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Chargers Week 1 Media Availability

Friday, September 9, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On CB J.C. Jackson's injury status, being listed as doubtful for Sunday:

"He's out there doing a lot of DB drills on his own. We're kind of putting him through individual [drills], ramping him up. He's going to go again tomorrow, and then he'll go again pregame. Then, we'll see what happens."

On how Jackson's wound is healing:

"Great. We wouldn't put him out there in individual if that wasn't healed. That part is healed, and now, it's just ramping him up and seeing where he is at tomorrow from a conditioning standpoint and all of that."

On if Jackson does not play on Sunday, is he 'trending toward' playing on Thursday night in Week 2:

"I think it's too early to tell. We're just going to push it and see where it goes. We're always going to do what's in the best interest of him. He's been great. He's been great to work with. He's a stud. He loves to compete. He's a hard worker and really tough. We'll just see where it goes."

On TE Donald Parham's injury status:

"He had a little bit of a setback. It's taken some time. It's just been kind of tricky. He's disappointed but not discouraged. We'll get him back here soon."

On LB Drue Tranquill's injury status:

"Kind of something at the end of practice yesterday. Just being cautious and seeing, today, how he feels. Then, tomorrow, I think we'll have a better sense of where he's at. Just being cautious today."

On activating a player from the practice squad if Parham does not play:

"I think that's a possibility."

On which practice squad tight end might potentially be activated:

"We're definitely sorting through that today. I think we've given both of them opportunities this week. Here in the next 24 hours, I think we'll be able to make that determination."

On if the team will activate an extra offensive lineman for the game:

"Big day today to make some of those determinations. I think that it will be dependent on the tight end position, whether or not we would call up another lineman."

On increased confidence entering his second season:

"I think any time that you get to do something more, you get better at it. That's how I feel. I feel that every single day I'm improving, and that's all any competitor can hope for. I love the people that I'm competing with. I think, like I've said, from the top down, from our ownership, the personnel department, our coaches, our players, our staff, you guys, I think that we have a team that believes in each other. Now, it's time to go prove ourselves and compete on Sunday. We're excited."

On ‘the last time [Raiders Head Coach Josh] McDaniels’ offensive scheme had a receiver as good as [Raiders WR] Davante [Adams]:’

“Randy [Moss]. That ‘07 New England team was a historic team, with Randy [Moss] and [Wes] Welker and that group of guys. He’s played with a lot of different guys over the course of his career. He also had Brandon Marshall. He knows how to use his pieces. Then, you also know that Davante [Adams] has made a name for himself in Green Bay in how he plays. You know that there are going to be some things that he likes that he’s going to bring with him. Josh [McDaniels] is a very good coach and knows how to use his players, for sure.”

On Raiders WR Hunter Renfrow:

“He has voodoo at the top of the route. He’s a multi-cut route-runner in level one and level two. He has a lot of that creativity and set up. Then, he has that the football IQ. He has that ability to process on the move and attack your leverage, create leverage, and be extremely friendly to the quarterback. He’s an outstanding football player. He has real toughness, much better run-after-the-catch than people realize, because he’s a strong player. Full respect for his game.”

On adjusting in-game in Week 1:

“You have to practice like that. You have to start from the first OTA, from your first meeting in Phase I. You have to have the agility in your football team to be able to compete like that. You have to create a foundation in football where you can draw from things, and that your players have a foundation in those types of contingencies so that when you do need to make that adjustment quickly, they can go perform it. It’s not theory to them, it’s application. That is the way that you have to practice throughout the year to be able to live like that. That is what is going to be required of us on Sunday, for sure, for a lot of reasons, but it’s like that every Sunday in the NFL. I know that coaches and players, the first game, you don’t know what’s coming out of the gate. That’s true, but it’s kind of like that every week in the NFL. The best people in this league know that every week is like that, so you have to prepare accordingly.”

On the challenge for the offense in competing against Raiders DEs Maxx Crosby and Chandler Jones:

“There’s danger on every snap, in the run game and in the pass game. I think both of those guys, they both play with a motor. There’s not like there are going to be downs off for you. They’re putting the pressure on you every snap. Just have full respect for their game. Chandler [Jones] standing the test of time. I was in the division with him with the Rams and [Rams Head Coach] Sean [McVay] having to go against him all the time. [Offensive Coordinator] Joe Lombardi has had to face him throughout his career, whether it was in New England or in Arizona. This is a very complete player, very complete rusher. He can rush with speed, power, hands. He has set up, can rush inside. It’s the same thing with Maxx [Crosby]. They’re both really long players, really long. They can affect the game every down. Definitely one of the top tandems that you’ll face, for sure.”

On John Carroll University connections prevalent between the Chargers and Raiders:

“Personal history for John Carroll, there’s an assistant on his staff named [Defensive Quality Control] Matt Feeney, who was my starting linebacker, my team captain, my first year at John Carroll. One of the best teams to ever play at John Carroll. That’s where the John Carroll connection is for me. I know Josh [McDaniels] and [Raiders General Manager Dave] Ziegler, I know those guys, but Matt is one of my all-time favorite players that I’ve ever coached. He’s one of the best players I’ve ever coached. He coaches for them. That’s what the John Carroll connection is for me. Him and his wife, their little girls, that’s where it is for me.”

On the special teams units:

“Really confident, really confident. They’ve earned our confidence. Now, they get to go prove themselves to everybody else. Really excited for them to be able to show people what they’ve been working on, helping us create a culture in that phase. That’s the challenge that’s in front of them, is to help create a culture in that phase for us because it hasn’t been there. There’s a great opportunity. I’m excited about all those guys. They’ve worked really hard. They fit right in, they’re Chargers all the way. Now, we have to go prove ourselves.”

On if starters will play on special teams:

“Yes, you can count on it.”

QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On preparing for Sunday's game:

"It's exciting. We've spent a lot of time this offseason getting prepared for this week and we're going to do everything we can to work on a good protection plan, timing with the receivers. It's exciting to finally be back at it."

On Raiders DE Chandler Jones:

"He's definitely a tough defender. He's had so much success in this league that he's definitely a threat on that side of the ball and you have to have a good protection plan for those guys, especially [Raiders DE] Maxx [Crosby], as well. They are two of the best in the league."

On entering his second season in the same offensive system:

"I think it's always huge to have a year of film on the offense, especially with this [Offensive Coordinator] Joe Lombardi system that we went with last year. We're just going, learning, doing our best to pick it up as quickly as we could last year, but I feel like we're kind of steps ahead of where we were at this point last year. I think the timing with the receivers has been great, the protection, it's all been blocked up. We're going to do everything we can to continue to develop, get better at that because there's still plenty of room for improvement."

On the approach of preparing for Raiders Defensive Coordinator Patrick Graham's new defense:

"It's going to be tough. You just have to watch as much film as you can. You have to watch the Giants. You have to watch the Raiders. You have to watch the preseason. Do everything you can to see as much as you can so that you are able to kind of adapt to whatever is out on the field. We know that they are a very talented team, well coached, and so they are going to play different coverages and we might not know exactly what they are going to do, but we're going to do our best to adapt out there and try and watch as much film as we can this week heading into it to feel comfortable."

On how much adjusting he is expecting to do when facing the Raiders defense early in the game:

"That's a great question. That's kind of what you find out after the first drive. You spend this week and last week as well, just preparing, watching as much film as you can. Maybe it's what we saw, maybe it's not. You're going to have to adjust and come back to the sidelines and say, 'Hey, this is what they're doing. This is what we're going to need to do.' It takes a team effort to do that."

On if he enjoys the 'figuring out process of a defense' on game days:

"I think it's part of the challenge. If I was defensive coordinators, too, I wouldn't show anything. I'd do my best to hide or disguise and make the opponent think as much as they can. It's part of the challenge and going into this week, just watch as much film as we can and just see whatever they do and adapt to that."

On if Week 1 games 'are the games that see the most adjustments':

"That's a good question. I think, for the most part, it's probably Week 1 just because it's a new opponent and you haven't seen a whole lot of film on exactly what they are going to do that year. But I think throughout the year, you're going to see differences and you're going to have to make adjustments and I think that's what good teams do, so we're going to try and do that this year."

On how much the Chargers defense in training camp helped prepare him for Week 1:

"Those guys are so competitive and we did a great job this offseason of just pushing each other. They make us better, and hopefully we made them better. To have guys like [CB] J.C. Jackson, [S] Derwin [James Jr.], [S] Nasir Adderley] Nas, [CB] Bryce Callahan, all of those guys on defense, they make us better. To go up against those guys week in and week out, it made us better going into the year."

On RB Sony Michel:

"He's been awesome. He's been able to pick up the offense really quickly. Obviously, very smart, very talented, but he picked it up incredibly quickly. I don't know what the plan is with him, but he's a good dude and really excited to watch him play this year."

On C Corey Linsley's ability to identify defensive cues:

"He is one of the best at that. To come off to the sideline and be able to talk with him, [G] Matt Feiler, [T] Rashawn [Slater], who have seen a lot of football, you know that offensive line is going to be prepared. We're going to do our best to have a good protection plan going into it. To have a guy like [RB] Austin Ekeler blocking, as well, I think to have that group of guys, that core group of guys together, it helps a ton on game day."

On if he 'likes opening the season against a divisional opponent':

"I think the division games are always super important, especially with the division that we're in. We think really highly of the opponents in our division and they mean a lot to us. And so week in, week out, we're going to have to do our best, put our best effort out there, but it's a great challenge and an exciting opportunity."

On if he'd rather play division opponents later in the season:

"I think the great thing about that is I don't get to pick the schedule and so whatever they put out in front of us, we're going to have to do our best to play. We can complain, we can do whatever we want, but we're playing the Raiders Week 1, so we have to be ready for them."

On G Zion Johnson:

"Zion has done a great job this offseason. Maybe he's had a little more reps compared to the year prior with COVID, but Zion is picking it up very quickly. He's a steady guy out there and we know that he's going to give us his best effort. It's been great to have him out there."

On improving his footwork:

"Hopefully, I've improved a little bit on that. I think we spend a lot of time this offseason working on that with [Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks Coach] Shane Day, Joe Lombardi and the rest of the quarterbacks. It was a huge emphasis for us going into this offseason, especially. Only time will tell. We're going to do our best to execute out there and have calm feet in the pocket. We'll find out."

On his familiarity with TE Gerald Everett:

"It's grown quite a bit. It's been a huge addition for us and to have a guy like that who can beat man coverage and does special things with the ball when he gets it in his hands, you have to find him. You have to get plays designed for him to go make something happen. Gerald has done a great job of picking up the offense and it's not an easy offense to pick up, but he's done that and we're going to do our best to get him the ball because special things happen when he gets the ball."

On if Everett is a 'yards-after-the-catch threat':

"I think that is a good point you bring up. Gerald is obviously a very special, talented, athletic guy. I think the tight ends that we had in the past couple of years, too, are pretty talented as well. [Former Chargers TEs] Jared Cook and Hunter Henry, those guys were pretty good with the ball, as well. We've been fortunate enough to have guys like that, especially me being able to throw to those guys because they make my job a lot easier."

On how his comfort level with WR Joshua Palmer has grown:

"A ton. He's so much more comfortable in the offense and he's confident and he knows exactly what he's doing. He runs the ball really well, runs hard on routes, and so he's one of those guys that you trust out there and you know he's going to put his best effort and somehow he is going to get open."

On when he 'switches the competitor switch on' on game days:

"I think that's kind of a weekly thing. I do my best to take practice reps, and when we're in the film room, to take all of those reps like it's a game. There are definitely times to turn that off when you're home or when you're eating lunch, but being in that mode and being prepared heading into Sunday is what gives us our best advantage."

On if he 'turns his competitiveness off' on Friday or Saturday:

"I try not to turn it off. I need to be dialed in as long as I can, studying and preparing as best as I can, so that I have any chance on Sunday."

On if he watched last night's game between the Bills and Rams:
"Bits and pieces."

On where he watched the game:
"We were here, in the quarterback room."