja’Sir Taylor, we had [DB] Deane Leonard, we had [WR] Josh Palmer, we had some guys that, I thought, really played well on the outside. Then, our interior protection, was solid. But you have to give credit to the snap to the punter, I think that’s where it really started yesterday, and I thought our gunner play was good yesterday.”

On the value of LS Josh Harris:

“With Josh, too, he has the intangible benefit to our team, as well. Not just like the physical element of the accuracy and stuff, but then he’s such a pro’s pro, and the culture on special teams of really setting the example and showing the young guys just the little things of getting in a huddle, get set in the huddle of the punt team, and how important that is. Just being a professional, I think he sets a very strong example that way. He performs consistently day in and day out. One of the top additions for us in the offseason was bringing him to our football team.”

On the addition of WR JuJu Smith-Schuster to the Chiefs' offense:

"They have a lot of excellent matchup players. I played against JuJu when he was a rookie in 2017, when he was kind of new to the NFL. They had like him and [former Steelers WRs] Martavis Bryant, Antonio Brown, [former Steelers RB] Le'Veon Bell. I mean, that team was loaded. He was an excellent player as a rookie. The route feel that he has, he is physical for a slot receiver, but he can play outside, too. He can play inside, he can play outside. I thought that that was a good add. Then, they got [Chiefs WR Marquez] Valdes-Scantling from Green Bay, who I'm familiar with. He has real gas. This guy's been extremely productive in his pro career. Then, they were able to draft the kid from Western Michigan, [Chiefs WR] Skyy Moore, who we really liked, who has a lot of ability. He's fast, a playmaker, versatile. Then, I think the other thing that you have to realize with this group, too, is the type of running backs that they have. [Chiefs RB Jerick] McKinnon, people forget, I was in the division with him when he was in Minnesota. Then, he signed that big deal in San Francisco. This guy has been an outstanding player for a long time. People forget that they onboarded [Chiefs RB] Ronald Jones. 2020, when I was with the Rams, he was the leading rusher on that Tampa team that that ends up winning the Super Bowl. This guy is an outstanding runner. Then, the new guy that they have, [Chiefs RB Isiah] Pacheco, he has had a really nice preseason. He's a nice player, too. They have a lot of players that can be very productive. They've done an excellent job of adding a lot of a lot of weapons to that group."

On if the Chiefs are 'deceptively deeper' than past years:

"I just think they're new guys. I think that they have always had really good depth. Maybe it's just me, I think they've always been deep. I think the optics of [former Chiefs WR and current Dolphins WR] Tyreek [Hill] leaving, they were a really good football team, they had a lot of good players when he was there, too. It's just when you have a player that's as special as Tyreek, maybe the other players don't get the same amount of attention. They've really onboarded a lot of players that allows them to truly spread the field and spread the distribution, run and pass, and make them really tough to defend."

On the decision to go for it on fourth-and-short:

"Just felt like in that part of the game, to allow our entire team to operate, let our entire team compete and show what they can do, and then use that to our advantage of people expecting us to go for it. Felt like that would be the best decision for us in making it an advantage for us. JK [Scott] did an excellent job of pinning them down there and really flipping the field and changing the way that you take the field on defense, for sure."

On the 'thought process' behind signing DL Christian Covington to the active roster:

"There's just some procedural stuff, the beginning of the 53 stuff that goes on, as you guys are aware of. We think a lot of Christian. We think he's a really valuable contributor to our front, as we do with [DL] Breiden [Fehoko]. As you guys know, it was very competitive for that spot. We see both of those guys as assets for our football team. Just felt like, for this week, that this would be the best decision. Excited that we're able to have him on our team."

On the most difficult aspect of short weeks:

"Having to do all of this [*laughter*], and then have to get ready for one of the top teams in the NFL. But there's nothing else I'd rather do. There's nothing else I'd rather do. There's definitely enough time in the day. There's enough time in the day, and that's what we're trying to do, is take advantage of the time in the day, do it the best we can. These are fun games, in my opinion. It's like the third game of an AAU Basketball tournament. The third game that day, it's your third game in the day, you may have played an hour ago, two hours ago, and you just get it back up, and you go compete. These are fun games. I'm excited for our football team. We have to get to work."

QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On yesterday's performance:

"Just kind of reiterating what we said yesterday, I thought the offensive line played really well. We moved the ball when we needed to and I thought the defense came up with some huge stops and got some turnovers when we needed them the most. I thought that part was really good."

On he has watched film of the Chiefs yet:

"We've watched a little bit. We kind of had a recovery lift, watched our own film this morning. We haven't gotten too far into it, but we'll get there."

On the keys for the offense to succeed on Thursday night:

"Just commit fewer turnovers than the opponent, protect the ball, move the ball when we need to, get first downs, and score in the red zone."

On the offensive line not allowing a sack yesterday:

"They are a very close group and they work really hard. They communicate very well and they work hard. I'm not surprised one bit to see how well they played because I've been seeing that all camp long. They go up against two of the best pass rushers the NFL has seen in [OLB] Joey [Bosa] and [OLB] Khalil [Mack]. To go up against those guys week in and week out, they're going to get better. I'm thankful to be playing behind them."

On if the offensive line giving him confidence:

"It definitely gives you a sense of comfort in the pocket, knowing that you can buy time, step up and make sure that you get the ball down the field. To have the weapons like we do downfield, that part helps as well. To have [WR] Keenan [Allen] and [WR] Mike [Williams] and [WR] Jalen Guyton [JG] and [WR] Josh Palmer and [WR] DeAndre Carter, all of those guys that make plays downfield, to have all that around me is definitely helpful."

On the wide receiving corps 'stepping up' after WR Keenan Allen's injury:

"I think it's huge to have all of those guys and they're interchangeable. To be able to play Josh Palmer at the F, X, or Z, or to have J.G. [WR Jalen Guyton] step in or [WR] DeAndre Carter, who can play pretty much any position, as well. You never want to lose a player like that, but when you get guys around them that are able to step up like that, I think it's huge for the team."

On his slide near the goal line that drew an unnecessary roughness penalty:

"I tried to find Ek [RB Austin Ekeler]. I lost him, just scrambled around and didn't want to take a hit, so I went down before the goal line. I didn't want to take any unnecessary hits, but it was fine, just a hit. It's another day in the NFL, but I'm doing well though."

On if he slid 'because he knew the offense would go for it' or if it was to 'avoid an unnecessary hit':

"I don't know. I think that's something that we probably would have talked about after that play. There were three Raiders defenders right in front of me and I didn't want to take them on. As much as I would have loved to have gone after them, I think it was best for me to slide and not take that hit."

On his touchdown pass to TE Gerald Everett and Everett 'extending his route' to make a play:

"I think it's something that we've seen all throughout camp from him. He's just a playmaker. He's a special player. Whenever you get the ball in his hands, something good is going to happen. It's a broken-down play and he finds his way up the sideline, makes an incredible catch and fights for two more yards. That was awesome to see. I'm not surprised by that, either. I've seen that all camp. It's just really good to see from him."

On the offense's performance in the fourth quarter yesterday:

"In the fourth, I think we got pinned on the one or two [-yard line]. We did our best to get out of there and get a good punt situation for [P] JK [Scott]. In the four-minute drill, you have to do what you do to try and run that clock out. We think really highly of our offensive line, handing the ball off and making sure that maybe those guys go and get five or six yards on a play. The defense came in clutch, got a big stop there at the end, so it was good to see."

On how much he worked with Carter during training camp:

“Quite a bit, actually. We kind of knew right when he stepped in here how special he was. He was able to play a lot more receiver than what is usual for a return specialist. He’s a special route runner, very smart, intelligent. That play, that touchdown that he caught, we’ve thrown that a couple of times in camp throughout OTAs, throughout camp. It was really good to see from him, but I’m not surprised by his success either.”

On Carter’s sideline catch:

“I think it’s one that we’ve practiced a couple of times. The protection broke down, I kind of stepped up, found him, and I just knew that he was running to the sideline. He flattened [the route] versus man. He went up, got the ball, and made a big play for us.”

On ‘if it’s easier to prepare for the Chiefs defense this week given the lack of changes from last season’:

“They are a very talented group. They haven’t switched up a whole lot on their personnel, but they still have [DE] Frank Clark, [DT] Chris Jones. Those guys get after the offensive line. To have them, and a secondary that flies around and plays really good defense, and some linebackers that are really talented, too, it makes for a great defense. It’s going to be a huge challenge for us this week. A short week, but we’re going to have to do our best to watch as much film as we can.”

On the anticipated environment on Thursday night:

“I think it’s always a great opportunity to go play football. I know that our guys are really excited for this one. To be able to play on primetime, Thursday Night Football, it’s something you always grow up dreaming about. It is a quick week, a short week, but we’re going to do everything we can to get prepared and get our bodies back so that we have a chance on Thursday.”

On Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes:

“I have a lot of respect for Patrick. He’s an incredible quarterback, has had a lot of success in this league over the past few years. Any time you get to play against him, it’s always a great opportunity to learn, to watch. I just have so much respect for his game.”

On ‘if there were moments in the fourth quarter where he was missing Allen’:

“It’s a good point. He’s a really special player. To have 13 out there, he’s a security blanket. You know that he’s going to get open and you have to look for him on third down. It’s always tough when you lose a player like that, but I think, thankfully, we have the guys behind him that are able to step up and do their best to kind of replace what he brings to the table. DeAndre Carter is a special player. We saw that yesterday. Josh Palmer, J.G., Mike Williams, that’s still a really good receiver group. A lot to look forward to with those guys.”

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR JOE LOMBARDI

On QB Justin Herbert and his connection with the receiving corps:

“You feel pretty fortunate that you have a quarterback like that, that can make those throws. They were fantastic. We’re glad we have him.”

On if Herbert ‘surprises him’ with his completions:

“Yes. It still kind of does. It shouldn’t because he does it over and over again, but yeah it’s impressive.”

On areas of improvement for the offense:

“Just a little more consistency in the run game. Just normal first game stuff. The ole’ coaching maxim is you make your biggest improvement between game one and two, and so there are just a lot of details that we need to improve on and I think we will.”

On the run game yesterday:

“We had some good runs. I thought the blocking was good by the o-line, overall, but just in any one run play, it just takes one guy to kind of be a little late off the ball or to miss-target it. It’s just little things. I think the production of the blocking was good. I think if you look at it for the most part, our O-line, our tight ends when they were doing the right thing, they were winning their blocks. It’s just little details, getting off the ball. Had a play that went bad because we were late off the ball and miss-targeted a couple runs. They were not in a front structure we anticipated. We were expecting more 3-4, they were more 4-3. It shouldn’t be a big deal, but the first game, it was on a couple runs anyways. Just getting those details down, I think we’re going to be just fine.”

On RB Austin Ekeler playing 49 percent of the offense’s snaps yesterday:

“I don’t think 49 percent is horrible. A lot of it is just how much he is getting hit, more so than how many plays he has. We’ll keep track of that.”

On RB Joshua Kelley’s performance yesterday:

“He’s definitely decisive. I thought he played well. I thought [RB] Sony [Michel] did well. So yeah, I think we just continue to rotate those guys.”

On the offense’s execution in the fourth quarter:

“Not as good as we would hope. I probably got a little bit conservative, but I think all of those drives, there were certain things we could have done to keep those drives going. You mentioned the drop, there was a third down I thought that we could have converted and just gotten to the route a little quicker for the timing of the quarterbacks drop. First game stuff that I anticipate that if we are in that situation again, we would have executed those plays better. We would have caught the ball and converted a couple of those third downs. We didn’t. It was frustrating. I was disappointed after the game that we didn’t hold on to the ball a little bit longer there in the fourth quarter, and certainly had the opportunity to. It’s certainly something we’ll improve on.”

On the incompleting on third down intended for WR Mike Williams:

“Well, there was that play. It was good played by the defender. I think Mike could have worked them a little bit longer, but that was a really good play by the defense. There was another one, we had Austin [Ekeler] coming out of the backfield. He just got into the route a little quick for the quarterback’s timing. We call it the carded look, what we practiced against in practice, and just didn’t quite time up the way that we wanted it to.”

On ‘balancing a conservative approach’:

“I think you pay attention to how the defense is playing. We felt that they were playing pretty well. I was probably watching some of those early games and seeing some teams come back, that kind of weighs on your mind. But, obviously, the narrative is told after it’s all done. If we had completed a couple of those passes, or kept those drives going, you would have felt like you did it just right. We have faith in O-line. I think we’re going to continue to grow there and be good. Immediately after the game, I did feel like I got a little conservative there and wished I would have made a different couple different calls, but it worked out, thank God.”

On the ‘thought process’ on the tempo quarterback sneak on fourth-and-short and if the true distance to the line-to-gain ‘is taken into account’:

“All of those things are taken into consideration. They did a good job of getting in the gaps. We were just hoping to push and get the yardage that we needed, it didn’t work out. Luckily, we got the turnover and were able to score. Good job by the defense.”

On WR Mike Williams ‘disappearing on offense’:

“It’s funny, because if you had watched practice early in the week, the guys were joking that he’s going to have about 20 catches. Unfortunately, we can’t always decide who we throw the football to, we can call plays that make someone primary, but the defense sometimes decides where the ball goes. In that first half, we did call a number of plays that were given him a chance, and we completed most of those plays. The one that Keenan [Allen] that was the 40-plus yarder, that was really a Mike Williams play that Justin [Herbert] saw Keenan come open behind the defense and threw it. A couple of other ones where they were just in a coverage that took Mike away, there’s a little bit of luck involved in that, just how the defense plays. Justin’s really good at not forcing the ball, if he finds the completion where the defense is telling you to throw it. We certainly weren’t planning on that. Then, in the second half, again, he started running the ball a little bit more, and that’s where he had his catches, a little more conservative calls there, like I said. I don’t think that’s going to be the narrative the whole season. I think he’ll get his touches, for sure. I would have been shocked if he told me he only had two catches, if you would have told me that before the game, but that’s just how it went.”

On Herbert ‘spreading the targets around’:

“That’s everything. It goes back to what we said on that last question. You have a past route that you have, and you have a progression. There’s always the primary, and he’s not always open. It happened a lot in New Orleans where you would get that box score after the game and the ball just gets spread around. I do think that, sometimes, that’s an indication of good quarterback play, where they’re just playing the play and getting to the guy that the defense is letting get the completion to. I think he had a pretty high completion percentage, so we’re not going to fuss too much about if he’s not throwing it to the stars all the time. As long as we’re getting completions and moving the ball, that’s what’s important. Every game is different. I don’t think there’s a huge takeaway to take away from this one game.”

On G Zion Johnson’s performance:

“I thought he did very well, kind of how we anticipated. He was solid. I’ve said it before, he’s very mature, and he just kind of blocked the guys that he was supposed to block. Once he starts blocking them, they stay blocked. I was very pleased with his performance. Again, we’re on a short week. I watched the game, but not in the same detail, maybe, than I would on a normal Monday. I went through it and paid attention to him. I thought that he played real well.”

On T Trey Pipkins III’s performance:

“I thought he did well. Obviously, there were a couple where he let some pressure in, and that’s going to happen against those guys. I thought, overall, he played very well. Very happy with what’s his performance.”

On the receiving corps ‘stepping up’ following Allen’s injury:

“it was huge. You guys have watched training camp, so you know how well D.C. [WR DeAndre Carter] has been doing. It was no surprise. I was really, really happy with how everyone stepped up. When you’re looking at the call sheet, and you know that Keenan is out, there are a lot of plays, obviously, where he’s primary and he’s the one who got the work during practice. I probably shied away from some calls, and in retrospect, I shouldn’t have because DeAndre [Carter] or Josh [Palmer], or whoever stepping in for Keenan in those roles, can do it. You get a little concerned because there are some routes that have some detail to it that when you haven’t seen the guy practice it during the week, you get a little bit hesitant to call him. The way that they played, looking back on it, I shouldn’t have hesitated at all. I was really proud of those guys.”

On FB Zander Horvath’s performance:

“He’s an athletic guy. He was a tailback in college. He’s fast for his size. He has shown the ability to be physical as a fullback. That’s always, I think, an issue for a defense, when you have a fullback that has some athleticism. We’re still finding out about the player. It’s still early in his time with us, so we’ll continue to look at him and see the things he can do, but it was a good start for him, I thought.”

On which of Carter's receptions 'were the more impressive throw' by Herbert:

"I thought the touchdown was a more impressive throw, I guess. He just rocketed that thing in there, but both were good."

On rep distribution for Allen's role if Allen does not play on Thursday night:

"I think Josh would step in. In the two receiver sets, he would be the main Z, that's the position that Keenan [Allen] plays. Every play, we have a million different personnel groupings, so Jalen [Guyton] will be in there some, D.C. [DeAndre Carter] will be in there, Josh [Palmer]. When we go sub [-package], you're going to see different combinations of three guys. There's not an easy answer to that question, but when we send the starting 12 personnel group out there, you'd say Josh [Palmer] would be the Z, but we'll be mixing it up quite a bit."

On his evaluation of the Chargers' defense:

"I wouldn't say I was surprised. You know what kind of pass rush that [OLB] Khalil [Mack] and [OLB] Joey [Bosa], and those interior guys, can bring on a quarterback. It's stressful. It was fun to watch and kind of something you could see coming through camp, that they were a really improved unit that is going to cause some problems for people."

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR RENALDO HILL

On if the defense's performance yesterday was 'close to the vision' of the defense that was anticipated by the coaching staff:

"I think it's very close. We wanted to get a complement to [OLB] Joey [Bosa] on the other side and take some of those chips off of him. I think it allowed for those guys to rush freely. We knew they would still probably try to chip, but we tried to do little things with our front just to try to take some of the chips off of them. But when you can let two premium pass rushers rush the quarterback like they did yesterday, that's definitely what we had envisioned there."

On if there was 'anything surprising' about the way the Raiders utilized WR Davante Adams:

"No. We were prepared for them to kind of move him around and put him in different spots. [Raiders Head Coach] Josh [McDaniels] is a smart coach over there and I knew he wouldn't allow him to sit in one spot and let us move the coverage over there. We knew we were going to have to try to move the down around and find ways to get the coverage to him. We tried to do it enough, but he's just a really talented player. He got his yards, but we didn't give up too many explosives with him as far as in the pass game."

On CB Asante Samuel Jr.'s performance yesterday:

"We knew it was going to be a big matchup, a tough matchup, those guys going against Adams there. We knew Zant wasn't going to back down from the challenge and we knew he was up for it and he wanted it. When you have all of those things working together, we knew there were going to be some battles won and lost, but he kept fighting and he won his share of battles as well. With the deep ball, that's just showing Sant is just being a football player. He's competitive. When something pops off, he's able to erase it and make up for it. That was a great job of tracking the football. Even staying off of the receiver, he did a good job of just tracking and going up, high-pointing it. You have a collision with [CB] Bryce [Callahan] in the same spot, just that focus and concentration to come down with the ball when everything is happening at that speed."

On 'if the defense tracks how many lives are saved over the course of the season':

"We don't plan on wanting to save a ton of lives [laughter]. We hope everybody is doing their job and their responsibility, but we do also talk about playing with vision and being able to see it in the back end. If something pops off the ground, we want guys to be football players and help us save the down."

On the 'key to slowing down' Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes down:

"It's always tough with him. The biggest thing you talk about is can we make him perform from the pocket and not extend plays because once he gets out the pocket, he's a whole other animal. Obviously, he can make the throws from in the pocket, but when you have time to extend plays, and we talk about when we do face him, we tell our guys, 'Hey, we have to cover not twice, a lot of times three, four times because that's how much he can extend the play.' It's always challenging, but if we can do a good job of trying to condense the pocket and really make him work from there and see if our pass rushers can come alive, that would be ideal. We just have to make it tough on him. We know he's going to make his plays, but we have to force him to get the ball off his hands right away."

On preparing for Chiefs TE Travis Kelce:

"With Kelce, the chemistry is still there with those guys just seeing it in Week 1. Once again, it's part of that covering them two, three times, maybe even four before you know you have these guys stopped. Patrick [Mahomes] can extend. Kelce, he's going to stay alive in his route running, and we have to do a good job of just knowing where he's at all times."

On 'how different' the Chiefs' offense is without WR Tyreek Hill:

"They are still explosive. It's still a talented group. You have [Chiefs WR] Juju [Smith-Schuster], you have [Chiefs WR Marquez Valdes] Scantling. These guys still added some speed to their roster. And you have a young [Chiefs WR] Skyy Moore, as well. They are still talented. A lot of the scheme from the game, it seemed like it was similar. You just kind of put those guys in different spots based on their skill set and they just roll with their offense. We know it's Week 1. We know they probably can still make adjustments here, but we do know it's a short week. They're going to have their game plan for us. They probably know us better than they knew the Arizona Cardinals. We have to do a good job of making sure that we're prepared for the Kansas City Chiefs that we've seen in the past."

On when he started watching film on the Chiefs:

“Probably Wednesday of last week. It’s a tough deal because you don’t want to get too much crossover and kind of mix some things up. You just try to write it down in your notebook and make sure that you can go back and register it for this week, but probably started it Wednesday of last week.”

On preparing for Chiefs RB Clyde Edwards-Helaire:

“He’s definitely dangerous once he gets out in space because his strike zone is tough, as well. A lot of people go tackle him high, but he’s already low in impact, where he can just kind of slide off of you. We know they will do a good job of getting him and [RB Jerick] McKinnon out in the passing game. We just have to do a good job, when they do get out in the field, of making sure we have more than one guy pursuing the ball so that we can get some vice tackles on these guys, because they are dangerous out in space.”

On if Samuel Jr. ‘exercised proper fundamentals and positioning to get the interception’:

“He did the ultimate job because we were out of place. He saw that something wasn’t right, and he did a good job of fixing it. On that pre-snap there, Bryce [Callahan] kind of got caught trying to communicate with him. The ball was snapped and I think Zant saw it and realized it and he was able to help his teammate out and help us out defensively. You talk about having football players, that’s what football players do. They see something wrong and they fix it. Everything won’t be perfect, but that’s what he did as a football player. He saw something wasn’t right, and he made it right for us.”

On if Callahan’s interception ‘is a product of his experience’ in the AFC West and against WR Hunter Renfrow:

“Definitely. Having Bryce, who played in this conference for a number of years, just being a part of our scheme since his rookie year essentially, having him know the scheme as well as knowing the matchups that he faces each week, that’s all a plus for us. He’s just a talented player. We knew he would fit in perfectly with our defense.”

On how he would summarize the defense’s performance yesterday:

“We talked about this offseason about these guys coming together. We talked about 40-plus new players on this team alone and how quickly we have to try to come together as a team. I think these guys really took it upon themselves this offseason to work on that, becoming a team. That’s what you saw out there this past Sunday was guys playing together as a team. Everything wasn’t perfect, but everyone was out there making sure that they were doing their job and trying to do it to their highest ability because they were trusting the guy next to them. That was a good sign when you get that in Week 1. We have a lot to build on, but these guys are a close, tight-knit group. I’m excited just moving forward with this group.”

On ‘how encouraging it was to see the pass rush close out the game’:

“It really gave me a good feeling like Pittsburgh last year when we were able to close it out with Joey getting some good rushes at the end. You saw the combination of the rush lanes and the patterns really coming together. They were working together. It wasn’t an individual base. It was guys working together to get it done. After the delay, where they could get with [Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley, you kind of saw the guys going into their heads of what they wanted to do. You could see the defensive backs talking. You could see the upfront guys talking and they were kind of working in sync. You could see it, just from our lens up top. It was a great feeling that they were up for the challenge, and they wanted the challenge. They went out there and got it done when we needed it the most.”

On if the call was to match S Derwin James Jr. on Raiders WR Davante Adams on the fourth-and-eight on the Raiders’ final offensive possession:

“We definitely wanted to get two bodies on Adams. I think the way the motion worked out with him motioning over gave Derwin the right of way so that Derwin was able to get the matchup on Adams. We obviously had Nas [S Nasir Adderley] there doubling with him, as well. We knew that if somebody was going to win the game or convert for those guys, it wouldn’t be Adams in that situation.”

On the coverage of Adams:

“We had a bracket on him.”

On the potential of the Chiefs 'showing more heavy personnel' offensively:

“Still similarities, even with the bigger bodies that they brought in that they did in the past. Probably just spent a little bit more time in that personnel grouping, but we just have to do a good from our end identifying those personnel groupings that are coming in and what they like to do out of it. It has been in there in the past, but if they use it more, we’ll have to switch up and apply different defenses from our standpoint, but we are familiar with it. It’s going to be challenging regardless going against Kansas City, but we just have to be prepared for a little bit more of that personnel grouping.”