

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS vs. SEATTLE SEAHAWKS POSTGAME TRANSCRIPTS

Sunday, October 23, 2022 ⚡ SoFi Stadium ⚡ Inglewood, Calif.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On CB J.C. Jackson's injury status:

"J.C. [Jackson] suffered a significant knee injury today."

On WR Mike Williams' injury status:

"Mike Williams has an ankle injury."

On if the club is aware of the 'severity' of Williams' injury:

"We do not."

On if Jackson's injury is 'definitely season-ending':

"It's a significant injury."

On starting the game with an early deficit:

"Certainly not the way that you want to start the football game. That definitely wasn't our goal today. We started off the game, defensively, with a big takeaway, and then we turned the ball over on downs on a third-and-fourth-and-short. We throw an interception, we fumble. It's really hard to get momentum when you start the game like that. We were able to fight our way back and get back into the game, but there's a lot of energy that goes with that. Then, we just didn't play a clean enough second half in any phase to create any momentum and to get the lead back. Just didn't play well enough today in any phase."

On the offense's performance today:

"I thought that we got beat up front. We couldn't run the football. We didn't protect the passer very well, so it's going to be tough to move the ball and score points. That's where it started today."

On the offensive run game today compared to previous weeks:

"I think that each game has been a little bit different. The fact is that at the point of attack, it wasn't good enough today. There wasn't a lot of room to run the football today. We have to do a better job coaching and we have to do a better job playing; that's all of us."

On WR Keenan Allen not playing in the second half:

"Kind of what I said on Friday, didn't want to push it if there was a feeling that he couldn't go, but he felt good during practice and we wanted to give it a go. He was definitely on a pitch count, but didn't want to push it knowing that we have the bye next week."

On his message to the team:

“Exactly what I told them is that we’re 4-3. The reality is that through seven games, we’ve had to fight really hard to be 4-3. We’ve endured a lot. Our season is in front of us, which is the truth. The reason why we’re 4-3, and not 5-2, is because we didn’t play good enough football today. We didn’t coach well enough today. What we need to do is get rested, take advantage of the bye and get rested, and then come back, as a team, and really focus on playing the way that we’re capable of playing. Today, certainly, was not it.”

On ‘coping with’ the injuries following today:

“All year we’ve been losing guys. That’s going to be a part of every week, whether you win or lose. Had we won today and those two guys would have gotten hurt, it would be the same feeling. You have to keep it moving, you have to figure it out. We’re 4-3. The AFC is wide open. We have to get rested up. We’re going to play a team in Atlanta who is a very well-coached, and very good, football team. We have to get rested up though, first.”

On Laguna Beach’s Bella Rasmussen ‘firing off’ the historic Chargers cannon prior to today’s game:

“I didn’t get a chance to talk to her, but our team here told me all about her. That’s what we want to be able to do, being here in Los Angeles, is to connect at the grassroots level of football, in our community, of really making Southern California and the City of Los Angeles our home. Any time that we can connect with people like that, that’s what we want to do. Know that the Chargers are always going to be present for people like that. Football brings people together, and I’m glad that we could do that for her.”

On Seahawks RB Kenneth Walker III’s 74-yard touchdown run:

“We lost the edge. We didn’t hold the edge. Our second level didn’t come alive. He was able to get around us. It wasn’t good enough. Ultimately, it’s my responsibility. I have to do a much better job coaching.”

On the defense’s performance today:

“Up and down. There were plenty of good moments. I thought that we got off to a good start with the takeaway. Then, we just fouled some on third down, a killer. I thought that the penalties were the story of the first three drives. Then, you give up a third-and-12 fade for a touchdown. Then, we settled in. I thought that we hung tough. We just have to play a lot cleaner football. There’s no excuse from me. I have to do a better job coaching this group and bringing it together.”

On the Seahawks’ first-quarter performance:

“They played exactly how they’ve been playing all year, trying to be opportunistic with the football. We knew that the takeaway margin was how they’ve been winning games. Today, certainly, with the way that we played, we played into their hands.”

On how a long drive impacts a defense:

“It takes a lot out of it, for sure. There were plenty of opportunities on that drive for us to get off of the field and play better. We didn’t. It’s good that we held them to three [points], but we have to do a better job, when we have field position like that, of keeping them back there. It’s all three levels playing together. Like I said, it starts with me.”

On the defense’s ‘up and down’ performance:

“I think that we’re going to take a long look at that in the bye week. What I’ve said throughout the season is just establishing continuity with who we’re playing with. I think that that is going to be something that I take a look at over the next two weeks before we play Atlanta, just getting the right combination of players out there, playing the right combination of play calls, because I think that there have been a lot of good moments from us, but our bad moments have been really bad. We have to make sure that that doesn’t happen because it’s preventing us from being the defense that we’re capable of being.”

On QB Justin Herbert’s interception:

“Just looking at it live, I think that our passing game, we have to play with better rhythm and timing. I think it starts up front. Then, our receivers have to run and get open. We have to play within the rhythm and timing of the play. The way we’re playing, when you’re playing up and down, it isn’t just one person. When you’re up and down, it’s not one person, it’s the whole group. We have to use this bye week to get rested and to make sure that we play a lot more consistent football in the second half of the season.”

On injuries 'catching up' to the team today:

"I don't know about that. It's just part of the NFL. We have to deal with it just like everybody else does. We make no excuses. Whoever is out there is going to play to our standard. We need to make sure that we use the next two weeks to get the right combination of guys out there. We know that we have a team that is resilient. I think that we've shown that through seven games. I know that tonight was a really tough night for us, but I think, through seven games, we've really shown a lot of resilience, a lot of toughness, but today certainly wasn't our best."

On his reaction to being 4-3:

"I don't think that today is the time to reflect. Today, I'm just really focused on how we played in today's game, and it wasn't good enough. Like I said, I have to make sure that I do a better job with this team. I thought that we played fantastic on Monday night and really showed the type of team that we can be. Today, in all three phases, it just wasn't good enough, and that starts with me."

On OLB Chris Rumph II's injury status:

"Chris Rumph [II] is kind of a hip/knee. We'll know more. It's not severe in nature."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On the Seahawks' defensive performance today:

"I thought they played really well defensively. Unfortunately, we didn't execute the way that we wanted to today. I turned the ball over a couple of times, and you can't expect to do that and win games in the NFL."

On his interception:

"Just the defender went up and got it. A costly turnover. You can't turn the ball over like that in the NFL."

On his message to the wide receivers:

"We believe highly in the guys that are stepping up. It didn't go our way today, but [WR] Jason Moore, [WR] Michael Bandy, [WR] DeAndre Carter, they have stepped up big time for us. We're going to need to continue to rely on those guys, especially as we're losing some guys, but we'll keep fighting and we'll keep getting after it."

On entering the bye week following a loss:

"It's unfortunate that you don't get the win. Every game, we're trying to win. That's the unfortunate part about today, we didn't execute the way we wanted to. We'll watch the film tomorrow and we'll get better. We'll have to keep moving forward."

On how he will spend the bye week:

"I'll probably just treat it like a normal week, just keep watching film and take care of my body, do treatment and do all of the stuff to get back and ready for next Sunday."

On anything that he would have 'done differently' on the strip-sack:

"I could always step up [in the pocket]. I could always get the ball out quicker. That's the unfortunate part, you have to be able to step up in the pocket, know the defenders right there. You just can't turn the ball over like that."

On if he saw his younger brother, Oregon TE Patrick Herbert, secure a reception in yesterday's win over UCLA:

"I did. It was cool to see."

On avoiding early deficits:

"We can continue to try and execute, get the ball moving early in the first quarter. Just get the ball to those guys on the outside to make plays and just stay ahead of the chains."

On Head Coach Brandon Staley's message to the team following the game:

"Just keep fighting. We're 4-3 at the moment. There's a lot of football left. We're going to get our bodies back this week, get healthy, continue to improve and keep getting after it."

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS EXECUTIVE VP OF FOOTBALL OPERATIONS/HEAD COACH PETE CARROLL

Opening statement:

"I really liked this today. I like the way we played. I thought you could feel us in all three phases. We were humming and guys were running and hitting the way we wanted to. It was a really physical game. It was good to see the offense be able to go down the field and put some points on the board and the defense was slowing down. Other than the turnovers that screwed us up, we really had a really solid football game. Anytime we can go out and run the ball for a bundle, 160-something [yards], and take care of the football like [Seahawks QB] Geno [Smith] did throwing it, 20-of-27, really efficient stuff, and then play defense to complement that. We know that we are going to be good on teams. It just fits together really well. To do it two weeks in a row, we made more progress in this game. I think, all around, it feels good to our guys. They can feel it. They can feel their defense. They can feel what they are doing and how they fit together. This is what can happen when you start moving. I'm really excited about it and looking forward to getting it going again next week."

On Seahawks WR DK Metcalf's injury status:

"He came down on his knee in an odd way. X-ray showed nothing there, but we're going to have to take him back and get him tested and checked out with MRIs and all of that stuff to make sure. We'll have to wait and see. Can't tell you. I'm sorry."

On the defense forcing a turnover on downs after the interception in the first quarter:

"That was really important. It was a really important message. That was a big stop. We stopped them on fourth down three out of four [times]. We had four out of five last week. That's a statement that our guys have made. You go back to the first game of the year when we were first putting it together and we did it a number of times in that game as well. Guys are coming through when their number is called, they have to make something happen, just exactly what we need and they have been able to do that. There were these few weeks from the first game to the last two weeks that we just weren't hitting it right. We made some adjustments, [Seahawks Defensive Coordinator] Clint [Hurtt] did a great job with the staff and they reached the players. The players are onboard in a way that is giving us a chance to really move forward and continue to get better. We have a long ways to go and we have a lot of improvement we can still make. That's an exciting thing for a coach."

On Seahawks RB Kenneth Walker III's 74-yard touchdown rush:

"Somebody was hollering about there might have been a flag or something, so I didn't get to enjoy it quite as much as I will. The guys went nuts about it. It just looked so cool. He just came right to us. I think it was [TE Will] Dissly and [TE] Noah [Fant], they had a great combination block to get the thing sprung and out he went. I don't think anybody touched him. He certainly has big-play ability. You can see the speed that he has. It wasn't even in doubt. It's really exciting to see that happen."

On maintaining the lead after 14-straight points scored from the Chargers:

"The drive of the game was after the 10-minute drive from where we were backed. They had done something and then we came right back and got rolling, just hung on to the football and took it on down and got a field goal. Knocking 10 minutes off of the clock, that's offense working together with the defense. That was really timely and it just showed that we have the ability to do some really cool things. I'm fired up about us."

On if he thinks the defense's 'issues from the first few weeks are gone':

"I do. I really do. Still, all kinds of improvement out there. [Seahawks SS] Ryan Neal showed up really well today. [Seahawks LB] Uchenna [Nwosu] had a terrific game. Uchenna was really an inspirational part of this prep in this week and coming back against his own guys, it was great that he was able to have a good game also. He cramped up, so he's OK. Those guys showed up, obviously. There were a bunch of guys that made plays today. It was pretty fun."

On being in first place in the NFC West:

"Nobody told me that before we started the meetings in there. I would have been going nuts about that. That's fun, too. That's good. Seven weeks in and look where we are. Who would have thunk it?"

On the defense's pass rush:

"They were five out of 15 on third down. This is a good club and a good thrower. Their catchers were playing. It was a really nice job. The way it worked out today, it was rushing and coverage working together. He held the football some. That gave us a chance to get the pressure on him and there were a couple of great rushers. [LB] Darrell Taylor had a great rush. Knocked the ball out and had a nice little return and all of that, which was fun. You can see it fitting together the way it needs to."

On Metcalf's injury:

"He did something to his knee. His knee wasn't feeling right and he had landed in front and that's kind of all I know about it right now. I'm thrilled that there was nothing on the X-rays. That's one test and we have to get another test when we get back."

On if Metcalf's injury occurred on a pass toward the sideline near the goal line in the first quarter:

"Yeah. It was the one that he went up for it in the end zone."

On Seahawks WR Marquise Goodwin:

"I'm really excited for Marquise. He came to us kind of late and had a great camp with us and then got kind of hampered a little bit, but showed great stuff. He's so explosive. I don't know how old he is, but he's still really, really fast and it shows on the field. He gives you a real boost and you can see it. He had a couple of terrific touchdowns today. Had a nice catch last week, as well. If DK is going to take a little bit to get back, he'll jump in, too. Overall, we really feel confident using him. He had a lot of fun playing today. It was exciting to see him help us out so much."

On Seahawks QB Geno Smith:

"This is Geno at the other end of his career. He has all of those years behind him. Because he's such a good guy and he's such a great competitor, he's studied his butt off to understand the game better. He's playing like a real pro. He gets it. He can see it. It's not too fast for him. He can make all of the checks, all of the adjustments. You saw him so many times use the clock all the way down to the nub to get us in the right play and to get the protection right, working with [C] Austin Blythe. He's got marvelous mechanical ability. He can throw the ball as well as anybody. He can throw it hard. He can throw touch throws and take advantage of those. I didn't see what our third-down numbers were today, but he's just been really good in tough situations. He made some great throws. [Seahawks WR] Tyler [Lockett] made a couple of terrific plays. Those guys are really hooking up. They've been hooking up all year and you can see it, but it happened again today. A couple really just fantastic third-down conversions for us. There are no restrictions on Geno. He can do whatever we can think of. He's different than he was. You can put a label on somebody for what he was and then you miss the whole chance to understand this guy. This guy is a different guy. He's experienced. He's physically fit. He's having a blast. He's living in an elevation of poise with the way that he's handling it. It's perfect. It's perfect for the moment. We're thrilled to see it happen and it couldn't happen to a better guy."

On Seahawks RB Kenneth Walker III:

"He really did have some terrific runs. He had a great three-yard run one time when he got caught in the backfield. He just has a ton of ability. He's really a natural football player. There is nothing he can't do. There is nothing he can't do. He can catch it. He can run it. He can break big plays. He can run short yardage. He can run off tackle. He can run around the edge like you saw him on the big play. It's a terrific draft pick. He's a terrific guy to add to our football team and he's doing it."

On Seahawks WR Tyler Lockett:

"He played fantastic. We spotted him and tried to take care of him through out the game. He made it through fine. You might miss the extraordinary catch he made on a low ball just inches off the ground for a conversion. He made another one in a different situation. He's an incredible player and he did it again today. It was seven catches for 45 yards, but they were so important in the situations he made his plays."

On the difference in the defense over the last few weeks:

"We didn't go where everybody was saying we were going. We just went where we had a real clear vision of what we could build and we stayed with it and we had to tweak some stuff. We had to change some things that we were doing to fit the people and their strengths. The players embraced it. There is no looking back now. There is no looking back. We're going to keep going and we're going to keep getting better and learn how to play with each other. That's really important. And utilize the scheme and the coaches and the coaches utilizing the players and their strengths. All of that is blending. I'm sorry it wasn't faster. We tried, but it just took a while."

On the injury statuses of Seahawks FB/LB Nick Bellore and Seahawks G Phil Haynes:

“Both of those guys were checked out for concussions. I don’t know what to tell you other than that. Let me say this, Phillip was designated to be taken out from upstairs, which was great because we didn’t see the hit, but they saw it. At the time, we didn’t know what they were doing because he played another play after that, I think. I think he played another play. That might not be right. That’s awesome because they brought it up, he didn’t need to be taken out of the game, so that’s the system working for you. It was a great job by the people in the booth.”

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS QUARTERBACK GENO SMITH

On today's game:

"Every game is a championship game and that's what it felt like. Ebbs and flows in the game. Ups and downs. We get momentum, then they get momentum. I think what the best teams do is that there are defining moments where you can really take control of the game. I think there in the third quarter, there was a spot for us to do that. Just to keep those drives alive and converting on third downs, that says a lot about our team and our offense. We just have to continue to build, continue to get better and look at those moments and say, 'Hey, this is what we can do.' Set that standard for ourselves."

On the defense's performance on fourth down:

"Our defense is growing. The more they get confidence and the more plays they make, it just makes for a more well-rounded team. As an offense, we have a long way to go as well and as a team we have to continue to build, but as you can see we are feeding off of one another. That's what coach talks about, he talks about team ball, complimentary ball and that is what it is about. If you want to be a great team, all sides have to contribute."

On gaining an early lead:

"We felt great, but one thing Coach [Carroll] always says is that you cannot win the game in the first quarter, second quarter, or third quarter. Everyone has seen him say that. We were not thinking the game was over at all. They have an explosive offense. [QB] Justin Herbert is a great quarterback. They have great receivers and they can score in a heartbeat. Our thought process was to keep the foot on the peddle and continue to play hard until the end of the game. There were moments throughout the game where we had chances to just go out there and make plays and we just did that."

On Seahawks WR Marquise Goodwin's performance today:

"That is what I talked about last week. We have guys all around that given the opportunity, can step up and make plays. I myself received an opportunity and now I'm given a chance to go out there and thrive. We have guys all over the team who have not gotten an opportunity yet, but when they do get their opportunities, they step up and make plays. Marquise is a great player and has been a great player in this league for a long time. World-class speed, tremendous hands. He made two great catches. We just have to continue to build on that. We have other guys that have to step up as well. You can never replace a guy like [Seahawks WR] DK Metcalf, I mean, he is just that special. We have guys that are going to contribute and fill that void."

On team's performance through the first seven games:

"We have a long way to go. 4-3 is OK, but it is not the greatest. We have a long way to go. We must keep building. We have 10 games in the regular season left and each game will be a championship game. Each one of those games are going to matter. I am happy with the win, we are all happy with the win, but I am ready to go to work tomorrow."

On 'absorbing his moment':

"This moment is not for myself. I do not really care about it. It is for the team. The opportunity to play is all that matters to me. It is to be able to go out there with the guys to compete. As far as any vindication, I already knew who I was. This is not fulfilling me in any way. It is about the team and how we can get better and continue to win each week. For me, I just need to continue to work hard and continue to lead and all the other stuff I am not really focused on."

On the Chargers' defense today:

"They have great players all over the field. They were playing great. [LB] Kyle Van Noy, [OLB] Khalil Mack, [DL Sebastian] Joseph-Day up front, they have studs all over. Their young linebackers were playing hard. [S] Derwin [James Jr.] was flying all over the field. Prayers up for [CB] J.C. Jackson, he is a great player. I hope he heals and gets better fast. As you can see, [CB] Asante [Samuel Jr.] made a couple of great plays on the ball. He almost got to me a few times. They have great players out there and so do we. It was great competition on both sides. It was awesome. It was great to go up against those guys"

On Metcalf's injury:

"I actually did not see it, but when I got the news, man, it was just heartbreaking. I know how hard he works and I know what he means to this team and this offense. He is one of my good friends as well. You hate to see a guy go down like that, especially since he was doing so well and having a great year, a career year. It sucks. It sucks for our team. It sucks for him and it sucks for our fans, but the reality is that we have to keep going. Guys have got to step up and I expect that to happen."

On Seahawks WR Dee Eskridge's preparation:

"Dee [Eskridge] is ready. He just had a baby and I know he is motivated. He's been competing and he has been studying his butt off. We are doing extra meetings. We were in the locker room talking about continuing to get together, continue to talk about the gameplan and be on the same page so that when we are out there playing, it is just natural. We have to continue to get it to him."

On Seahawks WR Marquise Goodwin's touchdown catch:

"He is a high jumper, one of the best in the world. He is an elite receiver. He was drafted high for a reason. He all the skillsets that you look for in a receiver. Obviously, he is not the tallest guy, but he is explosive. He can jump and can run faster than anybody. He has got great hands and we have to continue to give him opportunities to make those plays and put him in spots so he can continue to be successful."

On Seahawks RB Kenneth Walker III:

"That dude is special, man. Ken is a special player. You can just see the look in his eyes. He's focused. All he needs is a crease and he can be gone. That was an 80-yard run or something like that? He had a 74-yard run. That's amazing just for a guy to hit that crease and he was gone. I'm just sitting there and the best thing I did on that play was toss it to him. Having a guy like that who can explode at any minute is awesome."

On the Seahawks being in first place in the NFC West:

"We're happy with it. We're happy with it, but we're not done. We have a lot of work to do and we're not done. It's just the beginning. It's just the start of the season for us and we have to get this thing rolling. We're extremely excited with where we are at, but we know we have to get better and keep moving forward."

On the 'prove the doubters wrong tour':

"I'm not even on that tour, to be honest with you [laughter]. I'm not worried about doubters. My life has been great for a long time. I'm just out here battling with my brothers and continuing to work."