

Chargers Week 17 Media Availability

Friday, December 30, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On if OLB Joey Bosa will be activated in advance of Sunday's game:

"That's the plan."

On Bosa's performance in practice this week:

"He has looked good. He was able to share with you guys a little bit of what we've seen in his progression, which is a guy that was getting better and better. We didn't want to designate him to return if we didn't feel like he was capable of going out there and performing. He looked good in the practices. This is going to be part of his return to play, getting out there and playing football. I'm excited to see him compete."

On Bosa 'dealing with nagging injuries for a number of years':

"If you observe Joey [Bosa] before practice, you'll know that he is a guy that needs to get tuned up. I think what you're seeing is a guy that was just really pushing through a lot. It wasn't anything that was inhibiting his play, as he told you, but these guys go through a lot. It just shows you how tough of a player he really is. What's been amazing for me to see is just how he feels now. There's just a piece there where I feel good. I'm excited to see him go out there and play football like I know he knows how and to have that freedom to know that he's healthy."

On if Bosa will be on a 'snap count' on Sunday:

"He has to get his football conditioning, just like everybody else. It's not like he is going to go out there and play like he has been playing for three or four months, but he is going to go out there and play. That was our plan."

On S Derwin James Jr.'s progress:

"He's doing well."

On James Jr.'s status within the concussion protocol:

"He is working his way through."

On if Bosa 'will be where he should be conditioning-wise' by the Wild Card Round:

"Joey [Bosa] is one of the top players in the league, so I imagine that he just needs to play a little bit to get his full wind. You have to get your full football wind, just like [WR] Keenan [Allen] being out for however long he was out — 10 weeks or whatever. It took Keenan a couple of games to get his entire, like, 'Hey, I can go the whole way.' These guys are the best of the best, so I'm sure it won't take them long."

On if injured players ‘have to get a grasp of the game’ when returning to play:

“Yeah, you have to get your timing back, and your rhythm. You have to get your pads on. You guys have heard me talk about that, there’s a difference between like working out there on a grass field in shirts and shorts, and then having shoulder pads and helmets and you’re hitting people. He has to get all that football stuff back. ‘I’m wearing my pads, the contact, how I feel after contact, a game, all that soreness.’ All of that that is part of football.”

On RB Austin Ekeler’s knee injury:

“He’s progressing well. Just typical running back stuff, but we expect him to play.”

On OLB Kyle Van Noy’s tweet saying that ‘the media needs to give Staley more respect’ and his reaction to that:

“I didn’t see that tweet. What your players think of you matters the most. The fact that he did say that, that means a lot to me. I’m more excited about what we’re able to do for him, him coming here and us earning a playoff appearance, and people discovering how special of a player he really is. That was a big goal of mine for him, was for him to come here and be able to finish his career the right way and be able to help me create a culture. That’s exactly what he’s done. He’s performing at a high level. For me, it’s about living up to your end of the bargain with these players. Being everything that you want them to be, that’s my goal as a coach. We certainly wouldn’t be in this position without Kyle.”

On LB Drue Tranquill:

“I think that Drue Tranquill is playing the middle linebacker position as well as anybody that I’m watching on tape right now in the NFL. In the last three weeks, he has really taken full command of the huddle, really connecting people at a high level. Then, doing all of the things that you need to do at linebacker in this league, which is see the game, key diagnose, line people up. He’s running sideline-to-sideline, tackling well, covering backs, blitzing. I think that he’s shown himself to be a complete player His best football is still ahead of him, but I think that he’s shown that he’s one of the top players playing that position this year, for sure. He’s been a real big factor in our success this entire season. Then, really this stretch that we have had these last three games.”

On the defense ‘playing at their best right now’:

“No, we still have a lot more gears that we can get to, as a defense. There are so many more things that are within this group. This is what we have to attack next game and these next opportunities that we get.”

On the defense ‘playing more Cover 2 as of late’:

“I think that it’s a lot of the coverage variety that we believe in. There are always chapters that you want to keep for a long season. Some of it is matchup-driven, but we really believe in that variety, that it’s the spice of life. You have to make it tough on people. One of the ways that you make it tough on people is by flipping the script. That’s what we’ve always tried to do, but I think that we’ve played it well. That’s another motive — any time that you’re playing something well, you want to do it. That’s kind of what we believe in, you may not see that coverage for a couple of weeks, but we know that we have it. That’s one of the hallmarks of the way that we play.”

On if there is a ‘renewed sense of energy’ with Mack and Bosa returning to the lineup:

“I think that is fair to say. I think that there is a different energy when you get the addition, certainly of player of Joey’s caliber, which is one of the top players in the league. For myself and everybody, you know that is Joey Bosa over there, that is coming to play, and that is exciting for us, to be able to get a player of his caliber back. He has a lot of work in front of him for him to play his best, but it has been great to have him back at practice. The other thing for our guys that I think is really special is that they know how hard Joey [Bosa] worked to get back. I think that level of respect for the team, too, is just respecting, ‘Hey, man, this guy really had to put in a lot of work to come back this season for us.’ That is what is cool about it to me.”

On if there is a ‘relief’ that ‘media will not be asking about Bosa’s return any longer’:

“I have great stamina [*laughter*]. I don’t think that is going to change any time soon. I appreciate the role that you have in asking that question and I won’t ever get chippy, for sure.”

On Rams DB Jalen Ramsey:

“Rare size and speed. Rare athlete. Rare versatility. He can play any DB position on the field. Not only can he play it, but he can play it at a premium level. You have heard me talk about Derwin [James Jr.] in that way. It is one thing to be able to have the skillset to play all of those places, but then to have the mental capacity, the football IQ — he is also one of the smartest players that I have ever coached, and then had to compete against now. You just know that he is the fiercest competitor that you can coach. I certainly wouldn’t be here without him. It’s going to be a great matchup for us this week against him.”

On the tandem of Ramsey and S Derwin James Jr. at Florida State:

“In college, that’s why it’s about recruiting — you can recruit guys like that. In the NFL, there’s a salary cap [*laughter*]. Florida State, you can recruit a whole team full of guys like that. They didn’t capitalize on those guys very well in recruiting [*laughter*]. I made that joke to both of them. I think there is that stat, like those two guys are like two of four defensive backs that have had the type of Combine [performance] that they had. They are two unique players. They happen to be best friends. I have been fortunate to get to coach both of them. They are both really, really special. Jalen [Ramsey] is having another great year. Like I said, it’s going to be really competitive on Sunday.”

QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On keeping prepared on offense with two games left ahead of the playoffs:

“The focus is the same as always. It is very important to attack this week like it is the most important game of the week — and it is. This is a really good Rams team that we are facing, and we have had to have a good week of practice for any chance on Sunday. They are playing pretty well offensively and defensively, so we have had to watch a lot of film, but we have a lot of respect for those guys.”

On if the offense ‘will experiment more’ in the final two games:

“I think that might be a better question for the coaches. I think it is always a great opportunity just to keep playing football. It is always a pleasure and honor to have two more games and to be able to play these football games. It is not the end of our season, but it’s a great chance for us to get better and keep pushing it.”

On OLB Joey Bosa:

“It’s just huge to see him back out at practice. He brings a different energy to the team. To have him back around, working out, whatever happens, just excited to see him back in the facility.”

On finding a rhythm on offense and what that means for a quarterback:

“I think just to move the ball consistently. To execute in the red zone, limit turnovers and convert on third downs. The same things that we are attacking every week. Like I said, it’s a great opportunity for us to get better as an offense. Still two weeks of work and improvement, so hopefully we will get things to be more consistent.”

On if part of trying to find rhythm involves teammates returning from injury:

“I think it could be. I am not exactly sure. I think we just need to be better and we could be more consistent. We could execute better on third down, limit turnovers. That starts with me. There is plenty of room for improvement and definitely stuff that we have emphasized this week.”

On Rams LBs Bobby Wagner and Ernest Jones:

“They are very talented. We have so much respect for those guys and they fly around. They play fast. They are really well-coached and they are playing really good defense.”

On Rams DB Jalen Ramsey and any ‘similarities’ between S Derwin James Jr.:

“Jalen is one of the best in the league. We have so much respect for him as a competitor, as a teammate and as a corner. He is able to lineup in a lot of different places, kind of like Derwin. They are both really smart football players. You have to be aware of them on the field.”