



LA GAME RELEASE

WEEK 1 vs. LAS VEGAS **RAIDERS**

SUN. SEPT. 11, 2022 | 1:25 PM PT



LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

GAME RELEASE

714.540.7100 ✦ chargers.com ✦ @chargers



Josh.Rupprecht@chargers.nfl.com ✦ Jennifer.Rojas@chargers.nfl.com ✦ Jamaal.LaFrance@chargers.nfl.com

Brock.Anderson@chargers.nfl.com ✦ Danny.Markino@chargers.nfl.com ✦ Jordan.Colquitt@chargers.nfl.com ✦ Leonie.Strehl@chargers.nfl.com

BOLTS HOST RAIDERS AT SOFI STADIUM TO OPEN 2022

The Los Angeles Chargers host the Las Vegas Raiders to open the 2022 season, kicking off at 1:25 p.m. PT from SoFi Stadium. Kevin Harlan, Trent Green and Melanie Collins have the call on CBS, while Matt “Money” Smith, Daniel Jeremiah and Shannon Farren will broadcast on the Chargers Radio Network airwaves on ALT FM-98.7. Adrian Garcia-Marquez and Francisco Pinto will present the game in Spanish on Que Buena FM 105.5/94.3.

The Bolts begin their second season under Head Coach **Brandon Staley**, who led the team to a winning record and saw six players earn Pro Bowl nods — including quarterback **Justin Herbert**, who was named the game's Offensive MVP.

Herbert set numerous records in his second pro season last year, including single-season team records for completions (443), passing yards (5,014), touchdowns (38) and 300-yard performances (nine). The Bolts bolstered their roster this offseason with acquisitions that included six-time Pro Bowl outside linebacker **Khalil Mack**, Pro Bowl cornerback **J.C. Jackson** and long snapper **Josh Harris**, along with cornerback **Bryce Callahan**, outside linebacker **Kyle Van Noy** and rookie first-round pick **Zion Johnson**.

In addition to General Manager Dave Ziegler and Head Coach Josh McDaniels, Las Vegas added wide receiver Davante Adams as an offensive weapon for quarterback Derek Carr. The team also had defensive additions of defensive end Chandler Jones, linebacker Jayon Brown and cornerback Rock Ya-Sin.

The Chargers next have a short week and head to Kansas City for the first *Thursday Night Football* broadcast exclusively on Prime Video of the season. Kickoff from GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium on Thurs., Sept. 15 is slated for 5:15 pm PT.

BY THE NUMBERS

22 The 2022 Chargers roster features 22 new acquisitions, including eight draft selections, 13 free agent signings and one player acquired via trade.

5 The Chargers are scheduled to play five prime-time game this year, including a pair of games at SoFi Stadium. The team plays on *Monday Night Football* twice, *Sunday Night Football* twice and in the first-ever *Thursday Night Football* contest broadcast exclusively on Prime Video.

25 RB Austin Ekeler is one touchdown catch away from being the youngest running back in the common draft era (since 1967) to haul in 25 receiving scores.

ON THE CALL

TELEVISION: CBS

Play-by-play: Kevin Harlan
Analysts: Trent Green
Sideline: Melanie Collins

NATIONAL RADIO: SPORTS USA

Play-by-play: Larry Kahn
Analyst: Doug Plank

CHARGERS RADIO: ALT FM-98.7

Play-by-play: Matt “Money” Smith
Analyst: Daniel Jeremiah
Sideline: Shannon Farren

SPANISH RADIO:

QUE BUENA FM-105.5/94.3
Play-by-play: Adrian Garcia-Marquez
Analyst: Francisco Pinto

CHARGERS MOBILE APP: Official team news, full game stats, live local Chargers games on the Chargers mobile app. For more details, visit Chargers.com/app.

**Geographic and device restrictions apply. Local & primetime games only. Data charges may apply.*

2022 CHARGERS SCHEDULE

PRESEASON (0-3)

Wk	Date	Opponent	TV	Results
1	Sat., Aug. 13	L.A. RAMS	KCBS	L, 29-22
2	Sat., Aug. 20	DALLAS	KCBS	L, 32-18
3	Fri., Aug. 26	at New Orleans	KCBS	L, 27-10

REGULAR SEASON (0-0)

Wk	Date	Opponent	TV	Time*/Res.
1	Sun., Sept. 11	LAS VEGAS	CBS	1:25 p.m.
2	Thurs., Sept. 15	at Kansas City	PRIME	5:15 p.m.
3	Sun., Sept. 25	JACKSONVILLE	CBS	1:05 p.m.
4	Sun., Oct. 2	at Houston	CBS	10:00 a.m.
5	Sun., Oct. 9	at Cleveland	CBS	10:00 a.m.
6	Mon., Oct. 17	DENVER	ESPN	5:15 p.m.
7	Sun., Oct. 23	SEATTLE	FOX	1:25 p.m.
8	—	BYE	—	—
9	Sun., Nov. 6	at Atlanta	FOX	10:00 a.m.
10	Sun., Nov. 13	at San Francisco	NBC	5:20 p.m.
11	Sun., Nov. 20	KANSAS CITY	CBS	1:25 p.m.
12	Sun., Nov. 27	at Arizona	CBS	1:05 p.m.
13	Sun., Dec. 4	at Las Vegas	CBS	1:25 p.m.
14	Sun., Dec. 11	MIAMI	CBS	1:05 p.m.
15	Sun., Dec. 18	TENNESSEE	CBS	1:25 p.m.
16	Mon., Dec. 26	at Indianapolis	ESPN	5:15 p.m.
17	Sun., Jan. 1	L.A. RAMS	NBC	5:20 p.m.
18	Jan. 7/Jan. 8	at Denver	TBD	TBD

**All Times Pacific*

HOME GAMES IN CAPS

2021 AFC WEST STANDINGS

Team	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Kansas City	12	5	0	.706	480	364
Las Vegas	10	7	0	.588	374	439
L.A. Chargers	9	8	0	.529	474	459
Denver	7	10	0	.412	335	322

RELEASE INDEX

Content	Page	Content	Page
The 2022 Schedule	2	Austin Ekeler Notes	34
Raiders Series History	3	Mike Williams Notes	37
The Matchup	5	Joey Bosa Notes	39
Connections	7	Derwin James Jr. Notes	41
Don Coryell	8	Khalil Mack Notes	43
Tom Telesco	9	J.C. Jackson Notes	44
Brandon Staley	12	Other Player Notes	45
Assistant Coaches	13	Career Stats vs. Raiders	46
Team Notes	14	Statistics	51
Uniform Records	19	Rosters & Transactions	53
Justin Herbert Notes	20	Media Information	60
Keenan Allen Notes	30		

BREAKING DOWN THE 2022 SCHEDULE

SERIES BREAKDOWN	2021 RECORD	NOTES
 <p>ALL-TIME: 56-66-2 HOME: 28-33-1 AWAY: 28-33-1 LAST: L, 35-32 (OT) — 2021 at Raiders</p>	<p>OVERALL: 10-7-0 HOME: 5-4-0 AWAY: 5-3-0 2021 POSTSEASON: AFC W.C.</p>	<p>The Chargers have won 13 of the past 19 home contests and 12 of the past 18 road games against the Raiders. The season opener at SoFi Stadium marks the team's earliest home contest against the Raiders since the two squared off in Week 2 of the 1980 season.</p>
 <p>ALL-TIME: 57-65-1 HOME: 31-29-1 AWAY: 26-36-0 LAST: L, 34-28 (OT) — 2021 vs. Chiefs</p>	<p>OVERALL: 12-5-0 HOME: 7-2-0 AWAY: 5-3-0 2021 POSTSEASON: AFC Champ.</p>	<p>Seven of the past 12 games in the series at Kansas City have been decided by seven or fewer points. The Bolts have a 2-2 record against the Chiefs in <i>Thursday Night Football</i> games. The Chargers have an all-time regular-season home record against Kansas City of 31-29-1.</p>
 <p>ALL-TIME: 9-3-0 HOME: 5-0-0 AWAY: 4-3-0 LAST: W, 39-29 — 2020 vs. Jaguars</p>	<p>OVERALL: 3-14-0 HOME: 3-6-0 AWAY: 0-8-0 2021 POSTSEASON: N/A</p>	<p>The Week 3 matchup marks the 13th regular-season meeting between the teams. The Bolts have won nine of the 12 previous matchups, including all five home games. Los Angeles recorded its first win at SoFi Stadium against the Jaguars in 2020, 39-29.</p>
 <p>ALL-TIME: 5-3-0 HOME: 2-2-0 AWAY: 3-1-0 LAST: L, 41-29 — 2021 at Texans</p>	<p>OVERALL: 4-13-0 HOME: 2-7-0 AWAY: 2-6-0 2021 POSTSEASON: N/A</p>	<p>The Chargers sport a 5-3 record in the all-time series against Houston, with the teams squaring off at NRG Stadium for the second-straight season. Four of the last five contests in the series have been decided by one score or less.</p>
 <p>ALL-TIME: 18-9-1 HOME: 9-4-0 AWAY: 9-5-1 LAST: W, 47-42 — 2021 vs. Browns</p>	<p>OVERALL: 8-9-0 HOME: 6-3-0 AWAY: 2-6-0 2021 POSTSEASON: N/A</p>	<p>Winners of 13 of the last 17 matchups with Cleveland, the Chargers hold an 18-9-1 advantage in the regular-season series against the Browns. Los Angeles won the last matchup in Cleveland in 2018, 38-14. The Bolts are also undefeated in all 13 matchups when scoring 25-plus points against the Browns.</p>
 <p>ALL-TIME: 54-69-1 HOME: 36-26-0 AWAY: 18-43-1 LAST: W, 34-13 — 2021 vs. Broncos</p>	<p>OVERALL: 7-10-0 HOME: 4-5-0 AWAY: 3-5-0 2021 POSTSEASON: N/A</p>	<p>The Bolts hold a 36-26 regular-season home record against Denver. Los Angeles won the 2021 home finale, 34-13, as Justin Herbert set the team's single-season passing touchdowns record. Nine of the last 12 matchups in the Mile High City have been decided by one score, including five of them by less than seven points.</p>
 <p>ALL-TIME: 25-26-0 HOME: 14-10-0 AWAY: 11-16-0 LAST: W, 25-17 — 2018 vs. Seahawks</p>	<p>OVERALL: 7-10-0 HOME: 3-5-0 AWAY: 4-5-0 2021 POSTSEASON: N/A</p>	<p>The Chargers have won three of the last four games against the former division foe, including a 25-17 victory in Seattle in 2018. The Seahawks have a 26-25 advantage in the all-time series. Neither team has won a matchup in the series by double digits since 1998.</p>
 <p>ALL-TIME: 3-8-0 HOME: 1-6-0 AWAY: 2-2-0 LAST: W, 20-17 — 2020 vs. Falcons</p>	<p>OVERALL: 7-10-0 HOME: 2-6-0 AWAY: 5-4-0 2021 POSTSEASON: N/A</p>	<p>The matchup will mark just the 12th meeting in series history, with the Bolts having won each of the past two matchups by three points, including a 2016 overtime win over the eventual NFC Champions. Games between the teams have been close as eight of the 11 games in series history were decided by one score.</p>
 <p>ALL-TIME: 8-6-0 HOME: 5-3-0 AWAY: 3-3-0 LAST: W, 29-27 — 2018 vs. 49ers</p>	<p>OVERALL: 10-7-0 HOME: 4-4-0 AWAY: 6-3-0 2021 POSTSEASON: NFC Champ.</p>	<p>In seven of 14 games against the 49ers, the Chargers have posted 20-plus points, including the last five (all victories). Los Angeles has come away victorious in the last two contests at San Francisco. The Week 10 matchup will mark the first time ever the Bolts and 49ers play on <i>Sunday Night Football</i>.</p>
 <p>ALL-TIME: 10-4-0 HOME: 7-1-0 AWAY: 3-3-0 LAST: W, 45-10 — 2018 vs. Cardinals</p>	<p>OVERALL: 11-6-0 HOME: 3-5-0 AWAY: 8-1-0 2021 POSTSEASON: NFC W.C.</p>	<p>The Chargers hold a 10-4 (.714) all-time advantage against Arizona. Los Angeles has won four of the last five games, including a 45-10 victory in 2018, where Philip Rivers started the game by setting an NFL record with 25 consecutive completions.</p>
 <p>ALL-TIME: 14-17-0 HOME: 10-8-0 AWAY: 4-9-0 LAST: L, 29-21 — 2020 vs. Dolphins</p>	<p>OVERALL: 9-8-0 HOME: 6-3-0 AWAY: 3-5-0 2021 POSTSEASON: N/A</p>	<p>Los Angeles topped the Dolphins last in 2019 as running back Austin Ekeler scored a pair of touchdowns (one rushing, one receiving) and the defense totaled five sacks on the day. Los Angeles has a 10-1 record in the series when scoring at least 25 points.</p>
 <p>ALL-TIME: 27-15-1 HOME: 18-3-1 AWAY: 9-12-0 LAST: L, 23-20 — 2019 at Titans</p>	<p>OVERALL: 12-5-0 HOME: 7-2-0 AWAY: 5-3-0 2021 POSTSEASON: AFC Div.</p>	<p>The Chargers are 27-15-1 (.643) against the former AFL West rival. Los Angeles has won 10 of the past 12 games overall, including seven straight as the home team. In the seven-straight home wins, the Bolts average 32.9 points and 406.4 net yards per game.</p>
 <p>ALL-TIME: 17-10-0 HOME: 6-6-0 AWAY: 11-4-0 LAST: W, 30-24 (OT) — 2019 vs. Colts</p>	<p>OVERALL: 9-8-0 HOME: 4-5-0 AWAY: 5-3-0 2021 POSTSEASON: N/A</p>	<p>For the first time since 2016, Los Angeles heads to Indianapolis, where the Bolts have an 11-4 regular-season record. The Chargers have won five of the last seven matchups. The two teams have also met twice on <i>Monday Night Football</i>, with the Chargers holding a 2-0 advantage.</p>
 <p>ALL-TIME: 5-7-0 HOME: 3-1-0 AWAY: 2-6-0 LAST: L, 35-23 — 2021 at Rams</p>	<p>OVERALL: 12-5-0 HOME: 5-3-0 AWAY: 7-2-0 2021 POSTSEASON: Super Bowl</p>	<p>The Chargers have won three-straight home games against the Rams. The teams have split the last four matchups overall and the Bolts have a 5-7 record in the all-time series. The Sunday night bout will be the first-ever prime-time matchup between the teams.</p>

CHARGERS-RAIDERS SERIES HISTORY

SERIES BREAKDOWN

All-Time Series Record	56-67-2 (.456)
Regular Season Series Record	56-66-2 (.452)
Chargers All-Time vs. Raiders at Home	28-34-1 (.452)
Current Streak	L, One (1) game
Last Meeting	Jan. 9, 2022 – L, 35-32 (OT)
Longest Chargers Win Streak	13 games (2003-09)
Longest Raiders Win Streak	10 games (1972-77)
Head Coach Brandon Staley vs. Raiders	1-1 (.500)
Staley All-Time vs. Raiders*	2-2 (.500)
Most Career GP vs. Raiders	WR Keenan Allen (15)

*Including years as assistant coach

TEAM SUPERLATIVES AGAINST RAIDERS

Most Points Scored	55 – Nov. 22, 1981 at Oak.
Fewest Points Allowed	0 – Last: Sept. 11, 2006 at Oak.
Average Points Scored	21.9
Average Points Allowed	21.9
Most Points (Combined)	81 – Oct. 21, 1984 vs. Rai.^
Fewest Points (Combined)	6 – Oct. 5, 1975 vs. Oak.
Largest Margin of Victory	44 – Sept. 17, 1961 vs. Oak.
Most Total Net Yards	593 – Nov. 10, 1985 vs. Rai.^
Fewest Total Net Yards Allowed	58 – Sept. 22, 1961 at Oak.
Most First Downs	33 – Oct. 31, 2004 vs. Oak.
Fewest First Downs Allowed	11 – Oct. 11, 1998 at Oak.
Most Net Passing Yards	426 – Nov. 10, 1985 vs. Rai.^
Fewest Net Passing Yards Allowed	0 – Dec. 28, 2003 vs. Oak.
Most Rushing Yards	263 – Last: Dec. 28, 2003 vs. Oak.
Fewest Rushing Yards Allowed	2 – Oct. 22, 1961 at Oak.
Most Takeaways	7 – Sept. 1, 1964 vs. Oak.
Fewest Giveaways	0 – Last: Oct. 4, 2021 vs. L.V.

MOST RECENT SINGLE-GAME HIGHS

Category	Date	Opp./Loc.	Player	No.
Completions	Oct. 25, 2015	vs. Oak.	P.Rivers	38
Comp. Pct.*	Oct. 31, 2004	vs. Oak.	D.Brees	88.0
Passing Yards	Nov. 10, 1985	vs. Rai.^	D.Fouts	436
Passing TDs	Nov. 22, 1981	at Oak.	D.Fouts	6
Passer Rating*	Oct. 31, 2004	vs. Oak.	D.Brees	153.1
Rushing Yards	Dec. 28, 2003	vs. Oak.	L.Tomlinson	243
Rushing TDs	Oct. 14, 2007	vs. Oak.	L.Tomlinson	4
Receptions	Nov. 22, 1981	at Oak.	K.Winslow	13
Receiving Yards	Oct. 10, 2010	at Oak.	M.Floyd	213
Receiving TDs	Nov. 22, 1981	at Oak.	K.Winslow	5
Scrim. Yards	Dec. 28, 2003	vs. Oak.	L.Tomlinson	260
Scrim. TDs	Nov. 22, 1981	at Oak.	K.Winslow	5
Tackles	Nov. 7, 2019	at Oak.	D.Tranquill	14
Sacks	Dec. 30, 2007	at Oak.	J.Tucker	3.0
Interceptions	Nov. 27, 1995	vs. Oak.	D.Harper	3
FGs Made	Oct. 5, 1997	at Oak.	G.Davis	6
Net Punt Avg.**	Oct. 15, 2017	at Oak.	D.Kaser	55.8

*Min. 20 Pass Attempts

**Min. Three (3) Punts

^L.A. Raiders (1982-94)

ALL-TIME GAMES AGAINST RAIDERS

Date	Opponent	Result	Venue
Nov. 27, 1960	vs. Oakland	W, 52-28	L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Dec. 4, 1960	at Oakland	W, 41-17	Candlestick Park
Sept. 17, 1961	vs. Oakland	W, 44-0	Balboa Stadium
Oct. 22, 1961	at Oakland	W, 41-10	Candlestick Park
Sept. 30, 1962	at Oakland	W, 42-33	Frank Youell Field
Dec. 2, 1962	vs. Oakland	W, 31-21	Balboa Stadium
Oct. 27, 1963	vs. Oakland	L, 34-33	Balboa Stadium
Dec. 8, 1963	at Oakland	L, 41-27	Frank Youell Field
Nov. 1, 1964	vs. Oakland	W, 31-17	Balboa Stadium
Dec. 20, 1964	at Oakland	L, 21-20	Frank Youell Field
Sept. 19, 1965	at Oakland	W, 17-6	Frank Youell Field
Dec. 19, 1965	vs. Oakland	W, 24-14	Balboa Stadium
Sept. 25, 1966	at Oakland	W, 29-20	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Nov. 13, 1966	vs. Oakland	L, 41-19	Balboa Stadium
Oct. 29, 1967	at Oakland	L, 51-10	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Dec. 3, 1967	vs. Oakland	L, 41-21	San Diego Stadium
Oct. 13, 1968	at Oakland	W, 23-14	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Dec. 15, 1968	vs. Oakland	L, 34-27	San Diego Stadium
Oct. 26, 1969	vs. Oakland	L, 24-12	San Diego Stadium
Nov. 16, 1969	at Oakland	L, 21-16	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Sept. 27, 1970	vs. Oakland*	T, 27-27	San Diego Stadium
Nov. 22, 1970	at Oakland	L, 20-17	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Sept. 26, 1971	vs. Oakland	L, 34-0	San Diego Stadium
Nov. 21, 1971	at Oakland	L, 34-33	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Oct. 1, 1972	at Oakland	T, 17-17	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Dec. 3, 1972	vs. Oakland	L, 21-19	San Diego Stadium
Oct. 14, 1973	vs. Oakland	L, 27-17	San Diego Stadium
Nov. 25, 1973	at Oakland	L, 31-3	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Oct. 13, 1974	vs. Oakland	L, 14-10	San Diego Stadium
Nov. 17, 1974	at Oakland	L, 17-10	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Oct. 5, 1975	vs. Oakland	L, 6-0	San Diego Stadium
Oct. 26, 1975	at Oakland	L, 25-0	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Oct. 10, 1976	vs. Oakland	L, 27-17	San Diego Stadium
Dec. 12, 1976	at Oakland	L, 24-0	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Sept. 18, 1977	at Oakland	L, 24-0	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Nov. 20, 1977	vs. Oakland	W, 12-7	San Diego Stadium
Sept. 10, 1978	vs. Oakland	L, 21-20	San Diego Stadium
Oct. 29, 1978	at Oakland	W, 27-23	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Sept. 9, 1979	vs. Oakland	W, 30-10	San Diego Stadium
Oct. 25, 1979	at Oakland	L, 45-22	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Sept. 14, 1980	vs. Oakland	W, 30-24 (OT)	Jack Murphy Stadium
Oct. 12, 1980	at Oakland	L, 38-24	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Jan. 11, 1981	vs. Oakland**	L, 34-27	Jack Murphy Stadium
Nov. 22, 1981	at Oakland	W, 55-21	Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Dec. 21, 1981	vs. Oakland	W, 23-10	Jack Murphy Stadium
Nov. 22, 1982	at Los Angeles	L, 28-24	L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Jan. 2, 1983	vs. Los Angeles	L, 41-34	Jack Murphy Stadium
Dec. 1, 1983	vs. Los Angeles	L, 42-10	Jack Murphy Stadium
Dec. 18, 1983	at Los Angeles	L, 30-14	L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Sept. 24, 1984	at Los Angeles	L, 33-30	L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Oct. 21, 1984	vs. Los Angeles	L, 44-37	Jack Murphy Stadium

CHARGERS-RAIDERS SERIES HISTORY

ALL-TIME GAMES AGAINST RAIDERS

Date	Opponent	Result	Venue
Oct. 28, 1985	... at Los Angeles	... L, 34-21	... L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Nov. 10, 1985	... vs. Los Angeles	... W, 40-34 (OT)	... Jack Murphy Stadium
Sept. 28, 1986	... at Los Angeles	... L, 17-13	... L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Nov. 20, 1986	... vs. Los Angeles	... L, 37-31 (OT)	... Jack Murphy Stadium
Oct. 18, 1987	... at Los Angeles	... W, 23-17	... L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Nov. 15, 1987	... vs. Los Angeles	... W, 16-14	... Jack Murphy Stadium
Sept. 4, 1988	... at Los Angeles	... L, 24-13	... L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Nov. 6, 1988	... vs. Los Angeles	... L, 13-3	... Jack Murphy Stadium
Sept. 10, 1989	... at Los Angeles	... L, 40-14	... L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Nov. 12, 1989	... vs. Los Angeles	... W, 14-12	... Jack Murphy Stadium
Oct. 21, 1990	... vs. Los Angeles	... L, 24-9	... Jack Murphy Stadium
Dec. 30, 1990	... at Los Angeles	... L, 17-12	... L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Oct. 6, 1991	... at Los Angeles	... W, 21-13	... L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Dec. 1, 1991	... vs. Los Angeles	... L, 9-7	... Jack Murphy Stadium
Nov. 29, 1992	... vs. Los Angeles	... W, 27-3	... Jack Murphy Stadium
Dec. 20, 1992	... at Los Angeles	... W, 36-14	... L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Oct. 31, 1993	... at Los Angeles	... W, 30-23	... L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Nov. 21, 1993	... vs. Los Angeles	... L, 12-7	... Jack Murphy Stadium
Sept. 25, 1994	... at Los Angeles	... W, 26-24	... L.A. Memorial Coliseum
Dec. 5, 1994	... vs. Los Angeles	... L, 24-17	... Jack Murphy Stadium
Sept. 3, 1995	... at Oakland	... L, 17-7	... Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Nov. 27, 1995	... vs. Oakland	... W, 12-6	... Jack Murphy Stadium
Sept. 22, 1996	... at Oakland	... W, 40-34	... Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Oct. 21, 1996	... vs. Oakland	... L, 23-14	... Jack Murphy Stadium
Oct. 5, 1997	... at Oakland	... W, 25-10	... Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Nov. 16, 1997	... vs. Oakland	... L, 38-13	... Qualcomm Stadium
Oct. 11, 1998	... at Oakland	... L, 7-6	... Network Associates Coliseum
Dec. 20, 1998	... vs. Oakland	... L, 17-10	... Qualcomm Stadium
Nov. 14, 1999	... at Oakland	... L, 28-9	... Network Associates Coliseum
Dec. 26, 1999	... vs. Oakland	... W, 23-20	... Qualcomm Stadium
Sept. 3, 2000	... at Oakland	... L, 9-6	... Network Associates Coliseum
Oct. 29, 2000	... vs. Oakland	... L, 15-13	... Qualcomm Stadium
Nov. 18, 2001	... at Oakland	... L, 34-24	... Network Associates Coliseum
Dec. 15, 2001	... vs. Oakland	... L, 13-6	... Qualcomm Stadium
Oct. 20, 2002	... at Oakland	... W, 27-21 (OT)	... Network Asso. Coliseum
Dec. 8, 2002	... vs. Oakland	... L, 27-7	... Qualcomm Stadium
Sept. 28, 2003	... at Oakland	... L, 34-31 (OT)	... Network Asso. Coliseum
Dec. 28, 2003	... vs. Oakland	... W, 21-14	... Qualcomm Stadium
Oct. 31, 2004	... vs. Oakland	... W, 42-14	... Qualcomm Stadium
Nov. 21, 2004	... at Oakland	... W, 23-17	... McAfee Coliseum

ALL-TIME GAMES AGAINST RAIDERS

Date	Opponent	Result	Venue
Oct. 16, 2005	... at Oakland	... W, 27-14	... McAfee Coliseum
Dec. 4, 2005	... vs. Oakland	... W, 34-10	... Qualcomm Stadium
Sept. 11, 2006	... at Oakland	... W, 27-0	... McAfee Coliseum
Nov. 26, 2006	... vs. Oakland	... W, 21-14	... Qualcomm Stadium
Oct. 14, 2007	... vs. Oakland	... W, 28-14	... Qualcomm Stadium
Dec. 30, 2007	... at Oakland	... W, 30-17	... McAfee Coliseum
Sept. 28, 2008	... at Oakland	... W, 28-18	... Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Dec. 4, 2008	... vs. Oakland	... W, 34-7	... Qualcomm Stadium
Sept. 14, 2009	... at Oakland	... W, 24-20	... Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Nov. 1, 2009	... vs. Oakland	... W, 24-16	... Qualcomm Stadium
Oct. 10, 2010	... at Oakland	... L, 35-27	... Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Dec. 5, 2010	... vs. Oakland	... L, 28-13	... Qualcomm Stadium
Nov. 10, 2011	... vs. Oakland	... L, 24-17	... Qualcomm Stadium
Jan. 1, 2012	... at Oakland	... W, 38-26	... O.co Coliseum
Sept. 10, 2012	... at Oakland	... W, 22-14	... O.co Coliseum
Dec. 30, 2012	... vs. Oakland	... W, 24-21	... Qualcomm Stadium
Oct. 6, 2013	... at Oakland	... L, 27-17	... O.co Coliseum
Dec. 22, 2013	... vs. Oakland	... W, 26-13	... Qualcomm Stadium
Oct. 12, 2014	... at Oakland	... W, 31-28	... O.co Coliseum
Nov. 16, 2014	... vs. Oakland	... W, 13-6	... Qualcomm Stadium
Oct. 25, 2015	... vs. Oakland	... L, 37-29	... Qualcomm Stadium
Dec. 24, 2015	... at Oakland	... L, 23-20 (OT)	... O.co Coliseum
Oct. 9, 2016	... at Oakland	... L, 34-31	... Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Dec. 18, 2016	... vs. Oakland	... L, 19-16	... Qualcomm Stadium
Oct. 15, 2017	... at Oakland	... W, 17-16	... Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Dec. 31, 2017	... vs. Oakland	... W, 30-10	... StubHub Center
Oct. 7, 2018	... vs. Oakland	... W, 26-10	... StubHub Center
Nov. 11, 2018	... at Oakland	... W, 20-6	... Oak-Alameda Co. Coliseum
Nov. 7, 2019	... at Oakland	... L, 26-24	... Ring Central Coliseum
Dec. 22, 2019	... vs. Oakland	... L, 24-17	... Dignity Health Sports Park
Nov. 8, 2020	... vs. Las Vegas	... L, 31-26	... SoFi Stadium
Dec. 17, 2020	... at Las Vegas	... W, 30-27 (OT)	... Allegiant Stadium
Oct. 4, 2021	... vs. Las Vegas	... W, 28-14	... SoFi Stadium
Jan. 9, 2022	... at Las Vegas	... L, 35-32 (OT)	... Allegiant Stadium

**Known as Oakland Raiders (1960-81 and 1995-2019)
and Los Angeles Raiders (1982-94)**

**Ties were not counted in winning percentage until the 1972 season.
Ties prior to 1972 are not calculated into the series winning percentage.*

****AFC Championship**

THE MATCHUP

AT THE HELM



BRANDON STALEY

Chargers Head Coach

Overall Record: 9-8 (.529)
 Reg. Season Record: 9-8 (.529)
 Postseason Record: 0-0 (.000)
 Record vs. Raiders: 1-1 (.500)
 Home Record (Reg.): 5-4 (.556)

Hometown: Perry, Ohio
 College: Dayton ('04) / Mercyhurst ('05)

Brandon Staley was named the 17th head coach in franchise history on Jan. 17, 2021. In his first season at the helm, Staley helped further develop QB Justin Herbert, who went on to set the NFL record for most passing yards (9,350), passing touchdowns (69) and pass completions (839) by any quarterback in their first two seasons, becoming the first 5,000-yard passer in team history and setting the franchise's single-season passing touchdowns record (38).

Staley served as the defensive coordinator in 2020 for the Los Angeles Rams after spending three seasons as the outside linebackers coach for Denver (2019) and Chicago (2017-18). As one of the most progressive defensive minds in football, Staley overhauled a Rams defense to become the best defense in football in 2020. The unit ranked No. 1 in total defense, passing defense and scoring defense while finishing as the third-best rushing defense.

Prior to coaching in the NFL, Staley spent three seasons (2013, '15-16) at John Carroll as defensive coordinator/secondary coach and the 2014 season as defensive coordinator/linebackers at James Madison. In his final season as a collegiate coach, Staley earned National Coordinator of the Year honors for Division III by leading his unit to rank third in the nation in total defense (218.0 ypg) and fourth in scoring defense (12.6 ppg).

Staley played quarterback at the University of Dayton, serving as a team captain and was a two-year starter. The Flyers posted a 16-5 record with Staley starting under center from 2003-04. Following his time at Dayton, Staley played one season with his twin brother, Jason, at Mercyhurst College, playing there in 2005. A native of Perry, Ohio, Staley and his wife, Amy, have three sons — Colin, Will and Grant.



JOSH McDANIELS

Raiders Head Coach

Overall Record: 11-17 (.393)
 Reg. Season Record: 11-17 (.393)
 Postseason Record: 0-0 (.000)
 Record vs. Chargers: 1-2 (.333)
 Road Record (Reg.): 5-9 (.357)

Hometown: Canton, Ohio
 College: John Carroll ('99)

Josh McDaniels was named head coach of the Raiders on Jan. 31, 2022. McDaniels enters his 22nd season in the NFL, having spent 18 years with the New England Patriots, including 13 seasons as the team's offensive coordinator. He also served as the Denver Broncos' head coach from 2009-10 and the St. Louis Rams' offensive coordinator in 2011.

In his 13 seasons as the Patriots offensive coordinator, McDaniels guided an offense to top-10 finishes eight times, including the NFL's No. 1 ranked offense in 2007, 2012 and 2017. He has also coached the team to 12 seasons with 10-or-more wins, while the offense has scored 400-plus points in 11 seasons. Overall, McDaniels was a part of six Super Bowl championships, 14 division titles and eight conference crowns with New England. Regarded as one of the league's top quarterback coaches, McDaniels tutored quarterback Tom Brady to 10 Pro Bowl selections, two NFL Most Valuable Player awards and nine 4,000-yard passing seasons. Brady also led the league in touchdown passes two times (2007 and 2015) and passing yards three times (2005, 2007 and 2015) with McDaniels serving as his position coach.

McDaniels attended John Carroll University, where he played quarterback and wide receiver for the Blue Streaks from 1995-98. McDaniels was a college teammate of General Manager Dave Ziegler, former NFL linebacker London Fletcher and Texans General Manager Nick Caserio. A native of Canton, Ohio, McDaniels and his wife, Lauren, have four children.

2021 TEAM RANKINGS

9-8
 3rd (AFC West)

10-7
 2nd (AFC West)

OFFENSE (NFL RANK)

27.9 (5th) Points Per Game 22.0 (18th)
 390.2 (4th) Net Yds. Per Game 363.8 (11th)
 107.9 (21st) Net Rushing Yds. Per Game 95.1 (28th)
 282.4 (T-2nd) Net Passing Yds. Per Game 268.6 (6th)
 5.88 (6th) Scrimmage Yds. Per Play 5.72 (10th)
 15/167 Opp. Interceptions/Return Yds. 14/193
 31/-214 (T-6th) Sacks Allowed/Yds. 40/-241 (T-19th)
 10/7 Fumbles/Lost 29/10
 45.2% (6th) Third Down Pct. 37.4% (22nd)
 64.0% (4th) Red Zone TD Pct. 51.7% (27th)
 29:11 (23rd) Time of Possession Avg. 30:04 (20th)
 22 (T-13th) Giveaways 24 (T-20th)

DEFENSE (NFL RANK)

27.0 (T-29th) Points Per Game 25.8 (26th)
 360.1 (23rd) Net Yds. Per Game 337.2 (14th)
 138.9 (30th) Net Rushing Yds. Per Game 114.3 (19th)
 221.2 (12th) Net Passing Yds. Per Game 222.9 (13th)
 5.55 (22nd) Scrimmage Yds. Per Play 5.20 (9th)
 11/70 Interceptions/ Return Yds. 6/68
 35/-231 (T-20th) Sacks/Yds. 35/-207 (T-20th)
 23/10 Opp. Fumbles/Lost 21/9
 49.5% (32nd) Third Down Pct. 39.6% (15th)
 64.2% (26th) Red Zone TD Pct. 81.4% (32nd)
 21 (T-17th) Takeaways 15 (T-29th)

-1 (19th) TURNOVER MARGIN -9 (27th)

SPECIAL TEAMS (NFL RANK)

44.2 (25th) Punts-Avg. Yds. (Gross) 50.0 (1st)
 36.5 (32nd) Punts-Avg. Yds. (Net) 42.5 (6th)
 5.9 (32nd) Punt Returns-Avg. Per. 9.7 (10th)
 11.0 (29th) Punt Returns-Avg. Per Allowed. 12.2 (31st)
 25.0 (4th) Kickoff Returns-Avg. Per 19.8 (25th)
 20.8 (12th) Kickoff Returns-Avg. Per Allowed. 22.5 (21st)
 24/27 (9th) Field Goals Made/Attempted. 40/43 (4th)

PENALTIES (NFL RANK)

116/1,033 (30th) Penalties Against/Yds. 124/1,104 (31st)

THE MATCHUP

WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE

WR Keenan Allen

- Needs 82 receiving yards to be the fifth player to total 6,000 receiving yards since the start of the 2017 season.
- Needs two touchdown catches to reach 50 for his career.
- Needs 139 receiving yards on third down to be the first player to haul in 3,000 third-down receiving yards since he entered the NFL in 2013.

OLB Joey Bosa

- With 2.0 sacks, would reach 60 for his career and become the fourth player since he entered the NFL in 2016 to do so.
- Needs three more strip-sacks to reach 15 for his career and be the sixth player since 2016 to do so.

CB Michael Davis

- With a start, would reach 50 starts for his career and become the sixth undrafted Charger to start 50 games with the team.

RB Austin Ekeler

- Needs a touchdown to extend his scoring streak to nine consecutive games, tying for the third-longest in team history.
- Needs a touchdown catch to reach 25 for his career. He would be the youngest running back in the common draft era (since 1967) to reach 25 touchdown receptions.
- Needs two receiving touchdowns to become the only running back with multiple touchdown catches in each of their first six professional seasons in the common draft era (since 1967).

DL Morgan Fox

- Will play in his 70th career game on Sunday.

QB Justin Herbert

- Needs one passing touchdown to reach 70 in his 33rd career game, the fourth-fastest to reach that mark in history.
 - It would extend his streak to 22 consecutive games, good for the second-longest active streak and fourth-longest in team history.
- Needs three combined passing and rushing touchdowns to reach 80 in his 33rd career game, the second-fastest to reach that mark in NFL history.

CB J.C. Jackson

- Needs three defensive takeaways to reach 30 for his career. His 27 are currently the most by any NFL defender since he entered the league in 2018.

S Derwin James Jr.

- Needs a half-sack and an interception to be the fifth NFL defensive back to have six of each since he entered the professional ranks in 2018.

OLB Khalil Mack

- Needs 3.5 sacks to become the fifth player to reach 80 sacks since he entered the NFL in 2014. He would also be the only NFL player over that span to have 80 sacks and multiple interceptions returned for a touchdown.
- Needs two strip-sacks to reach 20 for his career and become just the second defender since he entered the NFL in 2014 to reach that mark.

2021 INDIVIDUAL LEADERS



9-8
3rd (AFC West)

10-7
2nd (AFC West)

PASSING YARDS

Herbert5,014 Carr 4,804

RUSHING YARDS

Ekeler.....911 Jacobs..... 872
Jackson*364 Drake*254
Herbert302 Barber* 212

RECEIVING YARDS

Williams.....1,146 Renfrow1,038
Allen.....1,138 Waller665
Ekeler.....647 Edwards* 571
Cook*.....564 Jones*546

POINTS SCORED

Ekeler.....124 Carlson150
Hopkins.....84 Jacobs.....54
Williams.....56 Renfrow54

INTERCEPTIONS

James Jr.2 Six Tied.....1
Samuel Jr.2
White*2

SACKS

Bosa.....10.5 Ngakoue*10.0
Nwosu*5.0 Crosby.....8.0
Tillery.....4.5 Jefferson*.....4.5

TACKLES (SOLO)

White*144 (90) Perryman154 (102)
James Jr.118 (75) Abram114 (63)
Adderley97 (67) Littleton*.....95 (50)
Tranquill70 (42) Hobbs71 (50)

KICKOFF RETURNS (AVG.)

Roberts*19 (32.8) Richard*11 (20.6)
Drake*10 (19.2)

PUNT RETURNS (AVG.); FC

Roberts*12 (5.5); 9 Renfrow31 (9.8); 20

FIELD GOALS

Hopkins.....18/20 (90.0%) Carlson40/43 (93.0%)
Vizcaino*6/7 (85.7%)










PUNTS (GROSS/NET AVG.)

Long.....46 (45.5/36.8) Cole.....64 (50.0/42.5)

*Player no longer with team

CHARGERS-RAIDERS CONNECTIONS

COLLEGE CONNECTIONS

	LAC	OLB Joey Bosa	2014-17	
	LAC	C Corey Linsley	2015-18	
	LAC	Chandler Whitmer (Off. Quality Control)	2019	
	LV	T Thayer Munford	2017-21	
	LV	DT Johnathan Hankins	2013-17	
	LV	Chris Ash (DBs)	2015	
	LAC	RB Sony Michel	2014-17	
	LAC	TE Tre' McKitty	2020	
	LAC	G Jamaree Salyer	2018-21	
	LV	S Johnathan Abram	2015	
	LV	RB Zamir White	2018-21	
	LAC	WR Joshua Palmer	2017-20	
	LAC	Derrick Ansley (Secondary)	2012, '19-20	
	LAC	Isaac Shewmaker (Def. QC)	2020	
	LAC	Kevin Koger (Tight End)	2015	
	LV	DT Matthew Butler	2017-21	
	LV	FB Jakob Johnson	2014-17	
	LV	DT Kendal Vickers	2013-17	
	LV	Cameron Clemmons (Asst. Offensive Line)	2016-19	
	LAC	DL Otito Ogbornia	2018-21	
	LAC	RB Joshua Kelley	2018-19	
	LAC	Tom Donatelli (Asst. Secondary)	2015-16	
	LV	RB Brittain Brown	2020-21	
	LV	C Andre James	2015-18	
	LV	T Kolton Miller	2014-17	
	LV	LB Jayon Brown	2013-16	
	LV	Kennedy Polamalu (Running Backs)	2014-16	
	LAC	Tom Telesco (General Manager)	1991-94	
	LAC	Brandon Staley (Head Coach)	2013, '15-16	
	LAC	Tom Arth (Pass Game Specialist)	1999-2002, '10-16	
	LV	Dave Ziegler (General Manager)	1996-99, 2007	
	LV	Josh McDaniels (Head Coach)	1995-98	
	LV	Jerry Schuplinski (Sr. Offensive Assistant)	1995-98, 2000-01	
	LV	Matt Feeney (Def. Quality Control)	2010-16	
		LAC	S Nasir Adderley	2015-18
		LAC	LB Troy Reeder	2016-18
LV		DT Bilal Nichols	2014-17	
	LAC	DL Breiden Fehoko	2018-19	
	LAC	C/G Will Clapp	2014-17	
	LV	TE Foster Moreau	2015-18	
	LV	DT Neil Farrell Jr.	2017-21	
	LV	DE Tashawn Bower	2013-17	
	LV	WR Tyron Johnson	2015	
	LAC	S JT Woods	2018-21	
	LV	Frank Okam (Defensive Line)	2018-19	
	LAC	CB J.C. Jackson	2016-17	
	LAC	Chris Beatty (WRs)	2016-18	
	LV	WR DJ Turner	2016-19	

NOTEWORTHY BONDS

Chargers **OLB Khalil Mack** (2014-17) was drafted by the Raiders with the fifth overall pick in the 2014 NFL Draft and played four seasons in Oakland. Raiders **LB Denzel Perryman** (2015-20), **WR Tyron Johnson** (2019-20) and **S Roderic Teamer** (2019-20) also have spent time with the Los Angeles Chargers in their careers.

This Sunday's matchup features many former members of the New England Patriots organization, including Raiders **Head Coach Josh McDaniels** (2001-08, '12-21) **DE Chandler Jones** (2012-15), **S Duron Harmon** (2013-19), Chargers **LB Kyle Van Noy** (2016-19, '21), **CB J.C. Jackson** (2018-21), **RB Sony Michel** (2018-20) and **WR DeAndre Carter** (2015-16).







Chargers **C Corey Linsley** and Raiders **WR Davante Adams** were teammates on the Green Bay Packers for seven seasons after both were drafted in 2014. In their time on the Packers' offense, they helped lead the team to four NFC North crowns and four appearances in the NFC Championship game.

Members of Alabama's 2017 National Championship team include Raiders **RB Josh Jacobs** (2016-18), **G Lester Cotton Sr.** (2015-18), **CB Anthony Averett** (2013-17), Chargers **P JK Scott** (2014-17), **Secondary Coach Derrick Ansley** (2010-11, '16-17) and **Defensive Quality Control Isaac Shewmaker** (2016-18).

The 2016 Clemson National Championship team featured Chargers **WR Mike Williams** (2014-16), Raiders **DE Clelin Ferrell** (2015-18), **WR Hunter Renfrow** (2014-18), and **G John Simpson** (2016-19).

Graduates of John Carroll University in this week's game include Chargers **General Manager Tom Telesco** ('95), **Pass Game Specialist Tom Arth** ('03), Raiders **General Manager Dave Ziegler** ('00, '07 graduate degree), **Head Coach Josh McDaniels** ('99), Raiders **Defensive Quality Control Coach Matt Feeney** ('14) and **Senior Offensive Assistant Jerry Schuplinski** ('99). **Arth** was the head coach of the Blue Streaks from 2010 to 2016 and **Head Coach Brandon Staley** (2013, '15-16) served as the defensive coordinator from 2015 to 2016. **Feeney** (2014-16) was hired to be the Blue Streaks' linebackers coach in 2014 and then added special teams coordinator duties in 2015.

PRO CONNECTIONS

OLB Kyle Van Noy (2016-19, '21)		Head Coach Josh McDaniels (2001-08, '12-21)
CB J.C. Jackson (2018-21)		RB Brandon Bolden (2012-17, '19-21)
WR DeAndre Carter (2015-16)		DE Tashawn Bower (2019-21)
RB Sony Michel (2018-20)		FB Jakob Johnson (2019-21)
		G/T Jermaine Eluemunor (2019-20)
		S Duron Harmon (2013-19)
		QB Jarrett Stidham (2019-21)
		DE Chandler Jones (2012-15)
		Offensive Coordinator Mick Lombardi (2011-12, '19-21)
		Defensive Coordinator Patrick Graham (2009-15)
		Quarterbacks Bo Hardegree (2021)
		Offensive Line Carmen Bricillo (2019-21)
		Senior Offensive Assistant Jerry Schuplinski (2013-18)
Head Coach Brandon Staley (2017-18)		TE Jesper Horsted (2019-21)
OLB Khalil Mack (2018-21)		DT Bilal Nichols (2018-21)
CB Bryce Callahan (2015-18)		Quarterbacks Bo Hardegree (2015)
WR DeAndre Carter (2020)		
QB Chase Daniel (2018-19)		
Run Game Coord./Defensive Line Jay Rodgers (2015-20)		
Defensive Assistant John Timu (2015-17)		
Head Coach Brandon Staley (2019)		Head Coach Josh McDaniels (2009-10)
CB Bryce Callahan (2019-21)		Quarterbacks Coach Bo Hardegree (2014)
Def. Coord. Renaldo Hill (2009-10, '19-20)		Special Teams Coordinator Tom McMahon (2018-21)
Run Game Coord./OLB Coach Jay Rodgers (2009-14)		
Asst. Special Teams Coach Chris Gould (2015-21)		
Offensive Assistant Mike Hiestand (2019-21)		
C Corey Linsley (2014-20)		WR Davante Adams (2014-21)
P JK Scott (2018-20)		Defensive Coordinator Patrick Graham (2018)
TEs Coach Kevin Koger (2019-20)		WRs Coach Edgar Bennett (2005-17)
Pass Game Specialist Tom Arth (2006)		DBs/Pass Game Coord. Jason Simmons (2011-19)
		Assistant Special Teams Maurice Drayton (2018-20)
OLB Kyle Van Noy (2014-16)		S Duron Harmon (2020)
T Storm Norton (2017)		RB Ameer Abdullah (2015-18)
QB Chase Daniel (2020)		
Offensive Coordinator Joe Lombardi (2014-15)		
LB Kyle Van Noy (2020)		WR Mack Hollins (2019-21)
Def. Coord. Renaldo Hill (2006-09, '18)		RB Brandon Bolden (2018)
QBs Coach Shane Day (2016-18)		DT Andrew Billings (2021)
		Quarterbacks Bo Hardegree (2016-18)

DON CORYELL

Pro Football Hall of Fame Contributor Candidate

In August, legendary Chargers Coach Don Coryell was named the sole contributory candidate for the 2023 Pro Football Hall of Fame Class. If he receives at least 80 percent approval from the 49-person Selection Committee in January, he will be enshrined as a Pro Football Hall of Famer as a member of the Class of 2023.

Coryell revolutionized offensive football in his nine seasons (1978-86) coaching the Chargers, setting the course for the future of prolific passing attacks. He led the team to 72 total wins (69 in the regular season, three in the postseason) and four playoff seasons, including a pair of AFC Championship Game appearances. With the Chargers, he coached four players that went on to be named to the Pro Football Hall of Fame: QB Dan Fouts, DE Fred Dean, WR Charlie Joiner and TE Kellen Winslow.



2 AFC TITLE GAMES

4 HALL OF FAMERS

72 TOTAL WINS

1 ARCHITECT OF THE MODERN OFFENSE



TOM TELESKO

TELESKO'S DRAFT HISTORY

Chargers General Manager Tom Telesko has drafted 69 players since joining the team in 2013. Those draft picks have combined to play 2,110 games and make 1,148 starts in the regular season (43 games played with 26 starts in the postseason) for the Bolts.

2022 CHARGERS DRAFT SELECTIONS

Pos.	Player	Drafted	Reg. Season		Postseason	
			GP	GS	GP	GS
G	Zion Johnson	1-17	0	0	0	0
S	JT Woods	3-79	0	0	0	0
RB	Isaiah Spiller	4-123	0	0	0	0
DL	Otito Ogbonnia	5-160	0	0	0	0
OL	Jamaree Salyer	6-195	0	0	0	0
DB	Ja'Sir Taylor	6-214	0	0	0	0
DB	Deane Leonard	7-236	0	0	0	0
FB	Zander Horvath	7-260	0	0	0	0
Totals			0	0	0	0

2021 CHARGERS DRAFT SELECTIONS

Pos.	Player	Drafted	Reg. Season		Postseason	
			GP	GS	GP	GS
T	Rashawn Slater	1-13	16	16	0	0
CB	Asante Samuel Jr.	2-47	12	12	0	0
WR	Joshua Palmer	3-77	17	5	0	0
TE	Tre' McKitty	3-97	11	4	0	0
OLB	Chris Rumph II	4-118	16	0	0	0
G/T	Brenden Jaimes	5-159	10	0	0	0
LB	Nick Niemann	6-185	17	0	0	0
RB	Larry Rountree III	6-198	12	0	0	0
DB	Mark Webb Jr.	7-241	7	0	0	0
Totals			118	37	0	0

2020 CHARGERS DRAFT SELECTIONS

Pos.	Player	Drafted	Reg. Season		Postseason	
			GP	GS	GP	GS
QB	Justin Herbert	1-6	32	32	0	0
LB	Kenneth Murray Jr.	1-23	27	22	0	0
RB	Joshua Kelley	4-112	24	0	0	0
WR	Joe Reed	5-151	11	0	0	0
S	Alohi Gilman	6-186	26	4	0	0
WR	KJ Hill Jr.	7-220	21	0	0	0
Totals			141	58	0	0

2019 CHARGERS DRAFT SELECTIONS

Pos.	Player	Drafted	Reg. Season		Postseason	
			GP	GS	GP	GS
DL	Jerry Tillery	1-28	47	29	0	0
S	Nasir Adderley	2-60	34	29	0	0
T	Trey Pipkins III	3-91	38	10	0	0
LB	Drue Tranquill	4-130	30	11	0	0
QB	Easton Stick	5-166	1	0	0	0
OLB	Emeke Egbule	6-200	32	0	0	0
DL	Cortez Broughton	7-242	11	0	0	0
Totals			193	79	0	0



2018 CHARGERS DRAFT SELECTIONS

Pos.	Player	Drafted	Reg. Season		Postseason	
			GP	GS	GP	GS
S	Derwin James Jr.	1-17	36	36	2	2
OLB	Uchenna Nwosu	2-48	62	25	2	0
DL	Justin Jones	3-84	51	35	2	2
LB	Kyzir White	4-119	47	37	0	0
C/G	Scott Quessenberry	5-155	63	10	2	0
WR	Dylan Cantrell	6-191	0	0	0	0
RB	Justin Jackson	7-251	43	6	2	0
Totals			302	149	10	4

2017 CHARGERS DRAFT SELECTIONS

Pos.	Player	Drafted	Reg. Season		Postseason	
			GP	GS	GP	GS
WR	Mike Williams	1-7	72	47	2	2
G	Forrest Lamp	2-38	25	18	0	0
C/G	Dan Feeney	3-71	63	57	2	2
S	Rayshawn Jenkins	4-113	61	32	2	2
DB	Desmond King II	5-151	53	23	2	2
T	Sam Tevi	6-190	58	44	2	2
DE	Isaac Rochell	7-225	51	9	2	0
Totals			382	230	12	10

2016 CHARGERS DRAFT SELECTIONS

Pos.	Player	Drafted	Reg. Season		Postseason	
			GP	GS	GP	GS
OLB	Joey Bosa	1-3	79	75	2	2
TE	Hunter Henry	2-35	55	49	1	1
C	Max Tuerk	3-66	0	0	0	0
LB	Joshua Perry	4-102	15	1	0	0
LB	Jatavis Brown	5-175	56	23	0	0
P	Drew Kaser	6-179	36	0	0	0
FB	Derek Watt	6-198	64	13	2	0
G	Donavon Clark	7-224	0	0	0	0
Totals			305	161	5	3

TOM TELESKO



TELESKO'S DRAFT HISTORY

2015 CHARGERS DRAFT SELECTIONS

Pos.	Player	Drafted	Reg. Season		Postseason	
			GP	GS	GP	GS
RB	Melvin Gordon III	1-15	67	63	2	2
LB	Denzel Perryman	2-48	69	51	0	0
CB	Craig Mager	3-83	24	10	0	0
LB	Kyle Emanuel	5-153	63	32	2	0
DE	Darius Philon	6-192	54	19	2	0
Totals			277	175	6	2

2014 CHARGERS DRAFT SELECTIONS

Pos.	Player	Drafted	Reg. Season		Postseason	
			GP	GS	GP	GS
CB	Jason Verrett	1-25	25	21	0	0
LB	Jeremiah Attaochu	2-50	38	13	0	0
G	Chris Watt	3-89	17	8	0	0
DT	Ryan Carrethers	5-165	24	3	0	0
RB	Marion Grice	6-201	0	0	0	0
WR	Tevin Reese	7-240	0	0	0	0
Totals			104	45	0	0

2013 CHARGERS DRAFT SELECTIONS

Pos.	Player	Drafted	Reg. Season		Postseason	
			GP	GS	GP	GS
T	D.J. Fluker	1-11	59	59	2	2
LB	Manti Te'o	2-38	38	34	2	2
WR	Keenan Allen	3-76	116	111	4	3
CB	Steve Williams	5-145	31	4	0	0
LB	Tourek Williams	6-179	44	6	2	0
QB	Brad Sorensen	7-221	0	0	0	0
Totals			288	214	10	7

Current Chargers are bolded in Powder Blue

TELESKO'S PRO BOWLERS

Throughout his tenure with the Chargers, **Tom Telesko** has acquired or extended 14 players that went on to earn Pro Bowl nods, including seven players that were acquired via draft pick.

BOLTS PRO BOWLERS ACQUIRED OR EXTENDED, SINCE 2013

Year Acq.	Player	How Acq.	Pro Bowls
2013	WR Keenan Allen	Drafted (3-76)	5
2014	S Adrian Phillips	UDFA	1
	CB Jason Verrett	Drafted (1-25)	1
2015	RB Melvin Gordon III	Drafted (1-15)	2
	QB Philip Rivers	Extension	3
2016	DE/OLB Joey Bosa	Drafted (1-3)	4
	CB Casey Hayward Jr.	UFA (G.B.)	2
2017	DE Melvin Ingram III	Extension	3
	T Russell Okung	UFA (Den.)	1
2018	S Derwin James Jr.	Drafted (1-17)	2
	C Mike Pouncey	FA	1
2020	QB Justin Herbert	Drafted (1-6)	1
2021	C Corey Linsley	UFA (G.B.)	1
	T Rashawn Slater	Drafted (1-13)	1
Totals	14 Players		28 Pro Bowls
	7 Drafted Players		16 Pro Bowls

ROOKIE RECOGNITION

Since joining the Bolts in 2013, **Tom Telesko** has drafted players that received recognition for their play — notably 2016 NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year **Joey Bosa** and 2020 NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year **Justin Herbert**.

Bosa twice earned NFL Defensive Rookie of the Month in 2016 (October and December) en route to winning consensus Defensive Rookie of the Year honors. Last year, **Asante Samuel Jr.**, also won Defensive Rookie of the Month for September.

In 2020, Herbert was named the NFL Offensive Rookie of the Month for October and November, tossing 10-plus touchdowns in both months. He posted a 122.2 passer rating in October — the best by a rookie in the month in NFL history (min. 50 attempts). He was widely recognized after his record-setting season as Offensive Rookie of the Year.

CHARGERS TO WIN NFL ROOKIE OF THE MONTH, ACQUIRED SINCE 2013

Season	Player	Phase	Month
2016	DE Joey Bosa	Defense	October
	DE Joey Bosa	Defense	December
2020	QB Justin Herbert	Offense	October
	QB Justin Herbert	Offense	November
2021	CB Asante Samuel Jr.	Defense	September

TOM TELESKO

LEAGUE HONORS

Over the course of his career as General Manager of the Chargers, **Tom Telesko** has acquired or extended 13 different players that earned AFC Player of the Month or AFC Player of the Week.

Last year, **Justin Herbert** won AFC Offensive Player of the Week three times — including in back-to-back weeks — to become the first Charger to do so since Hall of Fame **RB LaDainian Tomlinson** won the award four times in 2006.

Joey Bosa won AFC Defensive Player of the Week in 2019 following a Week 8 win at Chicago where he totaled 12 tackles (eight solo), two sacks and six tackles for loss.

After a monumental win on *Thursday Night Football* in Kansas City in 2018, **Mike Williams** was named AFC Offensive Player of the Week. He recorded in seven catches for 76 yards (10.9 avg.) and two touchdowns, while adding a 19-yard touchdown run. Williams also hauled in the game-winning two-point conversion in the waning seconds of the game.

CHARGERS TO WIN AFC PLAYER OF THE WEEK OR AFC PLAYER OF THE MONTH, ACQUIRED SINCE 2013

Season	Player	Phase	Week
2016	P Drew Kaser	Special Teams	Week 6 vs. Den.
	LB Denzel Perryman	Defense	Week 7 at Atl.
	RB Melvin Gordon III	Offense	Week 9 vs. Ten.
2017	RB Melvin Ingram III	Defense	September
	RB Melvin Gordon III	Offense	Week 5 at NYG
	WR Travis Benjamin	Special Teams	Week 7 vs. Den.
2018	CB Casey Hayward Jr.	Defense	November
	CB Desmond King II	Defense	Week 9 at Sea.
	CB Desmond King II	Special Teams	Week 13 at Pit.
	K Michael Badgley	Special Teams	Week 14 vs. Cin.
2019	WR Mike Williams	Offense	Week 15 at K.C.
	P Ty Long	Special Teams	Week 1 vs. Ind.
2020	DE Joey Bosa	Defense	Week 8 at Chi.
	CB Casey Hayward Jr.	Defense	Week 1 at Cin.
2021	QB Justin Herbert	Offense	Week 9 at Phi.
	QB Justin Herbert	Offense	Week 13 at Cin.
	QB Justin Herbert	Offense	Week 14 vs. NYG



PFWA SUPERLATIVES

Selections made by **Tom Telesko** have garnered league-wide recognition. He has drafted 12 players that were named All-Rookie by the *Professional Football Writers of America*.

Three picks by Telesko earned *PFWA* Rookie of the Year honors — **Keenan Allen** for offense in 2013, **Joey Bosa** for defense in 2016 and **Justin Herbert** overall and for offense in 2020.

Derwin James Jr. was named All-NFL by the *PFWA* as a rookie. He is one of four Telesko draft selections (Allen, once; Bosa, three times; James, once; Slater, once) to be named All-AFC.

Below is a look at Telesko's draft picks that have been recognized by the *PFWA* as All-NFL, All-AFC or All-Rookie:

CHARGERS DRAFT PICK SUPERLATIVES FROM PFWA WHILE WITH TEAM, SINCE 2013

Drafted	Player	All-NFL	All-AFC	All-Rookie
2013	Keenan Allen	0	1	1
	D.J. Fluker	0	0	1
2016	Joey Bosa	0	3	1
	Jatavis Brown	0	0	1
	Hunter Henry	0	0	1
2017	Dan Feeney	0	0	1
2018	Derwin James Jr.	1	1	1
2019	Drue Tranquill	0	0	1
2020	Justin Herbert	0	0	1
	Kenneth Murray Jr.	0	0	1
2021	Nick Niemann	0	0	1
	Rashawn Slater	0	1	1
Totals	12 Players	1	6	12

BRANDON STALEY

A DEFENSIVE INNOVATOR



One of the most progressive and innovative defensive minds in football, Brandon Staley has been around some of the top-producing defenses since entering the NFL. Twice he has been part of the best scoring defense in football, including 2020 as coordinator.

RANKINGS OF STALEY'S NFL DEFENSES

— Defensive Ranks —

Season	Team	Staley Pos.	Overall	Rush	Pass	Scoring
2017	Chi.	OLBs Coach	10th	11th	7th	9th
2018	Chi.	OLBs Coach	3rd	1st	7th	1st
2019	Den.	OLBs Coach	12th	16th	11th	10th
2020	LAR	Def. Coord.	1st	3rd	1st	1st
2021	LAC	Head Coach	23rd	30th	12th	T-29th
2022	LAC	Head Coach	—	—	—	—

A BEAST IN THE EAST

Brandon Staley led the Bolts to a win in the Eastern Time Zone in his first career game as an NFL head coach. Not only did he coach the team to a victory out East, but it was in the early time slot as well. It was the first season-opening win for the Chargers in the Eastern Time Zone and early time slot since 2002.

ACTIVE HEAD COACH WINS IN EASTERN TIME ZONE, PACIFIC TIME ZONE TEAMS, REGULAR SEASON, SINCE 2021

Rank	Coach (Team)	Wins	Losses	Ties	Pct.
1.	Kyle Shanahan (S.F.)	4	0	0	1.000
	Sean McVay (LAR)	3	0	0	1.000
3.	Brandon Staley (LAC)	3	1	0	.750
4.	Pete Carroll (Sea.)	1	2	0	.333
5.	Nathaniel Hackett (Den.)	0	0	0	—

COACHING AT AN ALL-STAR LEVEL

Since entering the NFL coaching ranks in 2017, **Brandon Staley** has coached 10 different players to be named an all-star. All 10 selections have come in the last four seasons.

BOLTS PRO BOWLERS ACQUIRED OR EXTENDED, SINCE 2013

Season	Team	Staley Pos.	Pro Bowlers
2018	Chicago	Outside Linebackers	1 <i>OLB Khalil Mack</i>
2019	Denver	Outside Linebackers	1 <i>OLB Von Miller</i>
2020	L.A. Rams	Defensive Coordinator	2 <i>DL Aaron Donald, CB Jalen Ramsey</i>
2021	L.A. Chargers	Head Coach	6 <i>WR Keenan Allen, OLB Joey Bosa, QB Justin Herbert, S Derwin James Jr., C Corey Linsley, T Rashawn Slater</i>
Totals	10 Players		10 Pro Bowls

The six Pro Bowlers Staley coached this year are tied for the most in the first full season as a head coach among active head coaches in the AFC. The six all-star selections tied for the second-most in the first full season for a Chargers coach in history.

MOST PRO BOWL SELECTIONS, FIRST FULL SEASON AS HEAD COACH, ACTIVE NFL HEAD COACHES

Rank	Season	Team	Head Coach	Pro Bowlers
1.	2017	LAR	Sean McVay	8
2.	2021	LAC	Brandon Staley	6
	2007	Pit.	Mike Tomlin	6
4.	2019	G.B.	Matt LaFleur	5
	2008	Bal.	John Harbaugh	5
6.	2013	Ari.	Bruce Arians	4

MOST PRO BOWL SELECTIONS, FIRST FULL SEASON AS HEAD COACH, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Season	Head Coach	Pro Bowlers
1.	2007	Norv Turner	9
2.	2021	Brandon Staley	6
	2017	Anthony Lynn	6
3.	1992	Bobby Ross	5
4.	2002	Marty Schottenheimer	3
	1989	Dan Henning	3
	1978	Don Coryell	3
7.	2013	Mike McCoy	2
	1997	Kevin Gilbride	2
	1972	Harland Svare	2
9.	1999	Mike Riley	1
	1986	Al Saunders	1
	1975	Tommy Prothro	1

ASSISTANT COACHES



RYAN FICKEN

SPECIAL TEAMS COORDINATOR
16TH NFL SEASON
1ST SEASON WITH CHARGERS



JOE LOMBARDI

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
17TH NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



TOM ARTH

PASS GAME SPECIALIST
4TH NFL SEASON
1ST SEASON WITH CHARGERS



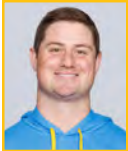
SHANE DAY

PASSING GAME COORDINATOR/QUARTERBACKS
14TH NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



DERRICK FOSTER

RUNNING BACKS
2ND NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



MIKE HIESTAND

OFFENSIVE ASSISTANT
4TH NFL SEASON
1ST SEASON WITH CHARGERS



BRENDAN NUGENT

OFFENSIVE LINE
10TH NFL SEASON
1ST SEASON WITH CHARGERS



SHAUN SARRETT

ASSISTANT OFFENSIVE LINE
11TH NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



GIFF SMITH

OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS
13TH NFL SEASON
7TH SEASON WITH CHARGERS



PAT WHITE

OFFENSIVE ASSISTANT
3RD NFL SEASON
1ST SEASON WITH CHARGERS



MICHAEL WILHOITE

LINEBACKERS
11TH NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



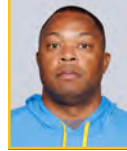
RENALDO HILL

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
15TH NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



DERRICK ANSLEY

SECONDARY
3RD NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



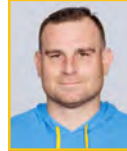
CHRIS BEATTY

WIDE RECEIVERS
2ND NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



TOM DONATELL

ASSISTANT SECONDARY
6TH NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



CHRIS GOULD

ASSISTANT SPECIAL TEAMS
8TH NFL SEASON
1ST SEASON WITH CHARGERS



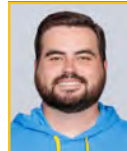
KEVIN KOGER

TIGHT ENDS
4TH NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



JAY RODGERS

RUN GAME COORDINATOR/DEFENSIVE LINE
14TH NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



ISAAC SHEWMAKER

DEFENSIVE QUALITY CONTROL
2ND NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



JOHN TIMU

DEFENSIVE ASSISTANT
5TH NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



CHANDLER WHITMER

OFFENSIVE QUALITY CONTROL
2ND NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS



ANTHONY LOMANDO

DIRECTOR OF SPORTS PERFORMANCE
14TH NFL SEASON
2ND SEASON WITH CHARGERS

TEAM NOTES

WELCOME TO L.A.



22 players on Los Angeles' active roster are new this season.

HOW NEW CHARGERS WERE ACQUIRED

How Acquired	New Players
Draft Selections	8
Undrafted Free Agents	0
Veteran Free Agents	13
Practice Squad Signings	0
Trades	1
Waiver Claims	0
Totals	22

NEW CHARGERS ON THE ACTIVE ROSTER

Pos.	Player	Exp.	How Acq.
CB	Bryce Callahan	8	Free Agent
WR	DeAndre Carter	5	UFA (Washington)
C/G	Will Clapp	5	Free Agent
TE	Gerald Everett	6	UFA (Seattle)
DL	Morgan Fox	6	Free Agent
LS	Josh Harris	11	UFA (Atlanta)
FB	Zander Horvath	R	Draft Selection (7-260)
CB	J.C. Jackson	5	UFA (New England)
DL	Austin Johnson	7	UFA (N.Y. Giants)
G	Zion Johnson	R	Draft Selection (1-17)
DL	Sebastian Joseph-Day	5	UFA (L.A. Rams)
DB	Deane Leonard	R	Draft Selection (7-236)
OLB	Khalil Mack	9	Trade (Chicago)
RB	Sony Michel	5	Free Agent
DL	Otito Obonnia	R	Draft Selection (5-160)
LB	Troy Reeder	4	Free Agent
G	Jamaree Salyer	R	Draft Selection (6-195)
P	JK Scott	4	Free Agent
RB	Isaiah Spiller	R	Draft Selection (4-123)
DB	Ja'Sir Taylor	R	Draft Selection (6-214)
OLB	Kyle Van Noy	9	Free Agent
S	JT Woods	R	Draft Selection (3-79)

COACH LOCATIONS

For the 2022 season, 15 members of the Chargers coaching staff will be down on the sideline while eight others will be up in the booth. The location of each coach can be seen below:

CHARGERS COACHES DOWN ON THE SIDELINE (15)

Name	Position
Brandon Staley	Head Coach
Ryan Ficken	Special Teams Coordinator
Derrick Ansley	Secondary
Chris Beatty	Wide Receivers
Cody Cejda	Special Assistant to the Head Coach
Shane Day	Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks
Derrick Foster	Running Backs
Chris Gould	Assistant Special Teams
Kevin Koger	Tight Ends
Brendan Nugent	Offensive Line
Jay Rodgers	Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line
Giff Smith	Outside Linebackers
John Timu	Defensive Assistant
Pat White	Offensive Assistant
Michael Wilhoite	Linebackers

CHARGERS COACHES UP IN THE BOOTH (8)

Name	Position
Renaldo Hill	Defensive Coordinator
Joe Lombardi	Offensive Coordinator
Tom Arth	Pass Game Specialist
Tom Donatell	Assistant Secondary
Mike Hiestand	Offensive Assistant
Shaun Sarrett	Assistant Offensive Line
Isaac Shewmaker	Defensive Quality Control
Chandler Whitmer	Offensive Quality Control

TELEVISION RATINGS

Los Angeles' 2021 home opener at SoFi Stadium on Sept. 19 garnered 24.3 million viewers. It was the most-watched television show in America that week.

Despite only being viewable to 37 percent of the country, the Week 3 contest at Kansas City had 14.3 million viewers — the third-most-watched television broadcast of the week.

MOST-WATCHED TV TELECASTS, SEPT. 13-SEPT. 19, 2021

Rank	Date	Program	Network	Viewership
1.	Sept. 19	Dal. at LAC	CBS	24.3 M
2.	Sept. 19	K.C. at Bal.	NBC	19.8 M
3.	Sept. 19	Atl. at T.B.	FOX	18.5 M
4.	Sept. 13	Bal. at L.V.	ABC/ESPN/ESPN2	15.3 M

MOST-WATCHED TV TELECASTS, SEPT. 20-SEPT. 26, 2021

Rank	Date	Program	Network	Viewership
1.	Sept. 26	T.B. at LAR	FOX	22.6 M
2.	Sept. 26	G.B. at S.F.	NBC	19.7 M
3.	Sept. 26	LAC at K.C.	CBS	14.3 M
4.	Sept. 20	Det. at G.B.	ABC/ESPN/ESPN2	13.8 M

TEAM NOTES

CHARGERS SEASON-OPENER SUPERLATIVES

Category	Date	Opp.	Player	No.
Completions	Sept. 9, 2018	vs. K.C.	P.Rivers	34
	Sept. 13, 2015	vs. Det.	P.Rivers	34
Pass Attempts	Sept. 9, 2018	vs. K.C.	P.Rivers	51
Comp. Pct.*	Sept. 13, 2015	vs. Det.	P.Rivers	82.9
Passing Yards	Sept. 9, 2018	vs. K.C.	P.Rivers	424
Passing TDs	Sept. 9, 2013	vs. Hou.	P.Rivers	4
	Sept. 7, 1980	at Sea.	D.Fouts	4
Passing INTs	Sept. 14, 1969	vs. K.C.	J.Hadl	4
Passer Rating*	Sept. 7, 1981	at Cle.	D.Fouts	157.1
Rush Attempts	Sept. 9, 2001	vs. Was.	L.Tomlinson	36
Rushing Yards	Sept. 7, 1981	at Cle.	C.Muncie	161
Rushing TDs	Sept. 11, 2016	at K.C.	M.Gordon	2
	<i>Eight other performances</i>			2
Receptions	Sept. 13, 2015	vs. Det.	K.Allen	15
Receiving Yards	Sept. 11, 1965	vs. Den.	L.Alworth	211
Receiving TDs	Sept. 8, 2019	vs. Ind.	A.Ekeler	2
	<i>Five other performances</i>			2
Off. Touches	Sept. 9, 2001	vs. Was.	L.Tomlinson	37
Scrim. Yards	Sept. 11, 1965	vs. Den.	L.Alworth	211
Total TDs	Sept. 8, 2019	vs. Ind.	A.Ekeler	3
	Sept. 11, 2011	vs. Min.	M.Tolbert	3
Points Scored	Sept. 8, 2019	vs. Ind.	A.Ekeler	18
	Sept. 11, 2011	vs. Min.	M.Tolbert	18
Total Tackles	Sept. 8, 2019	vs. Ind.	T.Davis	14
	<i>Two other performances</i>			14
Solo Tackles	Sept. 14, 2009	at Oak.	S.Cooper	13
Sacks	Sept. 11, 2006	at Oak.	S.Merriman	3.0
	Sept. 6, 1998	vs. Buf.	R.Harrison	3.0
Interceptions	Sept. 1, 1991	at Pit.	G.Byrd	2
	<i>Three other performances</i>			2
Passes Def.	Sept. 14, 2009	at Oak.	Q.Jammer	3
	Sept. 9, 2001	vs. Was.	A.Molden	3
FG Made	Sept. 5, 1993	vs. Sea.	J.Carney	6
PAT Made	Sept. 2, 1984	at Min.	R.Benirschke	6
Punts	Sept. 13, 2010	at K.C.	M.Scifres	8
	<i>Two other performances</i>			8
Punting Yards	Sept. 13, 2010	at K.C.	M.Scifres	382
Kick Ret. Yards	Sept. 14, 2009	at Oak.	D.Sproles	170
Punt Ret. Yards	Sept. 9, 2001	vs. Was.	T.Dwight	102

*Minimum 20 Pass Attempts

PROTECTING THE FOOTBALL

The Chargers offense fumbled the ball just 10 times in 2021, setting the all-time franchise mark for fewest fumbles in a season.

OFFENSIVE FUMBLES, SINGLE SEASON, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Season	Fumbles
1.	2021	10
2.	1993	13
3.	2013	14
	2009	14

DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH



In each season from 2008-21, at least one undrafted rookie made the Chargers active roster for the Week 1 game. Seven of those players appeared in every regular-season contest for the team, 12 made a start and eight started multiple times as a rookie.

UNDRAFTED ROOKIES ON KICKOFF WEEKEND ROSTER, SINCE 2008

Season	Player	College	GP as Rookie*
2021	LB Amen Ogbongbemiga	Oklahoma State	15 (2 starts)
2020	FB Gabe Nabers**	Florida State	16 (5 starts)
2019	DE Chris Peace	Virginia	1
	S Roderic Teamer	Tulane	7 (6 starts)
2018	LB Emmanuel Ellerbee***	Rice	3
	CB Brandon Facyson	Virginia Tech	15
	WR JJ Jones	West Georgia	3
	RB Detrez Newsome	Western Carolina	9
2017	TE Sean Culkin	Missouri	1
	RB Austin Ekeler	Western State Colorado	16
	LB Nigel Harris	South Florida	5 (1 start)
	K Younghoe Koo	Georgia Southern	4
2016	LB James Onwualu	Notre Dame	9
	RB Kenneth Farrow	Houston	13 (2 starts)
	S Dexter McCoil	Tulsa	16 (2 starts)
2015	C/G Spencer Pulley	Vanderbilt	16
	LB Nick Dzubnar	Cal Poly	16
	WR Tyrell Williams	Western Oregon	7
2014	CB Chris Davis	Auburn	12 (1 start)
	RB Branden Oliver	Buffalo	14 (7 starts)
	DT Tenny Palepoi	Utah	16
2013	S Jahleel Addae	Central Michigan	16 (2 starts)
	DT Kwame Geathers	Georgia	7
2012	G Mike Harris	UCLA	15 (9 starts)
2011	LB Darryl Gamble	Georgia	5
2010	LB Brandon Lang	Troy	10
2009	S C.J. Spillman	Marshall	5 (1 start)
2008	RB Mike Tolbert	Coastal Carolina	13 (7 starts)

*Number of games played as rookie for Chargers

**Part of 55-man active roster for Week 1 (2020 standard elevation)

***Claimed off waivers from Seattle following final cuts

TEAM NOTES

BOLTS PACE TOP 100



The Chargers posted a league-leading eight selections in the NFL's Top 100 Players of 2022 list, as voted on by the players. Seven of L.A.'s eight selections ranked in the top-60 on this year's register, pacing the league and joining the Seattle Seahawks in 2017 as the only teams ever with seven top-60 players.

Headlined by **CB J.C. Jackson**, who ranked No. 20 on the annual selection list, the eight Chargers are the most for the Bolts in a single season since the annual ranking's inception in 2011.

NFL TOP 100 SELECTIONS BY TEAM, 2022

Rank	Team	Total Selections
1.	Los Angeles Chargers	8
2.	San Francisco 49ers	7
3.	Dallas Cowboys	6
	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	6
5.	Six Tied	5

OLB Joey Bosa earned his sixth career placement on the list, securing the highest rank of his career following the 2021 season, while **WR Keenan Allen** tabbed his fifth career nod with a career-best No. 35 position. Bosa has earned a spot on the NFL Top 100 in each of his six accrued seasons.

All-Pro **T Rashawn Slater** and **RB Austin Ekeler** appeared on the list for the first time in their careers, as seven of the eight Chargers either matched or surpassed prior career-high marks.

CHARGERS NFL TOP 100 SELECTIONS, 2022

Rank	Pos.	Player	Tot. Selec.	High. Rk.
20	CB	J.C. Jackson	2	20 (2022)
30	OLB	Joey Bosa	6	30 (2022)
35	WR	Keenan Allen	5	35 (2022)
40	QB	Justin Herbert	2	40 (2022)
43	S	Derwin James	2	31 (2018)
46	RB	Austin Ekeler	1	46 (2022)
60	C	Corey Linsley	2	60 (2022)
73	T	Rashawn Slater	1	73 (2022)

CHARGERS HOME-OPENER SUPERLATIVES

Category	Date	Opp.	Player	No.
Completions	Sept. 9, 2018	vs. K.C.	P.Rivers	34
	Sept. 13, 2015	vs. Det.	P.Rivers	34
Pass Attempts	Sept. 9, 2018	vs. K.C.	P.Rivers	51
Comp. Pct.*	Sept. 13, 2015	vs. Det.	P.Rivers	82.9
Passing Yards	Sept. 15, 1985	vs. Sea.	D.Fouts	440
Passing TDs	Sept. 18, 2016	vs. Jax.	P.Rivers	4
	<i>Three other performances</i>			4
Passing INTs	Sept. 14, 1980	vs. Oak.	D.Fouts	5
Passer Rating*	Sept. 18, 2016	vs. Jax.	P.Rivers	138.9
Rush Attempts	Sept. 9, 2001	vs. Was.	L.Tomlinson	36
Rushing Yards	Sept. 29, 1974	vs. Mia.	D.Woods	157
Rushing TDs	Sept. 16, 1984	vs. Hou.	E.Jackson	3
Receptions	Sept. 13, 2015	vs. Det.	K.Allen	15
Receiving Yards	Sept. 15, 1985	vs. Sea.	W.Chandler	243
Receiving TDs	Sept. 14, 2014	vs. Sea.	A.Gates	3
	Sept. 16, 2012	vs. Ten.	D.Rosario	3
Off. Touches	Sept. 9, 2001	vs. Was.	L.Tomlinson	37
Scrim. Yards	Sept. 15, 1985	vs. Sea.	W.Chandler	243
Total TDs	Sept. 8, 2019	vs. Ind.	A.Ekeler	3
	<i>Four other performances</i>			3
Points Scored	Sept. 8, 2019	vs. Ind.	A.Ekeler	18
	<i>Five other performances</i>			18
Total Tackles	Sept. 10, 2000	vs. N.O.	J.Seau	15
Solo Tackles	Sept. 10, 2000	vs. N.O.	J.Seau	15
Sacks	Sept. 15, 2002	vs. Hou.	B.Leber	3.0
	Sept. 6, 1998	vs. Buf.	R.Harrison	3.0
Interceptions	Sept. 24, 1972	vs. Den.	J.Beauchamp	3
Passes Def.	Sept. 19, 2010	vs. Jax.	A.Cason	4
FG Made	Sept. 5, 1993	vs. Sea.	J.Carney	6
PAT Made	Sept. 18, 2016	vs. Jax.	J.Lambo	5
	<i>Four other performances</i>			5
Punts	Sept. 15, 2002	vs. Hou.	D.Bennett	10
Punting Yards	Sept. 15, 2002	vs. Hou.	D.Bennett	393
Kick Ret. Yards	Sept. 10, 2000	vs. N.O.	R.Jenkins	221
Punt Ret. Yards	Sept. 9, 2001	vs. Was.	T.Dwight	102

**Minimum 20 Pass Attempts*

TWO-POINT PROWESS

Los Angeles led the NFL in two-point conversions in 2021, finishing the season with seven conversions on a league-high 11 attempts. Both of those also set single-season team records. The Chargers have led the NFL in two-point conversions three other times (2008, '10, '18).

TWO-POINT CONVERSIONS, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Two-Point Conversions
1.	Los Angeles Chargers	7
2.	Dallas Cowboys	6
3.	Detroit Lions	5
	Philadelphia Eagles	5

TEAM NOTES

PUTTING UP POINTS

Los Angeles totaled 474 points in 2021, good for the third-most ever in a single season by a Chargers team. The Bolts scored at least 40 points three times, the most in a single season by a Chargers team since 2008. Los Angeles won all three of those games, improving their all-time record when scoring 40-plus points to 72-1 (.986).

MOST 40-POINT GAMES, SINGLE SEASON, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Season	40-Point Games	Record
1.	1960	5	5-0 (1.000)
2.	2006	4	4-0 (1.000)
	1985	4	4-0 (1.000)
	1981	4	4-0 (1.000)
5.	2021	3	3-0 (1.000)
	2008	3	3-0 (1.000)
	2005	3	3-0 (1.000)
	1982	3	3-0 (1.000)
	1961	3	3-0 (1.000)

FOURTH QUARTER RALLIES

The Chargers offense this season led the NFL with 181 points in the fourth quarter, good for the second-most ever in a single season. Los Angeles' 24 touchdowns in the fourth quarter were the most in a season since at least 1991.

FOURTH QUARTER POINTS SCORED, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Points Scored
1.	Los Angeles Chargers	181
2.	Pittsburgh Steelers	169
3.	New England Patriots	165
4.	New Orleans Saints	162
5.	Buffalo Bills	151

FOURTH QUARTER POINTS, SINGLE SEASON, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Fourth Quarter Points
1.	2013	Broncos	183
2.	2021	Chargers	181
3.	2013	Patriots	178
4.	2006	Chargers	176

The team put up 26 of those points in the fourth quarter of the Week 5 victory over Cleveland, good for the most by an offense since 2013. They were the fourth-most points in a single fourth quarter by a Chargers team in history.

FOURTH QUARTER POINTS, SINGLE GAMES, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Season	Week	Opp.	Result	Points
1.	1991	16	vs. Mia.	W, 38-30	28
	1966	5	vs. Mia.	W, 44-10	28
3.	1960	13	at Oak.	W, 41-17	27
4.	2021	5	vs. Cle.	W, 47-42	26
5.	2008	4	at Oak.	W, 28-18	25

PRIME-TIME DEFENSE

In four prime-time games in 2021, the Chargers defense has allowed an average of 90.8 rushing yards per game. Bolts were one of six teams with at least four prime-time games to allow less than 100 yards per game on the ground in those contests.

RUSHING YARDS PER GAME ALLOWED IN PRIME TIME, MIN. FOUR PRIME-TIME GAMES, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Rushing Yds/Game Allowed
1.	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	57.2
2.	Baltimore Ravens	73.4
3.	Green Bay Packers	82.6
4.	Los Angeles Chargers	90.8
5.	San Francisco 49ers	97.5
6.	Indianapolis Colts	99.8

In the first quarter of *Monday Night Football* in Week 4, the Chargers defense allowed zero net yards. It marked the first time a Bolts defensive did not allow a positive net yard in an opening quarter since 2001.

The Los Angeles defense allowed just one first down in the first half of the Monday night victory, good for the second-fewest allowed by the Chargers in a first half since 2006.

FUMBLE FAVORITES

The Los Angeles defense led the AFC in 2021 with 19 forced fumbles on the season — also ranking No. 3 in the NFL. The 19 forced fumbles tied the team's 2007 season as the most by a Chargers team in the last 20 years.

The Bolts also led the NFL with 11 strip sacks, which are the most by a Chargers defense in 20 seasons.

FORCED FUMBLES, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Forced Fumbles
1.	San Francisco 49ers	22
2.	Arizona Cardinals	21
3.	Los Angeles Chargers	19
4.	Indianapolis Colts	18
	Kansas City Chiefs	18
	Pittsburgh Steelers	18

STRIP SACKS, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Strip Sacks
1.	Los Angeles Chargers	11
2.	Arizona Cardinals	10
3.	Chicago Bears	8
4.	Dallas Cowboys	7
	Los Angeles Rams	7
	Minnesota Vikings	7
	San Francisco 49ers	7

TEAM NOTES

CONVERTING IN CRUNCH TIME

The Chargers offense was among the best at moving the chains on third down in 2021. The team ranked tied for fifth in the NFL with a 45.2 third down percentage. The 100 third-down conversions tied for the sixth-most in the NFL in 2021.

THIRD DOWN OFFENSE, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Att.	Conv.	Conv. Pct.
1.	Kansas City	205	107	52.2
2.	Tampa Bay	223	105	47.1
3.	Buffalo	222	103	46.4
4.	Philadelphia	221	101	45.7
5.	L.A. Chargers	221	100	45.2
	Arizona	221	100	45.2

The Bolts converted an NFL-high 22 attempts on fourth down in 2021. The team finished the season 22-for-34 (64.7 pct.) on fourth down attempts, tying for No. 4 in the NFL.

In the season finale at Las Vegas, the offense converted six-of-seven attempts on fourth down (85.7 pct.). According to the Elias Sports Bureau, the six fourth-down conversions were the most in a single game in the last 40 years.

FOURTH DOWN CONVERSIONS, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Fourth Down Conversions
1.	Los Angeles Chargers	22
2.	Detroit Lions	21
3.	Baltimore Ravens	18
	Indianapolis Colts	18
	Jacksonville Jaguars	18

FOURTH DOWN OFFENSE, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Att.	Conv.	Conv. Pct.
1.	Baltimore	27	18	66.7
	Kansas City	15	10	66.7
3.	Cincinnati	20	13	65.0
4.	L.A. Chargers	34	22	64.7
	New England	17	11	64.7

MOVING THE CHAINS

Los Angeles ended 2021 by ranking third in the NFL with a single-season team-record 401 conversions for a first down. The 401 first downs are tied for the sixth-most in a season in history.

FIRST DOWNS, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	First Downs
1.	Kansas City Chiefs	419
2.	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	404
3.	Los Angeles Chargers	401
4.	Buffalo Bills	398
5.	Baltimore Ravens	394

FIRST DOWNS, SINGLE SEASON, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	First Downs
1.	2012	Patriots	444
2.	2013	Broncos	435
3.	2021	Chiefs	419
4.	2011	Saints	416
5.	2021	Buccaneers	404
6.	2021	Chargers	401
	2021	Rams	401
8.	2011	Patriots	399

The Chargers offense moved the chains 33 times in the *Sunday Night Football* victory in Week 11. It tied for the fourth-most first downs by the Bolts in a single game.

MOST FIRST DOWNS, SINGLE GAME, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Game	First Downs
1.	Oct. 19, 1986 at Kansas City	35
2.	Nov. 18, 1984 vs. Miami (OT)	34
	Dec. 20, 1982 vs. Cincinnati	34
4.	Nov. 21, 2021 vs. Pittsburgh	33
	Sept. 9, 2018 vs. Kansas City	33
	Sept. 13, 2013 at Philadelphia	33
	Oct. 31, 2004 vs. Oakland	33

UNIFORM RECORDS

NEW UNIFORM RECORD

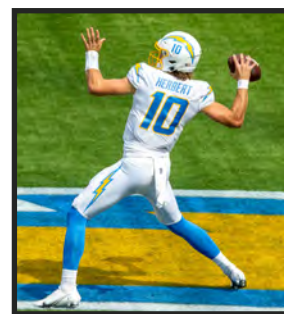
In April 2020, the Bolts unveiled new, sleek uniforms to make the best uniform in sports even better — marking a new era of Chargers football as the team moved into SoFi Stadium. Below is the team's record for the uniform colors as well as combinations.

RECORD BY UNIFORM, PANTS AND COMBOS, SINCE 2020

Uniform Color	Home	Road	Overall
Powder Blue Uniform	7-3	0-2	7-5
White Uniform	0-3	7-6	7-9
Navy Blue Color Rush	0-2	0-1	0-3
Royal Blue Color Rush.	2-0	0-0	2-0

Pants Color	Home	Road	Overall
Gold Pants	2-3	4-4	6-7
White Pants	5-3	3-4	8-7
Navy Blue Color Rush	0-2	0-1	0-3
Royal Blue Color Rush.	2-0	0-0	2-0

Uniform/Pant Combos	Home	Road	Overall
Powder Uni/Gold Pants	2-2	0-1	2-3
Powder Uni/White Pants	5-1	0-1	5-2
White Uni/Gold Pants	0-1	4-3	4-4
White Uni/White Pants	0-2	3-3	3-5
Navy Blue Color Rush	0-2	0-1	0-3
Royal Blue Color Rush.	2-0	0-0	2-0



UNIFORM RECORD SINCE THE MERGER

Since the 1970 NFL-AFL Merger, the Bolts have donned several different uniforms. Below is a look since 1970 of the team's record in specific uniform and pant colors as well as uniform combinations:

RECORD BY UNIFORM, PANTS AND COMBOS, SINCE 1970

Uniform Color	Home	Road	Overall
Powder Blue Uniform	31-36-2	4-6-1	35-42-3
White Uniform	63-38	140-210-2	203-248-2
Navy Blue Uniform.	103-89	16-18	119-107
Royal Blue Uniform	19-21	6-4	25-25

Pants Color	Home	Road	Overall
Gold Pants	58-51-2	46-70-3	104-121-5
White Pants	131-114	47-70	178-184
Navy Blue Pants.	22-18	73-98	95-116
Royal Blue Pants	5-1	0-0	5-1

Uniform/Pant Combos	Home	Road	Overall
Powder Uni/Gold Pants	8-15-2	1-4-1	9-19-3
Powder Uni/White Pants	23-21	3-2	26-23
White Uni/Gold Pants	36-16	39-62-2	75-78-2
White Uni/White Pants.	10-9	29-51	39-60
Royal Uni/Royal Pants	5-1	0-0	5-1
Navy Uni/Navy Pants	5-5	1-1	6-6
Royal Uni/Gold Pants	14-20	6-4	20-24
Navy Uni/White Pants.	98-84	15-17	113-101
White Uni/Navy Pants.	17-13	72-97	89-110

Helmet Color and Combos	Home	Road	Overall
White Helmet	86-71-2	63-84-3	149-155-5
White Uni/White Pants	6-6	14-10	20-16
White Uni/Gold Pants	6-2	8-20-2	14-22-2
Powder Uni/Gold Pants.	8-15-2	1-4-1	9-19-3
Powder Uni/White Pants.	23-21	3-2	26-23
Navy Uni/Navy Pants.	5-4	1-1	6-5
Royal Uni/Royal Pants.	5-1	0-0	5-1
White Uni/Navy Pants	9-6	32-40	41-46
Navy Uni/White Pants	24-16	4-7	28-23
Navy Helmet.	130-113	103-154	233-267
Navy Uni/Navy Pants.	0-1	0-0	0-1
Navy Uni/White Pants	74-68	11-10	85-78
Royal Uni/Gold Pants.	14-20	6-4	20-24
White Uni/Gold Pants	30-14	31-42	61-56
White Uni/Navy Pants	8-7	40-57	48-64
White Uni/White Pants	4-3	15-41	19-44

JUSTIN HERBERT

HERBERT AS A PRO

Since entering the NFL, **Justin Herbert** leads the AFC in completions and ranks inside the top five in the NFL in passing yards, passing touchdowns and total touchdowns.

PASSING COMPLETIONS LEADERS, NFL, SINCE 2020

Rank	Team	Player	Completions
1.	T.B.	QB Tom Brady	886
2.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	839
3.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	826
4.	Buf.	QB Josh Allen	805

PASSING YARDS LEADERS, NFL, SINCE 2020

Rank	Team/s	Player	Passing Yards
1.	T.B.	QB Tom Brady	9,949
2.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	9,579
3.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	9,350
4.	Det./LAR	QB Matthew Stafford	8,970
5.	Buf.	QB Josh Allen	8,951

PASSING TOUCHDOWNS LEADERS, NFL, SINCE 2020

Rank	Team	Player	Passing Touchdowns
1.	G.B.	QB Aaron Rodgers	85
2.	T.B.	QB Tom Brady	83
3.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	75
4.	Buf.	QB Josh Allen	73
5.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	69
6.	Min.	QB Kirk Cousins	68

MOST TOTAL TOUCHDOWNS, NFL, SINCE 2020

Rank	Team	Player	Total Touchdowns
1.	G.B.	QB Aaron Rodgers	91
2.	T.B.	QB Tom Brady	88
3.	Buf.	QB Josh Allen	87
4.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	79
5.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	77
6.	Min.	QB Kirk Cousins	70

MAKING AN IMPACT

Justin Herbert has thrown a touchdown pass in 21-straight games. It's the second-longest active streak in the NFL and the fourth-longest streak in team history.

MOST CONSECUTIVE GAMES WITH A PASSING TOUCHDOWN, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rk.	Quarterback	Dates	Consec. Games
1.	Philip Rivers	Dec. 9, 2012-Oct. 23, 2014	28
2.	Philip Rivers	Oct. 1, 2017-Dec. 13, 2018	27
3.	Philip Rivers	Oct. 4, 2009-Nov. 22, 2010	23
4.	Justin Herbert	Dec. 13, 2020-Present	21
5.	Dan Fouts	Oct. 14, 1979-Nov. 9, 1980	20



CAPTAIN CLUTCH

Justin Herbert has been clutch late in games dating back to his rookie season. In his career, Herbert has engineered eight game-winning drives in the fourth quarter or overtime.

Six of Herbert's game-winning drives in the fourth quarter or overtime capped comeback victories, including all five last year.

JUSTIN HERBERT'S CAREER GAME-WINNING DRIVES

Game	Drive Length	Game-Winning Score
Dec. 13, 2020 vs. Atl.	6 plays, 49 yds (0:31)	Badgley 43-yd FG
Dec. 17, 2020 at L.V.	5 plays, 75 yds (1:49)	Herbert 1-yd TD run*
Dec. 27, 2020 vs. Den.	7 plays, 56 yds (2:01)	Badgley 37-yd FG
Sept. 12, 2021 at Was.	3 plays, 3 yds (0:45)	M.Williams 3-yd TD rec.
Sept. 26, 2021 at K.C.	8 plays, 59 yds (1:10)	M.Williams 4-yd TD rec.
Oct. 10, 2021 vs. Cle.	5 plays, 48 yds (0:31)	Ekeler 3-yd TD run
Nov. 7, 2021 at Phi.	15 plays, 64 yds (6:05)	Hopkins 29-yd FG
Nov. 21, 2021 vs. Pit.	3 plays, 75 yards (1:15)	M.Williams 53-yd TD rec.

*Game-winning drive was in overtime

HERBERT'S FOURTH QUARTER/OVERTIME COMEBACK WINS

Date	Opponent	4Q/OT Deficit	Result
Dec. 17, 2020	at Las Vegas	24-27	W, 30-27 (OT)
Sept. 12, 2021	at Washington	13-16	W, 20-16
Sept. 26, 2021	at Kansas City	21-24	W, 30-24
Oct. 10, 2021	vs. Cleveland	35-42	W, 47-42
Nov. 7, 2021	at Philadelphia	16-17	W, 27-24
Nov. 21, 2021	vs. Pittsburgh	34-37	W, 37-34

Herbert posted a game-winning drive in the fourth quarter or overtime of three-straight games in 2020, becoming just the third rookie to do so since the 1970 NFL-AFL merger. The two others — Ben Roethlisberger (2004) and Vince Young (2006) — also won Offensive Rookie of the Year honors from *The Associated Press*.

ROOKIE QUARTERBACKS WITH THREE CONSECUTIVE GAME-WINNING DRIVES, SINCE 1970

Season	Team	Quarterback	Consecutive Games
2020	LAC	Justin Herbert*	3 (Dec. 13 — Dec. 27)
2006	Ten.	Vince Young*	3 (Nov. 26 — Dec. 10)
2004	Pit.	Ben Roethlisberger*	3 (Dec. 5 — Dec. 18)

*Won AP Offensive Rookie of the Year

JUSTIN HERBERT



AMONG THE GAME'S BEST

In 2021, **Justin Herbert** led the AFC and ranked inside the top four in the NFL in completions, passing yards and passing touchdowns. His nine 300-yard games tied Tampa Bay QB Tom Brady for the most in the NFL.

PASSING COMPLETIONS LEADERS, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Passing Completions
1.	T.B.	QB Tom Brady	485
2.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	443
3.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	436
4.	L.V.	QB Derek Carr	428
5.	Dal.	QB Dak Prescott	410

PASSING YARDS LEADERS, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Passing Yards
1.	T.B.	QB Tom Brady	5,316
2.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	5,014
3.	LAR	QB Matthew Stafford	4,886
4.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	4,839
5.	L.V.	QB Derek Carr	4,804

PASSING TOUCHDOWNS LEADERS, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Passing Touchdowns
1.	T.B.	QB Tom Brady	43
2.	LAR	QB Matthew Stafford	41
3.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	38
4.	Dal.	QB Dak Prescott	37
	G.B.	QB Aaron Rodgers	37
	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	37

MOST GAMES WITH 300-PLUS PASSING YARDS, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	9
	T.B.	QB Tom Brady	9
3.	LAR	QB Matthew Stafford	7
4.	Buf.	QB Josh Allen	6
	Cin.	QB Joe Burrow	6
	L.V.	QB Derek Carr	6
	Min.	QB Kirk Cousins	6

THREADING THE NEEDLE ON THIRD DOWN

In his 32 career starts, **Justin Herbert** has been the one of the best passers in the NFL at moving the chains on third down. He has completed 203 passes on 325 attempts (62.5 pct.) for 2,521 yards and 27 touchdowns with 11 interceptions (100.0 passer rating). His 2,521 passing yards on third down lead the NFL over the last two seasons.

Herbert tied for the league lead with 14 touchdown passes on third down in 2020, good for the most by a rookie in the last 40 seasons. He added 13 touchdowns in 2021, giving him 27 third-down passing scores since entering the professional ranks, which is good for the second-most over that span.

THIRD DOWN PASSING YARDS, NFL, SINCE 2020

Rank	Team/s	Player	Passing Yards
1.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	2,521
2.	Det./LAR	QB Matthew Stafford	2,496
3.	L.V.	QB Derek Carr	2,483

THIRD DOWN PASSING TOUCHDOWNS, NFL, SINCE 2020

Rank	Team	Player	Passing Touchdowns
1.	T.B.	QB Tom Brady	31
2.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	27
3.	G.B.	QB Aaron Rodgers	25
4.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	24

Herbert's 100.0 passer rating on third down ranks fifth in the NFL and No. 2 in the AFC over the last two years among players with at least 100 passing attempts on third down.

THIRD DOWN PASSER RATING, MIN. 100 ATT., NFL, SINCE 2020

Rank	Team	Player	Passer Rating
1.	G.B.	QB Aaron Rodgers	112.0
2.	T.B.	QB Tom Brady	111.2
3.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	105.7
4.	Min.	QB Kirk Cousins	102.2
5.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	100.0

Herbert leads the NFL with 152 passing first downs on third down over the past two seasons. He threw for 12 third-down conversions in the Week 1 win at Washington, the most passing first downs in a single game on third down since Andrew Luck did so in 2012. Herbert sported a league-leading 79 passing first downs on third down in 2021.

THIRD DOWN PASSING FIRST DOWNS, NFL, SINCE 2020

Rank	Team	Player	Passing First Downs
1.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	152
2.	Pit.	QB Ben Roethlisberger	141
3.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	140
4.	T.B.	QB Tom Brady	137
5.	Atl.	QB Matt Ryan	136

JUSTIN HERBERT

SETTING THE PACE — COMPLETIONS

After setting the rookie completions record in 2020, **Justin Herbert** has now completed 839 career passes, the most by a player through their first two seasons in NFL history.

MOST COMPLETIONS, FIRST TWO PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Completions
1.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	839
2.	Ari.	QB Kyler Murray	724
3.	Oak.	QB Derek Carr	698

MOST COMPLETIONS, FIRST THREE PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Completions
1.	Ind.	QB Andrew Luck	1,062
2.	Ari.	QB Kyler Murray	1,057
3.	L.V.	QB Derek Carr	1,055
4.	Mia.	QB Ryan Tannehill	1,029
5.	Ind.	QB Peyton Manning	1,014
—	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	839

In his 31st career game, Herbert became the fastest player in history to eclipse 800 career receptions. He reached the mark at 23 years, 298 days old, making him the third-youngest player to do so. Herbert is closing in on 1,000 career completions and can be the fastest to eclipse that milestone.

FEWEST GAMES TO 800 COMPLETIONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	31
2.	Det.	QB Matthew Stafford	34
	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	34
4.	Ari.	QB Kyler Murray	35

YOUNGEST PLAYERS TO 800 COMPLETIONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Age (Years-Days)
1.	N.E.	QB Drew Bledsoe	23-271
2.	T.B.	QB Jameis Winston	23-296
3.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	23-298
4.	Ari.	QB Kyler Murray	24-50
5.	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	24-78

FEWEST GAMES TO 1,000 COMPLETIONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	Det.	QB Matthew Stafford	41
2.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	42
3.	Ari.	QB Kyler Murray	43
	Phi.	QB Carson Wentz	43
—	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	32

SETTING THE PACE — PASSING YARDS

Justin Herbert has thrown for 9,350 yards in his career, good for the most in NFL history through a player's first two career seasons. He is the only player ever to reach 9,000 yards in his first two seasons.

MOST PASSING YARDS, FIRST TWO PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Passing Yards
1.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	9,350
2.	Ind.	QB Andrew Luck	8,196
3.	T.B.	QB Jameis Winston	8,132
4.	Car.	QB Cam Newton	7,920
5.	Ind.	QB Peyton Manning	7,874

MOST PASSING YARDS, FIRST THREE PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Passing Yards
1.	Ind.	QB Andrew Luck	12,957
2.	Ind.	QB Peyton Manning	12,287
3.	T.B.	QB Jameis Winston	11,636
4.	Ari.	QB Kyler Murray	11,480
5.	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	11,431
—	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	9,350

In his 32nd career game, Herbert eclipsed 9,000 career passing yards, tying as the second-fastest player to do so in history. He reached the mark at 23 years, 305 days old, making him the third-youngest to do so in NFL history.

FEWEST GAMES TO 9,000 PASSING YARDS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	30
2.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	32
	StL	QB Kurt Warner	32
4.	Det.	QB Matthew Stafford	33
5.	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	34

YOUNGEST PLAYERS TO 9,000 PASSING YARDS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Age (Years-Days)
1.	N.E.	QB Drew Bledsoe	23-264
2.	T.B.	QB Jameis Winston	23-272
3.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	23-305
4.	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	24-35

FEWEST GAMES TO 10,000 PASSING YARDS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	34
2.	StL	QB Kurt Warner	36
3.	Det.	QB Matthew Stafford	37
4.	Ind.	QB Andrew Luck	38
	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	38
	StL	QB Marc Bulger	38
—	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	32

JUSTIN HERBERT

SETTING THE PACE — TOUCHDOWNS

After setting the all-time rookie record with 31 touchdown passes in 2020, **Justin Herbert** threw 38 passing scores in 2021. He is the only player in history to have 30 or more in each of his first two seasons, while his 69 career touchdown passes are the most in NFL history through the first two seasons of a career.

Herbert has 77 total touchdowns in his career (passing and rushing), the most in history through a player's first two years.

MOST TOUCHDOWN PASSES, FIRST TWO PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Passing Touchdowns
1.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	69
2.	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	68
3.	Oak.	QB Derek Carr	53

MOST TOTAL TOUCHDOWNS, FIRST TWO PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Total Touchdowns
1.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	77
2.	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	70
3.	Car.	QB Cam Newton	62

MOST TOUCHDOWN PASSES, FIRST THREE PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Passing Touchdowns
1.	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	98
2.	Ind.	QB Andrew Luck	86
3.	Ind.	QB Peyton Manning	85
4.	L.V.	QB Derek Carr	81
5.	Cin.	QB Andy Dalton	80
—	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	69

MOST TOTAL TOUCHDOWNS, FIRST THREE PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Total Touchdowns
1.	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	100
2.	Ind.	QB Andrew Luck	98
3.	Buf.	QB Josh Allen	92
	Car.	QB Cam Newton	92
5.	Ari.	QB Kyler Murray	90
—	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	77

A 5,000-FOOT VIEW

Justin Herbert became the first 5,000-yard passer in franchise history, throwing for 5,014 yards in 2021. He is now one of just nine players in NFL history to pass for 5,000 yards in a single season, doing so in the season finale. At 23 years, 305 days of age that day, he became the third-youngest player in history to register 5,000 passing yards in a single season.

With 302 rushing yards on the season, Herbert had the most rushing yards by any 5,000-yard passer in NFL history. He was the fourth quarterback to total at least 5,000 passing yards and 100 rushing yards in the same season.

YOUNGEST PLAYERS TO THROW FOR 5,000 PASSING YARDS, SINGLE SEASON, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Age (Years-Days)
1.	1984	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	23-93
2.	2018	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	23-104
3.	2021	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	23-305
4.	2011	Det.	QB Matthew Stafford	23-328

QUARTERBACKS WITH 5,000 PASSING YARDS AND 100 RUSHING YARDS, SINGLE SEASON, NFL HISTORY

Season	Team	Quarterback	Pass Yds	Rush Yds
2021	LAC	Justin Herbert	5,014	302
2019	T.B.	Jameis Winston	5,109	250
2018	K.C.	Patrick Mahomes	5,097	272
2011	N.E.	Tom Brady	5,235	109

LEGGING IT OUT

In the team's *Sunday Night Football* victory over Pittsburgh in Week 11, **Justin Herbert** threw for 382 yards and ran for 90 yards, becoming the only player to ever top 350 yards passing and 90 yards rushing in a single game. He was the fifth player ever to run for 90 yards and pass for 300 in the same game.

QUARTERBACKS WITH 300 PASSING YARDS AND 90 RUSHING YARDS, SINGLE GAME, NFL HISTORY

Season	Team	Quarterback	Pass Yds	Rush Yds
2021	Buf.	Josh Allen	308	109
2021	LAC	Justin Herbert	382	90
2015	Car.	Cam Newton	340	100
2014	Sea.	Russell Wilson	313	106
2011	Phi.	Mike Vick	315	90
1989	Phi.	Randall Cunningham	306	92

JUSTIN HERBERT

BIG-TIME PERFORMER

Since entering the NFL, **Justin Herbert** has put up big-time performances. He's among the all-time leaders through a player's first two career seasons. Herbert's eight 300-yard games and six three-touchdown performances in 2020 both were the most ever by a rookie.

Herbert has topped 300 passing yards 17 times in his career, good for the most by a player through their first two seasons in NFL history and already tied for second through a player's first three seasons. He has also thrown for at least three touchdowns in 13 career games and multiple touchdowns in 22 games, both tied for the most over a player's first two seasons in history.

GAMES WITH 300-PLUS PASSING YARDS, FIRST TWO PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	17
2.	Cin.	QB Joe Burrow	11
3.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	10
	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	10

GAMES WITH 300-PLUS PASSING YARDS, FIRST THREE PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	Ind.	QB Andrew Luck	19
2.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	17
	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	17
	StL	QB Kurt Warner	17
5.	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	16

GAMES WITH THREE-PLUS PASSING TOUCHDOWNS, FIRST TWO PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	13
	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	13
3.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	10

GAMES WITH THREE-PLUS PASSING TOUCHDOWNS, FIRST THREE PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	18
2.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	15
3.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	13
	Ind.	QB Peyton Manning	13
	StL	QB Kurt Warner	13

GAMES WITH MULTIPLE PASSING TOUCHDOWNS, FIRST TWO PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	22
	Mia.	QB Dan Marino	22
3.	Oak.	QB Derek Carr	17

TARGET ACQUIRED

Justin Herbert has thrown touchdowns to 12 players, including 10 with multiple scores. He's most frequently thrown touchdowns to **WR Keenan Allen** and **WR Mike Williams**, who have each caught 14 scores from Herbert. The first passing score of his career went to **WR Jalen Guyton**, who caught the first touchdown of his career on the play.

HERBERT'S CAREER TOUCHDOWN PASSES BY RECEIVER

Receiver	Touchdown Passes
WR Keenan Allen	14
WR Mike Williams	14
RB Austin Ekeler	10
WR Jalen Guyton	6
TE Donald Parham Jr.	6
TE Jared Cook	4
TE Hunter Henry	4
WR Joshua Palmer	4
WR Tyron Johnson	3
FB Gabe Nabers	2
TE Stephen Anderson	1
TE Virgil Green	1
Total (12 Receivers)	69

A HISTORIC NIGHT ON FOURTH DOWN

In the 2021 season finale, **Justin Herbert** turned in a historic performance on fourth down – completing all six pass attempts for 106 yards and the game-tying touchdown, moving the chains each time and registering a perfect 158.3 passer rating.

It was the only known performance with six fourth-down passing first downs. Among players with five or more passing attempts on fourth down in a single game, Herbert is the only one with a perfect passer rating since at least 1991.

FOURTH DOWN PASSER RATING LEADERS, SINGLE GAME, MIN. FOUR ATT., NFL, SINCE 1991

Rk.	Team	Game	Player	Passer Rtg.
1.	LAC	Jan. 9, 2022 at L.V.	QB Justin Herbert	158.3
2.	Atl.	Nov. 22, 2018 at N.O.	QB Matt Ryan	151.3
3.	StL	Nov. 18, 2012 vs. NYJ	QB Sam Bradford	128.8
	NYG	Dec. 26, 1999 vs. Min.	QB Kerry Collins	128.8
5.	Cin.	Oct. 27, 2019 at LAR	QB Andy Dalton	118.8
	Chi.	Dec. 6, 1998 at Min.	QB Steve Stenstrom	118.8

JUSTIN HERBERT IN PRIMETIME

A PRIME-TIME PRODIGY

Since entering the NFL, **Justin Herbert** has made six starts in primetime, leading the Bolts to a 3-3 record in those games. He has led the Chargers to wins on each of the regularly-slated prime-time games — *Thursday Night Football*, *Sunday Night Football* and *Monday Night Football*.

He has been one of the best quarterbacks under the lights since entering the NFL in 2020, with his 102.0 passer rating in prime-time games ranking No. 3 among AFC players over the last two seasons with 100 prime-time passing attempts.

PRIME-TIME PASSER RATING, MIN. 100 ATT., SINCE 2020

Rank	Team	Player	Passer Rating
1.	G.B.	QB Aaron Rodgers	128.5
2.	Dal.	QB Dak Prescott	114.7
3.	N.O.	QB Drew Brees	109.6
4.	Buf.	QB Josh Allen	108.7
5.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	102.5
6.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	102.0
7.	Sea.	QB Russell Wilson	101.2
8.	L.V.	QB Derek Carr	100.1

SUNDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

In 2021, **Justin Herbert** appeared in two games on **Sunday Night Football**, totaling 765 passing yards and six touchdowns with two interceptions on 64-of-105 passing (61.0 pct.) for a 94.3 passer rating. The 94.3 rating is in the top-15 in NFL history in games played on Sunday night (min. 100 attempts).

Herbert made his first career appearance on *Sunday Night Football* in Week 11 against Pittsburgh, throwing for 382 yards and three touchdowns with an interception on 31-of-40 passing (73.2 pct.) for a 116.1 passer rating. He added 90 rushing yards to become the first player ever to have at least 350 yards passing and 90 yards rushing in a single game.

His 116.1 passer rating was the best in a quarterback's first career start on *SNF* with at least 40 passing attempts since the program began in 2006. It was also the best passer rating by a quarterback ever in their first career start in Sunday night game (min. 40 att.).

PASSER RATING LEADERS, FIRST CAREER START IN A SUNDAY NIGHT GAME, MIN. 40 ATT., NFL HISTORY

Rk.	Team	Game	Player	Passer Rtg.
1.	LAC	Nov. 21, 2021 vs. Pit.	QB Justin Herbert	116.1
2.	Ari.	Oct. 4, 2005 vs. S.F.	QB Josh McCown	109.4
3.	StL	Nov. 18, 2001 at N.E.	QB Kurt Warner	105.4

MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

After setting the *Monday Night Football* rookie record in 2020 for single-game touchdown passes, **Justin Herbert** added three passing scores in the Week 4 win, making him just the fourth player to have seven or more touchdown passes in their first two starts on *MNF* since the program began in 1970. Herbert has thrown for 486 yards and seven scores on 45-of-72 passing (62.5 pct.) for a 114.7 passer rating on Monday night — which ranks as the seventh-best rating in *MNF* history (min. 50 att.).

MOST TOUCHDOWN PASSES, FIRST TWO CAREER STARTS ON MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL, ALL-TIME

Rank	Team	Player	Passing TDs
1.	Buf.	Josh Allen	8
2.	LAC	Justin Herbert	7
	K.C.	Patrick Mahomes	7
	K.C.	Len Dawson	7

PASSER RATING LEADERS, MIN. 50 PASSING ATTEMPTS, MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL HISTORY

Rank	Team/s	Player	Passer Rating
1.	Dal.	QB Dak Prescott	124.3
2.	Ten./L.V.	QB Marcus Mariota	123.7
3.	Bal.	QB Lamar Jackson	123.0
4.	Hou.	QB Deshaun Watson	122.3
5.	Buf.	QB Josh Allen	117.4
6.	S.F.	QB Colin Kaepernick	117.2
7.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	114.7
8.	Was.	QB Sonny Jurgensen	114.2

THURSDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

As a rookie in 2020, **Justin Herbert** recorded his first career comeback win in the fourth quarter or overtime in Week 15 at Las Vegas, leading the Bolts to a 30-27 overtime victory. He finished the game with 314 passing yards and two touchdowns on 22-of-32 passing (68.8 pct.) for a 121.1 passer rating. Herbert added a rushing touchdown in overtime to secure the victory.

At 22 years, 282 days old, Herbert became the second-youngest player to mount a come-from-behind win in the fourth quarter or overtime of a Thursday night game in NFL history.

YOUNGEST QUARTERBACKS TO LEAD A COME-FROM-BEHIND WIN IN FOURTH QUARTER OR OVERTIME, THURSDAY NIGHT GAMES, NFL HISTORY

Rk.	Team	Game	Player	Age (Yrs-Days)
1.	S.F.	Dec. 14, 2006 at Sea.	QB Alex Smith	22-221
2.	LAC	Dec. 17, 2020 at L.V.	QB Justin Herbert	22-282
3.	Dal.	Dec. 1, 2016 at Min.	QB Dak Prescott	23-125

JUSTIN HERBERT

MR. OCTOBER

In October 2020, **Justin Herbert** set an NFL record by recording a 122.2 passer rating in the month — the best by a rookie quarterback in October (min. 50 att.). His stellar play during the month continued into the 2021 season, making Herbert one of the top quarterbacks in the month of October since entering the NFL.

Herbert's 104.2 career passer rating in October is the fourth-best while his 7.8 passing touchdown percentage ranks No. 3 in NFL history during the month among players with at least 150 October passing attempts.

PASSER RATING, MIN. 150 ATT., OCTOBER, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Passer Rating
1.	Hou.	QB Deshaun Watson	113.6
2.	G.B.	QB Aaron Rodgers	108.4
3.	Ari.	QB Kyler Murray	105.0
4.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	104.2
5.	Sea.	QB Russell Wilson	102.5

PASSING TD PCT., MIN. 150 ATT., OCTOBER, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team/s	Player	Passing TD Pct.
1.	LAR/Cle.	QB Frank Ryan	8.8
2.	Hou.	QB Deshaun Watson	8.5
3.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	7.8
4.	NYY*/Cle.	QB George Ratterman	7.6
5.	Was.	QB Sammy Baugh	7.5

*New York Yanks

In seven starts during the month of October, Herbert has tossed 20 passing scores. His 20 passing touchdowns are the second-most in the last two Octobers by any quarterback. Herbert has thrown a touchdown on 7.8 percent of his October passing attempts over the last two seasons, the best in football (min. 100 att).

PASSING TOUCHDOWNS, OCTOBER, NFL, SINCE 2020

Rank	Team/s	Player	Starts	Passing TDs
1.	T.B.	QB Tom Brady	9	27
2.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	7	20
3.	Ari.	QB Kyler Murray	9	19
	G.B.	QB Aaron Rodgers	8	19
5.	Ind.	QB Carson Wentz	9	18
	Det./LAR	QB Matthew Stafford	8	18

PASSER RATING, ROOKIE QBs, MIN. 50 ATT., OCTOBER, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Quarterback	Passer Rating
1.	2020	LAC	Justin Herbert	122.2
2.	2004	Pit.	Ben Roethlisberger	116.7
3.	2017	Hou.	Deshaun Watson	116.0

DIAL IT UP DEEP

On his second touchdown pass in Week 5 of 2021, **Justin Herbert** hit **WR Mike Williams** on a 72-yard score, marking the quarterback's third career passing touchdown of 70-plus yards. He found **WR Jalen Guyton** for a 59-yard score in Week 14, Herbert's seventh passing touchdown of 50 yards or more. The second-year passer paces the league in 70-yard touchdown passes and is tied for No. 2 in 50-yard passing scores since entering the NFL in 2020.

MOST TOUCHDOWN PASSES OF 70-PLUS YARDS, FIRST TWO SEASONS, NFL, SINCE 1991

Seasons	Team	Player	Passing TDs
2020-21	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	3
2020-21	Cin.	QB Joe Burrow	3
2018-19	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	3
2016-17	Dal.	QB Dak Prescott	3
2008-09	Bal.	QB Joe Flacco	3

PASSING TOUCHDOWNS OF 70-PLUS YARDS, NFL, SINCE 2020

Rank	Team	Player	Passing TDs
1.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	3
	Cin.	QB Joe Burrow	3
	G.B.	QB Aaron Rodgers	3
3.	—	Eight Other Players	2

PASSING TOUCHDOWNS OF 50-PLUS YARDS, NFL, SINCE 2020

Rank	Team/s	Player	Passing TDs
1.	Cin.	QB Joe Burrow	8
2.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	7
	Det./LAR	QB Matthew Stafford	7
4.	Sea.	QB Russell Wilson	6
5.	G.B.	QB Aaron Rodgers	5
	L.V.	QB Derek Carr	5
	Min.	QB Kirk Cousins	5

JUSTIN HERBERT



AFC OFFENSIVE PLAYER RECOGNITION

Three times in 2021, **Justin Herbert** was named AFC Offensive Player of the Week (Weeks 9, 13 and 14). He was the first Charger to win a Player of the Week honor in back-to-back weeks since Hall of Fame **RB LaDainian Tomlinson** did so in Weeks 14 and 15 of his 2006 MVP season.

Herbert was also the first quarterback to earn the recognition in consecutive weeks since Baltimore's Lamar Jackson did so in his 2019 MVP campaign (Weeks 9 and 10).

AFC OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE WEEK AWARDS — 3

Game	Week	Cmp-Att	Yards	TD	Rating
Nov. 7, 2021 at Phi.	9	32-38	356	2	123.2
Dec. 5, 2021 at Cin.	13	26-35	317	3	118.4
Dec. 12, 2021 vs. NYG	14	23-31	275	3	133.1

HERBERT'S STARTING RECORD

Below is a table of **Justin Herbert's** record as an NFL starter:

HERBERT'S REGULAR-SEASON RECORD AS STARTER

Category	Wins	Losses	Ties	Pct.
Overall.....	15	17	0	.469
Home.....	9	8	0	.529
Road.....	6	9	0	.400
vs. AFC West.....	6	6	0	.500
In December/January.....	7	4	0	.636
After October.....	10	10	0	.500
300-Plus Passing Yards.....	9	8	0	.529
Three-Plus TD Passes.....	9	4	0	.692
Four-Plus TD Passes.....	2	1	0	.667
100-Plus Passer Rating.....	12	3	0	.800
110-Plus Passer Rating.....	11	2	0	.846
120-Plus Passer Rating.....	6	2	0	.750
130-Plus Passer Rating.....	2	1	0	.667

HERBERT HITTING 300

Justin Herbert has topped 300 passing yards 17 times in his career, the most in the NFL over the last two seasons. His nine such performances in 2021 tied for the league lead and set a single-season team record. Herbert's eight 300-yard games in 2020 were the most ever by a rookie.

300-YARD PASSING OUTPUTS — 17

Date	Opp.	Cmp-Att	Yards	TD	Rating
Sept. 20, 2020	vs. K.C.	22-33	311	1	94.4
Sept. 27, 2020	vs. Car.	35-49	330	1	88.0
Oct. 25, 2020	vs. Jax.	27-43	347	3	111.3
Nov. 8, 2020	vs. L.V.	28-42	326	2	105.9
Nov. 22, 2020	vs. NYJ	37-49	366	3	116.5
Nov. 29, 2020	at Buf.	31-52	316	1	75.5
Dec. 17, 2020	at L.V.	22-32	314	2	121.1
Jan. 3, 2021	at K.C.	22-31	302	3	134.1
Sept. 12, 2021	at Was.	31-47	337	1	85.2
Sept. 19, 2021	vs. Dal.	31-41	338	1	87.2
Oct. 10, 2021	vs. Cle.	26-43	398	4	122.0
Nov. 7, 2021	at Phi.	32-38	356	2	123.2
Nov. 21, 2021	vs. Pit.	30-41	382	3	116.1
Nov. 28, 2021	at Den.	28-44	303	2	80.0
Dec. 5, 2021	at Cin.	26-35	317	3	118.4
Dec. 26, 2021	at Hou.	27-35	336	1	92.1
Jan. 9, 2022	at L.V.	34-64	383	3	80.4

HERBERT IN TEAM HISTORY

Through two seasons, **Justin Herbert** has the best completion percentage (66.2) and passer rating (97.9) in Chargers history among players with at least 500 pass attempts.

CAREER COMPLETION PERCENTAGE, MIN. 500 ATTEMPTS, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Seasons	Player	Completion Pct.
1.	2020-Present	QB Justin Herbert	66.2
2.	2004-19	QB Philip Rivers	64.7
3.	2001-05	QB Drew Brees	62.2

CAREER PASSER RATING, MIN. 500 ATTEMPTS, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Seasons	Player	Passer Rating
1.	2020-Present	QB Justin Herbert	97.9
2.	2004-19	QB Philip Rivers	95.1
3.	2001-05	QB Drew Brees	84.9

JUSTIN HERBERT

A ROOKIE CAMPAIGN FOR THE AGES

AWARDS

- *The Associated Press* Offensive Rookie of the Year
- *Professional Football Writers of America* Rookie of the Year
- PFWA Offensive Rookie of the Year
- PFWA All-Rookie Selection
- NFL Offensive Rookie of the Month (October)
- NFL Offensive Rookie of the Month (November)
- FedEx NFL Air Player of the Week — Week 11 vs. NYJ (fan vote)
- Voted by fans as the Pepsi Zero Sugar Rookie of the Year
- Nine-time Pepsi Zero Sugar Rookie of the Week (voted by fans)

RECORDS AT THE TIME

- Most passing touchdowns by a rookie quarterback ever (31).
- Most total touchdowns by a rookie in NFL history (36).
- Most consecutive games by a rookie quarterback with multiple passing touchdowns in NFL history (seven).
- Most performances by a rookie quarterback with 300-plus passing yards in NFL history (eight).
- Most performances by a rookie quarterback with three-plus touchdowns in NFL history (six).
- Most games by a rookie quarterback with multiple touchdown passes in NFL history (10).
- Most completions ever by a rookie quarterback (396).
- Youngest player ever to throw 30 touchdowns in a single season, doing so at 22 years, 299 days old.
- Tied for the longest streak of game-winning drives (three games) in the fourth quarter or overtime by a rookie quarterback in the Super Bowl era (since 1966).
- Recorded the first win in pro football history by a rookie quarterback while posting 300 passing yards, three touchdown passes, a rushing score and no interceptions.
- Most passing touchdowns by a rookie quarterback in a game (four) and a half (three) in *Monday Night Football* history.
- Tied for the longest streak of games with three-plus touchdown passes by a rookie quarterback in NFL history (four).
- Tied for the most 300-yard passing performances in a player's first two career games (two).
- Became the first player since at least 1970 to register over 1,500 passing yards and a 100-plus passer rating through the first five games of a career.
- Set marks for the most passing attempts, completions, passing yards and touchdown passes by a rookie quarterback in Chargers history.
- Recorded the most single-game rushing yards by a quarterback in team annals (66 in Week 7 vs. Jax.).

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OTHER NOTES AT THE TIME

- Ranked second among rookie quarterbacks in NFL history with 4,336 passing yards on the season.
- Joined Patrick Mahomes as the only players in history to eclipse 4,000 passing yards in the first 14 starts of a career.
- Became the second player in NFL history to top 250 passing yards in each of the first seven games of a career (Mahomes).
- Threw a touchdown pass in each of his first 10 games played, the second-longest streak to open a career in NFL history.
- Threw for 277 yards in the first half of Week 11, the most by any rookie quarterback in a first half over the last 40 seasons.
- Became the third quarterback in NFL history to have 300 passing yards and a rushing score in a debut.
- Threw for the fourth-most passing yards in a debut since 1970.
- Became the first quarterback to throw a touchdown and run for a score in the first half of a debut since 1954.

OFFENSIVE ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Justin Herbert earned widespread recognition as the Offensive Rookie of the Year, including as the 10th quarterback in history to win the honor from *The Associated Press*. Herbert was also selected by *Professional Football Writers of America* as Rookie of the Year and Offensive Rookie of the Year — becoming the second and seventh quarterback to win those awards, respectively. He is the first player in history to be recognized with all three honors.

QBs TO WIN AP OFFENSIVE ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Season	Team	Player	Total TDs
2020	LAC	Justin Herbert	36
2019	Ari.	Kyler Murray	24
2016	Dal.	Dak Prescott	29
2012	Was.	Robert Griffin III	27
2011	Car.	Cam Newton	35
2010	StL	Sam Bradford	19
2008	Atl.	Matt Ryan	17
2006	Ten.	Vince Young	19
2004	Pit.	Ben Roethlisberger	18
1970	Buf.	Dennis Shaw	10

HOT OUT OF THE GATE

Justin Herbert kicked off his career with a pair of historic streaks. As a rookie, he tossed a touchdown pass in each of the first 10 games of his career, just one less than the all-time record. Herbert's streak of games with 250-plus passing yards to start a career ended at seven contests, ranking second in NFL history.

PLAYERS WITH A PASSING TOUCHDOWN, CONSECUTIVE GAMES TO START CAREER, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Consecutive Games
1.	Was.	QB Mark Rypien	11
2.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	10
3.	Den.	QB Jay Cutler	9

PLAYERS WITH 250 PASSING YARDS, CONSECUTIVE GAMES TO START CAREER, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Consecutive Games
1.	K.C.	QB Patrick Mahomes	10
2.	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	7
3.	—	Seven Other Players	2

Herbert threw 31 touchdowns in 2020, eclipsing 30 in the season finale. At 22 years, 299 days of age that day, he became the youngest player in history to register 30 touchdown passes in a single season, besting a mark set by Ravens QB Lamar Jackson.

YOUNGEST PLAYERS TO THROW 30 TOUCHDOWN PASSES, SINGLE SEASON, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Age (Years-Days)
1.	2020	LAC	QB Justin Herbert	22-299
2.	2019	Bal.	QB Lamar Jackson	22-339

JUSTIN HERBERT

A BIG-TIME ROOKIE

In 2020, **Justin Herbert** posted the most passing touchdowns (31) and total touchdowns (36) by a rookie quarterback in NFL history.

He also registered a rookie-record six games with three-plus touchdowns. Four of those games were in a row, joining Deshaun Watson as the only rookie quarterbacks in NFL history with three or more consecutive games of three-plus touchdown passes.

Herbert had a seven-game streak with multiple touchdown passes, good for the longest by a rookie quarterback in NFL history and tied for the third-best in team history. He finished the year with a rookie-record 10 multi-touchdown games.

PASSING TOUCHDOWNS, ROOKIE QBs, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Passing TDs
1.	2020	LAC	Justin Herbert	31
2.	2018	Cle.	Baker Mayfield	27
3.	2012	Sea.	Russell Wilson	26
	1998	Ind.	Peyton Manning	26

TOTAL TOUCHDOWNS, ROOKIE QBs, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Total TDs
1.	2020	LAC	Justin Herbert	36
2.	2011	Car.	Cam Newton	35
3.	2012	Sea.	Russell Wilson	30

GAMES WITH MULTIPLE PASSING TOUCHDOWNS, ROOKIE QUARTERBACKS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Games
1.	2020	LAC	Justin Herbert	10
2.	2018	Cle.	Baker Mayfield	9

With 4,336 passing yards, Herbert recorded the second-most passing yards in NFL history among rookie quarterbacks. Herbert completed 396 passes and tossed for 300-plus yards in eight games, the most by a rookie quarterback in history.

PASSING YARDS, ROOKIE QBs, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Passing Yards
1.	2012	Ind.	Andrew Luck	4,374
2.	2020	LAC	Justin Herbert	4,336
3.	2011	Car.	Cam Newton	4,051
4.	2015	T.B.	Jameis Winston	4,042

GAMES WITH 300-PLUS PASSING YARDS, ROOKIE QUARTERBACKS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Games
1.	2020	LAC	Justin Herbert	8
2.	2012	Ind.	Andrew Luck	6

COMPLETIONS, ROOKIE QBs, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Completions
1.	2020	LAC	Justin Herbert	396
2.	2016	Phi.	Carson Wentz	379
3.	2021	Jax.	Trevor Lawrence	359

EFFICIENCY AT ITS FINEST

With a 98.3 passer rating in 2020, **Justin Herbert** had the No. 5 rating by a rookie quarterback in NFL history (min. 200 att.). Herbert's 289.1 passing yards per game ranked No. 1 in NFL history among rookie QBs with at least 200 passing attempts.

PASSER RATING, ROOKIE QBs, MIN. 200 ATT., NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Passer Rating
1.	2016	Dal.	Dak Prescott*	104.9
2.	2017	Hou.	Deshaun Watson	103.0
3.	2012	Was.	Robert Griffin III*	102.4
4.	2012	Sea.	Russell Wilson	100.0
5.	2020	LAC	Justin Herbert*	98.3
6.	2004	Pit.	Ben Roethlisberger*	98.1
7.	1983	Mia.	Dan Marino	96.0

PASSING YARDS/GAME, ROOKIE QBs, MIN. 200 ATT., NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Passing Yds/Game
1.	2020	LAC	Justin Herbert*	289.1
2.	2012	Ind.	Andrew Luck	273.4
3.	2020	Cin.	Joe Burrow	268.8
4.	2018	Cle.	Baker Mayfield	266.1
5.	2011	Car.	Cam Newton*	253.2

*Won AP Offensive Rookie of the Year



KEENAN ALLEN

A FIVE-YEAR SPAN FOR THE AGES

Keenan Allen has topped 95 receptions in each season since 2017, becoming the second player in NFL history to do so in five-straight years. Over the last five seasons, Allen leads the NFL in receptions and ranks fifth in receiving yards. He is one of 10 players in history to top 500 receptions over any five-year span.

CONSECUTIVE SEASONS WITH 95-PLUS RECEPTIONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team/s	Player	No. of Seasons
1.	Pit.	WR Antonio Brown	6 (2013-18)
2.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	5 (2017-Present)
3.	Hou./Ari.	WR DeAndre Hopkins	4 (2017-20)
	Ind.	WR Marvin Harrison*	4 (1999-2002)
	S.F.	WR Jerry Rice*	4 (1993-96)

*Pro Football Hall of Famer

RECEPTIONS LEADERS, NFL, SINCE 2017

Rank	Team	Player	Receptions
1.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	509
2.	G.B.	WR Davante Adams	506
3.	K.C.	TE Travis Kelce	480

RECEIVING YARDS LEADERS, NFL, SINCE 2017

Rank	Team/s	Player	Receiving Yards
1.	G.B./L.V.	WR Davante Adams	6,195
2.	K.C.	TE Travis Kelce	6,144
3.	Hou./Ari.	WR DeAndre Hopkins	6,094
4.	K.C.	WR Tyreek Hill	6,037
5.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	5,918

PLAYERS WITH 500 CATCHES IN A FIVE-YEAR SPAN, NFL HISTORY

Seasons	Team/s	Player	Receptions
2017-21	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	509
	G.B.	WR Davante Adams	506
2016-20	N.O.	WR Michael Thomas	510
	Hou./Ari.	WR DeAndre Hopkins	508
2015-19	Atl.	WR Julio Jones	519
	Hou.	WR DeAndre Hopkins	504
2014-18	Pit.	WR Antonio Brown	576
	Atl.	WR Julio Jones	524
2013-17	Pit.	WR Antonio Brown	582
2012-16	Pit.	WR Antonio Brown	547
2011-15	Pit.	WR Antonio Brown	510
2009-13	N.E./Den.	WR Wes Welker	522
2008-12	N.E.	WR Wes Welker	560
2007-11	N.E.	WR Wes Welker	554
2002-06	Ind.	WR Marvin Harrison	500
2001-05	Ind.	WR Marvin Harrison	514
2000-04	Ind.	WR Marvin Harrison	534
1999-2003	Ind.	WR Marvin Harrison	563
1998-2002	Ind.	WR Marvin Harrison	528
1994-98	Min.	WR Cris Carter	507
1993-97	Min.	WR Cris Carter	515
1992-96	S.F.	WR Jerry Rice	524



A PERENNIAL PRO BOWLER

With prolific campaigns each of the last five seasons, Keenan Allen earned five-straight Pro Bowl nods as one of the top receivers in football. Allen is one of six offensive players to be named a Pro Bowler following each of the last five seasons. His five-straight Pro Bowls is tied for the fourth-longest active streak among offensive players.

LONGEST ACTIVE STREAK OF PRO BOWL SELECTIONS, OFFENSIVE PLAYERS, NFL

Rank	Team	Player	Consecutive Pro Bowls
1.	K.C.	TE Travis Kelce	7 (2016-22)
2.	K.C.	WR Tyreek Hill	6 (2017-22)
	S.F.	FB Kyle Juszczyk	6 (2017-22)
4.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	5 (2018-22)
	G.B.	WR Davante Adams	5 (2018-22)
	N.O.	RB Alvin Kamara	5 (2018-22)

Allen is now tied for the sixth-most all-star selections in team history. Hall of Fame **LB Junior Seau**, **QB Philip Rivers** and Hall of Fame **QB Dan Fouts** are the only Chargers draft picks with more Pro Bowl selections with the team in history.

MOST PRO BOWL SELECTIONS, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Player	Pro Bowls	No.
1.	LB Junior Seau	1990-2002	12
2.	QB Philip Rivers	2007, '10-12, '14, '17-19	8
	TE Antonio Gates	2005-12	8
4.	DE Leslie O'Neal	1990-91, '93-96	6
	QB Dan Fouts	1980-84, '86	6
6.	WR Keenan Allen	2018-22	5
	RB LaDainian Tomlinson	2003, '05-08	5
	TE Kellen Winslow	1981-84, '88	5
	T Russ Washington	1975-76, '78-80	5

KEENAN ALLEN

A HISTORIC TRACK RECORD

Keenan Allen caught nine passes in his 99th career game in 2020's Week 14 win against Atlanta, setting an all-time record for the most catches through the first 100 games of a career. Allen added a catch in the 100th game of his career to add to his record-setting mark.

RECEPTIONS, FIRST 100 CAREER GAMES, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team/s	Player	Rec.
1.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	624
2.	Pit.	WR Antonio Brown	622
3.	Atl.	WR Julio Jones	619
4.	Ari./Bal.	WR Anquan Boldin	614
5.	Ind.	WR Marvin Harrison	591

Allen eclipsed 700 career receptions in Week 12, doing so in his 111th game to tie Antonio Brown for the fastest player to reach that mark in NFL history.

With a team-record 16 receptions in 2020's Week 11 win against the New York Jets, Allen tied as the fastest player in NFL history to reach 600 career receptions with Antonio Brown (96 games).

FEWEST GAMES TO 700 RECEPTIONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	111
	Pit.	WR Antonio Brown	111
3.	Atl.	WR Julio Jones	112
4.	Ind.	WR Marvin Harrison	114

FEWEST GAMES TO 600 RECEPTIONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team/s	Player	Games
1.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	96
	Pit.	WR Antonio Brown	96
3.	Atl.	WR Julio Jones	97
4.	Ari./Bal.	WR Anquan Boldin	98

KEENAN SETS THE MARK

WR Keenan Allen finished the game with six catches for 52 yards (8.7 avg.), giving him a team-record 106 receptions on the year.

MOST RECEPTIONS, SINGLE SEASON, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Season	Player	Receptions
1.	2021	WR Keenan Allen	106
2.	2019	WR Keenan Allen	104
3.	2017	WR Keenan Allen	102
4.	2020	WR Keenan Allen	100
	2003	RB LaDainian Tomlinson	100

HIT THE CENTURY MARK

Keenan Allen reached 100 receptions for the fourth season in his career in 2021, tying for the sixth-most 100-catch campaigns in history. The California product reached the mark each of the last three seasons, tying for the third-longest streak in NFL history.

MOST 100-CATCH SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team/s	Player	No. of Seasons
1.	Pit.	WR Antonio Brown	6
	Den./Chi./NYJ	WR Brandon Marshall	6
3.	Ari.	WR Larry Fitzgerald	5
	Hou.	WR Andre Johnson	5
	N.E.	WR Wes Welker	5
6.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	4
	Hou./Ari.	WR DeAndre Hopkins	4
	Ind.	WR Marvin Harrison	4
	Ind.	WR Reggie Wayne	4
	S.F.	WR Jerry Rice	4

CONSECUTIVE 100-CATCH SEASONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team/s	Player	No. of Seasons
1.	Pit.	WR Antonio Brown	6 (2013-18)
2.	Ind.	WR Marvin Harrison	4 (1999-2002)
3.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	3 (2019-21)
	Hou./Ari.	WR DeAndre Hopkins	3 (2018-20)
	N.O.	WR Michael Thomas	3 (2017-19)
	Ari.	WR Larry Fitzgerald	3 (2015-17)
	Den.	WR Brandon Marshall	3 (2007-09)
	N.E.	WR Wes Welker	3 (2007-09)
	Det.	WR Herman Moore	3 (1995-97)
	S.F.	WR Jerry Rice	3 (1994-96)

TOP OF THE CHARTS

Keenan Allen has now ranked inside the top four of the AFC for receptions in three-straight seasons. He also ranked seventh in receiving yards.

RECEPTIONS LEADERS, AFC, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Receptions
1.	K.C.	WR Tyreek Hill	111
2.	Bal.	TE Mark Andrews	107
	Pit.	WR Diontae Johnson	107
4.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	106
5.	Mia.	WR Jaylen Waddle	104

RECEIVING YARDS LEADERS, AFC, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Receiving Yards
1.	Cin.	WR Ja'Marr Chase	1,455
2.	Bal.	TE Mark Andrews	1,361
3.	K.C.	WR Tyreek Hill	1,239
4.	Buf.	WR Stefon Diggs	1,225
5.	Pit.	WR Diontae Johnson	1,161
6.	LAC	WR Mike Williams	1,146
7.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	1,138

KEENAN ALLEN

THIRD-DOWN PHENOM

Over his historic five-year span, **Keenan Allen** has also been the NFL's top receiver on third down, totaling 149 catches for 1,992 yards and moving the chains on 123 of those receptions — all of which are NFL highs. He ranked tied for fifth over that span with 14 touchdown grabs on third down.

Allen continued his third-down dominance in 2021. He had 31 catches for 414 yards and two touchdowns on third down, with 25 of those receptions moving the chains.

THIRD DOWN RECEPTIONS, NFL, SINCE 2017

Rank	Team/s	Player	Receptions
1.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	149
2.	LAR	WR Cooper Kupp	127
3.	G.B.	WR Davante Adams	122
4.	Hou./Ari.	WR DeAndre Hopkins	115

THIRD DOWN RECEIVING YARDS, NFL, SINCE 2017

Rank	Team	Player	Receiving Yards
1.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	1,992
2.	LAR	WR Cooper Kupp	1,954
3.	G.B.	WR Davante Adams	1,780
4.	K.C.	WR Tyreek Hill	1,681

RECEIVING FIRST DOWNS, THIRD DOWN, NFL, SINCE 2017

Rank	Team/s	Player	Rec. First Downs
1.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	123
2.	LAR	WR Cooper Kupp	102
3.	G.B.	WR Davante Adams	96
4.	Hou./Ari.	WR DeAndre Hopkins	94
	K.C.	WR Tyreek Hill	92
	K.C.	TE Travis Kelce	92

ALLEN A DAY'S WORK

With nine receptions for 112 yards (12.4 avg.) in Week 11, **Keenan Allen** tied a team record with his third-consecutive game of eight or more catches.

MOST CONSECUTIVE GAMES WITH EIGHT OR MORE RECEPTIONS, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rk.	Player	Dates	Consec. Games
1.	WR Keenan Allen	Nov. 7, 2021-Nov. 21, 2021	3
	WR Keenan Allen	Oct. 25, 2020-Nov. 8, 2020	3
	WR Keenan Allen	Sept. 8, 2019-Sept. 22, 2019	3
	WR Keenan Allen	Nov. 18, 2017-Dec. 3, 2017	3
	TE Antonio Gates	Oct. 23, 2005-Nov. 6, 2005	3



THE TOP TARGET

In 2020, **Keenan Allen** not only made team history with a record-setting 16 catches in the Bolts' Week 11 win, he also set an NFL record by registering his sixth career game of 13-plus receptions. Allen also became the fifth player in NFL history with multiple performances of 15 or more catches.

Allen caught 12 passes for 104 yards in the Week 9 win at Philadelphia, marking his record-setting ninth career performance with at least 12 receptions and 100 receiving yards.

MOST GAMES WITH 13-PLUS RECEPTIONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	6
2.	N.E.	WR Wes Welker	5
	Pit.	WR Antonio Brown	5

MOST GAMES WITH 15-PLUS RECEPTIONS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	2
	Dal.	TE Jason Witten	2
	Den.	WR Brandon Marshall	2
	N.E.	WR Wes Welker	2
	Pit.	WR Antonio Brown	2

MOST GAMES WITH 12-PLUS CATCHES AND 100-PLUS RECEIVING YARDS, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Games
1.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	9
2.	Ind.	WR Marvin Harrison	8
	N.E.	WR Wes Welker	8

KEENAN ALLEN

TRIPLE-THREAT

From Weeks 11-13 in 2017, **Keenan Allen** became the first player in NFL history to post three-consecutive games with 10-plus receptions, 100-plus receiving yards and a touchdown catch.

KEENAN ALLEN RECEIVING STATS, WEEK 11-13, 2017

Week	Date	Opp.	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
11	Nov. 19, 2017	vs. Buf.	12	159	13.3	29	2
12	Nov. 23, 2017	at Dal.	11	172	15.6	42t	1
13	Dec. 3, 2017	vs. Cle.	10	105	10.5	26	1

Allen capped off the season with an interception in the road finale at the New York Jets. The pick made him the first player in NFL history to have 90-plus catches and an interception in the same season. Allen also joined Hall of Famers Don Hutson (1942) and Randy Moss (2009) as the third player in league annals to register 1,000-plus receiving yards and an interception in the same season.

PLAYERS WITH 1,000 RECEIVING YARDS AND AN INT, SINGLE SEASON, NFL HISTORY

Season	Team	Player	Rec.	Rec. Yds	INTs
2017	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	102	1,393	1
2009	N.E.	WR Randy Moss*	83	1,264	1
1942	G.B.	E Don Hutson*	74	1,211	7

**Pro Football Hall of Famer*

KEENAN KEEPS CLIMBING

Keenan Allen's first catch in Week 10 of the 2020 season made him the franchise leader in receptions among wide receivers, passing Hall of Famer **Charlie Joiner** in the process. Allen now ranks No. 2 in team annals behind **TE Antonio Gates** with 730 career receptions.

In Week 2 of 2021, Allen moved to fourth on the team's receiving yards list. He currently sits at No. 2 among Chargers in history for games with 100-plus receiving yards and has a franchise-record 14 games with 10-plus receptions.

CAREER RECEPTIONS, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Seasons	Player	Receptions
1.	2003-18	TE Antonio Gates	955
2.	2013-Present	WR Keenan Allen	730
3.	1976-86	WR Charlie Joiner*	586
4.	1979-87	TE Kellen Winslow*	541
5.	2001-09	RB LaDainian Tomlinson*	530
6.	1962-70	FL Lance Alworth*	493

**Pro Football Hall of Famer*

CAREER RECEIVING YARDS, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Seasons	Player	Receiving Yards
1.	2003-18	TE Antonio Gates	11,841
2.	1962-70	FL Lance Alworth	9,584
3.	1976-86	WR Charlie Joiner	9,203
4.	2013-Present	WR Keenan Allen	8,535

KEEPING IT 100

Keenan Allen registered his fourth 100-yard performance of the year in Week 11. It gave him 31 games with 100-plus yards for his career, tied for the fourth-most since he entered the NFL in 2013.

Allen's seven 100-yard games in 2017 were the most by a Charger in a single season since 1980. He became the first Chargers rookie to top 100 receiving yards in a postseason contest.

REGULAR-SEASON 100-YARD RECEIVING GAMES — 31

Date	Opp.	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
Oct. 6, 2013	at Oak.	6	115	19.2	30	1
Oct. 14, 2013	vs. Ind.	9	107	11.9	22t	1
Nov. 3, 2013	at Was.	8	128	16.0	22	1
Nov. 24, 2013	at K.C.	9	124	13.8	29	0
Dec. 1, 2013	vs. Cin.	8	106	13.3	22	0
Sept. 28, 2014	vs. Jax.	10	135	13.5	24	0
Nov. 23, 2014	vs. StL	6	104	17.3	35	1
Nov. 30, 2014	at Bal.	11	121	11.0	23t	2
Sept. 13, 2015	vs. Det.	15	166	11.1	21	0
Sept. 27, 2015	at Min.	12	133	11.1	34t	2
Oct. 18, 2015	at G.B.	14	157	11.2	38	0
Sept. 17, 2017	vs. Mia.	9	100	11.1	24	0
Oct. 1, 2017	vs. Phi.	5	138	27.6	50	0
Nov. 19, 2017	vs. Buf.	12	159	13.3	29	2
Nov. 23, 2017	at Dal.	11	172	15.6	42t	1
Dec. 3, 2017	vs. Cle.	10	105	10.5	26	1
Dec. 10, 2017	vs. Was.	6	111	18.5	51	0
Dec. 31, 2017	vs. Oak.	9	133	14.8	28	1
Sept. 9, 2018	vs. K.C.	8	108	13.5	23	1
Nov. 4, 2018	at Sea.	6	124	20.7	54	0
Dec. 2, 2018	at Pit.	14	148	10.6	21	1
Sept. 8, 2019	vs. Ind.	8	123	15.4	28t	1
Sept. 22, 2019	vs. Hou.	13	183	14.1	34	2
Sept. 27, 2020	vs. Car.	13	132	10.2	22	1
Oct. 25, 2020	vs. Jax.	10	125	12.5	27	0
Nov. 8, 2020	vs. L.V.	9	103	11.4	27t	1
Nov. 22, 2020	vs. NYJ	16	145	9.1	21	1
Sept. 12, 2021	at Was.	9	100	11.1	17	0
Sept. 19, 2021	vs. Dal.	4	108	27.0	42	0
Nov. 7, 2021	at Phi.	12	104	8.7	18	0
Nov. 21, 2021	vs. Pit.	9	112	12.4	30	0

POSTSEASON 100-YARD RECEIVING GAMES — 1

Date	Opp.	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
Jan. 12, 2014*	at Den.	6	142	23.7	49	2

**AFC Divisional*

AUSTIN EKELER



AN OLD HEAD ON YOUNG SHOULDERS

On a two-yard receiving touchdown in Week 10, **Austin Ekeler** reached 20 career receiving touchdowns. At 26 years, 181 days, he was the second running back in the common draft era (since 1967) to reach that mark before turning 27-years-old.

This season, the dynamic receiving back can become the youngest running back in the common draft era to reach 25 career touchdown catches.

RUNNING BACKS TO REACH 20 CAREER RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS BEFORE TURNING 27-YEARS-OLD, COMMON DRAFT ERA (SINCE 1967)

Season	Team	Player	Age (Years-Days)
2021	N.O.	Alvin Kamara	26-161
2021	LAC	Austin Ekeler	26-181
1977	Min.	Chuck Foreman	26-333

YOUNGEST TO REACH 25 CAREER RECEIVING TDs, RUNNING BACKS, COMMON DRAFT ERA (SINCE 1967)

Rank	Team/s	Player	Age (Years-Days)
1.	Ind./StL	Marshall Faulk	28-265
2.	N.E.	James White	28-335
3.	Phi.	Brian Westbrook	29-13
4.	S.D./N.O.	Darren Sproles	29-193
—	LAC	Austin Ekeler	27-117*

*Age as of Sept. 11, 2022

Ekeler was already the sixth running back in the common draft era to eclipse 15 receiving scores before turning 26-years-old after hauling in his 15th touchdown catch in Week 16 of 2020.

RUNNING BACKS TO REACH 15 CAREER RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS BEFORE TURNING 26-YEARS-OLD, COMMON DRAFT ERA (SINCE 1967)

Season	Team/s	Player	Age (Years-Days)
2020	LAC	Austin Ekeler	25-224
2020	N.O.	Alvin Kamara	25-148
2020	K.C./Cle.	Kareem Hunt	25-80
2019	Car.	Christian McCaffrey	23-170
1983	Buf.	Joe Cribbs	25-312
1975	Min.	Chuck Foreman	25-42

HANDS TEAM

Austin Ekeler has solidified himself as one of the most dynamic receiving backs in the NFL. Entering his sixth pro year, he is already tied for the most receiving scores by a running back through their first six seasons in the common draft era (since 1967). The Western State Colorado product ranks tied for No. 8 in receiving touchdowns among running backs in the common draft era.

RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS THROUGH FIRST SIX SEASONS, RBs, NFL, COMMON DRAFT ERA (SINCE 1967)

Rank	Team	Player	Receiving TDs
1.	LAC	Austin Ekeler	24
	N.E.	James White	24
3.	Min.	Chuck Foreman	23
	Phi.	Brian Westbrook	23
5.	N.O.	Alvin Kamara	20

CAREER RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS, RUNNING BACKS, NFL, COMMON DRAFT ERA (SINCE 1967)

Rank	Team/s	Player	Receiving TDs
1.	Ind./StL	Marshall Faulk	36
2.	S.D./N.O./Phi.	Darren Sproles	32
3.	Phi./S.F.	Brian Westbrook	30
	S.D./Cin./T.B./Cle.	James Brooks	30
5.	Ari./Was./Buf./N.E.	Larry Centers	28
6.	Phi./Mia./N.E./NYJ	Keith Byars	27
7.	N.E.	James White	25
8.	LAC	Austin Ekeler	24
	Buf./S.D./Hou.*	Ronnie Harmon	24

*Houston Oilers

The 24 receiving touchdowns are the fifth-most in the common draft era by a running back with a single team.

RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS WITH A SINGLE TEAM, RBs, NFL, COMMON DRAFT ERA (SINCE 1967)

Rank	Team	Player	Receiving TDs
1.	Eagles	Brian Westbrook	29
2.	Bengals	James Brooks	27
	Rams	Marshall Faulk	27
4.	Patriots	James White	25
5.	Chargers	Austin Ekeler	24

Ekeler has now hauled in at least two receiving scores in each of his five seasons, joining Hall of Famer Marcus Allen as the only running backs to do so since the 1970 NFL-AFL Merger. There has not been a running back over that span to have two or more receiving scores in each of their first six pro seasons.

SEASONS WITH MULTIPLE RECEIVING TDs, FIRST FIVE PROFESSIONAL SEASONS, RBs, NFL, SINCE 1970

Rank	Team	Player	No. of Seasons
1.	Chargers	Austin Ekeler	5
	Raiders	Marcus Allen	5
3.	—	16 Other Players	4

AUSTIN EKELER

A LEAGUE-LEADING SCORER

In 2021, **Austin Ekeler** continued to showcase his ability as one of the most versatile weapons in football. He ended the season tied for the league lead with 20 scrimmage touchdowns and ranked third in scrimmage yards among running backs.

Ekeler's eight games of 100-plus scrimmage yards tied for third in the NFL among running backs. His eight touchdown catches tied for No. 10 in the AFC, while his 12 touchdown runs ranked fourth in the conference.

SCRIMMAGE TOUCHDOWNS LEADERS, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Scrimmage TDs
1.	LAC	RB Austin Ekeler	20
	Ind.	RB Jonathan Taylor	20
3.	Ari.	RB James Conner	18
4.	Cin.	RB Joe Mixon	16
	LAR	WR Cooper Kupp	16

SCRIMMAGE YARDS LEADERS, RBs, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Scrimmage Yards
1.	Ind.	Jonathan Taylor	2,171
2.	Pit.	Najee Harris	1,667
3.	LAC	Austin Ekeler	1,558
3.	Cin.	Joe Mixon	1,519
5.	Cle.	Nick Chubb	1,433

MAKING AN IMPACT

Austin Ekeler ended the 2021 season on an eight-game touchdown streak, tying for the fifth-longest streak in team history.

MOST CONSECUTIVE GAMES WITH A TOUCHDOWN, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rk.	Player	Dates	Consec. Games
1.	RB LaDainian Tomlinson	Oct. 3, 2004-Oct. 16, 2005	18
2.	RB LaDainian Tomlinson	Oct. 15, 2006-Dec. 17, 2006	10
3.	TE Antonio Gates	Dec. 13, 2009-Oct. 10, 2010	9
	RB Natrone Means	Dec. 19, 1993-Oct. 16, 1994	9
5.	RB Austin Ekeler	Nov. 14, 2021-Present	8
	RB LaDainian Tomlinson	Nov. 23, 2003-Sept. 19, 2004	8

END ZONE EKELER

With 12 rushing touchdowns and eight receiving scores last year, **RB Austin Ekeler** registered the sixth season in NFL history with at least eight rushing scores and eight touchdown catches. He's the only AFC player ever to do so.

Ekeler hauled in eight receiving scores for the second season in his career, joining Hall of Fame RB Marshall Faulk (2000 and '01) as the only running backs in the common draft era (since 1967) with multiple seasons of eight-plus touchdown grabs.

PLAYERS WITH EIGHT RUSHING TOUCHDOWNS AND EIGHT TOUCHDOWN CATCHES, SINGLE SEASON, NFL HISTORY

Season	Team	Player	Rush TDs	Rec. TDs
2021	LAC	RB Austin Ekeler	12	8
2001	StL	RB Marshall Faulk	12	9
2000	StL	RB Marshall Faulk	18	8
1975	Min.	RB Chuck Foreman	13	9
1966	Dal.	RB Dan Reeves	8	8
1949	NYG	RB Gene Roberts	9	8

In the Week 11 win against Pittsburgh on *Sunday Night Football*, Ekeler scored four scrimmage touchdowns (two rushing, two receiving). He was the only AFC player that season to score a touchdown in each quarter of a single game. It marked Ekeler's third game of the season with a rushing score and a touchdown catch. He had an NFL-best four such performances in 2021, tying for the second-most in a season in NFL history.

Ekeler was the first running back to have multiple rushing scores and multiple receiving touchdowns in a game since 2011 (Maurice Jones-Drew). He was also the first Charger to have four scrimmage scores in a game since **RB Danny Woodhead** in 2015.

GAMES WITH A RUSHING TOUCHDOWN AND RECEIVING TOUCHDOWN, SINGLE SEASON, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Games
1.	1975	Min.	RB Chuck Foreman	5
2.	2021	LAC	RB Austin Ekeler	4
	—	—	Eight Other Players	4

UNDER THE LIGHTS

In four prime-time games in 2021, **Austin Ekeler** scored nine scrimmage touchdowns, tying for the second-most in a single season in NFL history. His six scrimmage scores on *Sunday Night Football* tied for the most in a season ever (Dez Bryant in 2014, Randy Moss in 2007, LaDainian Tomlinson in 2006).

MOST PRIME-TIME SCRIMMAGE TDs, SINGLE SEASON, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Scrimmage TDs
1.	2007	N.E.	WR Randy Moss	11
2.	2021	LAC	RB Austin Ekeler	9
	1995	Dal.	RB Emmitt Smith	9

AUSTIN EKELER

SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED



In the fourth quarter of the Week 5 win against Cleveland, **Austin Ekeler** hauled in a receiving score and ran in two others to seal the victory. He became the first player in over a decade and just the fifth since at least 1991 to have three scrimmage touchdowns in a single fourth quarter.

PLAYERS WITH THREE-PLUS SCRIMMAGE TOUCHDOWNS IN A SINGLE FOURTH QUARTER, NFL, SINCE 1991

Season	Week	Team	Player	Scrimmage TDs
2021	5	LAC	RB Austin Ekeler	3
2009	8	Hou.	RB Ryan Moats	3
2008	12	Atl.	RB Michael Turner	3
2002	1	K.C.	RB Priest Holmes	3
1991	16	S.D.	RB Rod Bernstine	3

KEEPING IT 100

Austin Ekeler registered the second 100-yard rushing performance of his career in Week 4, setting a single-game career high for rushing yards in the process. In 2019, he posted three games with 100-plus receiving yards to set a team record for career 100-yard receiving games by a running back.

100-YARD RUSHING OUTPUTS – 2

Date	Opp.	Att	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
Dec. 8, 2019	at Jax.	8	101	12.6	35	0
Oct. 4, 2021	vs. L.V.	15	117	7.8	20	1

100-YARD RECEIVING OUTPUTS – 3

Date	Opp.	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
Oct. 20, 2019	at Ten.	7	118	16.9	41t	1
Nov. 18, 2019	vs. K.C.	8	108	13.5	37	0
Dec. 8, 2019	at Jax.	4	112	28.0	84t	1

100 MILES AND RUNNIN'

In the team's 45-10 win over Jacksonville in 2019, **Austin Ekeler** recorded the 35th 100-yard rushing and 100-yard receiving performance in league annals on just 12 offensive touches — the fewest in a 100/100 performance in NFL history.

Ekeler's effort was the fourth such performance by an undrafted running back in the common draft era (since 1967) and the third in team history (second by a Charger in the regular season.)

PLAYERS WITH 100 RUSHING YARDS AND 100 RECEIVING YARDS, SINGLE GAME, MAX. 15 TOUCHES, NFL HISTORY

Season	Team	Player	Rush Yds	Rec. Yds	Touches
2019	LAC	Austin Ekeler	101	112	12
1986	Dal.	Herschel Walker	122	170	15
1954	ChiC*	Ollie Matson	115	161	15

*Chicago Cardinals

PLAYERS WITH 100 RUSHING YARDS AND 100 RECEIVING YARDS, SINGLE GAME, CHARGERS HISTORY

Season	Player	Rush Att	Rush Yds	Rec.	Rec. Yds
2019	Austin Ekeler	8	101	4	112
1985	Lionel James	12	127	5	118
1963	Keith Lincoln*	13	206	7	123

*Only postseason 100/100 performance in pro football history



MIKE WILLIAMS

CLUTCH SCORING GRABS

Mike Williams hauled in seven touchdowns from QB Justin Herbert in the fourth quarter or overtime this year — five were go-ahead scores and another was a game-tying touchdown.

His five go-ahead touchdowns in the fourth quarter or overtime set a single-season NFL record, while his six game-tying or go-ahead scores in the fourth quarter or overtime were also an all-time best in a season. Williams' seven touchdown grabs in the fourth quarter tied for the most in a season since at least 1991.

GO-AHEAD TOUCHDOWNS IN FOURTH QUARTER OR OVERTIME, SINGLE SEASON, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Go-Ahead TDs
1.	2021	LAC	WR Mike Williams	5
2.	2021	LAR	WR Cooper Kupp	4
	2014	Min.	RB Matt Asiata	4
	2012	Atl.	RB Michael Turner	4
	1989	G.B.	WR Sterling Sharpe	4
	1985	Hou.*	RB Mike Rozier	4
	1985	S.F.	RB Roger Craig	4
	1979	StL	RB Ottis Anderson	4

*Houston Oilers

GAME-TYING OR GO-AHEAD TOUCHDOWNS IN FOURTH QUARTER OR OVERTIME, SINGLE SEASON, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Go-Ahead TDs
1.	2021	LAC	WR Mike Williams	6
2.	1989	G.B.	WR Sterling Sharpe	5
3.	—	—	15 Other Players	4

FOURTH QUARTER RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS, SINGLE SEASON, NFL, SINCE 1991

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Receiving TDs
1.	2021	LAC	WR Mike Williams	7
	2020	Min.	WR Adam Thielen	7
	2004	Car.	WR Mushin Muhammad	7
	2002	Ind.	WR Marvin Harrison	7
	2000	S.F.	WR Terrell Owens	7
	1995	Cin.	WR Carl Pickens	7

Since entering the NFL in 2017, Williams has recorded a league-leading seven go-ahead scores in the fourth quarter or overtime.

GO-AHEAD TOUCHDOWNS IN FOURTH QUARTER OR OVERTIME, NFL, SINCE 2017

Rank	Team/s	Player	Go-Ahead TDs
1.	LAC	WR Mike Williams	7
2.	LAR	WR Cooper Kupp	6
3.	G.B.	WR Davante Adams	5
	Hou./Ari.	WR DeAndre Hopkins	5
	LAC/Den.	RB Melvin Gordon III	5
	L.V.	RB Josh Jacobs	5
	Ten.	RB Derrick Henry	5
8.	—	Seven Other Players	4



LOOK UP AT THE LEADERBOARD

Mike Williams finished the 2021 season among the conference leaders in receiving yards and touchdowns. His team-best 1,146 yards ranked No. 6 in the AFC while his nine receiving touchdowns tied for third.

RECEIVING YARDS LEADERS, AFC, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Receiving Yards
1.	Cin.	WR Ja'Marr Chase	1,455
2.	Bal.	TE Mark Andrews	1,361
3.	K.C.	WR Tyreek Hill	1,239
4.	Buf.	WR Stefon Diggs	1,225
5.	Pit.	WR Diontae Johnson	1,161
6.	LAC	WR Mike Williams	1,146
7.	LAC	WR Keenan Allen	1,086

RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS LEADERS, AFC, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Receiving TDs
1.	Cin.	WR Ja'Marr Chase	13
2.	Buf.	WR Stefon Diggs	10
3.	LAC	WR Mike Williams	9
	Bal.	TE Mark Andrews	9
	Buf.	TE Dawson Knox	9
	K.C.	WR Tyreek Hill	9
	K.C.	TE Travis Kelce	9
	N.E.	TE Hunter Henry	9
10.	LAC	RB Austin Ekeler	8
	Pit.	WR Diontae Johnson	8

MIKE WILLIAMS



BIG-PLAY MIKE WILLIAMS

Mike Williams caught a conference-leading nine receptions of 40-plus yards in 2021. Since his breakout year in his second pro season in 2018, Williams' 21 catches of 40 or more yards are the second-most in the NFL.

RECEPTIONS OF 40-PLUS YARDS, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	40-Yard Receptions
1.	LAC	WR Mike Williams	9
	LAR	WR Cooper Kupp	9
	S.F.	WR Deebo Samuel	9
4.	Cin.	WR Ja'Marr Chase	8
5.	Sea.	WR Tyler Lockett	6

RECEPTIONS OF 40-PLUS YARDS, NFL, SINCE 2018

Rank	Team	Player	40-Yard Receptions
1.	K.C.	WR Tyreek Hill	22
2.	LAC	WR Mike Williams	21
3.	Buf.	WR Stefon Diggs	19
4.	G.B.	WR Marquez Valdes-Scantling	18
	LAR	WR Cooper Kupp	18
	T.B.	WR Mike Evans	18
	Sea.	WR Tyler Lockett	18

WILLIAMS ABOVE AVERAGE

Since entering the NFL in 2017, Mike Williams has 227 catches for 3,662 yards for a career receiving average of 16.1 yards. His career average is the second-best in the NFL since 2017 among players with at least 200 catches. Williams' 20.4 average in 2019 is still the best in a single-season over that span (min. 40 rec.).

RECEIVING AVG. LEADERS, MIN. 200 REC., NFL, SINCE 2017

Rank	Team/s	Player	Receiving Avg.
1.	Det./NYG	WR Kenny Golladay	16.3
2.	LAC	WR Mike Williams	16.1
3.	T.B.	WR Mike Evans	15.6

RECEIVING AVERAGE LEADERS, SINGLE SEASON, MIN. 40 RECEPTIONS, NFL, SINCE 2017

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Rec. Avg.
1.	2019	LAC	WR Mike Williams	20.4
2.	2019	Ten.	WR A.J. Brown	20.2
3.	2018	T.B.	WR DeSean Jackson	18.9

KEEPING IT 100

Mike Williams has topped 100 receiving yards in eight career games — including a career-high four in 2021. He has hauled in at least one touchdown in five of his last six 100-yard performances.

100-YARD RECEIVING OUTPUTS — 8

Date	Opp.	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
Nov. 3, 2019	vs. G.B.	3	111	37.0	56	0
Dec. 1, 2019	at Den.	5	117	23.4	52	0
Oct. 12, 2020	at N.O.	5	109	21.8	64t	2
Jan. 3, 2021	at K.C.	6	108	18.0	48t	1
Sept. 26, 2021	at K.C.	7	122	17.4	43	2
Oct. 10, 2021	vs. Cle.	8	165	20.6	72t	2
Dec. 5, 2021	at Cin.	5	110	22.0	47	0
Jan. 9, 2022	at L.V.	9	119	13.2	47	1

JOEY BOSHA



NOT YOUR AVERAGE JOEY

Since entering the NFL in 2016, **Joey Bosa** has been an absolute force, recording the sixth-best sacks-per-game over that span (min. 60 games played).

SACKS PER GAME, MIN. 60 GAMES PLAYED, SINCE 2016

Rank	Team/s	Player	Sacks/Game
1.	Pit.	LB T.J. Watt	0.94
2.	Cle.	DE Myles Garrett	0.86
3.	Ari./L.V.	OLB Chandler Jones	0.85
4.	LAR	DT Aaron Donald	0.82
5.	Min.	DE Danielle Hunter	0.77
6.	LAC	OLB Joey Bosa	0.73
7.	Den./LAR/Buf.	OLB Von Miller	0.71

Bosa has also been one of the top-producing pass rushers since entering the NFL. His 58.0 career sacks rank No. 6 over that span.

SACKS LEADERS, NFL, SINCE 2016

Rank	Team/s	Player	Sacks
1.	LAR	DT Aaron Donald	78.0
2.	Pit.	LB T.J. Watt	72.0
3.	Ari./L.V.	OLB Chandler Jones	71.5
4.	N.O.	DE Cameron Jordan	68.0
5.	Cle.	DE Myles Garrett	58.5
6.	LAC	OLB Joey Bosa	58.0
7.	Oak./Chi./LAC	LB Khalil Mack	57.5
8.	Den./LAR/Buf.	OLB Von Miller	55.5
	Jax./Min./Bal./L.V./Ind.	DE Yannick Ngakoue	55.5

ONE OF A KIND

With 8.5 sacks in his first eight games of 2017, **Joey Bosa** brought his career total to 19.0 sacks over his first 20 career games. That topped the previous NFL record of 18.5 set by Aldon Smith in 2012.

SACKS, FIRST 20 CAREER GAMES, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Team	Player	Sacks
1.	Chargers	DE Joey Bosa	19.0
2.	49ers	LB Aldon Smith	18.5
3.	Packers	LB Clay Matthews	17.0

FORCING THE ISSUE

In Week 17, **Joey Bosa** sacked Las Vegas QB Derek Carr and forced a fumble on the play. Bosa has 12 strip-sacks in his career and leads the NFL with seven strip-sacks this season. Bosa's seven strip-sacks are the most by a Chargers defender in a single season since at least 2000.

STRIP-SACKS LEADERS, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Strip Sacks
1.	LAC	OLB Joey Bosa	7
2.	Ari.	OLB Chandler Jones	5
3.	Chi.	LB Robert Quinn	4
	Pit.	LB T.J. Watt	4

FORCED FUMBLES LEADERS, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Forced Fumbles
1.	Ind.	LB Darius Leonard	8
2.	LAC	OLB Joey Bosa	7
3.	S.F.	CB Josh Norman	6

A PRO BOWL PASS RUSHER

Last year, **Joey Bosa** was named a Pro Bowler for the fourth time in his career. He joined Hall of Fame **LB Junior Seau** as the only Chargers defenders to be selected to four Pro Bowls over the first five seasons of a career.

MOST PRO BOWL SELECTIONS, FIRST FIVE SEASONS, DEFENSIVE PLAYERS, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Seasons	Player	Pro Bowls
1.	1990-94	LB Junior Seau	5
2.	2016-21	OLB Joey Bosa	4
3.	2005-10	LB Shawne Merriman	3
	1986-92	DE Leslie O'Neal	3
	1975-80	DT Louie Kelcher	3

PRESSURE COOKER

In his pro career, **Joey Bosa** has totaled 129 quarterback hits, 123 hurries and 250 pressures — the latter of which rank No. 3 since he entered the NFL in 2016.

DEFENSIVE PRESSURES, NFL, SINCE 2016

Rank	Team/s	Player	Pressures
1.	LAR	DT Aaron Donald	310
2.	Oak./Chi./LAC	LB Khalil Mack	256
3.	LAC	OLB Joey Bosa	250
4.	N.O.	DE Cameron Jordan	241
5.	Pit.	LB T.J. Watt	239

JOEY BOSA

BOSA'S SACKS BY PASSER

Joey Bosa has 58.0 career sacks. He has sacked Las Vegas QB Derek Carr eight times in his career, more than he's sacked any other quarterback. Bosa has brought down 36 different passers in his career, including 13 more than once. Below is a look at his career sacks by quarterback:

REGULAR-SEASON CAREER SACKS BY PASSER (58.0)

Sacks	Passer	Most Recent Sack
8.0	QB Derek Carr	Jan. 9, 2022 at L.V.
3.5	QB Trevor Siemian	Oct. 22, 2017 vs. Den.
2.5	QB Patrick Mahomes	Dec. 16, 2021 vs. K.C.
	QB Gardner Minshew II	Oct. 25, 2020 vs. Jax.
	QB Josh Rosen	Sept. 29, 2019 at Mia.
2.0	QB Josh Allen	Nov. 29, 2020 at Buf.
	QB Robert Griffin III	Dec. 24, 2016 at Cle.
	QB Eli Manning	Oct. 8, 2015 at NYG
	QB Ben Roethlisberger	Nov. 21, 2021 vs. Pit.
	QB Matt Ryan	Oct. 23, 2016 at Atl.
	QB Alex Smith	Sept. 24, 2017 vs. K.C.
	QB Ryan Tannehill	Oct. 20, 2019 at Ten.
	QB Mitchell Trubisky	Oct. 27, 2019 at Chi.
1.5	QB Lamar Jackson	Oct. 17, 2021 at Bal.
	QB Aaron Rodgers	Nov. 3, 2019 vs. G.B.
1.0	QB Matt Barkley	Nov. 29, 2020 at Buf.
	QB Blake Bortles	Nov. 12, 2017 at Jax.
	QB Tom Brady	Oct. 29, 2017 at N.E.
	QB Drew Brees	Oct. 12, 2020 at N.O.
	QB Teddy Bridgewater	Sept. 27, 2020 vs. Car.
	QB Jacoby Brissett	Sept. 8, 2019 vs. Ind.
	QB Joe Burrow	Sept. 13, 2020 at Cin.
	QB Kirk Cousins	Nov. 14, 2021 vs. Min.
	QB Jeff Driskel	Dec. 9, 2018 vs. Cin.
	QB Joe Flacco	Oct. 6, 2019 vs. Den.
	QB Ryan Fitzpatrick	Sept. 12, 2021 at Was.
	QB Mike Glennon	Dec. 12, 2021 vs. NYG
	QB Jalen Hurts	Nov. 7, 2021 at Phi.
	QB Case Keenum	Dec. 30, 2017 at Den.
	QB DeShone Kizer	Dec. 3, 2017 vs. Cle.
	QB Drew Lock	Nov. 28, 2021 at Den.
	QB Cam Newton	Dec. 11, 2016 at Car.
	QB Tyrod Taylor	Nov. 19, 2017 vs. Buf.
	QB Jameis Winston	Dec. 4, 2016 vs. T.B.
0.5	QB Brock Osweiler	Nov. 27, 2016 at Hou.
	QB Deshaun Watson	Sept. 22, 2019 vs. Hou.

POSTSEASON CAREER SACKS BY PASSER (1.0)

Sacks	Passer	Most Recent Sack
1.0	QB Lamar Jackson	Jan. 6, 2019 at Bal.* *AFC Wild Card

BRING THE HEAT

Joey Bosa ranks fourth for sacks in team history after reaching 50 for his career. He eclipsed 50 in his 67th game of his career, setting the mark for the fastest by any player in Chargers history.

CAREER SACKS LEADERS, CHARGERS HISTORY SINCE 1982

Rank	Seasons	Player	Sacks
1.	1986-95	DE Leslie O'Neal	105.5
2.	2004-12	LB Shaun Phillips	69.5
3.	1984-90	DE Lee Williams	65.5
4.	2016-Present	OLB Joey Bosa	58.0
5.	2012-20	DE Melvin Ingram III	49.0
6.	1990-2002	LB Junior Seau	47.0

FEWEST GAMES TO 50 SACKS, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Seasons	Player	Games
1.	2016-21	OLB Joey Bosa	67
2.	1986-91	DE Leslie O'Neal	70
3.	1984-89	DE Lee Williams	75
4.	2004-10	LB Shaun Phillips	96



DERWIN JAMES JR.

A PRO BOWL TALENT

Last year, **Derwin James Jr.**, became the sixth Chargers defender ever to make multiple Pro Bowls within the first four seasons of a career. He was again tabbed as an AFC starter at safety.

MOST PRO BOWL SELECTIONS, FIRST FOUR SEASONS, DEFENSIVE PLAYERS, CHARGERS HISTORY

Rank	Seasons	Player	Pro Bowls
1.	2005-08	LB Shawne Merriman	3
	1990-93	LB Junior Seau	3
3.	2018-21	S Derwin James Jr.	2
	2016-19	OLB Joey Bosa	2
	1986-92	DE Leslie O'Neal	2
	1975-80	DT Louie Kelcher	2

A NOSE FOR THE BALL

Derwin James Jr., bounced back from injury to be a defensive leader for the Chargers, totaling 118 tackles on the season to rank No. 3 in the NFL among defensive backs.

TACKLES LEADERS, DEFENSIVE BACKS, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Tackles
1.	Pit.	S Minkah Fitzpatrick	124
2.	Ari.	S Jalen Thompson	120
3.	LAC	S Derwin James Jr.	118
4.	NYG	DB Logan Ryan	117
5.	L.V.	S Johnathan Abram	114
	Min.	S Harrison Smith	114

COMEBACK PLAYER OF THE YEAR CANDIDATE

After appearing in just five games in the 2019-20 seasons, **Derwin James Jr.**, totaled 118 tackles in 2021.

James became the first defensive back and eighth player since 2000 to post 100 tackles after missing the entire previous season due to injury. The other players were all linebackers and two of those players — Sean Lee and NaVorro Bowman in 2015 — were selected to the Pro Bowl for their efforts while Bowman was also recognized by *The Associated Press* as a first-team All-Pro.

PLAYERS WITH 100 TACKLES AFTER MISSING ENTIRE PREVIOUS SEASON DUE TO INJURY, NFL, SINCE 2000

Season	Team/s	Player	Tackles
2021	LAC	S Derwin James Jr.*	118
2020	NYJ/Pit.	LB Avery Williamson	111
2018	Mia.	LB Raekwon McMillan	105
2015	Dal.	LB Sean Lee*	128
	S.F.	LB NaVorro Bowman**	154
2014	K.C.	LB Josh Mauga	103
	Was.	LB Keenan Robinson	108
2011	Cle.	LB D'Qwell Jackson	158

*Pro Bowl Selection

†Associated Press First-Team All-Pro



A GAME-WRECKER

Derwin James Jr., posted 118 tackles, two interceptions, two sacks, three forced fumbles, five passes defended, seven tackles for loss and seven quarterback hits. He was the first Charger to force three fumbles in the team's first seven games of a season since **DE Marcellus Wiley** in 2001. James is the fourth defensive back since at least 2000 to have 100 tackles, three forced fumbles, multiple sacks and multiple interceptions in a single season.

He was one of five NFL defenders in 2021 to have at least 100 tackles, multiple interceptions, a sack and multiple forced fumbles. Another was a teammate, **LB Kyzir White**, who had 144 tackles on the year. They were the first pair of Chargers teammates to each have 100 tackles in the same season since **S Rodney Harrison** and Hall of Fame **LB Junior Seau** in 2000.

DEFENSIVE BACKS WITH 100 TACKLES, THREE FORCED FUMBLES, MULTIPLE SACKS AND MULTIPLE INTERCEPTIONS, SINGLE SEASON, NFL, SINCE 2000

Season	Team	Player	Sacks	FF	Tackles
2021	LAC	S Derwin James Jr.	2.0	3	118
2019	Ten.	CB Logan Ryan	4.5	4	113
2004	N.E.	S Rodney Harrison	3.0	3	129
2000	Car.	S Mike Minter	2.0	3	116

DEFENDERS WITH 100 TACKLES, MULTIPLE FORCED FUMBLES, MULTIPLE INTs AND A SACK, NFL, 2021

Team	Player	Sacks	INTs	FF	Tackles
G.B.	LB De'Vondre Campbell	2.0	2	2	145
LAC	LB Kyzir White	1.0	2	2	144
Was.	LB Cole Holcomb	1.0	2	2	142
LAC	S Derwin James Jr.	2.0	2	3	118
Min.	S Xavier Woods	1.0	3	2	107

In Week 5, he posted 16 tackles (nine solo) and a sack on the day, including 13 tackles (press box totals) in the first half. James is the just the second defensive back since 2000 to record a game with 16 tackles and a sack, while his 16 tackles were the most by a Charger in a single game since Eric Weddle posted 16 in 2010.

DERWIN JAMES JR.

DERWIN'S PICKS AND SACKS BY PASSER

Derwin James Jr., has recorded five interceptions and 5.5 sacks in his career. He has brought down Baker Mayfield the most, totaling 1.5 sacks of the Oklahoma product. Below is a look at his career regular-season sacks and interceptions by passer:

REGULAR-SEASON CAREER INTs BY PASSER (5)

INTs	Passer	Most Recent INT
1	QB Derek Carr	Oct. 4, 2021 vs. L.V.
	QB Jared Goff	Sept. 23, 2018 at LAR
	QB Drew Lock	Nov. 28, 2021 at Den.
	QB Ben Roethlisberger	Dec. 2, 2018 at Pit.
	QB Josh Rosen	Nov. 25, 2018 vs. Ari.

REGULAR-SEASON CAREER SACKS BY PASSER (5.5)

Sacks	Passer	Most Recent Sack
1.5	QB Baker Mayfield	Oct. 10, 2021 vs. Cle.
1.0	QB Josh Allen	Sept. 16, 2018 at Buf.
	QB C.J. Beathard	Sept. 30, 2018 vs. S.F.
	QB Patrick Mahomes	Sept. 9, 2018 vs. K.C.
0.5	QB Joe Burrow	Dec. 5, 2021 at Cin.
	QB Dak Prescott	Sept. 19, 2021 vs. Dal.



ROOKIE SENSATION

Derwin James Jr., re-wrote NFL rookie record books in 2018 en route to being named a Pro Bowler and first-team All-Pro from *The Associated Press*. With two sacks and an INT through his first three career games, he became just the second DB in NFL history to do so in a non-strike season.

James ended up setting an NFL record among DBs with 3.5 sacks in his first six career games. James' 3.5 sacks were good enough for the most by a DB through 11 career games.

MOST SACKS IN FIRST 11 CAREER GAMES, DBs, NFL HISTORY

Rank	Season/s	Team	Player	Sacks
1.	2018	LAC	Derwin James	3.5
2.	2006-07	N.O.	Roman Harper	3.0
	2004-05	NYG	Gibril Wilson	3.0
	2002	StL	James Whitley	3.0
	1987	Dal.	Tommy Haynes*	3.0
	1985-86	NYJ	Lester Lyles	3.0
	1984	NYJ	Russell Carter	3.0
	1983	Dal.	Bill Bates	3.0

*Replacement player due to NFL players strike

DBs WITH MULTIPLE SACKS AND AN INTERCEPTION, FIRST THREE CAREER GAMES, NFL HISTORY

Season	Team	Player	Sacks	INTs
2018	LAC	Derwin James	2.0	1
1987	Sea.	Charles Glaze*	2.0	2
1987	Dal.	Tommy Haynes*	3.0	3
1983	Dal.	Bill Bates	2.0	1

*Replacement player due to NFL players strike

KHALIL MACK



MACK ATTACK

Since entering the NFL in 2014, **Khalil Mack** has totaled 76.5 sacks, good for the fifth-most in over that span. He's one of football's top defenders at forcing turnovers, ranking tied No. 2 in strip-sacks and tied for third in forced fumbles since entering the professional ranks.

SACKS LEADERS, NFL, SINCE 2014

Rank	Team/s	Player	Sacks
1.	LAR	DT Aaron Donald	98.0
2.	N.E./Ari./L.V.	OLB Chandler Jones	90.0
3.	N.O.	DE Cameron Jordan	85.5
4.	Den./LAR/Buf.	OLB Von Miller	80.5
5.	Oak./Chi./LAC	OLB Khalil Mack	76.5
6.	K.C./Ind./Bal.	OLB Justin Houston	75.5

STRIP-SACKS LEADERS, NFL, SINCE 2014

Rank	Team/s	Player	Strip Sacks
1.	N.E./Ari./L.V.	OLB Chandler Jones	26
2.	Oak./Chi./LAC	OLB Khalil Mack	18
	StL/LAR/Mia./Dal./Chi.	LB Robert Quinn	18
4.	LAR	DT Aaron Donald	17
	Jax./Min./Bal./L.V./Ind.	DE Yannick Ngakoue	17

FORCED FUMBLES LEADERS, NFL, SINCE 2014

Rank	Team/s	Player	Forced Fumbles
1.	N.E./Ari./L.V.	OLB Chandler Jones	29
2.	T.B.	Lavonte David	24
3.	Oak./Chi./LAC	OLB Khalil Mack	23
	LAR	DT Aaron Donald	23
	StL/LAR/Mia./Dal./Chi.	LB Robert Quinn	23
6.	Pit.	LB T.J. Watt	22

MACK'S SACKS AND PICKS BY PASSER

Khalil Mack has sacked 36 different players in the regular season for a total of 76.5 career sacks. He dropped QB Brock Osweiler six times in his career, including five times in a single game. Mack has also picked off three passes, including two that he returned for a touchdown. Below is a look at his career regular-season sacks and interceptions by quarterback:

REGULAR-SEASON CAREER SACKS BY PASSER (76.5)

Sacks	Passer	Most Recent Sack
6.0	QB Brock Osweiler	Nov. 21, 2016 at Oak.
5.5	QB Aaron Rodgers	Oct. 17, 2021 at Chi.
	QB Alex Smith	Dec. 10, 2017 at K.C.
5.0	QB Trevor Siemian	Nov. 26, 2017 vs. Den.
4.0	QB Kirk Cousins	Dec. 20, 2020 at Min.
3.0	QB Tom Brady	Oct. 8, 2020 vs. T.B.
	QB Jared Goff	Oct. 3, 2021 vs. Det.
	QB Josh McCown	Sept. 17, 2017 vs. NYJ
	QB Dak Prescott	Dec. 5, 2019 vs. Dal.
2.0	QB Sam Bradford	Sept. 23, 2018 at Ari.
	QB Teddy Bridgewater	Oct. 18, 2020 at Car.
	QB Joe Flacco	Sept. 15, 2019 at Den.
	QB Daniel Jones	Sept. 20, 2020 vs. NYG
	QB Colin Kaepernick	Dec. 7, 2017 vs. S.F.
	QB Case Keenum	Sept. 23, 2019 at Was.
	QB Marcus Mariota	Nov. 29, 2015 at Ten.
	QB Baker Mayfield	Sept. 26, 2021 at Cle.
	QB Philip Rivers	Oct. 27, 2019 vs. LAC
	QB Geno Smith	Dec. 3, 2017 vs. NYG
	QB Matthew Stafford	Nov. 11, 2018 vs. Det.
	QB Jameis Winston	Oct. 30, 2016 at T.B.
1.0	QB Blake Bortles	Oct. 23, 2016 at Jax.
	QB Drew Brees	Nov. 1, 2020 vs. N.O.
	QB Joe Burrow	Sept. 19, 2021 vs. Cin.
	QB Derek Carr	Oct. 10, 2021 at L.V.
	QB Jay Cutler	Oct. 4, 2015 at Chi.
	QB Ryan Fitzpatrick	Sept. 30, 2018 vs. T.B.
	QB DeShone Kizer	Sept. 9, 2018 at G.B.
	QB Patrick Mahomes	Dec. 22, 2019 vs. K.C.
	QB Eli Manning	Dec. 2, 2018 at NYG
	QB Cam Newton	Nov. 27, 2016 vs. Car.
	QB Kyle Orton	Dec. 21, 2014 vs. Buf.
	QB Tyrod Taylor	Dec. 4, 2016 vs. Buf.
	QB Deshaun Watson	Dec. 13, 2020 vs. Hou.
	QB Russell Wilson	Sept. 17, 2018 vs. Sea.
0.5	QB Matt Ryan	Sept. 27, 2020 at Atl.

REGULAR-SEASON CAREER INTs BY PASSER (3)

INTs	Passer	Most Recent INT
1	QB Kirk Cousins	Nov. 16, 2020 vs. Min.
	QB DeShone Kizer	Sept. 9, 2018 at G.B.
	QB Cam Newton	Nov. 27, 2016 vs. Car.

J.C. JACKSON

MR. INT

Entering his fifth season in the NFL, **J.C. Jackson** has logged 25 interceptions. His 25 picks are already among the most through a player's first five pro seasons in the Super Bowl era (since 1966).

INTERCEPTIONS THROUGH FIRST FIVE SEASONS, NFL, SUPER BOWL ERA (SINCE 1966)

Rank	Team/s	Player	Interceptions
1.	Det.	CB Lem Barney	35
2.	Dal.	CB Everson Walls	34
3.	K.C.	S Gary Barbaro	31
4.	Mia.	S Jake Scott	29
5.	Oak.	CB Lester Hayes	28
6.	K.C./LAR/Bal.	CB Marcus Peters	27
	Bal.	S Ed Reed	27
8.	Sea.	CB Richard Sherman	26
	Pit.	S Darren Perry	26
	Phx.*/Ari.	CB Aeneas Williams	26
	Sea.	S Kenny Easley	26
	Sea.	S John Harris	26
13.	N.E./LAC	CB J.C. Jackson	25
	—	Six Other Players	25

*Phoenix Cardinals

BALL HAWK

J.C. Jackson has logged 27 total takeaways (25 interceptions, two fumble recoveries) in his career. He leads all NFL players in takeaways and interceptions since he entered the league in 2018.

INTERCEPTION LEADERS, NFL, SINCE 2018

Rank	Team/s	Player	Interceptions
1.	N.E./LAC	CB J.C. Jackson	25
2.	Mia.	CB Xavien Howard	23
3.	Den.	S Justin Simmons	17
4.	Det./Sea.	S Quandre Diggs	16
5.	Hou./K.C./N.O.	S Tyrann Mathieu	15
	Ten.	S Kevin Byard	15

DEFENSIVE TAKEAWAY LEADERS, NFL, SINCE 2018

Rank	Team/s	Player	Takeaways
1.	N.E./LAC	CB J.C. Jackson	27
2.	Mia.	CB Xavien Howard	26
3.	Hou./K.C./N.O.	S Tyrann Mathieu	19
4.	Den.	S Justin Simmons	18
	Mia./Pit.	S Minkah Fitzpatrick	18



J.C.'S INTERCEPTIONS BY PASSER

J.C. Jackson has recorded 25 career interceptions, including Bills QB Josh Allen four times. Below is a look at his career regular-season interceptions by passer:

REGULAR-SEASON CAREER INTs BY PASSER (25)

INTs	Passer	Most Recent INT
4	QB Josh Allen	Nov. 1, 2020 at Buf.
3	QB Sam Darnold	Nov. 7, 2021 at Car.
2	QB Andy Dalton	Dec. 15, 2019 at Cin.
	QB Ryan Tannehill	Nov. 28, 2021 vs. Ten.
	QB Zach Wilson	Sept. 19, 2021 at NYJ
1	QB Ryan Fitzpatrick	Sept. 13, 2020 vs. Mia.
	QB Joe Flacco	Nov. 9, 2020 at NYJ
	QB Jimmy Garoppolo	Oct. 25, 2020 vs. S.F.
	QB Justin Herbert	Dec. 6, 2020 at LAC
	QB Lamar Jackson	Nov. 15, 2020 vs. Bal.
	QB Trevor Lawrence	Jan. 2, 2022 vs. Jax.
	QB Drew Lock	Oct. 18, 2020 vs. Den.
	QB Patrick Mahomes	Dec. 8, 2019 vs. K.C.
	QB Matt Ryan	Nov. 18, 2021 at Atl.
	QB Tua Tagovailoa	Dec. 20, 2020 at Mia.
	QB Mitchell Trubisky	Oct. 21, 2018 at Chi.
	QB Mike White	Oct. 24, 2021 vs. NYJ

OTHER PLAYER NOTES

ALL-STAR SLATER



In a stellar rookie season, **T Rashawn Slater** was recognized by fans, coaches and his peers as a 2022 Pro Bowl selection — and was tabbed as a starter for the AFC. He is the first rookie tackle to be named an all-star since Matt Kalil did so for the Vikings in the 2012 season.

Slater joined the Chargers' Marcus McNeill (2006) as the only tackles drafted outside of the top-10 to make the Pro Bowl as a rookie in NFL history.

ROOKIE TACKLES TO MAKE THE PRO BOWL, NFL HISTORY

Season	Team	Player	Rd. Drafted (Ovr. Pick)
2021	Chargers	Rashawn Slater	1st Round (13th Overall)
2012	Vikings	Matt Kalil	1st Round (4th Overall)
2008	Dolphins	Jake Long	1st Round (1st Overall)
2007	Browns	Joe Thomas	1st Round (3rd Overall)
2006	Chargers	Marcus McNeill	2nd Round (50th Overall)
1990	Dolphins	Richmond Webb	1st Round (9th Overall)

OGBONGBEMIGA GETS HIS FIRST

Late in the first quarter of Week 10, rookie **LB Amen Ogbongbemiga** dropped Minnesota QB Kirk Cousins for a nine-yard loss to register his first career sack. Ogbongbemiga became the second rookie undrafted free agent to post a sack this season, joining Tennessee DT Naquan Jones. He is the first undrafted rookie from Oklahoma State to have a sack since Warren Thompson in 1987.

SAMUEL AMONG ROOKIE LEADERS

With his two early interceptions, **CB Asante Samuel Jr.**, tied for third among NFL rookies and tied for second among AFC rookies for interceptions. His two September interceptions tied for the most by a rookie in September over the last three seasons.

INTERCEPTIONS, ROOKIES, NFL, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Interceptions
1.	Den.	CB Patrick Surtain II	4
2.	N.O.	CB Paulson Adebo	3
3.	LAC	CB Asante Samuel Jr.	2
—	—	Five Other Players	2

INTERCEPTIONS, ROOKIES, SINGLE SEPTEMBER, NFL, SINCE 2019

Rank	Season	Team	Player	Interceptions
1.	2021	LAC	CB Asante Samuel Jr.	2
	2020	K.C.	CB L'Jarius Sneed	2
	2019	NYG	LB Ryan Connelly	2
4.	—	—	Nine Other Players	1

PALMER SCORES LATE

Rookie **WR Joshua Palmer** caught 33 passes for 353 yards (10.7 avg.) and four touchdowns in 2021. He caught 13 of those passes for 137 yards (10.5 avg.) and three scores in the fourth quarter, good for the second-most touchdown grabs by a rookie wide receiver in the fourth quarter in 2021.

The three touchdown receptions in the fourth quarter are the most by a Chargers rookie in the last 30 years.

FOURTH-QUARTER RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS, ROOKIE WIDE RECEIVERS, 2021

Rank	Team	Player	Receiving TDs
1.	Cin.	Ja'Marr Chase	4
2.	LAC	Joshua Palmer	3
3.	Cle.	Anthony Schwartz	1
	Det.	Amon-Ra St. Brown	1
	Hou.	Nico Collins	1
	Mia.	Jaylen Waddle	1
	NYJ	Elijah Moore	1
	Phi.	DeVonta Smith	1

CAREER NUMBERS AGAINST RAIDERS

24	NASIR ADDERLEY																S	
REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE																		
Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
11/08/20	L.V.	L	1/1	5	5	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	0	0
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	5	2	3	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	0	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/1	10	7	3	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	1	0	0
Totals		1-2	3/3	20	14	6	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	2	1	0	0

13	KEENAN ALLEN							WR
REGULAR SEASON RECEIVING								
Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
11/06/13	at Oak.	L	1/1	6	115	19.2	30	1
12/22/13	Oak.	W	1/1	3	26	8.7	18	1
10/12/14	at Oak.	W	1/1	3	27	9.0	19	0
11/16/14	Oak.	W	1/1	8	63	7.9	13	0
10/25/15	Oak.	L	1/1	9	89	9.9	18	0
10/15/17	at Oak.	W	1/1	5	45	9.0	28	0
12/31/17	Oak.	W	1/1	9	133	14.8	28	1
10/07/18	Oak.	W	1/1	8	90	11.3	19	0
11/11/18	at Oak.	W	1/1	6	57	9.5	18	1
11/07/19	at Oak.	L	1/1	8	68	8.5	26	0
12/22/19	Oak.	L	1/1	5	71	14.2	20	0
11/08/20	L.V.	L	1/1	9	103	11.4	27t	1
12/17/20	at L.V.	W (OT)	1/1	1	17	17.0	17	0
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	7	36	5.1	9	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/1	6	52	8.7	14	0
Totals		9-6	15/15	93	992	10.7	30	5

82	DEANDRE CARTER							WR
REGULAR SEASON RECEIVING								
Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
10/27/19	Oak.	W	1/0	1	46	46.0	46	0
12/05/21	at L.V.	W	1/1	1	6	6.0	6	0
Totals		2-0	2/1	2	52	26.0	46	0
REGULAR SEASON KICK RETURNING								
Date	Opp.	Res.	GP	Ret.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
10/27/19	Oak.	W	1	1	22	22.0	22	0
12/05/21	at L.V.	W	1	1	18	18.0	18	0
Totals		2-0	2	2	40	20.0	22	0
REGULAR SEASON PUNT RETURNING								
Date	Opp.	Res.	FC	Ret.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
10/27/19	Oak.	W	1	4	32	8.0	14	0
12/05/21	at L.V.	L (OT)	2	2	29	14.5	16	0
Totals		2-0	3	6	61	10.2	18	0

97	JOEY BOSA																OLB	
REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE																		
Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
10/09/16	at Oak.	L	1/0	5	4	1	2.0	16	3	2	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
12/18/16	Oak.	L	1/1	4	3	1	1.0	6	1	1	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
10/15/17	at Oak.	W	1/1	3	2	1	1.0	6	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	1	0	0
12/31/17	Oak.	W	1/1	5	2	3	1.0	6	1	2	0	0	—	0	0	0	1	0
11/07/19	at Oak.	L	1/1	2	1	1	0.0	0	1	2	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
12/22/19	Oak.	L	1/1	4	4	0	1.0	9	2	3	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
12/17/20	at L.V.	W (OT)	1/0	4	2	2	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	1	1	0	1.0	12	0	2	0	0	—	0	0	1	0	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/1	2	2	0	1.0	10	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	1	0	0
Totals		4-5	9/7	30	21	9	8.0	65	8	12	0	0	—	0	0	3	1	0

23	BRYCE CALLAHAN																CB	
REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE																		
Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
11/15/20	at L.V.	L	1/1	3	3	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	0	0
10/17/21	L.V.	L	1/0	3	3	0	1.0	1	1	1	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
12/26/21	at L.V.	L	1/1	2	2	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		0-3	3/2	8	8	0	1.0	1	1	1	0	0	—	0	1	0	0	0

20	TEVAUGHN CAMPBELL																CB	
REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE																		
Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
11/08/20	L.V.	L	1/1	2	1	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
12/17/20	at L.V.	W (OT)	1/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/0	2	2	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		2-2	4/1	4	3	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0

CAREER NUMBERS AGAINST RAIDERS

4 CHASE DANIEL QB

REGULAR SEASON PASSING

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Cmp	Att	Pct.	Yds	Y/A	TD	INT	Lg	Sacks	Yds Lost	Rating
11/18/12	at Oak.	W	1/0	1	1	100.0	10	10.00	0	0	10	0	0	108.3
12/15/13	at Oak.	W	1/0	3	5	60.0	31	6.20	0	0	18	0	0	77.9
12/14/14	Oak.	W	1/0	0	1	0.0	0	0.00	0	0	—	0	0	39.6
10/06/19	at Oak.	L	1/1	22	30	73.3	231	7.00	2	2	32	4	37	89.7
Totals		3-1	4/1	26	37	70.3	272	7.35	2	2	32	4	37	86.8

REGULAR SEASON RUSHING

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Att	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
11/18/12	at Oak.	W	1/0	3	17	5.7	19	0
12/15/13	at Oak.	W	1/0	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0
12/14/14	Oak.	W	1/0	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0
10/06/19	at Oak.	L	1/1	1	2	2.0	2	0
Totals		3-1	4/1	6	17	2.8	19	0

43 MICHAEL DAVIS CB

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
10/15/17	at Oak.	W	1/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
12/31/17	Oak.	W	1/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
10/07/18	Oak.	W	1/0	1	0	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
11/11/18	at Oak.	W	1/1	4	3	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	0	0
11/07/19	at Oak.	L	1/1	4	4	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	0	0
12/22/19	Oak.	L	1/1	5	4	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
11/08/20	L.V.	L	1/1	4	4	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	0	0
12/17/20	at L.V.	W (OT)	1/0	2	2	0	0.0	0	1	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	0	0
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	5	4	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	0	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/1	5	4	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	2	0	0	0
Totals		6-4	10/6	30	25	5	0.0	0	1	0	0	0	—	0	7	0	0	0

30 AUSTIN EKELER RB

REGULAR SEASON OFFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Att	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD	Scrim. Yds	Scrim. TD
10/15/17	at Oak.	W	1/0	1	1	1.0	1	0	1	8	8.0	8	0	9	0
12/31/17	Oak.	W	1/0	0	0	—	—	0	0	0	—	—	0	0	0
10/07/18	Oak.	W	1/0	6	15	4.6	12	0	1	44	44.0	44t	1	59	1
11/11/18	at Oak.	W	1/0	3	19	4.6	9	0	0	0	—	—	0	19	0
11/07/19	at Oak.	L	1/1	6	19	4.6	10	0	2	29	14.5	23	1	48	1
12/22/19	Oak.	L	1/1	4	11	2.8	5	0	5	58	11.6	17	0	69	0
12/17/20	at L.V.	W (OT)	1/1	13	60	4.6	27	0	4	19	4.8	10	0	79	0
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	15	117	7.8	20	1	3	28	9.3	14t	1	145	2
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/1	16	64	4.0	14t	1	5	35	7.0	14t	1	99	2
Totals		6-3	9/5	64	306	4.8	27	2	21	221	10.5	44t	4	527	6

7 GERALD EVERETT TE

REGULAR SEASON RECEIVING

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
09/10/18	at Oak.	W	1/0	0	0	—	—	0
Totals		1-0	1/0	0	0	—	—	0

15 JALEN GUYTON WR

REGULAR SEASON RECEIVING

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
12/22/19	Oak.	L	1/0	0	0	—	—	0
11/08/20	L.V.	L	1/1	1	9	9.0	9	0
12/17/20	at L.V.	W	1/1	4	91	22.8	53	0
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	1	9	9.0	9	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/0	6	52	8.7	17	0
Totals		2-3	5/3	12	161	13.4	53	0

CAREER NUMBERS AGAINST RAIDERS

10 JUSTIN HERBERT QB

REGULAR SEASON PASSING

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Cmp	Att	Pct.	Yds	Y/A	TD	INT	Lg	Sacks	Yds Lost	Rating
11/08/20	L.V.	L	1/1	28	42	66.7	326	7.76	2	0	50	2	14	105.9
12/17/20	at L.V.	W (OT)	1/1	22	32	68.8	314	9.81	2	0	53	1	8	121.1
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	25	38	65.8	222	5.84	3	0	34	2	10	107.6
10/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/1	34	64	53.1	383	5.98	3	1	47	3	28	80.4
Totals		2-2	4/4	109	176	61.9	1,245	7.07	10	1	53	8	60	99.7

REGULAR SEASON RUSHING

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Att	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
11/08/20	L.V.	L	1/1	5	24	4.8	11	0
12/17/20	at L.V.	W (OT)	1/1	4	14	3.5	12	1
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	3	4	1.3	6	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/1	2	1	0.5	2	0
Totals		2-2	4/4	14	43	3.1	12	1

32 ALOHI GILMAN S

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
11/08/20	L.V.	L	1/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
12/17/20	at L.V.	W (OT)	1/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	1	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/0	5	3	2	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		2-2	4/1	6	4	2	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0

6 DUSTIN HOPKINS K

REGULAR SEASON KICKING

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP	FGM	FGA	Pct.	Lg	XPM	Pts
09/24/17	Oak.	W	1	2	3	66.7	28	3	9
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1	1	2	50.0	41	3	6
Totals		1-1	2	3	5	60.0	41	6	15

16 JK SCOTT P

REGULAR SEASON PUNTING

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP	Punt	Blk	Yds.	Avg.	Lg	TB	I20
10/20/19	at Oak.	W	1	3	0	166	55.3	57	0	1
Totals		1-0	1	3	0	166	55.3	57	0	1

27 J.C. JACKSON CB

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
09/27/20	L.V.	W	1/0	5	5	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	1	0
Totals		1-0	1/0	5	5	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	1	0

33 DERWIN JAMES JR. S

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
10/07/18	Oak.	W	1/1	5	4	1	0.0	0	1	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
11/11/18	at Oak.	W	1/1	9	5	4	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	0	0
12/22/19	Oak.	L	1/1	8	5	3	0.0	0	1	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	6	3	3	0.0	0	0	0	1	15	15	0	1	0	0	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/1	9	4	5	0.0	0	1	2	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		3-2	5/5	37	21	16	0.0	0	3	2	1	15	15	0	2	0	0	0

98 AUSTIN JOHNSON DL

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
09/10/17	Oak.	L	1/0	1	0	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
12/08/19	at Oak.	W	1/0	1	0	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
11/07/21	L.V.	W	1/1	4	1	3	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		2-1	3/1	6	1	5	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0

CAREER NUMBERS AGAINST RAIDERS

25 JOSHUA KELLEY RB

REGULAR SEASON OFFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Att	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD	Scrim. Yds	Scrim. TD
11/08/20	L.V.	L	1/0	9	28	3.1	9	0	5	31	6.2	12	0	59	0
12/17/20	at L.V.	W (OT)	1/0	2	8	4.0	5	0	0	0	—	—	0	8	0
Totals		1-1	2/0	11	36	3.3	9	0	5	31	6.2	12	0	67	0

52 KHALIL MACK OLB

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
10/06/19	at Oak.	L	1/1	3	3	0	0.0	0	0	1	0	0	—	0	0	0	1	0
10/10/21	at L.V.	W	1/1	8	7	1	1.0	8	1	1	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		1-1	2/2	11	10	1	1.0	8	1	2	0	0	—	0	0	0	1	0

20 SONY MICHEL RB

REGULAR SEASON OFFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Att	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD	Scrim. Yds	Scrim. TD
09/27/20	L.V.	W	1/1	9	117	13.0	48	0	2	23	11.5	14	0	140	0
Totals		1-0	1/1	9	117	13.0	48	0	2	23	11.5	14	0	140	0

9 KENNETH MURRAY JR. LB

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
11/08/20	L.V.	L	1/1	4	2	2	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
12/17/20	at L.V.	W (OT)	1/1	8	6	2	0.0	0	1	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/0	5	2	3	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		1-2	3/2	17	10	7	0.0	0	1	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0

31 NICK NIEMANN LB

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		1-1	2/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0

57 AMEN OGBONGBEMIGA LB

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		1-1	2/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0

5 JOSHUA PALMER WR

REGULAR SEASON RECEIVING

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/0	0	0	—	—	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/0	4	45	11.3	23t	1
Totals		1-1	2/0	4	45	11.3	23t	1

89 DONALD PARHAM JR. TE

REGULAR SEASON RECEIVING

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
10/04/20	L.V.	L	1/0	0	0	—	—	0
12/17/20	at L.V.	W	1/0	0	0	—	—	0
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/0	0	0	—	—	0
Totals		1-0	1/0	0	0	—	—	0

CAREER NUMBERS AGAINST RAIDERS

94 CHRIS RUMPH II OLB

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/0	1	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		1-1	2/0	1	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0

26 ASANTE SAMUEL JR. CB

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	4	3	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	0	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/1	4	4	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	0	0
Totals		1-0	2/2	8	7	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	0	0	0

99 JERRY TILLERY DL

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
11/07/19	at Oak.	L	1/0	2	0	2	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
12/22/19	Oak.	L	1/0	1	0	1	0.5	3.5	0	1	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
11/08/20	L.V.	L	1/1	1	1	0	1.0	5	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	1	1	0
12/17/20	at L.V.	W (OT)	1/1	1	1	0	0.0	0	1	2	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	3	1	2	1.0	10	1	1	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/1	2	1	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		2-4	6/4	10	4	4	2.5	18.5	2	4	0	0	—	0	1	1	1	0

49 DRUE TRANQUILL LB

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
11/07/19	at Oak.	L	1/1	14	6	8	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
12/22/19	Oak.	L	1/0	6	5	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	5	2	3	0.0	0	0	1	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/1	4	3	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		1-3	4/3	29	16	13	0.0	0	0	1	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0

8 KYLE VAN NOY OLB

REGULAR SEASON DEFENSE

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sks	Yds	TFL	QBH	INT	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
11/22/15	Oak.	W	1/0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
11/19/17	at Oak.	W	1/1	4	2	2	0.5	1	0	1	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
12/26/20	at L.V.	W	1/1	6	3	3	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		3-0	3/2	10	5	5	0.5	1	0	1	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0

81 MIKE WILLIAMS WR

REGULAR SEASON RECEIVING

Date	Opp.	Res.	GP/GS	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD
10/15/17	at Oak.	W	1/0	1	15	15.0	15	0
12/31/17	Oak.	W	1/1	1	8	8.0	8	0
10/07/18	Oak.	W	1/1	3	45	15.0	26	0
11/11/18	at Oak.	W	1/0	0	0	—	—	0
11/07/19	at Oak.	L	1/1	2	55	27.5	45	0
12/22/19	Oak.	L	1/1	3	51	17.0	23	0
11/08/20	L.V.	L	1/1	5	81	16.2	23	0
12/17/20	at L.V.	W (OT)	1/1	2	22	11.0	14	0
10/04/21	L.V.	W	1/1	1	11	11.0	11	0
01/09/22	at L.V.	L (OT)	1/1	9	119	13.2	47	1
Totals		6-4	10/8	27	407	15.1	47	1

2022 LOS ANGELES CHARGERS PRESEASON OFFENSIVE STATISTICS

Won 0, Lost 3

8/13/2022	L	22 - 29	Los Angeles Rams
8/20/2022	L	18 - 32	Dallas Cowboys
8/26/2022	L	10 - 27	at New Orleans Saints

	Los Angeles Chargers	Opponent						
Total First Downs	50	57						
Rushing	10	29						
Passing	35	22						
Penalty	5	6						
3rd Down: Made/Att	20/42	19/38						
3rd Down Pct.	47.6%	50.0%						
4th Down: Made/Att	3/4	3/3						
4th Down Pct.	75.0%	100.0%						
Possession Avg.	27:35	32:25						
Total Net Yards	847	840						
Avg. Per Game	282.3	280.0						
Total Plays	180	170						
Avg. Per Play	4.7	4.9						
Net Yards Rushing	227	385						
Avg. Per Game	75.7	128.3						
Total Rushes	65	107						
Net Yards Passing	620	455						
Avg. Per Game	206.7	151.7						
Sacked/Yards Lost	6/48	4/25						
Gross Yards	668	480						
Attempts/Completions	109/70	59/41						
Completion Pct.	64.2%	69.5%						
Had Intercepted	2	0						
Punts/Average	13/45.1	11/46.4						
Net Punting Avg.	37.7	39.1						
Penalties/Yards	17/180	18/119						
Fumbles/Ball Lost	3/2	1/0						
Touchdowns	6	11						
Rushing	2	6						
Passing	4	3						
Returns	0	2						
Score By Periods	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	OT	Pts		
Team	10	24	0	16	0	50		
Opponents	21	39	15	13	0	88		
Scoring	TD	Ru	Pa	Rt	PAT	FG	2Pt	Pts
M.Bandy	2	0	2	0	0/0	0/0	0	12
D.Hopkins	0	0	0	0	2/2	2/3	0	8
E.Stick	1	1	0	0	0/0	0/0	0	6
J.Reed	1	0	1	0	0/0	0/0	0	6
L.Rountree	1	1	0	0	0/0	0/0	0	6
J.Palmer	1	0	1	0	0/0	0/0	0	6
J.McCourt	0	0	0	0	2/2	0/0	0	2
H.Kampmoyer	0	0	0	0	0/0	0/0	1	2
G.Nabers	0	0	0	0	0/0	0/0	1	2
Team	6	2	4	0	4/4	2/3	2	50
Opponents	11	6	3	2	9/9	3/4	2	88

2-Pt. Conversions: Team 2/2, Opponents: 2/2
 Sacks: C.Rumph 1.0, C.Christiansen 1.0, J.Gaziano 1.0,
 S.Thomas 1.0 **Team: 4.0, Opponents: 6.0**

Rushing	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
J.Kelley	16	74	4.6	15	0
I.Spiller	13	37	2.8	6	0
L.Rountree	13	31	2.4	5	1
E.Stick	4	30	7.5	25	1
C.Daniel	2	29	14.5	22	0
L.Brown	9	16	1.8	6	0
K.Marks	5	8	1.6	3	0
Z.Horvath	2	3	1.5	2	0
D.Carter	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0
Team	65	227	3.5	25	2
Opponents	107	385	3.6	30	6

Receiving	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
M.Bandy	18	172	9.6	19	2
T.Bradford	6	55	9.2	20	0
L.Brown	6	28	4.7	12	0
J.Guyton	5	70	14.0	38	0
J.Reed	4	61	15.3	41t	1
E.Krommenhoek	4	30	7.5	19	0
J.Kelley	4	29	7.3	11	0
S.Surratt	4	29	7.3	10	0
J.Palmer	3	75	25.0	41	1
H.Kampmoyer	3	35	11.7	22	0
L.Rountree	3	12	4.0	7	0
D.Carter	3	12	4.0	8	0
J.Moore	2	25	12.5	19	0
Z.Horvath	2	9	4.5	8	0
I.Spiller	1	10	10.0	10	0
T.McKitty	1	8	8.0	8	0
G.Nabers	1	8	8.0	8	0
M.Ffrench	0	0	0.0	0	0
K.Marks	0	0	0.0	0	0
Team	70	668	9.5	41t	4
Opponents	41	480	11.7	60t	3

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	TD			
Opponents	2	0	0.0	0	0			
Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Net	TB	In	Lg	B
J.Scott	13	586	45.1	37.7	0	5	55	0
Team	13	586	45.1	37.7	0	5	55	0
Opponents	11	510	46.4	39.1	3	4	59	0

Punt Returns	Ret	FC	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
M.Bandy	2	2	7	3.5	5	0
T.Bradford	1	2	7	7.0	7	0
M.Ffrench	1	0	6	6.0	6	0
Team	4	4	20	5.0	7	0
Opponents	3	8	96	32.0	86t	1

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
J.Reed	5	86	17.2	30	0
M.Bandy	1	25	25.0	25	0
Team	6	111	18.5	30	0
Opponents	4	166	41.5	98t	1

Field Goals	1-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
D.Hopkins	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	1/2
Team	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	1/2
Opponents	0/0	1/1	1/1	1/1	0/1

Fumbles Lost: E.Stick 1, H.Kampmoyer 1 **Total: 2**
 Opponent Fumble Recoveries: **Total: 0**

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	Cmp%	Yds/Att	TD	TD%	Int	Int%	Long	Sack	Lost	Rating
C.Daniel	49	34	341	69.4%	7.0	3	6.1%	0	0.0%	41t	4/	37	109.3
E.Stick	60	36	327	60.0%	5.4	1	1.7%	2	3.3%	41	2/	11	66.5
Team	109	70	668	64.2%	6.1	4	3.7%	2	1.8%	41t	6/	48	85.7
Opponents	59	41	480	69.5%	8.1	3	5.1%	0	0.0%	60t	4/	25	110.9

2022 LOS ANGELES CHARGERS PRESEASON DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

Official Press Box Totals — Confirmed by league review.

Player	— Tackles —			Sacks	Yards	Tackles for Loss	QB Hits	Interceptions	Passes Def.	— Fumbles —	
	Solo	Assisted	Total							Forced	Recoveries
Cole Christiansen	11	5	16	1	8	2	1	0	1	0	0
Ben DeLuca	9	5	14	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Brandon Sebastian	8	4	12	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Carlo Kemp	4	8	12	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
Amen Ogbongbemiga	7	3	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Troy Reeder	4	6	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ja'Sir Taylor	5	4	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Jamal Davis	4	5	9	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
Kemon Hall	7	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
JT Woods	7	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Joe Gaziano	5	3	8	1	7	1	2	0	0	0	0
Raheem Layne	4	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Christian Covington	2	6	8	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Chris Rumph	6	1	7	1	10	3	1	0	0	0	0
Damon Lloyd	6	1	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Nick Niemann	4	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tyreek Maddox-Williams	3	3	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Breiden Fehoko	3	2	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Emeke Egbule	2	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alohi Gilman	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Andrew Brown	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Deane Leonard	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Michael Davis	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Otito Ogbonnia	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skylar Thomas	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Michael Jacquet	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Morgan Fox	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Jerry Tillery	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asante Samuel	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	113	74	187	4	25	13	12	0	5	0	0
<i>Defensive Backs</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Linebackers</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Outside Linebackers</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Defensive Line</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>

SPECIAL TEAMS TACKLES

Player	Total Tackles
Kevin Marks Jr.	2
Cole Christiansen	1
Jason Moore	1
Troy Reeder	1
Ja'Sir Taylor	1
JT Woods	1
Totals	7

2022 LOS ANGELES CHARGERS NUMERICAL ROSTER

ACTIVE ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
1	DeAndre Carter	WR	5-8	190	29	5	Sacramento State	San Jose, Calif.	UFA (Was)-'22
2	Easton Stick	QB	6-1	224	26	4	North Dakota State	Omaha, Neb.	D5-'19
3	Derwin James Jr.	S	6-2	215	26	5	Florida State	Haines City, Fla.	D1-'18
4	Chase Daniel	QB	6-0	229	35	13	Missouri	Southlake, Texas	FA-'21
5	Joshua Palmer	WR	6-1	210	22	2	Tennessee	Brampton, Ontario, Canada	D3a-'21
6	Dustin Hopkins	K	6-2	193	31	9	Florida State	Austin, Texas	FA-'21
7	Gerald Everett	TE	6-3	240	28	6	South Alabama	Atlanta, Ga.	UFA (Sea)-'22
8	Kyle Van Noy	LB	6-3	250	31	9	Brigham Young	Reno, Nev.	FA-'22
9	Kenneth Murray Jr.	LB	6-2	241	23	3	Oklahoma	Houston, Texas	D1b-'20
10	Justin Herbert	QB	6-6	236	24	3	Oregon	Eugene, Ore.	D1a-'20
13	Keenan Allen	WR	6-2	211	30	10	California	Greensboro, N.C.	D3-'13
15	Jalen Guyton	WR	6-1	212	25	3	North Texas	Allen, Texas	FA-'19
16	JK Scott	P	6-5	208	26	4	Alabama	Denver, Colo.	FA-'22
20	Sony Michel	RB	5-11	215	27	5	Georgia	Orlando, Fla.	FA-'22
22	JT Woods	S	6-2	193	22	8	Baylor	San Antonio, Texas	D3-'22
23	Bryce Callahan	CB	5-9	188	30	8	Rice	Moscow, Idaho	FA-'22
24	Nasir Adderley	S	6-0	206	25	4	Delaware	Philadelphia, Pa.	D2-'19
25	Joshua Kelley	RB	5-11	212	24	3	UCLA	Lancaster, Calif.	D4-'20
26	Asante Samuel Jr.	CB	5-10	180	22	2	Florida State	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	D2-'21
27	J.C. Jackson	CB	6-1	198	26	5	Maryland	Immokalee, Fla.	UFA (NE)-'22
28	Isaiah Spiller	RB	6-1	215	21	9	Texas A&M	Spring, Texas	D4-'22
30	Austin Ekeler	RB	5-10	200	27	6	Western State Colorado	Eaton, Colo.	FA-'17
31	Nick Niemann	LB	6-3	234	24	2	Iowa	Sycamore, Ill.	D6a-'21
32	Alohi Gilman	S	5-10	201	24	3	Notre Dame	Laie, Hawaii	D6-'20
33	Deane Leonard	DB	6-0	195	22	R	Mississippi	Calgary, Alberta, Canada	D7a-'22
36	Ja'Sir Taylor	DB	5-10	185	23	R	Wake Forest	Asbury Park, N.J.	D6b-'22
40	Zander Horvath	FB	6-3	230	23	R	Purdue	Mishawaka, Ind.	D7b-'22
42	Troy Reeder	LB	6-3	245	27	4	Delaware	Wilmington, Del.	FA-'22
43	Michael Davis	CB	6-2	196	27	6	Brigham Young	Glendale, Calif.	FA-'17
47	Josh Harris	LS	6-1	224	33	11	Auburn	Carrollton, Ga.	UFA (Atl)-'22
49	Drue Tranquill	LB	6-2	234	27	4	Notre Dame	Fort Wayne, Ind.	D4-'19
52	Khalil Mack	OLB	6-3	269	31	9	Buffalo	Fort Pierce, Fla.	T (Chi)-'22
56	Morgan Fox	DL	6-3	275	27	6	Colorado State-Pueblo	Fountain, Colo.	FA-'22
57	Amen Ogbongbemiga	LB	6-0	231	24	2	Oklahoma State	Calgary, Alberta, Canada	FA-'21
63	Corey Linsley	C	6-3	301	31	9	Ohio State	Boardman, Ohio	UFA (GB)-'21
64	Brenden Jaimes	G/T	6-5	300	23	2	Nebraska	Austin, Texas	D5-'21
68	Jamaree Salyer	G	6-4	325	22	R	Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	D6a-'22
69	Sebastian Joseph-Day	DL	6-4	310	27	5	Rutgers	Stroudsburg, Pa.	UFA (LAR)-'22
70	Rashawn Slater	T	6-4	315	23	2	Northwestern	Sugar Land, Texas	D1-'21
71	Matt Feiler	G	6-6	330	30	6	BloomSBurg	Strasburg, Pa.	UFA (Pit)-'21
74	Storm Norton	T	6-7	317	28	3	Toledo	Toledo, Ohio	FA-'20
76	Will Clapp	C/G	6-5	311	26	5	Louisiana State	New Orleans, La.	FA-'22
77	Zion Johnson	G	6-3	316	22	R	Boston College	Bowie, Md.	D1-'22
79	Trey Pipkins III	T	6-6	307	25	4	Sioux Falls	Apple Valley, Minn.	D3-'19
81	Mike Williams	WR	6-4	218	27	6	Clemson	Santee, S.C.	D1-'17
88	Tre' McKitty	TE	6-4	246	23	2	Georgia	Wesley Chapel, Fla.	D3b-'21
89	Donald Parham Jr.	TE	6-8	237	25	3	Stetson	Lakeland, Fla.	FA-'20
93	Otito Ogbonnia	DL	6-4	320	22	R	UCLA	Houston, Texas	D5-'22
94	Chris Rumph II	OLB	6-2	244	23	2	Duke	Gainesville, Fla.	D4-'21
96	Breiden Fehoko	DL	6-3	300	25	2	Louisiana State	Honolulu, Hawaii	FA-'20
97	Joey Bosa	OLB	6-5	280	27	7	Ohio State	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	D1-'16
98	Austin Johnson	DL	6-4	314	28	7	Penn State	Galloway, N.J.	UFA (NYG)-'22
99	Jerry Tillery	DL	6-6	295	25	4	Notre Dame	Shreveport, La.	D1-'19

PRACTICE SQUAD

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
11	Jason Moore Jr.	WR	6-3	215	27	2	Findlay	Oberlin, Ohio	FA-'19
12	Joe Reed	WR	6-0	224	24	2	Virginia	Charlotte Court House, Va.	D5-'20
29	Mark Webb Jr.	DB	6-1	207	23	2	Georgia	Philadelphia, Pa.	D7-'21
34	Larry Rountree III	RB	5-10	211	23	2	Missouri	Raleigh, N.C.	D6b-'21
37	Kemon Hall	CB	5-11	190	25	2	North Texas	Calhoun City, Miss.	W (Dal)-'21
39	Michael Jacquet	CB	6-2	201	25	2	Louisiana-Lafayette	Beaumont, Texas	FA-'22
41	Raheem Layne	S	5-11	192	23	R	Indiana	Deland, Fla.	FA-'22
54	Carlo Kemp	OLB	6-3	281	24	1	Michigan	Boulder, Colo.	FA-'22
58	Tyreek Maddox-Williams	LB	6-0	228	24	R	Rutgers	Philadelphia, Pa.	FA-'22
73	Foster Sarell	T	6-6	322	24	1	Stanford	Tacoma, Wash.	FA-'21
78	Zack Bailey	T	6-5	300	26	2	South Carolina	Summerville, S.C.	W (Was)-'22
82	Richard Rodgers	TE	6-4	257	30	7	California	Worcester, Mass.	FA-'22
83	Michael Bandy	WR	5-10	190	24	1	San Diego	La Mirada, Calif.	FA-'21
87	Hunter Kampmoyer	TE	6-4	243	24	1	Oregon	Bishop, Calif.	FA-'21
92	Joe Gaziano	DL	6-4	280	25	2	Northwestern	Scituate, Mass.	FA-'20
95	Christian Covington	DL	6-2	300	28	8	Rice	Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada	FA-'21

RESERVE/INJURED

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
20	Tevaughn Campbell	CB	6-0	200	29	3	Regina	Toronto, Ontario, Canada	FA-'19
53	Damon Lloyd	LB	6-0	235	24	2	Indiana (Pa.)	Avingdon, Md.	FA-'21
60	Isaac Weaver	C	6-6	310	24	R	Old Dominion	Marietta, Ga.	FA-'22
62	Andrew Trainer	T	6-7	320	24	R	William & Mary	Alexandria, Va.	FA-'22
91	Forrest Merrill	DL	6-0	322	26	1	Arkansas State	Willard, Mo.	FA-'21

RESERVE/NON-FOOTBALL INJURY

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
48	Stone Smartt	TE	6-4	226	23	R	Old Dominion	Sacramento, Calif.	FA-'22

2022 LOS ANGELES CHARGERS ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

ACTIVE ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	DOB	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
24	Adderley, Nasir	S	6-0	206	5/31/97	4	Delaware	Philadelphia, Pa.	D2-'19
13	Allen, Keenan	WR	6-2	211	4/27/92	10	California	Greensboro, N.C.	D3-'13
97	Bosa, Joey	OLB	6-5	280	7/11/95	7	Ohio State	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	D1-'16
23	Callahan, Bryce	CB	5-9	188	10/23/91	8	Rice	Moscow, Idaho	FA-'22
1	Carter, DeAndre	WR	5-8	190	4/10/93	5	Sacramento State	San Jose, Calif.	UFA (Was)-'22
76	Clapp, Will	C/G	6-5	311	12/10/95	5	Louisiana State	New Orleans, La.	FA-'22
4	Daniel, Chase	QB	6-0	229	10/7/86	13	Missouri	Southlake, Texas	FA-'21
43	Davis, Michael	CB	6-2	196	1/6/95	6	Brigham Young	Glendale, Calif.	FA-'17
30	Ekeler, Austin	RB	5-10	200	5/17/95	6	Western State Colorado	Eaton, Colo.	FA-'17
7	Everett, Gerald	TE	6-3	240	6/25/94	6	South Alabama	Atlanta, Ga.	UFA (Sea)-'22
96	Fehoko, Breiden	DL	6-3	300	10/15/96	2	Louisiana State	Honolulu, Hawaii	FA-'20
71	Feiler, Matt	G	6-6	330	7/7/92	6	Bloomsburg	Strasburg, Pa.	UFA (Pit)-'21
56	Fox, Morgan	DL	6-3	275	9/12/94	6	Colorado State-Pueblo	Fountain, Colo.	FA-'22
32	Gilman, Alohi	S	5-10	201	9/17/97	3	Notre Dame	Laie, Hawaii	D6-'20
15	Guyton, Jalen	WR	6-1	212	6/7/97	3	North Texas	Allen, Texas	FA-'19
47	Harris, Josh	LS	6-1	224	4/27/89	11	Auburn	Carrollton, Ga.	UFA (Atl)-'22
10	Herbert, Justin	QB	6-6	236	3/10/98	3	Oregon	Eugene, Ore.	D1a-'20
6	Hopkins, Dustin	K	6-2	193	10/1/90	9	Florida State	Austin, Texas	FA-'21
40	Horvath, Zander	FB	6-3	230	12/10/98	R	Purdue	Mishawaka, Ind.	D7b-'22
27	Jackson, J.C.	CB	6-1	198	11/17/95	5	Maryland	Immokalee, Fla.	UFA (NE)-'22
64	Jaimes, Brenden	G/T	6-5	300	5/28/99	2	Nebraska	Austin, Texas	D5-'21
3	James Jr., Derwin	S	6-2	215	8/3/96	5	Florida State	Haines City, Fla.	D1-'18
98	Johnson, Austin	DL	6-4	314	5/8/94	7	Penn State	Galloway, N.J.	UFA (NYG)-'22
77	Johnson, Zion	G	6-3	316	11/18/99	R	Boston College	Bowie, Md.	D1-'22
69	Joseph-Day, Sebastian	DL	6-4	310	3/21/95	5	Rutgers	Stroudsburg, Pa.	UFA (LAR)-'22
25	Kelley, Joshua	RB	5-11	212	11/20/97	3	UCLA	Lancaster, Calif.	D4-'20
33	Leonard, Deane	DB	6-0	195	11/20/99	R	Mississippi	Calgary, Alberta, Canada	D7a-'22
63	Linsley, Corey	C	6-3	301	7/27/91	9	Ohio State	Boardman, Ohio	UFA (GB)-'21
52	Mack, Khalil	OLB	6-3	269	2/22/91	9	Buffalo	Fort Pierce, Fla.	T (Chi)-'22
88	McKitty, Tre'	TE	6-4	246	1/12/99	2	Georgia	Wesley Chapel, Fla.	D3b-'21
20	Michel, Sony	RB	5-11	215	2/17/95	5	Georgia	Orlando, Fla.	FA-'22
9	Murray Jr., Kenneth	LB	6-2	241	11/16/98	3	Oklahoma	Houston, Texas	D1b-'20
31	Niemann, Nick	LB	6-3	244	12/2/97	2	Iowa	Sycamore, Ill.	D6a-'21
74	Norton, Storm	T	6-7	317	5/16/94	3	Toledo	Toledo, Ohio	FA-'20
57	Ogbongbemiga, Amen	LB	6-0	231	9/4/98	2	Oklahoma State	Calgary, Alberta, Canada	FA-'21
93	Ogbonnia, Otitio	DL	6-4	320	8/25/00	R	UCLA	Houston, Texas	D5-'22
5	Palmer, Joshua	WR	6-1	210	9/22/99	2	Tennessee	Brampton, Ontario, Canada	D3a-'21
89	Parham Jr., Donald	TE	6-8	237	8/16/97	3	Stetson	Lakeland, Fla.	FA-'20
79	Pipkins III, Trey	T	6-6	307	9/5/96	4	Sioux Falls	Apple Valley, Minn.	D3-'19
42	Reeder, Troy	LB	6-3	245	9/13/94	4	Delaware	Wilmington, Del.	FA-'22
94	Rumph II, Chris	OLB	6-2	244	10/19/98	2	Duke	Gainesville, Fla.	D4-'21
68	Salyer, Jamaree	G	6-4	325	7/13/00	R	Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	D6a-'22
26	Samuel Jr., Asante	CB	5-10	180	10/3/99	2	Florida State	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	D2-'21
16	Scott, JK	P	6-5	208	10/30/95	4	Alabama	Denver, Colo.	FA-'22
70	Slater, Rashawn	T	6-4	315	3/26/99	2	Northwestern	Sugar Land, Texas	D1-'21
28	Spiller, Isaiah	RB	6-1	215	8/9/01	R	Texas A&M	Spring, Texas	D4-'22
2	Stick, Easton	QB	6-1	224	9/15/95	4	North Dakota State	Omaha, Neb.	D5-'19
36	Taylor, Ja'Sir	DB	5-10	185	1/8/99	R	Wake Forest	Asbury Park, N.J.	D6b-'22
99	Tillery, Jerry	DL	6-6	295	10/8/96	4	Notre Dame	Shreveport, La.	D1-'19
49	Tranquill, Drue	LB	6-2	234	8/15/95	4	Notre Dame	Fort Wayne, Ind.	D4-'19
8	Van Noy, Kyle	LB	6-3	250	3/26/91	9	Brigham Young	Reno, Nev.	FA-'22
81	Williams, Mike	WR	6-4	218	10/4/94	6	Clemson	Santee, S.C.	D1-'17
22	Woods, JT	S	6-2	193	6/10/00	R	Baylor	San Antonio, Texas	D3-'22

PRACTICE SQUAD

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	DOB	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
78	Bailey, Zack	T	6-5	300	11/8/95	2	South Carolina	Summerville, S.C.	W (Was)-'22
83	Bandy, Michael	WR	5-10	190	12/5/97	1	San Diego	La Mirada, Calif.	FA-'21
95	Covington, Christian	DL	6-2	300	10/16/93	8	Rice	Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada	FA-'21
92	Gaziano, Joe	DL	6-4	280	9/27/96	2	Northwestern	Scituate, Mass.	FA-'20
37	Hall, Kemon	CB	5-11	190	6/2/97	2	North Texas	Calhoun City, Miss.	W (Dal)-'21
39	Jacquet, Michael	CB	6-2	201	1/29/97	2	Louisiana-Lafayette	Beaumont, Texas	FA-'22
87	Kampmoyer, Hunter	TE	6-4	243	2/6/98	1	Oregon	Bishop, Calif.	FA-'21
54	Kemp, Carlo	OLB	6-3	281	1/1/98	1	Michigan	Boulder, Colo.	FA-'22
41	Layne, Raheem	S	5-11	192	7/2/99	R	Indiana	Deland, Fla.	FA-'22
58	Maddox-Williams, Tyreek	LB	6-0	228	10/28/97	R	Rutgers	Philadelphia, Pa.	FA-'22
11	Moore Jr., Jason	WR	6-3	215	6/23/95	2	Findlay	Oberlin, Ohio	FA-'19
12	Reed, Joe	WR	6-0	224	1/4/98	2	Virginia	Charlotte Court House, Va.	D5-'20
82	Rodgers, Richard	TE	6-4	257	1/22/92	7	California	Worcester, Mass.	FA-'22
34	Rountree III, Larry	RB	5-10	211	2/13/99	2	Missouri	Raleigh, N.C.	D6b-'21
73	Sarell, Foster	T	6-6	322	8/28/98	1	Stanford	Tacoma, Wash.	FA-'21
29	Webb Jr., Mark	DB	6-1	207	9/10/98	2	Georgia	Philadelphia, Pa.	D7-'21

RESERVE/INJURED

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	DOB	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
20	Campbell, Tevaughn	CB	6-0	200	6/14/93	3	Regina	Toronto, Ontario, Canada	FA-'19
53	Lloyd, Damon	LB	6-0	235	5/8/98	2	Indiana (Pa.)	Avingdon, Md.	FA-'21
91	Merrill, Forrest	DL	6-0	322	8/15/96	1	Arkansas State	Willard, Mo.	FA-'21
62	Trainer, Andrew	T	6-7	320	12/18/97	R	William & Mary	Alexandria, Va.	FA-'22
60	Weaver, Isaac	C	6-6	310	2/14/98	R	Old Dominion	Marietta, Ga.	FA-'22

RESERVE/NON-FOOTBALL INJURY

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	DOB	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
48	Smartt, Stone	TE	6-4	226	10/4/98	R	Old Dominion	Sacramento, Calif.	FA-'22

2022 LOS ANGELES CHARGERS POSITION ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS (3)

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
2	Easton Stick	QB	6-1	224	26	4	North Dakota State	Omaha, Neb.	D5-'19
4	Chase Daniel	QB	6-0	229	35	13	Missouri	Southlake, Texas	FA-'21
10	Justin Herbert	QB	6-6	236	24	3	Oregon	Eugene, Ore.	D1a-'20

RUNNING BACKS (5)

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
20	Sony Michel	RB	5-11	215	27	5	Georgia	Orlando, Fla.	FA-'22
25	Joshua Kelley	RB	5-11	212	24	3	UCLA	Lancaster, Calif.	D4-'20
28	Isaiah Spiller	RB	6-1	215	21	R	Texas A&M	Spring, Texas	D4-'22
30	Austin Ekeler	RB	5-10	200	27	6	Western State Colorado	Eaton, Colo.	FA-'17
40	Zander Horvath	FB	6-3	230	23	R	Purdue	Mishawaka, Ind.	D7b-'22

WIDE RECEIVERS (5)

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
1	DeAndre Carter	WR	5-8	190	29	5	Sacramento State	San Jose, Calif.	UFA (Was)-'22
5	Joshua Palmer	WR	6-1	210	22	2	Tennessee	Brampton, Ontario, Canada	D3a-'21
13	Keenan Allen	WR	6-2	211	30	10	California	Greensboro, N.C.	D3-'13
15	Jalen Guyton	WR	6-1	212	30	3	North Texas	Allen, Texas	FA-'19
81	Mike Williams	WR	6-4	218	27	6	Clemson	Santee, S.C.	D1-'17

TIGHT ENDS (3)

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
7	Gerald Everett	TE	6-3	240	28	6	South Alabama	Atlanta, Ga.	UFA (Sea)-'22
88	Tre' McKitty	TE	6-4	246	23	2	Georgia	Wesley Chapel, Fla.	D3b-'21
89	Donald Parham Jr.	TE	6-8	237	25	3	Stetson	Lakeland, Fla.	FA-'20

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN (9)

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
63	Corey Linsley	C	6-3	301	31	9	Ohio State	Boardman, Ohio	UFA (GB)-'21
64	Brenden Jaimes	G/T	6-5	300	23	2	Nebraska	Austin, Texas	D5-'21
68	Jamaree Salyer	G	6-4	325	22	R	Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	D6a-'22
70	Rashawn Slater	T	6-4	315	23	2	Northwestern	Sugar Land, Texas	D1-'21
71	Matt Feiler	G	6-6	330	30	6	Bloomsburg	Strasburg, Pa.	UFA (Pit)-'21
74	Storm Norton	T	6-7	317	28	3	Toledo	Toledo, Ohio	FA-'20
76	Will Clapp	C/G	6-5	311	26	5	Louisiana State	New Orleans, La.	FA-'22
77	Zion Johnson	G	6-3	316	22	R	Boston College	Bowie, Md.	D1-'22
79	Trey Pipkins III	T	6-6	307	25	4	Sioux Falls	Apple Valley, Minn.	D3-'19

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN (6)

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
56	Morgan Fox	DL	6-3	275	27	6	Colorado State-Pueblo	Fountain, Colo.	FA-'22
69	Sebastian Joseph-Day	DL	6-4	310	27	5	Rutgers	Stroudsburg, Pa.	UFA (LAR)-'22
93	Otito Ogbornia	DL	6-4	320	22	R	UCLA	Houston, Texas	D5-'22
96	Breiden Fehoko	DL	6-3	300	25	2	Louisiana State	Honolulu, Hawaii	FA-'20
98	Austin Johnson	DL	6-4	314	28	7	Penn State	Galloway, N.J.	UFA (NYG)-'22
99	Jerry Tillery	DL	6-6	295	25	4	Notre Dame	Shreveport, La.	D1-'19

LINEBACKERS (6)

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
8	Kyle Van Noy	LB	6-3	250	31	9	Brigham Young	Reno, Nev.	FA-'22
9	Kenneth Murray Jr.	LB	6-2	241	23	3	Oklahoma	Houston, Texas	D1b-'20
31	Nick Niemann	LB	6-3	234	24	2	Iowa	Sycamore, Ill.	D6a-'21
42	Troy Reeder	LB	6-3	245	27	4	Delaware	Wilmington, Del.	FA-'22
49	Drue Tranquill	LB	6-2	234	27	4	Notre Dame	Fort Wayne, Ind.	D4-'19
57	Amen Ogbongbemiga	LB	6-0	231	24	2	Oklahoma State	Calgary, Alberta, Canada	FA-'21

OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS (3)

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
52	Khalil Mack	OLB	6-3	269	31	9	Buffalo	Fort Pierce, Fla.	T (Chi)-'22
94	Chris Rumph II	OLB	6-2	244	23	2	Duke	Gainesville, Fla.	D4-'21
97	Joey Bosa	OLB	6-5	280	27	7	Ohio State	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	D1-'16

DEFENSIVE BACKS (10)

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
3	Derwin James Jr.	S	6-2	215	26	5	Florida State	Haines City, Fla.	D1-'18
22	JT Woods	S	6-2	193	22	R	Baylor	San Antonio, Texas	D3-'22
23	Bryce Callahan	CB	5-9	188	30	8	Rice	Moscow, Idaho	FA-'22
24	Nasir Adderley	S	6-0	206	25	4	Delaware	Philadelphia, Pa.	D2-'19
26	Asante Samuel Jr.	CB	5-10	180	22	2	Florida State	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	D2-'21
27	J.C. Jackson	CB	6-1	198	26	5	Maryland	Immokalee, Fla.	UFA (NE)-'22
32	Alohi Gilman	S	5-10	201	24	3	Notre Dame	Laie, Hawaii	D6-'20
33	Deane Leonard	DB	6-0	195	22	R	Mississippi	Calgary, Alberta, Canada	D7a-'22
36	Ja'Sir Taylor	DB	5-10	185	23	R	Wake Forest	Asbury Park, N.J.	D6b-'22
43	Michael Davis	CB	6-2	196	27	6	Brigham Young	Glendale, Calif.	FA-'17

SPECIALISTS (3)

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College	Hometown	How Acq.
6	Dustin Hopkins	K	6-2	193	31	9	Florida State	Austin, Texas	FA-'21
16	JK Scott	P	6-5	208	26	4	Alabama	Denver, Colo.	FA-'22
47	Josh Harris	LS	6-1	224	33	11	Auburn	Carrollton, Ga.	UFA (Atl)-'22

HOW THE 2022 CHARGERS WERE BUILT

YEAR	NFL DRAFT	FREE AGENCY	TRADE/WAIVERS
2013	WR Keenan Allen (3)		
2014			
2015			
2016	DL Joey Bosa (1)		
2017	WR Mike Williams (1)	CB Michael Davis (UDFA) RB Austin Ekeler (UDFA)	
2018	S Derwin James Jr. (1)		
2019	S Nasir Adderley (2) T Trey Pipkins III (3) QB Easton Stick (5) DL Jerry Tillery (1) LB Drue Tranquill (4)	WR Jalen Guyton	
2020	S Alohi Gilman (6) QB Justin Herbert (1a) RB Joshua Kelley (4) LB Kenneth Murray Jr. (1b)	DL Breiden Fehoko (UDFA) T Storm Norton TE Donald Parham Jr.	
2021	G/T Brenden Jaimes (5) TE Tre' McKitty (3b) LB Nick Niemann (6a) WR Joshua Palmer (3a) OLB Chris Rumph II (4) CB Asante Samuel Jr. (2) T Rashawn Slater (1)	QB Chase Daniel G Matt Feiler (UFA-Pit) K Dustin Hopkins C Corey Linsley (UFA-GB) LB Amen Ogbongbemiga (UDFA)	
2022	FB Zander Horvath (7b) G Zion Johnson (1) DB Deane Leonard (7a) DL Otito Ogonnia (5) G Jamaree Salyer (6a) RB Isaiah Spiller (4) DB Ja'Sir Taylor (6a) S JT Woods (3)	CB Bryce Callahan WR DeAndre Carter (UFA-Was) C/G Will Clapp TE Gerald Everett (UFA-Sea) DL Morgan Fox LS Josh Harris (UFA-Atl) CB J.C. Jackson (UFA-NE) DL Austin Johnson (UFA-NYG) DL Sebastian Joseph-Day (UFA-LAR) RB Sony Michel LB Troy Reeder P JK Scott LB Kyle Van Noy	OLB Khalil Mack (T-Chi)

2022 LOS ANGELES CHARGERS COACHES

Head Coach	Brandon Staley	Offensive Line	Brendan Nugent
Special Teams Coordinator	Ryan Ficken	Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line	Jay Rodgers
Defensive Coordinator	Renaldo Hill	Assistant Offensive Line	Shaun Sarrett
Offensive Coordinator	Joe Lombardi	Defensive Quality Control	Isaac Shewmaker
Secondary	Derrick Ansley	Outside Linebackers	Giff Smith
Pass Game Specialist	Tom Arth	Defensive Assistant	John Timu
Wide Receivers	Chris Beatty	Offensive Assistant	Pat White
Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks	Shane Day	Offensive Quality Control	Chandler Whitmer
Assistant Secondary	Tom Donatell	Linebackers	Michael Wilhoite
Running Backs	Derrick Foster	Special Assistant to the Head Coach	Cody Cejda
Assistant Special Teams	Chris Gould	Director of Sports Performance	Anthony Lomando
Offensive Assistant	Mike Hiestand	Head Strength & Conditioning	Jonathan Brooks
Tight Ends	Kevin Koger	Assistant Strength & Conditioning	Lucius Jordan

2022 LOS ANGELES CHARGERS DEPTH CHART

Depth Chart is unofficial and compiled by Chargers Communications

OFFENSE

WR	13	Keenan Allen	5	Joshua Palmer	1	DeAndre Carter
LT	70	Rashawn Slater	74	Storm Norton		
LG	71	Matt Feiler	68	<u>Jamaree Salyer</u>		
C	63	Corey Linsley	76	Will Clapp		
RG	<u>77</u>	<u>Zion Johnson</u>	64	Brenden Jaimes		
RT	79	Trey Pipkins III	74	Storm Norton		
TE	7	Gerald Everett	89	Donald Parham Jr.	88	Tre' McKitty
WR	81	Mike Williams	15	Jalen Guyton		
QB	10	Justin Herbert	4	Chase Daniel	2	Easton Stick
FB	<u>40</u>	<u>Zander Horvath</u>	88	Tre' McKitty		
RB	30	Austin Ekeler	25	Joshua Kelley	— OR —	20 Sony Michel <u>22</u> <u>Isaiah Spiller</u>

DEFENSE

EDGE	97	Joey Bosa	8	Kyle Van Noy		
DL	99	Jerry Tillery	56	Morgan Fox		
DL	98	Austin Johnson	96	Breiden Fehoko		
DL	69	Sebastian Joseph-Day	<u>93</u>	<u>Otito Ogbornia</u>		
EDGE	52	Khalil Mack	94	Chris Rumph II		
LB	8	Kyle Van Noy	42	Troy Reeder	57	Amen Ogbongbemiga
LB	49	Drue Tranquill	9	Kenneth Murray Jr.	31	Nick Niemann
CB	27	J.C. Jackson	43	Michael Davis	<u>36</u>	<u>Ja'Sir Taylor</u>
S	24	Nasir Adderley	<u>22</u>	<u>JT Woods</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>Ja'Sir Taylor</u>
S	3	Derwin James Jr.	32	Alohi Gilman	<u>33</u>	<u>Deane Leonard</u>
CB	26	Asante Samuel Jr.	23	Bryce Callahan	<u>33</u>	<u>Deane Leonard</u>

SPECIALISTS

K	6	Dustin Hopkins		
P	16	JK Scott		
KO	6	Dustin Hopkins		
H	16	JK Scott		
LS	47	Josh Harris		
KR	1	DeAndre Carter	15	Jalen Guyton
PR	1	DeAndre Carter	15	Jalen Guyton

NOTE: Rookies are underlined

2022 LOS ANGELES CHARGERS PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Nasir Adderley	nah-SEER ADD-er-lee	Michael Jacquet	juh-KWET	Otito Ogbornia	oh-TEET-oh oh-BONE-yuh
Austin Ekeler . . . . .	.ECK-ler	Brenden Jaimes	HIGH-miss	Donald Parham Jr.	par-HAM
Breiden Fehoko . . . . .	.BRAY-dun fuh-HO-ko	Zion Johnson	ZEYE-uhn	Jamaree Salyer	SAL-yur
Matt Feiler	FEYE-luhr	Sony Michel	SO-nee mish-ELL	Rashawn Slater	ruh-SHAWN
Alohi Gilman	uh-LOW-hee	Nick Niemann	KNEE-min	Ja'Sir Taylor	JAH-sear
Kemon Hall	KEY-mahn	Amen Ogbongbemiga			
Zander Horvath . . . . .	.HOR-voth		AY-men awg-BONG-buh-mee-guh		

2022 TRANSACTIONS BY DATE

Jan. 11	Signed WR Michael Bandy, DL Andrew Brown, LB Cole Christiansen, DB Ben DeLuca, OLB Emeke Egbule, WR Maurice Ffrench, G Ryan Hunter, TE Hunter Kampmoyer, DL Forrest Merrill, WR Jason Moore Jr., and T Foster Sarell to Reserve/Future contracts.	June 10	Signed RB Isaiah Spiller.	Aug. 31	Signed RB Sony Michel. Waived RB Larry Rountree III. Signed T Zack Bailey, WR Michael Bandy, DL Christian Covington, DL Joe Gaziano, CB Kemon Hall, CB Michael Jacquet, TE Hunter Kampmoyer, OLB Carlo Kemp, S Raheem Layne, LB Tyreek Maddox-Williams, WR Jason Moore Jr., WR Joe Reed, T Foster Sarell and DB Mark Webb Jr., to practice squad.
Jan. 18	Signed WR Joe Reed to Reserve/Future contract.	June 13	Signed S JT Woods.	Sept. 2	Signed RB Larry Rountree III to practice squad.
Feb. 2	Signed OLB Jamal Davis II to Reserve/Future contract.	July 19	Declared Non-Football Injury for TE Stone Smartt.	Sept. 5	Signed TE Richard Rodgers to practice squad.
March 8	Signed WR Mike Williams to contract extension.	July 22	Signed OLB Carlo Kemp.		
March 15	Extended exclusive rights tenders to WR Jalen Guyton, T Storm Norton and TE Donald Parham Jr. Released T Bryan Bulaga.	July 26	Declared LB Kenneth Murray Jr., Physically Unable to Perform.		
March 16	Traded 2022 second-round selection and 2023 sixth-round selection to Chicago for OLB Khalil Mack.	July 31	Signed TE Sage Surratt.		
March 17	Signed DL Sebastian Joseph-Day.	Aug. 9	Signed C/G Cameron Hunt. Waived/Injured T Andrew Trainer.		
March 18	Signed CB J.C. Jackson and DL Austin Johnson. Re-signed DL Christian Covington and QB Chase Daniel.	Aug. 10	Placed T Andrew Trainer on Reserve/Injured.		
March 21	Signed LS Josh Harris and P JK Scott.	Aug. 15	Waived WR Maurice Ffrench, QB Brandon Peters and S Skyler Thomas. Waived/Injured DL Forrest Merrill and C Isaac Weaver.		
March 22	Signed TE Gerald Everett.	Aug. 16	Placed DL Forrest Merrill and C Isaac Weaver on Reserve/Injured.		
April 11	Signed WR DeAndre Carter.	Aug. 17	Signed S Derwin James Jr., to contract extension.		
April 12	Signed LB Troy Reeder. Re-signed WR Jalen Guyton and TE Donald Parham Jr.	Aug. 22	Removed LB Kenneth Murray Jr., from Active/Physically Unable to Perform. Waived C/G Cameron Hunt and K James McCourt.		
April 18	Re-signed T Storm Norton.	Aug. 23	Signed CB Michael Jacquet. Placed TE Stone Smartt on Reserve/Non-Football Injury. Waived/Injured CB Tevaughn Campbell, LB Damon Lloyd and OLB Ty Shelby.		
April 26	Signed C/G Will Clapp.	Aug. 24	Placed CB Tevaughn Campbell, LB Damon Lloyd and OLB Ty Shelby on Reserve/Injured.		
April 30	Traded two 2022 seventh-round selections to Chicago for 2023 sixth-round selection.	Aug. 30	Released DL Christian Covington. Waived T Zack Bailey, WR Michael Bandy, WR Trevon Bradford, DL Andrew Brown, RB Leddie Brown, LB Cole Christiansen, OLB Jamal Davis II, DB Ben DeLuca, OLB Emeke Egbule, DL Joe Gaziano, CB Kemon Hall, G Ryan Hunter, CB Michael Jacquet, TE Hunter Kampmoyer, OLB Carlo Kemp, TE Erik Krommenhoek, S Raheem Layne, LB Tyreek Maddox-Williams, RB Kevin Marks Jr., WR Jason Moore Jr., FB Gabe Nabers, WR Joe Reed, T Foster Sarell, CB Brandon Sebastian and DB Mark Webb Jr. Waived/Injured TE Sage Surratt. Reached injury settlements with OLB Ty Shelby and TE Sage Surratt.		
May 5	Signed CB Bryce Callahan and OLB Kyle Van Noy.				
May 13	Signed WR Trevon Bradford, RB Leddie Brown, FB Zander Horvath, TE Erik Krommenhoek, S Raheem Layne, DB Deane Leonard, LB Tyreek Maddox-Williams, RB Kevin Marks Jr., K James McCourt, DL Otito Ogbornia, QB Brandon Peters, G Jamaree Salyer, CB Brandon Sebastian, OLB Ty Shelby, TE Stone Smartt, DB Ja'Sir Taylor, S Skyler Thomas, T Andrew Trainer and C Isaac Weaver.				
May 17	Claimed T Zack Bailey off waivers.				
May 18	Signed DL Morgan Fox.				
May 31	Signed G Zion Johnson.				

2022 TRANSACTIONS BY PLAYER

Bailey, Zack — T

May 17 Claimed off Waivers
 Aug. 30 Waived
 Aug. 31 Signed to practice squad

Bandy, Michael — WR

Jan. 11 Signed to Reserve/Future contract
 Aug. 30 Waived
 Aug. 31 Signed to practice squad

Bradford, Trevon — WR

May 13 Signed
 Aug. 30 Waived

Brown, Andrew — DL

Jan. 11 Signed to Reserve/Future contract
 Aug. 30 Waived

Brown, Leddie — RB

May 13 Signed
 Aug. 30 Waived

Bulaga, Bryan — T

March 15 Released

Callahan, Bryce — CB

May 5 Signed

Campbell, Tevaughn — CB

Aug. 23 Waived/Injured
 Aug. 24 Placed on Reserve/Injured

Carter, DeAndre — WR

April 11 Signed

Christiansen, Cole — LB

Jan. 11 Signed to Reserve/Future contract
 Aug. 30 Waived

Clapp, Will — C/G

April 26 Signed

Covington, Christian — DL

March 18 Re-signed
 Aug. 30 Waived
 Aug. 31 Signed to practice squad

Daniel, Chase — QB

March 18 Re-signed

Davis II, Jamal — OLB

Jan. 11 Signed to Reserve/Future contract
 Aug. 30 Waived

DeLuca, Ben — DB

Jan. 11 Signed to Reserve/Future contract
 Aug. 30 Waived

Egbule, Emeke — OLB

Jan. 11 Signed to Reserve/Future contract
 Aug. 30 Waived

Everett, Gerald — TE

April 22 Signed

Ffrench, Maurice — WR

Jan. 11 Signed to Reserve/Future contract
 Aug. 15 Waived

Gaziano, Joe — DL

Aug. 30 Waived
 Aug. 31 Signed to practice squad

Guyton, Jalen — WR

Jan. 11 Extended exclusive rights tender
 April 12 Re-signed

Hall, Kemon — CB

Aug. 30 Waived
 Aug. 31 Signed to practice squad

Harris, Josh — LS

March 21 Signed

Horvath, Zander — FB

May 13 Signed

Hunt, Cameron — C/G

Aug. 9 Signed
 Aug. 22 Waived

Hunter, Ryan — G

Jan. 11 Signed to Reserve/Future contract
 Aug. 30 Waived

Jackson, J.C. — CB

March 18 Signed

Jacquet, Michael — CB

Aug. 23 Signed
 Aug. 30 Waived
 Aug. 31 Signed to practice squad

James Jr., Derwin — S

Aug. 17 Signed contract extension

Joseph-Day, Sebastian — DL

March 17 Signed

Johnson, Austin — DL

March 18 Signed

Kampmoyer, Hunter — TE

Jan. 11 Signed to Reserve/Future contract
 Aug. 30 Waived
 Aug. 31 Signed to practice squad

Krommenhoek, Erik — TE

May 13 Signed
 Aug. 30 Waived

Layne, Raheem — S

May 13 Signed
 Aug. 30 Waived
 Aug. 31 Signed to practice squad

Leonard, Deane — DB

May 13 Signed

Lloyd, Damon — LB

Aug. 23 Waived/Injured
 Aug. 24 Placed on Reserve/Injured

Mack, Khalil — OLB

March 16 Signed

Maddox-Williams, Tyreek — LB

May 13 Signed
 Aug. 30 Waived
 Aug. 31 Signed to practice squad

Marks Jr., Kevin — RB

May 13 Signed
 Aug. 30 Waived

McCourt, James — K

May 13 Signed
 Aug. 22 Waived

Merrill, Forrest — DL

Jan. 11 Signed to Reserve/Future contract
 Aug. 15 Waived/Injured
 Aug. 16 Placed on Reserve/Injured

Michel, Sony — RB

April 26 Signed

Moore Jr., Jason — WR

Jan. 11 Signed to Reserve/Future contract
 Aug. 30 Waived
 Aug. 31 Signed to practice squad

Murray Jr., Kenneth — LB

July 26 Declared Physically Unable to Perform
 Aug. 22 Passed Physical

Nabers, Gabe — FB

Aug. 30 Waived

Norton, Storm — T

March 11 Extended exclusive rights tender
 April 18 Re-signed

Ogbonnia, Otilo — DL

May 13 Signed

Parham Jr., Donald — TE

March 11 Extended exclusive rights tender
 April 12 Re-signed

Peters, Brandon — QB

May 13 Signed
 Aug. 15 Waived

Reed, Joe — WR

Jan. 18 Signed to Reserve/Future contract
 Aug. 30 Waived
 Aug. 31 Signed to practice squad

Reeder, Troy — LB

April 12 Signed

Rodgers, Richard — TE

Sept. 5 Signed to practice squad

Rountree III, Larry — RB

Aug. 31 Waived
 Sept. 2 Signed to practice squad

Salyer, Jamaree — G

May 13 Signed

Sarell, Foster — T

Jan. 11 Signed to Reserve/Future contract
 Aug. 30 Waived
 Aug. 31 Signed to practice squad

Scott, JK — P

March 21 Signed

Sebastian, Brandon — CB

May 13 Signed
 Aug. 30 Waived

Shelby, Ty — OLB

May 13 Signed
 Aug. 23 Waived/Injured
 Aug. 24 Placed on Reserve/Injured
 Aug. 30 Reached injury settlement

Smartt, Stone — TE

May 13 Signed
 July 19 Declared Non-Football Injury
 Aug. 23 Placed on Reserve/Non-Football Injury

Spiller, Isaiah — RB

June 10 Signed

Surratt, Sage — TE

July 31 Signed
 Aug. 30 Waived/Injured and reached injury settlement

Taylor, Ja'Sir — DB

May 13 Signed

Thomas, Skyler — S

May 13 Signed
 Aug. 15 Waived

Trainer, Andrew — T

May 13 Signed
 Aug. 9 Waived/Injured
 Aug. 10 Placed on Reserve/Injured

Van Noy, Kyle — OLB

May 5 Signed

Weaver, Isaac — C

May 13 Signed
 Aug. 15 Waived/Injured
 Aug. 16 Placed on Reserve/Injured

Webb Jr., Mark — DB

Aug. 30 Waived
 Aug. 31 Signed to practice squad

Williams, Mike — WR

May 8 Signed

Woods, JT — S

June 13 Signed

MEDIA INFORMATION



GAME-DAY MEDIA PARKING: Media attending Chargers home games have been assigned reserved areas to park at SoFi Stadium. Media will park in Lot E of SoFi Stadium. All parking will be distributed electronically. As a reminder, parking is limited and is being provided as a courtesy.

MEDIA ENTRANCE: All credentialed media must enter through southeast media gate between entries 10 & 11 near Media Will Call and are subject to search procedures. Please be prepared to open all cases and bags for inspection by SoFi Stadium security personnel. All items will be inspected and tagged for security purposes. Please make sure bags are identifiable and limit carry-in items to only what is necessary. Please remove any security tags from prior games.

PRESS WILL CALL
Press Will Call is located at the southeast media gate between entries 10 & 11.

PRESS BOX
Media can access the press box by entering SoFi Stadium through the southeast media gate. Once on the concourse, turn left and walk along the concourse around the South end zone until reaching elevators in the southwest corner of the stadium. Take the elevators up to level 7 to access the press box.


CHARGERS MEDIA SITE
Chargers.com/media is available to assist media with coverage leading up to each game of the 2021 season. The media site contains digital copies of all press materials. Credential requests on the site must be submitted by the sports director, sports editor or photo editor to be considered.

CHARGERS GAME RELEASE
Stats and notes in Los Angeles Chargers Game Releases are found utilizing a variety of sources, including STATS LLC, Sportradar, Stathead and the Elias Sports Bureau.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS COMMUNICATIONS CONTACTS

NAME	TITLE	DESK PHONE	EMAIL
Josh Rupprecht	Senior Vice President, Communications & External Affairs	657.356.2190	Josh.Rupprecht@Chargers.NFL.com
Jennifer Rojas	Vice President, Marketing Communications & Alumni Affairs	657.356.2162	Jennifer.Rojas@Chargers.NFL.com
Jamaal LaFrance	Senior Manager, Football Communications	657.356.2063	Jamaal.LaFrance@Chargers.NFL.com
Brock Anderson	Manager, Football Communications	657.356.2082	Brock.Anderson@Chargers.NFL.com
Danny Markino	Senior Coordinator, Football Communications	657.356.2068	Danny.Markino@Chargers.NFL.com
Jordan Colquitt	Coordinator, Marketing Communications & Alumni Affairs	657.356.2045	Jordan.Colquitt@Chargers.NFL.com
Leonie Strehl	Coordinator, Marketing Communications & Alumni Affairs	657.356.2140	Leonie.Strehl@Chargers.NFL.com

MEDIA INFORMATION

 Chargers Radio Network
Flagship or Affiliate

 Chargers Preseason Television
Network Flagship or Affiliate

CHARGERS RADIO NETWORK: iHeartMedia Los Angeles will again air all regular season and postseason Chargers games on ALT 98.7 FM — Los Angeles' New Alternative — complete with a two-hour pregame and one-hour postgame show.

Calls from Matt "Money" Smith, Daniel Jeremiah and Shannon Farren will be heard over the airwaves across Los Angeles and eight affiliate stations in California, Nevada and Oregon.

The Chargers Spanish broadcast called by Adrian Garcia-Marquez and Francisco Pinto will be locally broadcast on Que Buena 105.5/94.3 FM.

CHARGERS RADIO NETWORK AFFILIATES

- Los Angeles (KYSR-FM & KBUE-FM)*
- Bakersfield (KBFP-AM)
- Eugene, OR (KORE-AM)
- Fresno (KALZ-FM / KRZR-AM)
- Las Vegas (KXNT-AM)
- Modesto/Stockton (KFIV-AM)
- Palm Springs/Yucca Valley (KNWZ-FM, KNWH-AM)
- San Bernardino (KATY-FM)
- San Diego (KOGO-AM)

**Flagship Stations*

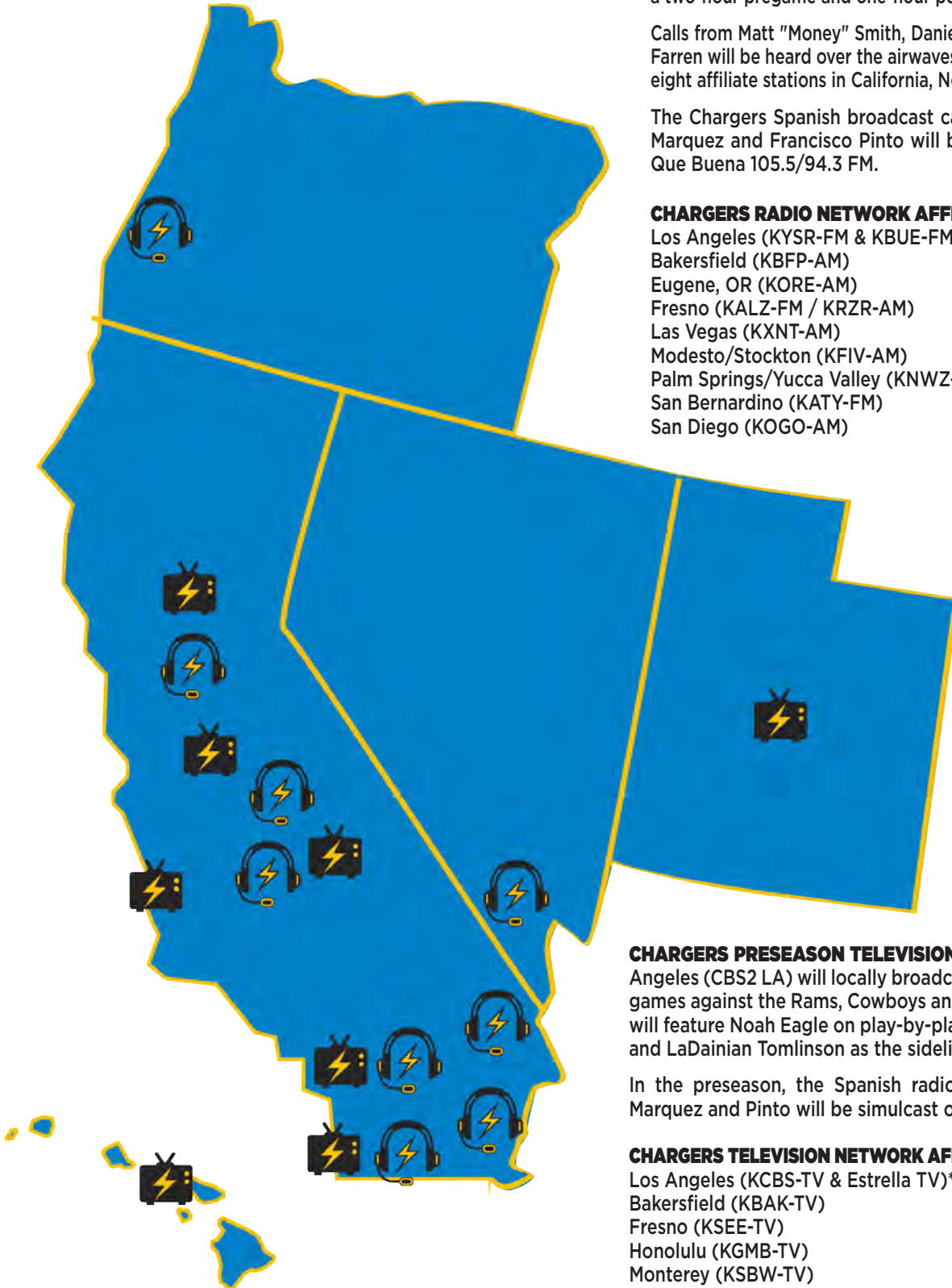
CHARGERS PRESEASON TELEVISION NETWORK: KCBS Los Angeles (CBS2 LA) will locally broadcast Chargers preseason games against the Rams, Cowboys and Saints. The broadcast will feature Noah Eagle on play-by-play, Dan Fouts as analyst and LaDainian Tomlinson as the sideline reporter.

In the preseason, the Spanish radio broadcast of Garcia-Marquez and Pinto will be simulcast on Estrella TV.

CHARGERS TELEVISION NETWORK AFFILIATES

- Los Angeles (KCBS-TV & Estrella TV)*
- Bakersfield (KBAK-TV)
- Fresno (KSEE-TV)
- Honolulu (KGMB-TV)
- Monterey (KSBW-TV)
- Sacramento (KQCA-TV)
- Salt Lake City (KTVX-TV)
- San Diego (KFMB-TV)

**Flagship Stations*





PLAYER
CAPSULES



SONY MICHEL ⚡ 20

RUNNING BACK | GEORGIA

5-11 | 215 lbs | PLANTATION, FLA.

FREE AGENT — 2022

EXPERIENCE: 5TH NFL SEASON

1ST YEAR WITH CHARGERS

2021: Appeared in all 17 games with the Rams, starting seven at RB...Accounted for 845 yards on 208 carries (4.1 avg.) with four rushing scores, along with 21 catches for 128 yards (6.1 avg.) and one touchdown through the air...In the postseason, contributed 26 rushes for 80 yards (3.1 avg.) with a long of 35 yards, as the Rams secured the World Championship...**at Seattle (Oct. 7):** Found the endzone for the first time as a Rams contributor, helping secure a road divisional win...**vs. Jacksonville (Dec. 5):** Accounted for a then-season-high 121 yards on 24 carries (5.0 avg.) with a long rush of 25 yards in his second start of the season...Went on to start each of the remaining five games of the regular season for the Rams...**at Minnesota (Dec. 26):** Rushed for a season-high 131 yards on a career-high 27 touches (4.9 avg.) and one touchdown, adding a four-yard reception...Hit pay dirt on the ground in the first quarter to gain an early lead...**vs. Arizona (Wild Card, Jan. 17):** Notched 13 carries for 58 yards (4.5 avg.) with a long rush of 35 yards in the Wild Card Round win over the Cardinals...**at Cincinnati (Super Bowl LVI, Feb. 13):** Rushed twice for two yards (1.0 avg.).

2020: Started six of nine appearances in 2020, totaling 449 yards on 79 rushing attempts (5.7 avg.) with one touchdown, along with seven receptions for 114 yards to notch a career-best 16.3-yard receiving average...Missed seven games after being placed on Reserve/Injured, Weeks 4 through 11...**vs. Miami (Sept. 13):** Opened the season with 10 carries for 37 yards (3.7 avg.) in a starting appearance...Found the end zone in the fourth quarter to help secure the Week 1 win over the division-rival Dolphins...**vs. Las Vegas (Sept. 27):** Rushed nine times for a season-best 117 yards on the ground (13.0 avg.)...Added two catches for 24 yards in the winning effort...**vs. NY Jets (Jan. 3):** Closed out the regular season with a season-high 16 carries for 76 yards (4.8 avg.), along with three catches for a career-best 60 yards, including a career-long 31-yard touchdown catch in the fourth quarter, helping solidify the victory.

2019: Played in all 16 regular-season games with 14 starts, accruing 912 yards rushing on 247 attempts (3.7 avg.) with a career-high seven touchdowns...Also caught 12 passes for 94 yards (7.83 avg.)...**at Miami (Sept. 15):** Started and was the team's leading rusher with 21 carries for 83 yards (3.95 avg.) and a one-yard touchdown run in the victory...**at Washington (Oct. 6):** Finished with 19 carries for 91 yards (4.79 avg.) and a touchdown, while also adding three receptions for 32 yards (10.6 avg.) in the victory at Washington...**at NY Jets (Oct. 21):** Set a regular season career-high with three rushing touchdowns on 19 carries, picking up 42 rushing yards (2.21 avg.) in the win...**vs. Buffalo (Dec. 21):** Started and rushed 21 times for a season-high 96 yards (4.57 avg.), with a long of 25 yards, in the winning effort...**vs. Miami (Dec. 29):** Set a new single-season career-best with his seventh rushing score of the year...**vs. Tennessee (AFC Wild Card, Jan. 4):** Totaled 61 yards on 14 carries (4.36 avg.), along with nine yards on two catches (4.50 avg.), in the AFC Wild Card loss.

2018: As a rookie, totaled a career-high 931 yards on 209 rushes (4.5 avg.) with six touchdowns...Added seven receptions for 50 yards (7.14 avg.) and returned four kickoffs for 77 yards (19.25 avg.)...In the postseason, en route to New England's Super Bowl LIII victory, recorded an NFL rookie record six rushing touchdowns and eclipsed 100 yards on the ground in all three outings...Collected 336 yards on 71 carries (4.7 avg.) in the playoffs along with the six touchdowns...Registered 100 yards rushing on four occasions in the regular season...**vs. Miami (Sept. 30):** Started and rushed 25 times for 112 yards (4.48 avg.), including his first career touchdown on a 10-yard scamper in the fourth quarter of the victory...**at NY Jets (Nov. 25):** Started and rushed 21 times for a career-high 133 yards (6.33 avg.) and a touchdown, while adding two receptions for 12 yards (6.0 avg.) in the victory...**vs. LA Chargers (AFC Divisional, Jan. 13):** Rushed 24 times for 129 yards (5.38 avg.) with three rushing touchdowns in the postseason win...**at Kansas City (AFC Championship, Jan. 20):** Started and was a key factor on offense, rushing 29 times for 113 yards (3.90 avg.) with two touchdowns in the AFC Championship victory, including the game-winning touchdown in OT...**vs. LA Rams (Super Bowl LIII, Feb. 3):** Started and rushed 18 times for 94 yards (5.22 avg.) and scored the game's lone touchdown on a two-yard run in the fourth quarter.

COLLEGE: Over four years at Georgia (2014-17), totaled 3,638 career rushing yards to rank third all-time in program history...Career rushing mark ranked 16th all-time among all rushers in Southeastern Conference annals upon his final season in Athens, Ga. ...In four seasons, eclipsed 100 yards rushing on 11 occasions, adding 33 career touchdowns on the ground...Named a team captain for each of his final two seasons...As a senior in 2017, accounted for 1,227 yards on just 156 carries, earning Offensive MVP following the Bulldogs' Rose Bowl victory with a four rushing touchdowns, including the game-winning touchdown in double overtime and a 75-yard score to set a new Georgia bowl record, finishing the CFP Semifinal Game with a career-best 181 rushing yards...Voted the team's Offensive MVP as a sophomore in 2016 after rushing for 1,161 yards and eight touchdowns.

PERSONAL: Born in Orlando, Fla. ...Majored in communication studies at Georgia...**High School:** Attended American Heritage School in Plantation, Fla. ...2013 American Family Insurance USA Today All-USA First Team and All-USA Florida Team...Named USA Today Florida Football Player of the Year and was selected to Florida's Class 5A All-State First Team...A five-year contributor, contributed to the program as an eighth grade student...As a senior in 2013, rushed for 1,833 yards and 24 touchdowns...Also competed in track & field, earning first-place finishes in the 100-meter dash and 200-meter dash at the FHSAA 2A District Meet as a sophomore in 2011.

SONY MICHEL NFL STATISTICS

Year	Team	GP	GS	-- Rushing --					-- Receiving --					-- Scrimmage --
				Att	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD	No.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD	Yards
2018	New England	13	8	209	931	4.5	34t	6	7	404	7.1	13	0	981
2019	New England	16	14	247	912	3.7	26	7	12	993	7.8	19	0	1,006
2020	New England	9	6	79	449	5.7	48	1	7	403	16.3	31t	1	563
2021	Los Angeles Rams	17	7	208	845	4.1	39	4	21	647	6.1	24	1	973
NFL Totals		55	35	743	3,137	4.2	48	18	47	386	8.2	31t	2	3,523
POSTSEASON														
Year	Team	GP	GS	-- Receiving --					-- Rushing --					-- Scrimmage --
				No.	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD	Att	Yds	Avg.	Lg	TD	Yards
2018	New England	3	2	71	336	4.7	40	6	1	9	9.0	9	0	345
2019	New England	1	0	14	61	4.4	25	0	2	9	4.5	7	0	70
2021	Los Angeles Rams	4	1	26	80	3.1	35	0	3	-8	-2.7	0	0	72
Postseason Totals		8	3	111	477	4.3	40	6	6	10	1.7	9	0	487

RECORDS

INDIVIDUAL RECORDS

*NFL Record

POINTS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 Nate Kaeding, 2009
- LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
- John Carney, 1994

Most, Career

- 1,076 John Carney, 1990-2000
- 918 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09
- 889 Nate Kaeding, 2004-12

Most, Season

- 186* LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
- 146 Nate Kaeding, 2009
- 144 Nick Novak, 2013

Most, Season, Non-Kickers

- 186* LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
- 124 Austin Ekeler, 2021
- 120 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2005

Most, Season, Rookie

- 114 Nate Kaeding, 2004
- 106 Josh Lambo, 2015
- Dennis ParTEE, 1968
- 94 Herb Travenio, 1965

Most, Game

- 30 Kellen Winslow, Nov. 22, 1981 at Oakland
- 24 (10x) Last: Austin Ekeler, Nov. 21, 2021 vs. Pit.
- 20 Mike Williams, Dec. 13, 2018 at Kansas City

TOUCHDOWNS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 3 Lance Alworth, 1964, 1965, 1966
- 1 Austin Ekeler, 2021
- LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
- Chuck Muncie, 1981

Most, Career

- 153 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09
- 116 Antonio Gates, 2003-18
- 83 Lance Alworth, 1962-70

Most, Season

- 31* LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
- 20 Austin Ekeler, 2021
- LaDainian Tomlinson, 2005
- 19 Chuck Muncie, 1981

Most, Game

- 5 Kellen Winslow, Nov. 22, 1981 at Oakland
- 4 (10x) Last: Austin Ekeler, Nov. 21, 2021 vs. Pit.
- 3 (45x) Last: A.Ekeler, Oct. 10, 2021 vs. Cle.

Most Consecutive Games

- 18* LaDainian Tomlinson, 2004-05
- 10 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
- 9 Antonio Gates, 2009-10
- Natrone Means, 1993-94
- Lance Alworth, 1963

POINTS AFTER TOUCHDOWN

Most Seasons Leading League

- 2 Nate Kaeding, 2006
- Rolf Benirschke, 1981, 1982
- 1 Herb Travenio, 1965

Most, Career

- 349 Nate Kaeding, 2004-12
- 328 Rolf Benirschke, 1977-86
- 293 John Carney, 1990-2000

Most, Season

- 58 Nate Kaeding, 2006
- 55 Rolf Benirschke, 1981
- 54 Nate Kaeding, 2004

Most, Game

- 7 (6x) Last: N.Kaeding, Dec. 28, 2008 vs. Den.
- 6 (30x) Last: M.Badgley, Dec. 8, 2019 at. Jax.
- 5 (54x) Last: D.Hopkins, Nov. 21, 2021 vs. Pit.

Most Consecutive

- 250 Nate Kaeding, 2004-09
- 128 Nick Novak, 2011-14
- 87 Rolf Benirschke, 1983-86

Most Attempts, Career

- 352 Rolf Benirschke, 1977-86
- 351 Nate Kaeding, 2004-12
- 298 John Carney, 1990-2000

Most Attempts, Season

- 61 Rolf Benirschke, 1981
- 58 Nate Kaeding, 2006
- 55 Nate Kaeding, 2004
- Bob Thomas, 1985

Most Attempts, Game

- 8 Rolf Benirschke, Nov. 22, 1981 at Oakland
- 7 (6x) Last: N.Kaeding, Dec. 28, 2008 vs. Den.
- 6 (38x) Last: M. Badgley, Dec. 8, 2019 at. Jax.

TWO-POINT CONVERSIONS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 Ladarius Green, 2015
- Mikhael Ricks, 1999
- Ronnie Harmon, 1994

Most, Career

- 3 Ronnie Harmon, 1990-95
- 2 Keenan Allen, 2013-21
- Jared Cook, 2021
- Austin Ekeler, 2017-21
- Mike Williams, 2017-21
- Antonio Gates, 2003-18
- Melvin Gordon, 2015-19
- Ladarius Green, 2012-15
- Legedu Naanee, 2007-10
- Dave Kocourek, 1960-65

Most, Season

- 3 Ronnie Harmon, 1994
- 2 Jared Cook, 2021
- Austin Ekeler, 2021
- Melvin Gordon, 2018
- Antonio Gates, 2018
- 1 (33x) Last: Justin Herbert,
- Donald Parham Jr., & Mike Williams, 2021

Most, Game

- 2* Ladarius Green, Oct. 25, 2015 vs. Oakland
- 1 (41x) Last: A.Ekeler, Jan. 9, 2022 at L.V. (OT)

FIELD GOALS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 Nate Kaeding, 2009
- John Carney, 1994

Most, Career

- 261 John Carney, 1990-2000
- 180 Nate Kaeding, 2004-12
- 146 Rolf Benirschke, 1977-86

Most, Season

- 34 Nick Novak, 2013
- John Carney, 1994
- 32 Nate Kaeding, 2009
- 31 John Carney, 1993, 1999

Most, Game

- 6 (3x) Last: G.Davis, Oct. 5, 1997 at Oakland
- 5 (11x) Last: N.Kaeding, Sept. 10, 2012 at Oak.
- 4 (36x) Last: M.Badgley, Dec. 27, 2020 vs. Den.

Most, Game, No Misses

- 6 (3x) Last: G.Davis, Oct. 5, 1997 at Oakland
- 5 (10x) Last: N.Kaeding, Sept. 10, 2012 at Oak.
- 4 (25x) Last: M.Badgley, Nov. 3, 2019 vs. G.B.

Highest Percentage, Career (min. 100 att.)

- 87.0 Nate Kaeding, 2004-12 (180-of-207)
- 84.6 Nick Novak, 2011-14, '17 (110-of-130)
- 81.6 John Carney, 1990-00 (261-of-320)

Highest Percentage, Season (min. 15 att.)

- 93.8 Michael Badgley, 2018 (15-of-16)
- 91.9 Nick Novak, 2013 (34-of-37)
- 91.4 Nate Kaeding, 2009 (32-of-35)

Most Consecutive

- 32 Nick Novak, 2013-14
- 29 John Carney, 1992-93
- 22 Nate Kaeding, 2009-10

Most Attempts, Career

- 320 John Carney, 1990-2000
- 208 Rolf Benirschke, 1977-86
- 207 Nate Kaeding, 2004-12

Most Attempts, Season

- 40 John Carney, 1993
- 39 Michael Badgley, 2020
- 38 John Carney, 1994

Most Attempts, Game

- 7 Dick Van Raaphorst, Oct. 8, 1966 at N.Y. Jets
- 6 (6x) Last: Steve Christie, Dec. 1, 2002 vs. Den.
- 5 (25x) Last: N.Novak, Nov. 19, 2017 vs. Buf.

Longest

- 59 Michael Badgley, Dec. 9, 2018 vs. Cincinnati
- 57 Nate Kaeding, Dec. 21, 2008 at Tampa Bay
- 55 Nate Kaeding, Nov. 29, 2009 vs. Kansas City

RUSHING YARDS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 2 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006, 2007
- 1 Dick Post, 1968
Paul Lowe, 1965

Most, Career

- 12,490 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09
- 4,972 Paul Lowe, 1960-68
- 4,297 Marion Butts, 1989-93

Most, Season

- 1,815 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
- 1,683 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2002
- 1,645 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2003

Most, Game

- 243 LaDainian Tomlinson, Dec. 28, 2003 vs. Oak.
- 220 LaDainian Tomlinson, Dec. 1, 2002 vs. Denver
- 217 LaDainian Tomlinson, Sept. 29, 2002 vs. N.E.
Gary Anderson, Dec. 18, 1988 vs. Kansas City

Most Games 100 Yards or More, Career

- 46 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09
- 15 Natrone Means, 1993-99
Paul Lowe, 1960-68
- 12 Ryan Mathews, 2010-14

Most Games 100 Yards or More, Season

- 10 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
- 7 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2002
Don Woods, 1974
- 6 Ryan Mathews, 2013
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2007
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2004
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2003
Natrone Means, 1994

Most Consecutive Games, 100 Yards or More

- 9 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
- 5 Natrone Means, 1994
- 4 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2007

Most Games 200 Yards or More, Career

- 4 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09
- 1 Gary Anderson, 1985-88

Longest Run

- 87t Melvin Gordon, Oct. 29, 2017 at New England
Paul Lowe, Sept. 10, 1961 at Dallas Texans
- 86t Keith Lincoln, Sept. 30, 1962 at Oakland
- 85t LaDainian Tomlinson, Dec. 17, 2006 vs. K.C.

RUSHING TOUCHDOWNS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 3 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2004, 2006, 2007
- 1 Chuck Muncie, 1981
Paul Lowe, 1961, 1965

Most, Career

- 138 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09
- 43 Chuck Muncie, 1980-84
- 38 Paul Lowe, 1960-68

Most, Season

- 28* LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
- 19 Chuck Muncie, 1981
- 18 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2005

Most, Game

- 4 LaDainian Tomlinson, Oct. 14, 2007 vs. Oak.
LaDainian Tomlinson, Nov. 12, 2006 at Cin.
LaDainian Tomlinson, Oct. 15, 2006 at S.F.
Chuck Muncie, Nov. 29, 1981 vs. Denver
Clarence Williams, Sept. 16, 1979 vs. Buffalo
- 3 (22x), Last: M.Gordon, Oct. 15, 2018 at Cle.
- 2 (119x), Last: J.Jackson, Dec. 26, 2021 at Hou.

RUSHING AVERAGE

Most Seasons Leading League (min. 100 att.)

- 2 Paul Lowe, 1960, 1965
- 1 Dickie Post, 1968
Brad Hubbard, 1967
Keith Lincoln, 1963

Highest, Career (minimum 500 att.)

- 4.90 Paul Lowe, 1960-68
- 4.71 Keith Lincoln, 1961-66, '68
- 4.63 Austin Ekeler, 2017-21

Highest, Season (minimum 100 att.)

- 6.45 Keith Lincoln, 1963
- 6.29 Paul Lowe, 1960
- 5.71 Paul Lowe, 1963

Highest, Game (minimum 10 att.)

- 14.7 Michael Turner, Oct. 7, 2007 at Denver
- 13.8 Keith Lincoln, Sept. 30, 1962 at Oakland
- 12.7 Keith Lincoln, Oct. 20, 1963 at Kansas City

RUSHING ATTEMPTS

Most, Career

- 2,880 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09
- 1,059 Melvin Gordon, 2015-19
- 1,031 Marion Butts, 1989-93

Most, Season

- 372 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2002
- 348 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
- 343 Natrone Means, 1994

Most, Game

- 39 LaDainian Tomlinson, Oct. 20, 2002 at Oak.
Marion Butts, Dec. 17, 1989 at Kansas City
- 37 (3x) Last: L.Tomlinson, Nov. 21, 2004 at Oak.
- 36 LaDainian Tomlinson, Sept. 9, 2001 vs. Was.
Gary Brown, Oct. 5, 1997 at Oakland

PASSING ATTEMPTS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 2 Dan Fouts, 1980, 1981
John Hadl, 1968, 1971
- 1 Philip Rivers, 2015

Most, Career

- 7,591 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 5,604 Dan Fouts, 1973-87
- 3,640 John Hadl, 1962-72

Most, Season

- 672 Justin Herbert, 2021
- 661 Philip Rivers, 2015
- 609 Dan Fouts, 1981

Most, Game

- 65 Philip Rivers, Oct. 18, 2015 at Green Bay
- 64 Justin Herbert, Jan. 9, 2022 at Las Vegas (OT)
- 58 Philip Rivers, Oct. 25, 2015 vs. Oakland
Mark Herrmann, Dec. 22, 1985 at K.C.

PASS COMPLETIONS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 2 Dan Fouts, 1980, 1981
John Hadl, 1968, 1971
- 1 Philip Rivers, 2015

Most, Career

- 4,908 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 3,297 Dan Fouts, 1973-1987
- 1,824 John Hadl, 1962-1972

Most, Season

- 443 Justin Herbert, 2021
- 437 Philip Rivers, 2015
- 396 Justin Herbert, 2020

Most, Game

- 43 Philip Rivers, Oct. 18, 2015 at Green Bay
- 38 Philip Rivers, Oct. 25, 2015 vs. Oakland
- 37 Mark Herrmann, Dec. 22, 1985 at K.C.
Dan Fouts, Nov. 18, 1984 vs. Miami (OT)

Most Consecutive

- 25* Philip Rivers, Nov. 25, 2018 vs. Arizona
- 22 Philip Rivers, Sept. 13, 2015 vs. Detroit —
Sept. 20, 2015 at Cincinnati
- 20 Philip Rivers, Sept. 13, 2015 vs. Detroit

COMPLETION PERCENTAGE

Most Seasons Leading League (min. 140 att.)

- 1 Philip Rivers, 2013
Mark Herrmann, 1985
Dan Fouts, 1979
Tobin Rote, 1963

Highest, Career (minimum 500 att.)

- 66.2 Justin Herbert, 2020-21
- 64.7 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 62.2 Drew Brees, 2001-05
- 58.8 Dan Fouts, 1973-87

Highest, Season (minimum 140 att.)

- 69.5 Philip Rivers, 2013
- 68.3 Philip Rivers, 2018
- 66.6 Justin Herbert, 2020

Highest, Game (minimum 20 att.)

- 96.6 Philip Rivers, Nov. 25, 2018 vs. Ari. (28-of-29)
- 90.0 Philip Rivers, Nov. 1, 2012 vs. K.C. (18-of-20)
- 88.0 Drew Brees, Oct. 31, 2004 vs. Oak. (22-of-25)

PASSING YARDS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 4 Dan Fouts, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982
- 3 John Hadl, 1965, 1968, 1971
- 1 Philip Rivers, 2010

Most, Career

- 59,271 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 43,040 Dan Fouts, 1973-87
- 26,938 John Hadl, 1962-72

Most, Season

- 5,014 Justin Herbert, 2021
- 4,802 Dan Fouts, 1981
- 4,792 Philip Rivers, 2015

Most, Game

- 503 Philip Rivers, Oct. 18, 2015 at Green Bay
- 455 Philip Rivers, Sept. 26, 2010 at Seattle
- 444 Dan Fouts, Dec. 11, 1982 at San Francisco
Dan Fouts, Oct. 19, 1980 vs. N.Y. Giants

Most Games 300 Yards or More, Career

- 70 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 51 Dan Fouts, 1973-87
- 17 Justin Herbert, 2020-21

Most Games 300 Yards or More, Season

- 9 Justin Herbert, 2021
- 8 Justin Herbert, 2020
Philip Rivers, 2015, 2019
Dan Fouts, 1980
- 7 Dan Fouts, 1981, 1985

Most Consecutive Games, 300 Yards or More

- 5 Philip Rivers, 2015
- 4 Dan Fouts, 1980-81, 1979
- 3 Justin Herbert, 2021, 2020-21
Philip Rivers, 2017, 2016, 2010-11
Dan Fouts, 1985, 1980
John Hadl, 1967

Most Games 400 Yards or More, Career

- 11 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 6 Dan Fouts, 1973-87
- 1 Jim Harbaugh, 1999-2000

Longest Completion

- 99t* Stan Humphries, Sept. 18, 1994 at Seattle
- 91t Jack Kemp, Nov. 12, 1961 at Denver
- 88t Ed Luther, Dec. 3, 1984 vs. Chicago

TOUCHDOWN PASSES

Most Seasons Leading League

- 2 Dan Fouts, 1981, 1982
John Hadl, 1968, 1971
- 1 Philip Rivers, 2008

Most, Career

- 397 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 254 Dan Fouts, 1973-87
- 201 John Hadl, 1962-72

Most, Season

- 38 Justin Herbert, 2021
- 34 Philip Rivers, 2008
- 33 Philip Rivers, 2016
Dan Fouts, 1981

Most, Game

- 6 Dan Fouts, Nov. 22, 1981 at Oakland
- 5 (4x), Last: Drew Brees, Oct. 31, 2004 vs. Oak.
- 4 (31x), Last: J.Herbert, Oct. 10, 2021 vs. Cle.

Most Consecutive Games

- 28 Philip Rivers, 2012-14
- 27 Philip Rivers, 2017-18
- 23 Philip Rivers, 2009-10
- 21 Justin Herbert, 2020-21

INTERCEPTIONS THROWN

Most Seasons Leading League

- 2 Philip Rivers, 2014, 2016
John Hadl, 1968, 1972

Most, Career

- 242 Dan Fouts, 1973-87
- 211 John Hadl, 1962-72
- 198 Philip Rivers, 2004-19

Most, Season

- 32 John Hadl, 1968
- 26 John Hadl, 1972
- 25 John Hadl, 1971
Jack Kemp, 1960

Most, Game

- 6 Ed Luther, Oct. 31, 1983 vs. Washington
John Hadl, Dec. 8, 1968 vs. Kansas City
- 5 (9x), Last: C.Whelihan, Dec. 13, 1998 at Sea.
- 4 (33x), Last: P.Rivers, Nov. 18, 2019 vs. K.C.

Fewest, Season (minimum 150 att.)

- 3 Ed Luther, 1984 (151 att.)
- 4 Doug Flutie, 2003 (167 att.)
John Friesz, 1993 (238 att.)
- 6 Stan Humphries, 1997 (225 att.)

Most Consecutive Attempts, None Intercepted

- 194 Drew Brees, Oct. 17-Dec. 5, 2004
- 170 Philip Rivers, Nov. 27-Dec. 24, 2011
- 168 Dan Fouts, Sept. 27-Oct. 25, 1981

Lowest Percentage, Season (minimum 150 att.)

- 1.7 Justin Herbert, 2020
Philip Rivers, 2017
John Friesz, 1993
- 1.8 Drew Brees, 2004
- 1.9 Philip Rivers, 2009

PASSER RATING

Most Seasons Leading League (min. 300 att.)

- 1 Philip Rivers, 2008

Highest, Career (minimum 500 att.)

- 97.9 Justin Herbert, 2020-21
- 95.1 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 84.9 Drew Brees, 2001-05

Highest, Season (minimum 300 att.)

- 105.5 Philip Rivers, 2008, 2013, 2018
- 104.8 Drew Brees, 2004
- 104.4 Philip Rivers, 2009

Highest, Game (minimum 20 att.)

- 157.1 Dan Fouts, Sept. 7, 1981 at Cleveland
- 154.4 Philip Rivers, Dec. 8, 2019 at Jacksonville
- 153.1 Drew Brees, Oct. 31, 2004 vs. Oakland

RECEIVING YARDS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 3 Lance Alworth, 1965, 1966, 1968
- 1 Wes Chandler, 1982
John Jefferson, 1980

Most, Career

- 11,841 Antonio Gates, 2003-18
- 9,584 Lance Alworth, 1962-70
- 9,203 Charlie Joiner, 1976-86

Most, Season

- 1,602 Lance Alworth, 1965
- 1,393 Keenan Allen, 2017
- 1,383 Lance Alworth, 1966

Most, Game

- 260 Wes Chandler, Dec. 20, 1982 vs. Cincinnati
- 243 Wes Chandler, Sept. 15, 1985 vs. Seattle
- 232 Lance Alworth, Oct. 20, 1963 at Kansas City

Most Games 100 Yards or More, Career

- 41 Lance Alworth, 1962-70
- 31 Keenan Allen, 2013-21
- 24 Kellen Winslow, 1979-87

Most Games 100 Yards or More, Season

- 9 Lance Alworth, 1965
- 8 Lance Alworth, 1966
- 7 Keenan Allen, 2017
John Jefferson, 1980

Most Consecutive Games, 100 Yards or More

- 5 Lance Alworth, 1966
- 4 Keenan Allen, 2017
Wes Chandler, 1982
John Jefferson, 1979-80
Charlie Joiner, 1976
Lance Alworth, 1968
Lance Alworth, 1965
- 3 Kellen Winslow, 1982
Kellen Winslow, 1980
John Jefferson, 1980
John Jefferson, 1979
Gary Garrison, 1971
Lance Alworth, 1967
Lance Alworth, 1965
Lance Alworth, 1964

Most Games 200 Yards or More, Career

- 5* Lance Alworth, 1962-70
- 2 Wes Chandler, 1981-87
- 1 Malcom Floyd, 2004-15

Longest Reception

- 99t* Tony Martin, Sept. 18, 1994 at Seattle
- 91t Keith Lincoln, Nov. 12, 1961 at Denver
- 88t Bobby Duckworth, Dec. 3, 1984 at Chicago

RECEIVING AVERAGE

Most Seasons Leading League (min. 35 rec.)

- 1 Mike Williams, 2019
Malcom Floyd, 2011
Wes Chandler, 1982
Gary Garrison, 1970
Lance Alworth, 1965

Average per Catch, Career (minimum 250 rec.)

- 19.4 Lance Alworth, 1962-70
- 18.6 Gary Garrison, 1966-76
- 17.5 Vincent Jackson, 2005-11

Average per Catch, Season (minimum 35 rec.)

- 23.2 Lance Alworth, 1965
- 22.9 Gary Garrison, 1970
- 21.2 Gary Garrison, 1968, 1971

Highest, Game (minimum 5 rec.)

- 36.0 Lance Alworth, Nov. 2, 1963 at New York Jets
- 33.6 Lance Alworth, Nov. 15, 1964 at Kansas City
- 32.0 Lance Alworth, Dec. 19, 1965 vs. Oakland

RECEPTIONS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 3 Lance Alworth, 1966, 1968, 1969
- 2 Kellen Winslow, 1980, 1981

Most, Career

- 955 Antonio Gates, 2003-18
- 730 Keenan Allen, 2013-21
- 586 Charlie Joiner, 1976-86

Most, Season

- 106 Keenan Allen, 2021
- 104 Keenan Allen, 2019
- 102 Keenan Allen, 2017

Most, Game

- 16 Keenan Allen, Nov. 22, 2020 vs. N.Y. Jets
- 15 Austin Ekeler, Oct. 6, 2019 vs. Denver
Keenan Allen, Sept. 13, 2015 vs. Detroit
Kellen Winslow, Oct. 7, 1984 at Green Bay
- 14 Keenan Allen, Dec. 2, 2018 at Pittsburgh
Keenan Allen, Oct. 18, 2015 at Green Bay
David Boston, Oct. 5, 2003 at Jacksonville
Kellen Winslow, Dec. 11, 1983 vs. Kansas City

Most Consecutive Games With a Catch

- 96 Lance Alworth, 1962-69
- 80 Antonio Gates, 2003-08
- 78 Charlie Joiner, 1978-84

RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 3 Lance Alworth, 1964, 1965, 1966
- 2 John Jefferson, 1978, 1980
- 1 Tony Martin, 1996
Wes Chandler, 1982

Most, Career

- 116 Antonio Gates, 2003-18
- 81 Lance Alworth, 1962-70
- 58 Gary Garrison, 1966-76

Most, Season

- 14 Tony Martin, 1996
Lance Alworth, 1965
- 13 Antonio Gates, 2004
John Jefferson, 1978, 1980
Lance Alworth, 1964, 1966
- 12 Antonio Gates, 2014
Gary Garrison, 1970

Most, Game

- 5* Kellen Winslow, Nov. 22, 1981 at Oakland
- 4 Lance Alworth, Dec. 1, 1968 at Denver
- 3 (14x) Last: D.Woodhead, Dec. 20, 2015 vs. Mia.

Most Consecutive Games

- 9 Antonio Gates, 2009-10
Lance Alworth, 1963
- 7 Lance Alworth, 1967
- 6 John Jefferson, 1980
Lance Alworth, 1964

SCRIMMAGE YARDS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 2 Lance Alworth, 1965, 1968
- 1 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2003

Most, Career

- 16,445 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09
11,841 Antonio Gates, 2003-18
9,721 Lance Alworth, 1962-70

Most, Season

- 2,370 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2003
2,323 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
2,172 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2002

Most, Game

- 271 LaDainian Tomlinson, Dec. 1, 2002 vs. Den.
261 Melvin Gordon, Nov. 6, 2016 vs. Tennessee
260 LaDainian Tomlinson, Dec. 28, 2003 vs. Oak.
Wes Chandler, Dec. 20, 1982 vs. Cincinnati

Most Games 100 Yards or More, Career

- 79 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09
44 Lance Alworth, 1962-70
32 Keenan Allen, 2013-21

Most Games 100 Yards or More, Season

- 14 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
11 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2003
10 Ryan Mathews, 2011
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2004
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2002

Most Consecutive Games, 100 Yards or More

- 11 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006
6 Melvin Gordon, 2018
Ryan Mathews, 2011
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2007
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2004
5 Natrone Means, 1994
Lydell Mitchell, 1978

Most Games 200 Yards or More, Career

- 12 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09
5 Lance Alworth, 1962-70
2 Lionel James, 1984-88
Wes Chandler, 1981-87

INTERCEPTIONS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 Casey Hayward, 2016
- Eric Weddle, 2011
- Antonio Cromartie, 2007

Most, Career

- 42 Gill Byrd, 1983-92
29 Dick Harris, 1960-65
26 Rodney Harrison, 1994-2002

Most, Season

- 10 Antonio Cromartie, 2007
9 Charlie McNeil, 1961
8 (4x) Last: Ryan McNeil, 2001

Most, Game

- 3 Antonio Cromartie, Nov. 11, 2007 vs. Ind.
Dwayne Harper, Nov. 27, 1995 vs. Oakland
Pete Shaw, Nov. 2, 1980 at Cincinnati
Clarence Duren, Oct. 30, 1977 at Miami
Chris Fletcher, Nov. 30, 1975 at Denver (OT)
Joe Beauchamp, Sept. 24, 1972 vs. Denver
Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, Sept. 25, 1966 at Oak.
Bud Whitehead, Oct. 10, 1965 at Buffalo
Dick Harris, Nov. 17, 1963 at Buffalo
C.McNeil, Sept. 24, 1961 vs. Houston Oilers
C.McNeil, Dec. 18, 1960 vs. Titans of N.Y.
2 (86x) Last: Kyzir White, Oct. 17, 2021 at Bal.

Most Consecutive Games

- 5 Charlie McNeil, 1961
4 Greg Jackson, 1998
Gill Byrd, 1989
Mike Fuller, 1977
Bryant Salter, 1972
3 (18x) Last: Stephen Cooper, 2008

INTERCEPTION RETURN YARDS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 Vencie Glenn, 1987
- Charlie McNeil, 1961

Most, Career

- 546 Gill Byrd, 1983-92
502 Charlie McNeil, 1960-64
477 Kenny Graham, 1964-69

Most, Season

- 349 Charlie McNeil, 1961
224 Stanley Richard, 1994
166 Vencie Glenn, 1987

Most, Game

- 177* C.McNeil, Sept. 24, 1961 vs. Houston Oilers
106 Woodrow Lowe, Nov. 18, 1979 vs. Pittsburgh
103 Vencie Glenn, Nov. 29, 1987 vs. Denver

Longest Return

- 103t Vencie Glenn, Nov. 29, 1987 vs. Denver
102t Donald Frank, Oct. 31, 1993 at L.A. Raiders
100t Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, Oct. 15, 1967 vs. K.C.

INTERCEPTION TOUCHDOWNS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 Clinton Hart, 2005
- Jeffery Dale, 1985
- John Hendy, 1985
- Gill Byrd, 1984
- Woodrow Lowe, 1979
- Fred Dean, 1977
- Leroy Jones, 1977
- Kenny Graham, 1969
- Joe Beauchamp, 1968
- Earl Faison, 1964
- Henry Schmidt, 1964
- Claude Gibson, 1962
- Dick Harris, 1961

Most, Career

- 5 Kenny Graham, 1964-69
Dick Harris, 1960-65
4 Woodrow Lowe, 1976-86
3 Eric Weddle, 2007-15
Joe Beauchamp, 1966-75

Most, Season

- 3 Dick Harris, 1961
2 (9x) Last: Demorrio Williams, 2012
1 (76x) Last: M.Davis and T.Campbell, 2020

Most, Game

- 1 (97x) Last: T.Campbell, Nov. 22, 2020 vs. NYJ

SACKS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 Shawne Merriman, 2006

Most, Career

- 105.5 Leslie O'Neal, 1986-95
69.5 Shaun Phillips, 2004-12
67.0 Gary Johnson, 1975-84

Most, Season

- 17.5 Gary Johnson, 1980
17.0 Shawne Merriman, 2006
Leslie O'Neal, 1992
Steve DeLong, 1969
15.5 Fred Dean, 1978

Most, Game (since 1982)

- 5.0 Leslie O'Neal, Nov. 16, 1986 vs. Dallas
4.0 Antwan Barnes, Dec. 18, 2011 vs. Baltimore
Shaun Phillips, Oct. 3, 2010 vs. Arizona
Leslie O'Neal, Oct. 22, 1995 at Seattle
Leslie O'Neal, Dec. 6, 1992 at Phoenix
Leslie O'Neal, Dec. 22, 1991 vs. Denver
3.5 (3x) Last: Kendall Reyes, Dec. 23, 2012 at NYJ

PUNTS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 Paul Maguire, 1962

Most, Career

- 771 Darren Bennett, 1995-2003
756 Mike Scifres, 2003-15
519 Dennis Pardee, 1968-75

Most, Season

- 95 Darren Bennett, 1998
92 Darren Bennett, 2000
89 Darren Bennett, 1997, 1999

Most, Game

- 11 (5x), Last: D.Bennett, Oct. 11, 1998 at Oak.
10 (10x) Last: D.Kaser, Nov. 12, 2017 at Jax.
9 (14x), Last: D.Kaser, Dec. 24, 2017 at N.Y. Jets

PUNT YARDS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 Paul Maguire, 1962

Most, Career

- 34,152 Mike Scifres, 2003-15
33,776 Darren Bennett, 1995-2003
21,417 Dennis Pardee, 1968-75

Most, Season

- 4,248 Darren Bennett, 2000
4,174 Darren Bennett, 1998
3,972 Darren Bennett, 1997

Most, Game

- 522 Darren Bennett, Oct. 11, 1998 at Oakland
493 Mike Scifres, Nov. 18, 2012 at Denver
492 Dennis Pardee, Nov. 10, 1974 at Kansas City
Longest Punt
82 Paul Maguire, Nov. 19, 1961 vs. Dallas Texans
73 Dennis Pardee, Oct. 17, 1971 at Denver
72 Mike Scifres, Sept. 21, 2014 at Buffalo

PUNTING AVERAGE

Most Seasons Leading League (min. 50 punts)

- 1 Darren Bennett, 2000

Highest, Career (minimum 100 punts)

- 47.4 Drew Kaser, 2016-18
46.5 Ty Long, 2019-21
45.2 Mike Scifres, 2003-15

Highest, Season (minimum 50 punts)

- 48.3 Mike Scifres, 2012
48.1 Drew Kaser, 2017
46.8 Ty Long, 2020

Highest, Game (minimum 4 punts)

- 59.5 Mike Scifres, Oct. 17, 2010 at St. Louis
Darren Bennett, Oct. 1, 1995 at Pittsburgh
57.0 Drew Kaser, Oct. 30, 2016 at Denver
Mike Scifres, Oct. 19, 2014 vs. Kansas City
Darren Bennett, Sept. 17, 2000 at Kansas City
56.7 Darren Bennett, Oct. 6, 1996 at Denver

PUNT RETURN YARDS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1965

Most, Career

- 2,388 Mike Fuller, 1975-80
1,651 Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70
1,407 Darrien Gordon, 1993-96

Most, Season

- 537 Darrien Gordon, 1996
489 Eric Metcalf, 1997
475 Darrien Gordon, 1994

Most, Game

- 168 Eric Metcalf, Nov. 2, 1997 at Cincinnati
136 Mike Fuller, Nov. 21, 1976 at Buffalo
133 Andre Coleman, Sept. 17, 1995 at Philadelphia
Longest Return
95t Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, Nov. 24, 1968 vs. NYJ
90t Darrien Gordon, Sept. 25, 1994 at L.A. Raiders
88t Andre Coleman, Sept. 17, 1995 at Philadelphia
Mike Fuller, Oct. 9, 1977 at New Orleans

PUNT RETURN AVERAGE

Most Seasons Leading League (min. 20 ret.)

- 1 Ron Smith, 1973
Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1965

Highest, Career (minimum 50 ret.)

- 13.7 Darrien Gordon, 1993-96
- 12.0 Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70
- 11.3 Mike Fuller, 1975-80

Highest, Season (minimum 20 ret.)

- 15.5 Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1965
- 14.9 Darrien Gordon, 1996
- 13.8 Desmond King, 2018

PUNT RETURN TOUCHDOWNS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 2 Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1965, 1966
- 1 Desmond King, 2018
Eric Metcalf, 1997
Andre Coleman, 1995
Darrien Gordon, 1994
Nate Lewis, 1990
Kitrick Taylor, 1990
Ron Smith, 1973

Most, Career

- 4 Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70
- 3 Eric Metcalf, 1997
Darrien Gordon, 1993-96
- 2 (5x) Last: Desmond King, 2017-19

Most, Season

- 3 Eric Metcalf, 1997
- 2 (3x) Last: Darrien Gordon, 1994
- 1 (19x) Last: Desmond King, 2019

Most, Game

- 2* Eric Metcalf, Nov. 2, 1997 at Cincinnati
- 1 (25x) Last: D.King, Oct. 6, 2019 vs. Den.

PUNT RETURNS

Most, Career

- 212 Mike Fuller, 1975-80
- 138 Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70
- 124 Lionel James, 1984-88

Most, Season

- 46 Mike Fuller, 1979
- 45 Eric Metcalf, 1997
- 39 Mike Fuller, 1978

Most, Game

- 8 (4x) Last: Leon Johnson, Dec. 7, 2003 at Det.
- 7 (4x) Last: M.Fuller, Dec. 17, 1978 at Houston Oilers
- 6 (9x) Last: J.Herndon, Dec. 20, 2015 vs. Mia.

Most Fair Catches, Season

- 25 Travis Benjamin, 2017
- 24 Kenny Graham, 1969
- 19 Chris Penn, 1999
Darrien Gordon, 1994

Most Fair Catches, Game

- 6 Phil McConkey, Dec. 17, 1989 at Kansas City
- 5 Travis Benjamin, Oct. 22, 2017 vs. Denver
Jeff Graham, Sept. 3, 2000 at Oakland
Kenny Graham, Oct. 4, 1969 vs. Cincinnati

KICKOFF RETURN YARDS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 Ronney Jenkins, 2001
Lionel James, 1984
James Brooks, 1982

Most, Career

- 6,469 Darren Sproles, 2005-10
- 3,997 Ronney Jenkins, 2000-02
- 3,914 Andre Coleman, 1994-96

Most, Season

- 1,541 Ronney Jenkins, 2001
- 1,531 Ronney Jenkins, 2000
- 1,528 Darren Sproles, 2005

Most, Game

- 250 Ronney Jenkins, Nov. 18, 2001 at Oakland
- 221 Ronney Jenkins, Sept. 10, 2000 vs. N.O.
- 215 Richard Goodman, Jan. 1, 2012 at Oakland

Longest Return

- 105t Richard Goodman, Jan. 1, 2012 at Oakland
- 103t Darren Sproles, Sept. 14, 2008 at Denver
Keith Lincoln, Sept. 16, 1962 vs. Titans of N.Y.
- 101t Andre Roberts, Jan. 2, 2022 vs. Denver

KICKOFF RETURN AVERAGE

Most Seasons Leading League (min. 10 ret.)

- 1 Jimmy Warren, 1964

Highest, Career (minimum 75 ret.)

- 25.3 Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70
- 25.1 Darren Sproles, 2005-10
- 24.2 Ronney Jenkins, 2000-02

Highest, Season (minimum 10 ret.)

- 32.8 Andre Roberts, 2021
- 29.7 Antonio Cromartie, 2006
- 28.9 Nasir Adderley, 2020

KICKOFF RETURN TOUCHDOWNS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 2 Anthony Miller, 1988, 1989
- 1 Richard Goodman, 2011
Ronney Jenkins, 2001
Andre Coleman, 1995
Nate Lewis, 1991
Jamie Holland, 1988
Keith Lincoln, 1962

Most, Career

- 4 Andre Coleman, 1994-96
- 3 Ronney Jenkins, 2000-02
- 2 Darren Sproles, 2005-10
Anthony Miller, 1988-93

Most, Season

- 2 Ronney Jenkins, 2001
Andre Coleman, 1995
Andre Coleman, 1994
- 1 (14x) Last: Andre Roberts, 2021

Most, Game

- 1 (20x) Last: A.Roberts, Jan. 2, 2022 vs. Den.

KICKOFF RETURNS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 Lionel James, 1984
James Brooks, 1982

Most, Career

- 258 Darren Sproles, 2005-10
- 166 Andre Coleman, 1994-96
- 165 Ronney Jenkins, 2000-02

Most, Season

- 67 Ronney Jenkins, 2000
- 63 Darren Sproles, 2005
- 62 Andre Coleman, 1995

Most, Game

- 8 (5x) Last: Darren Sproles, Oct. 26, 2008
at N.O. in London
- 7 (13x) Last: D.Sproles, Oct. 19, 2009 vs. Den.
- 6 (36x) Last: R.Goodman, Jan. 1, 2012 at Oak.

COMBINED KICK & PUNT RETURN YARDS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 James Brooks, 1982
Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1965

Most, Career

- 7,404 Darren Sproles, 2005-10
- 5,037 Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70
- 4,240 Andre Coleman, 1994-96

Most, Season

- 1,737 Andre Coleman, 1995
- 1,636 Darren Sproles, 2005
- 1,625 Darren Sproles, 2008

COMBINED KICK & PUNT RETURNS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 1 Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1965

Most, Career

- 372 Darren Sproles, 2005-10
- 289 Mike Fuller, 1975-80
- 272 Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70

Most, Season

- 90 Andre Coleman, 1995
- 81 Darren Sproles, 2005
- 80 Darren Sproles, 2009

SERVICE

Most Seasons

- 17 David Binn, 1994-2010
- 16 Antonio Gates, 2003-18
Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 15 Dan Fouts, 1973-87
Russ Washington, 1968-82
- 14 Don Macek, 1976-89
Doug Wilkerson, 1971-84

Most Games

- 256 David Binn, 1994-10
- 236 Antonio Gates, 2003-18
- 228 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 200 Junior Seau, 1990-2002
Russ Washington, 1968-82

Most Consecutive Games

- 225 Philip Rivers, 2005-19
- 179 David Binn, 1994-10
- 178 Russ Washington, 1968-80

Most Consecutive Starts

- 224 Philip Rivers, 2006-19
- 148 Russ Washington, 1970-80
- 140 Walt Sweeney, 1964-73

TEAM RECORDS

*NFL Record | †strike-shortened 1982 season

GAMES WON

Most, Season

- 14 2006
- 13 2009
- 12 1961, 1979, 2004, 2018

Fewest, Season

- 1 2000
- 2 1973, 1975
- 4 1962, 1972, 1986, 1991, 1997, 2003, 2015

Most Consecutive

- 15 Nov. 27, 1960–Dec. 3, 1961
- 11 (3x) Last: Oct. 25, 2009–Jan. 3, 2010
- 8 (7x) Last: Oct. 25, 2004–Dec. 13, 2004

Most Consecutive at Home

- 10 Nov. 5, 1978–Nov. 25, 1979
- 9 (3x) Last: Sept. 17, 2006–Sept. 9, 2007
- 8 (4x) Last: Sept. 17, 2006–Dec. 31, 2006

Most Consecutive on Road

- 11 Oct. 2, 1960–Nov. 12, 1961
- 6 (4x) Last: Oct. 14, 2018–Dec. 30, 2018
- 5 (5x) Last: Oct. 14, 2018–Dec. 13, 2018

Most Consecutive at Start of Season

- 11 1961
- 6 1994
- 4 1966, 1980, 2002

GAMES LOST

Most, Season

- 15 2000
- 12 1975, 1986, 1991, 1997, 2003, 2015
- 11 1973, 1998, 2001, 2016, 2019

Fewest, Season

- 2 1961, 1965, 2006
- 3 2009, 1963, 1982†
- 4 1960, 1979, 2004

Most Consecutive

- 11 (2x) Last: Sept. 3, 2000–Nov. 19, 2000
- 9 (5x) Last: Dec. 4, 2016–Oct. 1, 2017
- 8 (9x) Last: Dec. 4, 2016–Sept. 24, 2017

Most Consecutive at Home

- 7 Nov. 13, 2016–Oct. 1, 2017
- 6 (2x) Last: Nov. 13, 2016–Sept. 24, 2017
- 5 (10x) Last: Nov. 18, 2019–Sept. 27, 2020

Most Consecutive on Road

- 11 Oct. 6, 1985–Oct. 26, 1986
- 8 (4x) Last: Sept. 3, 2000–Dec. 17, 2000
- 7 (7x) Last: Nov. 10, 2002–Oct. 5, 2003

Most Consecutive on Road w/o Victory (Ties incl.)

- 14 Nov. 22, 1970–Nov. 19, 1972

POINTS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 6 1963, 1965, 1981, 1982, 1985, 2006

Most, Season

- 492 2006
- 478 1981
- 474 2021

Most, Game

- 58 Dec. 22, 1963 vs. Denver
- 55 Nov. 22, 1981 at Oakland
- Oct. 20, 1968 vs. Denver
- 54 Nov. 19, 2017 vs. Buffalo

Most Game, Both Teams

- 98 Dec. 8, 1985 vs. Pittsburgh
- 93 Dec. 18, 1960 vs. Titans of New York
- 90 Nov. 12, 2006 at Cincinnati

Most, Half

- 42 Nov. 12, 2006 at Cincinnati (2nd half)
- 41 Nov. 5, 1961 vs. Titans of N.Y. (2nd half)
- 37 Nov. 19, 2017 vs. Buffalo (1st half)

Most, Quarter

- 28 Nov. 25, 2018 vs. Arizona (2nd quarter)
- Nov. 15, 1964 at K.C. (2nd quarter)
- Nov. 5, 1961 vs. Titans of N.Y. (3rd quarter)
- Sept. 24, 1961 vs. Houston Oilers (2nd quarter)

Most, Quarter, Both Teams

- 41 Nov. 21, 2021 vs. Pittsburgh (4th quarter)
- Oct. 10, 2021 vs. Cleveland (4th quarter)
- 38 Dec. 26, 2021 at Houston (4th quarter)
- Sept. 14, 2008 at Denver (2nd quarter)
- Oct. 19, 1986 at Kansas City (2nd quarter)
- Oct. 6, 1963 at Denver (2nd quarter)
- Oct. 7, 1961 at Boston (2nd quarter)

Fewest, Season

- 188 1973
- 189 1975
- 212 1974

Fewest, Game

- 0 (29x) Last: Dec. 6, 2020 vs. New England

Most Consecutive Games Not Shutout

- 240 Nov. 7, 1999–Nov. 2, 2014
- 114 Oct. 4, 1992–Oct. 24, 1999
- 105 Sept. 7, 1962–Oct. 26, 1969
- 98 Nov. 16, 2014–Nov. 29, 2020

TOUCHDOWNS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 6 1963, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1985, 2006

Most, Season

- 61 1981
- 60 1985
- 59 2006

Most, Game

- 8 Dec. 8, 1985 vs. Pittsburgh
- Nov. 22, 1981 at Oakland
- 7 (9x) Last: Oct. 10, 2021 vs. Cleveland
- 6 (37x) Last: Dec. 8, 2019 at Jacksonville

Fewest, Season

- 22 1973, 1975
- 23 1998
- 25 1977, 1999

POINTS AFTER TOUCHDOWN

Most Seasons Leading League

- 5 1965, 1981, 1982, 1985, 2006

Most, Season

- 58 2006
- 55 1981
- 54 2004

Most, Game

- 7 (7x) Last: Dec. 28, 2008 vs. Denver
- 6 (30x) Last: Dec. 8, 2019 at Jacksonville
- 5 (53x) Last: Nov. 21, 2021 vs. Pittsburgh

Fewest, Season

- 19 1973, 1998
- 20 1975
- 21 1977

TWO-POINT CONVERSIONS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 4 2008, 2010, 2018, 2021

Most, Season

- 7 2021
- 6 2018
- 3 1994

Most, Game (since 1994)

- 2 Dec. 2, 2018 at Pittsburgh
- Sept. 9, 2018 vs. Kansas City
- Oct. 25, 2015 vs. Oakland
- 1 (36x) Last: Jan. 9, 2022 at Las Vegas (OT)

Most Attempts, Season

- 11 2021
- 8 2018
- 7 1994

Most Attempts, Game (since 1994)

- 3 Dec. 26, 2021 at Houston
- Sept. 9, 2018 vs. Kansas City
- Sept. 4, 1994 at Denver
- 2 (6x) Last: Oct. 10, 2021 vs. Cleveland
- 1 (47x) Last: Jan. 9, 2022 at Las Vegas (OT)

FIELD GOALS

Most Seasons Leading League

- 2 1994, 2009

Most, Season

- 34 1994, 2013
- 32 2009
- 31 1993, 1999

Most, Game

- 6 (3x) Last: Oct. 5, 1997 at Oakland
- 5 (11x) Last: Sept. 10, 2012 at Oakland
- 4 (37x) Last: Dec. 27, 2020 vs. Denver

Most Attempts, Season

- 43 2001
- 40 1993
- 38 1994

Most Attempts, Game

- 7 Oct. 8, 1966 at N.Y. Jets
- 6 (6x) Last: Nov. 19, 2017 vs. Buffalo
- 5 (27x) Last: Nov. 3, 2019 vs. Green Bay

Most, Game, Both Teams

- 9 Sept. 29, 1996 vs. Kansas City
- 8 Nov. 3, 1996 at Indianapolis
- Nov. 9, 1975 vs. New England
- 7 (16x) Last: Dec. 27, 2020 vs. Denver

Most Attempts, Game, Both Teams

- 10 (4x) Last: Dec. 12, 1999 vs. Seattle
- 9 (3x) Last: Dec. 1, 2002 vs. Denver
- 8 (23x) Last: Dec. 27, 2020 vs. Denver

Fewest Made, Season

- 6 1974
- 10 1976
- 12 1964, 1970, 1973, 1975

Fewest Attempts, Season

- 16 1974
- 19 1970
- 20 1962, 1976, 1988, 2003

FIRST DOWNS

Most Seasons Leading League (Total)

7 1965, 1969, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985

Most, Season

401 2021
380 1985
379 1981

Most, Game

35 Oct. 19, 1986 at Kansas City
34 Nov. 18, 1984 vs. Miami (OT)
Dec. 20, 1982 vs. Cincinnati
33 Nov. 21, 2021 vs. Pittsburgh
Sept. 9, 2018 vs. Kansas City
Sept. 15, 2013 at Philadelphia
Oct. 31, 2004 vs. Oakland

Most, Game, Both Teams

62 Sept. 15, 1985 vs. Seattle
58 Dec. 29, 2002 vs. Seattle (OT)
Sept. 22, 1985 at Cincinnati
Nov. 18, 1984 vs. Miami (OT)
57 Sept. 18, 2011 at New England
Dec. 11, 1982 at San Francisco

Fewest, Season

198 1973, 1975
208 1961
217 1962

Fewest, Game

3 Nov. 30, 1975 at Denver (OT)
5 Nov. 16, 2003 at Denver
Oct. 5, 1970 vs. Oakland
6 Dec. 24, 2000 vs. Pittsburgh
Nov. 22, 1987 at Seattle

Most Seasons Leading League (Rushing)

3 1963, 1965, 2006

Most by Rushing, Season

137 2006
131 2004
127 1965, 1981

Most by Rushing, Game

19 Nov. 27, 1960 vs. Oakland
18 Oct. 3, 1965 vs. Houston Oilers
17 (3x) Last: Dec. 28, 2008 vs. Denver

Fewest by Rushing, Game

0 Dec. 5, 2010 vs. Oakland
Nov. 14, 1999 at Oakland
1 (17x) Last: Sept. 25, 2016 at Indianapolis
2 (51x) Last: Oct. 27, 2019 at Chicago

Most Seasons Leading League (Passing)

7 1968, 1971, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985

Most by Passing, Season

259 1985
256 2021
244 1980

Most by Passing, Game

27 Sept. 15, 1985 vs. Seattle
26 Oct. 18, 2015 at Green Bay
23 Dec. 20, 1982 vs. Cincinnati
Oct. 19, 1980 vs. N.Y. Giants

Fewest by Passing, Season

89 1975
93 1973
110 1961

Fewest by Passing, Game

0 Sept. 20, 1998 at Kansas City
1 Nov. 30, 1975 at Denver (OT)
2 (3x) Last: Nov. 16, 2003 at Denver

Most Seasons Leading League (Penalty)

2 1960, 1970

Most by Penalty, Season

39 2013, 2019
37 2004, 2014
36 2016, 2020

Most by Penalty, Game

7 Nov. 13, 2016 vs. Tennessee
Nov. 15, 1998 vs. Baltimore
Nov. 30, 1997 vs. Denver
6 (5x) Last: Nov. 30, 2014 at Baltimore
5 (23x) Last: Nov. 21, 2021 vs. Pittsburgh

Fewest by Penalty, Season

11 1975
12 1964
13 1968

NET YARDS GAINED

Most Seasons Leading League

8 1963, 1965, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985, 2010

Most, Season

6,744 1981
6,634 2021
6,535 1985

Most, Game

661 Dec. 20, 1982 vs. Cincinnati
593 Nov. 10, 1985 vs. L.A. Raiders
581 Oct. 20, 1968 vs. Denver

Most, Game, Both Teams

1,102 Dec. 20, 1982 vs. Cincinnati
1,057 Oct. 20, 1968 vs. Denver
1,050 Sept. 15, 2013 at Philadelphia

Fewest, Season

3,411 1975
3,622 1973
3,953 1970

Fewest, Game

70 Nov. 2, 1969 at Denver
93 Oct. 5, 1975 vs. Oakland
96 Nov. 16, 2003 at Denver

Most Total Offensive Plays, Season

1,154 1984
1,135 1980
1,129 1981

Fewest Total Offensive Plays, Season

617 1982†
753 1963
759 1964

RUSHING

Most Seasons Leading League (Attempts)

1 1965

Most Attempts, Season

590 1978
525 2004
522 2006

Most Attempts, Game

58 Nov. 20, 1977 vs. Oakland
53 Dec. 16, 2007 vs. Detroit
Sept. 10, 1978 vs. Oakland
Dec. 3, 1972 vs. Oakland
52 Nov. 27, 1960 vs. Oakland

Fewest Attempts, Season

267 1982†
351 2000
361 1966

Most Seasons Leading League (Yards)

2 1963, 1965

Most Yards, Season

2,578 2006
2,257 1990
2,248 1991

Most Yards, Game

289 Dec. 28, 2008 vs. Denver
287 Oct. 13, 1963 vs. N.Y. Jets
274 Dec. 16, 2007 vs. Detroit

Fewest Yards, Game

2 Dec. 17, 1961 vs. Boston
3 Nov. 19, 1961 vs. Dallas Texans
11 Nov. 20, 1960 vs. Buffalo

Most Seasons Leading League (Touchdowns)

4 1961, 1981, 1982, 2006

Most Touchdowns, Season

32 2006
26 1981
25 1979

Fewest Touchdowns, Season

4 2012, 2015
5 1997
6 2014

Most Touchdowns, Game

5 (4x) Last: Dec. 28, 2008 vs. Denver
4 (22x) Last: Dec. 25, 2009 at Tennessee
3 (48x) Last: Oct. 10, 2021 vs. Cleveland

RUSHING AVERAGE

Most Seasons Leading League

6 1960, 1963, 1965, 1969, 1991, 2003

Most, Season

5.6 1963
5.1 2003
4.9 2006

Highest, Game

8.52 Dec. 24, 1967 vs. N.Y. Jets
8.44 Dec. 22, 1963 vs. Denver
8.26 Nov. 5, 2006 vs. Cleveland

PASSING

Most Seasons Leading League (Attempts)

3 1968, 1984, 1985

Most Attempts, Season

674 2021

667 2015

662 1984

Most Attempts, Game

65 Oct. 18, 2015 at Green Bay

Oct. 19, 1986 at Kansas City

64 Jan. 9, 2022 at Las Vegas (OT)

58 Oct. 25, 2015 vs. Oakland

Dec. 22, 1985 at Kansas City

Fewest Attempts, Season

337 1975

338 1982†

349 1974

Fewest Attempts, Game

6 Dec. 19, 2004 at Cleveland

10 Dec. 18, 1988 vs. Kansas City

11 (2x) Last: Oct. 28, 2007 vs. Houston

Most Seasons Leading League (Completions)

3 1983, 1984, 1985

Most Completions, Season

443 2021

442 2015

413 2020

Most Completions, Game

43 Oct. 18, 2015 at Green Bay

38 Oct. 25, 2015 vs. Oakland

37 (4x) Last: Nov. 22, 2020 vs. N.Y. Jets

Fewest Completions, Game

1 at Kansas City Sept. 20, 1998

3 vs. Oakland Oct. 5, 1975

4 at Cleveland Dec. 19, 2004

vs. Kansas City Nov. 2, 1986

Most Seasons Leading League (Net Yards)

11 1965, 1968, 1971, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985, 2017

Most Net Yards Gained, Season

4,870 1985

4,800 2021

4,739 1981

Most Net Yards Gained, Game

494 Sept. 15, 1985 vs. Seattle

488 Oct. 18, 2015 at Green Bay

486 Dec. 20, 1982 vs. Cincinnati

Fewest Net Yards Gained, Season

1,610 1975

1,808 1973

2,244 1977

Fewest Net Yards Gained, Game

-22 Oct. 5, 1975 vs. Oakland

-19 Sept. 20, 1998 at Kansas City

7 Sept. 16, 1973 at Washington

Most Seasons Leading League (Touchdowns)

5 1971, 1981, 1982, 1985, 2008

Most Touchdowns, Season

38 2021

37 1985

34 1981, 2008

Fewest Touchdowns, Season

7 1975

9 1973

11 1977, 1988, 1998

Most Touchdowns, Game

7* Nov. 22, 1981 at Oakland

5 (9x) Last: Oct. 31, 2004 vs. Oakland

4 (33x) Last: Oct. 10, 2021 vs. Cleveland

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest INTs)

2 1966, 2004

Most Had Intercepted, Season

34 1962, 1998

33 1968, 1983, 1986

30 1964, 1973, 1978, 1985, 2000

Most Had Intercepted, Game

7 Dec. 13, 1998 at Seattle

Dec. 8, 1968 vs. Kansas City

6 (6x) Last: Oct. 24, 1999 vs. Green Bay

5 (14x) Last: Dec. 27, 1987 at Denver

Fewest Had Intercepted, Season

8 2004

9 2006

10 2009, 2020

SACKED ATTEMPTING TO PASS

Most Seasons Leading League (Least Sacked)

5 1963, 1964, 1967, 1968, 2017

Most Times, Season

57 1970

53 2000

51 1997

Fewest Times, Season

11 1967

12 1982†

18 1968, 2017

Most Times Sacked Opponent, Season

62 1986

61 2006

60 1980

Most Times Sacked Opponent, Game

11 Dec. 23, 2012 at N.Y. Jets

Nov. 16, 1986 vs. Dallas

10 Sept. 24, 1978 vs. Green Bay

9 (5x) Last: Dec. 24, 2016 at Cleveland

INTERCEPTIONS

Most Seasons Leading League (Interceptions)

3 1961, 2007, 2016

Most, Season

49* 1961

31 1969

30 1964, 2007

Most, Game

6 (6x) Last: vs. Indianapolis Nov. 11, 2007

5 (9x) Last: vs. Buffalo Nov. 19, 2017

4 (30x) Last: at Indianapolis Nov. 28, 2010

Most, Game, Both Teams

10 Dec. 13, 1998 at Seattle

9 Sept. 21, 1980 at Denver

Nov. 1, 1964 at Oakland

8 (11x) Last: Nov. 11, 2007 vs. Indianapolis

Fewest, Season

7 2014

9 1970

10 2005

Most Seasons Leading League (Return Yards)

2 1961, 1964

Most Yards Returned, Season

929* 1961

562 1979

499 1984

Most Yards Returned, Game

194 Sept. 24, 1961 vs. Houston Oilers

174 Oct. 29, 1961 vs. Denver

171 Nov. 18, 1979 vs. Pittsburgh

Fewest Yards Returned, Season

65 2014

90 1970

123 1999

Most Seasons Leading League (Return TDs)

1 1961

Most Touchdowns by Returns, Season

9* 1961

5 2012

4 1984, 2000

Most Touchdowns by Returns, Game

2 Nov. 28, 2010 at Indianapolis

Oct. 29, 1961 vs. Denver

1 (92x) Last: Nov. 22, 2020 vs. N.Y. Jets

Most Consecutive Games

46* 1960-63

PUNTS

Most, Season

95 1998
92 2000
90 1997

Most, Game

11 (5x) Last: Oct. 11, 1998 at Oakland
10 (11x) Last: Nov. 12, 2017 at Jacksonville
9 (12x) Last: Dec. 24, 2017 at N.Y. Jets

Fewest, Season

23 1982[†]
45 1972
47 2011

Fewest, Game

0 (8x) Last: Sept. 19, 2021 vs. Dallas
1 (37x) Last: Dec. 16, 2021 vs. Kansas City
2 (82x) Last: Sept. 12, 2021 at Washington

Fewest, Game, Both Teams

1 (3x) Last: Sept. 19, 2021 vs. Dallas
2 (9x) Last: Dec. 16, 2021 vs. Kansas City
3 (16x) Last: Sept. 23, 2018 at L.A. Rams

PUNT YARDS

Most Seasons Leading League (Yards)

1 1962

Most, Season

4,248 2000
4,174 1998
3,972 1997

Most, Game

522 Oct. 11, 1998 at Oakland
493 Nov. 18, 2012 at Denver
492 Nov. 10, 1974 at Kansas City

Fewest, Season

868 1982[†]
1,813 1972
2,123 2021

Most Seasons Leading League (Average)

4 1960, 1969, 1987, 2000

Highest Average, Season

48.1 2017
47.5 2011
47.0 2019

Lowest Average, Season

36.3 1978
36.5 1979
36.8 1975

PUNT RETURNS

Most Seasons Leading League (Returns)

1 1965

Most, Season

57 1978
52 1979
49 2003

Most, Game

8 (4x) Last: Dec. 7, 2003 at Detroit
7 (7x) Last: Dec. 7, 1978 at Houston
6 (13x) Last: Dec. 20, 2015 vs. Miami

Fewest, Season

12 1982[†]
18 2021
20 2015

Most Seasons Leading League (Fair Catches)

3 1968, 1969, 1991

Most Fair Catches, Season

32 1969
26 2015, 2017
25 1991, 1999

Most Fair Catches, Game

6 Dec. 17, 1989 at Kansas City
Dec. 4, 1978 vs. Chicago
5 (3x) Last: Sept. 3, 2000 at Oakland
4 (11x) Last: Dec. 24, 2017 at N.Y. Jets

Fewest Fair Catches, Season

0 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1975
1 1976
3 1977

PUNT RETURN YARDS

Most Seasons Leading League (Return Yards)

1 1965

Most, Season

590 1978
559 1996
542 1998

Most, Game

168 Nov. 2, 1997 at Cincinnati
151 Sept. 20, 1965 vs. Kansas City
139 Nov. 5, 1961 vs. Titans of N.Y.

Fewest, Season

84 2015
100 2020
107 2021

Most Seasons Leading League (Average)

3 1965, 1966, 1973

Highest Average, Season

15.5 1961
14.7 1996
13.4 1965

Lowest Average, Season

4.2 2015
5.4 2019
5.6 1970, 2020

PUNT RETURN TOUCHDOWNS

Most Seasons Leading League

7 1965, 1973, 1990, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2018

Most, Season

3 1997
2 1965, 1973, 1990, 1994
1 (16x) Last: 2019

Most, Game

2* Nov. 2, 1997 at Cincinnati
1 (25x) Last: Oct. 26, 2019 vs. Denver

KICKOFF RETURNS

Most Seasons Leading League

2 1982, 2003

Most, Season

84 2003
83 2000
75 1997

Most, Game

9 (7x) Last: Nov. 3, 2002 vs. N.Y. Jets
8 (15x) Last: Oct. 26, 2008 at N.O. in London
7 (51x) Last: Sept. 26, 2010 at Seattle

Most, Game, Both Teams

17 Dec. 8, 1985 vs. Pittsburgh
16 Dec. 18, 1960 vs. Titans of New York
15 (3x) Last: Oct. 2, 1983 at N.Y. Giants

KICKOFF RETURN YARDS

Most Seasons Leading League

1 1962

Most, Season

1,804 2003
1,792 2000
1,716 2001

Most, Game

269 Nov. 18, 2001 at Oakland
242 Oct. 21, 1973 vs. Atlanta
232 Dec. 13, 1964 vs. Kansas City

Fewest, Season

474 2017
508 2016
577 2014

Most Seasons Leading League (Average)

3 1988, 1990, 2001

Highest Average, Season

26.0 2001
25.6 2011
25.5 2007

Lowest Average, Season

16.5 1961
17.5 1986
18.0 1992

KICKOFF RETURN TOUCHDOWNS

Most Seasons Leading League

6 1988, 1989, 1991, 1995, 2001, 2011

Most, Season

2 1988, 1994, 1995, 2001
1 1962, 1985, 1989, 1991, 1997, 2000, 2004,
2007, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2021

Most, Game

1 (20x) Last: Jan. 2, 2022 vs. Denver

PENALTIES

Most Seasons Leading League (Penalties)

3 1960, 1961, 1988

Most, Season

137 1998
129 1997
128 1981

Most, Game

19 Nov. 16, 1997 at Kansas City
16 Nov. 15, 1998 vs. Baltimore
15 Nov. 3, 1997 at Indianapolis

Fewest, Season

63 1969
64 1982[†]
68 1966

Fewest, Game

0 (5x) Last: Oct. 9, 2011 at Denver
1 (28x) Last: Nov. 19, 2017 vs. Buffalo
2 (39x) Last: Dec. 22, 2019 at Oakland

Most Seasons Leading League (Penalty Yards)

3 1960, 1961, 1966

Most Yards, Season

1,229 1998
1,101 1997
1,039 1988

Most Yards, Game

148 Oct. 13, 1963 vs. N.Y. Jets
146 Nov. 15, 1998 vs. Baltimore
Nov. 16, 1997 at Kansas City
138 Nov. 16, 1981 at Seattle

FUMBLES

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Fumbles)

4 1963, 1966, 1993, 2021

Most, Season

44 1985
42 1983
40 1972, 1973, 1980

Most, Game

9 Sept. 24, 1978 vs. Green Bay
7 Sept. 30, 1973 vs. Cincinnati
6 (5x) Last: Dec. 13, 1987 vs. Pittsburgh

Most by Opponent, Game

9 Nov. 15, 1964 at Kansas City
7 (3x) Last: Sept. 9, 2001 vs. Washington
6 (6x) Last: Dec. 9, 1995 vs. Arizona

Most, Game, Both Teams

11 (3x) Last: Oct. 13, 1985 vs. Kansas City
10 (5x) Last: Nov. 25, 1990 vs. Seattle
9 (7x) Last: Sept. 9, 2001 vs. Washington

Fewest, Season

10 2021
13 1993
14 2009, 2013

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Lost Fum.)

5 1963, 1966, 1970, 1979, 1993

Most Lost, Season

22 1980, 1981, 1983
21 1973, 1978
20 1972, 1987, 2000

Most Lost, Game

6 Sept. 24, 1978 vs. Green Bay
4 (10x) Last: Dec. 10, 2000 at Baltimore
3 (40x) Last: Sept. 25, 2016 at Indianapolis

Most Own Recovered, Season

25 1985
21 1979
20 1972, 1973, 1975, 1983

Most Own Recovered, Game

5 (5x) Last: Dec. 26, 1999 vs. Oakland
4 (7x) Last: Sept. 14, 2014 vs. Seattle
3 (42x) Last: Jan. 3, 2016 at Denver

Fewest Own Recovered, Season

3 2021
4 1963, 2013
7 1989, 2009

Most Opponents Recovered, Season

22 1986
18 1973, 1979, 1980, 1981, 2007
17 1960, 1961, 1963, 1983, 1984

Fewest Opponents Recovered, Season

3 2019
4 2011
5 1963

POINTS ALLOWED

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Points)

2 1961, 1963

Most, Season

462 1983
459 2021
441 2003

Most, Game

57 at St. Louis Oct. 1, 2000
52 at Pittsburgh Nov. 25, 1984
51 at Oakland Oct. 29, 1967

Most, Quarter

31 Dec. 8, 1963 at Oakland (4th quarter)
30 Nov. 20, 1983 at St. Louis Cardinals (2nd quarter)
28 (5x) Last: Nov. 28, 1999 at Min. (2nd quarter)

Fewest, Season

205 1977
219 1961
221 1982[†]

Fewest, Game

0 (18x) Last: Oct. 22, 2017 vs. Denver
3 (16x) Last: Nov. 22, 2009 at Denver
6 (19x) Last: Nov. 23, 2017 at Dallas

FIRST DOWNS ALLOWED

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Total)

1 2010

Most, Season

383 2021
365 1981
364 1985

Most, Game

34 Sept. 14, 2008 at Denver
Dec. 29, 2002 vs. Seattle
Nov. 19, 2000 at Denver

33 Sept. 26, 2021 at Kansas City
Sept. 23, 2018 at L.A. Rams
Nov. 23, 2003 vs. Cincinnati

32 Oct. 4, 2009 at Pittsburgh

Fewest, Season

190 1965
196 1982[†]
224 1962

Fewest, Game

5 Dec. 12, 2010 vs. Kansas City
Sept. 19, 1976 at Tampa Bay
6 Oct. 11, 1998 at Oakland
Oct. 22, 1961 at Oakland
7 (5x) Last: Sept. 15, 2002 vs. Houston

Most by Rushing, Season

154 1975
144 2021
143 1971

Most by Rushing, Game

19 (3x) Last: Nov. 22, 1987 at Seattle
17 Sept. 23, 1962 vs. Houston
16 Oct. 16, 1977 vs. New England
Dec. 18, 1966 vs. Kansas City

Fewest by Rushing, Season

54 1965
65 1982
71 1969

Fewest by Rushing, Game

0 (5x) Last: Nov. 28, 2010 at Indianapolis
1 (23x) Last: Nov. 3, 2019 vs. Green Bay
2 (43x) Last: Oct. 4, 2021 vs. Las Vegas

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Passing)

1 2014

Most by Passing, Season

218 1985
216 1981
213 2008

Most by Passing, Game

24 Nov. 19, 2000 at Denver
23 Sept. 18, 2011 at New England
22 (4x) Last: Nov. 15, 2009 vs. Philadelphia

Fewest by Passing, Season

105 1977
114 1971
116 1965

Fewest by Passing, Game

1 (3x) Last: Dec. 28, 2003 vs. Oakland
2 (6x) Last: Dec. 19, 2004 at Cleveland
3 (12x) Last: Sept. 11, 2011 vs. Minnesota

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Penalty)

1 1992

Most by Penalty, Season

41 2000, 2004, 2014
40 2021
35 1981, 1997, 1998

Most by Penalty, Game

7 Nov. 5, 2006 vs. Cleveland
6 (9x) Last: Sept. 24, 2017 vs. Kansas City
5 (23x) Last: Jan. 9, 2022 at Las Vegas (OT)

Fewest by Penalty, Season

12 1982[†]
13 1969, 1992
14 1976

NET YARDS ALLOWED

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Net Yards)

4 1961, 1965, 1998, 2010

Most, Season

6,265 1985
6,136 1981
6,122 2021

Most, Game

614 Oct. 1, 2000 at St. Louis
591 Dec. 29, 2002 vs. Seattle
553 Sept. 22, 1996 at Oakland

Fewest, Season

3,253 1982[†]
3,268 1965
3,652 1977

Fewest, Game

58 Oct. 22, 1961 at Oakland
67 Dec. 12, 2010 vs. Kansas City
99 Nov. 1, 1992 vs. Indianapolis

RUSHING ALLOWED

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Att.)

3 1965, 1979, 2004

Most Attempts, Season

606 1975
559 1973
552 1983

Most Attempts, Game

61 Oct. 25, 1981 at Chicago (OT)
60 Nov. 30, 1975 at Denver (OT)
59 Sept. 18, 1977 at Oakland

Fewest Attempts, Season

230 1982[†]
306 1965
355 2004

Fewest Attempts, Game

9 Dec. 16, 2007 vs. Detroit
Sept. 7, 1986 vs. Miami
10 (2x) Last: Sept. 16, 2012 vs. Tennessee
11 (6x) Last: Nov. 3, 2019 vs. Green Bay

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Yards)

3 1965, 1998, 2005

Most Yards, Season

2,442 1975
2,403 1966
2,361 2021

Most Yards, Game

378 Nov. 4, 2007 at Minnesota
355 Dec. 20, 2014 at San Francisco
328 Nov. 30, 1975 at Denver (OT)

Fewest Yards, Season

961 1982[†]
1,094 1965
1,140 1998

Fewest Yards, Game

2 Oct. 22, 1961 at Oakland
11 Dec. 17, 2000 at Carolina
13 Oct. 5, 1997 at Oakland

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest TDs)

2 1961, 1963

Most Touchdowns, Season

26 1983
25 1971, 1981, 1985
23 1973, 1984

Fewest Touchdowns, Season

7 1961, 1965
8 1999, 2011
10 (12x) Last: 2012

Most Touchdowns, Game

5 Oct. 21, 1973 vs. Atlanta
Sept. 18, 1960 at Houston
4 (11x) Last: Nov. 3, 2013 at Washington
3 (49x) Last: Oct. 17, 2021 at Baltimore

PASSING ALLOWED

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Att.)

2 1966, 2019

Most Attempts, Season

636 1996
607 2002, 2004
605 2008

Most Attempts, Game

61 Sept. 20, 1987 vs. St. Louis
58 (2x) Last: Oct. 3, 2004 vs. Tennessee
57 (2x) Last: Sept. 22, 1996 at Oakland

Fewest Attempts, Season

330 1977
341 1973
342 1982[†]

Fewest Attempts, Game

7 Nov. 6, 1977 at Detroit
12 (2x) Last: Dec. 10, 1972 at Denver
13 (4x) Last: Oct. 4, 1987 at Cincinnati

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Cmp.)

1 1966

Most Completions, Season

411 2008
375 2002
372 2004

Most Completions, Game

40 Dec. 20, 1982 vs. Cincinnati
39 Oct. 3, 2004 vs. Tennessee
37 Oct. 9, 1994 Kansas City

Fewest Completions, Season

170 1966
172 1977
177 1973

Fewest Completions, Game

3 Sept. 19, 1976 at Tampa Bay
5 (5x) Last: Oct. 4, 1987 at Cincinnati
6 (6x) Last: Dec. 28, 2003 vs. Oakland

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Net Yds)

4 1961, 1964, 1965, 2010

Most Net Yards, Season

4,311 1981
4,295 2002
4,293 1985

Most Net Yards, Game

453 Nov. 10, 2002 at St. Louis
451 Oct. 1, 2000 at St. Louis
443 Nov. 19, 2000 at Denver

Fewest Net Yards, Season

1,725 1977
2,155 1966
2,174 1965

Fewest Net Yards, Game

-13 Oct. 4, 1987 at Cincinnati
-4 Sept. 19, 1976 at Tampa Bay
0 Dec. 28, 2003 vs. Oakland
Dec. 6, 1970 vs. Cincinnati

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest TDs)

4 1963, 1965, 1966, 1979

Most Touchdowns, Season

36 2003
33 2000
31 1997

Most Touchdowns, Game

5 (8x) Last: Oct. 4, 2020 at Tampa Bay
4 (30x) Last: Sept. 9, 2018 vs. Kansas City
3 (111x) Last: Dec. 16, 2021 vs. Kansas City

Fewest Touchdowns, Season

10 1982[†]
11 1979
13 1966, 1970, 1974

PUNT RETURNS ALLOWED

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Returns)

7 1960, 1963, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1982, 2004

Most by Opponents, Season

56 1988
51 1996, 2000
49 1998

Fewest by Opponents, Season

7 1982[†]
16 1968
17 1960, 1972

Most Yards by Opponents, Season

722 2000
612 1996
601 1976

Most Yards by Opponent, Game

160 Sept. 13, 2010 at Kansas City
150 Dec. 27, 1987 at Denver
145 Dec. 6, 2020 vs. New England

KICKOFF RETURNS ALLOWED

Most Seasons Leading League (Fewest Returns)

1 1975

Most by Opponent, Season

90 2006
88 1981
87 2009

Fewest by Opponent, Season

21 2016
32 2015
34 2020

Most by Opponent, Game

10 (4x) Last: Dec. 16, 2007 vs. Detroit
9 (7x) Last: Nov. 28, 2010 at Indianapolis
8 (25x) Last: Nov. 24, 2013 at Kansas City

CAREER TOP-10

RUSHING YARDS

1. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09	12,490
2. Paul Lowe, 1960-68	4,972
3. Marion Butts, 1989-93	4,297
4. Melvin Gordon, 2015-19	4,240
5. Ryan Mathews, 2010-14	4,061
6. Natrone Means, 1993-95, 98-99	3,885
7. Chuck Muncie, 1980-84	3,309
8. Don Woods, 1974-80	2,858
9. Austin Ekeler, 2017-22	2,812
10. Keith Lincoln, 1961-66, 68	2,698

RUSHING TOUCHDOWNS

1. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09	138
2. Chuck Muncie, 1980-84	43
3. Paul Lowe, 1960-68	38
4. Melvin Gordon, 2015-19	36
5. Natrone Means, 1993-95, 98-99	34
6. Marion Butts, 1989-93	31
7. Ryan Mathews, 2010-14	23
8. Austin Ekeler, 2017-22	21
9. Mike Tolbert, 2008-11	20
10. Tim Spencer, 1985-90	19

RUSHING ATTEMPTS

1. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09	2,880
2. Melvin Gordon, 2015-19	1,059
3. Marion Butts, 1989-93	1,031
4. Paul Lowe, 1960-68	1,015
5. Natrone Means, 1993-95, 98-99	1,013
6. Ryan Mathews, 2010-14	923
7. Chuck Muncie, 1980-84	773
8. Don Woods, 1974-80	713
9. Austin Ekeler, 2017-22	607
10. Keith Lincoln, 1961-66, 68	573

TOTAL YARDS FROM SCRIMMAGE

1. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09	16,445
2. Antonio Gates, 2003-18	11,841
3. Lance Alworth, 1962-70	9,721
4. Charlie Joiner, 1976-86	9,191
5. Keenan Allen, 2013-22	8,634
6. Gary Garrison, 1966-76	7,562
7. Kellen Winslow, 1979-87	6,741
8. Wes Chandler, 1981-87	6,197
9. Melvin Gordon, 2015-19	6,113
10. Paul Lowe, 1960-68	6,017

PASSING YARDS

1. Philip Rivers, 2004-19	59,271
2. Dan Fouts, 1973-87	43,040
3. John Hadl, 1962-72	26,938
4. Stan Humphries, 1992-97	16,085
5. Drew Brees, 2001-05	12,348
6. Justin Herbert, 2020-22	9,350
7. Jack Kemp, 1960-62	5,996
8. Doug Flutie, 2001-04	4,901
9. John Friesz, 1990-93	4,396
10. Jim Harbaugh, 1999-2000	4,177

TOUCHDOWN PASSES

1. Philip Rivers, 2004-19	397
2. Dan Fouts, 1973-87	254
3. John Hadl, 1962-72	201
4. Stan Humphries, 1992-97	85
5. Drew Brees, 2001-05	80
6. Justin Herbert, 2020-22	69
7. Jack Kemp, 1960-62	37
8. Tobin Rote, 1963-64	29
9. Doug Flutie, 2001-04	25
10. Billy Joe Tolliver, 1989-90	21

PASS ATTEMPTS

1. Philip Rivers, 2004-19	7,591
2. Dan Fouts, 1973-87	5,604
3. John Hadl, 1962-72	3,640
4. Stan Humphries, 1992-97	2,350
5. Drew Brees, 2001-05	1,809
6. Justin Herbert, 2020-22	1,267
7. Jack Kemp, 1960-62	815
8. John Friesz, 1990-93	747
9. Doug Flutie, 2001-04	737
10. Jim Harbaugh, 1999-2000	636

PASS COMPLETIONS

1. Philip Rivers, 2004-19	4,908
2. Dan Fouts, 1973-87	3,297
3. John Hadl, 1962-72	1,824
4. Stan Humphries, 1992-97	1,335
5. Drew Brees, 2001-05	1,125
6. Justin Herbert, 2020-22	839
7. Doug Flutie, 2001-04	408
8. John Friesz, 1990-93	401
9. Jack Kemp, 1960-62	389
10. Jim Harbaugh, 1999-2000	372

PASSES INTERCEPTED

1. Dan Fouts, 1973-87	242
2. John Hadl, 1962-72	211
3. Philip Rivers, 2004-19	198
4. Stan Humphries, 1992-97	73
5. Drew Brees, 2001-05	53
6. Jack Kemp, 1960-62	49
7. Ryan Leaf, 1998-2000	33
8. Tobin Rote, 1963-64	32
9. Craig Whelihan, 1995-98	29
10. Justin Herbert, 2020-22	25

RECEIVING YARDS

1. Antonio Gates, 2003-18	11,841
2. Lance Alworth, 1962-70	9,584
3. Charlie Joiner, 1976-86	9,203
4. Keenan Allen, 2013-22	8,535
5. Gary Garrison, 1966-76	7,533
6. Kellen Winslow, 1979-87	6,741
7. Wes Chandler, 1981-87	6,132
8. Anthony Miller, 1988-93	5,582
9. Malcom Floyd, 2004-15	5,550
10. Vincent Jackson, 2005-11	4,754

RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS

1. Antonio Gates, 2003-18	116
2. Lance Alworth, 1962-70	81
3. Gary Garrison, 1966-76	58
4. Keenan Allen, 2013-22	48
5. Charlie Joiner, 1976-86	47
6. Kellen Winslow, 1979-87	45
7. Wes Chandler, 1981-87	41
8. Vincent Jackson, 2005-11	37
9. Anthony Miller, 1988-93	37
10. John Jefferson, 1978-80	36

RECEPTIONS

1. Antonio Gates, 2003-18	955
2. Keenan Allen, 2013-22	730
3. Charlie Joiner, 1976-86	586
4. Kellen Winslow, 1979-87	541
5. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09	530
6. Lance Alworth, 1962-70	493
7. Gary Garrison, 1966-76	404
8. Ronnie Harmon, 1990-95	377
9. Anthony Miller, 1988-93	374
10. Wes Chandler, 1981-87	373

QUARTERBACK SACKS

1. Leslie O'Neal, 1986, 1988-95	105.5
2. Shaun Phillips, 2004-12	69.5
3. Gary Johnson, 1975-84	67.0
4. Joey Bosa, 2016-22	58.0
5. Lee Williams, 1984-90	65.5
6. Fred Dean, 1975-81	53.5
7. Melvin Ingram, 2012-20	49.0
8. Junior Seau, 1990-2002	47.0
9. Raylee Johnson, 1993-2003	46.0
10. Shawne Merriman, 2005-09	43.5
Leroy Jones, 1976-83	43.5

INTERCEPTIONS

1. Gill Byrd, 1983-92	42
2. Dick Harris, 1960-65	29
3. Rodney Harrison, 1994-2002	26
4. Kenny Graham, 1964-69	25
5. Mike Williams, 1975-82	24
6. Joe Beachamp, 1966-75	23
7. Quentin Jammer, 2002-12	21
Woodrowe Lowe, 1976-86	21
Bob Howard, 1967-74	21
Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70	21

INTERCEPTION RETURN YARDS

1. Gill Byrd, 1983-92	546
2. Charlie McNeil, 1960-64	502
3. Kenny Graham, 1964-69	477
4. Joe Beachamp, 1966-75	433
5. Dick Harris, 1960-65	413
6. Rodney Harrison, 1994-2002	345
7. Woodrowe Lowe, 1976-86	343
8. Darren Carrington, 1991-94	337
9. Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70	322
10. Glen Edwards, 1978-81	309

INTERCEPTION TOUCHDOWNS

1. Kenny Graham, 1964-69	5
Dick Harris, 1960-65	5
Woodrowe Lowe, 1976-86	4
Eric Weddle, 2007-13	3
Joe Beachamp, 1966-75	3
6. Desmond King, 2017-20	2
Shaun Phillips, 2004-12	2
Demorrio Williams, 2012	2
Antonio Cromartie, 2006-09	2
Clinton Hart, 2004-09	2
Donnie Edwards, 2002-06	2
Rodney Harrison, 1994-2002	2
Stanley Richard, 1991-94	2
Donald Frank, 1990-93	2
Gill Byrd, 1983-92	2
Gary Johnson, 1975-84	2
Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70	2
Earl Faison, 1961-66	2
Charlie McNeil, 1960-64	2
Bob Laraba, 1960-61	2

TOUCHDOWNS SCORED

1. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09	153
2. Antonio Gates, 2003-18	116
3. Lance Alworth, 1962-70	83
4. Gary Garrison, 1966-76	58
5. Keenan Allen, 2013-22	49
6. Melvin Gordon, 2015-19	47
Charlie Joiner, 1976-86	47
8. Paul Lowe, 1960-68	46
9. Austin Ekeler, 2017-22	45
Kellen Winslow, 1979-87	45
Chuck Muncie, 1980-84	45

POINTS SCORED

1. John Carney, 1990-2000.....	1,076
2. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09	918
3. Nate Kaeding, 2004-12.....	889
4. Rolf Benirschke, 1977-86.....	766
5. Antonio Gates, 2003-18.....	700
6. Lance Alworth, 1962-70.....	500
7. Nick Novak, 2011-14.....	459
8. Dennis Partee, 1968-75.....	380
9. Gary Garrison, 1966-76.....	348
10. Keenan Allen, 2013-22.....	298

FIELD GOALS

1. John Carney, 1990-2000.....	261
2. Nate Kaeding, 2004-12.....	180
3. Rolf Benirschke, 1977-86.....	146
4. Nick Novak, 2011-14, 17.....	110
5. Dennis Partee, 1968-75.....	71
6. Michael Badgley, 2018-20.....	52
Josh Lambo, 2015-16.....	52
8. George Blair, 1961-64.....	50
9. Steve Christie, 2001-03.....	42
10. Ray Wersching, 1973-76.....	32

FIELD GOAL ATTEMPTS

1. John Carney, 1990-2000.....	320
2. Rolf Benirschke, 1977-86.....	208
3. Nate Kaeding, 2004-12.....	207
4. Nick Novak, 2011-14, 17.....	130
5. Dennis Partee, 1968-75.....	121
6. George Blair, 1961-64.....	80
7. Ray Wersching, 1973-76.....	68
8. Michael Badgley, 2018-20.....	65
9. Josh Lambo, 2015-16.....	64
10. Dick Van Raaphorst, 1966-67.....	61

KICKOFF RETURN YARDS

1. Darren Sproles, 2005-10.....	6,469
2. Ronney Jenkins, 2000-02.....	3,997
3. Andre Coleman, 1994-96.....	3,914
4. Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70.....	3,386
5. James Brooks, 1981-83.....	2,305
6. Kenny Bynum, 1997-2000.....	2,182
7. Lionel James, 1984-88.....	2,094
8. Nate Lewis, 1990-93.....	2,047
9. Artie Owens, 1976-79.....	1,998
10. Tim Dwight, 2001-04.....	1,876

KICKOFF RETURN TOUCHDOWNS

1. Andre Coleman, 1994-96.....	4
2. Ronney Jenkins, 2000-02.....	3
3. Darren Sproles, 2005-10.....	2
Anthony Miller, 1988-93.....	2
5. Andre Roberts, 2021.....	1
Micheal Spurlock, 2012.....	1
Tim Dwight, 2001-04.....	1
Richard Goodman, 2010-11.....	1
Rodney Harrison, 1994-2002.....	1
Nate Lewis, 1990-93.....	1
Jamie Holland, 1987-89.....	1
Gary Anderson, 1985-88.....	1
Keith Lincoln, 1960-66.....	1

KICKOFF RETURNS

1. Darren Sproles, 2005-10.....	258
2. Andre Coleman, 1994-96.....	166
3. Ronney Jenkins, 2000-02.....	165
4. Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70.....	134
5. Kenny Bynum, 1997-2000.....	107
6. James Brooks, 1981-83.....	105
7. Lionel James, 1984-88.....	99
8. Nate Lewis, 1990-93.....	92
9. Artie Owens, 1976-79.....	88
10. Tim Dwight, 2001-04.....	80

PUNT RETURN YARDS

1. Mike Fuller, 1975-80.....	2,388
2. Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70.....	1,651
3. Darrien Gordon, 1993-94, 96.....	1,407
4. Lionel James, 1984-88.....	1,193
5. Darren Sproles, 2005-10.....	935
6. Eric Parker, 2002-06.....	881
7. James Brooks, 1981-83.....	565
8. Tim Dwight, 2001-04.....	508
9. Eric Metcalf, 1997.....	489
10. Desmond King, 2017-20.....	438

PUNT RETURN TOUCHDOWNS

1. Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70.....	4
2. Eric Metcalf, 1997.....	3
Darrien Gordon, 1993-94, 96.....	3
4. Desmond King, 2017-20.....	2
Darren Sproles, 2005-10.....	2
Lionel James, 1984-88.....	2
Mike Fuller, 1975-80.....	2
Ron Smith, 1973.....	2
9. Travis Benjamin, 2017-18.....	1
Micheal Spurlock, 2012.....	1
Tim Dwight, 2001-04.....	1
Andre Coleman, 1994-96.....	1
Nate Lewis, 1990-93.....	1
Kitrick Taylor, 1990-91.....	1
Keith Lincoln, 1961-68.....	1

PUNT RETURNS

1. Mike Fuller, 1975-80.....	212
2. Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1964-70.....	138
3. Lionel James, 1984-88.....	124
4. Darren Sproles, 2005-10.....	114
5. Eric Parker, 2002-06.....	105
6. Darrien Gordon, 1993-94, 96.....	103
7. James Brooks, 1981-83.....	52
8. Tim Dwight, 2001-04.....	46
9. Desmond King, 2017-20.....	45
Eric Metcalf, 1997.....	45

SEASONS

1. David Binn, 1994-10.....	17
2. Philip Rivers, 2004-16.....	16
Antonio Gates, 2003-18.....	16
3. Dan Fouts, 1973-87.....	15
Russ Washington, 1968-82.....	15
6. Doug Wilkerson, 1971-84.....	14
Don Macek, 1976-89.....	14
8. Mike Scifres, 2003-15.....	13
Junior Seau, 1990-2002.....	13
10. Jamal Williams, 1998-2009.....	12

GAMES PLAYED

1. David Binn, 1994-2010.....	256
2. Antonio Gates, 2003-18.....	236
3. Philip Rivers, 2004-19.....	228
4. Junior Seau, 1990-2002.....	200
Russ Washington, 1968-82.....	200
6. Mike Scifres, 2003-15.....	195
Doug Wilkerson, 1971-84.....	195
8. Dan Fouts, 1973-87.....	181
9. Quentin Jammer, 2002-12.....	172
Charlie Joiner, 1976-86.....	164
Woodrow Lowe, 1976-86.....	164

SINGLE-SEASON TOP-10

RUSHING YARDS

1. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006	1,815
2. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2002	1,683
3. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2003	1,645
4. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2007	1,474
5. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2005	1,462
6. Natrone Means, 1994	1,350
7. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2004	1,335
8. Ryan Mathews, 2013	1,255
9. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001	1,236
10. Marion Butts, 1990	1,225

RUSHING TOUCHDOWNS

1. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006	28
2. Chuck Muncie, 1981	19
3. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2005	18
4. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2004	17
5. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2007	15
6. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2002	14
7. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2003	13
8. Austin Ekeler, 2021	12
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2009	12
Natrone Means, 1994	12
Chuck Muncie, 1983	12
Clarence Williams, 1979	12

RUSHING ATTEMPTS

1. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2002	372
2. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006	348
3. Natrone Means, 1994	343
4. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2005	339
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2004	339
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001	339
7. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2007	315
8. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2003	313
9. Earnest Jackson, 1984	296
10. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2008	292

TOTAL YARDS FROM SCRIMMAGE

1. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2003	2,370
2. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006	2,323
3. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2002	2,172
4. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2007	1,949
5. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2005	1,832
6. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2004	1,776
7. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001	1,603
8. Lance Alworth, 1965	1,590
9. Natrone Means, 1994	1,585
10. Melvin Gordon, 2017	1,581

PASSING YARDS

1. Justin Herbert, 2021	5,014
2. Dan Fouts, 1981	4,802
3. Philip Rivers, 2015	4,792
4. Dan Fouts, 1980	4,715
4. Philip Rivers, 2010	4,710
6. Philip Rivers, 2011	4,624
7. Philip Rivers, 2019	4,615
8. Philip Rivers, 2017	4,515
9. Philip Rivers, 2013	4,478
10. Philip Rivers, 2016	4,386

TOUCHDOWN PASSES

1. Justin Herbert, 2021	38
2. Philip Rivers, 2008	34
Philip Rivers, 2016	33
Dan Fouts, 1981	33
5. Philip Rivers, 2018	32
Philip Rivers, 2013	32
7. Justin Herbert, 2020	31
Philip Rivers, 2014	31
9. Philip Rivers, 2010	30
Dan Fouts, 1980	30

PASS ATTEMPTS

1. Justin Herbert, 2021	672
2. Philip Rivers, 2015	661
3. Dan Fouts, 1981	609
4. Justin Herbert, 2020	595
5. Philip Rivers, 2019	591
6. Dan Fouts, 1980	589
7. Philip Rivers, 2011	582
8. Philip Rivers, 2016	578
9. Philip Rivers, 2017	575
10. Philip Rivers, 2014	570

PASS COMPLETIONS

1. Justin Herbert, 2021	443
2. Philip Rivers, 2015	437
3. Justin Herbert, 2020	396
4. Philip Rivers, 2019	390
5. Philip Rivers, 2014	379
6. Philip Rivers, 2013	378
7. Philip Rivers, 2011	366
8. Dan Fouts, 1981	360
Philip Rivers, 2017	360
10. Philip Rivers, 2010	357

PASSES INTERCEPTED

1. John Hadl, 1968	32
2. John Hadl, 1972	26
3. John Hadl, 1971	25
Jack Kemp, 1960	25
5. Dan Fouts, 1980	24
Dan Fouts, 1979	24
John Hadl, 1962	24
8. Dan Fouts, 1986	22
John Hadl, 1967	22
Jack Kemp, 1961	22

RECEIVING YARDS

1. Lance Alworth, 1965	1,602
2. Keenan Allen, 2017	1,393
3. Lance Alworth, 1966	1,383
4. John Jefferson, 1980	1,340
5. Lance Alworth, 1968	1,312
6. Kellen Winslow, 1980	1,290
7. Anthony Miller, 1989	1,252
8. Lance Alworth, 1964	1,235
9. Tony Martin, 1995	1,224
10. Lance Alworth, 1963	1,205

RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS

1. Tony Martin, 1996	14
Lance Alworth, 1965	14
3. Antonio Gates, 2004	13
John Jefferson, 1980	13
John Jefferson, 1978	13
Lance Alworth, 1966	13
Lance Alworth, 1964	13
8. Antonio Gates, 2014	12
Gary Garrison, 1970	12
10. Lance Alworth, 1963	11

RECEPTIONS

1. Keenan Allen, 2021	106
2. Keenan Allen, 2019	104
3. Keenan Allen, 2017	102
4. Keenan Allen, 2020	100
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2003	100
6. Keenan Allen, 2018	97
Austin Ekeler, 2019	92
8. Tony Martin, 1995	90
9. Antonio Gates, 2005	89
Kellen Winslow, 1980	89

QUARTERBACK SACKS (since 1982)

1. Shawne Merriman, 2006	17.0
Leslie O'Neal, 1992	17.0
3. Lee Williams, 1986	15.0
4. Lee Williams, 1989	14.0
5. Leslie O'Neal, 1990	13.5
6. Marcellus Wiley, 2001	13.0
7. Joey Bosa, 2017	12.5
Shawne Merriman, 2007	12.5
Leslie O'Neal, 1995	12.5
Leslie O'Neal, 1994	12.5
Leslie O'Neal, 1989	12.5
Leslie O'Neal, 1986	12.5

INTERCEPTIONS

1. Antonio Cromartie, 2007	10
2. Charlie McNeil, 1961	9
3. Ryan McNeil, 2001	8
Dick Harris, 1963	8
Claude Gibson, 1962	8
Bob Zeman, 1961	8
7. Casey Hayward, 2016	7
Eric Weddle, 2011	7
Darren Carrington, 1993	7
Gill Byrd, 1990	7
Gill Byrd, 1989	7
Gill Byrd, 1988	7
Danny Walters, 1983	7
Bryant Salter, 1972	7
Jim Hill, 1969	7
Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1966	7
Bud Whitehead, 1965	7
Dick Harris, 1961	7

INTERCEPTION RETURN YARDS

1. Charlie McNeil, 1961	349
2. Stanley Richard, 1994	224
3. Vencie Glenn, 1987	166
4. Gill Byrd, 1984	157
5. Jeff Dale, 1986	153
6. Darren Carrington, 1992	152
7. Bob Laraba, 1961	151
8. Woodrow Lowe, 1979	150
9. Antonio Cromartie, 2007	144
10. Dick Harris, 1961	140

INTERCEPTION TOUCHDOWNS

1. Dick Harris, 1961	3
2. Demorrio Williams, 2012	2
Clinton Hart, 2005	2
Stanley Richard, 1994	2
Gill Byrd, 1984	2
Woodrow Lowe, 1979	2
Kenny Graham, 1969	2
Joe Beauchamp, 1968	2
Bob Laraba, 1961	2
Charlie McNeil, 1961	2

TOUCHDOWNS SCORED

1. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006	31
2. Austin Ekeler, 2021	20
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2005	20
4. Chuck Muncie, 1981	19
5. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2007	18
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2004	18
7. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2003	17
8. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2002	15
Lance Alworth, 1964	15
10. Tony Martin, 1996	14
Lance Alworth, 1965	14

POINTS SCORED

1. LaDainian Tomlinson, 2006	186
2. Nate Kaeding, 2009	146
3. Nick Novak, 2013	144
4. Nate Kaeding, 2006	136
5. John Carney, 1994	135
6. Nate Kaeding, 2008	127
7. Austin Ekeler, 2021	124
John Carney, 1993	124
9. Nick Novak, 2011	122
10. Josh Lambo, 2016	120
LaDainian Tomlinson, 2005	120

FIELD GOALS

1. Nick Novak, 2013	34
John Carney, 1994	34
3. Nate Kaeding, 2009	32
4. John Carney, 1999	31
John Carney, 1993	31
6. John Carney, 1996	29
7. Nick Novak, 2011	27
Nate Kaeding, 2008	27
9. Josh Lambo, 2016	26
Josh Lambo, 2015	26
Nate Kaeding, 2006	26
John Carney, 1998	26
John Carney, 1992	26

FIELD GOAL ATTEMPTS

1. John Carney, 1993	40
2. John Carney, 1994	38
3. Nick Novak, 2013	37
4. John Carney, 1999	36
John Carney, 1996	36
Rolf Benirschke, 1980	36
7. Nate Kaeding, 2009	35
8. Nick Novak, 2011	34
9. Michael Badgley, 2020	33
10. Josh Lambo, 2016	32
Josh Lambo, 2015	32
Nate Kaeding, 2008	32
Wade Richey, 2001	32
John Carney, 1992	32
Dennis Partee, 1968	32

KICKOFF RETURN YARDS

1. Ronney Jenkins, 2001	1,541
2. Ronney Jenkins, 2000	1,531
3. Darren Sproles, 2005	1,528
4. Andre Coleman, 1995	1,411
5. Darren Sproles, 2008	1,376
6. Darren Sproles, 2009	1,300
7. Andre Coleman, 1994	1,293
8. Darren Sproles, 2010	1,257
9. Tim Dwight, 2004	1,222
10. Andre Coleman, 1996	1,210

KICKOFF RETURN TOUCHDOWNS

1. Ronney Jenkins, 2001	2
Andre Coleman, 1995	2
Andre Coleman, 1994	2
4. Andre Roberts, 2021	1
Micheal Spurlock, 2012	1
Richard Goodman, 2011	1
Darren Sproles, 2008	1
Darren Sproles, 2007	1
Tim Dwight, 2004	1
Ronney Jenkins, 2000	1
Rodney Harrison, 1997	1
Nate Lewis, 1991	1
Anthony Miller, 1989	1
Jamie Holland, 1988	1
Anthony Miller, 1988	1
Gary Anderson, 1985	1
Keith Lincoln, 1962	1

KICKOFF RETURNS

1. Ronney Jenkins, 2000	67
2. Darren Sproles, 2005	63
3. Andre Coleman, 1995	62
4. Ronney Jenkins, 2001	58
5. Andre Coleman, 1996	55
6. Darren Sproles, 2009	54
7. Darren Sproles, 2008	53
8. Darren Sproles, 2010	51
9. Tim Dwight, 2004	50
Leon Johnson, 2003	50

PUNT RETURN YARDS

1. Darrien Gordon, 1996	537
2. Eric Metcalf, 1997	489
3. Darrien Gordon, 1994	475
4. Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1965	464
5. Mike Fuller, 1979	448
6. Mike Fuller, 1978	436
Mike Fuller, 1976	436
8. Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1967	434
9. Mike Fuller, 1975	410
10. Lionel James, 1987	400

PUNT RETURN TOUCHDOWNS

1. Eric Metcalf, 1997	3
2. Darrien Gordon, 1994	2
Ron Smith, 1973	2
Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1965	2
5. Desmond King, 2019	1
Desmond King, 2018	1
Travis Benjamin, 2017	1
Micheal Spurlock, 2012	1
Darren Sproles, 2009	1
Darren Sproles, 2007	1
Tim Dwight, 2001	1
Darrien Gordon, 1996	1
Andre Coleman, 1995	1
Nate Lewis, 1990	1
Kitrick Taylor, 1990	1
Lionel James, 1987	1
Lionel James, 1984	1
Mike Fuller, 1977	1
Mike Fuller, 1975	1
Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1968	1
Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1966	1
Keith Lincoln, 1961	1

PUNT RETURNS

1. Mike Fuller, 1979	46
2. Eric Metcalf, 1997	45
3. Mike Fuller, 1978	39
4. Eric Parker, 2006	37
5. Darrien Gordon, 1996	36
Darrien Gordon, 1994	36
Mike Fuller, 1975	36
Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, 1967	36
9. Mike Fuller, 1976	33
10. Latario Rachal, 1998	32
Lionel James, 1987	32

CHARGERS AND OPPONENT 10 LONGEST

RUNS FROM SCRIMMAGE

CHARGERS

- 87t Melvin Gordon, Oct. 29, 2017 at New England
- Paul Lowe, Sept. 10, 1961 at Dallas Texans
- 86t Keith Lincoln, Sept. 30, 1962 at Oakland
- 85t LaDainian Tomlinson, Dec. 17, 2006 vs. K.C.
- 83t Michael Turner, Dec. 18, 2005 at Indianapolis
- 80t Brad Hubbert, Dec. 24, 1967 vs. N.Y. Jets
- 76t Keith Lincoln, Oct. 20, 1963 at Kansas City
- 76 LaDainian Tomlinson, Dec. 1, 2002 vs. Den.
- 75 Justin Jackson, Oct. 31, 2021 vs. New England
- 74t Michael Turner, Oct. 7, 2007 at Denver

OPPONENT

- 90t Colin Kaepernick, Dec. 20, 2014 at S.F.
- 89t Kenny King, Oct. 12, 1980 at Oakland
- 84t Damien Williams, Dec. 29, 2019 at K.C.
- 81 Billy Sims, Sept. 30, 1984 vs. Detroit
- 77 Napoleon Kaufman, Sept. 22, 1996 at Oak.
- 74t Jack Spikes, Sept. 10, 1961 at Dallas Texans
- 71t Corey Dillon, Nov. 2, 1997 at Cincinnati
- 69t Kareem Hunt, Sept. 24, 2017 vs. K.C.
- Herman Heard, Oct. 14, 1984 at K.C.
- 68 LeGarette Blount, Oct. 1, 2017 vs. Phi.
- Henry Bell, Oct. 16, 1960 at Denver

PASS COMPLETIONS

CHARGERS

- 99t S.Humphries to T.Martin, Sept. 18, 1994 at Sea.
- 91t J.Kemp to K.Lincoln, Nov. 12, 1961 at Denver
- 88t E.Luther to B.Duckworth, Dec. 3, 1984 vs. Chi.
- 85t J.Hadl to L.Alworth, Oct. 17, 1965 at Boston
- T.Rote to L.Alworth, Oct. 6, 1963 at Denver
- 84t P.Rivers to A.Ekeler, Dec. 8, 2019 at Jax.
- J.Hadl to G.Garrison, Oct. 5, 1968 at N.Y. Jets
- 83t R.Leaf to J.Graham, Nov. 19, 2000 at Denver
- 82t T.Rote to L.Alworth, Dec. 6, 1964 vs. N.Y. Jets
- 81t P.Rivers to D.Sproles, Sept. 20, 2009 vs. Bal.
- D.Fouts to C.Joiner, Oct. 17, 1976 vs. Hou. Oilers

OPPONENT

- 99t T.Green to M.Boerigter, Dec. 22, 2002 at K.C.
- 98t J.Lee to W.Dewveall, Nov. 25, 1962 at Hou. Oilers
- 96t J.Montana to J.Rice, Nov. 27, 1988 vs. S.F.
- 93t C.Morton to S.Watson, Sept. 27, 1981 at Denver
- 90t S.DeBerg to J.Birden, Nov. 18, 1990 at K.C.
- C.Davidson to D.Dorsey, Dec. 2, 1962 vs. Oak.
- 89t N.O'Donnell to D.Stone, Sept. 1, 1991 at Pit.
- 87t D.Carr to A.Cooper, Dec. 31, 2017 vs. Oak.
- J.Namath to D.Maynard, Nov. 24, 1968 vs. N.Y. Jets
- F.Tripucka to A.Frazier, Nov. 12, 1961 at Den.

FIELD GOALS

CHARGERS

- 59 Michael Badgley, Dec. 9, 2018 vs. Cincinnati
- 57 Nate Kaeding, Dec. 21, 2008 at Tampa Bay
- 55 Nate Kaeding, Nov. 29, 2009 vs. Kansas City
- 54 Josh Lambo, Oct. 12, 2015 vs. Pittsburgh
- Nate Kaeding, Oct. 1, 2006 at Baltimore
- John Carney, Sept. 17, 2000 at Kansas City
- John Carney, Sept. 6, 1998 vs. Buffalo
- John Carney, Nov. 10, 1991 vs. Seattle
- 53 Michael Badgley, Oct. 4, 2020 at Tampa Bay
- Nick Novak, Nov. 27, 2011 vs. Denver
- Nate Kaeding, Oct. 17, 2004 at Atlanta
- Steve Christie, Dec. 15, 2002 at Buffalo
- John Carney, Sept. 1, 1996 vs. Seattle
- John Carney, Nov. 24, 1991 at N.Y. Jets
- Chris Bahr, Dec. 24, 1989 vs. Denver
- Rolf Benirschke, Sept. 21, 1980 at Denver

OPPONENT

- 61 Brandon McManus, Jan. 2, 2022 vs. Denver
- 58 Harrison Butker, Sept. 20, 2020 vs. K.C. (OT)
- Harrison Butker, Sept. 20, 2020 vs. K.C. (OT)
- Dan Miller, Dec. 26, 1982 vs. Baltimore Colts
- 56 Greg Zuerlein, Sept. 19, 2021 vs. Dallas
- Justin Tucker, Dec. 22, 2018 vs. Baltimore
- Sebastian Janikowski, Oct. 9, 2016 at Oak.
- 55 Jason Elam, Nov. 7, 1999 vs. Denver
- Gary Anderson, Nov. 25, 1984 at Pittsburgh
- George Blanda, Dec. 3, 1961 vs. Houston Oilers

PUNTS

CHARGERS

- 82 Paul Maguire, Nov. 19, 1961 vs. Dallas Texans
- 73 Dennis Pardee, Oct. 17, 1971 at Denver
- 72 Mike Scifres, Sept. 21, 2014 at Buffalo
- 71 Mike Scifres, Nov. 10, 2011 vs. Oakland
- Mike Scifres, Oct. 1, 2006 at Baltimore
- Mike Scifres, Dec. 4, 2005 vs. Oakland
- Maury Buford, Sept. 12, 1982 at Denver
- John Hadl, Nov. 8, 1964 at Denver
- 70 Mike Scifres, Nov. 25, 2007 vs. Baltimore
- 69 Ty Long, Oct. 17, 2021 at Baltimore
- Drew Kaser, Oct. 22, 2017 vs. Denver
- Drew Kaser, Dec. 18, 2016 vs. Oakland

OPPONENT

- 81 Dustin Colquitt, Dec. 2, 2007 at Kansas City
- 79 Drew Butler, Dec. 9, 2012 at Pittsburgh
- 77 Greg Montgomery, Sept. 19, 1993 vs. Hou. Oilers
- 75 Kevin Huber, Dec. 1, 2013 vs. Cincinnati
- 74 Bob Grupp, Nov. 4, 1979 at Kansas City
- 73 Shane Lechler, Sept. 28, 2003 vs. Oakland
- 72 Ryan Plackemeier, Dec. 24, 2006 at Seattle
- Chris Gardocki, Oct. 26, 1997 vs. Indianapolis
- Bob Scarpitto, Oct. 22, 1967 at Denver
- Jerrel Wilson, Sept. 29, 1963 vs. Kansas City

INTERCEPTION RETURNS

CHARGERS

- 103t Vencie Glenn, Nov. 29, 1987 vs. Denver
- 102t Donald Frank, Oct. 31, 1993 at L.A. Raiders
- 100t Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, Oct. 15, 1967 vs. K.C.
- 99t Shaun Gayle, Dec. 23, 1995 at N.Y. Giants
- Stanley Richard, Sept. 4, 1994 at Denver
- Gill Byrd, Oct. 4, 1984 at Kansas City
- 90t Desmond King, Nov. 23, 2017 at Dallas
- Jahleel Addae, Jan. 1, 2017 vs. Kansas City
- 86 Trevor Williams, Sept. 30, 2018 vs. S.F.
- 83t Willie Clark, Sept. 22, 1996 at Oakland

OPPONENT

- 102t Louis Breeden, Nov. 8, 1981 vs. Cincinnati
- 99t Janoris Jenkins, Nov. 23, 2014 vs. St. Louis
- Kevin Ross, Sept. 6, 1992 vs. Kansas City
- 96t Ray Griffin, Nov. 11, 1979 at Cincinnati
- Bashaud Breeland, Dec. 10, 2017 vs. Was.
- 91t Chad Greenway, Sept. 27, 2015 at Minnesota
- Fred Williamson, Sept. 30, 1962 at Oakland
- 90t Leroy Butler, Sept. 15, 1996 at Green Bay
- Deion Sanders, Dec. 11, 1994 vs. S.F.
- 87t Mark McMillian, Dec. 14, 1997 vs. K.C.
- 83t Leonard Johnson, Nov. 11, 2012 at Tampa Bay

KICKOFF RETURNS

CHARGERS

- 105t Richard Goodman, Jan. 1, 2012 at Oakland
- 103t Darren Sproles, Sept. 14, 2008 at Denver
- Keith Lincoln, Sept. 16, 1962 vs. Titans of N.Y.
- 101t Andre Roberts, Jan. 2, 2022 vs. Denver
- 99t Micheal Spurlock, Dec. 30, 2012 vs. Oakland
- 98t Gary Anderson, Nov. 17, 1985 at Denver
- 95t Nate Lewis, Nov. 17, 1991 vs. New Orleans
- 94t Jamie Holland, Dec. 18, 1988 vs. Kansas City
- 93t Ronney Jenkins, Nov. 18, 2001 at Oakland
- Ronney Jenkins, Sept. 10, 2000 vs. N.O.
- Anthony Miller, Nov. 20, 1988 at L.A. Rams

OPPONENT

- 104t Mecole Hardman, Dec. 29, 2019 at K.C.
- Ira Mathews, Oct. 25, 1979 at Oakland
- 103t Percy Harvin, Sept. 11, 2011 vs. Minnesota
- 101t Leon Washington, Sept. 26, 2010 at Seattle
- Brian Mitchell, Dec. 6, 1998 at Washington
- 99t Leon Washington, Sept. 26, 2010 at Seattle
- Byron Hanspard, Dec. 7, 1997 vs. Atlanta
- 98t Will Blackwell, Dec. 24, 2000 vs. Pittsburgh
- 97t Cassius Vaughn, Jan. 2, 2011 at Denver
- Tim Brown, Sept. 4, 1988 at L.A. Raiders

PUNT RETURNS

CHARGERS

95t Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, Nov. 24, 1968 vs. NYJ
90t Darrien Gordon, Sept. 25, 1994 at L.A. Raiders
88t Andre Coleman, Sept. 17, 1995 at Philadelphia
Mike Fuller, Oct. 9, 1977 at New Orleans
85t Eric Metcalf, Nov. 2, 1997 at Cincinnati
84t Tim Dwight, Sept. 9, 2001 vs. Washington
Ron Smith, Nov. 18, 1973 vs. New Orleans
83t Eric Metcalf, Nov. 30, 1997 vs. Denver
82t Paul Lowe, Oct. 7, 1961 at Boston
81t Darrien Gordon, Sept. 29, 1996 vs. K.C.
Lionel James, Sept. 20, 1987 vs. St. Louis
Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, Sept. 4, 1966 vs. Buf.

OPPONENT

95t Tyreek Hill, Jan. 1, 2017 vs. Kansas City
94t Dexter McCluster, Sept. 13, 2010 at K.C.
92t Rick Upchurch, Oct. 3, 1976 at Denver
91t Tyreek Hill, Sept. 9, 2018 vs. Kansas City
86t Tamarick Vanover, Oct. 9, 1995 at Kansas City
82t George Atkinson, Oct. 13, 1968 at Oakland
82 Ray Buchanan, Nov. 3, 1996 at Indianapolis
81 Dennis Northcutt, Nov. 5, 2006 vs. Cleveland
80t Phillip Buchanon, Dec. 28, 2003 vs. Oakland
79t Lemar Parrish, Dec. 6, 1970 vs. Cincinnati

FUMBLE RETURNS

CHARGERS

86t Eric Weddle, Nov. 30, 2008 vs. Atlanta
82t Donnie Edwards, Nov. 10, 2002 at St. Louis
81t Vencie Glenn, Oct. 22, 1989 vs. N.Y. Giants
79t Marlon McCree, Oct. 29, 2006 vs. St. Louis
78t Paul Bradford, Nov. 23, 1997 at San Francisco
75t Keith Browner (25 yds.) lateral to
Sam Seale(50 yds.), Nov. 20, 1988
at L.A. Rams
61t Tevaughn Campbell, Dec. 5, 2021 at Cincinnati
Caraun Reid, Sept. 25, 2016 at Indianapolis
58t Rick Redman, Oct. 2, 1966 vs. Miami
53t Darrell Stuckey, Dec. 7, 2014 vs. New England
53 Henry Rolling, Oct. 6, 1991 at L.A. Raiders

OPPONENT

68 A.J. Duhe, Oct. 15, 1978 vs. Miami
65t Tony Carter, Oct. 15, 2012 vs. Denver
64t Tyvon Branch, Oct. 10, 2010 at Oakland
63t Joey Browner, Sept. 2, 1984 at Minnesota
63 Rob Ninkovich, Oct. 24, 2010 vs. N.E.
62 Carlton Gray, Oct. 27, 1996 at Seattle
59t George Atkinson, Nov. 25, 1973 at Oakland
56t Ifeadi Odenigbo, Dec. 15, 2019 vs. Minnesota
55t Robert Lyles, Dec. 6, 1987 at Houston
54t Mike Montgomery, Nov. 5, 1972 vs. Dallas

BLOCKED PUNT RETURNS

CHARGERS

35t Bob Zeman, Oct. 7, 1961 at Boston
21t Derrie Nelson, Nov. 13, 1983 vs. Dallas
19 Pete Lazetich, Sept. 24, 1972 vs. Denver
5 Gene Selawski, Oct. 22, 1961 at Oakland
4 Wayne Davis, Nov. 17, 1985 at Denver
3 Steve Heiden, Dec. 17, 2000 at Carolina
0t Jacob Hester, Oct. 25, 2009 at Kansas City
Darryll Lewis, Sept. 26, 1999 vs. Indianapolis
0s Carlos Polk, Sept. 22, 2002 at Arizona
0 Corey Lynch, Sept. 10, 2012 at Oakland

OPPONENT

37t Frank Warren, Nov. 17, 1991 vs. New Orleans
29t Adam Hayward, Nov. 11, 2012 at Tampa Bay
16 Randy McClanahan, Sept. 18, 1977 at Oak.
15 Walt Landers, Sept. 24, 1978 vs. Green Bay
14 Glen Cadrez, Oct. 13, 2002 vs. Kansas City
9 Tyrone Braxton, Oct. 2, 1988 vs. Denver
5t Hiram Eugene, Oct. 10, 2010 at Oakland
2t Jerry Robinson, Nov. 20, 1986 vs. L.A. Raiders
0s Nick Schommer, Oct. 31, 2010 vs. Tennessee
Rock Cartwright, Oct. 10, 2010 at Oakland

BLOCKED FIELD GOAL RETURNS

CHARGERS

72t Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, Nov. 23, 1967 vs. Den.
35 Tom Day, Oct. 15, 1967 vs. Kansas City
28 Jim Tolbert, Nov. 15, 1971 vs. St. Louis
27 Kenny Graham, Nov. 15, 1964 at Kansas City
25 Jeff Staggs, Oct. 25, 1970 vs. Houston Oilers

OPPONENT

66 Tommy Casanova, Sept. 22, 1974 at Cin.
65t Matt Ware, Oct. 23, 2005 at Philadelphia
60 Louis Wright, Nov. 17, 1985 at Denver
54t Doug Evans, Dec. 17, 2000 at Carolina
44t Devin McCourty, Dec. 6, 2020 vs. N.E.
42t Ray McElroy, Oct. 26, 1997 vs. Indianapolis
28 John Barmlett, Nov. 27, 1966 vs. Denver
17 Charlie West, Dec. 5, 1971 vs. Minnesota
Mike Statton, Oct. 1, 1967 vs. Buffalo
16 Daniel Thomas, Oct. 25, 2020 vs. Jax.
Fletcher Smith, Oct. 15, 1967 vs. Kansas City

MISSED FIELD GOAL RETURNS

CHARGERS

109t Antonio Cromartie, Nov. 4, 2007 at Min.

INDIVIDUAL POSTSEASON RECORDS

*NFL Record

SCORING

Most Points, Career

- 42 Nate Kaeding, 2004-09
- 37 Rolf Benirschke, 1977-86
- 30 John Carney, 1990-2000

Most Points, Game

- 15 Michael Badgley, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019, at Baltimore
- 12 (8x) Last: Keenan Allen, AFC Divisional, Jan. 12, 2014 at Denver
- 11 Rolf Benirschke, AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami

Most Touchdowns, Career

- 4 Darren Sproles, 2005-09
- LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09
- Kellen Winslow, 1979-87
- Charlie Joiner, 1976-86
- 3 (4x) Last: Keenan Allen, 2013-21
- 2 (6x) Last: Antonio Gates, 2003-18

Most Touchdowns, Game

- 2 (7x) Last: Keenan Allen, AFC Divisional, Jan. 12, 2014 at Denver
- 1 (52x) Last: Antonio Gates, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England

Most Points After Touchdown, Career

- 18 Nate Kaeding, 2004-09
- Rolf Benirschke, 1977-86
- 9 John Carney, 1990-2000
- 6 George Blair, 1961-64

Most Points After Touchdown, Game

- 6 George Blair, AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston
- 5 Rolf Benirschke, AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami
- 4 (2x) Last: Nate Kaeding, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2008 at Indianapolis

Most Two-Point Conversions, Game

- 1 (4x) Last: Keenan Allen, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England

FIELD GOALS

Most, Career

- 8 Nate Kaeding, 2004-09
- 7 John Carney, 1990-2000
- Rolf Benirschke, 1977-86
- 5 Michael Badgley, 2018

Most, Game

- 5 Michael Badgley, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore
- 4 Nate Kaeding, AFC Championship, Jan. 20, 2008 at New England
- 3 Ben Agajanian, AFL Championship, Jan. 1, 1961 vs. Houston Oilers

Longest

- 54 John Carney, AFC Wild Card, Dec. 31, 1995 vs. Indianapolis
- 53 Michael Badgley, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore
- 47 Michael Badgley, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore

RUSHING

Most Attempts, Career

- 111 Chuck Muncie, 1980-84
- 96 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09
- 63 Natrone Means, 1993-95, 98-99

Most Attempts, Game

- 26 LaDainian Tomlinson, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 8, 2005 vs. New York Jets
- 25 Chuck Muncie, AFC First Round, Jan. 9, 1983 at Pittsburgh
- 24 (2x) Last: Natrone Means, AFC Divisional, Jan. 8, 1995 vs. Miami

Most Yards, Career

- 510 Chuck Muncie, 1980-84
- 380 Paul Lowe, 1960-68
- 327 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09

Most Yards, Game

- 206 Keith Lincoln, AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston
- 165 Paul Lowe, AFL Championship, Jan. 1, 1961 at Houston Oilers
- 139 Natrone Means, AFC Divisional, Jan. 8, 1995 vs. Miami

Most Touchdowns, Career

- 4 LaDainian Tomlinson, 2001-09
- 3 Chuck Muncie, 1980-84
- 2 (5x) Last: Melvin Gordon, 2015-19

Most Touchdowns, Game

- 1 (24x) Last: Melvin Gordon, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England

Longest Run

- 67t Keith Lincoln, AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston
- 58t Ronnie Brown, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 5, 2014 at Cincinnati
- Paul Lowe, AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston
- 56t Keith Lincoln, AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston

PASSING

Most Attempts, Career

- 355 Philip Rivers 2004-19
- 286 Dan Fouts 1973-87
- 228 Stan Humphries 1992-97

Most Completions, Career

- 211 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 159 Dan Fouts, 1973-1987
- 118 Stan Humphries, 1992-97

Highest Completion Pct., Career (min. 40 att.)

- 73.8 Drew Brees, 2001-04
- 59.4 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 55.6 Dan Fouts, 1973-87

Most Attempts, Game

- 53 Dan Fouts, AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 51 Philip Rivers, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England
- 49 Stan Humphries, Super Bowl XXIX, Jan. 29, 1995 vs. San Francisco

Most Completions, Game

- 33 Dan Fouts, AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 31 Drew Brees, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 8, 2005 vs. New York Jets
- 28 (2x) Last: Stan Humphries, AFC Wild Card, Dec. 31, 1995 vs. Ind.

Highest Completion Pct, Game (min. 10 att.)

- 75.0 Philip Rivers, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 5, 2014 at Cincinnati
- 73.8 Drew Brees, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 8, 2005 vs. New York Jets
- 73.7 Philip Rivers, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2008 at Indianapolis

Most Yards, Career

- 2,656 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 2,125 Dan Fouts, 1973-87
- 1,347 Stan Humphries, 1992-97

Most Yards, Game

- 433 Dan Fouts, AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 336 Dan Fouts, AFC Championship, Jan. 11, 1981 vs. Oakland
- 333 Dan Fouts, AFC First Round, Jan. 9, 1983 at Pittsburgh

Most Touchdowns, Career

- 14 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 12 Dan Fouts, 1973-87
- 6 Stan Humphries, 1992-97

Most Touchdowns, Game

- 3 (5x) Last: Philip Rivers, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England
- 2 (6x) Last: Philip Rivers, AFC Divisional, Jan. 12, 2014 at Denver
- 1 (9x) Last: Philip Rivers, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 5, 2014 at Cincinnati

Highest Passer Rating, Career (min. 40 att.)

- 101.2 Drew Brees, 2001-04
- 84.2 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 76.3 Tobin Rote, 1963-64

Highest Passer Rating, Game (min. 10 att.)

- 145.3 Tobin Rote, AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston
- 133.2 Philip Rivers, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2008 at Indianapolis
- 132.1 John Had, AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston

Most Games 300 Yards or More, Career

- 5 Dan Fouts, 1973-87
- 2 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 1 Drew Brees, 2001-04

Most Games 400 Yards or More, Career

- 1 Dan Fouts, 1973-87

Longest Completion

- 62t Philip Rivers, AFC Divisional, Jan. 11, 2009 at Pittsburgh
- 58 Philip Rivers, AFC Divisional, Jan. 14, 2007 vs. New England
- 56t Philip Rivers, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2008 at Indianapolis

Most Interceptions, Career

- 16 Dan Fouts, 1973-87
- 13 Stan Humphries, 1992-97
- 10 Philip Rivers, 2004-19

Most Interceptions, Game

- 5 Dan Fouts, AFC Second Round, Jan. 16, 1983 at Miami
- Dan Fouts, AFC Divisional, Dec. 29, 1979 vs. Houston Oilers
- 4 (3x) Last: Stan Humphries, AFC Wild Card, Dec. 31, 1995 vs. Indianapolis
- 2 (9x) Last: Philip Rivers, AFC Divisional, Jan. 17, 2010 vs. New York Jets

RECEIVING

Most Receptions, Career

- 51 Antonio Gates, 2003-18
- 39 Ronnie Harmon, 1990-95
- 30 Charlie Joiner, 1976-86

Most Receptions, Game

- 13 Kellen Winslow, AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 10 Ronnie Harmon, AFC Wild Card, Dec. 31, 1995 vs. Indianapolis
- 9 (4x) Last: Eric Parker, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 8, 2005 vs. New York Jets

Most Yards, Career

- 540 Antonio Gates, 2003-18
- 539 Charlie Joiner, 1976-86
- 503 Vincent Jackson, 2005-09

Most Yards, Game

- 166 Kellen Winslow, AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 142 Keenan Allen, AFC Divisional, Jan. 12, 2014 at Denver
- 133 Ronnie Harmon, AFC Wild Card, Dec. 31, 1995 vs. Indianapolis

Most Touchdowns, Career

- 4 Kellen Winslow, 1979-87
- Charlie Joiner, 1976-86
- 3 (2x) Last: Keenan Allen, 2013-21
- 2 (6x) Last: Antonio Gates, 2003-18

Most Touchdowns, Game

- 2 (4x) Last: Keenan Allen, AFC Divisional, Jan. 12, 2014 at Denver
- 1 (30x) Last: K.Allen, V.Green and A.Gates, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at N.E.

SCRIMMAGE YARDS

Most, Career

- 644 Chuck Muncie, 1980-84
- 540 Antonio Gates, 2003-18
- 539 Charlie Joiner, 1976-86

Most, Game

- 329 Keith Lincoln, AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston
- 187 LaDainian Tomlinson, AFC Divisional, Jan. 14, 2007 vs. New England
- 170 Paul Lowe, AFL Championship, Jan. 1, 1961 at Houston Oilers

INTERCEPTIONS

Most Interceptions, Career

- 3 Drayton Florence, 2003-07
- Glen Edwards, 1978-81
- 2 (5x) Last: Quentin Jammer, 2002-09
- 1 (20x) Last: Adrian Phillips, 2014-19

Most Interceptions, Game

- 2 (4x) Last: Glen Edwards, AFC Divisional, Jan. 3, 1981 vs. Buffalo
- 1 (28x) Last: Adrian Phillips, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore

Most Interception Return Yards, Career

- 62 Glen Edwards, 1978-81
- 45 Bud Whitehead, 1961-68
- 40 Darren Carrington, 1991-94

Most Interception Return Yards, Game

- 45 Bud Whitehead, AFL Championship Dec. 24, 1961 vs. Houston Oilers
- 40 Darren Carrington, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 12, 1993 vs. Kansas City
- 35 Bruce Laird, AFC First Round, Jan. 9, 1983 at Pittsburgh
- Glen Edwards, AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)

Longest Interception Return

- 40 Darren Carrington, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 12, 1993 vs. Kansas City
- 30 Shareece Wright, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 5, 2014 at Cincinnati
- Antonio Cromartie, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2008 at Indianapolis
- 24 Quentin Jammer, AFC Divisional, Jan. 17, 2010 vs. New York Jets

SACKS

Most, Career (since 1982)

- 3.0 Shawn Lee, 1992-95
- 2.5 Leslie O'Neal, 1992-95
- 2.0 Melvin Ingram, 2012-20
- Eric Weddle, 2007-15
- Luis Castillo, 2005-11
- Shawne Merriman, 2005-10
- Raylee Johnson, 1993-2003
- Burt Grossman, 1989-93

Most, Game (since 1982)

- 2.5 Leslie O'Neal, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 2, 1993 vs. Kansas City
- 2.0 (6x) Last: Melvin Ingram, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore
- 1.5 Steve Foley, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 8, 2005 vs. New York Jets

PUNTING

Most Punts, Career

- 52 Mike Scifres, 2003-13
- 13 John Kidd, 1990-94
- 11 Bryan Wagner, 1994

Most Punts, Game

- 7 Mike Scifres, AFC Divisional, Jan. 14, 2007 vs. New England
- John Kidd, AFC Divisional, Jan. 10, 1993 at Miami
- 6 (7x) Last: Donnie Jones, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England
- 5 (5x) Last: Donnie Jones, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore

Most Yards, Career

- 2,330 Mike Scifres, 2003-13
- 589 John Kidd, 1990-94
- 474 Bryan Wagner, 1994

Most Yards, Game

- 324 John Kidd, AFC Divisional, Jan. 10, 1993 at Miami
- 316 Mike Scifres, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 3, 2009 vs. Indianapolis (OT)
- 297 Mike Scifres, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 17, 2010 vs. New York Jets

Longest Punt

- 67 Mike Scifres, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 3, 2009 vs. Indianapolis (OT)
- 66 Mike Scifres, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2008 at Indianapolis
- 65 Darren Bennett, AFC Wild Card, Dec. 31, 1995 vs. Indianapolis

Highest, Career (minimum 4 punts)

- 45.3 John Kidd, 1990-94
- 44.8 Mike Scifres, 2003-13
- 43.9 John Hadl, 1962-72

Highest, Game (minimum 2 punts)

- 59.0 Mike Scifres, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2008 at Indianapolis
- 54.5 Darren Bennett, AFC Wild Card, Dec. 31, 1995 vs. Indianapolis
- 52.7 Mike Scifres, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 3, 2009 vs. Indianapolis (OT)

PUNT RETURNS

Most Returns, Career

- 12 Darren Sproles, 2005-09
- 8 Mike Fuller, 1975-80
- 7 Eric Parker, 2002-06

Most Returns, Game

- 5 Eric Parker, AFC Divisional, Jan. 14, 2007 vs. New England
- 4 (2x) Last: Desmond King, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore
- 3 (6x) Last: Darren Sproles, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 3, 2009 vs. Indianapolis (OT)

Most Yards, Career

- 107 Darren Sproles, 2005-09
- 99 Mike Fuller, 1975-80
- 63 Wes Chandler, 1981-87

Most Yards, Game

- 72 Darren Sproles, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 3, 2009 vs. Indianapolis (OT)
- 56 Wes Chandler, AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 46 Desmond King, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore

Longest Return

- 56t Wes Chandler, AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 33 Desmond King, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore

Most Touchdowns, Career

- 1 Wes Chandler, 1981-87

KICKOFF RETURNS

Most Returns, Career

- 21 Darren Sproles, 2005-09
- Andre Coleman, 1994-96
- 17 James Brooks, 1981-83
- 8 Hank Bauer, 1977-82

Most Returns, Game

- 8 Andre Coleman, Super Bowl XXIX, Jan. 29, 1995 vs. San Francisco
- 6 Andre Coleman, AFC Wild Card, Dec. 31, 1995 vs. Indianapolis
- 5 (4x) Last: Desmond King, AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England

Most Yards, Career

- 537 Darren Sproles, 2005-09
- 483 Andre Coleman, 1994-96
- 276 James Brooks, 1981-83

Most Yards, Game

- 242 Andre Coleman, Super Bowl XXIX, Jan. 29, 1995 vs. San Francisco
- 164 Darren Sproles, AFC Divisional, Jan. 11, 2009 at Pittsburgh
- 147 Leslie "Speedy" Duncan, AFL Championship, Dec. 26, 1964 at Buffalo

Longest Return

- 98t Andre Coleman, Super Bowl XXIX, Jan. 29, 1995 vs. San Francisco
- 72 Desmond King, AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore
- 63 Darren Sproles, AFC Divisional, Jan. 11, 2009 at Pittsburgh

Most Touchdowns, Career

- 1 Andre Coleman, 1994-96

SERVICE

Most Games

- 12 Antonio Gates, 2003-18
- David Binn, 1994-2010
- 11 Philip Rivers, 2004-19
- 10 Nick Hardwick, 2004-13
- Mike Scifres, 2004-13

TEAM POSTSEASON RECORDS

*NFL Record

POINTS

Most, Quarter

- 24 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (1st Q)
- 21 AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston (1st Q)
- 17 AFC Divisional, Jan. 12, 2014 at Den. (4th Q)

Most, Quarter, Opponent

- 21 AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England (2nd Q)
- AFC Divisional, Jan. 10, 1993 at Mia. (2nd Q)
- AFC Championship, Jan. 11, 1981 vs. Oakland (1st Q)
- 20 AFC Second Round, Jan. 16, 1983 at Miami (2nd Q)

Most Quarter, Both Teams

- 33 AFC Second Round, Jan. 16, 1983 at Miami (2nd Q)
- 28 (4x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 11, 2009 at Pittsburgh (4th Q)
- 25 AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Bal. (4th Q)

Most, Game

- 51 AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston
- 41 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 31 AFC First Round, Jan. 9, 1983 at Pittsburgh
- 49 Super Bowl XXIX, Jan. 29, 1995 vs. S.F.
- 41 AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England
- 38 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)

Most, Game, Opponent

- 79 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 75 Super Bowl XXIX, Jan. 29, 1995 vs. S.F.
- 69 AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England

Fewest, Game

- 0 AFC Divisional, Jan. 10, 1993 at Miami
- AFL Championship, Dec. 26, 1965 vs. Buffalo
- 3 AFL Championship, Dec. 24, 1961 vs. Houston Oilers
- 7 (2x) Last: AFC Championship, Jan. 10, 1982 at Cincinnati

Fewest, Game, Opponent

- 0 AFC Wild Card, Jan. 2, 1993 vs. Kansas City
- 6 AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2008 vs. Tennessee
- 10 (3x) Last: AFC Wild Card, Jan. 5, 2014 at Cincinnati

Fewest, Game, Both Teams

- 13 AFL Championship, Dec. 24, 1961 vs. Houston Oilers
- 17 AFC Wild Card, Jan. 2, 1993 vs. Kansas City
- 23 (2x) Last: AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2008 vs. Tennessee

TOUCHDOWNS

Most, Game

- 7 AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston
- 5 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 4 (3x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England

Most, Game, Opponent

- 7 Super Bowl XXIX, Jan. 29, 1995 vs. S.F.
- 5 (4x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England
- 4 (4x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 10, 1993 at Miami

Most, Game, Both Teams

- 10 Super Bowl XXIX, Jan. 29, 1995 vs. S.F.
- AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 9 AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England
- 8 (3x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 11, 2009 at Pittsburgh

POINTS AFTER TOUCHDOWN

Most, Game

- 6 AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston
- 5 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 4 (2x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2008 at Indianapolis

Most, Game, Opponent

- 7 Super Bowl XXIX, Jan. 29, 1995 vs. S.F.
- 5 (4x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England
- 4 (4x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 10, 1993 at Miami

Most, Game, Both Teams

- 10 Super Bowl XXIX, Jan. 29, 1995 vs. S.F.
- AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 8 (2x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 11, 2009 at Pittsburgh
- 7 (5x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England

Most Two-Point Conversions, Game

- 2 Super Bowl XXIX, Jan. 29, 1995 vs. S.F.

Most Two-Point Conversions, Game, Opponent

- 1 AFC Divisional, Jan. 14, 2007 vs. N.E.

FIELD GOALS

Most, Game

- 5 AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore
- 3 AFL Championship, Jan. 1, 1961 at Houston Oilers
- 2 (6x) Last: AFC Wild Card, Jan. 5, 2014 at Cincinnati

Most, Game, Opponent

- 4 AFC Championship, Jan. 20, 2008 at N.E.
- 3 (2x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 14, 2007 at New England
- 2 (7x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England

Most, Game, Both Teams

- 6 AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore
- 4 (3x) Last: AFC Championship, Jan. 20, 2008 at New England
- 3 (7x) Last: AFC Wild Card, Jan. 5, 2014 at Cincinnati

FIRST DOWNS

Most, Game

- 33 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 29 AFC First Round, Jan. 9, 1983 at Pittsburgh
- 28 AFC Divisional, Jan. 8, 1995 vs. Miami

Most, Game, Opponent

- 30 AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England
- 29 AFC Second Round, Jan. 16, 1983 at Miami
- 28 Super Bowl XXIX, Jan. 29, 1995 vs. S.F.

Most, Game, Both Teams

- 58 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 55 AFC First Round, Jan. 9, 1983 at Pittsburgh
- 52 AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England

Fewest, Game

- 10 AFC Divisional, Jan. 10, 1993 at Miami
- 12 AFL Championship, Dec. 26, 1965 vs. Buffalo
- 13 (2x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 12, 2014 at Denver

Fewest, Game, Opponent

- 11 AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore
- 14 (3x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 17, 2010 vs. New York Jets
- 15 (2x) Last: AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2008 vs. Tennessee

Fewest, Game, Both Teams

- 25 AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore
- 26 AFL Championship, Dec. 26, 1965 vs. Buffalo
- 28 AFC Divisional, Jan. 10, 1993 at Miami

FIRST DOWNS RUSHING

Most, Game

- 12 AFC Divisional, Jan. 14, 2007 at N.E.
- AFC Divisional, Jan. 8, 1995 vs. Miami
- 11 (5x) Last: AFC Wild Card, Jan. 3, 2009 vs. Indianapolis (OT)
- 10 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)

Most, Game, Opponent

- 15 AFC Second Round, Jan. 16, 1983 at Miami
- 13 (2x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 12, 2014 at Denver
- 12 (2x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 11, 2009 at Pittsburgh

Most, Game, Both Teams

- 20 AFC Second Round, Jan. 16, 1983 at Miami
- 19 (2x) Last: AFC Wild Card, Jan. 5, 2014 at Cincinnati
- 17 (3x) Last: AFC Championship, Jan. 20, 2008 at New England

Fewest, Game

- 1 (2x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 12, 2014 at Denver
- 2 (2x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England
- 3 (2x) Last: AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore

Fewest, Game, Opponent

- 2 AFC Divisional, Jan. 8, 1995 vs. Miami
- 3 (3x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 14, 2007 at New England
- 4 (5x) Last: AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore

Fewest, Game, Both Teams

- 7 AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore
- 8 (3x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 17, 2010 vs. New York Jets
- 9 AFL Championship, Dec. 26, 1965 vs. Buffalo

FIRST DOWNS PASSING

Most, Game

- 21 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 20 AFC Wild Card, Dec. 31, 1995 vs. Indianapolis
- 19 AFC First Round, Jan. 9, 1983 at Pittsburgh

Most, Game, Opponent

- 21 AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2008 at Indianapolis
- AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 20 AFC Wild Card, Jan. 5, 2014 at Cincinnati
- 19 AFC First Round, Jan. 9, 1983 at Pittsburgh

Most, Game, Both Teams

- 42 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 38 AFC First Round, Jan. 9, 1983 at Pittsburgh
- 35 AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2008 at Indianapolis

Fewest, Game

- 7 (5x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 10, 1993 at Miami
- 8 (3x) Last: AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore
- 9 (4x) Last: AFC Wild Card, Jan. 5, 2014 at Cincinnati

Fewest, Game, Opponent

- 5 AFC Divisional, Dec. 29, 1979 vs. Houston Oilers
- 6 AFC Divisional, Jan. 17, 2010 vs. N.Y. Jets
- 7 AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore

Fewest, Game, Both Teams

- 15 (2x) Last: AFC Wild Card, Jan. 6, 2019 at Baltimore
- 16 (3x) Last: AFC Divisional, Jan. 10, 1993 at Miami
- 17 (2x) Last: AFC Wild Card, Jan. 2, 1993 vs. K.C.

TOTAL NET YARDS GAINED

Most, Game

- 601 AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston
- 564 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 479 AFC First Round, Jan. 9, 1983 at Pittsburgh

Most, Game, Opponent

- 498 AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England
- 466 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 449 Super Bowl XXIX, Jan. 29, 1995 vs. S.F.

Most, Game, Both Teams

- 1,030 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 901 AFC First Round, Jan. 9, 1983 at Pittsburgh
- 862 AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston

NET YARDS GAINED RUSHING

Most, Game

- 309 AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston
- 202 AFC Wild Card, Jan. 8, 1995 vs. Miami
- 196 AFC Wild Card, Jan. 5, 2014 at Cincinnati

Most, Game, Opponent

- 219 AFL Championship, Dec. 26, 1964 vs. Buffalo
- 214 AFC Second Round, Jan. 16, 1983 at Miami
- 178 AFC Wild Card, Dec. 31, 1995 vs. Indianapolis

Most, Game, Both Teams

- 384 AFL Championship, Jan. 5, 1964 vs. Boston
- 343 AFL Championship, Dec. 26, 1964 vs. Buffalo
- 323 AFC Wild Card, Dec. 31, 1995 vs. Indianapolis

NET YARDS GAINED PASSING

Most, Game

- 415 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 351 AFC Championship, Jan. 11, 1981 vs. Oakland
- 333 AFC First Round, Jan. 9, 1983 at Pittsburgh

Most, Game, Opponent

- 402 AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2008 at Indianapolis
- 388 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 349 AFC Championship, Jan. 15, 1995 at Pit.

Most, Game, Both Teams

- 803 AFC Divisional, Jan. 2, 1982 at Miami (OT)
- 714 AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2008 at Indianapolis
- 659 AFC Divisional, Jan. 13, 2019 at New England



LAST WEEK'S
GAME BOOK

National Football League Game Summary

NFL Copyright © 2022 by The National Football League. All rights reserved. This summary and play-by-play is for the express purpose of assisting media in their coverage of the game; any other use of this material is prohibited without the written permission of the National Football League.

Date: Friday, 8/26/2022

Los Angeles Chargers at New Orleans Saints

Start Time: 7:07 PM CDT

at Caesars Superdome, New Orleans, LA

Game Day Weather

Game Weather: Fair

Temp: 83° F (28.3° C) Humidity: 73%, Wind: SW 8 mph

Played Closed Stadium on Turf: UBU Speed Series S5

Outdoor Weather: Fair, Wind Chill: 91

Officials

Referee: Clark, Land (130)
Line Judge: Bolinger, Brian (40)
Back Judge: Meyer, Greg (78)

Umpire: King, Paul (121)
Field Judge: Banks, Michael (72)
Replay Official: Campbell, Randy (0)

Down Judge: Stephan, Tom (68)
Side Judge: Pender, Dominique (114)

Lineups

Los Angeles Chargers

New Orleans Saints

Offense		Defense	
TE	88 T.McKitty	CB	38 B.Sebastian
LT	74 S.Norton	DB	36 J.Taylor
LG	64 B.Jaimes	OLB	44 J.Davis
C	76 W.Clapp	DL	96 B.Fehoko
RG	77 Z.Johnson	DL	95 C.Covington
RT	79 T.Pipkins	OLB	51 E.Egbule
WR	82 D.Carter	LB	42 T.Reeder
WR	15 J.Guyton	LB	31 N.Niemann
QB	4 C.Daniel	S	41 R.Layne
FB	45 Z.Horvath	S	22 J.Woods
RB	34 L.Rountree	CB	37 K.Hall

Offense		Defense	
WR	1 M.Callaway	LB	55 K.Elliss
WR	80 J.Landry	DE	98 P.Turner
LT	70 T.Penning	DT	99 S.Tuttle
LG	75 A.Peat	DT	93 D.Onyemata
C	78 E.McCoy	DE	94 C.Jordan
RG	51 C.Ruiz	LB	56 D.Davis
RT	71 R.Ramczyk	LB	58 E.Wilson
TE	81 N.Vannett	S	6 M.Maye
TE	83 J.Johnson	FS	32 T.Mathieu
QB	2 J.Winston	CB	21 B.Roby
RB	41 A.Kamara	DB	35 V.Gray

Substitutions

Substitutions

QB 2 E.Stick, K 6 D.Hopkins, WR 11 J.Moore, P 16 J.Scott, RB 25 J.Kelley, RB 35 L.Brown, CB 39 M.Jacquet, RB 39 K.Marks, FB 40 G.Nabers, DB 46 B.DeLuca, LS 47 J.Harris, LB 50 C.Christiansen, OLB 54 C.Kemp, LB 57 A.Ogbongbemiga, LB 58 T.Maddox-Williams, G 67 R.Hunter, G 68 J.Salyer, T 73 F.Sarell, T 78 Z.Bailey, WR 83 M.Bandy, TE 84 E.Krommenhoek, WR 86 T.Bradford, TE 87 H.Kampmoyer, DL 90 A.Brown, DL 92 J.Gaziano, DL 93 O.Ogbonnia

K 3 W.Lutz, P 4 B.Gillikin, RB 5 M.Ingram, WR 10 T.Smith, WR/RS 11 D.Harty, WR 12 C.Olave, QB 14 A.Dalton, QB 16 I.Book, DB 22 C.Gardner-Johnson, S 25 D.Sorensen, CB 26 P.Williams, S 30 J.Evans, RB 33 A.Smith, RB 34 T.Jones, DB 37 B.Allen, DB 39 D.Fields, CB 43 Q.Meeks, TE 44 L.Krull, LB 45 N.Sewell, FB 46 A.Prentice, LB 47 J.Bostic, DB 48 J.Gray, LS 49 Z.Wood, LB 50 A.Dowell, LB 53 Z.Baun, DE 54 T.Charlton, DT 57 J.Black, DT 59 J.Jackson, DE 60 N.Lalos, OL 62 D.Kelly, OL 64 D.Schweiger, OT 65 K.Washington, OL 66 L.Kidd, G 68 J.Andrews, C 72 N.Martin, OL 76 C.Throckmorton, WR 84 D.Dixon, WR 85 K.Merritt, WR 87 K.Baker, TE 88 J.Holtz, DE 90 T.Kpassagnon, DT 91 K.Street, DT 95 A.Huggins, DL 97 M.Roach

Did Not Play

Did Not Play

S 3 D.James, WR 5 J.Palmer, TE 7 G.Everett, OLB 8 K.Van Noy, LB 9 K.Murray, QB 10 J.Herbert, WR 12 J.Reed, WR 13 K.Allen, CB 23 B.Callahan, S 24 N.Adderley, CB 26 A.Samuel, CB 27 J.Jackson, RB 28 I.Spiller, DB 29 M.Webb, RB 30 A.Ekeler, S 32 A.Gilman, DB 33 D.Leonard, TE 41 S.Surratt, CB 43 M.Davis, LB 49 D.Tranquill, OLB 52 K.Mack, DL 56 M.Fox, C 63 C.Linsley, DL 69 S.Joseph, T 70 R.Slater, G 71 M.Feiler, WR 81 M.Williams, TE 89 D.Parham, OLB 94 C.Rumph, OLB 97 J.Bosa, DL 98 A.Johnson, DL 99 J.Tillery

TE 7 T.Hill, WR 13 M.Thomas, LB 20 P.Werner, CB 23 M.Lattimore, RB 24 D.Washington, CB 27 A.Taylor, CB 29 P.Adebo, LB 40 C.Hansen, T 67 L.Young, OL 74 J.Hurst, TE 82 A.Trautman, WR/RS 89 R.Shaheed, DE 92 M.Davenport, DE 96 C.Granderson

Not Active

Not Active

Field Goals (made () & missed)

	D.Hopkins	(51) 50WL	W.Lutz	(47) (29)				
			1	2	3	4	OT	Total
VISITOR:	Los Angeles Chargers		0	10	0	0	0	10
HOME:	New Orleans Saints		14	3	7	3	0	27

Scoring Plays

Team	Qtr	Time	Play Description (Extra Point) (Drive Info)	Visitor	Home
Saints	1	9:19	M.Ingram 1 yd. run (W.Lutz kick) (9-75, 5:41)	0	7
Saints	1	2:15	M.Ingram 2 yd. run (W.Lutz kick) (9-62, 4:51)	0	14

National Football League Game Summary

NFL Copyright © 2022 by The National Football League. All rights reserved. This summary and play-by-play is for the express purpose of assisting media in their coverage of the game; any other use of this material is prohibited without the written permission of the National Football League.

Chargers	2	11:55	L.Rountree 1 yd. run (D.Hopkins kick) (10-75, 5:20)	7	14
Chargers	2	0:57	D.Hopkins 51 yd. Field Goal (14-56, 6:59)	10	14
Saints	2	0:00	W.Lutz 47 yd. Field Goal (8-46, 0:57)	10	17
Saints	3	10:30	K.Merritt 9 yd. pass from I.Book (W.Lutz kick) (6-24, 3:06)	10	24
Saints	4	2:29	W.Lutz 29 yd. Field Goal (16-77, 8:58)	10	27
Paid Attendance: 69,089				Time: 2:44	

Los Angeles Chargers vs New Orleans Saints
8/26/2022 at Caesars Superdome

Final Individual Statistics

Los Angeles Chargers

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LG	TD
J.Kelley	6	40	6.7	15	0
L.Rountree	6	12	2.0	5	1
L.Brown	3	7	2.3	3	0
C.Daniel	1	7	7.0	7	0
Z.Horvath	1	1	1.0	1	0
D.Carter	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0
K.Marks	1	-2	-2.0	-2	0
Total	19	64	3.4	15	1

PASSING	ATT	CMP	YDS	SK/YD	TD	LG	IN	RT
E.Stick	17	9	74	0/0	0	19	0	64.3
C.Daniel	11	10	113	1/12	0	38	0	109.5
Total	28	19	187	1/12	0	38	0	86.5

PASS RECEIVING	TAR	REC	YDS	AVG	LG	TD
M.Bandy	5	3	30	10.0	15	0
T.Bradford	3	3	23	7.7	12	0
J.Guyton	2	2	48	24.0	38	0
H.Kampmoyer	2	2	29	14.5	22	0
L.Rountree	2	2	12	6.0	7	0
E.Krommenhoek	4	1	19	19.0	19	0
Z.Horvath	1	1	8	8.0	8	0
T.McKitty	1	1	8	8.0	8	0
G.Nabers	1	1	8	8.0	8	0
L.Brown	2	1	2	2.0	2	0
J.Kelley	1	1	1	1.0	1	0
D.Carter	1	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0
J.Moore	3	0	0	0.0	0	0
Total	28	19	187	9.8	38	0

INTERCEPTIONS	NO	YDS	AVG	LG	TD
Total	0	0	0	0	0

PUNTING	NO	YDS	AVG	NET	TB	IN20	LG
J.Scott	4	183	45.8	45.8	0	2	55
Total	4	183	45.8	45.8	0	2	55

PUNT RETURNS	NO	YDS	AVG	FC	LG	TD
M.Bandy	0	0	0.0	1	0	0
T.Bradford	0	0	0.0	2	0	0
Total	0	0	0.0	3	0	0

KICKOFF RETURNS	NO	YDS	AVG	FC	LG	TD
M.Bandy	1	25	25.0	0	25	0
[TOUCHBACK]	4	0	0.0	0	0	0
Total	1	25	25.0	0	25	0

New Orleans Saints

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LG	TD
I.Book	7	50	7.1	30	0
A.Smith	13	35	2.7	6	0
M.Ingram	9	34	3.8	9	2
T.Jones	8	23	2.9	5	0
A.Kamara	2	19	9.5	13	0
Total	39	161	4.1	30	2

PASSING	ATT	CMP	YDS	SK/YD	TD	LG	IN	RT
I.Book	15	11	81	1/8	1	16	0	107.9
A.Dalton	5	5	73	0/0	0	24	0	118.8
J.Winston	4	4	59	0/0	0	20	0	118.8
Total	24	20	213	1/8	1	24	0	117.5

PASS RECEIVING	TAR	REC	YDS	AVG	LG	TD
M.Callaway	4	4	65	16.3	24	0
K.Merritt	4	4	32	8.0	16	1
L.Krull	5	4	24	6.0	9	0
J.Landry	2	2	35	17.5	20	0
T.Jones	2	2	12	6.0	8	0
C.Olave	1	1	19	19.0	19	0
A.Smith	1	1	16	16.0	16	0
A.Kamara	1	1	5	5.0	5	0
D.Dixon	1	1	5	5.0	5	0
A.Prentice	1	0	0	0.0	0	0
Total	22	20	213	10.7	24	1

INTERCEPTIONS	NO	YDS	AVG	LG	TD
Total	0	0	0	0	0

PUNTING	NO	YDS	AVG	NET	TB	IN20	LG
B.Gillikin	3	117	39.0	39.0	0	2	45
Total	3	117	39.0	39.0	0	2	45

PUNT RETURNS	NO	YDS	AVG	FC	LG	TD
M.Callaway	0	0	0.0	1	0	0
D.Harty	0	0	0.0	3	0	0
Total	0	0	0.0	4	0	0

KICKOFF RETURNS	NO	YDS	AVG	FC	LG	TD
[TOUCHBACK]	3	0	0.0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Los Angeles Chargers

FUMBLES	FUM	LOST	OWN-REC	YDS	TD	FORCED	OPP-REC	YDS	TD	OUT-BDS
H.Kampmoyer	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

New Orleans Saints

FUMBLES	FUM	LOST	OWN-REC	YDS	TD	FORCED	OPP-REC	YDS	TD	OUT-BDS
J.Evans	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
D.Sorensen	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	17	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	17	0	0

Los Angeles Chargers vs New Orleans Saints
8/26/2022 at Caesars Superdome

Final Team Statistics

	Visitor Chargers	Home Saints
TOTAL FIRST DOWNS	11	22
By Rushing	3	11
By Passing	7	11
By Penalty	1	0
THIRD DOWN EFFICIENCY	4-12-33.3%	9-14-64.3%
FOURTH DOWN EFFICIENCY	1-1-100.0%	0-0-0.0%
TOTAL NET YARDS	239	366
Total Offensive Plays (inc. times thrown passing)	48	64
Average gain per offensive play	5.0	5.7
NET YARDS RUSHING	64	161
Total Rushing Plays	19	39
Average gain per rushing play	3.4	4.1
Tackles for a loss-number and yards	3-4	3-8
NET YARDS PASSING	175	205
Times thrown - yards lost attempting to pass	1-12	1-8
Gross yards passing	187	213
PASS ATTEMPTS-COMPLETIONS-HAD INTERCEPTED	28-19-0	24-20-0
Avg gain per pass play (inc.# thrown passing)	6.0	8.2
KICKOFFS Number-In End Zone-Touchbacks	3-3-3	5-4-4
PUNTS Number and Average	4-45.8	3-39.0
Had Blocked	0	0
FGs - PATs Had Blocked	0-0	0-0
Net Punting Average	45.8	39.0
TOTAL RETURN YARDAGE (Not Including Kickoffs)	0	0
No. and Yards Punt Returns	0-0	0-0
No. and Yards Kickoff Returns	1-25	0-0
No. and Yards Interception Returns	0-0	0-0
PENALTIES Number and Yards	5-40	8-52
FUMBLES Number and Lost	1-1	0-0
TOUCHDOWNS	1	3
Rushing	1	2
Passing	0	1
EXTRA POINTS Made-Attempts	1-1	3-3
Kicking Made-Attempts	1-1	3-3
FIELD GOALS Made-Attempts	1-2	2-2
RED ZONE EFFICIENCY	1-1-100%	3-4-75%
GOAL TO GO EFFICIENCY	1-1-100%	2-3-67%
SAFETIES	0	0
FINAL SCORE	10	27
TIME OF POSSESSION	24:05	35:55

Los Angeles Chargers vs New Orleans Saints
8/26/2022 at Caesars Superdome

Ball Possession And Drive Chart

Los Angeles Chargers

#	Time Recd	Time Lost	Time Poss	How Ball Obtained	Drive Began	# Play	Yds Gain	Yds Pen	Net Yds	1st Down	Last Scrm	How Given Up
1	9:19	7:06	2:13	Kickoff	LAC 27	3	-5	0	-5	0	LAC 22	Punt
2	2:15	11:55	5:20	Kickoff	LAC 25	10	83	-8	75	5	* NO 1	Touchdown
3	7:56	0:57	6:59	Punt	LAC 11	14	81	-25	56	3	NO 33	Field Goal
4	15:00	13:36	1:24	Kickoff	LAC 25	3	15	0	15	0	LAC 33	Fumble
5	10:30	9:00	1:30	Kickoff	LAC 25	4	15	0	15	1	LAC 40	Punt
6	4:39	0:43	3:56	Punt	LAC 42	8	31	-5	26	1	NO 32	Missed FG
7	13:31	11:27	2:04	Punt	LAC 15	5	17	0	17	1	LAC 32	Punt
8	2:29	1:50	0:39	Kickoff	LAC 25	3	2	0	2	0	LAC 27	Punt

(195) Average LAC 24

New Orleans Saints

#	Time Recd	Time Lost	Time Poss	How Ball Obtained	Drive Began	# Play	Yds Gain	Yds Pen	Net Yds	1st Down	Last Scrm	How Given Up
1	15:00	9:19	5:41	Kickoff	NO 25	9	90	-15	75	6	* LAC 1	Touchdown
2	7:06	2:15	4:51	Punt	NO 38	9	62	0	62	5	* LAC 2	Touchdown
3	11:55	7:56	3:59	Kickoff	NO 25	6	43	-10	33	1	LAC 42	Punt
4	0:57	0:00	0:57	Kickoff	NO 25	8	46	0	46	3	LAC 29	Field Goal
5	13:36	10:30	3:06	Fumble	LAC 24	6	34	-10	24	2	* LAC 9	Touchdown
6	9:00	4:39	4:21	Punt	NO 14	6	13	-10	3	1	NO 17	Punt
7	0:43	13:31	2:12	Missed FG	NO 41	3	4	-5	-1	0	NO 40	Punt
8	11:27	2:29	8:58	Punt	NO 13	16	77	0	77	4	* LAC 10	Field Goal
9	1:50	0:00	1:50	Punt	NO 31	3	-3	0	-3	0	NO 29	End of Game

(288) Average NO 32

* inside opponent's 20

Time of Possession by Quarter

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Visitor Los Angeles Chargers	4:28	10:04	6:50	2:43		24:05
Home New Orleans Saints	10:32	4:56	8:10	12:17		35:55

Kickoff Drive No.-Start Average

Chargers: 5 - LAC 25 Saints: 3 - NO 25

Los Angeles Chargers vs New Orleans Saints
8/26/2022 at Caesars Superdome

Final Defensive Statistics

Los Angeles Chargers	Regular Defensive Plays											Special Teams					Misc				
	TKL	AST	COMB	SK	/ YDS	TFL	Q	IN	PD	FF	FR	TKL	AST	FF	FR	BL	TKL	AST	FF	FR	
C.Christiansen	6	3	9	1	8	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Taylor	4	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B.DeLuca	4	3	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
R.Layne	3	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B.Sebastian	2	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K.Hall	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Woods	3	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A.Ogbongbemiga	3	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C.Kemp	0	4	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C.Covington	0	4	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N.Niemann	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Gaziano	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A.Brown	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
T.Maddox-Williams	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B.Fehoko	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
T.Reeder	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E.Egbule	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M.Jacquet	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Davis	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E.Stick	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	40	33	73	1	8	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

TKL = Tackle AST = Assist COMB = Combined QH=QB Hit IN = Interception PD = Pass Defense FF = Forced Fumble FR = Fumble Recovery

Los Angeles Chargers vs New Orleans Saints
8/26/2022 at Caesars Superdome

First Half Summary

PERIOD SCORES

Chargers 0 10 = 10
 Saints 14 3 = 17

TIME OF POSSESSION

Chargers 14:32
 Saints 15:28

Scoring Plays

Team	Qtr	Time	Play Description (Extra Point) (Drive Info)	Visitor	Home
Saints	1	9:19	M.Ingram 1 yd. run (W.Lutz kick) (9-75, 5:41)	0	7
Saints	1	2:15	M.Ingram 2 yd. run (W.Lutz kick) (9-62, 4:51)	0	14
Chargers	2	11:55	L.Rountree 1 yd. run (D.Hopkins kick) (10-75, 5:20)	7	14
Chargers	2	0:57	D.Hopkins 51 yd. Field Goal (14-56, 6:59)	10	14
Saints	2	0:00	W.Lutz 47 yd. Field Goal (8-46, 0:57)	10	17

	Los Angeles Chargers	New Orleans Saints
TOTAL FIRST DOWNS	8	15
First Downs Rushing-Passing-by Penalty	3 - 4 - 1	8 - 7 - 0
THIRD DOWN EFFICIENCY	4-6-66.7%	2-3-66.7%
TOTAL NET YARDS	159	241
Total Offensive Plays	26	31
NET YARDS RUSHING	58	84
NET YARDS PASSING	101	157
Gross Yards Passing	113	157
Times thrown-yards lost attempting to pass	1-12	0-0
Pass Attempts-Completions-Had Intercepted	11 - 10 - 0	14 - 12 - 0
Punts-Number and Average	1 - 40.0	1 - 31.0
Penalties-Number and Yards	4 - 35	4 - 27
Fumbles-Number and Lost	0 - 0	0 - 0
Red Zone Efficiency	1-1-100%	2-2-100%
Average Drive Start	LAC 21	NO 28

Los Angeles Chargers

New Orleans Saints

RUSHING						RUSHING					
	ATT	YDS	AVG	LG	TD		ATT	YDS	AVG	LG	TD
J.Kelley	6	40	6.7	15	0	M.Ingram	9	34	3.8	9	2
L.Rountree	6	12	2.0	5	1	I.Book	2	21	10.5	16	0
C.Daniel	1	7	7.0	7	0	A.Kamara	2	19	9.5	13	0
D.Carter	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0	T.Jones	4	10	2.5	5	0
Total	14	58	4.1	15	1	Total	17	84	4.9	16	2

PASSING										PASSING									
	ATT	CMP	YDS	SK/YD	TD	LG	IN	RT		ATT	CMP	YDS	SK/YD	TD	LG	IN	RT		
C.Daniel	11	10	113	1/12	0	38	0	109.5	A.Dalton	5	5	73	0/0	0	24	0	118.8		
									I.Book	5	3	25	0/0	0	16	0	72.9		
									J.Winston	4	4	59	0/0	0	20	0	118.8		
Total	11	10	113	1/12	0	38	0	109.5	Total	14	12	157	0/0	0	24	0	113.4		

PASS RECEIVING								PASS RECEIVING							
	TAR	REC	YDS	AVG	LG	TD		TAR	REC	YDS	AVG	LG	TD		
J.Guyton	2	2	48	24.0	38	0	M.Callaway	4	4	65	16.3	24	0		
L.Rountree	2	2	12	6.0	7	0	J.Landry	2	2	35	17.5	20	0		
H.Kampmoyer	1	1	22	22.0	22	0	L.Krull	3	2	13	6.5	8	0		
M.Bandy	1	1	15	15.0	15	0	C.Olave	1	1	19	19.0	19	0		
Z.Horvath	1	1	8	8.0	8	0	K.Merritt	1	1	16	16.0	16	0		
T.McKitty	1	1	8	8.0	8	0	A.Kamara	1	1	5	5.0	5	0		
J.Kelley	1	1	1	1.0	1	0	T.Jones	1	1	4	4.0	4	0		
D.Carter	1	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0									
J.Moore	1	0	0	0.0	0	0									
Total	11	10	113	11.3	38	0	Total	13	12	157	13.1	24	0		

Los Angeles Chargers

Regular Defensive Plays

Special Teams

Misc

First Quarter

8/26/2022

Play By Play

NO wins toss, elects to Receive, and LAC elects to defend the North goal.

D.Hopkins kicks 65 yards from LAC 35 to end zone, Touchback.

New Orleans Saints at 15:00

1-10-NO 25	(15:00) A.Kamara right end to NO 25 for no gain (R.Layne; K.Hall). <i>PENALTY on NO-C.Ruiz, Offensive Holding, 10 yards, enforced at NO 25 - No Play.</i>	
1-20-NO 15	(14:40) (Shotgun) A.Kamara right guard to NO 21 for 6 yards (T.Reeder; N.Niemann).	
2-14-NO 21	(14:08) J.Winston pass deep left to J.Landry to NO 41 for 20 yards (J.Woods). Pass 18, YAC 2	P1
<u>1-10-NO 41</u>	(13:33) A.Kamara left guard to LAC 41 for 18 yards (B.Sebastian). <i>PENALTY on NO, Illegal Shift, 5 yards, enforced at NO 41 - No Play.</i>	
1-15-NO 36	(13:09) (Shotgun) J.Winston pass short middle to J.Landry to LAC 49 for 15 yards (J.Taylor) [C.Kemp]. Pass 15, YAC 0	P2
<u>1-10-LAC 49</u>	(12:33) M.Ingram right tackle to LAC 47 for 2 yards (T.Reeder).	
2-8-LAC 47	(11:58) M.Ingram left tackle to LAC 38 for 9 yards (R.Layne).	R3
<u>1-10-LAC 38</u>	(11:22) J.Winston pass deep middle to C.Olave to LAC 19 for 19 yards (J.Woods). Pass 19, YAC 0	P4
<u>1-10-LAC 19</u>	(10:45) (Shotgun) J.Winston pass short middle to A.Kamara to LAC 14 for 5 yards (N.Niemann). Pass 4, YAC 1	
2-5-LAC 14	(10:14) A.Kamara right guard to LAC 1 for 13 yards (R.Layne; J.Taylor).	R5
<u>1-1-LAC 1</u>	(9:24) M.Ingram right guard for 1 yard, TOUCHDOWN. W.Lutz extra point is GOOD, Center-Z.Wood, Holder-B.Gillikin.	R6

LAC 0 NO 7, 9 plays, 75 yards, 5:41 drive, 5:41 elapsed

W.Lutz kicks 63 yards from NO 35 to LAC 2. M.Bandy to LAC 27 for 25 yards (J.Evans).

Los Angeles Chargers at 9:19, (1st play from scrimmage 9:11)

1-10-LAC 27	(9:11) C.Daniel pass short right to Z.Horvath to LAC 35 for 8 yards (T.Mathieu, D.Davis). Pass 2, YAC 6	
2-2-LAC 35	(8:35) D.Carter right end to LAC 34 for -1 yards (E.Wilson).	
3-3-LAC 34	(7:56) (Shotgun) C.Daniel sacked at LAC 22 for -12 yards (D.Davis).	
4-15-LAC 22	(7:14) J.Scott punts 40 yards to NO 38, Center-J.Harris, fair catch by M.Callaway.	

New Orleans Saints at 7:06

1-10-NO 38	(7:06) 14-A.Dalton in at QB. M.Ingram right end to NO 38 for no gain (A.Brown).	
2-10-NO 38	(6:34) (Shotgun) A.Dalton pass short right to M.Callaway pushed ob at LAC 44 for 18 yards (M.Jacquet). Pass 9, YAC 9	P7
<u>1-10-LAC 44</u>	(6:02) M.Ingram right guard to LAC 39 for 5 yards (A.Ogbongbemiga, C.Covington).	
2-5-LAC 39	(5:27) M.Ingram left end pushed ob at LAC 34 for 5 yards (A.Ogbongbemiga, B.Sebastian).	R8
<u>1-10-LAC 34</u>	(4:46) T.Jones right tackle to LAC 29 for 5 yards (C.Kemp; A.Brown).	
2-5-LAC 29	(4:11) (Shotgun) A.Dalton pass short right to M.Callaway to LAC 12 for 17 yards (K.Hall). Pass 15, YAC 2	P9
<u>1-10-LAC 12</u>	(3:37) M.Ingram up the middle to LAC 5 for 7 yards (N.Niemann).	
2-3-LAC 5	(3:00) M.Ingram left end to LAC 2 for 3 yards (B.Sebastian).	R10
<u>1-2-LAC 2</u>	(2:21) M.Ingram right tackle for 2 yards, TOUCHDOWN. W.Lutz extra point is GOOD, Center-Z.Wood, Holder-B.Gillikin.	R11

LAC 0 NO 14, 9 plays, 62 yards, 4:51 drive, 12:45 elapsed

W.Lutz kicks 65 yards from NO 35 to end zone, Touchback.

Los Angeles Chargers at 2:15

1-10-LAC 25	(2:15) L.Rountree right guard to LAC 30 for 5 yards (N.Sewell; C.Jordan).	
2-5-LAC 30	(1:44) (Shotgun) C.Daniel pass deep left to J.Guyton pushed ob at NO 32 for 38 yards (B.Roby). Pass 30, YAC 8	P1
<u>1-10-NO 32</u>	(1:05) (Shotgun) C.Daniel pass incomplete deep right to D.Carter. <i>PENALTY on LAC-S.Norton, Offensive Holding, 10 yards, enforced at NO 32 - No Play.</i>	
1-20-NO 42	(:59) (Shotgun) C.Daniel pass short middle to D.Carter to NO 43 for -1 yards (V.Gray). Pass -4, YAC 3	
2-21-NO 43	(:24) (Shotgun) C.Daniel pass short right to L.Rountree to NO 36 for 7 yards (C.Gardner-Johnson, D.Onyemata). Pass -4, YAC 11	

END OF QUARTER

	Score	Time Poss	First Downs				Efficiencies	
			R	P	X	T	3 Down	4 Down
Los Angeles Chargers	0	4:28	0	1	0	1	0/1	0/0
New Orleans Saints	14	10:32	6	5	0	11	0/0	0/0

Second Quarter

8/26/2022

Play By Play

Los Angeles Chargers continued.

3-14-NO 36	(15:00) (Shotgun) J.Kelley left guard to NO 21 for 15 yards (D.Davis).	R2
<u>1-10-NO 21</u>	(14:23) J.Kelley left end ran ob at NO 12 for 9 yards (B.Roby).	
2-1-NO 12	(13:46) (Shotgun) C.Daniel pass short right to J.Guyton to NO 2 for 10 yards (V.Gray). Pass 0, YAC 10	P3
<u>1-2-NO 2</u>	(13:11) (Shotgun) J.Kelley left guard to NO 3 for -1 yards (M.Maye).	
2-3-NO 3	(12:36) C.Daniel pass incomplete short right to J.Guyton.	
	<i>PENALTY on NO-V.Gray, Defensive Pass Interference, 2 yards, enforced at NO 3 - No Play.</i>	X4
<u>1-1-NO 1</u>	(12:31) L.Rountree right guard to NO 1 for no gain (M.Maye; N.Sewell).	
2-1-NO 1	(12:00) L.Rountree left guard for 1 yard, TOUCHDOWN.	R5
	D.Hopkins extra point is GOOD, Center-J.Harris, Holder-J.Scott.	

LAC 7 NO 14, 10 plays, 75 yards, 1 penalty, 5:20 drive, 3:05 elapsed

D.Hopkins kicks 65 yards from LAC 35 to end zone, Touchback.

New Orleans Saints at 11:55

1-10-NO 25	(11:55) T.Jones right guard to NO 30 for 5 yards (J.Taylor; A.Ogbongbemiga).	
2-5-NO 30	(11:21) T.Jones right end to NO 36 for 6 yards (B.DeLuca).	
	<i>PENALTY on NO-J.Holtz, Offensive Holding, 10 yards, enforced at NO 30 - No Play.</i>	
2-15-NO 20	(10:55) (Shotgun) A.Dalton pass short right to L.Krull to NO 28 for 8 yards (B.DeLuca). Pass 8, YAC 0	
3-7-NO 28	(10:17) (Shotgun) A.Dalton pass incomplete deep left to T.Smith. New Orleans challenged the incomplete pass ruling, and the play was REVERSED. (Shotgun) A.Dalton pass deep left to M.Callaway to LAC 48 for 24 yards. Pass 24, YAC 0. Pass tipped up to NO-1-M.Callaway by NO-10-T.Smith. Initially ruled incomplete. Play blown dead at the spot of the catch.	P12
<u>1-10-LAC 48</u>	(10:03) T.Jones left tackle to LAC 45 for 3 yards (B.Sebastian; C.Kemp).	
2-7-LAC 45	(9:29) T.Jones left end to LAC 48 for -3 yards (B.Fehoko, C.Kemp).	
3-10-LAC 48	(8:49) (Shotgun) A.Dalton pass short left to M.Callaway pushed ob at LAC 42 for 6 yards (K.Hall). Pass 3, YAC 3	
4-4-LAC 42	(8:04) B.Gillikin punts 31 yards to LAC 11, Center-Z.Wood, fair catch by M.Bandy.	

Los Angeles Chargers at 7:56

1-10-LAC 11	(7:56) <i>PENALTY on LAC-F.Sarell, False Start, 5 yards, enforced at LAC 11 - No Play.</i>	
1-15-LAC 6	(7:56) J.Kelley left guard to LAC 13 for 7 yards (E.Wilson).	
2-8-LAC 13	(7:27) C.Daniel pass short left to J.Kelley to LAC 14 for 1 yard (K.Street, B.Allen). Pass -6, YAC 7	
3-7-LAC 14	(6:47) (Shotgun) C.Daniel scrambles up the middle to LAC 21 for 7 yards (E.Wilson).	R6
<u>1-10-LAC 21</u>	(6:06) L.Rountree right end to LAC 24 for 3 yards (K.Street).	
2-7-LAC 24	(5:31) (Shotgun) C.Daniel pass short left to L.Rountree to LAC 29 for 5 yards (D.Fields, E.Wilson). Pass 1, YAC 4	
3-2-LAC 29	(4:50) (Shotgun) C.Daniel pass short middle to M.Bandy to LAC 44 for 15 yards (B.Allen; J.Gray). Pass 7, YAC 8	P7
<u>1-10-LAC 44</u>	(4:16) C.Daniel pass incomplete deep left to J.Moore [P.Turner].	
2-10-LAC 44	(4:09) (Shotgun) J.Kelley left end to NO 48 for 8 yards (T.Charlton; P.Williams).	
3-2-NO 48	(3:36) J.Kelley right end to NO 44 for 4 yards (J.Gray).	
	<i>PENALTY on LAC-T.Bradford, Offensive Holding, 10 yards, enforced at NO 46.</i>	
3-10-LAC 44	(3:04) (Shotgun) C.Daniel pass short right to H.Kampmoyer pushed ob at NO 34 for 22 yards (E.Wilson; J.Gray) [P.Turner]. Pass 3, YAC 19	P8
<u>1-10-NO 34</u>	(2:39) L.Rountree left guard to NO 27 for 7 yards (D.Fields; J.Jackson).	
	<i>PENALTY on LAC-B.Jaimes, Offensive Holding, 10 yards, enforced at NO 34 - No Play.</i>	

Two-Minute Warning

1-20-NO 44	(2:00) (Shotgun) L.Rountree left tackle to NO 43 for 1 yard (D.Fields).	
	Timeout #1 by NO at 01:55.	
2-19-NO 43	(1:55) L.Rountree left tackle to NO 41 for 2 yards (E.Wilson).	
	Timeout #2 by NO at 01:48.	
3-17-NO 41	(1:48) (Shotgun) C.Daniel pass short right to T.McKitty to NO 33 for 8 yards (D.Fields). Pass 6, YAC 2	
4-9-NO 33	(1:03) D.Hopkins 51 yard field goal is GOOD, Center-J.Harris, Holder-J.Scott.	

LAC 10 NO 14, 14 plays, 56 yards, 6:59 drive, 14:03 elapsed
--

D.Hopkins kicks 65 yards from LAC 35 to end zone, Touchback.

New Orleans Saints at 0:57

1-10-NO 25	(:57) New quarterback for the Saints is #16 Ian Book. I.Book pass short right to L.Krull pushed ob at NO 30 for 5 yards (J.Taylor). Pass 0, YAC 5	
2-5-NO 30	(:51) (Shotgun) I.Book pass incomplete short right to L.Krull (K.Hall).	

Los Angeles Chargers vs New Orleans Saints at Caesars Superdome

3-5-NO 30 (:45) (Shotgun) I.Book scrambles right end pushed ob at NO 35 for 5 yards (K.Hall). R13

1-10-NO 35 (:38) (Shotgun) I.Book pass short right to T.Jones to NO 39 for 4 yards (A.Ogbongbemiga). Pass 3, YAC 1
Timeout #3 by NO at 00:33.

2-6-NO 39 (:33) (Shotgun) I.Book pass deep middle to K.Merritt to LAC 45 for 16 yards (K.Hall). LAC-K.Hall was injured during the play. His return is Probable. Pass 16, YAC 0 P14
Timeout #1 by LAC at 00:20.

1-10-LAC 45 (:20) (Shotgun) I.Book scrambles up the middle ran ob at LAC 29 for 16 yards (B.DeLuca). R15

1-10-LAC 29 (:13) (Shotgun) I.Book pass incomplete deep right.

2-10-LAC 29 (:05) **W.Lutz 47 yard field goal is GOOD, Center-Z.Wood, Holder-B.Gillikin.**

LAC 10 NO 17, 8 plays, 46 yards, 0:57 drive, 15:00 elapsed

END OF QUARTER	Score	Time Poss	First Downs				Efficiencies	
			R	P	X	T	3 Down	4 Down
Los Angeles Chargers	10	10:04	3	3	1	7	4/5	0/0
New Orleans Saints	17	4:56	2	2	0	4	2/3	0/0

Third Quarter

8/26/2022

Play By Play

LAC elects to Receive, and NO elects to defend the South goal.

W.Lutz kicks 65 yards from NO 35 to end zone, Touchback.

Los Angeles Chargers at 15:00

- 1-10-LAC 25 (15:00) 2-E.Stick in at QB. (Shotgun) E.Stick pass short left to T.Bradford to LAC 31 for 6 yards (B.Allen). Pass 5, YAC 1
- 2-4-LAC 31 (14:23) L.Brown left tackle to LAC 33 for 2 yards (T.Kpassagnon, J.Bostic).
- 3-2-LAC 33 (13:48) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass short middle to H.Kampmoyer to LAC 40 for 7 yards (J.Evans). FUMBLES (J.Evans), RECOVERED by NO-D.Sorensen at LAC 41. D.Sorensen to LAC 24 for 17 yards (E.Stick). Pass 8, YAC 0

New Orleans Saints at 13:36

- 1-10-LAC 24 (13:36) (Shotgun) T.Jones right guard to LAC 22 for 2 yards (J.Davis).
- 2-8-LAC 22 (13:06) (Shotgun) I.Book pass short right to L.Krull to LAC 20 for 2 yards (J.Taylor). pass -2, yac 4
- 3-6-LAC 20 (12:26) (Shotgun) I.Book pass short middle to L.Krull to LAC 11 for 9 yards (J.Woods). Pass 6, YAC 3 P16
- 1-10-LAC 11 (11:55) T.Jones left guard to LAC 7 for 4 yards (J.Gaziano).
- 2-6-LAC 7 (11:21) I.Book pass incomplete short left to K.Merritt.
PENALTY on NO-D.Dixon, Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards, enforced at LAC 7 - No Play.
- 2-16-LAC 17 (11:15) (Shotgun) I.Book pass short left to T.Jones to LAC 9 for 8 yards (A.Brown; J.Woods). Pass -1, YAC 9
- 3-8-LAC 9 (10:37) (Shotgun) I.Book pass short middle to K.Merritt for 9 yards, TOUCHDOWN [C.Covington]. Pass 5, YAC 4 P17
W.Lutz extra point is GOOD, Center-Z.Wood, Holder-B.Gillikin.

LAC 10 NO 24, 6 plays, 24 yards, 3:06 drive, 4:30 elapsed

W.Lutz kicks 65 yards from NO 35 to end zone, Touchback.

Los Angeles Chargers at 10:30

- 1-10-LAC 25 (10:30) E.Stick pass short right to M.Bandy to LAC 38 for 13 yards (Q.Meeeks). Pass 13, YAC 0 P9
- 1-10-LAC 38 (9:51) L.Brown left end to LAC 40 for 2 yards (J.Bostic, Z.Baun).
- 2-8-LAC 40 (9:18) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass incomplete short left to J.Moore (T.Charlton).
- 3-8-LAC 40 (9:14) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass incomplete short left to M.Bandy (J.Evans).
- 4-8-LAC 40 (9:09) J.Scott punts 46 yards to NO 14, Center-J.Harris, fair catch by D.Harty.

New Orleans Saints at 9:00

- 1-10-NO 14 (9:00) A.Smith right guard to NO 17 for 3 yards (T.Maddox-Williams; B.Sebastian).
- 2-7-NO 17 (8:27) (Shotgun) T.Jones right guard to NO 22 for 5 yards (T.Maddox-Williams).
- 3-2-NO 22 (7:50) (Shotgun) T.Jones right guard to NO 24 for 2 yards (C.Christiansen, C.Kemp). R18
- 1-10-NO 24 (7:08) A.Smith right tackle to NO 30 for 6 yards (J.Taylor; C.Christiansen).
- 2-4-NO 30 (6:31) (Shotgun) PENALTY on NO-K.Washington, False Start, 5 yards, enforced at NO 30 - No Play.
- 2-9-NO 25 (6:12) (Shotgun) PENALTY on NO-D.Kelly, False Start, 5 yards, enforced at NO 25 - No Play.
- 2-14-NO 20 (5:45) (Shotgun) A.Smith up the middle to NO 25 for 5 yards (C.Christiansen, T.Maddox-Williams).
- 3-9-NO 25 (5:10) (Shotgun) I.Book sacked at NO 17 for -8 yards (C.Christiansen).
- 4-17-NO 17 (4:47) B.Gillikin punts 41 yards to LAC 42, Center-Z.Wood, fair catch by T.Bradford.

Los Angeles Chargers at 4:39

- 1-10-LAC 42 (4:39) (Shotgun) Z.Horvath right guard to LAC 43 for 1 yard (N.Sewell; J.Jackson).
- 2-9-LAC 43 (4:04) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass short left to J.Moore to LAC 48 for 5 yards (N.Sewell).
PENALTY on LAC-W.Clapp, Ineligible Downfield Pass, 5 yards, enforced at LAC 43 - No Play.
- 2-14-LAC 38 (3:41) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass short right to G.Nabers to LAC 46 for 8 yards (Q.Meeeks). Pass 3, YAC 5
- 3-6-LAC 46 (3:02) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass short middle to T.Bradford to NO 49 for 5 yards (B.Allen).
- 4-1-NO 49 (2:24) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass short right to E.Krommenhoek to NO 30 for 19 yards (J.Bostic). Pass 5, YAC 14 P10
- 1-10-NO 30 (1:41) K.Marks left end to NO 32 for -2 yards (Z.Baun, J.Bostic).
- 2-12-NO 32 (:59) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass incomplete short middle to E.Krommenhoek (N.Sewell).
- 3-12-NO 32 (:53) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass incomplete short left to L.Brown (A.Huggins).
- 4-12-NO 32 (:48) D.Hopkins 50 yard field goal is No Good, Wide Left, Center-J.Harris, Holder-J.Scott.

New Orleans Saints at 0:43

- 1-10-NO 41 (:43) The yardline changed on the change of possession. A.Smith up the middle to NO 45 for 4 yards (J.Gaziano; C.Christiansen).
PENALTY on NO, Illegal Formation, 5 yards, enforced at NO 41 - No Play.
- 1-15-NO 36 (:27) A.Smith right tackle to NO 37 for 1 yard (C.Covington; E.Egbule).

Los Angeles Chargers vs New Orleans Saints at Caesars Superdome

END OF QUARTER

	Time	First Downs				Efficiencies		
Score	Poss	R	P	X	T	3 Down	4 Down	
Los Angeles Chargers	10	6:50	0	2	0	2	0/4	1/1
New Orleans Saints	24	8:10	1	2	0	3	3/4	0/0

Fourth Quarter

Play By Play

New Orleans Saints continued.

- 2-14-NO 37 (15:00) (Shotgun) I.Book pass short left to K.Merritt pushed ob at NO 38 for 1 yard (R.Layne). Pass 3, YAC -2
- 3-13-NO 38 (14:24) (Shotgun) I.Book scrambles up the middle to NO 40 for 2 yards (B.DeLuca; R.Layne).
- 4-11-NO 40 (13:39) B.Gillikin punts 45 yards to LAC 15, Center-Z.Wood, fair catch by T.Bradford.

Los Angeles Chargers at 13:31

- 1-10-LAC 15 (13:31) L.Brown right guard to LAC 18 for 3 yards (N.Lalos). NO-A.Huggins was injured during the play. He is Out.
- 2-7-LAC 18 (13:01) E.Stick pass short right to T.Bradford to LAC 30 for 12 yards (D.Fields). Pass 4, YAC 8 P11
- 1-10-LAC 30 (12:25) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass short right to L.Brown pushed ob at LAC 32 for 2 yards (J.Bostic). Pass -3, YAC 5
- 2-8-LAC 32 (11:47) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass incomplete short right to J.Moore (V.Gray).
- 3-8-LAC 32 (11:43) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass incomplete short middle to M.Bandy.
- 4-8-LAC 32 (11:36) J.Scott punts 55 yards to NO 13, Center-J.Harris, fair catch by D.Harty.

New Orleans Saints at 11:27

- 1-10-NO 13 (11:27) (Shotgun) I.Book pass short left to K.Merritt to NO 19 for 6 yards (J.Taylor). Pass 5, YAC 1
- 2-4-NO 19 (10:52) (Shotgun) I.Book pass incomplete deep right.
Timeout #1 by NO at 10:46.
- 3-4-NO 19 (10:46) (Shotgun) I.Book pass short left to D.Dixon to NO 24 for 5 yards (B.Sebastian). Pass 5, YAC 0 P19
- 1-10-NO 24 (10:12) A.Smith right guard to NO 27 for 3 yards (E.Egbule; C.Christiansen).
- 2-7-NO 27 (9:39) (Shotgun) A.Smith up the middle to NO 31 for 4 yards (C.Covington; C.Christiansen).
- 3-3-NO 31 (9:02) (Shotgun) I.Book pass short right to A.Smith to NO 47 for 16 yards (B.DeLuca). Pass 3, YAC 13 P20
- 1-10-NO 47 (8:18) A.Smith left tackle to 50 for 3 yards (C.Christiansen).
- 2-7-50 (7:41) I.Book pass incomplete short right to A.Prentice.
- 3-7-50 (7:37) (Shotgun) I.Book scrambles right end pushed ob at LAC 20 for 30 yards (R.Layne). R21
- 1-10-LAC 20 (6:52) A.Smith right tackle to LAC 16 for 4 yards (J.Gaziano; B.DeLuca).
- 2-6-LAC 16 (6:11) A.Smith up the middle to LAC 13 for 3 yards (B.Fehoko, C.Covington). LAC-B.Fehoko was injured during the play. His return is Questionable.
- 3-3-LAC 13 (5:30) A.Smith right guard to LAC 8 for 5 yards (C.Christiansen, B.DeLuca). R22
- 1-8-LAC 8 (4:44) A.Smith left guard to LAC 5 for 3 yards (J.Gaziano).
- 2-5-LAC 5 (4:00) A.Smith left tackle to LAC 8 for -3 yards (B.DeLuca).
- 3-8-LAC 8 (3:21) A.Smith right guard to LAC 10 for -2 yards (C.Christiansen).
Timeout #2 by NO at 02:33.
- 4-10-LAC 10 **(2:33) W.Lutz 29 yard field goal is GOOD, Center-Z.Wood, Holder-B.Gillikin.**

LAC 10 NO 27, 16 plays, 77 yards, 8:58 drive, 12:31 elapsed

W.Lutz kicks 65 yards from NO 35 to end zone, Touchback.

Los Angeles Chargers at 2:29

- 1-10-LAC 25 (2:29) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass short right to M.Bandy to LAC 27 for 2 yards (A.Dowell). Pass 1, YAC 1
- 2-8-LAC 27 (2:09) (No Huddle, Shotgun) E.Stick pass incomplete short right to E.Krommenhoek.
- 3-8-LAC 27 (2:04) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass incomplete short left to E.Krommenhoek.

Two-Minute Warning

- 4-8-LAC 27 (1:59) J.Scott punts 42 yards to NO 31, Center-J.Harris, fair catch by D.Harty.

New Orleans Saints at 1:50

- 1-10-NO 31 (1:50) I.Book kneels to NO 30 for -1 yards.
- 2-11-NO 30 (1:09) I.Book kneels to NO 29 for -1 yards.
- 3-12-NO 29 (:32) I.Book kneels to NO 28 for -1 yards.

END OF QUARTER

	Score	Time Poss	First Downs				Efficiencies	
			R	P	X	T	3 Down	4 Down
Los Angeles Chargers	10	2:43	0	1	0	1	0/2	0/0
New Orleans Saints	27	12:17	2	2	0	4	4/7	0/0

Miscellaneous Statistics Report

Los Angeles Chargers vs New Orleans Saints
8/26/2022 at Caesars Superdome

Ten Longest Plays for Los Angeles Chargers

Yards	Qtr	Play Start	Play Description
38	1	2-5-LAC 30	(1:44) (Shotgun) C.Daniel pass deep left to J.Guyton pushed ob at NO 32 for 38 yards (B.Roby). Pass 30, YAC 8
22	2	3-10-LAC 44	(3:04) (Shotgun) C.Daniel pass short right to H.Kampmoyer pushed ob at NO 34 for 22 yards (E.Wilson; J.Gray) [P.Turner]. Pass 3, YAC 19
19	3	4-1-NO 49	(2:24) (Shotgun) E.Stick pass short right to E.Krommenhoek to NO 30 for 19 yards (J.Bostic). Pass 5, YAC 14
15	2	3-14-NO 36	(15:00) (Shotgun) J.Kelley left guard to NO 21 for 15 yards (D.Davis).
15	2	3-2-LAC 29	(4:50) (Shotgun) C.Daniel pass short middle to M.Bandy to LAC 44 for 15 yards (B.Allen; J.Gray). Pass 7, YAC 8
13	3	1-10-LAC 25	(10:30) E.Stick pass short right to M.Bandy to LAC 38 for 13 yards (Q.Meeks). Pass 13, YAC 0
12	4	2-7-LAC 18	(13:01) E.Stick pass short right to T.Bradford to LAC 30 for 12 yards (D.Fields). Pass 4, YAC 8
10	2	2-1-NO 12	(13:46) (Shotgun) C.Daniel pass short right to J.Guyton to NO 2 for 10 yards (V.Gray). Pass 0, YAC 10
9	2	1-10-NO 21	(14:23) J.Kelley left end ran ob at NO 12 for 9 yards (B.Roby).
8	1	1-10-LAC 27	(9:11) C.Daniel pass short right to Z.Horvath to LAC 35 for 8 yards (T.Mathieu, D.Davis). Pass 2, YAC 6

Ten Longest Plays for New Orleans Saints

Yards	Qtr	Play Start	Play Description
30	4	3-7-50	(7:37) (Shotgun) I.Book scrambles right end pushed ob at LAC 20 for 30 yards (R.Layne).
24	2	3-7-NO 28	(10:17) (Shotgun) A.Dalton pass incomplete deep left to T.Smith.
20	1	2-14-NO 21	(14:08) J.Winston pass deep left to J.Landry to NO 41 for 20 yards (J.Woods). Pass 18, YAC 2
19	1	1-10-LAC 38	(11:22) J.Winston pass deep middle to C.Olave to LAC 19 for 19 yards (J.Woods). Pass 19, YAC 0
18	1	2-10-NO 38	(6:34) (Shotgun) A.Dalton pass short right to M.Callaway pushed ob at LAC 44 for 18 yards (M.Jacquet). Pass 9, YAC 9
17	1	2-5-LAC 29	(4:11) (Shotgun) A.Dalton pass short right to M.Callaway to LAC 12 for 17 yards (K.Hall). Pass 15, YAC 2
16	2	2-6-NO 39	(:33) (Shotgun) I.Book pass deep middle to K.Merritt to LAC 45 for 16 yards (K.Hall). LAC-K.Hall was injured during the play.
16	2	1-10-LAC 45	(:20) (Shotgun) I.Book scrambles up the middle ran ob at LAC 29 for 16 yards (B.DeLuca).
16	4	3-3-NO 31	(9:02) (Shotgun) I.Book pass short right to A.Smith to NO 47 for 16 yards (B.DeLuca). Pass 3, YAC 13
15	1	1-15-NO 36	(13:09) (Shotgun) J.Winston pass short middle to J.Landry to LAC 49 for 15 yards (J.Taylor) [C.Kemp]. Pass 15, YAC 0

Touchdown Scoring Information

		Offense	Defense	Special Teams
VISITOR	Los Angeles Chargers	1	0	0
HOME	New Orleans Saints	3	0	0

Player Scoring Information

Club	Player	TD	Rush TD	Rec TD	KO TD	Punt TD	Int TD	Fum TD	Misc TD	FG	XP	2Pt Rush	2Pt Rec	Sfty	Points
LAC	L.Rountree	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
LAC	D.Hopkins	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
NO	M.Ingram	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
NO	W.Lutz	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	9
NO	K.Merritt	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6

Possession Detail

	First Half		Second Half		Game	
	Visitor	Home	Visitor	Home	Visitor	Home
Largest Lead	0	14	0	17	0	17
Drives Leading	0	3	0	5	0	8
Time of Possession Leading	0:00	9:47	0:00	20:27	0:00	30:14
Largest Deficit	-14	0	-17	0	-17	0
Drives Trailing	3	0	5	0	8	0
Time of Possession Trailing	14:32	0:00	9:33	0:00	24:05	0:00
Times Score Tied Up		0		0		0
Lead Changes		1		0		1

Playtime Percentage

Percent of playtime per player on offense, defense and special teams (Unofficial)

Los Angeles Chargers

New Orleans Saints

		Offense	Defense	Special Teams				Offense	Defense	Special Teams			
W Clapp	C	52	100%	2	9%	D Kelly	T	58	84%	5	22%		
B Jaimes	G	52	100%	1	4%	L Kidd	G	58	84%	5	22%		
M Bandy	WR	46	88%	7	30%	N Martin	C	58	84%	5	22%		
F Sarell	T	37	71%	3	13%	K Baker	WR	42	61%	14	61%		
Z Bailey	G	37	71%	2	9%	I Book	QB	42	61%				
J Moore	WR	35	67%	7	30%	D Dixon	WR	39	57%	8	35%		
T Bradford	WR	30	58%	6	26%	L Krull	TE	38	55%				
C Daniel	QB	29	56%			J Holtz	TE	35	51%	15	65%		
T McKitty	TE	26	50%	3	13%	K Washington	T	35	51%	5	22%		
E Stick	QB	23	44%			D Schweiger	G	35	51%	4	17%		
R Hunter	G	20	38%	2	9%	A Smith	RB	29	42%	9	39%		
L Rountree	RB	18	35%	3	13%	M Callaway	WR	27	39%	1	4%		
H Kampmoyer	TE	17	33%	16	70%	K Merritt	WR	23	33%	10	43%		
J Salyer	G	17	33%	3	13%	J Andrews	G	23	33%	5	22%		
J Guyton	WR	17	33%			C Throckmorton	T	23	33%				
S Norton	T	15	29%	1	4%	T Jones	RB	22	32%	7	30%		
T Pipkins	T	15	29%	1	4%	J Johnson	TE	16	23%	5	22%		
Z Johnson	G	15	29%	1	4%	A Dalton	QB	16	23%				
D Carter	WR	15	29%			A Prentice	FB	13	19%	9	39%		
L Brown	RB	13	25%	6	26%	T Smith	WR	12	17%	2	9%		
J Kelley	RB	12	23%	5	22%	T Penning	T	11	16%	1	4%		
K Marks	RB	10	19%	7	30%	R Ramczyk	T	11	16%				
E Krommenhoek	TE	10	19%	2	9%	M Ingram	RB	11	16%				
Z Horvath	RB	9	17%	8	35%	A Peat	G	11	16%				
G Nabers	FB	2	4%	11	48%	C Ruiz	G	11	16%				
B Sebastian	DB		69	100%	13	57%	J Winston	QB	11	16%			
J Woods	DB		55	80%	12	52%	E McCoy	C	11	16%			
J Davis	DE		52	75%	5	22%	D Harty	WR	9	13%	3	13%	
E Egbule	LB		46	67%			C Olave	WR	8	12%			
J Taylor	DB		45	65%	10	43%	J Landry	WR	8	12%			
R Layne	DB		43	62%	7	30%	A Kamara	RB	7	10%			
B DeLuca	DB		42	61%	15	65%	N Vannett	TE	6	9%			
J Gaziano	DE		42	61%	5	22%	V Gray	DB		34	65%	2	9%
N Niemann	LB		41	59%	4	17%	D Fields	DB		33	63%	5	22%
C Kemp	DE		40	58%	13	57%	B Allen	CB		28	54%	10	43%
A Brown	NT		40	58%	4	17%	P Turner	DE		28	54%	2	9%
B Fehoko	NT		36	52%	3	13%	T Kpassagnon	DE		26	50%	3	13%
M Jacquet	CB		35	51%	8	35%	T Charlton	DE		26	50%	2	9%
C Covington	NT		35	51%	1	4%	N Sewell	LB		24	46%	16	70%
A Ogbongbemiga	LB		29	42%	5	22%	Q Meeks	CB		23	44%	12	52%
C Christiansen	LB		28	41%	12	52%	J Bostic	LB		23	44%	1	4%
K Hall	CB		28	41%	1	4%	J Jackson	DT		23	44%	1	4%
T Maddox-Williams	LB		27	39%	12	52%	J Gray	SS		22	42%	2	9%
O Ogbornia	DT		15	22%	4	17%	P Williams	CB		22	42%		
T Reeder	LB		11	16%	2	9%							

J Harris	LS	7	30%	E Wilson	LB	20	38%	3	13%
J Scott	P	7	30%	K Elliss	LB	20	38%	2	9%
D Hopkins	K	6	26%	A Huggins	DT	20	38%	1	4%
				J Evans	SS	15	29%	11	48%
				N Lalos	DE	15	29%	9	39%
				D Sorensen	FS	15	29%	6	26%
				S Tuttle	DT	15	29%	2	9%
				T Mathieu	SS	15	29%		
				M Maye	FS	15	29%		
				B Roby	CB	15	29%		
				D Davis	LB	15	29%		
				J Black	DT	14	27%	1	4%
				K Street	DE	13	25%	3	13%
				Z Baun	LB	13	25%	3	13%
				M Roach	DT	10	19%		
				D Onyemata	DT	9	17%		
				C Gardner-Johnson	SS	9	17%		
				C Jordan	DE	9	17%		
				A Dowell	LB	3	6%	17	74%
				W Lutz	K			10	43%
				Z Wood	LS			8	35%
				B Gillikin	P			8	35%



FEATURE
STORIES

TABLE OF CONTENTS



LOS ANGELES CHARGERS.....	3
Chargers' Brandon Staley: The math, mindset behind NFL's most aggressive coach.....	3
Inside the Chargers' defensive infusion: 'They fit the way we want to play'.....	6
FMA: Brandon Staley Isn't Changing Who He Is Despite '21 Finish.....	8
Physicality: A Look Inside the Chargers 2022 Mindset.....	10
Los Angeles Chargers' new pass-rush duo of Khalil Mack, Joey Bosa bonding quickly.....	12
Chargers coach Brandon Staley fulfills a dream with trip to Wimbledon.....	13
Chargers begin groundbreaking moves with Super Bowl in mind.....	13
Chargers break ground on new facility in El Segundo.....	14
Chargers hope improvements on defense make them contenders.....	15
Chargers Participating in 'NFL Diversity in Sports Medicine Pipeline Initiative'.....	15
FMA: Chargers Anime.....	16
Chargers' savage 2022 schedule release video takes shot at dancing Urban Meyer.....	17
Chargers Win NFL Schedule Day With Hilarious Anime Announcement Video.....	17
Chargers roast opponents in scathing anime-inspired NFL schedule release video.....	17
NFL Fans Couldn't Get Enough Of The Chargers Anime Video Taking Cracks At Their Opponents.....	18
Los Angeles Chargers' draft not flashy, but necessary after splashy offseason start.....	19
Chargers aim for more draft hits with the help of Snoop Dogg.....	20
Getting to know the 5 additions to Brandon Staley's Chargers coaching staff.....	21
Chargers-Chiefs will be first Thursday night game on Amazon.....	22
BRANDON STALEY.....	23
Chargers trade for Khalil Mack is a deviation from their norm — and hints at Brandon Staley's influence.....	23
Staley's journey: Chargers coach's cancer battle defined him.....	24
Unlikely interview set Brandon Staley on journey from St. Thomas to head coach of the Chargers.....	25
Column: Well versed on Chargers curse, Brandon Staley might be the coach to end it.....	26
Brandon Staley gets Chargers to buy in with collaborative culture.....	27
Chargers' new leader a family man: 'I am from the Bruce and Linda Staley coaching tree'.....	28
A brother's promise and the D-II season that led Brandon Staley to the Chargers.....	30
Mom's influence inspires ex-Flyer's meteoric rise to NFL head coach.....	31
Brandon Staley, Chargers coach? Those who know him know why he 'skyrocketed' to top.....	34
Chargers head coach Brandon Staley is still in his heart a Perry Pirate.....	35
JOE LOMBARDI.....	35
Chargers offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi believes the wait was worth it.....	35
New Chargers coordinator Joe Lombardi looks to build offense around Justin Herbert.....	36
Chargers' Joe Lombardi eager to build an offense around Justin Herbert.....	37
Chargers' Lombardi hoping to make most of second chance.....	37
RENALDO HILL.....	39
Chargers' new defense leader Renaldo Hill is well-coordinated with Brandon Staley.....	39
New Chargers DC Renaldo Hill excited to reunite with Brandon Staley.....	39
Chargers' Hill eager for first shot as defensive coordinator.....	40
KEENAN ALLEN.....	41
Justin Herbert and Keenan Allen: The NFL's next great QB-WR duo?.....	41
JOEY BOSA.....	43
Joey Bosa enjoying learning and exploring Los Angeles Chargers' new defense.....	43
Chargers Edge Rusher Joey Bosa Put Mental Health Recovery Over Football in Offseason.....	44

JUSTIN HERBERT	46
Justin Herbert is the franchise quarterback who might finally redefine Charging	46
Justin Herbert's critical third year: Why the Los Angeles Chargers QB is ready for this moment	47
Justin Herbert Is Known for His Arm. But His Mental Game May Be Even Better.	48
The magic and mystery of Los Angeles Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert	50
Step by step: Herbert focusing on footwork going into Year 3.....	52
Chargers' Justin Herbert: 'I need to be the best quarterback that I can be'	53
Facing pressure appears to be old hat for young Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert	54
Justin Herbert, Chargers' new offense could thrive thanks to his study skills	55
Justin Herbert went from 'Justin Who?' at Oregon to a Chargers standout in five years.....	57
Acts of Kindness: Justin Herbert hosts golf tourney to raise money for Kidsports	58
The Real-Life Diet of Chargers Quarterback Justin Herbert, Who Lives on Subway Sandwiches	58
Justin Herbert's misinterpreted personality becomes Chargers' gain	59
Chargers' Justin Herbert learning he can't let the perils of running in the NFL slide	61
J.C. JACKSON	62
His family was scared he'd go to prison. How J.C. Jackson kept his NFL dream alive	62
DERWIN JAMES JR.	65
Once called 'Pooh Bear,' Derwin James Jr.'s Florida legacy began with famous father	65
'He's a G': Healthy Derwin James embracing leadership role on Chargers' defense	67
The comeback story of Chargers' Derwin James: 'I'm coming back to be dominant'	67
Why Derwin James Jr. is NFL's most unique defensive player: 'Mr. Versatility' set to do it all for Los Angeles Chargers' defense	69
Chargers' bolt is BACK: 'Alpha leader' Derwin James drives culture of accountability in Los Angeles	71
ZION JOHNSON.....	72
How a bus driver nudged Zion Johnson on his unlikely path to the Chargers	72
Zion Johnson reveals inside info on journey to become Chargers' new starting guard.....	73
SEBASTIAN JOSEPH-DAY	75
Sebastian Joseph-Day brings a load of experience to middle of Chargers' defense.....	75
KHALIL MACK	76
How Khalil Mack's family helped him annihilate his 'soft' reputation.....	76
How the Bears and Chargers became perfect trade partners for Khalil Mack	78
New Chargers defender Mack happy to be reunited with Staley	80
Chargers coach Brandon Staley, linebacker Khalil Mack were a dynamic duo before.....	81
KENNETH MURRAY JR.	82
Los Angeles Chargers' Kenneth Murray Jr. playing with heavy heart in aftermath of brother's death	82
JOSHUA PALMER.....	83
With his friend's health on his mind, Joshua Palmer aiming for bigger Chargers role.....	83
DONALD PARHAM JR.	84
Chargers' Donald Parham Jr. on injury: 'A life-flashing-before-your-eyes kind of thing'.....	84
TREY PIPKINS	86
Chargers tackle Trey Pipkins eyes starting job after productive offseason	86
CHRIS RUMPH II.....	87
Chris Rumph II Explains 'Invaluable' Situation Entering 2022 Season	87
ASANTE SAMUEL JR.....	89
Asante Samuel Jr. has trouble learning from one former NFL player — his dad	89
RASHAWN SLATER.....	90
Chargers' young star Rashawn Slater working hard to improve — even on his honeymoon	90
Chargers rookie Rashawn Slater's football love affair: 'The sacrifices only made it grow fonder'	91
MIKE WILLIAMS	94
'He gave everything he had': How Mike Williams earned his extension with the Chargers	94
Mike Williams credits Chargers' coaching staff for throwing new contract his way	94

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

Chargers' Brandon Staley: The math, mindset behind NFL's most aggressive coach

By Daniel Popper
The Athletic
August 15, 2022

COSTA MESA, Calif. — Brandon Staley is sitting on a couch in his corner office at the Chargers' facility, freshly brewed coffee in hand. He is wearing a casual offseason outfit — sneakers, shorts, a thin baby blue dri-fit hoodie and a black BNP Paribas Open hat.

He considers a question about the value of understanding mathematical advantages.

"There's a really powerful part of this book that has stayed with me ..."

Staley stands up and walks over to the bookcase along the back wall of the office, next to his desk. He kneels and scans the shelf with his index finger until he finds what he is looking for — "The Undoing Project" by Michael Lewis. Staley pulls it out and starts flipping through the pages as he walks back to the couch and sits down again. With the book resting on his lap, he turns page after page, searching for a specific passage.

His goal here is to teach — he is the son of educators, after all. His mother, Linda, who died in 2004 after a long battle with breast cancer, taught sixth-grade English. His father, Bruce, taught fourth grade for a few years before starting a second career.

The only noise in the office is the flip, flip, flip of turning pages until Staley finds the passage he is looking for and reads aloud. "The new definition of a nerd," he recites. "A person who knows his own mind well enough to mistrust it."

He looks up.

"Your instincts aren't better than everybody on Earth," Staley says. "Do I think one of the big reasons why I became the head coach of the Chargers is because I've got instincts? Yes.

"But do I think that when it comes to making these premium decisions in the heat of the moment that, man, my instincts are so much better than everybody else, and I would do a perfect job if I didn't have any information? There's just no way."

For most of football history, coaches have made game-management decisions using nothing more than tradition and gut feelings. Staley is as well versed in this history as any person on the planet. He is a walking football encyclopedia. He has read Bill Polian's "Super Bowl Blueprints" cover to cover more times than he can count.

Staley is also determined to find advantages wherever he can, to better his team and give his players the best opportunities to be successful, even if it means admitting what he does not know. Staley sees a potential advantage in the admission — and in acquiring as much information as he can from as many resources as possible, in knowing his own mind well enough to mistrust it.

We are discussing fourth downs, opportunities gained and lost in an eventful 2021 season that fell just short, and the dreaded, polarizing word that has caused arguments and outrage across sports for most of this century.

Analytics — people in and around football spend countless hours dissecting the topic. But when the dissection happens, analytics are rarely defined as what they actually are: more information.

"I think the problem with 'analytics,' when you use that word, immediately somebody is feeling something, and they shouldn't be," Staley says. "If it was another term that people were more comfortable with, then there would be a different response. But analytics has ... it's like, well, it doesn't belong in ball. It belongs in the CIA. It belongs in investment banking. It doesn't belong in sports. And that's not true. Information has been how people have been making judgments in this game since Paul Brown and Vince Lombardi were coaching.

"What we try to do is try to use data to make better decisions."

For Staley, that process started in the winter of 2021, before he went for it on fourth down at a higher rate than any coach in the league, before his in-game decisions helped propel the Chargers to the cusp of the postseason and before the fierce backlash of the NFL world came crashing down on the then-rookie head coach when his team came up one win (or tie) short.

Staley believes in math, but he also acknowledges there is a part of the game numbers cannot and may never be able to quantify. Mindset. Emotions. Effort. The human element. And the driving force in Staley's approach to in-game decision-making was rooted in that understanding.

"There has to be a fearlessness to play in this game, and what I wanted to establish was that," Staley says. "The history of this team when I got here, it was like someone's going to get hurt, they're going to blow a lead, something catastrophic is going to happen. There's this 'Charger' thing. There's all of these external factors that I know in my life, they're just all excuses. They're just all excuses.

"And so, how do you change that? Well, you have to do things different, you have to have a different approach. ... Our mindset's going to be on us, it's not going to be on the opponent. It's going to be on us. So creating that fearless mindset of, we are going to be aggressive, we're going to put the ball in our hands, we're going to trust our guys to make plays.

"If we lose, we're going to do it on our terms, not someone else's terms."

It was crucial to Staley to instill that mindset in all of his players. But it was most crucial for his rising star quarterback Justin Herbert, who was set to enter his second pro season after an eye-opening rookie campaign. Whether he failed or succeeded, Herbert needed to experience the pressure. He needed to face the do-or-die realities of the NFL head on.

"The first person that I was thinking about was Justin. I wasn't thinking about anything or anybody else," Staley says. "For me, I came into this and I said, I know I have a special quarterback. I also know part of my responsibility is to train him. Part of my responsibility is to get him ready. And I also know that if I take the ball out of his hands, I know what that's going to do, too.

"For him to grow and be as good as he's going to be, he needs to be in these pressure-packed moments. Whether he throws it or not, it's not the point. It's that the ball is in his hands, it's in our hands as a team, and that is where it all started for me."

For his vision to be executed, Staley felt he needed to institute a clear plan for streamlined communication on game days.

Only six people would be involved in game-management discussions on the headsets. Staley and his three coordinators — offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi, defensive coordinator Renaldo Hill and then-special teams coordinator Derius Swinton — plus two staffers devoted exclusively to game-management strategy, director of football research and analytics Aditya Krishnan and offensive assistant Dan Shamash, who had previous game management experience on Anthony Lynn's staff. (Shamash was hired away in the offseason by Robert Salah to be the Jets' situational football and game management coordinator.)

"Those (six) people are in complete alignment in terms of how we're going about these decisions," Staley says. "You don't have time to have a big powwow. You don't have time to have this intricate back and forth on a headset during a game."

Next, Staley constructed the mechanics of the fourth-down decision-making in a "yes, unless" system.

At the start of each series of downs on offense, win-probability models from the Chargers football research department would indicate the number of yards the offense would have to gain on first, second and third down to make it a go-for-it — or "green," in the team's lexicon — decision.

Say the Chargers have a first-and-10 from their own 40-yard line. And say the model indicates that they would increase their win probability by going for it on fourth down as long as they have 4 or fewer yards to gain. That information is communicated to all relevant parties, including Lombardi. Lombardi can then call plays on first, second and third down knowing that if he gets to fourth-and-4 or less, the Chargers are going for it — unless Staley says otherwise.

"You can be a better decision-maker if you have things modeled ahead of time," Staley says. "You have to go into the game with a plan, and then that way you're saying, 'No,' as opposed to deciding yes or no. I'm going into it saying, we're doing this unless."

With the infrastructure built, the Chargers entered the 2021 season.

"It's not just about that one down on fourth down," Staley says. "It's what happened on the previous three. And that changes the way you play, and it changes the way they have to play you. And that's what I wanted to do, was use mindset and math to our advantage."

Back in his office, Staley is quoting "The Mighty Ducks."

He references a scene from the 1992 classic in which protagonist Gordon Bombay, a defense attorney who takes over coaching a youth hockey team to fulfill a court-mandated community service sentence, is talking to one of his players, Charlie Conway. Bombay was a star player as a kid, and he rehashes a painful childhood memory of a potential winning penalty shot hitting the post in a championship game.

"A quarter of an inch this way and it would have gone in," Bombay says in the scene. "A quarter of an inch, Charlie!"

"Well, yeah," Charlie replies, "but a quarter of an inch the other way and you would have missed completely."

Staley recites the exchange nearly word for word from memory as he discusses the 2021 Chargers season, when Los Angeles missed the playoffs after losing three of its final four games, including two losses in prime time.

They entered their Week 15 Thursday night game against the Chiefs with a chance to take over first place in the AFC West but fell in overtime after going for it on five of their six fourth downs, only converting twice.

Three weeks later, in the final game of the season at Las Vegas on Sunday night, the Chargers had a chance to make the playoffs with a win or tie. They lost to the Raiders in overtime. They went for it on seven of their 12 fourth downs, though five of those came in desperation situations in the fourth quarter and overtime.

One failed attempt — a third-quarter fourth-and-1 from the Chargers' own 18-yard line when Austin Ekeler was dropped for a 2-yard loss on a run — was a sticking point in the Monday morning quarterbacking that followed. And the failed fourth downs in prime-time games became the lasting images for what had been a promising season.

"I take full responsibility for those two games," Staley says. "There's nobody that was more devastated, that was more crushed by us losing. We're going to learn a lot from those two games. But we're going to learn a lot from all the games that we played in."

That includes wins over the Chiefs (Week 3), Raiders (Week 4), Browns (Week 5), Eagles (Week 9) and Bengals (Week 13), in which the offense went a collective 9-for-12 on fourth down.

"You have to accept it can go both ways," Staley says. "And you're ready for it."

In total, the Chargers went for it on 34 of 108 fourth downs across 17 games — a 31.5 percent go rate that was the highest in the league. Despite the high rate, the Chargers were tied for fourth in fourth-down conversion rate at 64.7 percent, making them the only team in the league with a go rate over 25 percent and a conversion rate over 60 percent.

The Chargers were highly productive on all fourth downs, despite having one of the worst punt units in the league and a field goal unit that only found its footing over the second half of the season after the team replaced kicker Tristan Vizcaino with Dustin Hopkins.

Expected points added (EPA), widely used to measure and compare efficiency in all three phases, uses historical situational data — like down, distance, score and time of game — to produce a point total a team is expected to produce on a given play. After that play, a new expected points total can be calculated based on the same factors. By subtracting the second total from the first total, you are left with the number of expected points produced on a single play.

The Chargers ranked third in the league in EPA/play on fourth downs — by going for it, punting and attempting field goals — despite ranking 25th in total EPA on punts and 16th in total EPA on field goals, according to TruMedia.

"I don't think I'm smarter than everybody else," Staley says. "I believe in myself. I believe in how we do things."

Imagine you are a contestant on "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" You have made it to the final question. One more correct answer and you win \$1 million. The question pops up, along with your four possible multiple choice options. You are stumped. You have no clue. Luckily, you have kept one of your lifelines — phone a friend.

Now answer this: Do you make the call to get someone else's opinion? What is the downside in gathering as much information as possible before making your million-dollar decision?

The same logic should apply to any decision — even the ultra-high-stakes ones NFL head coaches must make every week in the fall: the more information, the better. And that is where the Chargers football research department comes in.

At the time of his hiring, the Chargers only had one full-time analytics staffer in the building, Krishnan, whom they hired from the Browns as director of football research in March 2020. In July 2021, the Chargers hired Alex Stern, a former consultant for the University of Virginia football team who was a finalist at the 2020 NFL Big Data Bowl — the league's annual analytics contest — and an honorable mention in 2021.

"When you say analytics, it's like, well, that's an outsider's view of the game," Staley says. "But there are people that really care about the game that are really smart. They may not be a coach, they may not be a player, they may not be an executive or front office, but they have a real place in the game."

Krishnan and Stern are responsible for producing the weekly game-specific win probability models Staley uses to inform the team's strategic decisions. The models include myriad factors, like score, time of game, down, distance, weather conditions, adjusted point spread, injury reports and histories, opposing quarterback, home vs. road game, kicking and punting efficiency and more.

The models give Staley a mathematical indication of how much value the Chargers are gaining inherently in a fourth-down decision, before the play happens. That failed fourth-and-1 from the season finale in Las Vegas is a worthy example. And we can use Ben Baldwin's fourth-down bot — an open source win probability model — as a framework.

Inputting the relevant parameters — score (Chargers down 3), quarter (third), time remaining (8:57), field position (own 18), and yards to go (1) — Baldwin's win probability model gave the Chargers a 41 percent chance of winning the game if they punted. If they successfully gained that yard and converted the fourth down, their chances of winning the game would jump to 49 percent. If they failed to convert, their chances of winning the game would fall to 32 percent.

The next step is calculating the chances the Chargers have of converting the fourth-and-1. In this case, Baldwin's model gave the Chargers a 71 percent chance of converting this fourth down. (For context, the league average conversion rate on fourth-and-1s was 68.1 percent last season.)

Next, take the difference in win probability between a successful conversion and a failed conversion — in this case, 17 percent or .17. Multiple that by the probability of conversion — 71 percent or .71 — and you get 12 percent. Add that to the win probability in the case of a failed conversion — 32 percent + 12 percent — and you get 44 percent, three percentage points higher than the win probability if the Chargers punted.

In other words: According to Baldwin's model, the Chargers had a 3 percent better chance of winning the game by going for it than by punting.

The Chargers' team-specific and game-specific models are more nuanced than Baldwin's more general model that calculates win probability for every fourth-down decision from every game all season. More factors come into play — weather, kicking situations, opposing quarterback metrics, injury reports and history, etc. The Chargers also tailor their models based on how Staley wants to play in a given week, either more conservative or more aggressive.

The win probability figures are relayed to Staley and the rest of the coaches involved in game management at the beginning of a new series of downs — the "yes, unless" system — as opposed to fourth down. Staley then has final say and can do whatever he sees fit. There is no chart or sheet, just more information put into the headset of the head decision-maker. And while he trusts the math, there is always more to the decision than just numbers. That was the case with the fourth-and-1 decision in Las Vegas, too.

"When we make this, we're going to tell that team, 'This is our game to win, not yours,'" Staley remembers thinking in that moment. "It's our game to win."

Mindset, then math.

Most often, those two things aligned. According to Baldwin's model, Staley faced 17 fourth-down decisions in which he would gain at least 3 percent in win probability by going for it. He went for it on 12 of those decisions. The Chargers failed to convert four of those 12 fourth downs, including Ekeler's run against the Raiders. Staley says he is not so process-oriented that he "can be immune to the result."

"You can't be blind and say, 'Oh man, I'm so proud of that decision. It didn't work out, but I can live with that,'" he says. "There's a reality to the result. And I think as a leader, you do have to factor that in, because there's this thing called morale and buy-in that really matters. And that's something that you have to take very seriously, and that's something that is incumbent upon me to communicate to our entire team and make sure that you don't ever cross that line."

Buy-in. Morale. Mindset. The unquantifiable human element of the game.

"It's not about me," Staley says. "The mindset, it's not about one person. It's about our team."

The loss in Las Vegas showed both sides of this coin. The fourth-and-1 attempt was the right mathematical decision. But even Staley now admits that he noticed a letdown from his offense after the failed Ekeler run, and the Chargers went three-and-out on their next two possessions.

In the fourth quarter, though, the Chargers, led by Herbert, staged an epic comeback, storming back from 15 points down with 8:23 remaining. Joey Bosa sacked Derek Carr on a third-and-6 to force a punt in the Raiders' final possession of regulation, then Herbert tied the game with a 12-yard touchdown pass to Mike Williams on the final play of regulation. Herbert had a perfect passer rating on fourth down in the game

For Staley, his vision for forging an unflappability among his players had been realized in this comeback.

Even if it ultimately fell short, does it happen if Staley does not prioritize a fearless mindset in his players from his very first day on the job? There is no mathematical model in the world that can answer that question.

"For me, coming here to this team and what I had heard about this team. I knew that mindset was something that I was going to have to establish — and that I wanted to establish," Staley says, "And I think we're in the process of doing it."

Staley is reading another passage from "The Undoing Project."

"Lung cancer proved to be a handy example," he quotes. "Lung cancer doctors in the early '80s faced two unequally unpleasant options: surgery or radiation. Surgery was more likely to extend your life, but unlike radiation, it came with the small risk of instant death.

"When you told people that they had a 90 percent chance of surviving surgery, 82 percent of the patients opted for surgery. But when you told them that they had a 10 percent chance of dying from the surgery, which was of course just a different way of putting the same odds, only 54 percent chose the surgery."

He looks up.

"I think that's a big part of the language of football," he says. "Think about science itself. Sports does an even worse job of framing. People don't always have a good reference point to help them frame some of these decisions."

Staley starts scanning again, flipping pages, reading sentences to himself under his breath. Then he finds another passage he wants to share.

"The understanding of numbers is so weak that they don't know how to communicate anything," he reads aloud. "Everyone feels that those probabilities are not real."

He looks up again.

"That's the real issue," he says. "They don't think these probabilities are real."

But they are. And they could be the difference between winning and losing.

"Facts are what bring people together," Staley says. "When I tell J.C. Jackson that a wide receiver catches 90 percent of his passes outside the numbers, that math should matter to him. When I tell Justin Herbert that over 70 percent on third-and-4-to-6, they pressure, that should matter to him. That math should matter to them. It doesn't mean that on those 4-to-6s it's always going to be pressure and vice-versa. But it's part of the calculation."

Staley held exit interviews with his players, the people who brought his mindset to life, in his office after the season. Veterans came in and delivered Staley a message, as he recalls: "Don't you ever change. Don't you even think about it."

Staley had hoped to build belief among his players. And as the Chargers turn to a new season, one with Super Bowl aspirations buoyed by a defensive overhaul, it is that belief that permeates. The returning players have it. The new faces — like Jackson, Khalil Mack, Sebastian Joseph-Day, Kyle Van Noy and Bryce Callahan — want to be a part of this team because of it.

"Where we are now, we are different because of that. It's the mindset that got us here," Staley says. "This is a different group out here than last year, and it's not just because of the additions. It's because of what we accomplished last year and what we didn't accomplish."

Inside the Chargers' defensive infusion: 'They fit the way we want to play'

By Jeff Howe
The Athletic
March 25, 2022

J.C. Jackson's eyes opened wide with a smile to match.

The seafood tower dominated the middle of the table at Mastro's Ocean Club in Newport Beach, Calif., with steak, lobster, shrimp and wine passed around throughout the night. Jackson, who had just finalized his five-year, \$82.5 million contract with the Chargers, was sitting next to head coach Brandon Staley. Several Chargers assistants and members of Jackson's camp attended the welcome dinner at the high-end chop house on the Pacific coast.

Staley conversed with Jackson as though they had known each other for years rather than days. For Jackson, undrafted in 2018, the night was a celebration of how far he'd come in his career and a glimpse into a promising future in Los Angeles. For the Chargers, the night represented a significant swing in free agency, as they loaded up on defense to balance their offensively gifted roster.

"Our goal this offseason was to build a complete team, a deep team," Staley told The Athletic. "And I think we're off to a good start."

After keeping wide receiver Mike Williams on a three-year, \$60 million contract, the Chargers got to work on a defense that allowed the fourth-most points in the NFL in 2021. They were 9-8 and eliminated from playoff contention during a 35-32 overtime loss to the Raiders on the final night of the regular season. It was a squandered opportunity — losing three of their final four games and surrendering an average of 36.7 points in those defeats — in star quarterback Justin Herbert's second season.

So the defensive-minded Staley and his staff aligned with general manager Tom Telesco and key front office members, including executive vice president of football administration Ed McGuire, to pinpoint a list of players who would make an impact on defense and fit with their culture.

"The list isn't very long," Staley said.

They started with edge rusher Khalil Mack. The Chargers recognized his high cap number for the rebuilding Bears, who overhauled their leadership structure this offseason by hiring general manager Ryan Poles and head coach Matt Eberflus, and the organization might be willing to move him.

Staley, who was the Bears' outside linebackers coach from 2017-18, has long had an affinity for the former Defensive Player of the Year. Mack held out for the entire 2018 offseason and training camp with the Raiders until the Bears jumped into the mix and acquired him in a trade package that included two first-round draft picks.

Mack immediately validated the Bears' faith.

"You trade for him (in 2018) and sign him to the richest contract of any defensive player in the National Football League," Staley said. "Then he had no offseason — no spring, no training camp.

So everyone is waiting to see if this guy is in shape, has he been working? His first rep, I'll never forget it. In a one-on-one against (tackle) Bobby Massie, what that looked like with all the eyes on him, what everyone witnessed at that moment, you're like, 'Oh man, this is going to be different.' Just that explosion — what that looked like, what that felt like. You're looking at one of the elite players in the game. Just a rare player.

"You knew the ability. What expressed itself quickly was just how hard he works. In between drills, when the defense would go out against the scout-team offense, Khalil Mack would sprint to the football off the sideline. He would sprint there. Pretty soon, you've got (defensive tackle) Akiem Hicks sprinting there at 335 pounds. You've got (linebacker) Roquan Smith chasing him. And (cornerback) Kyle Fuller. It became like a game of who is going to get there first. What he did from a practice standpoint, he doesn't talk. What Khalil does is he plays, he performs, he competes. He doesn't need to say anything. He gets it done. There was no better evidence of a prime-time player than what that guy did for us in 2018. Just one of the rare players in the league."

Telesco called Poles and set the parameters for a potential trade. And on March 10, within a day of that initial conversation, the teams agreed to a deal. The Chargers got Mack for a 2022 second-round pick and a 2023 sixth-rounder.

With Mack on board, it'll be a lot more of a challenge for opponents to account for Joey Bosa and his 58 career sacks on the opposite edge. But beyond that, Staley was also excited about the way the Chargers could enhance their culture.

"That's someone who is going to make (safety) Derwin James better," Staley said. "Derwin James gives so much to our team. Well, who is giving Derwin James that in return on defense? Who is filling him up? We need to give him weapons so we can get even more out of him. This is a way to do it. Khalil Mack is a culture-changing player."

The Chargers were also focused on Jackson, who was widely viewed as the top cornerback in free agency. To feel comfortable with the requisite payday, the Chargers studied cornerbacks Jalen Ramsey, Marshon Lattimore, Marlon Humphrey, Tre'Davious White and Xavier Howard — five of the league's best corners — to evaluate how Jackson compared.

They were comfortable with the film work, notably his NFL-best 25 interceptions over the past four years. They were also impressed by his durability, as Jackson hasn't missed a game due to injury in four years (three healthy scratches in 2018). And because the Chargers place an emphasis on signing players with a championship pedigree, they appreciated Jackson's time with the Patriots, who won the Super Bowl during his rookie season.

There was also the James influence. The pair were teammates on a seven-on-seven team in high school in Florida, and James went all in to recruit Jackson to the Chargers when they linked up at the Pro Bowl in February.

James tried to sell Jackson on the team culture, the staff, their young talent, the new facilities, the California lifestyle. Everything, really. James was such an integral piece to the process that Jackson left the Pro Bowl already intrigued about the possibility of moving across the country.

His heart remained in Foxboro, though. Jackson wanted to stay with the Patriots, but the negotiations made very little progress. When the Patriots declined to use the franchise tag on Jackson, his departure from New England was a near certainty. The Patriots told Jackson to return to the negotiating table if his market didn't unfold as expected.

It did. McGuire called Jackson's camp on March 14 as soon as the negotiating window opened and expressed the Chargers' seriousness in signing the cornerback. They were among six teams that showed a decent level of interest, including three that were serious suitors. He had a few competitive offers in the same range as the Chargers' proposal, according to a source.

The Chargers' push was too strong to pass up. Jackson's deal was the fourth-highest among cornerbacks in total dollars, sixth in average annual value and third in fully guaranteed money.

"I felt like he'd be an outstanding fit for us and would provide us the type of impact player at an impact position," Staley said. "What was great about the deal, it was a good deal for both sides in terms of where he was able to exist in the marketplace and for us to be able to attack the rest of free agency. We're just really excited about him and his future and how he fits for us."

The Chargers, who ranked 30th against the run last season, also added defensive tackles Sebastian Joseph-Day (three years, \$24 million) and Austin Johnson (two years, \$14 million). Staley had history with Joseph-Day during their year together with the Rams, and those additions should help the Chargers' personnel transition into Staley's system.

"They fit the way we want to play. There was a pretty big system transition," said Staley, who took over as the Chargers head coach in 2021. "They really allow us to play the way we want to play. To pair Khalil with Joey on the edge of your defense, that's really going to help your run defense in a big way. I can't state this enough. Khalil Mack is one of the complete players in the league. This guy is not just a rusher. Why he's one of the top players in the NFL is because he's a complete player."

The improved front should create more turnover opportunities for James, Jackson and cornerback Asante Samuel Jr. Likewise, the playmakers on the back end should aid the rushers. If Herbert and the highly skilled offense continue to thrive, it'll put more pressure on opponents to play out of their comfort zone, thereby marrying it all together.

And again, Staley kept harping on the chemistry, rooted in advice he once received from longtime defensive coach Ed Donatell.

“You’re not just putting together a collection of pieces,” Staley said. “These players are people, and they’re competitors. You want to make sure when you onboard people into your locker room that they fit with who is already in your locker room. (Donatelli) told me one time, and I think it’s amazing wisdom, when you go sign a guy or trade for a guy, your locker room better know why they’re there, and it shouldn’t take them forever to know why and to see why. That’s always stayed with me.”

There’s one more aspect that shouldn’t be overlooked. Of course, the Chargers want to maximize their opportunity while Herbert is playing on his rookie contract. And looking into the future, he’ll be eligible for an extension during the 2023 offseason, though he is under the Chargers’ control through his fifth-year option in 2024.

It’s becoming an increasingly attractive place to play, and the Chargers want to ensure it’s a place where Herbert will want to stay.

“We’re going to be locked in every single year to be as good as we can be for our football team and for our fans,” Staley said. “But what we’re not going to do is mortgage our future to make that happen. We’ve been tactical so we can support Justin throughout his entire career, not just the beginning of his career. What we want to make sure we do is we have the assets, the capital to build around him for years to come. That’s been our pledge to him and all of our players. We’re trying to take advantage of the circumstance that we’re in now, and I think we’re being tactical in that approach. I think what it says to him is we’re going to compete to the best of our abilities.”

This month, that approach was highlighted by a defensive overhaul.

“We had a really good game plan going into this offseason,” Staley said. “I think we’ve executed it extremely well.”

FMIA: Brandon Staley Isn't Changing Who He Is Despite '21 Finish

By Peter King
NBC Sports
August 29, 2022

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif.—It's 5:39 a.m. in Orange County, and Chargers coach Brandon Staley is in a rush to get to work 25 minutes away. But he can't rush his drive too much through the thick fog enveloping the area around his home, not far from the Pacific Ocean.

"In the morning, you can get this fog, which is kind of cool," said Staley, an Ohio kid exposed to California life for the first time in 2020. He speaks of it not in annoyance for adding five minutes to his commute — but rather in a Hey, look at this awesome rolling fog tone.

"My wife is from Chicago. I'm from Cleveland. I don't know what our picture of California was, but coming to southern California we couldn't believe how much it feels like home."

Staley, 39, has a natural eagerness to him, which the football world should see a lot of this year. The Chargers were doomed by a leaky defense last year — the dramatic postseason-elimination loss to the Raiders has left a scar — and the offseason has brought in credible reinforcements: cornerback J.C. Jackson, pass rusher Khalil Mack, run-stoppers Sebastian Joseph-Day and Austin Johnson, guard Zion Johnson. With mature-beyond-his-years quarterback Justin Herbert piloting a top-five NFL offense, the pieces are in place for a young team to make a 2022 run, even in the stacked AFC West.

Staley's not just a coach, though. He's become a lightning rod for progressive football. The Chargers led the NFL in fourth-down conversions last year with 22, and they were fourth in efficiency, making a first down on 65 percent of their fourth-down tries. But it's the one they didn't convert — fourth-and-one from their own 18- in the third quarter of that final game in Las Vegas, leading to a Raider field goal in a three-point loss — that prompted a torrent of criticism.

The young coach is wounded but unbowed. The analytics community, quietly, loves Staley. "He's our Trojan horse," said one team research analyst in the growing community of numbers-crunchers throughout the league. Meaning: Staley's taking the heat from many who think it's insane to go for it on fourth-and-one deep in your own territory in a tight game, but four models say (narrowly) it was the right thing to do. Another analyst told me, "Everyone screamed about fourth-and-one from the 18-, but no one mentions the Chargers were six of seven on fourth down in their biggest game of the year, and they lost because they were awful against the run."

The Lead: Staley

Raiders 35, Chargers 32, Week 18, game 272, Sunday night. America watching.

"That was the ... that's the toughest loss that I've ever been a part of as a competitor for sure," Staley said, merging onto I-5, fog dissipating. "Then to watch the playoffs unfold how they did, you know, to see the AFC Championship Game and then the Super Bowl, that was a tough month for me. As tough a month as I've had.

"But I think it was a good month for me because I got a lot of work done in that month. I really took a hard look at myself number one, our team, our organization, how we did things, make those after-action reports in all phases. I got a lot of work done. As hard as it was, I think it set the stage for the type of offseason that we've had but it was as tough as it gets."

"Ryan Tannehill told me he got professional help," I said. "Not suggesting you did or you needed it, but can football send you into, even temporarily, a really depressed state?"

"When things matter to you so much, like I'm sure they do for Ryan...I think the finality of the NFL and sometimes how you lose, you can't help but be affected, because of how much it means, how much you care. But that's part of competition. I think when you compete, especially in the NFL, you're gonna sign up for losses like Ryan had, like we had. There's gonna be these really tough moments. That's what gets you back going again, though, knowing that you get an opportunity to prove yourself again. You have to show that resilience and I think that's what it's about for me. You learn a lot from everything and then you gotta bounce back and you gotta come back better. That's what I spent my time learning this offseason."

One thing that sticks with me about that game — and that spurred GM Tom Telesco to over-scout run defenders last winter — was the very end, the last two plays of the 2022 NFL regular season. The Raiders had second-and-11 from the LA 46 with 80 seconds left. Tie game. If it ended in a tie, both teams would have made the playoffs. Next two snaps: Josh Jacobs for seven, Jacobs for 10. Daniel Carlson's 47-yard field goal won it.

"My regret," Staley said, "is that in what should've been able to get us out of there with a tie. They ended up splitting us on a 10-yard run and that's what I've been thinking about — our execution on that last play. That's the tough side of things, having to live with that. I didn't do a good enough job. That's the tough side of things. That's what gotten me moving this whole offseason."

Staley was hired after coaching the league's top-rated defense with the Rams in 2020. The Chargers were 23rd in team defense last year, allowing more points than Jacksonville and Houston. That led to the offseason urgency to fix the defense. In Staley's first year as an NFL assistant, 2017, he coached the Bears' outside linebackers and got to know Mack well. Now he's gambling that Mack, at 31 and coming off foot surgery, can be the Mack of five years ago. It's a big gamble.

"I felt like we were missing...that presence up front," Staley said. "I think Derwin James is as good of a leader as there is in pro football. I think Joey Bosa is one of the top defensive players in pro football. But I think to establish a culture and the type of mindset, you gotta bring in players who can live that. I think there's no better example of that than Khalil. I saw it happen in Chicago. He's a fierce competitor."

Fourth-and-one. Regrets?

Of course you regret something when it doesn't work. That's human nature. But in the six or seven minutes we discussed it, these were the five words that meant the most: "The mindset, I don't regret."

I don't see Staley changing. And he shouldn't.

"I think as a coach any time something doesn't go down, you're gonna challenge yourself and say, 'Was that the best thing? Did I give myself, our team the best chance to win?' That was a moment in the game that I felt like we could take advantage of to really give our team a lift. And looking back on it, when we didn't make that fourth down, it had an impact on our offense for a couple of possessions. Defensively, we stopped them right away. I like the way we were playing but it had an impact on our offense for a few possessions and so I think I underestimated that, what that could do if we didn't make it. But the mindset, I don't regret. That's obviously something that in one of the many decisions in that game that if you had to do over again and you knew it was gonna happen, you obviously wouldn't do it. But the mindset of why we did it, I think in games like that, you have to go meet moments like that head-on."

There's a Twitter account run by a football analyst for The Athletic, Ben Baldwin, called the 4th down decision bot (@ben_bot_baldwin). Baldwin uses historical data for each team and each situation and analyzes each fourth-down decision to go for it during the NFL season. He provides, by the numbers, a percentage for the team to win if it goes for it and if it doesn't. He first-guesses, essentially. On this play — Raiders up 17-14, Chargers with fourth-and-one at their 18-, 8:57 left in the third quarter, Chargers with 15 running-back rushes for 77 yards to this point — the 4th down decision bot said the Chargers had a 44 percent chance to win the game if they went for it, a 41 percent to win if they punted. The recommendation ("STRONG") was to go for it. NFL partner Next Gen Stats and two other public analytics sites also said the right call was to go for it.

Austin Ekeler got swarmed trying to pierce the left side of the line. Loss of two. Maybe the Chargers will put the ball in Herbert's hands even on a short one the next time. Herbert was six for six throwing it for conversions on the other six times Staley went for it on fourth down.

There's a bit of an old-school/new-school divide on fourth-down tendencies. The four coaches who went for it on fourth down the fewest times in the league last year, in order: Pete Carroll (11 fourth-down attempts), Andy Reid (15), Bruce Arians (16), Bill Belichick (17). But Sean McVay (19 tries) and Kyle Shanahan (20) were close, so it's not definitive that the youngsters are all changing the landscape.

"We had two primetime games at the end of the season that were really, really, really the big games. We didn't win. There were some [fourth] downs in there that people are gonna scrutinize. That's part of it.

“But then there were five or six, seven games for sure — five games for sure, six seven depending how you look at it — where I know that we don’t win without that mindset. What you have to be able to do is look at the entire season and then in those games that everyone is rightfully talking about, just be really critical of yourself and that’s what I’ve tried to do. I know that what I’m not gonna apologize for is how our team played in those games because our team played exactly how I would want them to play.”

Fourth-down attitude is the bright shiny object; it’s easy to take shots when the team doesn’t convert a controversial one, and it’s understandable because it’s such an untraditional decision. But this was the big picture for the ’21 Chargers: They lost three of their last four. They gave up 34, 41 and 35 points in those losses. They weren’t enough of a complete team and didn’t deserve to make the playoffs. Now they’ve done something about it — but that something isn’t a change in philosophy by the head coach. It’s a change in personnel.

Now Staley was in the parking lot in Costa Mesa. Time to go to work.

“I know the mindset I tried to create within our team,” he said. “I know that’s not gonna change. Not one bit.”

Physicality: A Look Inside the Chargers 2022 Mindset

By Eric Smith
Chargers.com
August 11, 2022

On the morning of June 15, Chargers Head Coach Brandon Staley gathered the Bolts together for a team meeting at Hoag Performance Center.

The Chargers were set to begin a two-day minicamp, and Staley had a message to deliver to his squad.

"There's a lot that's being talked about with this group right now," Staley said. "They're going to use words like 'talent' and 'AFC West' and 'Super Bowl.'

"It actually should upset you when someone says you're a 'talented' team, or you're a 'talented' player," Staley continued. "We're not a talented team. We're a tough team.

"You're going to hear me talk a lot of about it in training camp — Toughness. Discipline. Physicality," Staley added. "We've got a football team. We're an organization. We're about something. It starts with your practice field, your weight room. If all of us in here have that mindset, then this team will be special."

The Chargers 2022 season kicks off in exactly one month with a home opener against the Raiders.

Over the next few weeks, Chargers.com will look at each of those themes Staley wants to represent his team, beginning with Physicality.

The second-year head coach explained on a macro level how he wants physicality to resonate within his team.

"It establishes a mindset of how you want to play the game. Physicality is the essence of football, especially at the point of attack," Staley said. "This is a contact game and there's a lot of different forms of that. Blocking and tackling are the essence of that.

"But when you're covering people or trying to get open, there's a physicality that needs to express itself for you to be as good as you need to be," Staley continued.

"You do it by bringing in physical players, but then creating a lot of confidence in their assignment and technique so they can truly play as physical as they can," Staley added. "It's a theme for us this year, but we really want to be able to see it. Not just talk about it, but see it."

The Bolts have seen that play out to fruition this summer during training camp practices.

But in order to see that in August, and once the regular season begins, you have to go back to March to discover how parts of this roster were built.

In the span of three days — from March 16 to 18 — the Bolts beefed up their defense.

On the first day of the New League Year, the Chargers acquired edge rusher Khalil Mack from the Bears for a 2022 second-round pick, plus a 2023 sixth-round selection.

The 2016 NFL Defensive Player of the Year, Mack has 76.5 career sacks and is also a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame's 2010s All-Decade Team that was announced in April 2020.

Mack is also one of the league's top run defenders on the edge and will be counted upon to help shore up a run defense that ranked 30th in the league in 2021.

Mack will have some help, too. On March 17, the Bolts added defensive tackle Sebastian Joseph-Day to the roster. A day later, defensive lineman Austin Johnson was added as a free agent.

That trio has nearly 250 games of total NFL experience, nearly all of it in the trenches.

"I believe in size at the point of attack. I believe this is a big man's game. I truly believe that," Staley said. "That can look a lot of different ways, but for us it's size and length on the edges, with an anchor inside. I believe we're a lot closer to being where we want to be [on defense]."

Even in training camp practice, Chargers running back Austin Ekeler noticed the lack of space when trying to squeeze through running lanes.

"I see a lot bigger bodies in the box," Ekeler said. "So, I like to see that too because as a runner, I'm like, 'Man, we've got a lot of people in here. There's a lot of big bodies that we've got to try to run through.' It's a little bit tougher on the run game in my opinion."

Linsley has noticed the extra mass up front, too.

"They're super strong with heavy, heavy hands," Linsley said of Joseph-Day and Johnson.

But it wasn't just the run defense that was addressed in free agency. Chargers General Manager Tom Telesco and his staff bolstered the pass defense, too, by adding cornerback J.C. Jackson.

The premier cornerback available in free agency, Jackson had also established himself as one of the league's best at his position. Jackson has 25 career interceptions in four seasons, including 17 over the past two years.

Yet it wasn't just Jackson's ball skills that interested Staley and the Chargers. It was his physical style in press coverage and ability to jam and disrupt opposing wide receivers in man coverage.

Jackson went into detail to Chargers.com about the mentality he brings to the field each play.

"Playing man-to-man and being a physical corner, it's not making it easy for the receiver," Jackson said. "That's what being physical is to me. When you're in a guy's face all game, that's aggravating, you know?"

"Imagine somebody lining up in your face, touching you and jamming you up every play," Jackson added. "You won't like that, right? It's being hands-on, being aggressive ... little things like that. That's what great defenses do."

Ty Nowell/Ty Nowell/Los Angeles Chargers
Jackson has been in Powder Blue for just a few shorts months. But his aggressive style has already shown up in camp.

And he said Staley is constantly harping that physicality to his team.

"He talks about it every day," Jackson said. "He talks about being a physical, dominant team, especially on defense.

"We have the guys to do that this year," Jackson added. "The team did a lot of work this offseason, and that's what Coach wants."

But make no mistake about it, that mindset also applies on offense, too.

While most of the 2022 free-agent priorities might have been on defense, the Chargers have been building up the other side of the ball in recent seasons, too.

In the spring of 2021, the Bolts added Linsley and left guard Matt Feiler to help protect quarterback Justin Herbert up the middle. Left tackle Rashawn Slater was added in the first round of the 2021 NFL Draft, and all he did was earn All-Pro honors as a rookie.

The Chargers went back to the offensive line well in the first round of the 2022 NFL Draft, too, tabbing right guard Zion Johnson out of Boston College with the 17th overall pick.

Linsley, regarded by many as the best center in the league, had high praise for his for his linemate earlier in camp.

"He's a really good player. He has a ton of raw talent. You can see he's already put a lot together," Linsley said of Johnson. "Honestly, the sky is the limit. He's very talented. I'm excited to play next to him.

"There's really not a whole lot that I've seen where I'm like, 'Eh.' He's just a calm, confident individual who loves playing ball," Linsley added.

The fifth spot on the offensive line — a battle between Storm Norton and Trey Pipkins III — will be determined as the preseason plays out, but both players have flashed and fared well in camp.

As the 2022 season approaches, Chargers Offensive Coordinator Joe Lombardi likes the mindset up front.

"We're really strong inside on the O-line, between Corey and 'Anchor,' which is what they call Matt Feiler," Lombardi said. "All of those guys are strong. You feel the line of scrimmage moving in the run game. You feel a real sturdy pocket inside in the pass game. I've been really pleased with the physicality."

Sure, Staley knows the Bolts will need to run the ball effectively this season. And a strong offensive line will help ensure that success.

But with Herbert leading the offense, being physical also applies in the pass game, too.

"I don't think it's just exclusive to the run game. It's the people who are running the routes and catching the football," Staley said. "It's the people in pass protection. Physicality isn't just about the run game. It's all parts of the game.

"On offense, we have a lot of size in our skill position players," Staley added. "Those guys are going to be tough to match up against."

That means keeping No. 10 upright at all costs and letting him spread the ball around.

While Keenan Allen is known for his shiftness, fellow wide receiver Mike Williams is the bruiser of the bunch at 6-foot-4 and 218 pounds.

"I'm a big, physical receiver. I just try to use my size to an advantage," Williams said.

Tight end Gerald Everett, who measures up at 6-foot-3 and 240 pounds, also brings that element to the field.

Add it all up, and Staley wants his team to bring the fight to opposing teams this season.

And in what appears to be a loaded AFC West, that means all three phases will have to be physical when division games roll around.

"You have to factor [opposing] quarterbacks into the equation, because that's where the game starts," Staley said. "Our division has four quarterbacks of [high] caliber, so you're trying to build your team to be able to defend those guys.

"It's not just defense defending that quarterback. It's your offense, too. It's your special teams," Staley added. "It takes a team to take down quarterbacks that are as good as that."

The Chargers went 9-7 and just missed the playoffs in Staley's first season in charge.

As he enters Year 2 as the head coach, it's clear that Joey Bosa has gotten the message that the entire teams needs to be more physical.

"You have to be smart, obviously, but it's a violent game," Bosa said. "If we want to play for a championship, we've got to get rugged and kick some ass. You can't be afraid to get after each other sometimes."

The Bolts have been physical against each other in recent practices, but they know that's not the end goal.

Instead, the real tests will begin in Week 1 and beyond.

"Every time you have to play the Chargers, you have to go through them," Staley said. "It's not going to be an easy game. You want to make teams go through you."

Los Angeles Chargers' new pass-rush duo of Khalil Mack, Joey Bosa bonding quickly

By Lindsey Thiry
ESPN.com
August 11, 2022

COSTA MESA, Calif. -- On the opening day of the Los Angeles Chargers' training camp, edge rushers Joey Bosa and Khalil Mack kneeled next to each other on the sideline.

When defensive lineman Joe Gaziano rumbled into the end zone with an intercepted pass, Bosa and Mack sprang to their feet to join in celebration then returned to the sideline, stood hip to hip and resumed conversation.

"I just love to have a guy like that to lean on, ask questions, whether it's about football or just life," Bosa said about Mack, whom the Chargers acquired via trade with the Chicago Bears in March.

Through two weeks of training camp, Bosa and Mack have appeared inseparable -- whether meeting in the backfield, on the sideline or at the film room.

"He's a fun dude," Mack said about Bosa. "But when it comes down to work, we work."

In Brandon Staley's first season as coach in 2021, the Chargers finished 9-8, third in the AFC West, and missed the playoffs for a third consecutive season.

Despite being under the direction of a defensive-minded coach -- as the Los Angeles Rams' defensive coordinator in 2020, Staley's unit ranked atop the NFL -- the defense turned in a subpar performance, ranking No. 26 in efficiency and No. 29 in points allowed, with opponents scoring an average of 27 points per game.

But after an offseason headlined by a personnel overhaul to better fit Staley's scheme -- including the additions of Mack, cornerback J.C. Jackson, linebacker Kyle Van Noy and defensive linemen Sebastian Joseph-Day and Austin Johnson -- the unit is expected to excel, especially with the return of Bosa and All-Pro safety Derwin James Jr., who remains a training camp hold-in while awaiting a contract extension.

"You have to be a complete defense, a team at all three levels that plays together. You have to play with toughness ... discipline ... physicality," Staley said. "We have to come together in training camp and really create and crystallize that identity."

It's Bosa and Mack who are expected to lead the way.

Over the past five seasons, they each have ranked in the top four in total defensive pressures. They both have 12 strip sacks in the past five seasons, tied for sixth in the league, and have a combined 134.5 career sacks.

Now on the same team, Bosa and Mack form arguably one of the top pass-rushing duos in the NFL.

"There are a lot of things that are going on between them that not many people would understand," Staley said. "To see the game through two superstars' lenses like that, two of the top players at their position in the last several years, to be teaming up and sharing their stories and what they see, it's really special."

Both veterans have somewhat eased into training camp, with each being -- by design -- limited in their 11-on-11 participation and taking some rest days. But that hasn't slowed them from learning each other's game.

Along with spending time together on the field -- "Half the time, it's just throwing ideas at each other, and the other half of the time, it's just shooting the stuff with each other and just talking about life," Bosa described -- they've also taken to the film room, studying tape of pass-rushers such as Nick Bosa, Chandler Jones and Myles Garrett.

"When we turn on the film, it's just -- I don't know, automatically, we kind of see the same things, but also we see different things," Mack said. "It's kind of like a yin and yang in the sense of understanding the game."

Perhaps also a yin and yang in their approach.

Mack described Joey Bosa as a technical and methodical rusher, while labeling himself as the opposite.

"I kind of take what you give me," Mack said. "I'm not paying attention too much to the tackle; I pay more attention to the quarterback when I rush."

It's not just the defensive front, or even the defense, that is feeling the Bosa-Mack effect.

"I've never played with a pass rush like that," said Jackson, who signed a five-year, \$82.5 million contract in free agency after playing four seasons with the New England Patriots. "I believe I can make more turnovers having those two guys going at the quarterback."

Jackson leads the NFL in interceptions since 2018 with 25.

"For us to be able to face those guys every day makes us better," quarterback Justin Herbert said.

He produced the NFL's third-highest total QBR last season, behind Aaron Rodgers and Tom Brady.

"It's good that we're going against them out here," veteran center Corey Linsley said. "They can do it all. They're technicians."

Bosa, the No. 3 overall draft pick in 2016, recently admitted he wasn't sure that he would have previously embraced a partnership with Mack, the fifth overall pick in 2014.

"As a rookie or a few years into my career, it would have been a negative almost in a way where I'm too in my head, too hypercompetitive," said Bosa, a four-time Pro-Bowl selection.

But now, at 27 years old and with six seasons of experience, the partnership could be what Bosa and the Chargers need to propel them into the playoffs.

"The competition, having an elite guy like that to look at and be like -- just keep you on your toes," Bosa said.

"It's just great to have that guy to compete with and lean on."

A fresh start in L.A., coupled by a reunion with Staley -- his former position coach in Chicago -- also could benefit the 31-year-old Mack, who was limited to seven games in 2021 because of season-ending foot surgery.

"My expectations for myself are always high," said Mack, who produced six sacks in seven games last season. "I'm not going to display or tell what they are, but I expect you guys to be able to see it when I touch the field."

Chargers coach Brandon Staley fulfills a dream with trip to Wimbledon

By Sam Farmer
Los Angeles Times
July 2, 2022

WIMBLEDON, England — Brandon Staley was simultaneously in his element and half a world removed from it.

The Chargers coach, a passionate tennis fan since childhood, spent the past two days watching Wimbledon matches in person with his wife, Amy. It's an anniversary trip for them and their first time in Europe.

Yet football is never too far away for Staley, who used the experience as an opportunity to hone his coaching techniques. He got a special invitation to watch his favorite player, Rafael Nadal, grind through a session on the practice courts. The Staleys also sat in the players' box for a Steve Johnson match, those prime seats courtesy of Marc Lucero, who coaches the former USC star.

"You're just trying to see how the top players in the world practice and perform," Staley said. "As a coach, you're trying to take in stuff in Rafa's practices that you kind of feel can help Justin Herbert. You're just observing. There were just a lot of moments in that hour pocket that I know I can bring back with me for Justin and Derwin James, because Rafa's the best of all time."

In March, the coach brought quarterback Herbert and safety James to the BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells in hopes of exposing them to the focus and dedication required to play tennis at an elite level for, in Nadal's case, a generation.

"There's always something you can observe if you're willing to look and listen," Staley said. "There's going to be something that I can see with my own two eyes that can help me with coaching."

Josh Rupprecht, who runs media relations for the Chargers, arranged for the Staleys to sit in friend Pete Sampras' seats at Centre Court. Sampras was another childhood favorite of the coach.

Staley, 39, grew up playing tennis in Ohio, was a competitive youth player and briefly considered focusing on that instead of football. The lure of playing quarterback was too strong, though, and he wound up playing the position at the University of Dayton.

"I would use my athleticism to beat you when I was a kid," he said. "I'm out there wearing basketball shoes and baggy shorts. I could use my basketball, football background to beat these rich kids in tennis."

"Beat them a different way. Beat them like Rafa does, with my mindset. Playing the game a different way. If you hit a good shot, I can go get it and I'll get it back. Then I'll go get another one. I'm just going to wear you down."

Even as football took front and center in his life, his love for tennis never disappeared. It did fade, however, after he lost his mother, Linda, to cancer when he was in college. She had picked up the sport at 35 and became a relentless player in their community.

"My mom was amazing," he said. "She was a human backstop. She'd get everything back. She was so consistent."

Linda Staley's dream was to see the U.S. Open in person one day, and perhaps Wimbledon.

That never came to be. But now her son has spent time on these hallowed grounds, and while visiting the Tennis Channel set Saturday he had a conversation with Martina Navratilova, one of her sports idols.

"If my mom were here now, she wouldn't believe this," he said.

Like his mother, Staley's wife began playing at 35, this year, and she's showing a natural aptitude for the sport. Amy is a former Division I college volleyball player, and has to resist the urge to dive for every shot. When the youngest of their three sons starts school this fall, Amy will have even more time to work on her game.

"Brandon just doesn't have the time for hobbies that most people do," she said. "It's always been a childhood love of his, reminiscing and talking about tennis. He had said for years, 'When we stop moving, I swear, we're going to start playing together. It's going to be something that we can do together, we can do with our kids...'"

The Staleys have moved 11 times since 2007, including NFL stops with the Chicago Bears, Denver Broncos and Rams before Brandon was hired as head coach of the Chargers in 2021.

Now, he has rediscovered tennis. This spring, he started taking an hour-long lesson every Friday at 6 a.m. before driving to work.

"My first lesson, it all came back for me," he said. "I was like, 'I've got to do this the rest of the year, even during the regular season. I've got to do this at least once a week.' It's been like a renaissance. I remember how much I loved it and why."

He feels it also brings him closer to his mom, who was a teacher.

"I tell people I come from the Bruce and Linda Staley coaching tree," he said. "I learned everything I know about coaching from my parents."

As for that other dream his mom had?

Staley is sending his wife and her friends to the U.S. Open this year.

Half a world away. And never closer.

Chargers begin groundbreaking moves with Super Bowl in mind

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
May 18, 2022

The Chargers conducted a groundbreaking ceremony Wednesday afternoon for their new training facility in El Segundo but before Chairman Dean Spanos said anything to mark the occasion, he asked one of his future neighbors for some help.

Sitting in the crowd was Lakers President Jeanie Buss, whose team won two championships immediately after moving its training center to El Segundo in March 2000.

"Jeanie, give me a little of that luck, will you?" Spanos said. "Our first two years, I'll take one. But I know Coach would like two, OK. I'd appreciate that."

The Chargers' facility will stand near the intersection of El Segundo Boulevard and Nash Street on a 14-acre site that was part of a sprawling campus operated by defense contractor Raytheon Technologies Corp.

The project is expected to be completed in spring 2024. Until then, the Chargers will remain in Costa Mesa, where they have been headquartered since relocating from San Diego in 2017.

"Finally, we have our home for the future," Spanos said. "I'm really happy about it. I know our staff is, our coaches, our family. Everybody's really excited about it. This is our home now."

Among those in attendance Wednesday were head coach Brandon Staley, safety Derwin James Jr. and quarterback Justin Herbert.

By the time the Chargers move to El Segundo, James and Herbert could be playing on significant second contracts. James can be extended as early as this summer. Herbert is eligible for an extension starting next offseason.

"I think you always want to extend players like that," Spanos said when asked specifically about James. "I'm not going to make any predictions, but I don't have to say enough great things about him. We love him."

Along with their day-to-day operations, the Chargers also intend to conduct training camp at the new facility. The three-story headquarters will be flanked by three practice fields.

There will be an outdoor lap pool and a lounge. Video games will be at the ready as part of a studio that eventually could host an e-sports team. The complex will have broadcasting facilities and a 180-seat auditorium for player meetings. On the top floor will be an indoor-outdoor hospitality club for VIP events.

The renderings on display during the ceremony Wednesday included one that featured a giant picture of Herbert near the main entrance of the building.

"I never imagined myself being on the side of a facility like that," Herbert said, smiling. "I thought that was pretty cool."

The ceremonial groundbreaking continued an aggressive offseason during which the Chargers have made numerous touted roster additions, particularly on defense.

A team that finished last season 9-8 and missed out on a playoff berth in the regular-season finale is now being talked about as a potential Super Bowl contender.

"I feel like expectations are a privilege," James said. "For people to think highly of you ... that's a privilege. So we need to go out there and do what we need to do."

Chargers break ground on new facility in El Segundo

*By Gilberto Manzano
Orange County Register
May 18, 2022*

EL SEGUNDO — As the star quarterback of the Chargers, Justin Herbert has seen his picture used for a lot of team events, but he was still surprised when he noticed his image on the side of the team's new facility rendering.

"I never imagined myself to be on a side of a facility," Herbert said Wednesday at the Chargers' groundbreaking ceremony for the future team headquarters and training facility. "I thought that was pretty cool. It's great to be able to share it with (Chargers safety) Derwin (James), Coach (Brandon Staley) and all these guys."

Herbert, James, Staley and General Manager Tom Telesco sat in the first row to watch team owner Dean Spanos officially announce the construction at the 14-acre site in El Segundo, which is slated for completion in the summer of 2024.

"As players, for them to believe in us, and come up with something like this, I feel like it's only going to help us get that competitive winning edge," James said.

With a lavish facility on the south of El Segundo Boulevard and east of Pacific Coast Highway on Nash Street, the Chargers are positioned to do plenty of winning in the coming seasons with Herbert and James, two of the best players in the NFL at their respective positions.

To possibly add more good fortune, the Chargers had a Greek orthodox priest conduct a 10-minute sermon before blessing the dirt and the participants who were tasked with shoveling during the groundbreaking ceremony.

"I'm just glad some water hit my head," Staley jokingly said. "It's like being at church, you're hoping it hits you."

The Chargers' new home is projected to have a main building that spans nearly 145,000 square feet adjacent to three full-sized football fields where the team will hold practices. The new headquarters is expected to have a roof-top hospitality club, full eSports gaming and content studios, and a 3,100-square foot media center.

An additional 3,400-square foot elevated outdoor turf area and two-lane lap pool for player rehabilitation are among the assorted outdoor amenities set for construction. Sonnenblick-Eichner Co. in Beverly Hills announced in March it has arranged \$276 million of construction and permanent financing for the facility.

"I really believe within the next two years, what you're going to see is going to be magnificent," Spanos said.

The Chargers will join the NBA's Lakers and the NHL's Kings as L.A. pro teams with facilities in El Segundo. It puts them less than 3 miles from LAX and 7 miles from SoFi Stadium.

Lakers owner Jeanie Buss and King president Luc Robitaille were in attendance for the Chargers' groundbreaking ceremony. Spanos said Buss was one of the first people to congratulate him when the team announced its move to El Segundo.

"Jeanie, give me a little of that luck, will ya," Spanos said on stage. "Our first two years, I'll take one, but I know Coach would like two championships."

"Jeanie Buss took my whole family out to dinner," Spanos later said. "She welcomed us. She's just a delightful person, and to have a friend like that just a mile away, I can't tell you what that means to us."

The future headquarters and facility is the Chargers' last step into settling in Los Angeles after relocating from San Diego in 2017. They played at the Galaxy's soccer-specific stadium in Carson for three seasons before becoming co-tenants with the Rams at SoFi Stadium in 2020.

While searching for a location for a permanent facility, the Chargers have had temporary headquarters in Costa Mesa since 2017.

"It's been five years in the making," Spanos said. "Finally, we have our home for the future. I'm really happy about it. I know the staff is, our coaches, our family, everybody is really excited about it. This is our home now."

Herbert, who had an NFL-caliber facility during his time at the University of Oregon, said the headquarters could help attract free agents and retain current players.

"It should be right up there with the best of the best. The Spanos family has invested a lot, and it is up to us as players to go out and deliver," he said.

Chargers hope improvements on defense make them contenders

By Joe Reedy
The Associated Press
August 23, 2022

COSTA MESA, Calif. (AP) — Justin Herbert has the most passing yards, completions and touchdowns through his first two years than any quarterback in NFL history.

Yet, for all that Herbert has done, it hasn't resulted in the Los Angeles Chargers getting to the postseason.

After an aggressive offseason, the Chargers are not only looked at as a playoff team but as a Super Bowl contender. Los Angeles not only returns most of its offense, but has significantly upgraded its defense as it looks to get back to the postseason for the first time since 2018.

"I'm really excited for this team. I think we are miles ahead of where we were at this point last year," said Herbert, who threw for a franchise-record 5,014 yards and had nine 300-yard passing games last season.

"Having been in the same offense, same defense, we've added a couple of guys on defense that will make a huge impact. It's been fun to go up against those guys because they made us better."

The Chargers were on track for a playoff spot last season before losing three of their last four, including a 35-32 overtime defeat at Las Vegas, to finish 9-8 in Brandon Staley's first season as coach.

While the offense played at a high level, the defense struggled. The Chargers were ranked 23rd in total defense and near the bottom of the league in stopping the run, third down conversion, and fourth-quarter points allowed.

Linebacker Khalil Mack and cornerback J.C. Jackson are the most significant additions on defense. Mack, acquired in a trade from Chicago, will team up with Joey Bosa to form one of the league's premier pass-rushing duos, while Jackson has an NFL-high 25 interceptions over the past four seasons with New England.

However Jackson underwent ankle surgery Tuesday, putting his availability for the first two games of the season in doubt. Jackson will miss two to four weeks, the team said in a statement.

"You have to be a complete defense, a team at all three levels that play together. You have to play with toughness, discipline, and physicality," Staley said. "The best defenses I've been a part of have those elements. I know that we're in a lot better spot."

DEFENSIVE MAKEOVER

Including Mack and Jackson, the defense will have at least six new starters. Sebastian Joseph-Day and Austin Johnson are on the defensive line with Kyle Van Noy at inside linebacker and nickel cornerback Bryce Callahan.

"The types of players out there, and the types of fundamentals, most importantly, are more what we're used to seeing and expect to see. It's not just the interior players that you guys know about. It's everybody that's improving," he said.

FAMILIARITY FACTOR

Herbert is in the same offense for the first time in his three-year NFL career, which has allowed him to hone in on improvements to his footwork and his snap cadence in trying to draw defenses offside.

Teammates have also noticed Herbert become more comfortable as a team leader.

"He's just a lot looser than usual. He's just a lot more comfortable. When you come in year one, kind of shy, don't want to talk a lot," wide receiver Mike Williams said. "But now, he's taken control and been himself."

HIGHLY SKILLED

Williams had a breakthrough season last year with 76 receptions for 1,146 yards and nine touchdowns, which he parlayed into a three-year, \$60 million contract extension.

Keenan Allen has five straight seasons with at least 95 receptions, the second-longest streak in NFL history. Austin Ekeler scored 20 touchdowns last year (12 rushing, eight receiving) and was third among running backs with 1,558 scrimmage yards.

FOURTH AND STALEY

Last season, the Chargers were the 18th team since 1991 to go for it on fourth down at least 30 times. They were 22 of 34, and their 64.7% success rate was the highest in that group.

Staley took plenty of criticism for fourth down calls that went awry late in the season against the Chiefs and Raiders, but he isn't about to change his mindset this year.

"All of those decisions are about feel. There's the math that's also a part of it, but it's more mindset than math, I can assure you that," he said. "It's the way that we want to play as a team."

THE SCHEDULE

The Chargers start with two major division tests.

They open at home against the Raiders on Sept. 11 before traveling to Kansas City four nights later to take on the Chiefs. Los Angeles' next six games are against teams with losing records last season before a Nov. 13 contest at San Francisco starts a brutal stretch that includes hosting Kansas City (Nov. 20) and road games at Las Vegas and Arizona.

The Chargers will be the home team on Jan. 1 against the defending Super Bowl champion Rams in the Battle of Los Angeles.

Chargers Participating in 'NFL Diversity in Sports Medicine Pipeline Initiative'

By Hayley Elwood
Chargers.com
May 24, 2022

On Tuesday, the NFL, NFL Physicians Society (NFLPS), and Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society (PFATS) announced the NFL Diversity in Sports Medicine Pipeline Initiative, a program slated to give med students from four HBCU medical schools an opportunity to experience working in sports medicine with medical staffs of NFL teams.

The Los Angeles Chargers are one of eight NFL teams that will host 16 students for one-month rotations in September and October of this year. The NFL will expand the program to all 32 teams in 2023.

"It's monumental," Chargers head athletic trainer Damon Mitchell said. "This is something that will allow Black and Brown medical students the opportunity to see what it's like to be a sports medicine doctor within this setting. I just can't wait to get started to show these students what we do, hopefully they like what we do, and hopefully it's something they'd want to do."

2022 marks Mitchell's 24th season with the Chargers and sixth as the team's head athletic trainer. The significance of being part of this initiative is personal to Mitchell himself as he attended two HBCUs, Bethune-Cookman University and Morgan State, and cites his experiences there as the key to where he is today. He holds a degree from Morgan State in health education with an emphasis in athletic training.

"For Black and Brown students, [Bethune-Cookman University] said they're gonna give you a shot and make sure you have everything available to you to be a successful college student," he said. "I'm very thankful for that and very appreciative of that because that's what allowed me to get to where I am today. I transferred from Bethune and went to Morgan State and the rest is history. I met James Collins [Chargers director of football/medical services] there. I met Darryl Conway [Senior Associate Athletic Director, Chief Health & Welfare Officer, & Chief Infection Officer for University of Michigan Athletics], another mentor of mine who allowed me to get into this setting."

Per the NFL, this initiative will provide students with specific hands-on experience at the club level. At the Chargers, Mitchell and Hoag are putting the curriculum together to have the students work with the athletic training staff and team doctors, watch practice, and see how the doctors and athletic trainers work and communicate with the players and coaches. All of this will culminate with the students attending games and seeing how the work during the week comes together on gameday.

As someone whose brother decided to become an orthopedic surgeon after an opportunity to work in a sports medicine setting like these students altered his career path, and got his own foot in the door to the NFL with an internship with the Philadelphia Eagles, Mitchell believes this program will help "open doors" for these students in an otherwise very "competitive" environment such as sports medicine.

"Students may think, 'I don't have the resources to get in, I don't know folks to help me get in, so I'm gonna look elsewhere,'" he said. "When I did an internship with the Eagles, I thought of it as something to do. But when I met Darryl Conway, he said he knew folks in the NFL, and that's how I met James and James brought me along [to the Chargers] and showed me there's other avenues of athletic training you can do, one being the professional side.

"When these students come in, I want to show them that there are other things available to you, but maybe these doors have to open up. And these other seven clubs besides us will open up some doors to these students. We need more diversity within this small population because it helps us become better medical professionals."

FMIA: Chargers Anime

*By Peter King
NBC Sports
May 16, 2022*

So the Chargers' 14-member video/social/wisecrass team put together a work of art in what has become a highly competitive business for reasons totally beyond me—social videos trumpeting the release of a team's schedule.

Of all the weird things NFL teams could trumpet, how the 17 games of a team's slate are ordered might be the most preposterous one. But, such is life in the NFL, where non-events two weeks after the draft and 11 weeks before the start of training camps become primetime television shows, and teams spend tens of thousands on in-house videos (and video teams) to create fun memes and social content. I guess it's a cool thing to have some fun in the No Fun League, and these videos, mostly, are a lot of fun.

This year, lots of teams used imaginative plotlines to promote their schedules—Russell Wilson as team intern in Denver; Eli Manning being his self-deprecating self with the Giants; Stephen A. Smith trolling and getting trolled by the Cowboys. But the best was the 2-minute, 7-second anime (the Japanese style of animation meant to appeal to adults probably more than children) done by the Chargers that was so full of subtle digs that it's stunning they crammed all the action into 127 seconds:

The goal: to reach a sub-culture outside of football, to drive conversation and connect with an audience the Chargers wouldn't normally relate, in hopes that the franchise would entertain Chargers fans and new fans.

Anime fans are very internet-savvy people between maybe 10 and 35, and one of the biggest is a Chargers feature producer and editor, Andrew Cordova.

He drew all the images, and he and the staff came up with all the fun subtleties in five weeks of meetings prior to the schedule release. In the video, there are 11 seven-second one-act plays (basically) and three very short two-act plays—with single bits on the teams the Chargers play once, and two references apiece to the three other AFC West teams.

The little digs are endless.

- Think of the images that got Urban Meyer in big trouble on the first day of a long weekend in Columbus last year, when Meyer was in a Columbus bar and had a couple of compromising photos taken. In the Chargers' anime, there's a snappily dressed figure at the bar in the approximate position Meyer was ... and instead of Meyer's face, there's a Jaguar head atop Meyer's body—with the Jaguar looking exceedingly forlorn. Perfect.

- Chargers versus Colts—there's a "Quarterback Carousel" at the circus, and the man running it is cartoonish Pat McAfee with his "For The Brand" tank top. (That's a slogan of his.)

- Chargers versus Seahawks—there's a graveyard poking fun at the decline of the Seahawks, with catchy inscribed gravestones of Seattle-based things: "LEGION OF BOOM, 2011-2018," "2001 SEATTLE MARINERS," "MINA KIMES FOOTBALL HOPES AND DREAMS" (Kimes likes the 'Hawks), "SUPER BOWL 49 GOAL LINE RUN PLAYS."

- Chargers versus Raiders—There's a treasure chest with old Raider junk, with a Chucky doll and a label of "AB's discarded helmets."

- Chargers versus Atlanta—A falcon flies into one of those omnipresent-in-the-south yellow-and-black Waffle House signs, advertising 28 percent off 3 waffles or more. (I have no hope for you if that image flies over your head.) The Falcon flies into the "W" on the sign, and it goes dark, and so of course you're left with AFFLE HOUSE. Arthur Blank has to be getting tired of all the jokes made at his team's expense, but this is a great one.

- Weirdly, apropos of nothing, is a drop-in of a dueling scene of cartoony Ian Rapoport and Adam Schefter furiously texting or tweeting on their phones.

Okay, I've got the McAfee, Kimes, Rapoport and Schefter meaning. The Chargers have worked with all four of those media people and know them. In a nod to pop culture and social-media mania, it wouldn't be a bad thing if those four people, some or all, would re-tweet the anime to their combined 16.1 million followers on Twitter, or talk about the video on TV. McAfee did, on his popular show, Friday, and Kimes spent a minute blasting it on "NFL Live" Friday.

Of all the images, the forlorn, slump-shouldered Jaguar was the most perfect. But the overall imagination—beginning with Cordova, the big anime fan on the Chargers' staff, was simply superb.

The best single moment of all the other videos? Easy. Josh Allen riding what appears to be a toy sheepdog, entering a room with various Bills players doing normal tasks, holding hands with a Buffalo wings-chomping tight end Dawson Knox and saying: "What does this all mean? Let me break it down for you. Absolutely nothing. Here's our schedule. Go Bills."

Thank you.

But hey ... it's a rare time in the NFL when fun can be poked. So have at it.

Chargers' savage 2022 schedule release video takes shot at dancing Urban Meyer

By Jeremy Layton
New York Post
May 13, 2022

The Los Angeles Chargers have officially raised the bar for schedule release videos – and took some impeccable shots at other teams in the process.

The team revealed their entire 2022 schedule in a hilarious anime send-up, going through all 17 matchups and animating each of their opponents – with varying levels of savagery.

After a pirate ship animation for the Week 1 Raiders matchup and dueling mechas of Patrick Mahomes and Justin Herbert for Week 2 against the Chiefs, the video tackled the Jaguars – the Week 3 opponent – and mocked Urban Meyer in an incredible four seconds. The video showed a jaguar wearing the outfit the former Jaguars head coach wore in the infamous video of a young woman grinding on his lap from 2021, looking sad and alone at a bar.

The incident was the most embarrassing one from Meyer's tenure in Jacksonville, though it was not the one that got him fired less than a full season in (a report that he physically kicked ex-Jaguars kicker Josh Lambo was). The Chargers' social media team, however, had no problem wading into the controversy.

Nor did they have a problem mocking the Browns and Deshaun Watson. Los Angeles plays Cleveland in Week 5, and in the video, the music stops and a graphic appears that says: "Redacted on advice of our lawyers."

It refers to the Browns trading for Watson and signing him to a \$230 million extension, despite 22 women accusing him of sexual misconduct. The trade was executed after Watson was cleared of criminal charges, though he still faces numerous civil suits over the allegations.

While the Chargers weren't too mean to the Chiefs, they jabbed fellow division rival Broncos by animating Mile High Stadium burning down after Russell Wilson wears a "Let Russ Cook" headband. They also took a shot at Antonio Brown's brief tenure with the Raiders, showing a dumpster that said "AB's discarded helmets."

For the Cardinals matchup, they mocked Kyler Murray deleting all of his social media posts. For the Seahawks, a gravestone for the "Legion of Boom" defense. For the Colts, a literal "quarterback carousel" that showed the QBs the team has gone through in recent years: Matt Ryan, Carson Wentz, Jacoby Brissett and former Chargers QB Philip Rivers.

All in all, it was a brilliant two minutes that put every other team's schedule release video to shame.

Chargers Win NFL Schedule Day With Hilarious Anime Announcement Video

By Daniel Chavkin
Sports Illustrated
May 12, 2022

The NFL's schedule release day has evolved into an opportunity for social media managers to show off their creativity in recent years. Every spring, organizations let their social media teams come up with fun ways to reveal their schedule.

This year, one of the fan favorites for most creative schedule reveal belongs to the Chargers. Los Angeles created an anime-inspired video, which depicts every opponent in succession.

The Chargers' full schedule features Amazon's first ever Thursday Night Football game vs. Kansas City and two Monday night games vs. Indianapolis and Denver. They will also play the Rams on New Years Day on Sunday Night Football.

While Los Angeles's video had the strongest reaction among viewers, a few other teams also successfully revealed their schedule in a creative way.

The Panthers used a nostalgia theme for their video, while the Giants enlisted Eli Manning's help for their unveiling.

However, Los Angeles's tweet won the night, receiving over 10,000 retweets in just two hours.

Chargers roast opponents in scathing anime-inspired NFL schedule release video

By Kevin Skivver
Sporting News
May 12, 2022

NFL schedule releases have become something of an art form in recent years, but teams generally aren't openly hostile to their upcoming opponents.

Enter the Chargers' social media team. Los Angeles went with a good, old-fashioned anime intro for its schedule reveal. But while anime intros are generally an odyssey of positivity through some faraway land, the Chargers chose violence.

Things start on a somewhat positive note, with the Raiders being depicted as your typical marauding pirates — ship at all — and the Chiefs getting the Pacific Rim-esque mech treatment they've earned.

Then it gets weird.

In Weeks 3, 4, and 5 the Chargers play the Jaguars, Texans and Browns, respectively.

The reveal starts with a remarkably sad-looking jaguar dressed suspiciously like a certain former 13-loss coach sitting alone in a pub (that game is in London).

That's followed up by a Texan wiping out in vintage anime form. Then, the piece de resistance: a cut to a field of rainbows and butterflies with a title card that says "REDACTED ON ADVICE OF OUR LAWYERS" to denote the Browns, who traded for Deshaun Watson this offseason.

The video goes on in much the same fashion, but that trio of blows is so devastating it's hard to top.

Good for the Los Angeles social team being terminally online. Schedule release day was a little bit better for it.

NFL Fans Couldn't Get Enough Of The Chargers Anime Video Taking Cracks At Their Opponents

*By Robby Kalland
Uproxx
May 12, 2022*

At 8:00 p.m. ET, Twitter was flooded with NFL schedule release videos as team social staffs were allowed to finally put their hard work from the offseason up, as the league put out all 32 schedules.

Each team takes a unique approach to these videos, with some getting celebrities on board — even celebrity haters, like Dallas did with Stephen A. Smith this year — and others picking a theme and going all in on it. Fitting in that latter category was the Los Angeles Chargers, who had to have spent an upsetting amount of time putting together this anime video for this year's schedule release, which is far better than it has any right to be — and also features some incredible digs at their opponents.

It does a pretty incredible job of being entertaining for everyone, as anime fans will surely be able to pick out tributes to different shows, while NFL fans who have never seen an anime will be able to enjoy the not so subtle jokes about L.A.'s opponents.

Among those are the Jaguar posted up in a bar like Urban Meyer, having Kyler Murray deleting all his social media posts in Arizona, the 28-3 jab at the Falcons on the Waffle House sign, and avoiding a disaster by redacting whatever they had planned for Deshaun Watson and the Browns.

Unsurprisingly, the video was a hit with fans from all around the league, who dove in to find as many easter eggs as they could in the frames.

Los Angeles Chargers' draft not flashy, but necessary after splashy offseason start

By Lindsay Thiry
ESPN.com
May 2, 2022

COSTA MESA, Calif. -- The Los Angeles Chargers commanded attention at the outset of the offseason.

They acquired All-Pro outside linebacker Khalil Mack from the Chicago Bears in exchange for a second-round pick this year and a 2023 sixth-round pick. Then the Bolts signed Pro Bowl cornerback J.C. Jackson to a whopping five-year, \$82.5 million contract in free agency.

But a star-studded streak of activity came to a halt on the opening night of the NFL draft when the Chargers used their first-round pick, No. 17 overall, to select a guard.

"Guards are people too, right?" Tom Telesco asked, grinning, in a rhetorical question following the opening round of his 10th NFL draft as Chargers general manager.

After making the high-profile initial offseason moves to improve a defense that ranked No. 29 in the NFL last season and allowed an average of 27 points per game, the Chargers selected Boston College guard Zion Johnson with their first pick in the draft, prioritizing protection for third-year quarterback Justin Herbert and a need to keep their offense moving.

"I know it's not the sexiest pick in the world, but he's tough, he's durable, he's smart," Telesco said about Johnson, who is anticipated to step in immediately at right guard. "We have some excellent skill players, both at receiver, tight end, also at running back and with Justin Herbert.

"Obviously, these guys cannot do their jobs without a rock-solid offensive line. As much as this pick is to protect our quarterback, which is a big part of it, this is also to facilitate everybody else. It's pass protection, it's run game."

It's not just that the Chargers' first pick wasn't that exciting, their entire draft didn't warrant headlines. And it also didn't yield the exact results for which the general manager hoped.

"It never goes perfect, because you can't control everything," Telesco said. "But it was a good weekend of work."

However, in a season with playoff expectations after a near-miss in 2021 extended a three-year postseason drought, the Bolts were able to quietly address several areas of need, including the offensive and defensive lines, running back and the secondary.

"From the last game that we played 'til now, we're certainly a much different-looking football team," said Brandon Staley, whose first season as coach resulted in a 9-8 record and third-place AFC West finish. "There's a lot of time between now and when we play, so we're always going to be trying to find that winning edge, but I really like the team we have in front of us now."

The Bolts selected eight players after entering the three-day event with 10 total picks. Two of their picks, both seventh-round selections, ended up with the Bears, as the Chargers traded them to re-acquire the 2023 sixth-round pick they sent to Chicago as part of the Mack trade.

The Chargers selected guard Jamaree Salyer in the sixth round to join Johnson on the offensive line. The Georgia product has experience playing all five positions on the line, and although he said some teams projected him as a right tackle, the Chargers have penciled him in as an interior player.

"He has a great makeup, great attitude to come in and try and win a job," Telesco said about the NCAA national champion.

The Bolts used a fourth-round pick on Texas A&M running back Isaiah Spiller, whose rushing and pass-catching abilities are expected to complement Austin Ekeler. Staley said safety Derwin James Jr. vouched for Spiller "in a big way" as another former player of coach Jimbo Fisher, who coached James at Florida State and Spiller at A&M.

"[James] was saying, 'You know that if you can play all three downs for Jimbo that you're a legit guy,'" Staley explained. "He has really good instincts."

Spiller led the SEC in rushing yards since 2019, which includes a conference-best 1,844 rushing yards after contact in that span.

The Chargers also added Purdue fullback Zander Horvath in the seventh round.

Defensively, the Bolts built depth in their secondary by selecting Baylor safety JT Woods in the third round.

"He's a safety with a lot of cover ability, with his length and his speed," Telesco said. "He shows a little bit of corner movement, so we kind of see him as a defensive back."

They also picked Wake Forest cornerback Ja'Sir Taylor and Mississippi cornerback Deane Leonard in the sixth and seventh rounds, respectively.

The Chargers also drafted UCLA defensive tackle Otito Ogbornia in the fifth round to join a defensive front that already has undergone a significant makeover with the addition of defensive tackles Sebastian Joseph-Day and Austin Johnson in free agency. Like Ogbornia, Joseph-Day doesn't have to travel far, as he was with the Super Bowl champion Los Angeles Rams last season.

"We look at lot closer to what I expect to look like," Staley said about the interior of the defensive line. "We're not there yet, but we're a lot closer."

Some questions remain as the Chargers continue the offseason program and look ahead to training camp.

Despite adding two offensive linemen, there remains no clear starter at right tackle. Storm Norton and Trey Pipkins III will again be among candidates to fill the spot.

And depth continues to be a concern on the edge behind Mack, Joey Bosa and second-year man Chris Rumph II.

"To kind of fill out the depth of that position, we're going to have to look elsewhere," Staley said. "Whether it's the undrafted free agency right now or veteran free agency or before the first game - - sometime during training camp -- that'll probably happen at one of those three junctures."

As Staley prepared to exit his post-draft news conference, he provided a reminder the work is ongoing.

"Today is an ending, tomorrow is a beginning," he said.

Sometimes it's flashy. Sometimes, as seen during a three-day draft stretch, it's less than glamorous.

But if all goes as planned, each phase will play its part in making the Chargers relevant again come late January.

Chargers aim for more draft hits with the help of Snoop Dogg

By Gilberto Manzano
Orange County Register
April 27, 2022

Chargers general manager Tom Telesco had a slight hesitation before embracing the benefits of having a Snoop Dogg concert near the team's draft war room.

"Snoop is a coach, so we may have to lean on him a little bit and see who he likes in the first round," Telesco jokingly said.

It will be a unique setting for Telesco's 10th draft as general manager of the Chargers. For Thursday's opening round, the Chargers will operate from their locker room at SoFi Stadium while Snoop Dogg and Colombian artist Esther Anaya entertain fans on the field for DraftFest.

Chargers star players Justin Herbert, Keenan Allen and Derwin James are scheduled to greet fans on the performance stage before learning who Telesco drafted from the nearby war room.

Telesco didn't mind moving his draft operations for a day – the Chargers found their franchise quarterback in Herbert in the 2020 draft when COVID-19 forced every team to pick from home. Also, the Chargers are slated to pick 17th on Thursday, the same pick they had in 2018 when they landed James.

Throw in the lucky surfboard from the "pandemic draft" and the Chargers might turn the odds in their favor for the three-day draft in Las Vegas.

"If we hadn't had the pandemic draft, it would be really, really strange," Telesco said. "I would have been, probably, fighting back a little bit on it. ... If I can draft from my dining room table, I can draft from anywhere."

The Chargers didn't have to fight with the Rams to use SoFi Stadium on opening night of the draft as the Rams don't pick until the third round Friday. The Rams haven't made a first-round pick since selecting Jared Goff first overall in 2016. They have shipped their top picks in trades for Goff, Brandin Cooks, Jalen Ramsey and Matthew Stafford.

The Rams' aggressive approach took time but paid off with a Super Bowl victory more than two months ago and now a handful of teams have followed Rams general manager Les Snead's "Eff them picks" mantra.

The Chargers' AFC West rivals Raiders and Broncos don't have first-round picks after acquiring wide receiver Davante Adams and quarterback Russell Wilson, respectively. The Chiefs, the six-time AFC West champions, have two first-round picks after trading speedy wide receiver Tyreek Hill to Miami. Eight teams will enter Thursday's draft without a first-round pick, including the Chicago Bears, Indianapolis Colts, Cleveland Browns and San Francisco 49ers.

"I haven't changed, no," Telesco said after being asked if the notable trades have made him change his draft approach. "I think what people forget about the Rams – I mean, everyone is focused on those first-round picks – but they've drafted and developed players really well, middle and late (rounds). It kind of gets glossed over. I guess it's not as sexy, but they've done a great job with that, both Les and (Rams coach) Sean (McVay)."

Telesco has selected at least one first-round draft pick in his prior nine drafts with the Chargers and most of those picks have been successful. Left tackle Rashawn Slater (2021), Herbert (2020), James (2018), wide receiver Mike Williams (2017) and edge rusher Joey Bosa (2016) are cornerstone pieces for the organization, and even running back Melvin Gordon (2015) and cornerback Jason Verrett (2014) had success before moving on to different teams.

Kenneth Murray (2020) and Jerry Tillery (2019) so far haven't lived up to expectations. Ironically, Telesco's first draft in 2013 had arguably his worst first-round selection with offensive tackle D.J. Fluker, who went 11th overall, and his best middle-round pick in Allen, who was taken in the third round and is now a five-time Pro Bowler.

But, unlike the Rams, Telesco hasn't found enough gems in the middle to late rounds, which could be one reason why the Chargers have only two playoff wins in his tenure. Only one player remains from Telesco's drafts in 2018 (James), 2017 (Williams), 2016 (Bosa) and 2013 (Allen) and none from 2014 and 2015.

Telesco is also on his third head coach – Brandon Staley was preceded by Anthony Lynn (2017-2020) and Mike McCoy (2013-2016).

Most GMs wouldn't see a 10th season with the same team without at least winning one division title, something Telesco hasn't done, but not many GMs can say they have drafted six Pro Bowlers from their first-round selections, including a franchise quarterback.

With the 17th pick, the Chargers could start their draft by selecting defensive tackle Jordan Davis to repair their run defense, or cornerback Trent McDuffie to defend the star quarterbacks of the AFC West, or wide receiver Chris Olave to stretch the field for Herbert, or offensive tackle Trevor Penning to block for Herbert.

But the Chargers also need a running back to complement Austin Ekeler, another pass rusher to assist Bosa and Mack, depth at linebacker and players who can contribute on special teams, an area that has hampered the organization for the past decade. The Chargers have 10 total picks, with two in the sixth round and four in the seventh round, to address these needs.

"In my career, I can't remember ever having this many picks in the sixth and seventh rounds," Telesco said. "I have no idea how it's going to roll. When you get down toward that seventh round, the way we do our board, there's not a lot of players left down there. We'll kind of see how it shakes out. It's going to be kind of fun, I guess, to have that many picks in the seventh, but we'll see. It wouldn't be a straight focus on just special teams. We'll kind of see where it goes."

Telesco said it's possible that the team could look to trade down in the first round to regain the second-round pick they sent to the Chicago Bears for Khalil Mack, but that might put them in the back of the line for the opening round. Telesco has never traded down in the first round, but he's also never traded a second-round pick for a veteran player before acquiring Mack.

A few more quality pieces in this year's draft could be what the Chargers need to finally win their first division title since 2009.

"Yeah, I don't really grade drafts," Telesco said. "I'll leave that up to you."

Getting to know the 5 additions to Brandon Staley's Chargers coaching staff

By Daniel Popper
The Athletic
February 24, 2022

Brandon Staley has added five new coaches to his Chargers staff this offseason.

Let's meet them.

Special-teams coordinator Ryan Ficken

The Chargers hired Ficken on Feb. 3 to replace former special-teams coordinator Derius Swinton, who the team fired five days after the end of the regular season.

Swinton achieved commendable on-field results despite working with a very young and inexperienced group of special-teams players. The Chargers found some stability in that phase after they added kicker Dustin Hopkins and returner Andre Roberts during the bye in Week 7. Swinton deserves credit for successfully integrating those two veterans into his unit and also for getting improvement out of his young coverage players and return blockers over the course of the season. The Chargers ranked 21st in special-teams EPA from Week 10 on, according to TruMedia. And they finished 18th in weighted special-teams DVOA, Football Outsiders' efficiency metric that puts more emphasis on recent games. Swinton was given a pretty barren cupboard when he arrived in the winter of 2021, and he helped turn the Chargers special teams into a functional unit by the end of the season.

But as general manager Tom Telesco said at his end-of-season news conference, Swinton was not a "perfect fit." My read on the situation is that Swinton's coaching style and personality did not marry with Staley's vision. And so Staley went and found that "perfect fit" in Ficken.

Ficken, 42, had spent his entire NFL coaching career with the Vikings, serving various roles with the organization over 15 seasons under three different head coaches. Ficken, who was a walk-on receiver in college at Arizona State, was hired by Brad Childress in 2007 as the Vikings' assistant running backs coach. In 2009, he shifted to assistant wide receivers coach for the final two seasons of Childress' tenure as head coach.

Ficken stayed in that same role when Leslie Frazier was promoted to head coach in 2011 to replace Childress. In 2013, Frazier's final season with the Vikings, Ficken made the transition to assistant special-teams coach. He stayed on in the same role when Mike Zimmer replaced Frazier in 2014. Ficken served as assistant special-teams coach for Zimmer from 2014 to 2020 before being promoted to special-teams coordinator last season. When Zimmer was fired in January, Ficken became available.

It is impressive that Ficken remained with one organization for that long. The NFL is a difficult business, and coaches tend to bounce around quite a bit. That longevity would seem to point to both his capability as a coach and an ability to fit in and mesh with different personalities.

"The coaches there, when there was turnover, they believed in me and thought I could add value to the organization," Ficken said Thursday.

In 2013, the Vikings and then-special-teams coordinator Mike Priefer were looking for an assistant special-teams coach after former assistant Chris White left to take a college job at Iowa. Ficken said Priefer had seen him working with special teams during his time as the assistant receivers coach and decided to offer him the role. Priefer is now the Browns' special-teams coordinator.

"He brought me over to the dark side," Ficken said, "and I haven't looked back since."

Ficken and Staley are close friends with Eagles defensive coordinator Jonathan Gannon. Staley and Gannon grew up together in Ohio. Ficken and Gannon coached together with the Vikings from 2014 to 2017. Gannon was Minnesota's assistant defensive backs coach. That was the primary connection. Ficken also coached Cordarrelle Patterson for four seasons in Minnesota. Staley coached Patterson for two seasons at Hutchinson Community College in Kansas. Staley was the assistant head coach and defensive coordinator at Hutchinson from 2010 to 2011. Patterson is slated to become a free agent in March.

Ficken led a notable turnaround in his only season as Vikings special-teams coordinator. The Vikings ranked 31st in special-teams DVOA in 2020 and 13th last season.

On his philosophy, Ficken said, "Keep it simple. That's my biggest thing. I want to make sure I keep it simple so I can go ahead and allow those guys' God-given abilities to take over."

Ficken's first coaching job was at UCLA, where he served as a graduate assistant from 2004 to 2006. He said he first moved to Newport Beach after college when he was still looking for a job, a short drive from the Chargers' current facility in Costa Mesa. He then moved to Hermosa Beach before eventually settling in Culver City. So this is very much a full-circle opportunity for Ficken, who is in the process of moving his wife and three children to Southern California.

"It's exciting," Ficken said. "Looking forward to the challenge."

Special-teams assistant Chris Gould

The Chargers announced the hiring of Gould as Ficken's special-teams assistant this week. He is replacing former special-teams assistant Mayur Chaudhari, who was fired along with Swinton in January.

Gould, 36, is the younger brother of 49ers kicker Robbie Gould. He spent the past seven seasons with the Broncos — the first two as a coaching assistant and then the past five as an assistant special-teams coach. Gould and Staley coached together for one season with the Broncos in 2019 on Vic Fangio's staff.

Gould was a punter and kicker in college at the University of Virginia. He went on to kick for three seasons in the Arena Football League — two years with the Chicago Rush and one with the Arizona Rattlers. He was then hired as a special-teams quality control coach for Syracuse in 2012. He spent three seasons there before joining the Broncos.

Gould brings specialist expertise to the staff at a time of transition for the Chargers' specialist group. Hopkins and long snapper Matt Overton are both set to become unrestricted free agents. So is Roberts. And punter Ty Long is a pending restricted free agent.

"He's a phenomenal coach," Ficken said of Gould. "He's got a great background with some of these specialists."

Ficken said he was involved in Gould's hiring process. He also said Gould's responsibilities will stretch beyond just specialists.

"He might have a niche in that because he was a kicker," Ficken said. "But he's a well-rounded coach."

Offensive line coach Brendan Nugent

The Chargers offense had an outstanding season in 2021. They finished fourth in both offensive EPA/play and Football Outsiders' offensive DVOA. That efficiency and productivity, rather predictably, led to some brain drain from the offensive staff. Coordinator Joe Lombardi interviewed for the Texans' head-coaching vacancy. Wide receivers coach Chris Beatty reportedly interviewed for the Vikings' offensive coordinator job. Tight ends coach Kevin Koger reportedly interviewed for the Packers' OC job.

Only one coach was poached, though, and that was offensive line coach and run game coordinator Frank Smith, who was hired as the offensive coordinator on Mike McDaniel's Dolphins staff. Smith did a tremendous job with the Chargers' offensive line this past season. He got an influx of talent between Corey Linsley, Matt Feiler and Rashawn Slater. But he navigated some significant injuries to Oday Aboushi and Bryan Bulaga and had that group, on aggregate, playing well, particularly in pass protection. Slater had an All-Pro season as a rookie. The Chargers allowed the fourth-lowest pressure rate in the league in 2021, according to TruMedia.

Nugent, 39, will replace Smith. Nugent spent the past seven seasons with the Saints. He was the assistant offensive line coach from 2017 to 2019, then was promoted to run game coordinator and assistant offensive line coach in 2020. He served as the Saints' offensive line coach last season.

Lombardi worked with Nugent on Sean Payton's Saints staff for five seasons. Lombardi was the Saints' quarterbacks coach from 2016 to 2020. Nugent should be very familiar with Lombardi's scheme, so this hire makes a lot of sense. Payton, of course, retired this offseason.

Pass game specialist Tom Arth

Arth and Staley go way back. They first crossed paths in 2013 when Arth was the head coach at Division III John Carroll and Staley was the defensive coordinator and secondary coach. Staley left for a season in 2014 to coach at James Madison before returning to Arth's John Carroll staff for two more seasons as DC from 2015 to 2016.

In 2017, Arth, 40, left John Carroll to become the head coach at Chattanooga, which plays in the FCS. He spent two seasons in that role before rising to the FBS and taking the head coaching job at Akron, where he coached for the last three seasons. Meanwhile, Staley left for the NFL in 2017 to join up with Fangio in Chicago.

Arth was fired from Akron in early November after compiling a 3-24 record — though it's worth mentioning that the university was dealing with COVID-19-related financial issues during his tenure.

Amid these issues, Staley had reportedly targeted Arth for his initial staff last offseason. Now that Arth was a free agent, he made the move to Southern California.

Offensive assistant Mike Hiestand

Hiestand spent the last three seasons working on Fangio's defensive staff with the Broncos. He was a defensive quality control coach and assistant to the head coach in 2019 and 2020 and was the assistant defensive line coach and assistant to the head coach in 2021. Hiestand and Staley were on the same Fangio staff in 2019.

The Chargers announced Hiestand as an offensive assistant, which is interesting considering his playing and coaching history is all on the defensive side. Hiestand was a linebacker in college at Illinois State. He was a defensive grad assistant at Florida International in 2013 and at Notre Dame from 2014 to 2015. He then served as defensive coordinator at Ave Maria University — an NAIA school — from 2016 to 2018 before joining the Broncos.

Hiestand specialized in defensive line last season, and that position group was obviously a weakness for the Chargers in 2021. Giff Smith remains the defensive line coach, but he was a holdover from Anthony Lynn's staff under defensive coordinator Gus Bradley. Staley had issues translating his run defense scheme to the players early last season and he and defensive coordinator Renaldo Hill basically overhauled that entire phase of the defense during the bye. That led to some improvement over the second half of the season. Perhaps Hiestand will bring added fluency in the scheme after coaching with Fangio for the past three seasons.

We will find out more about Hiestand's specific role when we talk to Staley next week at the combine in Indianapolis.

Chargers-Chiefs will be first Thursday night game on Amazon

*By Joe Reedy
Associated Press
April 28, 2022*

Los Angeles Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert will visit Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs on Sept. 15 in the first game on Amazon Prime Video's "Thursday Night Football" package.

The Week 2 matchup between AFC West rivals was announced on Thursday during the first round of the NFL draft.

Amazon will pay \$1 billion a season to carry the games for 11 years. Prime Video will carry 15 regular-season and one preseason game. They will be available on stations in the participating teams' markets, which is the same practice when they are on ESPN and NFL Network.

NBC has the opening game of the season and also Thanksgiving night. The final week of the regular season has two games on Saturday and the remaining 14 on Sunday.

Al Michaels and Kirk Herbstreit will be the announcing team for the "Thursday Night Football" games. Michaels moves to Prime from NBC while Herbstreit will pull double duty. He will do NFL games for Prime and remain ESPN's lead college football analyst.

The league announced last week that the complete schedule will be released on May 12. However, international games will be revealed on May 4 with other notable matchups being announced the week of May 9.

This will be the fourth time in five seasons that the AFC West rivals have had one of their games in prime time. They met last year on Thursday night in Week 15 when Kansas City won 34-28 in overtime. They also had a Thursday night game in 2018 and a Monday night matchup in 2019 in Mexico City.

The Chiefs and Chargers have split their regular-season matchups the past two seasons. Last season, Kansas City (13-6) made its fourth straight trip to the AFC Championship game before losing to Cincinnati in overtime. Los Angeles was 9-8, but missed the postseason for the third straight year after dropping three of its final four games, including the regular-season finale to the Las Vegas Raiders in overtime.

There could be other AFC West matchups in prime time when the complete schedule is announced. The division is loaded with star power at quarterback with Mahomes, Herbert, Las Vegas' Derek Carr and Russell Wilson's arrival in Denver.

BRANDON STALEY

Chargers trade for Khalil Mack is a deviation from their norm — and hints at Brandon Staley's influence

By Daniel Popper
The Athletic
March 10, 2022

The Chargers have made their move, and Brandon Staley's fingerprints are all over it.

Khalil Mack, a four-time All-Pro edge rusher and former NFL Defensive Player of the Year, is headed to Los Angeles. The Chargers on Tuesday agreed to trade a second-round pick in next month's draft and a sixth-rounder in 2023 to the Bears in exchange for Mack. The Athletic confirmed. ESPN was first to report the trade, which will not become official until the new league year begins Wednesday.

This deal is monumental for two reasons:

1. The Chargers are adding an elite defensive player in Mack, and he will single-handedly change the makeup of a defense that ranked 26th in Football Outsiders' DVOA and 28th in TruMedia's EPA/play last season.

2. Staley is showing how much influence he has in personnel decisions, and it signifies a shift in how the Chargers are doing business.

The first point is obvious. The second point is less so.

Mack just turned 31 years old. Trading draft picks for an older player is not something general manager Tom Telesco has previously done. It goes against every fiber of his team-building philosophy. In fact, before Tuesday, Telesco had traded a draft pick for a player just two times in his nine years as GM. He traded a conditional seventh-round pick to the Cowboys for defensive tackle Sean Lissemore in 2013. And he traded a conditional seventh-round pick to the Bills for quarterback Cardale Jones in 2017.

That's it. That's the list.

In his time with the Chargers, Telesco has always stuck to a firm roster-construction strategy. Draft players, develop them and re-sign the ones who have earned second contracts. Then use free agency and trades only as a means to supplement the roster with talent.

The Mack deal is a deviation from that strategy. And it is no coincidence that this deviation is occurring as Staley is entering his first full offseason as the Chargers' head coach.

Staley has a close personal relationship with Mack. The two spent a season together in Chicago in 2018. Staley was Mack's position coach as the outside linebackers coach under defensive coordinator Vic Fangio. Mack had 12 1/2 sacks and six forced fumbles that season and earned first-team All-Pro honors. That connection was certainly a factor in this trade.

There were other important factors, too, primarily where the Chargers are currently positioned in terms of talent and finances.

The defense was not good enough last season in any facet. They could not stop the run. They could not cover consistently enough on the back end. They did not produce enough pressure on the quarterback. That all led to the worst third-down defense in the league and a downright bad unit overall, despite star players Derwin James and Joey Bosa playing the whole season.

When Staley took the head-coaching job last winter, he made it a priority to improve and stabilize the Chargers' offensive line. They signed three new starters in free agency and drafted a franchise left tackle, Rashawn Slater, in the first round. By focusing resources on that position group, the defense was mostly neglected. The only defensive starter they added in the offseason was rookie cornerback Asante Samuel Jr. The organization felt like Staley — a respected defensive coach — could take the existing pieces, led by James and Bosa, and turn it into a functional defense. That did not happen, in large part because of depth issues.

Now we are seeing Staley's vision for his second season. He solidified the offensive line in 2021 to help ensure Justin Herbert's continued development. In 2022, he is infusing his defense with talent, and he is doing so in a manner that runs contrary to how the Chargers normally operate.

Adding to the defense was the stated goal entering this offseason, and we are seeing it come to fruition with this trade for Mack, who will impact the defense in several ways. The Chargers now have two elite edge rushers on opposite sides of their defensive line, and opposing offenses will not be able to double-team Bosa and Mack every play. The pass rush — which ranked 19th in pressure rate last season — will improve. So will the run defense.

Financially, the Chargers' ample cap space allowed them to make this deal. They entered this offseason with close to \$60 million in space, according to OverTheCap. That number decreased after they agreed to an extension with Mike Williams earlier this week. But they still had space, and they are using it on Mack. All of this, of course, is made possible by Herbert's cheap contract. You have more money to spread around to other position groups when you have an elite quarterback on a rookie deal.

"This year, we can attack it a little bit differently because we do have a lot of cap space and we do have a quarterback on a rookie deal," Telesco said at the combine earlier this month, foreshadowing what was to come. "But the goal every year is the same. The goal is to challenge and to compete for a championship."

Mack will have a cap hit of \$17.75 million in 2022, according to numbers from OverTheCap. That's going to take up a healthy portion of the Chargers' remaining spending space for this offseason. But they will still have enough room to be players in the free-agent market, particularly at cornerback and on the defensive line. Re-signing Uchenna Nwosu is now less likely.

Mack's cap hits will jump to \$22.9 million in 2023 and \$23.25 million in 2024. The Bears are reportedly eating the \$24 million in remaining prorated signing bonus on Mack's deal, which lowers the cap hits he will have with the Chargers.

"We certainly have the space, whether it's for our players or for players from the outside," Telesco said at the combine. "It's a nice resource to have right now."

Staley needed defensive talent, and the Chargers went and got a familiar player who could elevate his unit to new heights.

Herbert has two years left on his rookie deal and is eligible for a market-setting extension next offseason.

Telesco has said he does not believe in championship windows. But the time to win is now. It will only get more challenging once Herbert signs his second deal. That is undeniable. And the team making this aggressive move is proof of that window existing.

The trade was an emphatic statement.

Brandon Staley's Chargers are not your Same Old Chargers.

Staley's journey: Chargers coach's cancer battle defined him

By Joe Reedy
Associated Press
October 3, 2021

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Chargers coach Brandon Staley will be on the national stage Monday night for the first time when Los Angeles hosts the Las Vegas Raiders.

The narrative will be predictable. How Staley went from Division III defensive coordinator to NFL head coach in five years.

But the 38-year old Staley also wants the attention shifted another direction. Something that is more personal and real to him.

As the NFL begins its "Crucial Catch" initiative, Staley would like everyone to know about his most significant victory — being a cancer survivor after he was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma 14 years ago.

"I wouldn't be the head coach of the Los Angeles Chargers if it weren't for my cancer journey. Cancer has been, if not the biggest, one of the biggest reasons why I'm here today," Staley said on Saturday. "I think what cancer does is that it can bring out the best in you. I know that it's brought the best out in me."

Staley was in his first season as a graduate assistant at Northern Illinois in 2007 when doctors discovered a grapefruit-sized tumor on his right lung. The Perry, Ohio, native underwent six months of chemotherapy treatments in Cleveland during offseason breaks. That was followed by six weeks of morning radiation sessions in Chicago during the season so that he could continue coaching.

Cancer has also affected more than just Brandon. His mother, Linda, died from breast cancer in 2004. Bruce, his father, had thyroid cancer when Brandon was younger and completed treatment for prostate cancer last year.

"You can't do it by yourself. I learned that by watching my mom and my dad," Staley said. "I think that so much of beating cancer is believing in yourself. A lot of times, it's knowing that there are other examples out there that show you that you should believe. I got to see it with my mom and dad. I was lucky that it was personal."

Jason Staley — Brandon's twin brother and younger sibling by 2 1/2 minutes — said that his brother's approach to beating cancer bears many resemblances to his coaching philosophy and getting those around him to buy in.

"He's always had this special way to get you to believe. Every time I talked to him, he explained, this is what's going on, this is what I'm doing, and this is how we're going to beat this," Jason Staley said.

"The way he approached it was very methodical. There were no peaks and valleys. It was one treatment at a time; find what progress you can, and continue to get stronger and better.

"His ability to stay in the present and not let it get too big was the catalyst for him. Not letting the past affect him is the same way he coaches his

players. He said, 'I'm just going to compete, and I'm going to grind this thing into the ground,' and 'I'll be damned if he didn't do it.'"

Northern Illinois was the first step on a coaching road that to Staley being hired by the Chargers in January. After a second stint as John Carroll University's defensive coordinator in 2016, he was a linebackers coach in Chicago and Denver under Vic Fangio for three years before becoming the Los Angeles Rams defensive coordinator in 2020. In one season, the Rams defense went from 13th to leading the league.

Staley's communication skills have drawn rave reviews from players. Defensive lineman Linval Joseph, who is in his 12th season, said the way Staley has explained his system and philosophy has been the best he has experienced in the league.

Joseph isn't the only player to share that sentiment.

"Coach Staley is very open. He brings it to us, his plan. He listens to us, and he sees how we see it, too. He asks how we see it," safety Derwin James said. "We are constantly communicating, and that's what makes him so great as a coach. It's not just, 'Hey, you do it this way.' It's both ends of the stick."

Staley's first win as an NFL coach came on Sept. 12, when the Chargers rallied in the fourth quarter to defeat the Washington Football Team 20-16. It also was on what would have been Linda Staley's 64th birthday.

"That meant everything. That would have been the 18th birthday we celebrated without her, and this is the first one where I haven't been sad," Jason Staley said. "As a brother, that's the best gift he could have given. She loved watching us play sports."

Jason Staley said seeing his brother have the platform to reach and inform others about cancer awareness is more important than the wins and losses on the field, especially during the league's many cancer awareness programs in October.

It goes back to when they were 12 years old, sitting at a kitchen table and hearing that their mom had breast cancer.

"His goal is for the 12-year old kid that gets this news in 2021, that they don't have the same outcome we did," Jason Staley said. "From a platform standpoint, the most important thing is just his ability to make a difference and keep my mom's memory and legacy alive."

The Chargers come into Monday night's game 2-1 after a thrilling 30-24 victory at Kansas City gave them their first 2-1 start in nine years. While Justin Herbert has directed a pair of fourth-quarter comebacks this season, the defense, where Staley still calls the plays, has set up the drives with takeaways.

The Raiders, who are expected to have a large contingent of fans at the Hollywood Park stadium, are 3-0 for the first time since 2002. Derek Carr leads the league with 1,203 passing yards entering Week 4 and has led Las Vegas to two overtime wins.

While Staley is still emerging and adjusting to being an NFL head coach, he has already helped others going through their cancer journey. He met a Chargers season-ticket holder who was

recently diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma during an event in April.

"You need to see other examples of why you should believe that you can do it," Staley said. "I think hopefully, from me, they can see somebody that — I'm just a kid from Perry, Ohio. I was in Division III five years ago. You can live your dreams; you can do anything that you dream of if you believe in yourself."

Unlikely interview set Brandon Staley on journey from St. Thomas to head coach of the Chargers

By Mark Craig
Minneapolis Star Tribune
November 12, 2021

Brandon Staley, the 38-year-old cancer survivor who raised the Rams' defense to No. 1 a year ago and now has the Chargers atop the AFC West as a rookie head coach, essentially began his coaching career 12 years ago while sitting in his car at a truck stop in Beloit, Wis.

He couldn't bring himself to cross back into Illinois because of something University of St. Thomas head coach Glenn Caruso had told him hours earlier during an interview for an opening to coach the Tommies' defensive line and special teams.

"Brandon was a longtime quarterback, an offensive guy who was working in administration as a graduate assistant on Jerry Kill's staff at Northern Illinois," Caruso said. "I think he was wondering, 'Why does this guy have me up in St. Paul interviewing for a defensive job?'"

"But I liked him right away. I said to him, 'I'm going to offer you the job, and I think you're going to call me before you get to the Illinois state line, and I think you're going to accept it.'"

It was early 2009. Staley, born Dec. 10, 1982, in Perry, Ohio, was 26. He was two years removed from beating Hodgkin's lymphoma with chemo treatments at the Cleveland Clinic. And he was closing in on asking his girlfriend, Amy, to marry him.

"I pulled over because I had to make sure it was OK with my future wife," Staley said last week when asked about his fateful pit stop along I-90 West. "I knew Amy was probably going to have to stay back in Chicago while I took that job in St. Paul. I wanted to make sure we were a team that could make it happen."

"Also," he added, "I didn't want to waste time and have Glenn take the offer away from me. Meeting him, I knew he operates fast."

Staley got the job and spent the 2009 season in St. Paul helping Caruso continue turning the Tommies from the 2-8 team he inherited in 2008 to 11-2 and Division III regional finalists two seasons later.

From there, Staley's whirlwind race to the top of his profession included stints as associate head coach and defensive coordinator at Hutchinson (Kan.) Community College (2010-11); graduate assistant at Tennessee (2012); defensive coordinator and secondary coach at John Carroll University in Ohio (2013, '15-16); defensive coordinator and secondary coach at James Madison (2014); outside linebackers coach with the Bears (2017-18); outside linebackers coach with the Broncos (2019); defensive coordinator with the Rams (2020); and head coach of a Chargers team that's 5-3 and plays host to the Vikings (3-5) at SoFi Stadium on Sunday.

Sleeping in a car in Mobile

Staley played quarterback at Perry High School, the University of Dayton and Mercyhurst (Pa.) University. His graduate assistant stint at Northern Illinois started in 2006, two years before Kill's staff arrived from Southern Illinois.

"I think he was video coordinator when we got there," said Tom Matukewicz, who was Kill's linebackers coach and is now the Southeast Missouri State head coach. "In the transition, I basically fell in love with the guy and took him under my wing. There wasn't a lot of on-field coaching for him, but he was kind of my right-hand man."

So how in fact did the young administrative assistant and former quarterback end up interviewing for D-Line and special teams coach?

Well, it all started when Matukewicz and Caruso's defensive coordinator, Wallie Kuchinski, met and hit it off at a coaching clinic.

"Tom Matukewicz became a guy I really trust," Caruso said. "He called me out of the blue."

Staley says that call eventually changed the trajectory of his career, challenging him to grow and become a more well-rounded coach who learned to see the game not just from a former quarterback's perspective.

But first Caruso had to be convinced to grant the interview request in the first place.

"I came at it pretty strong in that call to Glenn," Matukewicz said. "I said, 'Hey, just do me this favor. Interview him. And if you don't hire him, I'll pay for the interview.'"

Matukewicz laughs when he hears people call Staley "an overnight sensation" after the Rams led the NFL in yards allowed (281.9) and points allowed (18.5) last year.

"I was there when he went to the Senior Bowl and slept in his car because he didn't have any money for a hotel," Matukewicz said. "My wife and I gave him gas money, but we didn't have money for a hotel."

"Brandon and Amy made a lot of sacrifices. Brandon isn't a silver spoon. He's made it because he's worked his butt off and he's great at leading and teaching football."

Cancer survivors bond

Staley and twin brother, Jason, grew up in a home where teaching and football were intertwined. Bruce, the dad, coached football. Linda, the mom, was a teacher.

Cancer first struck the home when Bruce was diagnosed while the twins were in grade school. A few years later, Linda was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Bruce survived. Linda lost her nine-year battle when Brandon was at the University of Dayton. Three years later, Brandon, then 24, received his diagnosis.

"When Tom called me about Brandon, he said, 'This young man has gone through a ton of struggles in his life, and he's overcome them all,'" Caruso said. "He's tough. The year Brandon was here, we're getting ready for our first playoff game. We're sitting around talking about this very good opponent and their very fancy schemes and plays and all that."

"At the end of the meeting, I ask if anyone has anything to add. Brandon stands up with his clipboard in his hand and says, 'I heard a lot about schemes tonight, but no one said this team is tougher than we are. Let's go win.' And we did."

Staley looked back on that season last week and credited Caruso and St. Thomas with giving him a solid foundation he still leans on.

"Glenn is the total package," Staley said. "All you have to do is look at what's happened there since he arrived. That year allowed me to see up close what a real head coach should look like. I have so much respect for those guys. St. Thomas has a blueprint that I really believe in."

Staley stays in touch with Caruso and others at St. Thomas. Last year, Caruso and his wife, Rachael, went to Tampa to watch Staley's defense beat Tom Brady and the Buccaneers.

There's another side to Staley's relationship with the Carusos, one that had Glenn choking up.

"In 2017, we're getting ready for the playoffs and Rachael goes in for a routine checkup and we find out that she has Stage 3 colorectal cancer," Caruso said. "Brandon would pray for Rachael daily. Brandon would text Rachael, and it's not like he didn't have other things going on because he's coaching in the NFL."

"If he knew she was going in for chemo, he would just send a note and say, 'Hey, I'm thinking about you. I love you. I'm with you.' If there was a surgery, I swear he would be the first one to be calling after the surgery as I'm sitting there in the waiting room."

Staley heard those words and said, "From my experience, I just know that you can't do it alone. ... Those guys are amazing people. They just mean a lot to me."

To this day, that interview with Staley back in 2009 has stuck with Caruso.

"Nowadays, when I want to strongly recommend someone for a job, I think back to Tom Matukewicz calling me about Brandon," Caruso said. "I pick up the phone and say, 'Just bring him in and if you don't hire him, I'll pay for the interview.' That sure worked with Brandon."

Column: Well versed on Chargers curse, Brandon Staley might be the coach to end it

By Dylan Hernandez
LA Times
September 8, 2021

A well-regarded sports executive once told me that only an idiot would judge a coach based on what he says at his introductory news conference.

Almost eight months after Brandon Staley was hired by the Chargers, every time the rookie head coach speaks publicly is basically an extension of that news conference. His team has yet to play a real game; most of what the former Rams defensive coordinator says is theoretical. Until he wins a game, his words are just words.

Nonetheless, as Staley spoke recently under a giant tent next to the Chargers' practice field, he made a convincing case for why he'll be the man who removes the longstanding curse afflicting the team.

The first step in solving a problem is acknowledging there is one — and Staley is acknowledging their wretched history.

"I think what people don't do a good enough job of is admitting what's out there," Staley said. "What I've tried to do is confront the truth head on with these guys. Like, hey, people do think that you're cursed."

Wait, he has addressed this with his team?

"Oh yeah," Staley said.

Curses don't exist. Staley knows that. But he also knows how a franchise's past can affect the mood of a fan base in times of crisis, how a sense of fatalism in the stands can gradually seep onto the field until the negativity becomes inescapable.

"I'm a former cancer patient," Staley said. "So are both of my parents. There is no such thing as a person with bad luck. It's just life. It's what you make of it. We'll write our story, based off the people that are here and how we do things."

Makes sense. Much of what Staley says does.

The 38-year-old Staley, who was the defensive coordinator at John Carroll University just five years ago, is an engaging communicator. He speaks in grammatically-correct sentences, which doesn't seem like a big deal until you consider how few people do.

His players rave about how smart he is. So do the reporters who cover him every day.

"I love the way he talks," receiver Keenan Allen said. "He talks with passion, energy and confidence."

Staley also has a potential generational quarterback in Justin Herbert.

"Quarterback helps a lot," Staley said. "Your odds of playing in the Super Bowl aren't very good if you don't have a premium quarterback. If you don't, you have to be loaded everywhere else. It's just hard to do."

Herbert passed for 4,336 yards and a rookie-record 31 touchdowns last year after being a first-round pick.

"Normally, when you see someone that is as talented as Justin, they will tell you size, arm strength," Staley said. "But that's not what people talk about. What they talk about first is intangibles, how sharp he is, what a hard worker he is, how humble he is. And that's how I know he'll be a special guy because he has the tangibles on top of premium talent."

Staley especially likes how hard Herbert is on himself.

"That's what great competitors have, that perfectionist [mentality]," Staley said. "An artist can spot his own flaw before anyone else can. But not only can he identify it, then what he does is he goes out and takes care of it every day. He's the last one on this practice field every day. He's the last one every day. He's the first one in our building every day and he has that competitive stamina to bring his game to life."

Herbert was upbeat about how he prepared for his second season by facing a Staley-designed defense in training camp.

"He'll talk about their defense and explain, 'This is why we play it, this is how the safeties will play it,' and how to beat it," Herbert said. "Those are great conversations because I'm new to this league. To learn whatever I can and be around that, he's a guy that knows so much, so that's super helpful."

The Chargers are hoping Staley will be a defensive version of his previous boss, Rams coach Sean McVay. In his lone season with the Rams, Staley coached a defense that gave up the fewest points and yards in the league.

Staley will have players to work with on the Chargers' defense, so long as the group remains healthy.

All-Pro safety Derwin James was sidelined last season recovering from a knee operation. Defensive end Joey Bosa sat out four games because of two separate concussions.

"They hold their disguise so well and they're always showing [coverage] shell," Herbert said. "It puts the offense in a tough position because everything looks the same and you're not really able to pick up where the pressure is coming from, where to slide to and who to point. Just seeing all of that, it doesn't get much more complicated than that, so I have really appreciated that."

How Staley deploys Bosa could be critical, as Melvin Ingram's departure to the Pittsburgh Steelers will allow blockers to focus more on him. Bosa said he liked the culture Staley was creating, something that will be critical when hardships strike.

"He's a genuine guy and he really wants that out of his players," Bosa said. "I don't think that there's any surprises — when we hit some adversity, we'll see what we're all made of together — but, right now, I like his energy. I don't see it as a fake or forced thing. I think he's learned from some of the best coaches in the league, so he likes to emulate that kind of stuff. I think he's really genuine. Personally, I really appreciate that."

Staley has said all the right things so far. The question is how that will translate on to the field.

Brandon Staley gets Chargers to buy in with collaborative culture

By Gilbert Manzano
Orange County Register
July 27, 2021

Brandon Staley was introduced as the Chargers' head coach, but he looked the part of a motivational speaker by comfortably engaging with about 100 high school athletes during a football camp at Long Beach Poly High earlier this month.

Staley noticed three-time Super Bowl champion Willie McGinest standing to his left while he spoke about building relationships and seizing opportunities.

"I told the group, when you're around guys like Willie McGinest, you need to take advantage of that opportunity and introduce yourself," Staley said about the Long Beach area legend who attended Poly and USC before winning championships with the New England Patriots. "You need to be around a guy who comes from where you come from and has achieved all that he has."

"I know I'm going to introduce myself after this because I know that there's things I'm going to learn from him."

Staley learned plenty from McGinest after a lengthy introductory chat about what it takes to win a Super Bowl and how to make a lasting impact in Southern California.

Staley plans on sharing that knowledge from McGinest – and everything he's learned in the past seven months since being hired as the Chargers' head coach – to his 86 players who were expected to report Tuesday for the start of training camp. Staley's first camp practice as a head coach is Wednesday at Jack Hammett Sports Complex in Costa Mesa.

A RELATIONSHIP-DRIVEN COACH

Staley, 38, has quickly made a name for himself as an innovative coach constantly looking to learn from others by forging genuine relationships. His giving-and-receiving approach has led to a meteoric rise since earning his first NFL coaching job with the Chicago Bears in 2017.

He's no longer the assistant coach pushing for a head coaching gig, but he continues to have the same approach and isn't leaning on his impressive credentials, which includes turning the Rams into the top-ranked defense in the NFL last season during his one-year stint as defensive coordinator.

Staley spent the offseason listening and encouraging feedback from his new Chargers players and coaching staff to gain trust and create a collaborative environment.

"It's a position that he has been working really hard for," Chargers edge rusher Joey Bosa said about his first impressions of Staley. "Now, he gets to be the head guy and run things exactly how he wants to. He wanted us to know how confident he is in us as players and how much he trusts us. He's really open to talking and suggestions. It's a great relationship that he's building so far."

Staley's defensive scheme produced winning results with the Rams, but he spent months tweaking it to fit the strengths of the Chargers' defensive roster that features Pro Bowlers Bosa, safety Derwin James and cornerback Chris Harris Jr. and emerging linebackers Kenneth Murray and Drue Tranquill. Staley took the foundation of his defensive system from Broncos coach Vic Fangio when he was his outside linebackers coach in Denver and Chicago from 2017 to 2019. But Staley didn't attempt to replicate Fangio's scheme and added his own wrinkles.

"He is his own man," said Harris when asked to compare Staley to Fangio. Staley coached Harris with the Broncos in 2019. "He is doing it the way that he wants to do it. He's more relational than Vic (Fangio). Vic is kind of closed-door. You have to work your way in with Vic. Coach Staley, he is just a very sociable guy."

Although Staley was assigned to the outside linebackers, he often asked Harris for advice during their lone season together in Denver.

"We talked all of the time, all through the year and during the season," said Harris, a four-time Pro Bowl cornerback. "He would pick my brain, 'Chris, what would you do in this coverage? What did you think on this?' We would just talk football all of the time. From there, I knew that he was a very intelligent coach. He was a very relationship-driven coach. Guys liked him."

"Then Coach Fangio always had opportunities for his assistants to have presentations. Coach Staley always had amazing presentations and always kept everybody upbeat on what he was presenting. From there, I knew that he would definitely have a great chance to be a head coach."

BLENDING IDEAS

Staley, who overcame cancer after being diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma at 24, presented himself as a friendly and talkative coach during a 90-minute introductory news conference with Chargers reporters in January.

Chargers assistant coaches and players have yet to see Staley shout in anger and many don't expect that to change when the games arrive – win or lose.

Defensive backs coach Derrick Ansley first worked with Staley in 2012 at the University of Tennessee when Staley was a graduate assistant. Ansley said Staley's friendly personality hasn't changed in the past decade.

"He always came off very humble, very eager to learn and asked a lot of good questions," Ansley said. "You could tell at that age that he was going to go on to bigger and better things. He was always impressive from Day 1. He hasn't changed one bit."

Staley is the latest 30-something NFL head coach with a calm demeanor. He quickly meshed with Rams coach Sean McVay last season because of their similar personalities. Staley will use what he learned from competing against McVay during Rams practices to form the best offensive system for quarterback Justin Herbert, the reigning Offensive Rookie of the Year. But Staley, a former college quarterback at Dayton and Mercyhurst University, will also collect past experiences from his coaching staff.

Quarterbacks coach Shane Day has recent success from working with Kyle Shanahan and the San Francisco 49ers the past two seasons. Offensive line coach Frank Smith made a lasting impact as a tight ends coach with the Las Vegas Raiders and was instrumental in Darren Waller's development. Offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi spent 12 of the past 14 seasons working in New Orleans with Saints coach Sean Payton, who has operated one of the most productive offenses in the NFL since 2006.

"It's been really fun to work with him because he's one of the few guys that's a defensive head coach but also played quarterback," Day said about Staley. "That's a very unique experience. I've really enjoyed having our conversations because he's bringing a lot to the room. He's shared a lot of defensive perspectives with the quarterbacks. When he's able to frame it from a quarterback's perspective, that really helps us integrate it into our thought process. I've really enjoyed a lot of our conversations."

Staley has been busy blending ideas from different perspectives to create a successful operation on the field, but it always goes back to relationships for the coach from Perry, Ohio. Taking the time to get to know his players away from football is how he got the Chargers to quickly buy in, despite his lack of head coaching experience.

BUYING IN

James immediately realized his good friend and Rams cornerback Jalen Ramsey was right about Staley when the two had their first conversation during Staley's tour of the Chargers' facility.

"Everything that I've heard, and everybody I've met through this game, had nothing but great things to say about (Staley)," James said. "Our first talk on his first day here, the day he signed with the Chargers, I remember him just bringing me up here and wanting me to be a part of his moment. For me, it's just relationships. Everything that's been said has been spot on."

Staley has embraced backgrounds and personalities by letting players be themselves. He refers to cornerback Michael Davis by his nickname "Vato," which is Spanish slang for man.

"That's what he likes to be called," Staley said about Davis, who's half Mexican. "If you know Vato, that's such a big part of his story. What you try to do is you try to tap into that, and I think what's so cool about learning L.A., Southern California is that Mexican American, that Latino population is such a huge part of the fabric of this place and what makes it so cool."

"So the fact that we have a player that's half Mexican and what that means to people, because he's so proud of his heritage, yeah, I'm going to tap into that."

Staley has made all the right moves when it comes to building relationships and installing his systems this offseason, but the next phase of his challenge as a first-time head coach is getting his team prepared during training camp as games quickly approach.

RELYING ON TRUST

Staley will have plenty on his plate as the team's defensive play caller, but he plans on leaning on the trust he has with his coaching staff, specifically defensive coordinator Renaldo Hill, who will be in the booth while Staley calls plays on the field.

"I've learned so much from him and we have such a strong professional relationship and personal relationship," Staley said about Hill. "I think having that upstairs perspective as a coordinator, there's going to be things that I think he can help me with between series. ... He can talk to the defensive staff from an adjustment standpoint when my big-picture focus then transitions to (special) teams or offense and I think we've done a lot of trial runs in the spring camp.

"I can't emphasize how special of a coach he is and how much he's meant to our staff and our players."

Staley has quickly risen through the coaching ranks because he listens and wants others to succeed with him. That formula helped him as a small-program college coach at John Carroll University and James Madison and he hasn't gone away from that in the NFL.

The relationships and trust Staley has created since being hired as head coach will dictate how the Chargers go in 2021.

Chargers' new leader a family man: 'I am from the Bruce and Linda Staley coaching tree'

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
February 5, 2021

It was a single line — just 10 words — from a news conference that stretched beyond an hour and a half:

"I am from the Bruce and Linda Staley coaching tree."

When Detroit unveiled its new head coach on Jan. 21, the guy talked about biting kneecaps and kicking teeth, Dan Campbell's bizarre fit of passion stirring national attention.

On the same day, just a short time later, almost no one noticed when Brandon Staley was introduced by the Chargers and talked about his mom and dad, calling them "my heroes."

This is a coach whose first NFL job came with the 2017 Chicago Bears and noted defensive mind Vic Fangio.

When he was coaching collegiately at John Carroll, Staley was so enamored with Fangio's concepts that he would finish his meetings and game-planning, and rush off to study whatever Fangio was up to next.

Back then, Fangio was San Francisco's defensive coordinator and catching the 49ers on television in Ohio sometimes meant having to go to a nearby sports bar, where Staley would sit alone in wonderment.

After the 2018 season, Fangio left Chicago to become the head coach in Denver and took two assistants with him. One of them was Staley.

Barely a year later, Staley was hired by the Rams to be their defensive coordinator and brought along everything he had learned from his handpicked mentor.

Still, when asked to declare his roots, Staley put family over football, which is understandable given how much this family, bonded by hard reality, has persevered together and kept alive a tradition of teaching.

"I am from the Bruce and Linda Staley coaching tree."

That is Brandon Staley's line and this is the story behind that line.

Everyone else saw him coaching Jalen Ramsey that day, in a moment especially poignant and peeved.

Television cameras showed Staley reasoning with the Rams' all-everything cornerback shortly after Green Bay had taken a one-touchdown lead on an Aaron Rodgers pass.

Ramsey, his team en route to a crushing 32-18 NFC divisional-round playoff loss last month, was visibly upset on the field and now well short of pleased on the sideline.

Sitting at home just outside Pittsburgh, nearly 700 miles from Lambeau Field, Jason Staley watched his twin brother coaching, too, but saw something else entirely.

He saw the woman whose impact was so profound on the Chargers' new coach that it resonates still today, nearly 17 years after her death.

"Watching Brandon teach those guys, I get a little bit of my mom back," Jason said. "I get to see that, and it's just so cool. It's the reason I pay whatever DIRECTV charges me to get his games."

Linda Staley taught sixth-grade English in northeast Ohio before the breast cancer won, ending her 9½-year battle against a disease doctors estimated would take her life in less than one year.

Bruce Staley also was a teacher — fourth-grade math — before he and Linda learned their first child instead would be children, twin boys. A combined annual income of \$22,000 wasn't going to work for a household about to double in size.

So Bruce took a second job that eventually became a second career in adhesive materials. He was a coach, too, mostly AAU basketball, working with the twins from fifth grade through their junior years at Perry High, about a 45-minute drive from Cleveland.

He always had an even, measured demeanor on the bench and an equally steady point guard on the floor, Brandon possessing sublime ball-handling skills and the sort of passing ability that led to him setting assist records in high school.

Two decades later, while watching the Rams play the Packers, Jason said he laughed more than once at the images of his brother at work.

"He looks like my dad, kind of stalking the basketball sideline," Jason, 38, said. "It's like a flashback: 'That's my dad. That's what he would do.'"

Brandon knew only two positions growing up: point guard and quarterback. He was the sort of player who almost never was taken out of a game. He was athletic but — at 6 feet, 160 pounds — there just wasn't enough of him.

So he ended up at Dayton, which plays non-scholarship football, arriving as a fifth- or sixth-stringer. During that first year, buried on the depth chart, Brandon attempted to walk on to the school's Division I basketball team. He made the final two before being cut.

He'd end up starting for two seasons in football, operating the Flyers' option offense, being voted a captain and winning 16 of 21 games.

"He was as good as any player we had on the chalkboard," said Mike Kelly, Dayton's coach at the time. "He would always ask why. Most athletes don't ask why. It's, 'OK, Coach, got it,' and they just go to it. Brandon wanted to know why all the time."

The call to return home came during Brandon's junior year. It was his father. Mom was dying. Originally diagnosed with 21 cancerous lymph nodes, Linda's fight had been an extended and courageous one.

The disease showed up when the twins were 11 and not quite two months after they'd lost an aunt, Ann Maltarich, also to breast cancer. The first two years weren't as bad as the seven that followed as Linda's condition intensified, even as she long outlived the forecasts.

"An incredible will," said Bruce, a two-time cancer survivor himself. "Nothing ever negative, either. Not a 'why me' kind of thing. Incredible resolve. Just graceful. That's what I saw."

Linda would spend weeks at a time in the hospital, typically isolated and communicating with her three children — the Staleys have a younger son, Michael — mostly through journals the boys would write.

So they didn't always see the pain, but seeing the struggle was as unavoidable as the sound of their mother in the bathroom getting sick again. Jason said he never saw his father cry, those tears also coming only in private.

"That kind of fight leaves a mark," Jason said. "As kids, you see that and there's no way that doesn't affect you. When you think back to how they handled it and how she fought, those are the things that empower us."

At his introductory news conference, Brandon called his mother "the most graceful, loving, strongest person I know." He also said she remains his inspiration today "as a coach, as a father, as a husband."

He didn't include "as a teacher" but only because there's little difference between teaching and coaching to Brandon, who became more than a son to Linda after she was diagnosed. He and his brothers also became her students.

No longer able to work, Linda taught her sons instead, showing them the importance of building relationships with students and recognizing how each one learns and then using that foundation to build something special.

"She's the best teacher I've ever seen, certainly," Brandon said. "She was always able to reach people that were more difficult to reach. Seeing that up close when I was a little kid, I saw the power in that. I've tried to embody a lot of that as a coach."

The lesson remains powerful today and so, too, does the memory of Linda's goodbye. Jason said the turnout at her funeral was eye-opening in the number of lives his mother touched, all that love expressed after she died on Valentine's Day 2004.

Two busloads of players arrived from Dayton and two more from Mercyhurst College, where Jason played linebacker and was student body vice president. Jason that day even had to help a few of his teammates tie their ties.

"You would have thought the funeral was for a superstar," Bruce, 63, said. "The line to get in this place was unbelievable. It was more than you could have hoped for. I'm sure she would have been thrilled."

Mercyhurst is a small liberal arts school in Erie, Pa., hardly known for its athletes but famous for its underdog. Former heavyweight champion Buster Douglas was recruited to play basketball for the Lakers in the early 1980s before giving up hoops for boxing.

In 2005, the school was home to another long shot — a reunion of the Staley twins, Brandon transferring to play football with his brother one final time, both now graduate students.

They lived together and worked out together, even took a class together. Jason had considered not using his final season of eligibility, but Brandon talked him out of it.

Marty Schaeztle wrote all about the twins that season for one of the school's game-day programs. He knew their story well since Schaeztle also is the Lakers' football coach.

"I think once they lost their mom, they really realized the value of family and time," he said. "I think they believed it would be a very good thing to play one more time together. We were fortunate to be able to make that happen."

Brandon practically dragged Jason to watch film with him and catch his passes. As one of the team's new captains, Jason had no choice but go along, refusing to be outworked by someone who had just arrived on campus.

He also had no interest in looking bad in front of his big brother. See, Brandon is the older twin, by two minutes. Still, there were times when big brother was almost too driven.

"He was a classroom rat, a film rat," Schaeztle recalled of Brandon. "It was natural for him to try to put everything together, from the protections to the routes to what was going on in the backfield. It came to him very naturally."

By that point, Brandon was on his coaching path and, the next year, was a graduate assistant at Northern Illinois. Those 2006 Huskies made the Poinsettia Bowl.

It was on that trip to San Diego that the night sweats and the flu-like symptoms turned worse. Brandon, who also had a growth in his chest, called his dad, and Bruce remembers telling him, "You need to get home and get home now."

The doctors determined it was lymphoma.

"As a twin brother, it's the worst day of your life, scariest moment of your life," Jason said. "I'm feeling guilty because I don't have it. I would have given anything, anything to take that cancer out of him and put it into me."

These twins would eventually serve as each other's best man. They got engaged only two weeks apart and married just six weeks from one another.

They competed plenty as kids but, more often, teamed up. Brandon was always the better athlete. Yet, to this day, the only thing that really bothers Jason is the fact that Brandon, despite being an inch shorter, was the one who could dunk a basketball.

Brandon now calls the six months of chemotherapy and six weeks of radiation that followed his "cancer journey." He phoned his twin brother after every treatment, reassuring Jason that things would work out, the patient also the healer.

As a former college quarterback evolved into an NFL defensive coordinator, Brandon has been touted for his ability to see football from both sides. His vision goes even deeper than that.

"I looked at it as a chance to compete," Brandon said of his diagnosis. "It was a chance that could really bring out all the best in me. When you get to the other side of it, there's an energy, there's a strength, there's a feeling that you can do anything that you dream of. That's what I've been trying to do every day since."

And now, he's the Chargers' head coach, a young, sharp leader ready to pair with Justin Herbert, the team's young, sharp quarterback.

Brandon's first call after accepting the job was to his wife, Amy. His second was to Herbert.

On the day he was introduced by the Chargers, Brandon called Herbert again, this time for a video chat, explaining later that he wanted to loop in his quarterback as a way of gaining Herbert's trust.

The call included not only Brandon but also Amy and couple's three young sons — Colin, Will and Grant.

"That meant a lot to me," Herbert said. "He had so many other things to do that day. To set aside some time like that was special. I thought that was a pretty cool moment."

They talked family and relationships before they talked football, this disciple of Vic Fangio leaning instead on the lessons from home, the lessons taught by his most favorite of teachers.

At the Perry Cemetery, a family friend recently hung a Chargers lanyard over Linda's gravestone and sent the twins a photo.

Thinking back to his mother, Brandon said, "She's not here, but she's with me."

And that won't change anytime soon, not for someone who comes from a coaching tree carved from his family tree.

A brother's promise and the D-II season that led Brandon Staley to the Chargers

By Daniel Popper
The Athletic
March 23, 2021

Mitch Phillis was still learning, and like any 19-year-old college sophomore, he had questions. But he was afraid of asking a dumb one to his superior — in this case, his football coach.

Phillis had taken over as Division II Mercyhurst College's starting quarterback four games into the 2005 season. He was developing, there was no doubt about that. But his coach was demanding, and Phillis did not want to mar his progress with public embarrassment. So in the film room, as his coach toggled through cut-ups of an exotic defensive coverage, Phillis bit his tongue.

Luckily, he had a human answer key sitting next to him: Brandon Staley, a fifth-year grad transfer backup quarterback who, despite being only 22, already was an encyclopedia of football schematics. The film session would wrap up, and later, Phillis would find Staley in the locker room to ask the questions that had been eating at him. Staley would happily oblige: It was a split coverage, of course. Man on one side, zone on the other.

Problem solved. Embarrassment avoided.

Fifteen years before he was hired to lead the Los Angeles Chargers, Staley's remarkable capacity for teaching, distilling and communicating information already was there — it just had to be uncovered. He had started two games earlier in the fall while Phillis dealt with a training camp injury, but once Phillis was healthy, he returned under center, and Staley was faced with the finality of his playing career.

Instead of wallowing, though, Staley did what was natural, what he always was destined to do.

"He just started coaching," says his twin brother Jason.

Jason Staley was ready to break up with football. His mother, Linda, died on Valentine's Day in 2004 after a long battle with breast cancer. "She approached just a truly awful disease with an amount of grace that is really hard to put into words," Jason said.

Jason, a linebacker, spent the 2004 season at Mercyhurst that fall, but he had lost his desire to keep playing.

"I hit the point where I loved football but I wasn't in love with football anymore," he said. "That's a tough realization because you've been playing the game since you were 6. It's even tougher to make the decision to walk away."

Jason was done, and he told his brother, his "best friend" who had just finished his second winning season as Dayton's starting quarterback and who, like Jason, had one more year of eligibility

But his brother was having none of it. Brandon knew Jason would regret giving up that final season for the rest of his life. So he offered a solution.

"I'll come play with you," Brandon said.

"Excuse me?" Jason replied in shock.

Brandon could have stayed at Dayton. But the brothers, inseparable from birth, had spent the last four years apart. They were still grieving for their mother, a sixth-grade English teacher who had instilled in them the value of work ethic and empathy. Brandon wanted to be there for his twin. And so they decided to spend this final season at Mercyhurst, together.

Brandon graduated from Dayton in May. He was in Erie, Pa., days later, moving in with his brother for the first time since they were 18. Brandon picked up a summer job moving furniture around campus. And he picked up Mercyhurst's hefty playbook, literally and figuratively.

The first time Phillis sat down to watch film with Staley, he was surprised to realize the newcomer already had learned the Lakers' intricate pro-style offense.

"We did not have anybody like him," Jason said.

That was evident within days — in the weight room, on the field, in the film room.

"I probably learned more in that summer about studying opponents than I had in the prior four years combined," said John Egbert, a receiver on that 2005 team. "And it just really was evident that he was a different level of cat."

Brandon was instrumental in organizing regular 7-on-7 games between the Mercyhurst offense and defense, what Egbert described as "epic, epic duels" every Sunday. Those days were transformative for the whole team.

"A lot of competition," said Jeff Nowling, who entered 2005 as the starting quarterback. "A lot of jawing at one another."

Because most of the players grew up locally, those not staying on campus drove to Erie for those scrimmages, including Phillis, who came to a sudden realization about Brandon.

"This guy's been getting after it," Phillis said. "He knows the offense already. He's been working on that. He's not coming into camp, like, oh, I'll learn it in camp. He was someone that was like, I'm going to know this before camp, and he was on it."

Brandon galvanized the team to train harder and more frequently. He threw every day with teammates.

The day Brandon got to the Mercyhurst football office, Egbert walked into the weight room and saw his new teammate doing Olympic lifts with a barbell while balancing on one leg. Egbert looked on in bewilderment. What are you doing over there?

The previous summer, before Brandon's arrival, Egbert thought he had made dramatic strides through his workouts.

"We probably did half the amount of work that we did the summer that Brandon came in," Egbert said.

Trying to find any way to get on the field, Brandon took reps at safety during those 7-on-7 games to sharpen his defensive versatility. He had only ever played quarterback.

"He could play any position," Nowling said. "He was very athletic."

Brandon still spent enough time in the playbook to grasp the complex offense at warp speed.

"I remember within a week or two," Egbert said, "not only was he teaching concepts to the other QBs who had been in the room for one, two or in some cases three years, some of the offensive assistants, like our wide receivers coach, he was teaching things to."

Brandon Zangaro, a two-way player on that 2005 team, was not in Erie for the summer. When he arrived for the start of training camp, Brandon Staley had already mastered far more than just the quarterback's duties. He knew the responsibilities of every player on the field.

"You know his intelligence and his Xs and Os are next level within the first 30 seconds of speaking with him," Zangaro said. "You have a guy transferring in, there's going to be some skepticism. Who's this guy? He hasn't been here the past four years doing what we've all been doing. But that didn't happen, because everybody knew."

Including Joe Lombardi.

Lombardi joined the Mercyhurst staff in 2002 when Marty Schaezle took over as head coach. And though he was coaching at a small Division II liberal arts school, Lombardi, the grandson of legend Vince Lombardi, still had Super Bowl expectations.

"Every day, every week, it seemed like he thought he was in the NFL," Egbert said. "I think in his mind he was walking out to Heinz Field instead of Tullio Field in Erie, Pennsylvania."

Lombardi demanded perfect recall. He ran Bill Walsh-inspired perfect-play drills to end practice, where one minor misstep — like running a route at 14 yards of depth instead of 15 yards — required another repetition. He scripted his first 20 plays every game when no one in Division II was implementing that level of preparation.

One day at practice, Lombardi watched a play unfold that reminded him of a film clip he showed his team two months prior. He asked Phillis if he remembered it — well, more like demanded if he remembered it.

(This might explain why Phillis would go to Staley with his questions.)

"I was kind of like, 'Ummm, I don't remember that specific play,'" Phillis remembers. "He was the type that was like, 'How could you not remember that? If you see it once, you should know it forever.'"

Thinking back, Egbert still marvels at Lombardi's attention to detail.

"Football is in his blood," Egbert added. "But honestly, there's more football in his brain than in his blood."

Staley, meanwhile, was enthralled. The two football junkies connected almost immediately.

"I really fell in love with studying the game," Staley said of his time with Lombardi at Mercyhurst. "I felt like Joe was an outstanding teacher. I felt like he was really progressive at that time. I had never been around an offense like that, that really challenged the quarterback from a mental standpoint, from a preparation standpoint."

"I love that. I couldn't get enough of it."

Specifically, Lombardi offered a diverse and layered NFL-inspired playbook that differed from the option-heavy offense Staley ran at Dayton. The quarterback had much more control at the line of scrimmage, sometimes having as many as 20 possible audibles or checks at his disposal.

"He was always trying to learn," Nowling said of Staley. "He wanted to eat it up. So he asked a million questions. ... Brandon's questions sparked a different thought in Coach Lombardi."

"The way that Joe talked to Brandon, he knew he could put more on him than other guys," Egbert said. "He would feed him more, he would pick his brain more. He talked to him more as a peer than a player because he really respected his knowledge."

The connection grew over that season, and Lombardi trusted Staley's understanding of the offense. That formed an avenue to the field for Staley. With Phillis injured, Staley replaced Nowling, the starter, in the second half of the season opener with the Lakers trailing, 28-10, to Gannon. He led an early second-half touchdown drive, but four fourth-quarter turnovers prevented a comeback.

The following week, Staley entered for Nowling in the second quarter against Northern Michigan. He helped erase a five-point deficit, and Mercyhurst took its first lead of the season. But turnovers, again, were the culprit in a loss. Staley started the next week and nearly led the Lakers to a win over 18th-ranked Michigan Tech. He gained over 100 yards on the ground and threw for 192 yards, a touchdown and two interceptions.

Phillis then replaced Staley in the fourth quarter the following week with Mercyhurst trailing Northwood, 35-0. Staley's final snaps at quarterback came two weeks later in relief of Phillis against Ashland. Staley took snaps at quarterback in five of the first six games of the season. The Lakers went 0-7 to start the year. They had a young defense that gave up at least 40 points in seven of 10 games the season.

But the Staley-Lombardi relationship was a bright spot in the disappointment. Staley had earned that trust over the course of that season, in the film room and on the practice field, even after he lost the starting job for the second time.

"Brandon was just there," Jason said. "He showed up to every practice and soaked up everything from Coach Lombardi. It was like hell trying to stop him. ... He really knew he wanted to go into coaching after interacting with Coach Lombardi."

In 2009, when Staley was an assistant at Division III St. Thomas, he traveled to New Orleans to visit with Lombardi, then the Saints quarterbacks coach. Staley embedded in the Saints QB room for a week with Lombardi and Drew Brees. Lombardi long had been an advocate for Staley in NFL coaching circles, including with Ed Donatell, with whom Lombardi coached on the Falcons staff in 2006. Staley ended up getting his first NFL gig as the outside linebackers coach for the Bears in 2017 with Vic Fangio, and Donatell, a longtime Fangio assistant, was on that staff.

"He really taught me the game at a high level," Staley said of Lombardi. "Protections, the run game, how do these concepts fit together, how can we get in and out of plays. At that time, that's kind of where my love for coaching offensive football really came, was from him, because I loved playing for him and I learned so much and he made me better. And I think that we saw the game the same way, and that relationship has really stood the test of time."

"They were really good memories," Lombardi said. "He was awfully smart and fun to be around."

Staley's decision to play with his brother in turn helped facilitate the relationship that led to perhaps the most important hire of his life.

Justin Herbert's development is a priority as the Chargers enter a pivotal offseason. That responsibility will fall largely on the shoulders of his offensive coordinator: Joe Lombardi.

"There are so many coaching trees built up and circles crossing, and you hear about people hiring people they know all the time," Egbert said. "But this does seem unique, doesn't it?"

Zangaro broke his leg midway through the 2005 season and had a front row seat to Staley's transformation.

He watched practice as the backup quarterback, completely comfortable in his teaching role, groomed Phillis and connected with his teammates.

Staley was finding his coaching voice.

"He's got it. He's just got it," Zangaro remembered thinking at that moment. "The way that he communicates and his ability to communicate with different people at different levels, it was unparalleled."

Phillis' growth was most evident. And Zangaro, from his sideline seat, knew Staley played a crucial part.

Phillis, a self-proclaimed pocket passer, even scored a rushing touchdown that season when he pump-faked a linebacker and dove over the goal line. He said he picked up the move from watching Staley in training camp.

As Zangaro thinks back now, he witnessed a man born to coach football embarking on a journey that would carry him to the very pinnacle of the professional.

"You knew what he was going to do," Zangaro said, "and where he was going to go."

Mom's influence inspires ex-Flyer's meteoric rise to NFL head coach

*By Tom Archdeacon
Dayton Daily News
January 24, 2021*

The Dayton Flyers – who'd been on a 14-game winning streak – had suffered a heartbreaking, 33-28 loss to Valparaiso at Welcome Stadium.

Brandon Staley, UD's option quarterback, had thrown for 280 yards and two touchdowns, ran for 86 yards and another score and nearly orchestrated the comeback when he drove the Flyers the length of the field in the final minutes, only to have four straight passes fall incomplete in the end zone.

After the game, he had gone around the dressing room consoling several of his teammates, but before he would talk to me he said he had to step outside to make a phone call.

As he did after every game in that 2003 football season, Staley called his mom, Linda, who was back home in their small Lake County town of Perry.

She was too ill to be at the game, but as she'd tell me that evening when we spoke, listening to the radio broadcast of the Flyers' game and especially hearing her son's voice afterward was "some of the best medicine I can get now."

A longtime English teacher, she'd been diagnosed nine years earlier with breast cancer and by that late October game things had gotten "pretty tough" for her Brandon said.

Linda didn't hold back when we spoke.

"I had three chemo treatments a week ago and I feel OK, but I don't have much energy now," she said quietly. "My cancer has metastasized to my liver and I know it's kind of scary for my boys now. They know it can be brutal.

"But Brandon knows how much I look forward to Saturdays: Listening to what he's doing out there on the field, hearing them say his name, knowing he's on the Dean's List at school, it makes me so proud.

"Saturdays I have a smile on my face."

Less than four months later – on Valentine's Day 2004 – Linda Staley passed away. She was just 46 and left three sons and Bruce, her husband of 23 years. After that emotional call back home following the Valpo game, Brandon had talked about his mom:

"You could never tell what she's fighting through because... she never gives in, never gives up."

"I draw on her strength every day. She's my inspiration."

Now, fast forward 17 years and 3 months to this past Thursday afternoon, and you heard Staley say almost the exact same thing about his mom when the Los Angeles Chargers formerly introduced him at press conference as their next head coach.

"She was an inspiration to me as a player and she is an inspiration to me as a coach and as a father and as a husband," he said on the Zoom call. "There's no possible way I would be here if it weren't for her."

Many football observers were surprised by what some called the "meteoric rise" of the 38-year-old coach. He has been in the NFL just four years. Five years ago he was an assistant coach at John Carroll University, the Division III school on Cleveland's east side.

Before he was hired last Sunday to replace Anthony Lynn, he'd never been a head coach at any level.

The Chargers interviewed five other candidates, but Staley – who had spent the past season as the defensive coordinator on Sean McVay's Los Angeles Rams staff and made the defense No. 1 in the NFL – was impressive in their interviews, said John Spanos, the president of football operations:

"He's the son of a teacher and he's the son of a coach. One of my favorite parts of the first time we sat down with Coach Staley was when he said, 'People ask me what coaching tree I consider myself a part of.'

"This is a guy who coached with some great minds in football. He worked with Vic Fangio. He coached with Sean McVay. But he says, 'I'm part of the Bruce and Linda Staley coaching tree. That's my coaching tree.'

"And I think that says a lot about Brandon. It says a lot about his character, his values and who he is."

Back in 2003, Linda talked to me about football and her family: "Football is important to our whole family. Actually, we're pretty nuts about it."

That October day had been proof. While Linda was at home, Bruce was at Mercyhurst College where Brandon's twin brother Jason was a linebacker. It was Parents Weekend so he belonged there, but he wanted to know everything that was happening with Brandon, too.

"My husband and I had a phone call going and when Dayton was on offense, I'd hold my phone up to the Internet broadcast so Bruce could listen on his cell phone," she laughed. "I got pretty animated, so I don't know what he actually heard."

That spunk his mom showed that day was something Brandon would draw on four years later – in 2007 – when he was a grad assistant at Northern Illinois and a grapefruit-sized tumor was found on his right lung. By then he'd lost his mom and aunt to breast cancer and his high school coach to the disease as well, but his dad had overcome thyroid cancer and would do the same (recently) with prostate cancer.

Brandon was diagnosed with lymphoma and when the season ended he returned to Cleveland to undergo chemotherapy. He returned to NIU for spring football, then went back home to finish his six months of chemo.

When the next season began, he drove regularly to Chicago for six weeks of radiation.

His scheduled his treatments at 7 a.m. so he could get back to campus in time for afternoon practice.

"When I went through my cancer journey...I thought of it as a chance to really bring out the best in me," he said Thursday. "I think when you get to the other side of it, there is an energy, a strength. There is a feeling you can do anything you dream of."

"And that's just what I've been trying to do every day since."

'I never would have been able to do it alone'

"He's what I'd call a typical Dayton Flyers football player," said Mike Kelly, who was UD's celebrated head coach back then and today is an assistant athletics director at the school. "He came from a smaller school, was multi-talented and an outstanding student."

After a stellar career at Perry High School, he was redshirted his first year at UD and the following season he was a backup. Finally, in his third year – that 2003 season – Staley won the starting job and guided the Flyers through a 9-2 campaign.

In 2004, the Flyers had added Kevin Hoyng from Coldwater. He'd go on to become the program's all-time leader in career passing yards completions and touchdowns, but that season he and Staley split the starting duties. Although he graduated after that season, Staley still has a year of eligibility left.

"He knew he was going to be in a serious battle with Kevin, but we probably would have played both of them again," Kelly said. "Like any young man, he wanted the spot himself, but we couldn't guarantee that."

He decided to transfer to Mercyhurst, whose quarterbacks' coach was former Flyers assistant Joe Lombardi, now the QB coach of the New Orleans Saints.

It hadn't been easy for Staley to leave Dayton, especially because of the way people reached out to him when his mom died.

"We brought two busloads of players – maybe 50 or 60 guys – up to the funeral," Kelly said. "It was a very emotional time for Brandon and his family."

Staley reflected on that Thursday: "I never would have been able to do it alone."

But in going to Mercyhurst, he became the starting quarterback, got to play with his brother and was a lot closer to his dad since Perry was just 70 minutes away from the Erie, Pa. campus.

His dad had been a longtime high school coach and that's something that always intrigued Brandon.

"I started drinking coffee in the first grade and reading the sports page," he laughed. "I wanted to be just like my dad."

'The best teacher I've ever seen'

During spring football drills in 2003, Staley registered the highest vertical jump on the UD team. And in landing now with the Chargers, it's evident he hasn't lost his hops as a coach.

"I've been around for three decades coaching and every once in a while a young, bright guy who sees the game globally comes around," Ed Donatell, the Denver Broncos defensive coordinator and a two-time Super Bowl winner, told the Denver Post. "(Staley) sees offense, defense, special teams and he knows how they work ... It's an extraordinary job of teaching (to get the Rams defense atop the NFL.) He's a young, bright mind that sees it all and can communicate with people."

After starting out as a defensive assistant at Northern Illinois, Staley became a defensive line and special teams coach at D-III St. Thomas University in Minnesota, then spent two seasons at Hutchinson Community College in Kansas and year as a grad assistant at Tennessee.

In 2013 he was hired as the defensive coordinator at John Carroll. He made a one-season detour to James Madison, then returned to John Carroll. In 2016, he planned to join JCU coach Tom Arth at Tennessee-Chattanooga when Vic Fangio of the Chicago Bears called.

Two seasons later he followed Fangio to Denver and last season he was hired by McVay, whose granddad, John McVay, had been the Flyers coach for eight seasons in the 1960s and '70s and later, as San Francisco's VP and director of football operations, helped lead the 49ers to five Super Bowl titles.

"I hardly know anything about professional football, but what amazes me is it's such a tight knit group of people," Kelly said. "There's a lot of networking."

And the Dayton Flyers are now a part of that network. When he was 30, Sean McVay – who went to Ascension School in Kettering – became the youngest head coach ever in the NFL. At 33, he was the youngest Super Bowl coach.

Part of his grandpa's staff at UD was Jim Gruden, whose son Jon would be a back-up quarterback for Kelly's UD teams in the 1980s and later won the Super Bowl as the Tampa Bay Buccaneers coach. He now coaches of the Las Vegas Raiders. Before him, Chuck Noll, the former Flyers lineman of the 1950s, won four Super Bowls as the Pittsburgh Steelers head coach and is enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Jon Gruden now has Austin King, a former Flyers assistant, on his staff. And this evening former Flyers' center Terry Heffernan will help coach the Buffalo Bills line in the AFC title game against Kansas City.

Thursday somebody noted to Staley that he'd now be facing fellow Flyer Gruden twice a year in the AFC West. While he praised Gruden – "he's as good of a football coach as there is" – he also got in a puckish tweak: "We were both quarterbacks at Dayton, but I'll tell you that I was a little better quarterback than he was."

The Chargers hired him because of the way they believe he'll relate to his players and Staley was quick to give props to his mom for that:

“She was the best teacher I’ve ever seen. She had an amazing ability to listen. People just felt they could be themselves with her. She could really bring out the best in them ... I think seeing that up close when I was a kid, I saw the power in that. And certainly I’ve tried to embody a lot of that now as a coach.

“So even though my mom’s not here, she’s with me.”

Once he lifted her. Now she lifts him.

Brandon Staley, Chargers coach? Those who know him know why he 'skyrocketed' to top

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
January 18, 2021

To understand how quickly Brandon Staley reached the status of Chargers coach, consider this:

The team has been in Los Angeles longer than he has been in the NFL.

Staley joins the Chargers after only four years in the league and one season as a coordinator. He coached outside linebackers in Chicago and Denver before overseeing the Rams' No. 1-ranked defense this season under Sean McVay.

"I knew that he could be a D-coordinator," said cornerback Chris Harris Jr., who played in Denver until joining the Chargers this season. "I knew that he should be a D-coordinator. But just to see how fast he's skyrocketed, I mean, that's pretty amazing."

Harris spent nine years with the Broncos, including 2019 when Staley was on Denver's staff. He praised Staley's football knowledge, willingness to listen to players and ability to build relationships. He predicted that teammates will love their new coach and called the situation "a great fit."

"I'm so happy, so excited for him," Harris said. "He's a guy who's very smart, knows the game of football. He took it to another level this year with the Rams. I'm excited to see what he can do with us."

Harris said he and Staley already have spoken, their discussion even going into detail about expected defensive scheme changes. With the Rams, Staley ran a 3-4 as opposed to the 4-3 the Chargers have been employing.

This is the first head coaching job at any level for Staley, 38, who spent 11 years as a college assistant before going to work for the Chicago Bears in February 2017. Six weeks earlier, the Chargers had relocated from San Diego.

During his first season as coach of the Rams, McVay was seven years younger than Staley is today. But by that point, McVay had been in the NFL as an assistant for eight years.

The man who gave Staley his first coaching job said he knew "from the word go" that Staley would be a success. But Joe Novak said no one on that 2006 Northern Illinois staff could have envisioned Staley becoming an NFL coach just 15 years later.

Even less likely, Staley's stops en route to the Chargers were rooted in anything but Power Five football conferences. Among other places, he worked at a Division III school in Minnesota and a community college in Kansas.

Staley established himself as a defensive coordinator with one season at James Madison, a Football Championship Subdivision school, and three at John Carroll, another Division III university.

"I knew he could be good," said Novak, who is retired. "I thought he had all the traits you're looking for. But to go from John Carroll to the Chargers in five years is pretty darn hard to do. I don't think you'll find anybody else who did that."

John Carroll is the school where Chargers general manager Tom Telesco played in the 1990s. Telesco and the Chargers selected Staley from a group of candidates with much more NFL experience, mostly as coordinators. The team also interviewed Jason Garrett, who spent 9½ years as Dallas' coach.

In the end, the Chargers opted for the choice they must believe has more of an NFL future than an NFL past.

The move to hire Staley on Sunday night was met with surprise around the league, in part because Buffalo offensive coordinator Brian Daboll was believed to be a favorite for the position, but also given Staley's relative inexperience. He was a candidate for the openings that remain in Philadelphia and Houston but instead landed a job considered to be one of the most attractive of this hiring cycle.

Staley spent his first three seasons in coaching as a graduate assistant working with the Northern Illinois defense. As a player, he was a quarterback, first at Dayton and then at Division II Mercyhurst University in Pennsylvania.

That combination of knowledge on both sides of the ball is expected to be vital for Staley as he moves into the unfamiliar position of overseeing an entire team.

"He's going to be so easy to work with," Novak said. "The players will love him. And he can coach too. That's a nice combination. He knew back at NIU where he was headed. You don't always find that in people that age."

With the Rams, Staley was armed with All-Pros in lineman Aaron Donald and cornerback Jalen Ramsey. His defense finished first in the NFL in points and yards allowed.

Harris explained that the more impressive thing Staley did this season could be seen in the performances of the other Rams, those defenders who emerged unexpectedly.

"They have a lot of talent over there," Harris said. "You know what you're going to get out of Ramsey and Donald. But you have a lot of no-name players, guys that you've never even heard of, who made a lot of plays on that team too."

Staley is scheduled to meet with the media Thursday for the first time since accepting the job. Along with reaching out to his new players, he is assembling his staff, one that could include current offensive coordinator Shane Steichen, though no announcement has been made.

Multiple reports Monday indicated Staley would be hiring Las Vegas' Frank Smith to be his run game coordinator. Smith has been the tight ends coach for the Raiders the last three years.

Novak said Staley's lack of ego will allow him to bring in assistants who can best supplement his skill-set. He said Staley's personality and energy will be infectious and effective.

"You spend a half-hour with him and you'll know what I'm talking about," Novak said. "You just know. With that kid — he's still a kid to me — you just know. He's got all the qualities."

Chargers head coach Brandon Staley is still in his heart a Perry Pirate

By Jeff Shudel
The News-Herald (Willoughby, Ohio)
June 16, 2021

Get out the welcome banners; Brandon Staley is headed home for the first time in two years.

Staley's feet and head are in California as the first-year head coach of the Los Angeles Chargers. His heart is where it has always been — Perry, Ohio.

Staley, a graduate of Perry High School and the University Dayton, exudes enthusiasm when he is in front of his players and when he is in front of the media, as he was on Zoom June 16 when the Chargers wrapped up their mandatory minicamp.

Most of the questions directed to Staley were from beat writers covering the Chargers, but the 38-year-old former John Carroll defensive coordinator also took time to talk about his roots and the influence the late Bob Ritley had on him as the Perry head coach. Staley played quarterback for the Pirates.

"Coach Ritley was a special, special man," Staley said. "I don't think I ever met a player, a teacher, a coach or someone that had contact with him that didn't revere him.

"When you were in the presence of him you felt different. You felt special. He had that special way about him. He got the essence of football. He got the essence of teaching. I think that's why we all loved playing for him so much. He had the same staff for over 20 years."

The more Staley talked about the Perry days, the more excited he became.

"All of us that were fortunate enough to go to school there, we all played for the same coaches. We had a lot of stability, a lot of continuity growing up.

"Certainly, I was able to see what a head coach should look like — a leader. A person that not only was a great football coach, but the type of leader and connector within the community. He could have a conversation with anybody and you would feel better about yourself.

"Certainly, I miss him. I've been able to keep in contact with his wife and son Tim, who was a heck of a player growing up. He played at the University of Akron.

"There's nothing like home. That place means a lot to me. I'm actually going back there for the first time in two years in a couple days. Coach Ritley meant an awful lot to me."

Staley has not stayed in one place long since his coaching career began in 2006 as a graduate assistant at Northern Illinois. He made stops at St. Thomas in 2009 (defensive line coach/special teams coach), Hutchinson in 2010-11 (associate head coach/defensive coordinator), Tennessee in 2012 (graduate assistant) John Carroll in 2013 (defensive coordinator/secondary coach), James Madison in 2014 (defensive coordinator/linebackers coach) and then back to John Carroll in 2015-16 as defensive coordinator/secondary coach to end his college coaching gigs.

Staley coached the Bears outside linebackers in 2017-18 and the Broncos outside linebackers in 2019.

It was impossible for Chargers general manager Tom Telesco (a John Carroll graduate) to not take notice, considering in 2020 Staley was defensive coordinator of the Los Angeles Rams, who finished with the top-rated defense last season.

"He's a genius," Rams cornerback Jalem Ramsey told Sports Illustrated when the Chargers hired Staley. "He's smart. He knows how to use his players, and works well to put his players in position to make plays or have impact on the game.

"He knows how to get the best out of people. He knows how to calm people down and keep us going throughout the games. I just think he's great. There's literally nothing negative I can say about him. I think he would be an amazing head coach."

The second stint with John Carroll was the launching point for the success that followed, Staley said on the Zoom call. The 2016 team beat Baldwin-Wallace, 17-10, in a defensive struggle in the second game of the season. The Blue Streaks went on to beat powerhouse Mount Union and then won three games in the Division III playoffs before bowing out in a national semifinal at Wisconsin-Oshkosh, 10-3.

"Anybody that knows me knows John Carroll is the place that really shaped me," Staley said. "I think that's where I discovered myself as a leader and a coach. I kind of hit a sweet spot there.

"The people at John Carroll — that place — the players, the coaches, the administration, the professors — that campus community meant a lot to my wife and me. Those players are a big reason why I'm here today. There are too many to name, but that experience with (then John Carroll head coach) Tom Arth was one of those really impactful experiences for me. That's where I really found my rhythm as a coach.

"That team we had in 2016 was the best team in school history. It's one of the best defenses I've ever been a part of. That whole process started in 2013. The 2016 team was the end of the run we had. It's such an example of what you can do when you have special people in place."

If all goes well with the Chargers, Staley's nomadic life as a football coach is at an end.

JOE LOMBARDI

Chargers offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi believes the wait was worth it

By Gilbert Manzano
Orange County Register
August 7, 2021

COSTA MESA — Chargers offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi has noticed the close friendship between quarterbacks Justin Herbert and Chase Daniel and compared them to the 1988 comedy film "Twins."

Herbert and Daniel are an odd pairing visually because Herbert is six inches taller, but they complement each other as quarterbacks, according to Lombardi.

It's a perfect pairing between an emerging starting quarterback and a vastly experienced backup.

"You know, it's really like having another coach in the room," Lombardi said about Daniel, a 13-year veteran. "It kind of looks like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito in 'Twins' when they're standing next to each other, but it's great having them."

The quarterbacks are one of many reasons why Lombardi decided to join the Chargers this year as the offensive coordinator.

Lombardi waited five years before returning as a play caller because he wanted the perfect situation to redeem himself after a short stint as the Detroit Lions' offensive coordinator in 2014 and 2015.

With a star quarterback in Herbert, a revamped offensive line with an All-Pro center in Corey Linsley and an abundance of playmakers with wide receiver Keenan Allen and running back Austin Ekeler, the Chargers qualified as a perfect situation for Lombardi from a personnel standpoint, but it was his close relationship with Chargers coach Brandon Staley that got him to leave New Orleans after five years as their quarterbacks coach.

Lombardi coached Staley in college when Staley was the quarterback for Mercyhurst University in 2005.

"I really enjoyed my time in New Orleans and was happy there, but you know, my history with Brandon and this organization, I was real excited for the opportunity," Lombardi said. "I've got a lot of experience with (Chargers offensive line coach) Frank Smith from our time in New Orleans. So it's been very seamless, and it's a good group."

Lombardi was familiar with the Chargers' roster after the Saints' scrimmages against the Chargers in Costa Mesa between 2017 to 2019. He got a close look at Allen, who's regarded as one of the best route runners in the NFL.

"As advertised," Lombardi said about working with Allen. "There's not better. He's just always open, just one of those guys. Even when you look at the script and you look at the defense versus the route, and you think, 'Oh, they'll probably have him covered,' but they don't necessarily. He's just a fun guy to be around. He's always positive and has good energy. It's been great."

Allen compared Lombardi's offense to what former Chargers offensive coordinator Ken Whisenhunt ran with quarterback Philip Rivers. He said it's an elevated version of the West Coast offense, one that will allow him to play more freely.

"Just a step up where I'm allowed to play free and play my game," Allen said. "The fact that I was in that offense and with Phil for so long, I'm able to translate it into this offense."

Lombardi said his new offensive system will be a blend from what he ran with the Saints for many years, but with heavy input from Staley, Smith and quarterbacks coach Shane Day.

Lombardi said it didn't work in Detroit with quarterback Matthew Stafford and wide receiver Calvin Johnson because he was focused on replicating Sean Payton's system with the Saints.

With another opportunity to call plays, Lombardi is allowing his perfect situation to have plenty of say in building the Chargers' offense.

New Chargers coordinator Joe Lombardi looks to build offense around Justin Herbert

*By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
January 26, 2011*

His first shot as an NFL offensive coordinator lasted 23 games.

Joe Lombardi now has a second chance and plans to apply a lesson learned in 2014-15.

"Just having the flexibility to adjust a little bit better maybe than we did back then," he said Tuesday in a videoconference. "That's the biggest thing, just the flexibility to adjust as things aren't like you're used to them being."

Lombardi, 49, was hired this week by new coach Brandon Staley to oversee a Chargers offense that features one of the NFL's bright young quarterbacks in Justin Herbert.

Seven years ago, he joined Jim Caldwell's staff in Detroit for a tenure that turned out to be rocky and failed to meet expectations. Lombardi was fired seven games into the 2015 season.

He had spent the previous seven years with New Orleans, first as an offensive assistant and then as quarterbacks coach. Lombardi suggested Tuesday that he had become too rutted in the Saints' way of operating.

His two Lions teams had a difficult time running the ball and in pass protection, which led to Matthew Stafford struggling despite the presence of receivers Calvin Johnson and Golden Tate.

After being dismissed by Caldwell, Lombardi returned to New Orleans, where he spent five more seasons as quarterbacks coach before the Chargers called.

Now, he's in a position where, like Staley last week, he's touting the idea of building a scheme around Herbert rather than forcing the quarterback into a predetermined system.

"I'm comfortable with whatever our guys are good at," Lombardi said. "Man, if it's something the quarterback thrives in, then that's what we're going to want to do."

For Herbert, Lombardi explained that could mean more up-tempo and no-huddle next season. The Chargers tried both this season but with no sustained commitment.

In college, Herbert flourished in an offense that never huddled and operated almost exclusively from the shotgun. Lombardi said he will go back to Herbert's days at Oregon to tap into what the 22-year-old does best.

"He's got a skill set that is elite," Lombardi said. "It appears there's nothing he can't do. He's got an incredibly strong arm, good accuracy. He's very athletic. Sounds like he's a real smart guy that's a good leader."

Along with directing the Chargers' offense, Lombardi is expected to continue developing Herbert after a season that made him the favorite for the NFL's offensive rookie of the year award.

Having spent 12 of the previous 14 years working with Drew Brees, Lombardi said the future Hall of Famer's commitment to detail and exhaustive preparation are two qualities he can pass along to Herbert.

He said that in New Orleans, Brees' influence could be seen in the Saints' other quarterbacks, specifically how they followed his example. He called Brees' traits "coachable."

Lombardi's familiarity with Herbert dates to preparation for last year's draft. He said he began paying closer attention during the season as Herbert gained league-wide exposure by the week.

The Chargers lost to Saints in mid-October, 30-27, in overtime. Herbert finished 20 for 34 for 264 yards and four touchdowns, an effort Lombardi noticed even as he was more focused on Brees.

"I've seen enough to know I've got no questions about his abilities," Lombardi said. "If you lined up all the quarterback skill sets in the NFL, he'd be at the very top with a couple guys."

After a season in which the Chargers offense on occasion lacked aggressiveness, Lombardi said that although game situations sometimes dictate otherwise, he leans toward leaving the offense on the field if there's an opportunity.

"I always say, 'What would I want if I'm on the other sidelines?' " Lombardi said. "I always feel like when a team's going for it on fourth down [it's] like, 'I wish they were just punting it.' So, yeah, I'm a big fan of going for it on fourth down."

Lombardi said he was drawn to the Chargers' job mostly because of his relationship with Staley. In 2005, both were at Mercyhurst University, Lombardi as offensive coordinator and Staley as quarterback.

He also said he is not surprised Staley received a head coaching job after only four seasons in the NFL. Lombardi recalled a conversation the two had a few years ago about Staley making it to the league as a coach.

"I said, 'Look, you'll get your chance, and I bet you you'll be a head coach in five years,' " Lombardi said, smiling. "Pretty sure I called that one a long time ago."

Chargers' Joe Lombardi eager to build an offense around Justin Herbert

By Gilbert Manzano
Orange County Register
January 26, 2021

Brandon Staley observed from the back of the room while Joe Lombardi instructed the New Orleans Saints' quarterbacks, including Drew Brees.

Nearly 12 years before Staley asked Lombardi to be his offensive coordinator with the Chargers, Lombardi invited his former quarterback turned coach to a training camp visit as the Saints embarked on their Super Bowl season of 2009.

"I'd bet you that he's watched every single game we've played on offense here in New Orleans since then," Lombardi said Tuesday about Staley, who at the time coached defensive linemen and special teams at St. Thomas, a Division III program in Minnesota. "Just (Staley's) familiarity with me and what we've done here (in New Orleans), it makes it such an easier transition."

If Lombardi's guess about the recently-hired Chargers head coach is true, then Staley has watched more than 160 Saints games from the past decade.

On Monday, Staley hired Lombardi as the Chargers' new offensive coordinator. Lombardi spent 12 seasons on Sean Payton's coaching staff during two stints in New Orleans — 10 overall as the quarterbacks coach, including the past five seasons.

Lombardi, 49, said he had interest in other coaching jobs since the Detroit Lions fired him as the offensive coordinator in 2015, but he wasn't going to jump at any opportunity. It needed to make sense and familiarity was important to him.

Staley, 38, was Lombardi's quarterback for one season at Mercyhurst University in 2005, when Lombardi was the offensive coordinator.

"Brandon, No. 1," Lombardi said when asked why the Chargers' opening was the right fit. "How well I know him and I think how well he knows me. ... Not to mean that we're going to copy (the Saints' offense), but just coming from a common background of football, to be able to get things started. As he is in the beginning of putting a staff together, what he is looking for, it all lines up with the way that I think.

"Sean Payton often says that he is more interested in compatibility first before he thinks about capability. I just think that the compatibility of what Brandon is building here is going to be second-to-none."

Lombardi will likely incorporate some parts of the Saints' offense to form the right scheme for quarterback Justin Herbert and the rest of the Chargers' offense, but he knows the importance of flexibility.

Lombardi said a reason why his stint with the Lions didn't work out was because he forced the Saints' offensive system instead of using it as a starting point to build off players' strengths. The Lions finished 11-5 during Lombardi's first season in 2014, but the offense based on short passes, timing and precision produced mixed results for quarterback Matthew Stafford and a Lions team that ranked 19th in total offense. It got worse the following season and the Lions fired Lombardi after a 1-6 start.

"The biggest thing is just being able to be more flexible," Lombardi said about what he learned the most as a first-time play caller in Detroit. "Spending so much time in New Orleans and doing things one way, you kind of get used to that. When you're put into a new situation where the schedule is different, and maybe you're around coaches that weren't used to doing things the way that you were used to, just having flexibility to adjust a little bit better maybe than we did back then.

"That's the biggest thing, just the flexibility to adjust when things aren't the way that you're used to them being."

Staley has only coached in the NFL for four seasons, but he's had plenty of success by prioritizing players' strengths over schemes. Lombardi said he is eager to form an offensive coaching staff with Staley.

Lombardi wants coaches from other offensive schemes to provide different perspectives, which will be vital for Herbert's development after a dynamic rookie season.

"He's got a skill set that's elite," Lombardi said about Herbert. "It appears there's nothing that he can't do. He's got an incredibly strong arm, good accuracy and he's very athletic. Sounds like he's a real smart guy that's a good leader. He just checks all the boxes."

Lombardi said it's too soon to reveal what the Chargers' offense will look like in 2021, but he said Staley wants tempo.

With Herbert's downfield accuracy, and Staley looking to play off his quarterbacks' strengths, Lombardi will likely call many deep shots, but he understands what type of weapons Herbert has.

Wide receiver Keenan Allen, running back Austin Ekeler and tight end Hunter Henry thrive with up-tempo passes, a staple of the Saints' offense since Payton took over in 2006. The Chargers' trio had a similar style with quarterback Philip Rivers before Herbert took over in 2020.

Allen had an instant connection with Herbert, but Henry and Ekeler, one of the best pass-catching running backs in the NFL, often got lost when the rookie quarterback was looking upfield for wide receivers Mike Williams, Jalen Guyton and Tyron Johnson.

It will be up to Lombardi and Staley to find the right balance to utilize all of the Chargers' skill players.

Lombardi has shown he's able to evolve around his Saints quarterbacks in recent years. He's worked with quick passers Brees and Teddy Bridgewater, aggressive quarterback Jameis Winston and athletic quarterback Taysom Hill. Watching how Payton changed the Saints' offense from Brees as the focal point to wide receiver Michael Thomas and running back Alvin Kamara as the centerpieces, will likely help Lombardi in his second opportunity as an offensive coordinator.

Lombardi said it's important to have a balanced offense, which scared some Chargers fans on social media, but he reiterated the importance of using Herbert's strengths as a passer.

"I think it's important to have some balance," Lombardi said. "But when you have a quarterback as talented as Justin, you want to let him throw the ball when it's appropriate. That's for sure."

Herbert had a historic rookie season under prior head coach Anthony Lynn, but the coaching staff was often criticized for conservative play calling and not taking enough chances on fourth down. Lombardi wasn't as cautious in his response when asked about possibly going for it more on fourth downs.

"I'm a big fan of going for it on fourth down," Lombardi said. "I know all the data analysis says that we are probably not aggressive enough as NFL coaches. I'm in favor of moving in that direction."

Chargers' Lombardi hoping to make most of second chance

By Joe Reedy
Associated Press
January 26, 2021

COSTA MESA, Calif. (AP) — Joe Lombardi is hoping that his second stint as an offensive coordinator goes better than the first.

Lombardi, who accepted the Los Angeles Chargers coordinator opening over the weekend, said on Tuesday the biggest thing he learned from his first opportunity in Detroit was that he needs to be more flexible when assessing his personnel and their abilities. Lombardi went to the Lions in 2015, but was fired seven games into the following season.

"Spending so much time in New Orleans and doing things one way, you kind of get used to that," he said. "When you're put into a new situation where the schedule is different, and maybe you're around coaches that weren't used to doing things the way that you were used to, just having to flexibility to adjust a little bit better, maybe, than we did back then."

Lombardi comes to Los Angeles after a second stint in New Orleans, where he was the quarterbacks coach for five seasons. Twelve of his 14 seasons as an NFL assistant have been with the Saints.

Chargers head coach Brandon Staley and Lombardi have worked together before, but in a player-coach capacity. Lombardi was the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach at Mercyhurst College in 2005, when Staley transferred from Dayton to play with his twin brother, Jason.

Staley, who was hired as coach on Jan. 17, said Lombardi's experience with the Saints should prove invaluable.

"You think about the relationship he has with Drew Brees and having a front-row seat to that relationship. It's huge," Staley said. "And then obviously partnering up with Sean Payton — one of the best offensive coaches in the NFL, really one of the best coaches period — that experience is invaluable."

Lombardi said the biggest thing he gained from Brees is being exact on details and that other things, such as how to communicate with the receivers, is coachable.

The first task for Lombardi will be trying to create a system that further showcases quarterback Justin Herbert, who passed for 4,336 yards and a rookie-record 31 touchdowns this past season.

Lombardi said he hasn't spoken to Herbert yet, but that he has reached out to him after finally getting his number. Lombardi scouted Herbert leading up to last year's draft and had a chance to see him in person when the Chargers faced the Saints.

"I've seen enough to know that I have no questions about his abilities," said Lombardi about Herbert. "I mean, if you lined up all the quarterback skillsets in the NFL, he'd be at the very top, with couple of guys. Like I said, the sky's the limit with what he's able to do."

In discussions with Staley, Lombardi said they are looking to have an up-tempo offense. The Chargers were ranked ninth in the league in total offense, including sixth in passing. While they have a solid array of skill position players — including running back Austin Ekeler along with wide receivers Keenan Allen and Mike Williams — the Chargers have struggled to build an offensive line and have lacked depth because of key injuries.

"Look, I'm comfortable with whatever our guys are good at. If it's something that the quarterback thrives in, that's what we're going to want to do," Lombardi said.

RENALDO HILL

Chargers' new defense leader Renaldo Hill is well- coordinated with Brandon Staley

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
January 27, 2021

They spent the 2019 season together in Denver, as in really together.

Renaldo Hill explained that his office was next to Brandon Staley's, and the two frequently swapped ideas.

"I think we probably spent more time in the other person's office just talking and game-planning than our own," Hill said Wednesday. "It was important to us."

They now are teaming up again, Staley as the Chargers' new head coach and Hill as his defensive coordinator.

Barely a year ago, they were position coaches for the Broncos. Staley worked with the outside linebackers and Hill the defensive backs. Neither has been in the NFL long, Staley only four seasons and Hill three.

But in 2021, they will combine efforts to oversee a defense led by Joey Bosa up front and Derwin James everywhere else.

Staley, who was hired away from the Rams after one year as their defensive coordinator, will call defensive plays during games while Hill manages the operation.

"We'll collaborate," Hill said. "[Staley has] always been open to listening and receiving. I'm looking forward to the opportunity. But, in the meantime, I definitely will lean on Staley and be able to sit back and learn."

The setup is similar to what they experienced in Denver, where head coach Vic Fangio has called the defense the last two years with Ed Donatell serving as coordinator.

The Chargers will be switching to a hybrid 3-4 scheme that is expected to present various fronts, often employs more defensive backs and emphasizes versatility.

"We want to uniquely shape it around our guys," Staley explained last week. "I think that's probably the hallmark of the way we play, that agility that we have to feature our premium players."

Under former coordinator Gus Bradley, the Chargers blitzed as little as any team. Though they are expected to bring extra pressure more in 2021, the Chargers don't figure to be blitz heavy.

Staley and the Rams ranked 19th in blitz percentage this season. Using a similar 3-4 system under Fangio, Denver finished in the bottom half of the NFL in blitzing in 2019-20.

Hill, 42, was drafted in the seventh round by Arizona in 2001 and had a decade-long career. His playing days ended when the Broncos cut him in late July 2011. During that summer, he met Chris Harris, an undrafted rookie cornerback the Broncos had signed out of Kansas. Harris was with Denver for nine years and now is entering his second season with the Chargers.

"I heard about some of the noise, that this young guy was flashing, making plays all over the field," Hill recalled, smiling. "And, you know, 10 years down the road he's still doing the same thing."

Hill's coaching tenure began in 2012 as a graduate assistant at Wyoming. Two years later, he was out of coaching and spent time visiting various college programs. He said he went to his alma mater, Michigan State, as well as Alabama, Utah and North Dakota State.

"I just wanted to continue to build while I was out of the game," Hill said. "I was always trying to find out how I could advance and move forward."

He got a job coaching defensive backs at the University of Pittsburgh in 2015 and spent three years there before reaching the NFL as an assistant with Miami. Hill was with the Broncos the last two seasons.

Now, he's a coordinator entering just his fourth year in the league and with a team that is transitioning to a new staff but has enough promise to be considered beyond rebuilding.

"It may have been a fast move up, but I felt like I was preparing myself," Hill said. "You have to say there was some luck there. But I'm thankful for every opportunity I've been in."

Though the Chargers have announced nothing officially, Hill indicated that Giff Smith, who has coached the team's defensive line the last five years, will remain on staff.

He also said Derrick Ansley and Tom Donatell will be joining the Chargers. Ansley had been the defensive coordinator at the University of Tennessee and Donatell, an ex-UCLA assistant, a quality control coach for Seattle.

The Chargers also have hired defensive line coach Jay Rodgers and Joe Barry, who is expected to be the defensive run game coordinator.

New Chargers DC Renaldo Hill excited to reunite with Brandon Staley

By Gilbert Manzano
Orange County Register
January 27, 2021

Brandon Staley and Renaldo Hill spent countless hours in each other's offices as defensive coaches on the Denver Broncos' staff to not only prepare for their 2019 opponents but for future offensive schemes they might face.

Planning ahead is why Staley, the recently hired Chargers head coach, decided to hire Hill as his defensive coordinator.

"Let's figure out some puzzles," Hill recalled Wednesday about his game-planning hours with Staley. "Let's find the new things that people are doing and let's attack them ... We're always looking for the next thing. How can we improve our defense?"

The two became close during their lone season together in Denver, with Staley as the outside linebackers coach and Hill as the defensive backs coach.

Hill remained in the same role with the Broncos this past season and Staley went on to be the Rams' defensive coordinator.

Now they'll reunite to use their past notes and brainstorm for the Chargers.

Staley will call the plays for the defense, but Hill said the new job intrigued him because he knows Staley will allow his heavy input on game days.

"I'm going to lean on (Staley) earlier in this process," said Hill, a first-time defensive coordinator.

"But I know he's always open to listen to ideas. And he has his own ideas, I have mine. But as a defensive staff, we'll definitely collaborate on all those and come up with the best for the guys, but he's always been open to listening and receiving. A lot of times you may be in rooms and it might not be received as well."

Hill, 42, played 10 NFL seasons as safety for the Arizona Cardinals, then-Oakland Raiders, Miami Dolphins and Broncos. He coached for college programs Wyoming and Pittsburgh before landing his first NFL coaching job with the Dolphins in 2018 as an assistant defensive backs coach.

Hill said Tampa Bay Buccaneers defensive coordinator Todd Bowles inspired him to become a coach when Bowles coached him with the Dolphins in 2008.

"The way his brain operated, that's something that I think we have a shared common," Hill said about Bowles.

"Always thinking from a different lens. He always talked to me about, 'You know this game. There will be a lot of people with a lot of experience.' It's good to pick up that experience from him and understand that they have something to offer, but don't sell yourself short on the things you know about this game as well."

Staley also noticed that potential in Hill, and referred to him as a "young superstar," according to Hill during the recruiting pitch.

Hill said this opportunity will help him learn how to coach defensive linemen and linebackers while still sharing his extensive knowledge to the Chargers' defensive backs.

Eventually, Hill wants to use this experience for bigger coaching roles and he believes Staley will allow him to grow as a coach with the Chargers.

“That’s one of the first things that Staley mentioned is about putting guys in better positions in order to move up and advance,” said Hill, a Black coach, when discussing the NFL’s lack of diversity among coaches. “It just wasn’t lip service.

“(Staley is) always talking with his staff about putting guys in position to move up, and I know that’s something, once I step in that building, that’d be the game plan for not only myself but the rest of the staff.”

Hill didn’t get into specifics about how the Chargers will look defensively in 2021, but he stressed the importance of bringing pressure and disguising coverages, possibly from a Cover-2 scheme with two safeties downfield.

The Chargers rarely blitzed in the past four seasons with Gus Bradley as defensive coordinator. Bradley often utilized a four-man rush and used Cover-3 with a single-high safety.

“You have to bring those simulated pressures,” Hill said. “You have to bring those five-man pressures as well as six. Obviously, you want to be able to mix those things in, but you also want to see how your personnel fits to all those things.

“But I think it’s important to understand the personnel and how we want to operate, but I believe you have to bring pressure in this league. I believe you have to change it up and give these quarterbacks multiple looks. You also have to know who you’re going against, because of the quarterbacks we have in our conference, they invite pressure.”

Hill was likely referring to Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes.

He’s looking forward to game planning against him twice a year, along with the many other talented quarterbacks in the NFL.

Chargers’ Hill eager for first shot as defensive coordinator

*By Joe Reedy
Associated Press
January 27, 2021*

COSTA MESA, Calif. (AP) — Renaldo Hill is getting his first opportunity to be a defensive coordinator, although he won’t be thrown into the deep end of the pool just yet.

Los Angeles Chargers coach Brandon Staley will call the plays during games, allowing Hill to be able to progress at his own pace. It is a hierarchy Hill is used to. During his two seasons coaching defensive backs with the Denver Broncos, coach Vic Fangio called the plays while coordinator Ed Donatell handled things during the week.

“I definitely will lean on Staley, and be able to sit back and learn. It still gives you that that growth opportunity,” Hill said Wednesday. “I can move around and assert myself into the front seven, but also still have a footprint on the back end.”

The 42-year-old Hill has eight years of coaching experience after a 10-year playing career with the Cardinals, Raiders, Dolphins and Broncos.

He joined the Dolphins staff as assistant defensive backs coach in 2018 after five years at Wyoming and Pittsburgh, before being hired by the Broncos.

Hill and Staley worked together in Denver in 2019, when Staley was coaching outside linebackers.

“We’ll definitely collaborate on those and come up with what’s best for the guys, but he’s always been open to listening and receiving ideas,” Hill said. “Staley emphasizes all the time it is a collaboration of voices in the room, and everybody having their opinion in what this defense will look like. When you can listen to those other ideas, it makes everybody feel a part of what we’re doing, we’re having success.”

Hill inherits a unit that has defensive end Joey Bosa and safety Derwin James as its cornerstones, but plenty of questions. Bosa missed four games last season due to concussions and James has played in only five games the past two seasons due to foot and knee injuries.

After four years of running a 4-3 scheme under Gus Bradley, the Chargers will go back to a 3-4 defense. Los Angeles was ranked 10th in total defense this past season, but had six games in which it squandered double-digit leads. The Chargers were also 25th in sacks and tied for 22nd in takeaways.

Hill said he is looking for the defense to have a more consistent pass rush and to better pressure the quarterback. The Chargers were last in blitzing, averaging 6.1 per game while the league average is 11.7.

Hill also revealed that defensive line coach Giff Smith is being retained, while Derrick Ansley, Joe Barry and Tom Donatell are joining the staff.

KEENAN ALLEN

Justin Herbert and Keenan Allen: The NFL's next great QB-WR duo?

By Daniel Popper
The Athletic
September 8, 2021

Justin Herbert walked to the line of scrimmage late in the first quarter in an empty SoFi Stadium in December and set up under center Dan Feeney. The Chargers, then 3-9, were taking on the Falcons in a Week 14 matchup. The game was scoreless and Herbert and the offense faced a second-and-goal from the 10-yard line. As Herbert settled behind Feeney, he looked to his right at Keenan Allen, who was positioned on the hash marks split off the outside shoulder of tight end Hunter Henry.

Herbert and Allen made eye contact for a split second. Just a slight hesitation. Then Herbert sent Austin Ekeler, who was lined up offset right behind Allen, in motion to the left side of the formation.

Watching live, this eye contact seemed benign, even meaningless. But in that second, the thoughts rolling through Herbert's mind shine a light on his burgeoning relationship with one of the NFL's best receivers.

You see, Herbert was supposed to audible. The initial play call was a pass. Allen was the primary read on an out route. But, based on how the play unfolded in practice, Herbert was told he should kill the play to a run if the cornerback was playing outside leverage on Allen, defending against the very out route he was slated to run.

Herbert got to the line and saw Falcons rookie A.J. Terrell shaded to Allen's outside, with his back to the sideline. So he looked over at Allen, who gave him a subtle shake of the head.

"Herb, this is not it," Allen remembered thinking in that moment. "There's no chance. This is a first-round draft pick. I don't want this guy to pick me off. If he picks me off and goes 99 yards, it's your fault."

Allen stared into Herbert's soul like a mother catching her son reaching into the cookie jar.

"Herbert. Kill it."

Herbert got the message but did not listen. He looked away after Ekeler passed behind him and readied for the snap. As Herbert started his snap count, Allen raised his right hand up and turned his palm to the sky.

"What are you doing?"

"I remember looking at him and I was like, 'Nah, I'm gonna throw this one,'" Herbert recalled. "And so we did it."

"Fuck it," Allen said.

Herbert took the snap, dropped back and faked a handoff to Kalen Ballage. As he did, Falcons defensive end Steven Means beat Henry off the edge. With pressure bearing down, Herbert retreated in the pocket to give Allen time to break.

Allen still did not think he was getting the ball. Nothing about the coverage led him to believe he was even an option. The Falcons had made the perfect call, and Herbert had not adjusted.

"I ran the route, like, nonchalant," Allen said.

Herbert fired a laser off his back foot, fitting the throw into a tiny window past a diving Terrell. Allen had created just enough separation.

Touchdown Chargers.

"He throws a fucking dime," Allen said.

Allen pointed back at Herbert just before celebrating with a dance.

"It's just one of those plays where I trusted Keenan," Herbert said. "I just thought, 'Keenan is this special player, I'm going to see what I can do with him.'"

"We talked about it after the game," Herbert added. "He was like, 'I wanted you to kill that.' I was like, 'You're glad I didn't kill it, huh?'"

This play was both a culmination and a window into the future.

Herbert was Tyrod Taylor's backup throughout training camp. He didn't take first-team reps until his surprise first NFL start in Week 2 against the Chiefs after a mishap with Taylor's pregame rib injection. Herbert was forced to develop his rapport with Allen on the fly, mostly in games. Over 12 weeks, that turned into an unwavering trust — a trust so strong that Herbert felt comfortable ignoring what should have been a no-brainer check in that Falcons game.

Now Herbert — one of the most exciting talents in the game with a chance to cement himself as a truly elite quarterback as he enters his second pro season — is the unquestioned starter. He has spent an entire offseason cultivating his on-field connection with Allen.

Joe Montana and Jerry Rice. Steve Young and Rice. Troy Aikman and Michael Irvin. Peyton Manning and Marvin Harrison. More recently, Matthew Stafford and Calvin Johnson. Matt Ryan and Julio Jones. Drew Brees and Michael Thomas. They were all here once.

Could Herbert and Allen be the NFL's next great quarterback-receiver duo?

"Absolutely," Allen said. "We can't be stopped."

On the night of April 23, 2020, the Chargers drafted Justin Herbert with No. 6 pick. Days later, Herbert packed up his car and drove from Eugene, Ore., to Costa Mesa, Calif., to begin his NFL career.

With the pandemic still in its early stages, teams were not permitted to hold rookie minicamp or offseason workouts. The Chargers quarterbacks and skill players, instead, took to fields in Orange County to get in their work.

Taylor, the veteran entering his second season with the Chargers, was organizing and running the workouts. He threw to the first four receivers, including Allen. Then Easton Stick, a Chargers fifth-round pick in 2019, threw to the next two receivers. Herbert, the rookie, got the scraps. He grew up a Chargers fan, though, and had been watching Allen from afar for years.

"I was just kind of admiring everyone," Herbert, speaking in a 30-minute interview with The Athletic, remembers of those early-May workouts.

It was not until training camp that Herbert actually attempted a pass to Allen. All those throws came in routes-against-air or one-on-ones. Taylor was taking all the first-team reps as the team's declared starter. Herbert was working exclusively with the second and third teams.

Which only makes what happened next even more remarkable.

We all know the story by now. The Chargers hosted the Chiefs in their home opener in Week 2. Taylor had suffered a rib injury in the season opener at the Bengals while taking a hit. A pregame pain injection punctured his lung. Taylor went to the hospital, and Herbert found out minutes before kickoff that he was about to make his NFL debut.

The first pass attempt of Herbert's career, fittingly, went to Allen. He handed off to Ekeler twice. Then on a first-and-10, Allen motioned into the right slot and ran a wheel route down the right sideline. Allen stopped his route 15 yards downfield, working back toward Herbert. He was open.

And Herbert, well ...

"Just sailed it," Herbert said with a smile.

"Voof!" Allen said, waving his hand quickly over his head to mimic the high throw. "What the fuck was that?"

"I just thought he was excited," Allen added. "I didn't think that was a normal ball."

He paused.

"It's a normal ball."

Allen trotted back to his quarterback and tried to settle him down.

"I told him to relax," Allen said. "That shit was hot."

"He came back to the huddle and said, 'All right, you got that one out of your system. Let's dial it back,'" Herbert said.

Five plays later, Herbert capped his first touchdown drive with a 4-yard scramble.

His first completion to Allen came on the next drive on a bubble screen. Allen took that for 14 yards. On the following series, Herbert went to Allen again, this time on an out-breaking option route near the right sideline on third down. He threw high again. The Chargers punted.

"I was salty at that point," Allen recalled. "I was like, 'What the fuck is about to happen?'"

Herbert answered that question pretty definitively.

Behind a sound defensive plan and an unexpected performance from their surprise starting quarterback, the Chargers had built a 14-6 lead over the defending champion Chiefs. On his first possession of the second half, Herbert moved the Chargers close to midfield. He faced a third-and-10.

Herbert took the shotgun snap and was almost immediately pressured by Kansas City defensive end Taco Charlton, who beat Henry off the right edge. Allen was running a post out of the right slot.

"As soon as the ball was snapped, I knew it was Cover 2," Allen said. "I knew I should be getting the ball."

Herbert stood in the pocket and delivered down the middle of the field, releasing the pass just before Charlton hit him. He layered the ball in between two defenders. Allen made the catch for a 25-yard gain, hanging on despite a big hit from Chiefs cornerback L'Jarius Sneed, who had peeled off his man to try and make a play over the top. Allen did not see Sneed coming.

"He hit me and I was like, 'Damn!'" Allen said. "He threw that shit in there."

"If you look at the back angle of the camera ... you don't even see the hole," Herbert said. "That's where faith and that's where practice reps come into play."

But here's the thing: Herbert and Allen did not have any practice reps. Herbert did not attempt a pass to Allen in an 11-on-11 setting until this very game. Early on in training camp and even during the season, Herbert was still focused on some of the basics of playing the position in the NFL, like taking snaps from under center — something he did not do at Oregon — opening up the correct way on handoffs and properly executing play-action fakes.

Herbert remembers a play from practice not long after he took over as starter when he tried to send Allen in motion pre-snap. Only Allen was not supposed to be the motion man.

"He just shakes his head," Herbert said, "and I flip it to the other way."

That is what makes the relationship so fascinating. That is what makes the production, from their first game together, so hard to wrap your mind around. Herbert was a neophyte as a quarterback. And he was forced to build trust with Allen, initially, from merely watching him from the practice sideline.

And yet the on-field connection started like this, and only grew more solid over the rest of the season. Herbert and Allen connected 96 times for 955 yards and eight touchdowns. Of those 96 completions, 28 produced third-down conversions.

"He's always open," Herbert said.

"No, seriously," Allen said. "I am always open."

Allen has been through this process once before. At their height, Allen and former Chargers quarterback Philip Rivers made up one of the best quarterback-receiver tandems in the league. Over seven seasons together, Rivers and Allen totaled 520 completions for 6,364 yards and 33 touchdowns. Under Rivers' tutelage, Allen developed from a talented but injury-prone prospect into arguably the game's most lethal route runner and one of the most consistent receivers in the league.

"Phil taught me so well and taught me so much," Allen said.

Rivers is retired now, coaching high school football in Alabama, and it feels as though Allen is entering a second chapter of his career.

Allen is on a Hall of Fame trajectory. He turned 29 in April. If he produces five more seasons at the pace he has set over the past four years, he will crack the top five all-time in receptions.

Allen has a chance to become the first player in NFL history to catch 500 passes from two different quarterbacks. He needs 404 more catches from Herbert to get there. He has averaged 101 catches over his past four seasons. You do the math.

Rice never did it. Tony Gonzalez never did it. Larry Fitzgerald is the only player in NFL history to catch 400 passes from two different quarterbacks — Kurt Warner and Carson Palmer.

This is all very much in the realm of possibility for Allen. That is partly because of who is now throwing him the ball and how much potential Herbert holds in his towering 6-foot-6 frame. But it's also because of just how damn good and reliable Allen is. The league is only really now starting to give Allen his due credit.

"If he is not in the top five, I'd love to see the top five," Herbert said, "because I think he's as good as it gets."

Allen does not catch 70-yard touchdowns on a weekly basis. His performance is more subtle, more artistic. The beauty of his game is not in the flashiness, but in the less discernible aspects — the releases, the breaks at the top of his routes, the deception of his effortless movements, his knowledge of coverages, his feel for positioning and his almost innate understanding of how to shatter defender's leverage.

"I have the answers to the test," Allen said.

"Keenan could play quarterback too," Herbert said. "He knows defenses better than anyone else."

This is why Allen is so effective on third down. He has the most third-down-conversion receptions of any receiver in the league since 2017 with 98. DeAndre Hopkins has the next most with 83. Allen led the league in this stat in 2020, with 28, in 15 games.

"If you didn't have lines on the field, it wouldn't matter," Herbert said. "Keenan would still get to the right place."

The best could still be ahead for Allen. Herbert's skill set opens so many doors. Rivers thrived because of his brain and accuracy, and he might very well be on his way to the Hall of Fame. Herbert, though, simply provides two things Rivers did not: elite arm strength, and the ability to both escape the pocket and throw on the run.

"It's night and day," Allen said of playing with Rivers versus Herbert. "(With Rivers), you got a guy who is going to go through his progressions every time. ... You can line up with Philip Rivers and you can say, well, he's not throwing the ball to this side of the field. He's not coming over here, just based on the defense. Pre-snap read, Phil is going to that side. Like, it's 100 percent. Justin Herbert? There's no chance! There's no fucking chance. He's throwing where he wants to throw the ball. He doesn't care."

Allen said when the Chargers moved on from Rivers last offseason and elevated Taylor to starter, they started practicing scramble drills for the first time. This was a new facet to the offense that just did not exist previously. Herbert then took it to another level when he replaced Taylor.

"He's bringing up a whole new game," Allen said. "Phil couldn't run. Phil could throw the dime, but what if I'm not open right now? Herbert can scramble and then I can re-get open."

Herbert thrives in off-platform situations. He also has enough confidence in himself to, say, shrug off an audible call, defensive coverages be damned.

"It ain't new, but it ain't the same thing," Allen said. "It's Keenan without Phil."

Or, alternatively, it's Keenan with Justin.

During OTAs in early June, new Chargers offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi shared his vision for Allen in his passing scheme.

"We always say that there are rules guys and guidelines guys," Lombardi said. "Here are the rules to the routes; some of you have to follow them exactly, but for some of you, they're guidelines."

Allen?

"He's definitely a guidelines guy," Lombardi said.

Lombardi spent more than a decade as the Saints quarterbacks coach working with Brees and under Sean Payton, and he has brought that passing system to Los Angeles. One of the hallmarks of the scheme is a heavy dose of option routes, which are perfectly tailored for Allen's skill set because of his spatial awareness and feel for leverages.

Allen said this is allowing him to "play more freely," and that is largely related to these option routes. As a "guidelines" player, Allen can put his own flavor on routes. In football parlance, this is called "pumping" a route.

For instance, Allen might have an option route where he can break in, break out, or sit in an open space. Based on the leverage of the defenders pre-snap or on tape, though, he might see an opening and want to take a higher angle up the field. He would fake like he is running a sharp out route before splitting the defenders on a deeper line.

"Sometimes, he'll look to me and tell me he's going to pump it," Herbert said. "So he'll do something crazy and I'm just like, 'Yeah, that's awesome. I'll find you.'"

Allen's freedom in the scheme will also affect how Herbert goes through his progressions. Lombardi has given Herbert leeway to stay on Allen longer than he would with other receivers.

"Sometimes you're late to the rest of the progression," Herbert said, "but you know that Keenan will find a way to get open."

"Normally a mortal quarterback would say, 'I'm not giving it to him, I'm going to my progression,'" Lombardi said. "But, he ends up getting open so often that sometimes, as a quarterback, you give him an extra count."

It is a fine line.

Herbert recalls a play from training camp where he moved off Allen on a progression because Chris Harris Jr. had him covered. Herbert completed a crossing route to Jalen Guyton for a 20-yard gain. Watching the play back on tape, though, Herbert saw that Allen came open after he had already moved on from that read.

"Had I stuck on him," Herbert said, "it would have been a walk-in touchdown."

"You just got to be right," Allen added. "When he does do it, he has to be right. When he doesn't do it, he has to be right again. He has to know when and when not, but he'll get it with more repetition."

As Lombardi said, this is a "good problem to have."

"Keenan would have a good relationship with any quarterback," he added. "He's a guy that you trust so much. When in doubt, you find him and throw him the football."

"I want to play with him for as long as I can," Herbert said. "And for as long as I can play with Keenan, I'm going to do my best to get him the ball."

On July 8, Herbert held a charity golf tournament in Eugene to raise money for a youth sports non-profit. He invited a number of his Chargers teammates, including Allen.

Allen initially said via text he would "love to go." But when Herbert later texted Allen for his flight information so he could book the travel for his top receiver, he got no response.

"Keenan's probably busy," Herbert remembered thinking. "He's got something going on."

Two days before the event, Herbert's phone lit up with a text from Allen.

"You got my flight?"

"I was like, 'I got to get on this!'" Herbert said.

Herbert sent the flight to Allen, and Allen arrived the next day, joining Scott Quessenberry, Michael Badgley, Storm Norton, Gabe Nabers and others for the event.

It says something that Allen wanted to support Herbert, right?

"I think he just really likes golf," Herbert deadpanned.

Allen also really likes his quarterback.

JOEY BOSA

Joey Bosa enjoying learning and exploring Los Angeles Chargers' new defense

By Shelley Smith
ESPN.com
August 5, 2021

COSTA MESA, Calif. -- To see Joey Bosa move -- like, say, between the field and the (healthy) snack cart after practice -- you'd think he was more like a sloth. Slow, deliberate, slower. You'd never guess he was one of the best and fastest edge rushers in the NFL.

But put Bosa on the football field, specifically in this new defense the Los Angeles Chargers are running, and the 6-foot-5, 280-pound Bosa has cat-like reflexes, brutal off the ball and even more brutal when he makes contact, which is often -- even without pads.

That's not to say that Bosa is completely comfortable standing on the edge, rather than down with a hand in the dirt. He does both, depending on whether new coach Brandon Staley has the Chargers in a 3-4 defense or a 4-3. It's all designed to keep the opposing offense guessing and is completely unpredictable, which is how Staley likes it.

And the thought of Bosa being utilized in many different ways is a scary thought to opposing defenses.

"There's a lot going on," Bosa said. "A lot of moving pieces. Usually I'm coming in here and I'm solely focused on how I'm rushing each day, which is another dynamic. I get to judge myself on another level, and it's fun. But yeah, it's going to take some time."

But football smarts are not an issue for Bosa.

"I'm going to make a few mistakes here and there, but by the time camp is over, I'm sure it will be second nature," he said.

On one sequence, Bosa took on rookie offensive tackle Rashawn Slater, who has been praised by just about everyone in camp. Slater was a first-round draft pick for a reason, a player who got the best of defending rookie defensive player of the year Chase Young (then at Ohio State) during his junior year at Northwestern -- setting up a great Week 1 matchup between Slater and Young when the Chargers head to Washington.

But back to Bosa and his gait ... the quick, game-time one. He faced Slater, who slowed him initially and held up until the whistle blew to end the rep. But if the whistle had blown just a little bit later, who knows if the rook would have held up.

"I turn into a different guy when I get mad," Bosa has said many times.

Bosa isn't the only player who loves the new scheme.

"It's refreshing," said defensive lineman Justin Jones. "It allows a team the inability to adjust to what we're going. It keeps them on their toes, which means offensive linemen are on their toes. They're not going to know who's blitzing -- who's coming and who's not coming."

"It's going to be hard to figure us out (for the opponents). What we're doing, what we're bringing. We're never a standstill defense and that's going to make us really hard to beat."

That suits Bosa just fine, even if it means learning a new scheme and a new stance. But Bosa admits they're not easy to learn, which he's fine with.

"A good defense shouldn't be easy to learn in two days," Bosa said. "So it's a fun challenge. Obviously seeing it live is a lot different than sitting at home reviewing on my book. ... It's not as much the athletic part of it. It's just seeing the field, understanding the formation, seeing shifts. There's a lot of moving pieces. I think it's a dynamic defense."

It's a defense who involves fast and relentless hitting, which is how Bosa has played his entire career. Even last season, when he was battling a bunch of injuries, Bosa still recorded 7.5 sacks and 39 tackles.

"Joey Bosa, he'd be good doing anything," Staley said. "We're trying to get him into a new comfort zone -- there are some things we're asking him to do that he hasn't done before. I think that more than anything, what he does best he'll be able to do at a high level. Some of the other things that are brand new for him will help not only himself but his teammates and we've tried to map that out for him. He's been great."

"You need premium players to play the type of defense we hope to play."

Perhaps the safest way to slow Bosa down is to bring a dog around, which perhaps is why Bosa doesn't have one ("I can barely take care of myself," he has said).

But he loves them. He slowly crawled up on the field to hug the Chargers' rescue mascot "Bolt" saying, "Come play with me," and hugged him tight.

So the best way to stop Bosa? Dog hugs and a sports drink from the snack cart.

Chargers Edge Rusher Joey Bosa Put Mental Health Recovery Over Football in Offseason

By Fernando Ramirez,
Sports Illustrated (Maven)
September 9, 2021

When players line up for stretching and activation for the Los Angeles Chargers, it's done in unison at Jack Hammett Sports Complex or Hoag Performance Center.

But when all players are on the ground going through a stretch, a silent figure is in the back doing his own thing.

Joey Bosa is backpedaling, doing lunges, and working out at his own speed. He is always working on his craft and always tries to improve. He works with his trainer Todd Rice in Florida, and his workout partner is his brother -- San Francisco 49ers defensive end Nick Bosa.

He is out there in Florida from the moment the season ends until mandatory minicamp. Usually, they go through numerous pass-rushing techniques or work on getting stronger and faster.

However, this year was different.

Last season was challenging all around, with the pandemic and the offseason program being shortened. It was rough, but for Bosa, the whole season was strange.

"The impact of what I went through last year was real," said Bosa with a straight face.

He sustained numerous injuries to begin the season. By the New Orleans game in Week 5, Bosa dealt with a triceps, ankle, and knee injuries that prevented him from playing any other down but third. He got a sack in the 4th quarter against Drew Brees using a spin move that would make Dwight Freeney proud.

Fast forward to Week 9 in Denver when the Chargers had a 21-point lead over the Broncos late in the third. Bosa took a hit to the head and would miss the rest of the game with a concussion. Things would change from here.

Bosa only remembered showing up at the facility on the bus. Everything else was foggy. The next few days would get even worse with him locking himself up in his room and only coming out to get his COVID test at the facility.

He would miss two games. He returned feeling a little more upbeat. He had a dominating performance against the Buffalo Bills in week 11, sacking the opposing quarterback three times, collected nine tackles and six tackles for loss.

Three weeks later, it would happen again. He sustained a second concussion in Las Vegas against the Raiders. He wouldn't return for the last two games of the season.

"I undersold how much it affected me mentally with a concussion or what I had to deal with," explained Bosa. "It was really intense, and I kind of fell into a bit of a hole at the end of last year mentally."

One of the factors that helped him get out of his hole was that the fact that he had Nick living with him in L.A. The younger Bosa brother was rehabbing from a torn ACL he sustained in week two against the Jets.

Bosa decided to room with his brother again, like when they were kids. Growing up, they competed in anything and everything. They still kind of compete to this day.

"I think we have this intense competition against each other all the time," admitted Bosa. "That's kind of unspoken like, when somebody else does something, we're happy for him, but at the same time, we're like s***, and I want to do better."

During the back end of training camp this year, the 49ers were in town to have a joint practice with the Chargers. The younger Bosa is still coming back from his torn ACL, but he was able to practice on the side.

He also watched as his brother hand swiped, outpowered, and even used his agility to get past the 49ers offensive line. He was on a mission.

"I'm happy I was able to perform well against this team, and for him to see a few reps, it meant a lot," explained Bosa. "I was going to be really, really upset if I went out there and had a bad week because I can't have him show me up."

Bosa was Mic'd up for the Chargers, and the first thing he says when he bumps into his little brother is, "what's up, small guy?" to which Nick asked his older brother what moves he used to get past the offensive line.

It is the typical big brother, little brother love relationship. You always want your little brother to do great things, but not better than you.

"Sometimes the competition gets a little too intense, but luckily we don't play ping pong anymore or paddles are flying all over the place," said Bosa.

Bosa was happy to see his brother. He was thankful that Rice and his brother helped him climb out of that dark hole. He spoke out about mental health after what he had suffered through last season and has become more and more of an advocate.

"It's your health long term, and you see so many people losing their minds," Bosa said last November. "There's people around me that have been losing their fathers from, from brain diseases, and it's just it's a scary thing to think of."

Sometimes athletes are seen as Supermen, nothing can get to them, and nothing can hurt them, but people forget that they are more like Clark Kent. A couple of years ago, Bosa started to see a therapist, who helped significantly with what was going on during the end of last season.

"Ever since then, I've been super open about all of it, my meditation, therapy sessions, and all that," said Bosa. "So, it was just a tough time, and I had him to help me every week."

Bosa is a workout warrior. So, after the season ends, he takes some time to himself then jumps back on it with Rice and his brother in Florida. This offseason, though, Bosa felt like it was more about getting back mentally.

"The last few months, I've been steadily climbing and climbing and climbing and I'm just back to my old self, you know, feeling great," said Bosa. "Feeling great physically feeling great mentally."

He took his time. While he did that, some changes were going on back in Los Angeles. The team had fired head coach Anthony Lynn and hired 38-year-old Brandon Staley.

The new head coach called every single one of his players on the phone to explain to them who he was, and he wanted to get to know them. He wanted to show the players that he cared for them as people, not only as players.

"It's pretty obvious that this is who he is, and he's really passionate and knowledgeable about every single position," said Bosa. "He's a younger guy who listens and knows how to take care of us."

The head coach would talk to Bosa here and there but knew that his star pass rusher wouldn't be coming until mandatory minicamp. When Bosa showed up in Costa Mesa, he sat down with his head coach, and they just talked for a little over two hours. Bosa opened up to his coach about what he had gone through last season.

"I think that for him to be so outspoken," said Staley. "It's very courageous to me; there's a lot of bravery. Then there's also a selflessness too because he's not thinking about himself. He's thinking about other people. Anytime you have a star player like him that thinks that way, it's amazing."

He also talked football with Staley, realizing quick that Bosa is a unique person with a high football capacity.

"He's kind of an artist," said Staley about his initial thought after meeting with Bosa. "You don't get that way without being fully invested in your game, and I think he's so insightful about the details of his craft."

Bosa was quickly impressed by his new head coach.

"He could walk in any room really and talk about technique, and it's not just like, 'Oh, yeah, what are you guys running?' It's like he breaks it down exactly what's going on technique because he loves football," explained Bosa. "He has this kind of freaky memory where he just remembers things."

Staley was also impressed with Bosa. Staley has worked with some of the best pass rushers in Chicago's Khalil Mack, Denver's Von Miller and Bradley Chubb, and L.A. Rams' Leonard Floyd and Aaron Donald.

"I learned a lot from those guys like what he sees and what his approach is, and, and tapping into that, so you can coach him better," said Staley. "I felt like he's just has a lot of insights because he's such an accomplished player."

There will be some changes to this defense, though. Since being drafted by the Chargers in 2016, Bosa has been a big reason why the defense has generated a consistent pass rush. He has played 63 games in a Bolt uniform, sacked the opposing quarterback 47.5 times, and has 109 quarterback hits.

He also had his partner in crime in Melvin Ingram. When one of them got a sack, Bosa would do his signature shrug, and Ingram would cross his arms. They were a solid duo, but that has come to an end. Ingram wasn't re-signed and is a member of the Pittsburgh Steelers.

"He was great," said Bosa about Ingram. "He was the polar opposite of me, which I mean, opposites attract. I think we had a great relationship. Great player. I learned a lot from him. But I'm just happy he found a good spot, and he's probably going to have another great year over in Pittsburgh."

The Chargers brought Kyler Fackrell from the New York Giants to compete with Uchenna Nwosu for that spot opposite the Pro Bowl pass rusher.

"I love having Kyler," explained Bosa. "I think he was a great pickup. He had a great game the other day, was really impactful. I think Chenna's definitely coming into his own. He's been a great rusher for the past few years already, and he's finally going to have a real opportunity to get a lot of reps, but I think all three of us are going to do a really good job rotating in, and we're going to all have a lot of reps every game and keep each other fresh."

The significant change in Bosa's game will be that the team will ask him to take his hand out of the dirt and drop back into coverage. "I obviously want to rush the passer," said Bosa. "It's what I love to do. It's what I love about football and what I love to work on. But this is a new skill I have to learn. So, it's been a fun challenge. It's been frustrating at times, definitely. But at the same time, anything worth doing isn't going to be easy all the time -- corny, corny saying, but it's true."

That change also came with him not being with defensive line coach Giff Smith, who has been his defensive line coach since he entered the league. Bosa has always thought highly of him.

The Chargers hired Jay Rodgers from the Chicago Bears, who coached with Staley, to be the outside linebacker's coach.

"He's definitely a very positive guy, levelheaded -- which sometimes I need that," said Bosa. "So, I'm excited to keep on getting to know him. It has been a challenge for him, too, because he was with the big guys the last few years. So, he's been open about that. It's a new situation for him. He hasn't coached edge in a while, so it's been a fun learning process for both of us."

Rodgers had spent the last five years as the defensive line coach in the Windy City before moving out west. "This guy loves football," Rodgers said about Bosa. "He's very knowledgeable about his skill set what he's trying to do. His specific blockers run and pass. So, I've really enjoyed getting to know him and see how he reacts to some of the things that we're installing."

When camp started, Bosa was excited to work with Rodgers, but there was some hesitancy about last season.

"I was a little nervous coming into camp with how I feel at some certain things that have kind of built up over the years, but I have been feeling great," said the pass rusher. "I feel like I've got my rhythm back."

When on the defensive field at Jack Hammett, Bosa did one of two things during every practice, either going through a drill or talking to Rodgers.

"He's constantly working on his body, his timing, his footwork," explained Rodgers. "And then, as far as our conversations go on the sideline, different scenarios that could come up to help him play faster because I think the more you know, the faster you can play. Faster guys like him can play the more production they wind up having."

When it was 7-on-7, or there was a special team drill, and he wasn't needed, Bosa would be at a machine or workout dummy working on his craft, as Staley put it, like an artist.

Something else that Bosa noticed without Ingram being present is that he is now the leader of the pass rushers. Make no mistake about it, Bosa isn't a ra-ra guy; he is the furthest from that. He leads by example but doesn't mind giving tips.

"I feel like it's most effective when I'm coaching guys up one on one and telling them how I see things," said Bosa. "I understand everybody rushes differently. So, I don't want to like tell him this was the only way but tell him what I see what's been successful for me."

He has been a silent leader in the pass-rushing room. He has helped guys from Nwosu to third-year player Davin Bellamy to rookie fourth-rounder Chris Rumph.

"I mean, at the end of the day, Joey has been doing this at a high level for a long time, since his rookie year, and so any advice I go to him and talk to him about anything pass-rushing wise anytime I go to him after advice," said Rumph.

Things have certainly changed a lot since last season. The team has a new head coach with a new direction. Bosa will have some new duties to go along with getting after the quarterback.

So, the fans should expect a 10-sack season and a five-interception season from Bosa?

"Hopefully, more than ten sacks, but I'll take one interception. It's all I need," joked Bosa.

Bosa said he is excited about the season to start, but there will be a lot of factors that will go into how the Chargers will do this season. He knows that one factor he can count on is his quarterback Justin Herbert, whom Bosa has been a massive advocate for a la Paul Heyman since last training camp.

"I'm excited to see what he can do this year," said Bosa about his quarterback. "Another thing that I love about him is I don't think he... I mean, he must know is that good, but I feel like he's such a humble and normal dude. So, it's like it never comes off as arrogant or full of himself for like this super talent that he is, which was he's a 6'5 fast like he's the ideal quarterback, and I think he's got a Hall of Fame future, for sure."

From everything Bosa has gone through from last season to this one, he feels re-juiced and is looking ahead and not back.

"I don't come into practice where you don't want to bump my head or anything feeling like that," said Bosa. "I think I've done everything right to heal my brain and heal my body, so it's part of the game."

JUSTIN HERBERT

Justin Herbert is the franchise quarterback who might finally redefine Charging

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
September 4, 2022

The pivotal moment arrived five picks into the NFL's 2020 remote, pandemic-scrambled draft, the fate of the franchise resting in hands nearly 2,800 miles away.

When Miami selected Tua Tagovailoa, the Chargers were left with a choice that was most obvious at the time and soon would bring outrageous fortune.

With the sixth pick, they took Justin Herbert.

"To hit on a quarterback like Justin, it changes everything," said Shane Day, now Herbert's position coach. "It would change everything for every team in the league."

With one appearance and zero Super Bowl titles, the Chargers are supposedly cursed, right? Charging is a word invented to describe the myriad ways that games, seasons and entire decades have inexplicably crumbled for this forlorn franchise.

Yet, when Herbert was the one standing right there in front of them, the Chargers received a gift that would extend a run so ridiculous that this organization can be correctly characterized with only one word: blessed.

Blessed at the most important position in all of sports.

Since Week 1 of the 2006 season, the Chargers have had only three players start at quarterback, and one of them — Tyrod Taylor — was in there for just a single game.

During that same time:

Atlanta has had six players start at quarterback — despite Matt Ryan holding the job for 14 years.

New England has had seven — despite Tom Brady spending 20 seasons there.

Green Bay has had eight — despite Aaron Rodgers taking over in 2008.

"We've seen how desperate some teams can get trying to find a quarterback," running back Austin Ekeler said. "To get Herbert here and do what he's done so far, that has to give you a lot of rest at night if you're a general manager."

"It's a relief for us too. We know we've got a guy. Our reality is there's genuine mystery about how far we can go. Justin has such an amazing talent cap. I'm real curious to see where our cap as a team is too."

That's just three starting quarterbacks over a span of 273 regular-season games, the first 240 of which were manned by Philip Rivers. Then came Taylor's one start, followed by Herbert for 32 games.

Blessed? Since 2006, the Chargers have had as many home stadiums as they've had starting quarterbacks. They've had five head coaches during that time.

Since Rivers began this stretch, each of Chargers' three AFC West rivals — Denver, Kansas City and Las Vegas — has had at least one season during which three different players started at quarterback.

Now retired, Ryan Fitzpatrick started for nine different teams while the Chargers enjoyed absurd consistency. Wanna talk Charging? Cleveland has had 24 players start at quarterback since 2006.

"They made a great pick," wide receiver Mike Williams said. "That's about all you can say, right? Sometimes, it doesn't go the way you wanted. This one is going the way everybody wanted."

The longest-tenured of the Chargers had no idea what the team had in Herbert when he made that first career start as a desperately late replacement for Taylor in Week 2 of the 2020 season.

Keenan Allen said Herbert trotted onto the field that afternoon at SoFi Stadium and into a huddle clueless as to what would happen next.

"You couldn't really tell because he was going with the twos all training camp," the veteran wide receiver said. "We were with Tyrod. We knew he obviously had a big arm. But we had Tyrod. So, you know, we just didn't even think about it."

Herbert is entering his third year standing atop a foundation unmatched in league history. No one has had more completions (839), passing yards (9,350) or touchdown passes (69) through the first two seasons of a career.

The Chargers invested their 2021 and 2022 first-round picks to bolster the front tasked with protecting Herbert. Considered a weakness in Rivers' final season, the offensive line is now a strength.

Joshua Palmer has emerged as a legitimate third target at wide receiver, tight end Gerald Everett was signed in free agency and veteran running back Sony Michel was added last week.

Around their young quarterback, the Chargers have built even more potential after they were a top-five offense in yards and points last season.

Yet there's even more going on here with Herbert, more than can be expressed in numbers or records. His presence alone puts the Chargers among the league leaders in belief.

"Philip was unbelievable," edge rusher Joey Bosa said. "He's a Hall of Fame quarterback. But to have that young talent that can just sling it from any part of the field, it's just a different feel, especially when you're down in the fourth quarter and you have the ball last."

As a rookie, Herbert produced winning drives late in three consecutive games, matching another NFL mark. He led the Chargers from 15 points down in the final five minutes to force overtime in his most recent game.

In 2020, before facing Tampa Bay, Herbert was asked about playing as long as Brady has. He said he liked the idea of quarterbacking into his 40s.

At the end of the Chargers' offseason program in June — concluding weeks and weeks of work — he was asked about his vacation plans. "I feel like," Herbert answered, "I'm kind of on vacation right now."

Given the desire for longevity and the love of football, who knows how long he might be leading this team? He's only 24. Could the 2032 Chargers have the same quarterback as the 2022 version? How about the 2042 Chargers?

If that sounds crazy, so does the stability this franchise already is enjoying at Herbert's position.

"Coming into this year, you're just seeing Justin grow and grow and grow in every aspect," Day said. "I don't think there are any limits on him. He's so young. He's working hard every day. He's humble. There's no ceiling on this guy."

"That's why I love coming out here every day. It's so exciting to continue to see him spiral upward. He has all the physical skills, which everyone sees, and then all the mental things to go with it, as well. It's amazing. He's amazing."

Justin Herbert's critical third year: Why the Los Angeles Chargers QB is ready for this moment

By Lindsey Thiry
ESPN.com
August 24, 2022

COSTA MESA, Calif. -- The first of two joint practices with the Dallas Cowboys did not bode well for the Los Angeles Chargers.

Protection issues against the Cowboys' defensive front stymied progress. Quarterback Justin Herbert took several sacks. Passes that should have been completed were not, and interceptions were thrown.

Following the most grueling workout of camp, most of Herbert's teammates had already departed the practice facility on buses, while a few others lingered to visit with family and friends.

But there, in the far corner of the fields, long after the final whistle, remained Herbert, throwing pass after pass.

"He stays like an hour-and-a-half after practice just throwing balls," receiver Keenan Allen said, amid a growing smile and chuckling. "It's crazy."

A quarterback throwing passes, what's so wild about that?

"I don't know," Allen said, before making a comparison to Philip Rivers, the Chargers' former quarterback of 16 seasons, including six with Allen. "Philip never stayed after practice to throw the ball. Philip put in the work, but this guy is out here like an hour-and-a-half after, just throwing the same route over and over and over. If there is not a spiral, he'll just keep throwing the same one."

For Herbert, there's no throw count, no time limit, no real measurable that indicates that his post-practice work for the day is complete.

"It's based on whatever happened that day," he explained. "If there are a couple of throws during practice that maybe I missed or maybe I felt like I could have done better, after practice is the time to address those."

The Chargers finished last season 9-8, third place in the AFC West, and missed the playoffs after losing three of their final four games, including a 35-32 overtime loss to the Las Vegas Raiders in Week 18, when a tie would have sent them to the postseason.

A failure of a season, despite Herbert's individual success.

So the attention returns to the franchise quarterback, Herbert -- the No. 6 overall pick in 2020, who is tasked with powering a star-packed roster not only to a second playoff appearance in nine seasons, but -- dare they whisper -- a Super Bowl run.

The post-practice work offers evidence of the burden Herbert carries into 2022, even if the quarterback himself downplays it.

"There is no pressure on us," Herbert said. "The only pressure that you make is what you put on yourself."

As a second-year pro, Herbert posted the third-best QBR in the NFL behind future Hall of Fame quarterbacks Aaron Rodgers and Tom Brady.

It's your league. Run it how you want.

Choose your league size, customize the scoring and set the rules you want to follow in order to create the fantasy football league you want to play in.

Create your custom league for free!

On his way to his first Pro Bowl appearance, he became the first player in NFL history to pass for 30 touchdowns in each of his first two seasons. And that's only where his record-setting numbers began.

Through the first two seasons of a career, Herbert has the most passing touchdowns (69), passing yards (9,350), completions (839) and total touchdowns (77) in NFL history. He reached 800 career completions by his 31st game, faster than any player in NFL history.

But personal milestones don't mean much if you don't advance to, and win in, the postseason -- a destination the Chargers haven't visited since 2018, when Herbert was still an Oregon Duck.

That's why the organization went all-in this offseason to bolster its defense, a unit that turned in an abysmal performance in 2021, and is expected to exponentially improve with the addition of All Pro outside linebacker Khalil Mack, Pro Bowl cornerback J.C. Jackson and run-stopper Sebastian Joseph-Day -- all of whom join star edge Joey Bosa and safety Derwin James Jr.

Staley, now in his second season as coach, expressed confidence that Herbert can handle heightened expectations.

"He's just so steady," Staley said. "He's a fierce competitor. His intangibles are by far his best quality, the head that he has on his shoulders. There is nobody's standards that will ever, ever meet his own..."

"He has rare competitive stamina... It tells the organization that we better keep up with him."

Entering his third season, and a second in offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi's offense, teammates and coaches have noticed an ease about Herbert that he didn't previously display.

Herbert's numbers have been good and he has looked the part of a franchise QB. Will serious winning soon follow? Gary A. Vasquez-USA TODAY Sports

"He's just a lot looser than usual," said receiver Mike Williams, who caught nine of Herbert's 38 touchdown passes last season. "He's kind of taken control and being himself."

Herbert, who also had 15 passes intercepted last season, knows where the spots are on the field for his different receivers, according to Williams, and for their part, the receivers have a better understanding where they must be for him to get them the football.

"Everything is just running smoothly now," Williams said.

Herbert is more present with each group on the team, including the offense, defense, and even an occasional stop by special teams. And with the coaching staff, he's providing more input on time and score situations.

"He's a lot more comfortable this year," Lombardi said. "Probably experimenting a little bit out here with some throws, being a little more aggressive and testing the limits of things."

Through training camp practices, Herbert has been more vocal. He directs traffic, asserts his knowledge, and corrects teammates when needed.

"He's making calls now," veteran center Corey Linsley said. "And he's making adjustments and stuff. Last year, he was maybe a little hesitant."

Herbert often deflects when asked to evaluate his own personal performance, and instead defers to the team's progress. This training camp, he said, there's an advantage continuing in the same offensive system.

"Going into this camp and having a year of film to look back on and study and go through, is so helpful," said Herbert, who spent his rookie season of 2020 under former head coach Anthony Lynn, who was fired in January 2021, and former offensive coordinator Shane Steichen, who called plays and is now the Eagles offensive coordinator.

"We're miles ahead of where we were at this point last year."

Justin Herbert Is Known for His Arm. But His Mental Game May Be Even Better.

By Steven Ruiz
The Ringer
August 31, 2022

In hindsight, it was probably a bad question. That became clear as Los Angeles Chargers quarterbacks coach Shane Day looked off into the spotless Costa Mesa sky searching for an answer. I had asked him to pick out the best play he'd seen Justin Herbert make during their first year working together, and he was struggling—not because he had trouble coming up with an answer. There were just too many options to choose from.

We'd set forth some parameters: For example, he couldn't pick Herbert's big throw against the Giants, the one when the QB fled the pocket after his left tackle got beat, planted at his own 33-yard line, and then launched a pass that dropped right into Jalen Guyton's hands for a touchdown.

It was probably the throw of the 2021 NFL season, so I thought it was too easy. "I wouldn't pick that one anyway," Day reassured me.

"There were several plays in the red zone," Day continued. "A lot of times as coaches, when we watch the red zone [film], we'll talk about how most of the touchdowns are scored off schedule. But [Herbert] doesn't. He goes through the progressions. He goes, bang, bang, bang and throws touchdowns."

Suddenly Day started doing an impression of a quarterback going through a progression, bouncing on his feet as he reads an imaginary defense. That seemed to jog his memory, and he finally had an answer: It's a 4-yard touchdown pass on the opening drive of L.A.'s 41-22 win over the Bengals in Week 13. Not a gargantuan throw, a buzzer-beating strike to force overtime in the season finale against Vegas, or the 40-yard hole shot Herbert threw against the Cowboys that looked like CGI. No, this random-ass 4-yarder from a game you probably barely remember.

Day cited that play because of what happened between the moment Herbert took the snap and when he let go of the ball. Most quarterbacks aren't able to get through a full-field progression in the open field—and doing it in the red zone, where everything is condensed, basically never happens, said Day. But on this play, Herbert considered and dismissed three different options before finally making a throw to Keenan Allen, who was considered a "checkdown" option.

To fully appreciate the work Herbert did to make that touchdown, we need to break down his progression step-by-step, starting before the ball is even snapped. The Chargers motion Guyton across the formation, and the cornerback across from him follows, leaving Mike Williams one-on-one on the outside. Herbert, thinking he's getting some sort of man coverage, wants to attack that matchup. But right before the ball is snapped, Bengals safety Jessie Bates audibles into a zone coverage that takes away Williams's post route.

So option one is off the table. Herbert's next read is running back Austin Ekeler in the flat, but the cornerback had passed Williams off to Bates and was in position to rally and make the tackle short of the end zone. On fourth-and-goal, that's a no-go.

So Herbert's eyes move on to tight end Jared Cook, who's running a shallow crossing route from the opposite side of the formation. Cincinnati had that covered, too: Sam Hubbard, who typically rushes the passer, had dropped back from the line of scrimmage.

At this point, the defense had clearly "won" the play call. Time and space is limited in the red zone, so if the defense can take away even just the first option for an offense, they consider it a minor victory. Cincinnati had smothered Herbert's first three options. Most quarterbacks in this situation would panic: scramble, throw the ball away, or just take a sack. But Herbert found another answer. His eyes went straight to linebacker Logan Wilson, who was manning his zone over the middle of the field. Allen was running an in-breaking route from the backside of the formation, and there was just enough of a throwing window to fit in a pass.

"If you freeze that, where that ball location was, and you see the type of traffic that he fit that in," said Chargers coach Brandon Staley, who also brought up the same play unprompted. "That's the only place it could have been on fourth-and-4."

It was a perfectly placed pass thrown with enough velocity to beat the multiple zone defenders. But as impressive as the throw itself may have been, the process Herbert used to get to it is what made it so special. That can be hard to appreciate when watching from home without knowledge of the play call or what's expected of the QB. It's certainly harder to appreciate than a 60-yard bomb thrown under pressure. But watch that play back at normal speed. There's just about 2.5 seconds between the time the ball is snapped and when Herbert starts his throwing motion—that's all he needed to make four-plus calculations before nailing a highly difficult throw.

Highlight reel throws have accelerated Herbert's climb up the quarterback hierarchy. Everybody loves a good deep ball. And his coaches concede that his generational arm—which helped him finish second in both completion percentage and yards per attempt on deep passes (20-plus air yards) in 2021, per Pro Football Focus—allows him to pierce windows that other quarterbacks can't. But the real magic is having the imagination and foresight to make those throws in the first place. Staley brings up one of the many season-saving throws Herbert made late in the Week 18 game against the Raiders:

The velocity is unreal, but Staley was in awe that Herbert knew exactly where to place it to navigate the gauntlet of Raiders defenders standing in the way—and to do it while allowing Williams to catch it in stride and pick up a big chunk of yards. In that way, there's an underappreciated depth to Herbert's game that can be obscured by his overwhelming physical talent. The throws are awesome, but if you ask his coaches, it's the young quarterback's advanced mastery of the position that makes him so special.

"So we kind of get numb to the splash plays—the deep throws, the runs down the sideline, all that," Day said. "But I think what's most impressive about Justin [is] when you watch him play quarterback ... he goes one-two-three through progressions, and I think that's what he does better than anything."

"It's not the splash plays; it's playing quarterback."

Before Staley started on the defensive coaching track, he played quarterback at Mercyhurst University and Dayton. That gives him a unique point of view when analyzing the job his young passer is doing. The Chargers coach knows how difficult it is to play the position at a high level ... and just how difficult it is to stop a quarterback when they're operating like that.

"Hitting five in the progression" is a phrase Staley used several times during our conversation after the Chargers' annual intra-squad scrimmage. On any given passing play, there are five eligible receivers for the quarterback to throw to. It's rare that a quarterback will even get a chance to look at three of them before getting rid of the ball or taking off. Tom Brady does it every now and then, but even for the GOAT, it can be tough to process all of that information in a matter of seconds.

Brady has been running these plays for more than 20 years, so it's not a surprise that he's able to do this. But Herbert just finished his first year in offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi's scheme and is already doing it with regularity.

"He's getting through five in the progression, and you just know that many young quarterbacks in their first year in an offense aren't getting there," said Staley. "I know that because I have to defend them. So I know who's making it through and who isn't. Most guys, they get one-two-three and then they're out of there. They're moving, they're running, and they're escaping. They're getting out of trouble. Where what this guy [is doing] is playing quarterback at the highest level already."

Staley says knowing that a quarterback is willing and able to exhaust all the options available to him puts tremendous stress on a defensive play caller. There are no perfect calls, and every coverage has a weak point. But the top quarterbacks sniff out those vulnerabilities quickly and exploit them with ruthless efficiency.

"I know that our margin of error is so small on defense," Staley said of playing against quarterbacks who can hit five in the progression. "If we're not connected, if we're not on it, and if the rush isn't coming, like, he's gonna make it."

While studying the playbook certainly helps Herbert get through his progression quickly, he also possesses the innate spatial awareness that's required to do it in the heat of a game. The 2020 first-round pick says when he's reading a defense from the pocket, he's reacting to stimuli rather than actually going through the thought process the coaches design for him. Those instincts are honed by putting in the work and taking coaching well, Herbert says, but there's obviously a limit to that.

“He sees a lot more than I can coach,” Day said. “He has just a great feel for, Hey, this guy’s open. I’m going to put the ball there and I’m going to progress through the read like this. He just has a very good sense of the whole position at a very young age.”

Day brought up Herbert’s game-winning touchdown pass to Williams in a pivotal mid-season win against the Steelers as an example. Williams was so open it looked like Pittsburgh had blown a coverage.

It hadn’t.

Early in the game, Los Angeles had called an identical pass pattern with the outside receiver running straight down the field and the slot receiver running a quick out. Herbert had noticed the corner “getting nosy,” as Day puts it, trying to jump the out route for an interception—what coaches might call a “trap” coverage. So when the Chargers, trailing by three, dialed up the concept late in the fourth quarter, Herbert was ready to take advantage. As soon as he saw the corner flip his hips toward the out route, Herbert fired off a far-hash hole shot that arrived early enough for Williams to erase the safety’s tackling angle with ease. After the score, the NBC broadcast cut to a tight shot of Herbert nodding at the Chargers sideline, as if to say, “Did you see how easy that was for me?”

“I think what he does better than a lot of players, when they see that, they’ll come out and predetermine it,” said Day, who’s worked with cerebral quarterbacks like Kirk Cousins and Alex Smith while coaching in the NFL.

“And then it won’t be there and they’ll get stuck. He really plays it straight, and if he reacts to the defense and the defense makes a mistake, he makes them pay.”

You would think a young quarterback making rapid-fire decisions like that would make more mistakes, but Herbert rarely does. He threw 15 interceptions last season, but that was the product of throwing a ton of passes while trying to keep a porous defense in games. The Chargers’ typical rotten luck also played a part. Herbert had the lowest turnover-worthy play rate of any quarterback in 2021 and was the only one who finished with more interceptions than turnover-worthy plays, per Pro Football Focus.

If you just look at Herbert’s pressured dropbacks, his 1.9 percent TWP rate would have still been tied with Tom Brady’s overall figure for second lowest in the NFL.

No quarterback is immune to pressure, but Herbert is the closest I’ve ever seen. The numbers in the last paragraph show he doesn’t throw dangerous passes into coverage. He finished top 10 in pressure-to-sack rate last year, so he doesn’t take hits either. He doesn’t really even scramble as much as he probably could, finishing around the middle of the league in scramble rate on pressured dropbacks.

Herbert is consistently able to find answers built into the design of the play—the “break glass in case of emergency” options that quarterbacks rarely have the poise to consider.

“He ‘plays the play’ better than anyone I’ve ever seen,” says Day. “If you want to take something away in man coverage, he’s gonna make you pay with his legs. But it’s not forcing it. And he never does that, which is very rare for a young quarterback. Usually [they] lean on those physical gifts.”

So where does Herbert go from here? How does he get better after throwing for 5,014 yards and 38 touchdowns last season? There aren’t any glaring issues that need to be addressed before his third year. Herbert said on *The Ringer NFL Show* this spring that sharpening his footwork, and how it syncs up with his receivers’ routes, was his big focus of his offseason training regimen. Both Staley and Day pointed to pre-snap operation—getting in and out of the huddle faster, fixing pass protections, checking out of bad play calls before snap, etc.—as an area of growth for the third-year pro. But these are just small improvements here and there. There is no need for wide-scale corrections.

“I think the second year in the offense, you got the terminology down, you know what the coaches expect, and now you can really concentrate on the fundamentals,” Day said. “You can concentrate on fixing protections, making checks in the run game, but we put a lot of that on him last year, too. ... I think he’ll continue to grow in those areas.”

By all accounts, Herbert is a diligent worker who is constantly tinkering with his game, finding ways to get better. Last season, it often seemed like he was just running the offense as it was designed on paper, and in 2022, he should have more creative freedom to put his own twist on the scheme. Staley says that more than anything, though, it’s the quarterback’s desire to learn and improve that has driven his early success.

“It’s not just natural passing—like, this guy is pouring into his game,” Staley said. “It’s not God-given talent. It’s God-given work ethic. He’s got an incredible will to be a great player. And I think that’s what people don’t realize because of his physical gifts. They don’t realize the will that he has inside.”

Herbert’s lore will soon spread to the masses.

Playing in the AFC West, the league’s toughest division, he’ll have quite the platform to prove himself in 2022. The Chargers are scheduled to play five prime-time games, including a Thursday-night showdown with Patrick Mahomes’s Chiefs in Week 2 and a Sunday-nighter against Russell Wilson’s Broncos in Week 6. Herbert has already beaten Mahomes in his own stadium, but that game was played at 1 p.m. in September. Outplaying top quarterbacks (especially ones with rings) on the national stage will give the QB’s reputation a boost. And getting this cursed franchise to the postseason would likely push Herbert into the MVP discussion and get more people comfortable with the idea that he is elite. But Day is already there.

“I have this huge folder [on my computer] called ‘Why Justin’s the greatest quarterback of all time,’” Day says.

“It’s like 67 plays. If I’ve had a bad day, I just watch that.”

If Day is right about Herbert’s ceiling, the Chargers won’t have too many of those in the foreseeable future.

The magic and mystery of Los Angeles Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert

By Mina Kimes
ESPN.com
September 2, 2021

EUGENE, ORE. – Let's talk about the haircut.

Justin Herbert looks away, visibly distraught. Not because he's embarrassed by the haircut in question -- in December, he showed up at a Chargers news conference looking less like a golden-haired surfer god and more like a military school cadet, a visually awkward transformation that launched a thousand memes -- but because talking about the haircut means he has to talk about his least favorite subject, the one that he's been trying to avoid ever since we sat down for breakfast: himself.

Herbert stabs his pancakes with a fork. "So John Lott, our strength and conditioning coach ... he said, 'I cut my son's hair all the time.' I was like 'Sweet, you can cut mine.'" He shoves a bite into his mouth. "He cut it in the weight room, and ... that's kind of it."

But why would you let your strength and conditioning coach ...

He shrugs. "I just didn't really want to pay for a haircut, to be honest."

Offensive Rookie of the Year, \$27 million contract, face of a newly relevant franchise. And yet.

Herbert's hair has grown back, but he still looks younger than his 23 years, hunching over his plate like the biggest kid at school. He's dressed in a T-shirt and shorts that were probably sent to him by Nike; he drives an Audi sedan that was definitely a gift from an auto dealership here in Eugene (he drove it more than 13 hours from Los Angeles). Later, when I point out a Whole Foods from the car, he says he doesn't shop at the grocery store because it's too expensive. "It's just calories," he explains.

Herbert barely looks at social media. He doesn't tweet, and only joined Instagram at the end of college, when his marketing representatives made him sign up. "I don't really run it," he tells me, a little sheepishly. When I mention his public persona is somewhat inscrutable, he seems pleased. "I think the less people know about me, the better," he says. "I don't want to read an article about myself."

Herbert glances at the tape recorder. We both laugh.

When the quarterback's representative told me we were meeting here, in a crowded breakfast spot on the fringe of Oregon's campus, I was curious to see how he'd handle interactions with fans. But in the hour or so since we've arrived, no one has approached him, save the waitress who keeps wordlessly refilling his coffee (Herbert, polite to a fault, stops midsentence to thank her every time). I ask him if he's surprised he hasn't been bothered, and he shakes his head. "I don't think people care a whole lot," he says.

That is, of course, preposterous. We're in Eugene freaking Oregon; Herbert's origin story is as woven into this college town's fabric (hemp, no doubt) as beer and bicycles and Phil Knight. And unlike Knight, he actually grew up here, in the shadow of Autzen Stadium, attending football games with his grandfather as a boy. Eventually, he'd star there as the school's quarterback, solidifying his local legend by returning for a senior season with the Ducks instead of entering the draft. His picture hangs on the wall of the restaurant where we're sitting, along with Oregon sports heroes like Sabrina Ionescu, Payton Pritchard and Marcus Mariota, all clad in green and yellow.

Herbert is friendly with Mariota; the former No. 2 overall pick, now a backup in Las Vegas, owns a house in Eugene not far from where Herbert's parents live. The two quarterbacks share a marketing agency, as well as a network of Oregon alumni and friends. And while their careers seem to be headed in different directions at the moment, their NFL journeys started in the same place, with the football world questioning their ability to lead.

If the draft is a marketplace of competing ideas, the league's disdain for quieter personalities under center is one of its staler tropes -- an investing principle that persists despite numerous counterexamples, as though introversion is tantamount to sloppy footwork or a wonky release. Herbert, with his generational gifts, could be the star whose success both catalyzes a scarred fan base and shatters the myth of the outspoken Alpha. But he's reluctant to clap back, demurring when nudged for comment on how he has been perceived. So I try a different tack, pointing out that Eli Manning, two-time Super Bowl MVP, was criticized early in his career for his reserved demeanor.

Herbert furrows his brow. "I wish I knew people on the Giants roster that could explain what Eli Manning was all about -- how he acted in the huddle," he says. "I bet when he stepped onto the field, he had control of the offense. Because he had to. And maybe he is soft-spoken off the football field, and maybe he doesn't love all the attention, but I don't think loving the attention and needing it is a requirement to be a good football player."

So, yeah: Justin Herbert doesn't want to talk about Justin Herbert. But that doesn't mean he has nothing to say.

When the Chargers' offense jogged onto the field in Week 2 last season, CBS play-by-play announcer Jim Nantz was stupefied. "Well how about this," he said to his booth partner, Tony Romo. "Justin Herbert's the quarterback on the first snap!" Nantz wasn't the only one surprised to see Herbert instead of Tyrod Taylor, the team's veteran starter. When tight end Hunter Henry saw the rookie in the huddle, he asked him what he was doing on the field. "I was like, just let me call the play," says Herbert, laughing.

The quarterback, like the rest of the world, didn't know at the time that Taylor had suffered a chest injury during warm-ups when the team doctor accidentally punctured his lung ("I felt horrible for him," Herbert says. "I wouldn't wish that on anyone.") Coach Anthony Lynn told the rookie less than 30 seconds before kickoff that he was starting in Taylor's place; as the news trickled through the sideline, star edge rusher Joey Bosa walked over and slapped him on the back.

The first drive was a blur. Because the pandemic had abbreviated the NFL's offseason program and eliminated the preseason altogether, Herbert, who operated exclusively out of the gun at Oregon, was unusually green. He spent part of the summer in Eugene calling plays in an imaginary huddle, his brothers Patrick and Mitchell radioing in messages using a walkie-talkie. Now he was lining up in SoFi Stadium, with the Chiefs' defense bearing down on him like homesteaders descending on untouched land. His teammates were awestruck. Easton Stick, the Chargers' third-string quarterback, recalls watching Herbert flip his protection early in the series and go through his progressions before checking down to running back Joshua Kelley for a 35-yard gain. "He had probably never done that a single time in training camp," Stick says.

Herbert blew everyone away in his debut, but L.A. lost in overtime to the reigning Super Bowl champs. Then, the next week, the Chargers lost again, and again ... going 2-8 over the next 10 games. Some of the losses were chaotic, and others a little freaky -- standard stuff in recent years for the Chargers, a team seemingly subject to the whims of a vindictive special-teams god. Still, optimism abounded. The results mattered less to fans than the performance of their young quarterback, and the early returns were strong. Despite playing behind a leaky offensive line, Herbert dazzled with his arm and his legs, Fred Astaire-ing his way through crowded pockets and launching bombs downfield. He broke Baker Mayfield's rookie passing record with 31 touchdowns, and the team ended the season with a four-game win streak.

While Herbert was taken sixth overall, behind Joe Burrow and Tua Tagovailoa, he did encounter a fair amount of skepticism during the pre-draft process. Many analysts admired his physical tools but questioned his decision-making; in his final season at Oregon, where he lacked elite weapons, the quarterback occasionally locked onto his first read before taking off with the ball. Over breakfast, I confess to Herbert that I underestimated him coming out of college, in part because I didn't properly account for the context around him compared to what Burrow and Tagovailoa were working with at LSU and Alabama. "I appreciate you saying that," he says, with a gentle smile. "It can't be easy."

Herbert says he generally tries to avoid consuming analysis or coverage of his career. Last year, the Chargers, along with the Rams, were featured on HBO's "Hard Knocks." Even though the rookie quarterback was featured in a few scenes, he says he skipped the series (Stick tells me Herbert tried to hide from the cameras). His teammates describe him as a homebody, more keen on watching movies -- he loves Christopher Nolan films, especially "Inception" and "Interstellar" -- and playing board games than going out. During camp last year, when the rookies were quarantined together in a hotel, he insisted on buying a copy of Settlers of Catan, the Risk-like strategy game where players gather resources to accrue territory, for the group. Gabe Nabers, the team's fullback, says they played nearly every night. "He loves that game," says Nabers. "He'll do anything to win."

"The first time he lost, he looked at whoever won -- maybe Gabe or me or some other guy -- and said: "That won't ever happen again," recalls Nate Gilliam, a guard on the practice squad. He giggles. "I was like, 'Uh, OK ... I just met you.'"

Before the season started, the three rookies moved into a house near the Chargers facility in Costa Mesa. Herbert's teammates say they quickly learned that their new roommate was a something of a neat freak, with meticulous handwriting, a color-coordinated closet and a thinly veiled distaste for any sort of mess. Nabers says he has seen Herbert's temper flare up only once, when Nabers tried to abandon his grocery store cart in the parking lot. "The first time we went shopping, I was like, 'Eh, I'll leave it right here,'" he says, pantomiming a gentle push. "And he said: 'No. Take it all the way back.'"

Herbert, who lives alone now (he recently adopted a cat, which he named Nova, after a weapon in the video game Call of Duty), doesn't dispute this characterization. "I like things neat," he says. "Things have a place, and they should be put back where they come from." His preference for order extends to the football field, where he loves feeling confident in his ability to sort through the mess on defense and Marie Kondo his way to a first down -- pre-snap recognition, in quarterback terms. One of his favorite moments as a rookie took place on a seemingly unremarkable play, when he recognized a defensive look from the Raiders, killed the call, then reloaded it after Las Vegas adjusted to his adjustment.

"It was like a game of chess," he says. "If you could do that on every play, every drive ..." he sighs a little. "I think that's where success comes from."

Perhaps. But it also came when Herbert was immersed in chaos -- dodging free rushers and hurling passes across his body, breaking the rules that apply to less gifted athletes. His private quarterback coach, John Beck, says Herbert's natural arm talent is what enables him to thrive outside of structure. "I feel fortunate to have been around some really good throwers," says Beck, who has worked with Matt Ryan and Drew Brees. "There aren't that many people on the planet like that."

If Herbert wasn't a professional football player, he'd probably be a doctor or a science teacher. His dad, Mark, taught high school biology; so did his grandfather, who lived near the family in Eugene. Growing up, he and his brothers used to spend hours at the pond by their grandparents' house, chasing snakes and trying to trap nutria, a rat-like species of rodent endemic to the Pacific Northwest. Holly, his mother, says Herbert used to bring home various animals as pets, including one fish that jumped out of its aquarium while the family was out and died. "He was devastated," she says.

After Justin and I finish breakfast, he takes me to his parents' house, a rambler where he and his brothers grew up. One of them, Mitchell, is visiting from New York (he's a student at Columbia medical school), so the two of us sit outside, on a dusty patio set in the backyard. Mitchell points to the stretch of lawn where he used to catch passes from his younger brother when they were kids. "He was just always so athletically gifted," says Mitchell. "Justin would never say this, but people knew he was different. That's just kind of how he's always been."

Earlier in the day, I had asked Herbert how he ended up playing quarterback growing up. In his usual self-deprecating manner, he told me it was probably because his dad was the team's coach; everyone else says he was an obvious athletic prodigy, the sort of kid who could sling perfect spirals when he was barely out of diapers. At 4, he was out-throwing older boys at track and field events. At 5, he was pulling off unassisted triple plays. His high school football coach, Lane Johnson, says he first witnessed Herbert's "Rookie of the Year"-like throwing power at a little league game, when a young Justin whipped off his catcher's mask to field a bunt, barehanded the ball and threw a kid out. At the time, he was in the second grade.

Holly says she has only one memory of ever getting a call about Herbert's behavior, when a teacher phoned her to ask if she could get him to go easier on the other kids at recess. Watching him play youth soccer was a little embarrassing, she says, because her son scored all of the goals. As a boy, she says, Herbert was equally reluctant to tout his own accomplishments. "When the spotlight was on him, it was uncomfortable -- he was not attention-seeking." Holly describes Justin as a classic middle child. "Sort of the odd man out," she explains.

Herbert's aversion to self-promotion explains, in part, why he wasn't more heavily recruited in high school. After breaking his femur at the beginning of his junior year, he shot up several inches, approaching his current height of 6-foot-6. One would think a kid the size of a power forward with a Howitzer attached to his right shoulder would've enticed football programs far and wide, but Herbert wasn't heavily recruited, in part because, well, he rarely left Eugene. He visited only one quarterback camp, at his dad's request, and told his parents afterward he didn't plan on attending any more. "I don't think he fully understood how unique of a talent he was," says Beck, who notes that Herbert also didn't compete in The Elite 11, the throwing event widely attended by the nation's top prospects. "He never knew how he stacked up next to everyone else."

In the end, Herbert ended up at his dream school, Oregon, cracking the starting lineup as a true freshman under head coach Mark Helfrich. Though the team was very mediocre, Herbert was clearly very good. But when Helfrich was fired, the new head coach, Willie Taggart, declined to name the young quarterback as the starter from the jump, kindling a faux controversy when he told the media he was looking for a real leader. From that point on, Herbert was relentlessly critiqued for his understated attitude, figuratively poked and prodded all the way until the Chargers picked him in the draft. The quarterback studied biology and scored numerous academic honors, with near-perfect grades. Was he too smart? An unnamed lineman told a reporter that Herbert was extremely shy. Could he steer a team? Someone wrote a cute story about how he started a fishing club in high school. Did he like fish more than people?! (No one actually said the last thing, but you get the idea.)

It had to be exhausting. Herbert never complained in public, but others did -- teammates, coaches, friends. Joey Harrington, the former Oregon QB who was also panned for his cerebral vibe, tells me he gets frustrated watching history repeat itself year after year. "I think people have an idea of what a quarterback or leader should be," he says. "But a lot of times in the NFL, people just want you to shut the f--- up and do your job. I don't care if you're trying to motivate me -- if you don't play well, you're costing me money."

I ask him if he has advised Herbert to ignore the noise, and he chuckles. "He doesn't really care. He doesn't listen to this s---; he just does him."

It's true that Herbert mostly ignored the discourse ahead of the draft. ESPN's Desmond Howard questioned his ability to win over a locker room compared to Burrow; the quote spread like an oil spill, but Herbert says he didn't hear it until the comments resurfaced this spring, after he won Offensive Rookie of the Year. He insists he didn't care -- but concedes he did have to answer pointed queries from NFL teams, some of whom shared similar concerns. "I'd go to a meeting and they'd say, 'Well, we've heard some issues about your leadership ability,'" he says. "I said, 'Listen, I'm myself. Ask my teammates.' I'd give them examples."

One of the stories he brought up, he says, was a moment from his performance against Washington State in 2019, when there was less than a minute left in the game and the team was down by one. "I remember being on the sideline and saying, 'We practiced this every Wednesday, the 2-minute drill. We're absolutely fine. We'll go out there, we know what we're doing.'" Herbert went 4-for-4 on passing attempts on the final drive, and Oregon won 37-35.

"If you can look people in the eye in the huddle and say we're fine when bullets are flying and things seem bad ... that's my idea of leadership," he says. "Being yourself. Not being a rah-rah guy. Being the same person always."

He doesn't deny that he's an introvert but contends that the label is widely misunderstood. Back in college, Oregon's offensive coordinator, Marcus Arroyo, gave Herbert a book called "Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking." Herbert remembers a section about a developmental psychologist who studied hundreds of children, exposing them to stimulating noises and visuals as infants. One might expect the babies who eventually became quiet kids to turtle inward in response to hectic environments, he says, but the future introverts were actually the infants who wiggled and danced the most.

The book's author, Susan Cain, wrote: "It's as if they process more deeply -- sometimes consciously, sometimes not -- the information they take in about the world."

The day after I meet Herbert and his family, his current and former teammates descend on Eugene for a charity golf tournament he's hosting at a local country club, to benefit a nonprofit that funds youth sports programs. As the morning fog rolls off of the pines, Chargers wideout Keenan Allen, conspicuously dressed in a bright violet polo with matching sneakers, is sitting next to a buffet, plowing through a plate of biscuits and grits. I pull up a chair and ask him what it was like playing with a rookie quarterback after seven seasons of catching passes from Philip Rivers. "Phil has the knowledge, the experience," he says. "But as far as athletic ability?" He snorts. "It's not even close. The guy is throwing 70-yard bombs as he gets hit."

The wide receiver points to a play against the Raiders in Week 9 called X Tower. Herbert was supposed to throw the ball to Mike Williams on a post route, with Allen clearing space -- "running for the love of the game," he says. But when the safety abandoned his responsibility and left Allen in space, Herbert, who was looking to his left at a double-covered Williams, abruptly flicked the ball nearly 30 yards downfield to Allen, who was caught by surprise when it spiraled into his outstretched hands.

"Experienced quarterbacks wouldn't even look at that route," says Allen. Herbert's extraterrestrial arm talent has made all of the receivers work harder, he continues, because no one can take any plays off. "Now, when you're the third guy on the team, you can't think ... OK the ball is going to Keenan, so you don't have to run your route. You can always get the ball at any point in time."

Herbert is Rivers' polar opposite in more ways than one. Allen can't remember a single instance of the rookie screaming in his presence; Rivers was, of course, well known for his antics on the field. "Phil's gonna yell every play," Allen says, cackling. "His team, the other team, he don't care. Phil yellin'." But the wide receiver is quick to point out that, for all of their ostensible differences, Rivers and Herbert share the same competitive fervor, it just manifests itself in different ways. During the Chargers' losing streak last year, he says, Herbert used to sit by himself at his locker for hours after games in full pads, eyes straight ahead. "I had to tell him, 'Bro: Let it go,'" says Allen. "It ain't got nothing to do with you. Leave it out on the field."

Allen pauses, then adds: "It's good to have a guy like that. You know he wants to win."

While the Chargers advanced to the playoffs seven times during the Rivers era, the team made it past the divisional round only once and never reached the Super Bowl. Even when the roster was stocked with talent, the organization seemed to be mired in perpetual misfortune, or playing out a Sisyphian drama where Rivers was doomed to lead endless comeback attempts, seemingly always culminating in a shanked field goal. Between the bizarre losses, the pervasive injuries and ownership's decision to skip town, Chargers fans could be forgiven for jumping ship. But then, Herbert entered the picture, and the franchise's prospects flipped overnight. While Kansas City still looms as the favorite in the conference, there's a sense among fans -- and analysts -- that Los Angeles could be a dark horse in the playoffs.

In a league where quarterback play matters more than ever, drafting a game-changing passer is a little like finding a working compass; no matter where you are, or where your team is going, you can always find your way north. Today, the Chargers' compass is posted up on the 10th hole, hitting the same shot over and over, exchanging pleasantries with every group that stops by his tee. Allen does a double take when Herbert smacks a perfect drive over the treetops, shaking his head. "Relax, my guy!"

Herbert grins. "Sometimes you get a good one, sometimes you get a bad one."

A few minutes later, Pep Hamilton, the former quarterbacks coach in Los Angeles, pulls up in his golf cart. Herbert hits an identical shot (I watch him take the same swing about a dozen times, and almost all of them follow a similar arc), and Hamilton, now with the Texans, whistles. "Jesus, Herbert," he says. "You been doing that all day?"

The quarterback shrugs. "I've had some good ones, some not-so-good ones," he says, tossing his driver in his bag.

As Herbert's Chargers teammates pass through, I pull them to the side, looking for insights. "He's like a sponge in the building -- eats everything up, absorbs so much info, wants to know the playbook more than anything. I mean, he's a biology major," says Scott Quessenberry, a backup guard. Herbert sidles up to us, and Quessenberry gestures in his direction. "He's like: 'Do you know the lifespan of organisms in the ocean?'"

"I've never said that," says Herbert.

Groups of golfers cycle in and out; the sun goes down and the tournament ends, giving way to a party next to the green. Hundreds more people show up for the festivities, lining up for barbecue and drinks and a glimpse of Dan Fouts. I spot Hamilton standing alone with a beer and ask him what it was like teaching Herbert last year. "I think he has a lot more in common with Andrew Luck than any other quarterback I've had a chance to be around in the NFL," says Hamilton, who spent just over two seasons as the offensive coordinator of the Colts. "He's a quiet leader -- he leads by example. He has an innate toughness about him, and he garners field credibility and respect as a result."

Hamilton smiles. "You can be tough without announcing you're tough."

We find a table and watch as a small crowd gathers around a makeshift stage, where a hired performer is playing covers of wedding songs. The singer strums the opening bars of "Sweet Caroline," then stops and calls for Herbert to join him. The quarterback shakes his head, but the guy won't take no for an answer, so Herbert trudges up the steps, where he's flanked by a couple of his offensive linemen. Before long, all of the Chargers still at the event have joined them; one of the linemen is belting out the chorus, the kicker is swaying with his eyes closed, and Allen is dancing with somebody's mom. A minute or so into the song, I spot Herbert fading into the background, then trying to slip into the crowd. So do his teammates, who pull him back on stage.

Step by step: Herbert focusing on footwork going into Year 3

By Joe Reedy
The Associated Press
August 2, 2022

COSTA MESA, Calif. (AP) — Despite being the Offensive Rookie of the Year in 2020 and then reaching the Pro Bowl last season, Los Angeles Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert still has room to improve going into his third season.

Herbert is focused his footwork. He made it a major focus of his offseason program and has continued to hone in on it during the first week of training camp.

"I think all of the drops that tie into the routes — three-step, five-step, seven-step — and being smooth in progressions and going through all of the reads," said Herbert about what he wanted to improve.

"I'm still experiencing the young aspects of playing in the NFL. I have a lot to learn, but hopefully a lot of room for improvement, as well."

Footwork has been at the top of Herbert's improvement list going back to when he was preparing for the draft. He did not take any snaps under center during his four years at the University of Oregon.

Honing in on footwork took a little bit of a backseat last season as Herbert was getting up to speed with coach Brandon Staley, offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi and quarterback coach Shane Day.

Now that he's more comfortable in the offense, Herbert's work on his footwork has become a bigger focus.

Day — also the Chargers passing game coordinator — has noticed improvement from last year's training camp to offseason workouts and the first week of preseason practices.

"The evolution of that footwork is pretty cool," Day said. "The second year, kind of once you have the offense down, then you can focus on the fundamentals. It's been working through that progression of what's best and me learning what his body does best too, because he's a top quarterback. And then figuring out how to implement all that stuff as we go."

Herbert's learning curve of learning how to operate under center is part of a process that most quarterbacks have to go through when they come into the NFL. With most high school and college programs running their offense out of the shotgun, the learning curve can be steep and often begins during the pre-draft process and the scouting combine.

Even with getting up to speed with a new offense, Herbert was one of the league's top quarterbacks last season. He tied Tampa Bay's Tom Brady for most 300-yard games (nine), was second in completions (443) and passing yards (5,104), and third in passing touchdowns with 38.

Herbert also has the most completions, passing yards, passing touchdowns and total TDs through the first two seasons of a career.

Center Corey Linsley and wide receiver Mike Williams said they have noticed Herbert being more vocal during the first week of camp.

"In the walkthroughs and out here in practice and everything, he is definitely in tune a little bit more with some of the suggestions that we've made," Linsley added. "From an adjustment standpoint, that's something that he's shown in the early few days of camp and even in the offseason in OTAs and stuff. We're like, 'Hey, man, if you see it, call it. We're good. As long as we're on the same page, we're good. Make the call.'"

Herbert's biggest goal this season is to get the Chargers into the playoffs for the first time since 2018. Los Angeles looked as if it was going to get there last year before dropping three of the final four.

Being in the same offense for the second straight season is an advantage, but the Chargers have a tough start to the season. They host Las Vegas on Sept. 11 before a short week and trip to Kansas City for a Thursday night game on Sept. 15.

"You just have to compete and you have to execute when it matters most. Unfortunately, we fell short of that, but I think we have the team, and definitely the pieces," Herbert said.

"We're miles ahead of where we were at this point last year, so now we're focusing on things that are maybe a little more tough or challenging to tackle, but I think we're where we need to be right now."

Chargers' Justin Herbert: 'I need to be the best quarterback that I can be'

*By Elliott Teaford
Orange County Register
September 3, 2022*

COSTA MESA — Practice was done, but quarterback Justin Herbert was not.

Chargers players, coaches and staff members began drifting away from the fields at Jack Hammett Sports Complex after the second of two joint practices with the Dallas Cowboys last month. Cold drinks and a snack or two or three awaited them all after a long session under the midday sun.

Herbert stayed put.

One throw followed another, tight spirals to a number of receivers.

Five minutes passed.

Ten minutes passed.

Fifteen minutes passed.

"You see him, he stays, like, an hour and a half after practice just throwing the same route over and over and over," Chargers wide receiver Keenan Allen said, watching Herbert from afar while others ran pass patterns. "If there's not a spiral, he'll just keep throwing the same one."

Twenty minutes passed.

"He's not only a tremendous talent, but I think it's just the way he plays," Cowboys coach Mike McCarthy had said one day earlier when asked for his assessment of Herbert. "He has a lot of juice, a lot of energy. Both in the pocket and out of the pocket, obviously, he can make any throw on the field."

Thirty minutes passed.

Finally, Herbert called it quits.

"I need to be the best quarterback that I can be," Herbert said when asked about his post-practice routine. "I go after practice and if I miss my throws that day, it's important to me to figure them out and take care of my body, as well. I'm going to go ice and make sure I'm ready to go tomorrow."

Many minutes earlier, Allen had marveled at Herbert's commitment.

Sort of.

"It's crazy," Allen said

What's crazy?

"I don't know," said Allen, entering his 10th season in the NFL, all with the Chargers and the first eight with longtime quarterback Philip Rivers.

"Philip never stayed after practice to throw the ball. Philip put in the work, but this guy (Herbert) is out here, like, an hour and a half, just throwing the same route over and over and over."

Rivers, Herbert's predecessor, completed 65% of his passes for 63,440 yards and 421 touchdowns in 244 career games over 17 years in the NFL, all but one with the Chargers. Rivers never threw for 5,000 yards in a season.

Herbert did last year.

In fact, no one in Chargers history had thrown for 5,000 yards in a season until Herbert threw for 5,014 yards in 17 games last year – not Rivers, not Dan Fouts, not Stan Humphries, not John Hadl and not Drew Brees. Fouts set the team record of 4,802 yards in 16 games in 1981, one fewer than Herbert.

"So impressed with Justin, frankly, last year when we played them," the Cowboys' McCarthy said, referring to Dallas' 20-17 victory on Sept. 19, when Herbert completed 31 of 41 passes for 338 yards with one touchdown and two interceptions. "I think it's like any player in this league. You watch them on tape and there's no emotion. You don't really feel that energy that's out there."

It was a different story while watching Herbert live.

"I was just so impressed with him in our game last year," McCarthy said.

WHAT MAKES HIM GO?

Herbert, 24, was selected to the Pro Bowl in 2021 in his second season with the Chargers, who drafted him sixth overall in the 2020 draft following his stellar career at the University of Oregon. There's been preseason chatter that he could be an MVP candidate when this season is done.

"My personal goal is just to be the best quarterback and teammate that I can be," he said on the opening day of training camp July 27. "I try not to look too much into statistics. I think that can kind of skew or throw you off from what you are trying to accomplish. As long as I work hard and do the right things on and off the field, I think we'll be in good shape."

Last season, Herbert's record-setting yardage coupled with a 65.9% completion percentage and 38 touchdowns. They were counterbalanced by 15 interceptions, a 9-8 record, a third-place finish in the AFC West and falling one win short of the playoffs.

Perfection, as a goal unto itself, can be elusive.

Or it can prove to be maddening at best or counterproductive at worst.

So, how does Herbert balance a desire to be the best with inevitable mistakes?

"It's an interesting thought because I always tell myself that I made it further than I ever thought I was going to," he said. "At this point, if I just do my best, I can't complain. I go out there and if I work as hard as I can on every single rep and I go out after practice, I can fail and still be proud of myself."

Improvement when you've reached the peak of your profession can be difficult, too. As a rookie, with a Rose Bowl victory, a golden arm, fleet feet and a sparkling résumé, Herbert still had to prove himself in the NFL. As a second-year player, he had to raise his game to another level, and he did.

Spectacularly, in fact.

What comes next? How many more steps can Herbert take in Year 3?

“He’s pretty good, he’s pretty good,” Chargers wide receiver Mike Williams said, laughing while repeating himself for emphasis. “But, yeah, we can unlock some more stuff this upcoming season. We haven’t gotten to the playoffs or the Super Bowl with him, so, yeah, we’re looking forward to that.”

Herbert has become more vocal, more assertive and more of a leader in his third training camp, according to center Corey Linsley, who is in his second season with the Chargers after seven years snapping the ball to quarterback Aaron Rodgers with the Green Bay Packers.

“It’s more of an attitude,” Linsley said of Herbert. “Yeah, he says stuff. It’s not like he doesn’t rally the team up. It’s his calm, that sort of confidence where it doesn’t need to be said a whole lot. You just see it in his eyes. This guy is in the zone. That’s what you see day in and day out where we all rally around him.”

Then there’s that arm of Herbert’s. Have we mentioned his strength and accuracy?

“Justin hits you in the chest every time,” Chargers wide receiver DeAndre Carter said. “There’s not too much to get used to – just catch the ball when it comes. It definitely makes it easier. He can throw that thing in there. Probably about 102 miles per hour. If he played baseball.”

THE BACKSTORY

As a matter of fact, Herbert did play baseball while at Sheldon High School in Eugene, Oregon. He pitched Sheldon to the state 6A championship as a senior and earned second-team all-state recognition, which makes one wonder who was picked as the state’s first-team pitcher.

Football runs through the Herbert family like the blood coursing through their veins, so that was the direction Justin headed after high school. He landed at Oregon after initially hoping to join his older brother, Mitchell, at Montana State. His father, Mark, had played at Montana and his grandfather, Rich, played at Oregon.

After Herbert’s record-setting career with the Ducks, the Chargers selected him as the heir apparent to Rivers, who signed with the Indianapolis Colts for his 17th and final NFL season on March 21, 2020, less than a month before the draft. Herbert then started 15 games as a rookie.

Brandon Staley replaced Anthony Lynn as the Chargers’ coach after the 2020 season, and Staley’s union with Herbert has been strengthened with each passing day. Not that Herbert has changed in any great way, mind you, but Staley can’t help but notice his growth and maturity over the past weeks and months.

If there’s increased pressure on Herbert’s 6-foot-6, 236-pound frame to win this season, to march the Chargers into the playoffs for the first time since they went 12-4 in 2018, it wasn’t apparent to Staley as training camp unfolded. Herbert is the same, no different in meaningful ways.

“He’s just so steady,” Staley said. “He’s handling it like he did the first time I met him. He’s a fierce competitor. His intangibles are by far his best quality – the head that he has on his shoulders. There’s nobody’s standards that will ever, ever meet his own. That’s what makes him such a good player and such a good teammate.

“He knows how important it is to be one of the guys. I think that’s why his teammates and his coaches appreciate him so much. Because it’s never about him. He wants it to be about our team, our unit on offense, our fans. When you have a humble superstar like him, it sure helps.”

No question, expectations of Herbert have increased for his third NFL season.

Blame him. He’s the one who set them.

Facing pressure appears to be old hat for young Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert

*By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
October 7, 2021*

The breakdowns were unfortunate, glaring and — in the words of offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi — “really silly.”

Twice Monday, Justin Herbert faced almost instant pressure because of failures in the Chargers’ pass protection.

The plays resulted in a short completion and a sack, the sum total being a loss of one yard.

But despite his offense going backward, Lombardi explained that what Herbert avoided on those plays was much more significant: calamity.

“That’s not easy to do, what he did in those situations,” Lombardi said. “So his ball security and clock in his head, those things were just outstanding.”

Herbert has gone back-to-back games — victories over AFC West rivals Kansas City and Las Vegas — without a turnover.

With 38 attempts by Herbert in each game, the Chiefs and Raiders sacked him only three times, that number aided by the quarterback’s ability to make quick decisions and even quicker passes.

“He’s just got that instinct, that feel, that awareness that I’m not sure you can really teach,” Lombardi said. “It’s a nice security blanket as a play caller to know that he’s gonna not let a lot of bad things happen if something breaks down in front of him.”

At Oregon, Herbert was known as a quarterback who could make plays in structure. NFL scouts were less convinced of his ability to salvage situations gone wrong.

Since debuting with the Chargers in Week 2 last season, Herbert repeatedly has mocked any such concerns. He has been among the league’s best when under pressure or off script.

“The most impressive thing about him is how quickly he processes the information,” Lombardi said, “how quickly he gets rid of the ball.”

After the Chargers’ Week 3 win at Kansas City, Lombardi said a late-game situation involving the clock reminded him that Herbert is in only his second season.

On Thursday, Lombardi says the opposite is true when it comes to Herbert recognizing and solving issues that arise in a sudden moment.

“He seems like a 10-year veteran when you get to that aspect of the game,” Lombardi said, “just his ability to figure out where the ball should go.”

Last year, before the Chargers played at New Orleans, Lombardi said he met on the field with Shane Steichen. At the time, Steichen was the Chargers’ offensive coordinator and Lombardi was a Saints assistant.

During their conversation, Lombardi said he asked Steichen when he realized the Chargers had something special in Herbert. The answer: right away.

“You could just tell he had an instinct for who was open and where to go with the ball,” Lombardi said. “I don’t know how to explain it. It’s pretty rare for someone as young as he is.”

Herbert will make just his 20th NFL start Sunday when the Chargers play the Cleveland Browns at SoFi Stadium. He won’t turn 24 until March.

Head coach Brandon Staley this week praised his decisiveness and strength in securing the football when he does get hit, calling Herbert’s calm amid chaos “the beauty of Justin.”

After some early issues in the red zone, the Chargers have scored touchdowns on eight of their last 10 trips inside the opposing 20-yard line. One of those failures came when Herbert took a knee to end the game Monday.

Herbert has seven touchdown passes — to five different receivers — over the last two weeks.

For the season, the Chargers’ offense is four for four on fourth down. Herbert has passed for three of those conversions and run for the other.

Since he took over as their starting quarterback, the Chargers are 7-2 — with six wins in a row — when Herbert doesn’t turn over the ball.

“You can’t minimize the importance of him taking care of the football,” Staley said. “It’s an 11-man operation, but he’s at the heart of it all.”

Justin Herbert, Chargers’ new offense could thrive thanks to his study skills

By Gilbert Manzano
Orange County Register
September 11, 2021

Nate Gilliam and Gabe Nabers had an awkward situation when Justin Herbert asked what they planned to do for housing during their rookie season with the Chargers.

Gilliam and Nabers already had plans to live together. They didn’t expect the prized first-round rookie quarterback to be interested in being anyone’s roommate.

“I think we found a place,” Gilliam recalled telling Herbert when he revealed his plans with Nabers.

Herbert’s response, according to Gilliam: “Oh, so you don’t want to live with me?”

Gilliam and Nabers didn’t mind making room for one more because they had become close with Herbert during training camp. They played video games, board games and ate together while staying at the team hotel.

“We didn’t know that was an option,” Gilliam, an offensive lineman on the Chargers’ practice squad, said about living with Herbert. “We just didn’t know that was actually going to come together. I think we went to dinner and we talked it over then.”

The three rookies moved into a place near the team’s facility in Costa Mesa and added to their teammate bonding activities by hosting a feast on the days following wins last season. The roommates cooked a “victory brisket” for the main course.

“He won’t take credit for it, but he’s like the head of the operation when it comes to cooking the meat,” Nabers, a fullback, said of Herbert. “I’m like the sous chef and sides guy. I’m the ultimate sides guy.”

The college-like atmosphere helped Herbert stay centered while dealing with the rigorous demands of being a starting quarterback in the NFL. But Gilliam and Nabers quickly learned that any roommate activities needed to be planned for early in the week.

The closer it got to game days, the more time Herbert spent in his downstairs office analyzing film and preparing for that week’s opponent.

“We’d get home and he’d be in his own zone,” Nabers said. “Me and Nate would have our own things that we do and I’d be in my room watching film. ... But Justin would always be downstairs in his office watching film.”

Occasionally, Gilliam knocked on Herbert’s door and asked if he could pick his brain on what he’s seeing on film.

“With that guy, you have to give him space,” Gilliam said. “Let him focus. Let him do his own thing. You can chime in. He’s not going to be standoffish. ... But with those kinds of people, I feel like they just see it quicker than others in the sense that they see the big picture.”

“For him, he sees the coverages. He sees certain things a different way. ... He just picked it up a little bit quicker than the normal person.”

That meticulous preparation is why Herbert had instant success when he was thrust into the starter’s role in Week 2 last season without getting any first-team snaps in training camp. His ability to quickly process how defenses are attacking him helped him sustain that success and deliver a record-setting rookie season.

But Herbert, 23, is starting from scratch for his second season with a new coaching staff and another scheme to learn.

He won’t catch the Washington Football Team by surprise in the season opener on Sunday at FedExField. All of the Chargers’ 2021 opponents have a year’s worth of film on the strong-armed quarterback, but Herbert doesn’t rely solely on his physical gifts to beat opponents.

He welcomes the challenge of adjusting to the adjustments defenses are sure to make against him this season.

RISK FOR LONG-TERM REWARDS

Herbert broke several NFL rookie records and earned Offensive Rookie of the Year honors under the guidance of former head coach Anthony Lynn and his staff.

The Chargers fired Lynn after Herbert’s memorable rookie year because the team had back-to-back losing seasons and the front office didn’t view Lynn and his staff as innovative enough to take Herbert to the next level.

By hiring a new coaching staff, the Chargers risked disrupting Herbert’s comfort zone. Too many times young quarterbacks regress because they were forced to learn a new offensive system.

But that was likely never a significant concern for Chargers ownership and General Manager Tom Telesco after they witnessed what Herbert was able to do without an offseason program during the pandemic and without any starter’s reps before being notified just before kickoff that he would make his debut against the defending Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs in Week 2.

A revolving door at offensive coordinator has derailed the careers of many promising quarterbacks, but learning a new system hasn’t been an issue for Herbert. Consuming new knowledge has become one of his strengths.

“That’s a skill,” Nabers said, “being able to drop some information and just fully let the new information flood your brain. That’s a skill. I think that’s something (Herbert’s) been pretty good at.”

Herbert is in the process of learning his fifth offensive system in the past six seasons. He had three head coaches in four seasons at the University of Oregon and is now with his second NFL head coach.

Herbert, a three-time Academic All-American at Oregon, credited his study habits for being able to transition to different offensive systems.

"I think it goes back to school and having good study habits," said Herbert, a biology major who had a 4.01 cumulative grade-point average in college. "Being able to try and pick things up quickly, you have to work hard. You have to put the work in to get it figured out."

Disrupting Herbert's comfort zone after his historic rookie season was likely worth the risk for the Chargers because of his proven study habits and his new teachers.

The well-prepared Herbert is now working with Chargers coach Brandon Staley, a defensive mastermind with a knack for being ahead of trends, and offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi, who has extensive knowledge of the New Orleans Saints' offensive system, one of the most successful schemes in the league over the past 15 years.

Lombardi, Staley, quarterbacks coach Shane Day and offensive line coach Frank Smith spent the offseason program and training camp building off the Saints' scheme as a foundation and tweaking it to fit Herbert's strengths.

Lombardi spent 12 of the past 14 seasons as a Saints assistant coach. He was the quarterbacks coach for 10 of those years and got to coach Drew Brees, Teddy Bridgewater, Taysom Hill, Jameis Winston and Chase Daniel, who is now a backup quarterback with the Chargers.

"It's a very sophisticated offense, but the foundation is the same," Daniel said about comparing the Chargers' and Saints' schemes. "We're going to do stuff that Justin might do better than Drew Brees and vice versa. What Joe does is fit the offense to the quarterback. He got spoiled for so long being with Drew for 12 years. But this No. 10 of ours is special. He can throw just about every ball on the football field.

"I know Justin's excited about (the new offense). It's a lot of studying, a lot of work for a quarterback in this system. You literally have to know every single bit in the run game, the pass game, play-action game, screen game. Justin's been studying his butt off for that. It's going to be fun when the live bullets start flying."

The complex scheme and rotating personnel groupings at a rapid pace might be the toughest system Herbert has ever been asked to grasp, but he's embraced the challenge.

"It's never easy and I wouldn't really want it any other way," Herbert said. "It's obviously a tough scheme that we have to learn, but all of the guys here, they put in a lot of effort. I think it's been going pretty well so far."

'EVERYBODY GETS LOVE'

Chargers wide receiver Keenan Allen was in the process of explaining what makes this offensive system different from others when he realized Nabers was being featured in this offense.

"We got different personnel groupings," Allen explained. "Gabe's getting catches out there. ... Obviously, that's Herb's guy. He's getting catches on hitch routes. That's a fullback, by the way."

Allen doesn't want to lose targets to a fullback, but he understands the more other players contribute, the better it's going to be for him and Herbert in the long run.

"Everybody gets love in the offense and that's good because, obviously, I get doubled a lot," said Allen, a four-time Pro Bowl receiver. "Mike (Williams) gets doubled sometimes in the red zone. Jared (Cook) will get doubled in the red zone. (Austin Ekeler) gets doubled sometimes, so if everybody is getting the ball, it's hard to pick who to double, so it'll open up some matchups."

Nabers is Herbert's guy, as Allen mentioned, but they're no longer roommates. All three moved into their own homes for their second NFL season. Nabers and Gilliam won't have to worry about disrupting Herbert's "locked in" film sessions. Herbert has a new home office, but the results on the field have been the same.

Herbert has gotten his teammates in the right places and has executed the fast-paced offense smoothly in practices, according to his teammates.

"We're going to utilize his big arm," Lombardi said about taking downfield shots. "We're keeping the defense on their heels, especially when a new personnel group comes in while you're in the huddle. By the time they figure out who's in the huddle, they're trying to get their call in. We'll already be breaking and then the ball snaps. It gives (opposing defenses) less time to think, the faster you can change personnel groups.

"They're always looking for tendencies. Like when we're in this personnel grouping, this is the call we like to make. The less time you give them to think about it, the better."

Nabers expects the Chargers to have a variety of personnel groupings, including multiple tight ends on the field and an empty backfield.

"Any offensive coordinator is going to want to utilize Keenan, but a lot of our schemes last year were to try to get him and some of our main dominant playmakers the ball, which you always want to do, but I think the difference in this offense is this offense is trying to highlight where you're weak," Nabers said. "So week-to-week we're going to try to find where is the weak point in a defense?"

"And we have weapons at every spot. ... There's definitely different ways to get everybody the ball. It's not an offense where you're asleep on some plays. 'I know I'm not getting the ball.' If you have that mindset then you're going to get hit in the back of the head with a ball because you never know when it's coming."

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Herbert had a prolific rookie season, but he had some struggles when facing defenses with complex disguises.

But Herbert should improve in that area after spending an offseason with a defensive coach who thrived with disguises. Staley turned the Rams into the top-ranked defense in the NFL last season when he was their defensive coordinator.

Staley has made sure to throw as much as possible at Herbert and the offense during practice.

"They've done such a great job disguising their looks," Herbert said about Staley's Chargers defense. "That's what they do such a great job of. They're really well-coached and they have some really talented guys on that side of the ball.

It's a special opportunity for us to go against them because they're going to make us better and, hopefully, we'll be able to do the same thing for them. Just to be able to see it, see their fronts, all of the different personnel and what they're able to do, it'll make us better."

Staley attempted to confuse Herbert, but he quickly realized how much he has improved from his rookie season.

"What I'm aware of is that on defense, your margin for error is so much smaller against the caliber of a quarterback like Justin Herbert," Staley said. "The margins are so small and you have to be so much more precise. That's really bringing out the best in our defense, especially from a coverage systems standpoint because he can hit any throw that's tightly contested. If you're not tightly contested, those are layups for him. I think it's really bringing out the best in our defense."

The Chargers' new offensive scheme has evolved since the start of training camp and the test trials in practices have concluded. The updated scheme launches Sunday and mistakes will likely occur against a stacked Washington defense led by Chase Young and Montez Sweat, but adjusting on the fly is what Herbert does best.

"It's obviously a tough situation when you lose a coaching staff that you've become close with," Herbert said. "It's never easy. But you have to look at it as a good opportunity to learn more about football. All of these schemes and all of the things that they bring are going to be different. You get to see more football, you get to learn more. I think that aspect of my background has helped me."

Daniel said Herbert didn't speak much when Brees met with the Chargers' quarterbacks on multiple occasions in the summer. Herbert, as he often does, was listening and letting Brees' knowledge flood into his brain.

"He's probably one of the smartest young guys I've been around in terms of knowledge," Daniel said.

Herbert's football IQ and study habits helped launch his NFL career. Now, those tools should help him sustain success with a new offensive scheme in 2021.

Justin Herbert went from ‘Justin Who?’ at Oregon to a Chargers standout in five years

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
July 27, 2021

He went from No. 2 on his team to No. 1 in his league, collecting numerous franchise and NFL records during a wholly unexpected offensive rookie of the year season.

Stunning as it was, fast-tracking is nothing new to Justin Herbert, who arrived as the sixth-string quarterback at Oregon and bolted into the starting lineup only six games into his freshman year.

To appreciate how meteoric the rise of the Chargers quarterback has been, consider that it was in August of 2016 that then-Ducks wide receiver Darren Carrington called him this:

“Justin, the freshman from Eugene. I forget his last name.”

Just five years ago — Five! — even one of his teammates didn’t know it was Justin “Herbert.” This week — as the Chargers gather in Costa Mesa for the opening of training camp — all of football knows him ... and well.

Last season, Herbert produced more passing touchdowns (31), total touchdowns (36) and 300-yard games (eight) than any NFL rookie in history.

He finished with more yards than Aaron Rodgers, better accuracy than Patrick Mahomes and a higher rating than Philip Rivers.

He was at his best under pressure, on third down and in prime time.

So, entering Year 2, Herbert is expected to be, ah, better?

“There are no guarantees in this league,” said John Beck, Herbert’s personal coach. “There are a lot of guys on the other side of the ball getting paid a lot of money to stop you. And, as a quarterback, you need your teammates too. But, in terms of what Justin can control, he has a great chance to be an amazing quarterback in this league for a long time.”

The Chargers have a new coach in Brandon Staley and a new offense that is more nuanced and places additional responsibility on the quarterback. Herbert has admitted he has a lot to learn, even as a former straight-A student.

Beck, who works with Herbert at 3DQB in Huntington Beach, predicted any stalling in 2021 will be the result of the transition to a new scheme rather than the development of the orchestrator of that scheme.

“Justin’s going to be an improved football player, no doubt,” Beck said. “He’s certainly going to be a better quarterback. If there are circumstances where the road becomes bumpy, I would believe it would be him getting accustomed to the new offense and he and his teammates building chemistry in a new system.”

Herbert, 23, faced few expectations last July. Yes, he was the No. 6 overall pick, but the Chargers already had veteran Tyrod Taylor and the full intention of starting Taylor for the foreseeable future.

Things changed in Week 2 when Taylor was sidelined by a pregame medical accident minutes before kickoff. Herbert started and performed convincingly enough that he missed just four offensive snaps the rest of the season.

Today, everyone is forecasting greater things as he prepares to operate behind a rebuilt offensive line projected to make Herbert’s life easier.

He suggested that muting the outside chatter won’t be a problem. Herbert insisted he’ll listen only to those whose opinions matter — family, teammates, coaches — just as he always has.

This is a player who grew up grounded in leafy, tree-lined Eugene, who has experienced broken bones and busted seasons, who had only one personal coach before joining up with Beck last year.

When he was in school, Herbert worked with one guy for one hour and, \$100 later, told his father Mark that the money could be better spent elsewhere.

“The way you manage expectations is the outside expectations will never, ever, ever, ever approach your own,” Staley said. “We just focus on him being as good as he can be, on him being himself, not trying to be somebody [else].”

Herbert, according to those who know him well, never has been anything but himself, even in the aftermath of his glorious 15-game NFL debut.

He returned to Oregon this summer and hosted a charity golf tournament that benefited KidSports, a local nonprofit that provides athletic opportunities for children and is the place where Herbert first experienced organized football.

His tournament sold out so fast that the field had to be expanded. More than \$150,000 was raised by Herbert and his fellow “celebrities,” a group that included star wide receiver Keenan Allen along with several other Chargers.

“I was as proud watching him give back through the golf tournament as I was watching him play last season,” Mark said. “There are just some bigger things in life. I think he’s on the right path to seeing that.”

Herbert’s father never expected his middle son to be an NFL star. The family lives practically within the shadow of Autzen Stadium, home of the Ducks and Herbert’s stated ultimate destination growing up.

The NFL? That’s a five-hour drive away in Seattle.

Until traveling to Denver to watch the Chargers in Week 8 last year, Mark hadn’t been to an NFL game since the late 1980s. He often has pondered how and why so much good has happened to his son so quickly.

He said he considered the professional fate of other notable Pac-12 quarterbacks — think Josh Rosen and Sam Darnold — and wondered, “Why him? Just dumb luck?”

“This is all new to us,” Mark said. “We’re just grateful and gracious that the path he’s on seems like the right one. We’re just parents happy that he’s succeeding. Whatever it is, we’re grateful for it and I think Justin is too.”

It is an adjustment, your unassuming son suddenly sought for television commercials and gaining fame for things such as his latest haircut or ability to barbecue brisket.

A couple of days before the show this month, Herbert turned to Mark and said, “Dad, did I tell you I’m going to the ESPYs?” Mark went online to find out his son had been nominated for an award.

“That’s the way he is about a lot of things,” Mark said. “It’s like, you don’t need to tell anyone how good you are. If you’re really any good, people are going to know.”

For a player who seems to have everything and more, Herbert has experienced empty moments.

He broke his leg in high school and missed most of his junior season. He fractured his collarbone as a sophomore at Oregon. His first Ducks team finished 4-8.

There were times in college when Herbert questioned whether he belonged on a Power Five football field. At the 2020 draft combine, he said he didn’t know if he was ready to be a starter in the pros because he’d never played in the NFL.

That admission generated outside doubt, former linebacker and current television analyst Emmanuel Acho saying Herbert “could potentially be one of the biggest mistakes of the draft.”

Beck was instrumental in cultivating Herbert’s belief in himself, along with his talent. The two bonded quickly, Beck explaining that they are “both thinkers” and learned in humbled environments rather than at elite camps.

“You just simply played ball,” said Beck, 39, a former NFL quarterback.

“That’s how you came up. We both came from a place where nobody’s telling you how great you are. You’re just self-motivated.”

In June, about 16 months after Herbert admitted he didn’t know if he could play in this league, Staley said the most impressive thing about the young quarterback was his presence.

He called Herbert “a commander in the offense” and pointed out how comfortable he looks going into and coming out of the huddle and making calls at the line of scrimmage.

All of this adds to the growing notion that this should be a second NFL season more special than the record-setting first.

“Justin has all the tools that you would want,” Beck said.

“He’s a smart kid. He’s very determined. It means a lot to him to play well. He’s fully invested. ... He’s exactly what you want when you pick a franchise quarterback.”

At football’s highest level, Herbert is on his way to establishing his game, just five years after someone in his huddle didn’t know his name.

Acts of Kindness: Justin Herbert hosts golf tourney to raise money for Kidsports

By Kendall Bartley
NBC16 KMTR (Eugene, Ore.)
April 9, 2021

EUGENE, Ore. - It's where Eugene native Justin Herbert started his football journey - Kidsports, a local nonprofit providing youth sports programs for kids in our area.

Now the former Sheldon Irish and Oregon Duck quarterback is entering his second year in the NFL with the Los Angeles Chargers.

The hometown hero is now giving back to the nonprofit by hosting The Justin Herbert Golf Invitational.

"Eugene's always been my home and I've loved that community and they've given me so much," said Herbert. "If I have even the slightest chance at giving back and helping them, I'd love to do it."

The Justin Herbert Invitational is on July 8th. It has a huge goal of raising \$100,000 benefitting Kidsports.

Bev Smith, the executive director of Kidsports was ecstatic: "First of all, it's incredibly heartwarming, and secondly, it just falls in line with the type of person Justin Herbert is and the family from which he leaned most of his values and principles."

Justin partnered with Kendall Auto Group, which is the presenting sponsor.

"When we partnered with Justin and talked about putting on an event that would help support the community, it didn't take any conversation at all for us to decide if Kidsports would be the right fit," said Amy Newport, the community relations specialist with Kendall Auto Group.

Kidsports was the program Justin grew up with.

"As Justin talked about an interview this year when he was going through some losing with the Chargers," said Smith, "he mentioned that he had learned the importance of winning and losing and how to manage that through Kidsports. So, really what we would like our kids to learn is that sometimes you win, sometimes you learn, and the rest of the time you should be having fun - and I think that's why Kidsports has managed to maintain its presence in the community for so long."

Kidsports is a fun program that builds friendships and stability.

As Justin explains, "I think it's huge because I take a look at my life and without football, baseball and basketball, I don't know what I'd do. I'd be in school and definitely learning, but football has been such a big part of my life and there are people all across the city that, given that same opportunity, they can shine. If we're able to provide that for them, I think it's a great opportunity."

Now, Justin is hoping this golf tournament will provide just that.

"All of the money, all of the proceeds will go to making sure that every kid will have a chance to play."

Smith explained what the money would mean to Kidsports.

"It would benefit us in all kinds of ways," she said. "Certainly we want and would love to fund free; we would love activities for children to be free, particularly for low income families, particularly families who have been affected by COVID-19 and the fires in our community. We try to find ways to get kids out here to play."

The goal of \$100,000 can go a long way, and Newport believes they are well on their way with fundraising already.

"I believe I'm being conservative in saying that we are going to blow that out of the water."

The Real-Life Diet of Chargers Quarterback Justin Herbert, Who Lives on Subway Sandwiches

By Emily Abbate
GQ Magazine
November 19, 2020

The 2-7 Los Angeles Chargers are not having an amazing season. That having been said, their rookie quarterback Justin Herbert is doing an impressive job under center. He's being touted as the front-runner for offensive rookie of the year, and if you've got him on your fantasy team, you're probably doing a little dance every Sunday. The issue seems to be on the other side of the ball—the Chargers are excelling at blowing leads. Still, the former Oregon Duck says he's just grateful to be doing what he loves every single day.

"I'm honored to be playing for a great organization," he says. "Every week is another opportunity to play the game and I'm ready to get after it." GQ caught up with him recently to chat about his diet, which involves lots of team-catered meals and a steady rotation of fast-food sub sandwiches.

GQ: When are you up in the morning?

Justin Herbert: The day starts out pretty early. I wake up at about 5 a.m., immediately brush my teeth and head out the door. I live about 15 to 20 minutes away from the facility, and I really look forward to the drive because it gives me a chance to just listen to music and unwind.

I can't eat very much in the morning. I kind of have a weak stomach, so maybe I'll reach for a Gatorade protein bar or two. I usually stick with the chocolate peanut butter flavor. We lift at 6 a.m. for about an hour, and then we'll have a couple of meetings. I usually have just the right amount of energy to get through all of this, and then at 9:00 or 10:00, I'll have two slices of bacon, three eggs over easy, and two slices of wheat toast.

Are you big on hydrating?

Definitely. I drink a lot of water throughout the day. Normally it's about five or six bottles. I try to drink at least one right when I wake up. I think hydration is really important, and we've done a good job of integrating that.

When you say "we've done a good job," who is the "we" that you mention?

Well, we have a team nutritionist, but I really just mean the team. We make it a point to drink plenty of water.

Have you ever worked one-on-one with anyone to chat about your nutrition?

When I was training prior to the draft, I used a couple of food services that catered meals and had prepackaged meals ready to go for the day. When I did that, I was focused on low-dairy, low carb diets. It was a lot of protein. Now, since we're in season, I try to maintain my weight, and in that process I need to kick up the carbs a little bit.

What's for lunch?

We'll have whatever the team normally caters. So maybe it's a sandwich or it's rice and chicken—something along those lines. In the afternoon, I'll usually stop by the smoothie station that we have at the facility. In my smoothie, I put in strawberries, banana, mango, pineapple, Greek yogurt, and vanilla whey isolate protein powder.

So you're a fruit smoothie but a peanut butter chocolate protein bar guy?

I like to mix it up, you know?

And dinner?

At night after we get off, I normally just honestly stop at Subway. That's kind of what I've been living off for the past couple of weeks. Normally I'll get two sandwiches. One is a steak and cheese and then the other is the chicken bacon ranch, both on their Italian herbs and cheese bread. It's been working for me. It's a good thing to pick up on the way home.

When you're not grabbing Subway, what are some other things you may do for dinner?

If I have enough time, I'm definitely barbecuing. I've got a Traeger grill in my backyard and a bunch of Snake River Farms meats. Any time I get a chance to throw some of those on the grill, it's pretty great.

Do you have a sweet tooth?

I'm a big fan of mint chocolate chip ice cream and peanut butter cookies. But I've done a pretty good job over the past couple of months of staying away from that. Probably because I call it a night pretty soon after dinner, like at 8:10 or so. I get home at about 7:45. So I'll have dinner for like 15 or 20 minutes, and then it's always right around 8:10 that I turn the lights off.

That's pretty impressive.

I'm normally a night person and waking up early in the morning is not easy for me by any means. But it kind of comes with the job. It's something I have to do. So it's something that I've had to practice and it got easier over time. But it's still not easy at all.

Justin Herbert's misinterpreted personality becomes Chargers' gain

By Gilbert Manzano
Orange County Register
October 31, 2020

Jana Prikryl, the director of general science at the University of Oregon, didn't realize she had helped Justin Herbert change his major until a peer advisor identified him with a scream.

"Oh, my God, that was Justin Herbert," Prikryl recalled hearing when the 6-foot-6 Oregon quarterback left the office.

Herbert, now a star quarterback for the Chargers, submitted his change-of-major form to switch from biology to general science. Herbert was the second future NFL quarterback that Prikryl had assisted. Marcus Mariota was a general science major at Oregon a few years before Herbert.

"Embarrassingly, I did not know that he was Justin Herbert," Prikryl said in a phone interview last week. "I knew we had Justin Herbert and I knew he was fantastic, but I didn't put the face to the name."

Prikryl shouldn't be embarrassed. Not many knew of Herbert before he became a star at Oregon and the latest NFL rookie sensation.

Even now, as more become familiar with the name, not many truly know Herbert. Although, there were many guesses about his personality in the lead up to the 2020 NFL Draft.

Herbert was described as an introvert, also known as a shy person, and few NFL teams want a shy quarterback. But that didn't stop the Chargers from selecting Herbert with the No. 6 overall pick in April's draft.

They were well aware of Herbert's physical gifts, just like the other 31 teams, but perhaps the Chargers dug deeper in getting to know Herbert as a person.

"I think a lot of introverts get labeled with that word shy, lack of leadership," Chargers coach Anthony Lynn said. "My son is an introvert, so I raised one. I know what the tags are, but you just look at how people respond to them. That's all you need to know."

The Chargers did their personality research on Herbert and are now getting rewarded for it with weekly touchdown passes from his rocket right arm.

"Ultimately, this guy is just very talented," said Denver Broncos coach Vic Fangio, whose team hosts Herbert and the Chargers on Sunday. "Looks to me like he's made up of the right stuff to be a quarterback in the NFL, and fortunate for (the Chargers) and unfortunate for us, I think they found their quarterback for the next 10 to 15 years."

Herbert has only started five games, but he's played so well that questions are now being asked. How did a quarterback who is enjoying a historic NFL start that rivals Patrick Mahomes and Dan Marino become available at No. 6 for the Chargers?

Why didn't the Washington Football Team take Herbert second overall and why didn't other quarterback-needy teams leapfrog the Chargers in the draft order to take him?

Many draft experts described Herbert as having all the physical tools, but somehow that wasn't enough to shake the introvert label that hung like a dark cloud.

Of course, it wasn't all because of Herbert's quiet demeanor, but it likely played a part in why teams were skeptical, and it goes to show that swagger isn't everything. Sometimes saying less means there's more of other leadership qualities.

Herbert won't say teams got it wrong by passing on him and making him the third quarterback selected — that's not his personality — but he did say the introvert tag was incorrect.

"I wouldn't say that's fairly accurate," Herbert said. "I think on the surface it might appear that way, but when I really get to know people and the team, I think a lot of the guys on the team would tell you differently."

Many draft experts and talking heads have said they got it wrong with Herbert, but the Chargers should thank them because all the personality speculation they provided before the draft became their gain.

Herbert celebrated his first NFL victory against the Jacksonville Jaguars last week by giving star wide receiver Keenan Allen an enthusiastic slap on the behind.

"Yes, sir!" Herbert shouted at Allen.

That doesn't sound like a shy quarterback.

Here's how family members, teammates and former professors described Herbert as a person and leader:

THE REAL HERBERT

College recruiters also got it wrong with Herbert.

Herbert was a three-star high school recruit with no Division I FBS scholarship offers heading into his senior year at Sheldon High in Eugene, Ore. Herbert was set on attending Montana State to play with his older brother, Mitchell, before Oregon made an offer.

"He did not go to (football) camps because he practiced with his high school team," said Mark Herbert, Justin's father. "When other guys were looking for exposure to go to colleges, Justin was practicing with the little kid down the street that he'd grown up with or another kid he played middle school football with or somebody else because that was going to be their team in the fall."

Justin Herbert has a reputation for not looking ahead. He prioritizes the present and enjoyed it by playing baseball, basketball and forming a fishing club in high school.

In college, it wasn't all about making it to the NFL. It was also about improving as a biology student. Herbert agreed to be a biology professor's assistant even though it took time away from football.

But helping the little kid down the street and having extracurricular activities didn't help Herbert in the college recruiting process and it was probably ignored by some NFL teams.

Multi-sport prep athletes have become a thing of the past. It's now about specializing in one sport and getting as much exposure as possible by participating in 7-on-7 tournaments, creating Youtube highlight videos and announcing every college offer received on Twitter.

You can't find Herbert on Twitter, although he does have an Instagram account.

"He didn't enroll early (at Oregon) because he wanted to play his senior year of baseball with his buddies," Mark Herbert said.

Justin Herbert stayed in one place before the NFL called, never leaving Oregon while the university's coaching staff changed twice in four years.

Mark Herbert recalled being asked by a local reporter if Herbert would consider transferring if he lost the quarterback job when Willie Taggart replaced Mark Helfrich as head coach in 2017.

"What are you talking about?" the older Herbert remembered asking. "I don't understand the line of question. What's Justin going to do? Get his degree in biology, he's gonna play football and he's gonna go to medical school or he's going to go to the NFL.

"I don't know what he's going to do, but he's not leaving. That's not what Justin does."

Justin Herbert also didn't leave when Mario Cristobal took over in 2018 and then stayed for his senior season, despite being projected as a first-round selection.

Sticking around for an extra year to play with friends gave pundits more time to analyze Herbert as armchair psychologists.

He wasn't viewed as the committed teammate who wanted to help win a Pac-12 championship. Instead, he was the quarterback who struggled against Arizona State and lacked the alpha-male personality to lead an NFL locker room.

But Herbert proved in high school and college that he doesn't run from adversity and makes it work with what he has. Those are the leadership traits that went unnoticed, and he's showing it again in the NFL by elevating undrafted players such as Jalen Guyton, Tyron Johnson and Donald Parham and doing it without his top offensive linemen, Bryan Bulaga and Trai Turner.

Herbert gets everyone involved and is not afraid to ask for advice. But all of that was lost during the lead up to the draft and it became the Herbert family's gain.

Mark and his wife, Holly, were rooting for their son to play for the Chargers. They have family ties to Southern California.

Justin Herbert's paternal grandfather, Roger, played football and ran track for Fullerton College before transferring to Oregon State. Herbert's maternal grandfather, Rich Schwab, grew up in San Diego before playing football at Oregon.

"We looked at (the draft order), 'Hey, Los Angeles all the way.'" Mark Herbert said. "Oh my goodness, travel-wise, and family-wise, team-wise ... a lot of things pointing to the Chargers."

Mark Herbert credited the grandfathers for Justin's professionalism and said his son got plenty of good qualities from his mother Holly.

"I'd say Justin is fiercely loyal and fiercely focused and dedicated and definitely gets that from her," Mark said.

Justin Herbert's love for science likely came from his father, who was a science and biology teacher for middle school and high school students.

HERBERT, THE COMEDIAN

Chargers defensive tackle Linval Joseph played four seasons with recently retired Giants quarterback Eli Manning. The two-time Super Bowl champion was also described as an introvert.

Joseph sees similarities between Manning and Herbert.

"I felt like there was two different types of Elis," Joseph said. "You have funny Eli and then you have 'get the job done' Eli. Two minutes in the quarter, fourth quarter, need this drive and he woke up, and when he woke up, he made those big throws, made those big plays, and I see that in Herbert. I really do.

"I feel like he's going to have a great career and once we put everything in order, he's going to be elite. He's going to be great."

Chargers rookie wide receiver K.J. Hill can attest to Herbert's comedic side. Hill explained why Herbert was shown in a scene of "Hard Knocks" doing a lengthy "whassup" from the popular Budweiser commercials.

"I told him you gotta say the 'whassup' in the huddle," Hill said. "I told him to say it in the huddle before he called a play or something like that. It was something silly like that. He was practicing basically before he did it to get my OK if it was good or not."

Herbert and Hill texted each other after being drafted by the Chargers and have become close friends.

"Inside the locker room, (he's) making jokes, talking," Hill said about Herbert. "He has not been a quiet guy since I've been around him. We're always talking about anything and everything, so I feel like he got a great personality and great competitor side that I love about him, too."

Hill said he's a better "Call of Duty" player than Herbert, but he gave his quarterback the edge in golf.

"Justin likes to golf," Hill said. "I told him the only close thing I get to golf is Top Golf."

HERBERT, THE TUTOR

Mark Carrier, a professor at Oregon, was in need of a teacher's assistant for his Biology 212 course. Herbert was one of his best students, but Carrier assumed he didn't have time to teach the material to other students for the upcoming quarter.

"I figured no way a football player is going to have the time to do that, but in passing one day, I told him, 'Hey, you know if you weren't so busy being the quarterback of the football team I would definitely offer you this role,'" Carrier recalled.

Without hesitation, Herbert took the offer and assisted the class of about 200 students.

"It's a pretty interactive class time," Carrier said. "You can tell if people are going to hide what they know or help others along. Justin was the kind of guy who helped the people around him.

"It was clear to the people around him he understood the material more quickly than most. He didn't struggle as much as people tend to do. It's a very challenging course. He was very helpful to the people around him."

At the time, it wasn't certain that Herbert would be a top NFL draft pick. Carrier said Herbert expressed interest in a career in medicine or becoming a researcher.

"I was just really interested with how everything worked out (in biology) and science and kinda how your body processes things and kinda explaining the natural phenomena that happened around us," Herbert said.

Biology sounds as complex as breaking down NFL defenses. Herbert being able to grasp intricate material at a fast pace while also teaching it is perhaps another leadership sign (and an indicator of future success) that went unnoticed.

"That might be a reach, but it's a good analogy," Herbert said about comparing football to biology. "Having a good understanding of defenses, coverages and things like that. It definitely helps."

Herbert said his top passion has always been football. He'd said he would likely be a coach right now if he wasn't an NFL quarterback.

"Hopefully I'd be coaching the game or somewhere involved in the game," Herbert said. "I just love football too much to not be around it."

That's the real Justin Herbert. Passionate about football, but with other interests. Not the loudest, but a quiet genius with an occasional comedic side.

"I think he's more outgoing than what people give him credit for, but that's OK," Lynn said.

The Chargers said that's OK to Herbert's personality and now, as Fangio mused, they stand to reap the rewards for years to come.

Chargers' Justin Herbert learning he can't let the perils of running in the NFL slide

By Sam Farmer
Los Angeles Times
October 15, 2020

Justin Herbert, with his smooth throwing motion and surgical precision, has proven he's already a top-notch NFL passer.

Now, the 6-foot-6 Chargers rookie needs to work on his going-to-the-ground game.

He took off running in his first career game and clobbered Kansas City linebacker Damien Wilson when they collided near the sideline. Whereas Herbert nonchalantly popped to his feet, Wilson appeared knocked out cold.

Two weeks later, Herbert tore off a five-yard run against Tampa Bay and lowered his shoulder on Buccaneers safety Jordan Whitehead. This time, the defensive player got the better of the crash, as Herbert needed a few moments with his hands on his knees to compose himself. Whitehead was flagged for unnecessary roughness.

"Feet-first sliding is probably the best option I should go with," Herbert conceded later. "I grew up playing baseball so I feel like I'm pretty comfortable with sliding. It's a little tough on the grass, your cleats get stuck a little bit, but it's definitely something I've been practicing. Moving forward, I'll be better about it."

Chargers coach Anthony Lynn hopes so. He could be forgiven for watching replays of those collisions through his fingers while covering his eyes.

"Bad coaching by me right there, bad coaching," Lynn said. "I don't want him taking hits like that, like he did from the Chiefs. ... I want him to get down. I don't want him to take those hits in the National Football League."

Theoretically, Herbert could look across town for pointers from another young quarterback. The Rams' Jared Goff, the son of a former Major League Baseball player, has had sliding issues of his own.

In the two years since the NFL made a rule change — stipulating a quarterback doesn't have to slide feet first to be considered giving himself up, and instead is afforded the same defenseless-player protections when he dives forward — Goff has found himself getting "caught in between sometimes."

"I'm used to going feet first, and I have my whole career," Goff said. "And then in the last year or two, I want to go head first. I don't want to lose those three yards. But at the same time, you're kind of trying to figure out where your momentum is."

His father, Jerry Goff, who played catcher in the majors for six years, wishes his son would hit the deck more often, yet understands why he doesn't always do so.

"Do I encourage him to slide? Yeah, 100%," the elder Goff said. "But there are times, like he did in the playoffs against Dallas, and a few times in college, where you've just got to deal with it and go get that first down. You're not going to slide short in that situation. But I would say 90% or more, you're just going to slide and play the next down."

The dilemma is older than Red Grange. Should a quarterback risk injury by fighting for that extra yard, either by dropping a shoulder and delivering a blow, or by diving forward as a human missile?

Or should he sacrifice that extra yard or two and safely slide feet first?

"We've got to coach these quarterbacks out of the macho-man approach," said Hall of Fame personnel executive Bill Polian, who thinks all NFL teams should build sliding pits at their facilities to teach quarterbacks. "Playoffs are one thing; that's a different cat altogether. But in terms of the regular season, never lower your shoulder. Don't take those kinds of blows. The rule is there to protect you: Go slide."

Sometimes, even sliding feet first is unsafe. Last Saturday, Clemson quarterback Trevor Lawrence, the overwhelming favorite to go No. 1 in next spring's NFL draft, took a shot to the helmet from University of Miami safety Amari Carter while sliding. Officials ejected Carter for targeting.

In 2006, Kansas City quarterback Trent Green absorbed a brutal hit to the head from Cincinnati defensive end Robert Geathers while sliding feet first. Green suffered a serious concussion and the replay reverberated throughout the league.

"I remember being like, 'Yeah, see? I don't want that to happen. I would rather dive head first, I'm in control of my head,'" recalled former Seattle Seahawks quarterback Matt Hasselbeck, who took a ribbing from his coaches about his aversion to sliding. "I sort of remember being made fun of by Mike Holmgren and Jim Zorn about how I didn't slide, like I couldn't slide."

So Zorn, the former Seahawks quarterback who later coached the position for the team, unfurled a Slip 'n Slide at practice in hopes of teaching his passers how to avoid big hits by gracefully going to the ground. He even brought in Seattle Mariners first baseman John Olerud as a sliding tutor.

"The thing was, we knew how to slide," Hasselbeck said. "It wasn't like we didn't know. We just preferred to dive."

According to NFL rules, a defender must pull up when a runner gives himself up with a feet-first slide. If a defender already has committed himself and makes unavoidable contact with the sliding runner, it is not a foul unless the defender makes forcible contact to the head or neck area of the runner with the helmet, shoulder or forearm, or commits some other act that is unnecessarily rough.

But the runner bears the responsibility of starting his slide with ample time for the defender to pull up and avoid the hit.

"Pursuing a guy, I would give him the benefit of the doubt that he was going to slide," former Rams defensive tackle D'Marco Farr said. "But you'd better start that slide within two or three steps of me. Make it obvious. If not, I'm going to treat you as a runner that's attacking my goal line, which means I'm going to try to knock your teeth out."

The notion of sliding never appealed to Hall of Fame quarterback Steve Young, but not because he sought those extra yards at all costs. He just didn't feel that sliding provided him enough protection.

"My own philosophy was sliding was a nightmare," Young said. "Sliding is saying, 'Just hit me in the face.' I always thought it was much safer to go forward, find a soft spot forward."

What's more, Young said, officials routinely get the placement of the ball wrong when a player slides feet first.

"Inevitably, the referee gives you a spot farther back than you thought it would be, or than it should be," he said. "It's a weird thing. I don't know what sliding does that creates this image that the ball's downed earlier than it was."

"I always thought I got a better spot when I was going forward. It's like an optical illusion for them. When I slid, nine times out of 10 I'd turn around and say, 'Where are you marking that? That's not right.'"

Not surprisingly, some of the quarterbacks who had the option of playing pro baseball — notably Seattle's Russell Wilson and Arizona's Kyler Murray — are the most graceful sliders.

"I think playing multiple sports is a very big thing in terms of getting those extra yards, also being smart, getting down," Wilson, selected in two different MLB drafts, told reporters in 2017. "The ability to quickly slide, too. When you hit a ball in the gap, you've got to get to second base and get there fast. You've got to know where to slide, how to get around the tag, and everything else."

"I don't really like sliding head first, never did when I was playing baseball. But sometimes it's necessary. ... You've got to be smart in how you do it."

Not everyone is a pretty slider. Peyton Manning got an earful from his Denver teammates in 2012 when he clomped downfield against Carolina, then executed a hideous slide — think Evel Knievel at Caesars Palace — that excavated a sizeable divot when his left knee brace burrowed into the turf.

"It's not even worth explaining what happened," Manning told reporters at the time. "It looked bad, and the fact that my knee brace got caught, nobody wants to hear that. It is what it is, as they say, and it's right there on film. I'm very aware that it's fair game for criticism and ridicule."

In those hold-your-breath bashes of bodies, it's frequently the quarterback who comes away staggering. There's a reason for that.

"Justin Herbert does no tackling. None," Young said. "And then he's running into people where that's all they do is tackle."

"I used to see smaller guys in the defensive backfield, and I was like, 'OK, I can take that guy on.' But you've got to remember, even those guys, that's all they do is tackle."

When and whether a quarterback should slide often depends on where you're standing, as in, which sideline.

"When it's your own guy, you want him to get down," Farr said. "When Kurt Warner scrambled, I'd be the first one yelling, 'Get down!' And I would tell him, 'Your body doesn't belong to you, it belongs to us.' If he gets tagged, it affects us all."

Young's philosophy: Your most important play is your next one.

"Risks just to show your manhood don't help you get to the next play," he said. "The truth is, if you've still got the ball in your hand, there's been a general failure anyway. Don't compound it by trying to run over somebody to impress someone."

After Herbert's debut, while the Chargers and Chiefs were mingling on the field, Kansas City's Patrick Mahomes offered him some words of advice: "Protect yourself on some of those runs."

Sometimes, staying up requires getting down.

J.C. JACKSON

His family was scared he'd go to prison. How J.C. Jackson kept his NFL dream alive

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
July 25, 2022

LAKELAND, Fla. — They sold their house, their furniture, Dad's truck and his motorcycle.

Lisa Dasher and Chris Jackson surrendered their jobs and their friends and trekked 140 miles north, joining Lisa's oldest daughter in her apartment — her one-and-a-half bedroom apartment.

"We was living in the half," Lisa recalled, smiling.

Dasher, Jackson and their son, J.C., were three of the seven people wedged into the space, their lives squeezed for the most basic of reasons: They needed money.

Yes, the bills were significant. And so were the circumstances. They had to pay the attorneys trying to keep J.C. out of prison.

"Every success he's having now is very emotional to me because I know the path," Lisa said. "I tell people, 'You don't understand everything that we had to sacrifice to be here.' It just wasn't easy. But I'm glad we made it, man."

In March, J.C. Jackson signed with the Chargers, accepting a five-year contract worth up to \$82.5 million, \$40 million of which is guaranteed.

A team rebuilding its defense added one of the NFL's top cornerbacks, a tough, resilient, playmaking star coming off his first Pro Bowl appearance and four seasons removed from being a Super Bowl champion.

But the Chargers added more than that because Jackson hardly arrived on his own, his path cluttered by obstacles discouraging to staggering, including a trial that threatened not just his football but also his freedom.

Navigating such a twisting, tortured journey required the strength of more than just one man.

"J.C.," his dad said, "hasn't walked alone in his shoes."

Before he was a Hall of Famer, Edgerrin James was a blocking back, burying opposing tacklers for Chris Jackson during their time together at Immokalee High. James was two grades behind Jackson and, playing in a stacked program, had to wait his turn.

"That's how it was back in the day," said John Thomas, a longtime Immokalee coach. "The talent's usually lined up pretty good around here."

They called Chris "Action Jackson" because of his athletic prowess. He and his crew labeled themselves "The Raw Dogs" and set out to properly represent their home.

Immokalee is an everyone-knows-everyone town deep in southwest Florida and the heart of industrial agriculture in the United States. They grow an abundance of tomatoes and watermelons down here, a dusty place where there's genuine value in the dirt.

In the Mikasuki language, Immokalee means "My Home," and the pride of the people who choose to stay can be as thick as the July humidity.

"If you gonna make it out of Immokalee, you gotta get it from the mud," said Jackson, 47. "Nothing comes easy in Immokalee. It taught me to grind, to be a strong man."

Jackson had plans to leave, at least for a while, to pursue a playing opportunity at a small school in Mississippi. Lisa, who was a state-qualifying sprinter at Immokalee, remembers dropping him off at the bus station in Fort Myers and waving goodbye through streaming tears.

But after only a week or so, Jackson was on his way home, where he and Lisa soon enough were welcoming their son.

"I wanted to be in J.C.'s life," said Jackson, who was raised by his grandparents. "Everything I knew about football, I wanted to put into him."

They spent hours together in the backyard, Chris firing passes to J.C. and urging him to catch with his fingertips. At age 4, J.C. was spinning around on his father's command and snagging footballs spiraling toward his face.

Dad was training the boy's hands, hands that two decades later would carry the reminder of an Immokalee upbringing yet still ignite an NFL career rooted in the ability to catch passes thrown by the opposition.

When he was 5, J.C. scored the first touchdown of his life. It was flag football and he slipped to the outside and sprinted away from everyone. Well, almost everyone.

"I was running right with him down the sidelines, jumping and screaming," Lisa said. As she did so, she yelled, "He's gonna play for the Florida Gators! He's gonna play for the Florida Gators!"

That was the plan too, after J.C. was a four-year varsity starter at Immokalee, his two all-state plaques as a wide receiver now hanging near the school's main entrance, not far from the plaque commemorating his All-America selection as a defensive back.

Thomas has spent a quarter-century coaching at Immokalee and was in charge of the receivers when he convinced Chris that his son was too talented to play on the freshman team and instead belonged on varsity.

J.C. needed roughly one-half of one game to prove his position coach correct.

"He lit up the stadium right from the start," said Thomas, who recalls sitting in film sessions on Saturday mornings and wondering what the opposing coaches were thinking trying to cover J.C. one-on-one.

The talent was obvious, and so were the other gifts, most notably the long and athletic body that suggested J.C. could be special, as Chris remembers it, as early as elementary school.

Fort Myers-based trainer LeDondrick Rowe first worked with J.C. during the kid's sophomore season in high school. All the Immokalee players were lined up in the end zone as Rowe walked along and introduced himself one by one.

"I got to J.C. and asked him what position he played," Rowe said. "He told me wide receiver. I said, 'Dude, you're a defensive back.' Those were our first words: 'You look like an NFL defensive back.'"

All that work J.C. and his father logged in the backyard — sometimes out there past midnight — was boosted by another level of training, a tough-love regimen Chris employed throughout his son's development.

He explained that he "used to cuss J.C. out, just talk harsh to him, 'cause I knew what it takes to make it." Lisa said she often defended her son as Chris assured her his methods would pay dividends.

During an NFL game two seasons ago, while playing with New England, Jackson was beaten twice by receiver Breshad Perriman for touchdowns — 50 yards in the second quarter and 15 in the third — the latter putting the New York Jets up 27-17.

Following the second score, a television camera caught Jackson slumped on the bench, his head hanging.

"I said, 'Lisa, I'm in his ear again right now,' " Chris said, edging forward in his seat. "J.C. was hearin' his daddy. I said, 'Watch, he's gonna make a play.' "

In the final six minutes of the fourth quarter, Jackson picked off Joe Flacco. Four minutes later, New England tied the score en route to a 30-27 victory secured on the game's last snap.

"All that talking," Lisa said, "I think that's what kept J.C. strong through everything."

During his four years of two-way high school stardom, J.C. emerged as a recruit so sought after that Lisa remembers hiding when someone would show up unannounced and knock on the door.

She also recalled how the Miami coaches arrived one day for dinner in a series of black SUVs with dark-tinted windows. "They rolled up," Lisa said, "like the President."

But J.C. chose Florida — fulfilling his mother's Pop Warner projection — because he was drawn to then-coach Will Muschamp and his defensive coordinator, D.J. Durkin.

It was a shoulder injury that resulted in Jackson redshirting his first season. It was an off-field incident that cost him the rest of his Gators career.

In April 2015, Jackson was arrested and charged with four felonies in connection with an armed robbery in Gainesville. He and two companions were involved, though Jackson no longer was present when the robbery occurred, according to the police report.

Still, he faced those four counts, each carrying a minimum sentence of 10 years and a maximum of life in prison.

"I was scared. Forty years in jail? I might be dead and gone when he gets out."

— Chris Jackson, on the charges his son faced in connection to a 2015 armed robbery

When officials at Florida informed Jackson he no longer was welcome there, his desire to continue playing led him to Riverside City College, three time zones from Gainesville and an immeasurable distance from SEC country.

That November, Jackson's lone season at Riverside was interrupted when he had to return to Florida for his trial, which included five days of excruciating uncertainty for parents convinced their son had done nothing wrong but knowing a jury would make the ultimate decision.

Each morning, Chris and J.C. would drive from the cramped apartment in Lakeland to Gainesville, leaving before the sun came up, traveling the 120 miles one way in Chris' orange Dodge Charger.

Chris said they had to "scrape up gas money" to make it through the week. One of the attorneys the family hired bought J.C. a suit to wear in court.

On those otherwise quiet drives, Chris played what he called "my church music" — "Be Encouraged" by gospel singer William Becton was in heavy rotation.

J.C. would sit back in the passenger seat and, in the darkness, Chris would stroke his son's head. "Just lovin' on him," Chris said.

"I was scared," the father acknowledged. "Forty years in jail? I might be dead and gone when he gets out."

On the morning of the final day, Lisa said she wept while wrapping her arms around J.C.

"I hugged him hard 'cause I didn't know what the verdict was going to be," she said. "I told him, 'Remember this: I love you so much.' He said, 'Ma, I'll be back.' I'm looking at him like, Do you not know what you're up against?"

Chris said he sat in the back of the courtroom each day with tears in his eyes as he listened to the prosecutor characterize his son as a criminal. At some point during the week, Chris said he stopped eating.

Lisa couldn't bring herself to attend the proceedings. She remained in Lakeland where she had just started a new job, working in early child care.

She wasn't allowed to have her cell phone on during business hours, meaning she spent that entire final afternoon unaware of her son's fate. Asked to explain the experience, Lisa said, "H-e-l-l."

Up in Gainesville, the jury deliberated for approximately two hours before — in the late morning four days before J.C.'s 20th birthday — acquitting him on all four counts.

At the end of her work day, Lisa retrieved her phone from a desk drawer and turned it on.

"There was so many calls, so many messages," she said. " 'Not guilty! Not guilty! Not guilty!' All of a sudden, I'm crying and crying and trying to call everybody back at once."

The jury sided with J.C. after hearing testimony that he arranged the visit in which the robbery occurred but was not otherwise involved. His attorneys argued that the evidence against him was circumstantial.

After being cleared, Jackson returned to Riverside, a step that helped put his football career back on track, leading him to Maryland, where he reunited with Durkin, then the Terrapins coach.

In his first Maryland practice, an oft-repeated story goes, Jackson intercepted three passes. He made 23 starts over two seasons and became a draft prospect some observers forecast to go as high as the second round.

"I can't let it go unknown how much we appreciate what the people at Maryland did for J.C.," said Lisa, now 48. "We thank them so much."

It was after the combine that Jackson — back home and sitting at a Tropical Smoothie Cafe having lunch with his mother — revealed how depressed he was at times in Riverside.

"He just started crying," Lisa recalled. "I said, 'J.C., what's wrong?' He said, 'You just don't know. It was so hard out in California. I was sleeping on floors, not having food. That was the time I wanted to just forget it all.' It hurt me to my heart hearing that because I had no idea that he was struggling that bad. None of us knew."

Now, though, all the pain, all the sacrifice would be swept away by the 2018 draft. Having since moved into their own apartment in Lakeland, Chris and Lisa hosted a viewing party.

J.C. was surrounded by the love and support of more than a dozen family members and friends. There was food, including cupcakes made to look like little footballs.

Over three days and 256 selections, the name J.C. Jackson was never announced. Teams took 28 cornerbacks and passed on him every chance they had.

If he was going to make it in the NFL, this cornerback with all the ball skills was going to have to reach out and steal someone else's roster spot as an undrafted free agent.

And that's exactly what Jackson did with New England, first starting during scout-team repetitions, flustering at times even all-everything quarterback Tom Brady.

As training camp unfolded, Jackson began getting time with the first-stringers. He ended his rookie season appearing in 13 games, with five starts, and launched a four-year stretch in which he intercepted an NFL-best 25 passes.

Those hands, first trained by Dad, soon secured the second-largest signing bonus in Chargers history while offering another example of Jackson's perseverance.

When his boy was just 7 or 8, Chris got J.C. a job at a watermelon processing plant to expose him to the exact sort of existence he wanted his son to avoid in life.

While he was positioned along a conveyor belt, J.C.'s hand became entangled in the machinery. Seeing blood oozing everywhere, Chris grabbed his son and carried him to a nearby fire station.

The boy spent almost a week in the hospital and required surgery to restore the mangled mess hanging from his arm. In his right hand today, Jackson literally holds the scars of his hometown.

"J.C. is Immokalee," said Rowe, the Fort Myers-based trainer. "I saw a kid struggle. I saw a kid grow. I saw a kid overcome. If you're not tough, Immokalee can overwhelm you."

Over his first three NFL seasons, Jackson played on an entry-level deal before receiving a one-year, \$3.4-million contract for 2021.

When he signed with the Chargers, he earned a \$25-million bonus on the spot. During the next two seasons, he is guaranteed another \$15 million in base salary. The kid from Immokalee had made it, had indeed gotten it from the mud.

His big payday came after Jackson watched his father work in everything from corrections to sanitation — "throwin' trash," Chris described it — before becoming a delivery driver.

Lisa has worked extensively with teenage mothers and is employed at Pace Center for Girls.

There are plans for Jackson to buy his parents a new home, something closer to Tampa ... maybe near the water.

In May, he bought each an Audi. Lisa drives hers regularly, while Chris has his in storage. For now, he prefers the 2011 orange Charger, which has eclipsed 200,000 miles.

Chris' Audi was delivered while he was at work, with no advance warning, a surprise that came with a sticker price of \$181,790.

He simply was called outside to the parking lot, where the car was hidden under a cover, with a big red bow on the hood.

There also was a note from J.C., who signed it "#27."

"Without U," the note read, "There Is No Me."

DERWIN JAMES JR.

Once called 'Pooh Bear,' Derwin James Jr.'s Florida legacy began with famous father

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
July 27, 2022

HAINES CITY, Fla. — They can still feel the reverberations around here, the beautiful aftershocks from the ferocity produced when he flexed his uncommon level of athleticism.

Derwin James' exploits echo at his alma mater to this day, even breaking the midsummer stillness of the grassy countryside that surrounds a football field flanked by a cemetery.

Yes, the locals proudly suggest, James rocked the opposition with enough force to stir the dead.

"He came at you like a flash, just a black streak comin' and then, 'Boom!' " said Olin Gee, who spent more than three decades coaching at Haines City High. "When he got to you, he was lightin' you up good."

Fans of the Chargers can nod knowingly at Gee's recollections, their eyes confirming as genuine any tale of James' ability to separate a man from his senses.

An All-Pro as a rookie, James now enters his fifth year in the NFL coming off a season in which he made 118 tackles and his second Pro Bowl.

But here's what Chargers fans don't know: Gee wasn't talking about that Derwin James — but their Derwin James.

He was recalling the original Derwin James, the father of the Chargers' safety, the Haines City Hornet they nicknamed "Blue" because, when he dropped his shoulder into someone, the poor mark turned that most unnatural of colors.

"The son was a hell of a hitter," said Gee, who coached both versions of Derwin James. "But the father, he came with bad intentions every time. People ran away from him in high school."

So the story of Derwin James Jr. can rightly start only here, with Derwin James Sr., who gifted his son everything from athletic prowess to mannerisms to an easy smile, helping shape the boy many in these parts still call by a childhood nickname: "Pooh Bear."

It was Derwin Jr.'s sister, Shaderrika, who recently had to be reminded of the order of business in this family.

"She told me, 'You act just like 'Pooh Bear,' " Derwin Sr. recalled with that identifiable grin. "I told her, 'No, 'Pooh Bear' acts just like me.' "

He was a high school running back, as well, Derwin Sr. blessed with the kind of speed that made him an annual participant in Florida's state track championships.

But he really excelled at middle linebacker, where he could smear chaos sideline to sideline and orchestrate the defense like another coach, making sure everyone was lined up properly.

If that again sounds familiar to Chargers fans, well, Derwin Sr. passed those qualities to his son, too, Derwin Jr. one of the few NFL defensive backs who calls signals in the huddle.

"His father was faster than Derwin," said longtime Florida State assistant Odell Haggins, who recruited both Derwin Jameses. "His father would knock your face off. His daddy was unreal."

Yes, Derwin Sr. had the game. He just didn't have the grades, his academic issues preventing him from fully seizing his athletic talents.

During his final year of high school, Derwin Sr. discovered he was going to be a father. Derwin Jr.'s mom, Shanita Williams, gave birth the summer before her senior year.

She had to give up going to college and running track at Haines City, where she also stood out as a sprinter.

Shanita took one job at the nearby Publix and another at a day-care center and got her own place, a \$315-a-month one-bedroom apartment. She said she still graduated on time and with honors.

Derwin Sr. was at college then, his football career expiring after two seasons at a small school in Michigan because of a knee injury.

He returned to Florida and remained with Shanita until 2001, the couple splitting when their son was 4, by which point they were convinced they had produced something special.

Although he was "Pooh Bear" — Shanita: "He always looked like a little bear to me, so plump and round and hairy." — Derwin Jr. was tough as a toddler, a burly ball whose first word actually was "ball."

By middle school, he was running past, around or through kids his size and larger.

"You could see where Derwin was going with it," Shanita said. "Even that early on I felt it. I believed it."

There remain conflicting accounts about how many times a young Derwin Jr. was hit by a car while riding his bike. Some say it happened twice; others contend it was three times. Either way, the point is "Pooh Bear" grew up as a rumbly sort of child.

Derwin Sr. said he was coaching a team of 6- and 7-year-old kids when he finally relented to the tugging on his pants leg and allowed Derwin Jr. to join them. He recalled his boy being 4 at the time.

"He was just begging to play," Derwin Sr. said. "We put that kid in some pads and the rest is history."

Having worked two places at once when Derwin Jr. was an infant, Shanita said she assumed another significant responsibility later. She emphasized the importance of succeeding in school, too, understanding the possibilities awaiting her firstborn.

"That was my other job," she said. "I made sure I did that."

Derwin Jr. began high school next door in Auburndale, where he arrived with a familiar name and too much talent and want-to to go unnoticed. He was long and lanky, an eye-grabbing sort of sleek.

The kid's body was different. Derwin Jr. was stronger than he appeared to be, ran faster than he looked to be moving and could dunk a basketball with an almost bizarre ease.

"It was crazy how freakish of an athlete he was at 15," said Auburndale basketball coach Eric Robinson. "He had that crazy athletic build. His body looked all — I don't know how else to say it — crazy."

Still, the rules were simple as presented by the man who was then the school's head football coach. No freshmen on varsity. Period.

Rick Smith was a defensive assistant at the time and still can recall the reaction when the edict was presented.

"Every one of the varsity coaches was like, 'There's no way you're keeping Derwin down,' " Smith said. "He was probably our best player already. I mean, we almost said it in unison."

By then, they had identified the enormous potential and everything else that suggested Derwin Jr. was a rarity.

The kid would lift weights to the point where coaches had to tell him to stop. He was smart and continually asking questions because he wanted to be smarter. He didn't just watch film; Derwin Jr. decoded it.

In something that felt like an instant, he was escaping his father's shadow as an ascending college football recruit but also reflecting light back on everything Derwin Sr. had been by reminding locals of the stories of "Blue" James.

Derwin Jr. has said he knew he wanted to play for Florida State as early as first grade. Then-Seminoles head coach Jimbo Fisher wasn't that far behind in that thinking.

Haggins visited Auburndale during Derwin Jr.'s first season, noticed him lining up all over the place — on both sides of the ball — and then looked at a roster. Speaking to no one in particular, Haggins recalled saying aloud, "You're telling me that's a freshman?"

When he returned to Tallahassee, Haggins said he walked into the football offices and, so excited about what he had just witnessed, couldn't resist presenting his findings in a way what would be memorable.

He opened by apologizing to Fisher for missing on Derwin Jr., admitting a kid that noticeable somehow had ducked his radar. Then Haggins played the video from Auburndale, pointed to Derwin Jr. streaking across the screen and told Fisher he was a senior.

With Fisher about to explode, Haggins said he laughed and informed his boss that Derwin Jr., in truth, was just a freshman. Fisher's response: "We need to offer him now!"

The offer did come, after just another day or two, Haggins remembering tears pooling in the eyes of both Derwin Sr. and Jr., who committed immediately. They called Shanita with the news and she cried, as well.

During his two years at Auburndale, Derwin Jr. became a star in football and track and a team-first grinder in basketball, one who applied his abundant athletic talents to the grunt work. Setting screens. Rebounding. Blocking shots.

He also emerged quickly as a leader despite being an underclassman at a new school and playing a sport that was no better than his third-best.

“Everyone heard his voice when he talked,” Robinson said. “There were things I didn’t have to worry about. I knew he’d take care of it. I mean, who’s gonna bow up to Derwin James?”

For his final two high school years, Derwin Jr. attended Haines City High, rejoining many of the kids with whom he grew up.

He continued roaming the entire field — too dynamic for one position, Derwin Jr. played them all — often accurately calling out the opposition’s plans pre-snap because he recognized what was coming from his Monday film study.

He kept pushing iron until finally, as a senior, he passed even Gee, his old Haines City coach, in the bench press. To fully grasp the significance of that accomplishment, realize that today all the Hornets’ athletes work out in the Coach Olin Gee Weight Room, named this spring after the thick, broad-shouldered career educator.

Having started at 135 pounds, Derwin Jr. maxed out in high school with a bench press of 415.

But here’s the thing about Derwin Jr. and his strength: He always has displayed a capacity to lift more than just weight.

“What you see in L.A., that’s what we saw in Polk County,” Robinson said. “Fun-loving, always smiling, always positive. People loved Derwin. And I mean not just on Friday nights.”

Said Haggins: “He puts others before him. ... Guys like that, they come around once in a lifetime.”

The display is entirely fitting, if not completely accurate. A small gold plate near the bottom identifies Derwin Jr. as the 17th overall pick of the 2018 draft — all true — but selected by the “San Diego” Chargers.

Though he changed high schools, Derwin Jr.’s commitment to Florida State remained permanent, just like the Seminoles tattoo he wore on his upper left arm long before he played for Florida State.

During his senior year, Derwin Jr. even told Haggins that the coach didn’t have to continue calling him every week, that his promise to be a Seminole couldn’t be shaken.

“He never deviated,” Haggins said. “He told me once, ‘Look on my arm, Coach. You’ve seen it. I’m coming to Florida State.’ That kind of commitment tells you something about a young man.”

If a single play could define Derwin Jr.’s time in Tallahassee, it came during his freshman season, against rival Florida.

Lined up at defensive end in a pass-rush situation, he bullied to the ground a fifth-year senior named Mason Halter, who was listed at 6 feet 6, 295 pounds, four inches taller and 80 pounds heavier than Derwin Jr. weighs to this day.

“As coaches, we all looked at each other like, ‘What?’ ” Haggins recalled. “One of the greatest plays I’ve ever seen.”

After beginning his time at Florida State with only “James” on his back, Derwin Jr. later added the nod to his father after he approached Derwin Sr. and shared his intentions.

The decision meant a jersey alternation that was minor — just the inclusion of “Jr.” — yet carried significance that was anything but.

“It was a proud moment,” Derwin Sr. said. “I told him, ‘OK, do your thing, baby.’ That was cool.”

With the Chargers, the “Jr.” appeared at the start of his second season. By then, Derwin Jr. had made an impact that was just as impressive and equally as immediate as the moment he demolished that Florida offensive lineman.

In his NFL debut, against AFC West rival Kansas City, Derwin Jr. broke up a pass some 40 yards downfield to open the second quarter.

Two snaps later he was in the backfield, sacking Patrick Mahomes.

Turns out, Derwin Jr. had time-stamped his arrival in the league even before facing the Chiefs. That August, he sent his father a training-camp video of him intercepting Philip Rivers in practice.

“He picked off Phil at the goal line,” said Derwin Sr., who still has the video on his phone. “Oh yeah, baby. That was big. I came off my seat on that one. ‘My boy! Ain’t nobody gonna stop him from bein’ great!’ ”

After signing his rookie deal, Derwin Jr. bought his mother a five-bedroom, four-bath home in a gated community in Auburndale. For his father, he purchased a truck.

Both parents still work and said they will continue to do so even if, as expected, Derwin Jr. soon signs an extension that could make him the highest-paid safety in the league.

Shanita, who has been employed at McKesson Pharmaceutical for 17 years, said she prefers to earn her own money, and that she can make no claim to the millions her son has collected.

Having spent 26 years working with at-risk youth, Derwin Sr. looks at the situation through eyes so familiar with sometimes-stark, often-unforgiving central Florida.

“I like to sit back and reflect on where we come from,” he said. “I grew up picking oranges. And not just me, but his momma’s side of the family, too. I mean, picking oranges! We all did harvest work. That’s just the way it was.”

After missing the first 11 games of the 2019 season because of injury, Derwin Jr.’s second game back came in his home state, in Jacksonville. He finished with six tackles, including one for loss, and a pass breakup as the Chargers won by five touchdowns.

Sitting in the stands that overcast December afternoon, Derwin Sr. said he stared down and marveled at what he was witnessing, the reality hitting him deeper than ever before.

“I’m looking at my son and saying, ‘Man, he’s dominating out here. He’s the best of the best,’” Derwin Sr. remembered.

“Just a little country boy from ol’ Polk County. That was like, ‘My boy is here to stay.’ ”

Having been to Southern California several times for games, Derwin Sr. said he still isn’t accustomed to seeing his son’s face all over town, whether on a billboard for Oakley or a mural in Venice Beach.

He said a friend recently sent him a picture of Derwin Jr. featured on an advertisement in a Las Vegas mall.

The image caused chills, similar to the ones Derwin Sr. said he feels when seeing “Pooh Bear” on the giant SoFi Stadium video board.

“He’s everywhere,” Derwin Sr. said. “You can’t get rid of him. ‘Damn, you everywhere, son.’ You just have to think about it, think about where we come from and say, ‘Wow!’ ”

Derwin Jr. is everywhere — on the field and off it. Sometimes, it’s like there are two Derwin Jameses. Yeah, sometimes. Like now.

'He's a G': Healthy Derwin James embracing leadership role on Chargers' defense

By Shelley Smith
ESPN.com
November 24, 2021

INGLEWOOD, Calif. -- It's two hours before kickoff for an all-important game against the Pittsburgh Steelers. And Mr. Do Everything, Play Everywhere, Derwin James Jr. is in shorts and a t-shirt (blue, of course, for his team, the Los Angeles Chargers) and no shoes. None. He's barefoot, walking along the sidelines of the field, saying hello to the Steelers he knows.

Later, I find out it's what he does before every game.

"So I can feel the surface, really feel it before I put on the cleats," the Chargers' safety explains.

Okay, every player has his routine, his superstitions, his quirks. And if this is James', with everything he does during the game, it doesn't draw stares or prompt questions from his teammates or even his opponents. He commands that much respect.

Asked where he likes to play, James answers, "Wherever the ball is."

The Chargers won the game 41-37 in what the players and coach Brandon Staley called a must-win. Not only did it move the Chargers to 6-4 and put them in the playoffs if the season ended today, but it breathed confidence into the team - which had lost three of its previous four games -- on both sides of the ball.

But no one enjoyed the win more than James, who bounded into the interview room, a huge smile on his face -- cleats still on -- and with energy that belied the effort he put into the game, with six tackles and one pass defended.

"The interception gotta be coming," James said, kicking himself after the game after a near-miss against the Steelers. He had one this season for a 15-yard return in a 28-14 win over Las Vegas on Monday Night Football in Week 4.

James sat out all of 2020 and most of 2019 with injuries (a Jones fracture in his foot cost him 11 games in 2019, a torn meniscus last season), meaning he's especially motivated now -- whether he's asked to cover, help with run support or rush the passer. He's even capable of playing receiver in a pinch.

James is as affable and chatty as anyone on the team. And he moves like nobody else in the NFL. He's 6-foot-2, 215 pounds and when he's healthy and playing to his full potential, as he has been all season due in part to the Chargers' careful conditioning and agility drills, they are often considered among the best teams in the AFC.

And here's one more thing, maybe the toughest that James does: He runs the defense and wears the green dot on his helmet, symbolizing his possession of an in-helmet transmitter. He is responsible for relaying the coaches' calls from the press box to his teammates. And when the technology failed in Week 10 against the Minnesota Vikings, James had to run to the sidelines to get the playcall, then head back to the huddle.

James is smart enough (and quick enough) to do the job well, Staley said, even though the Chargers ended up losing the game 27-20. He is a comfort to the entire defense, he added, because he doesn't make mistakes.

"The great thing about it is it's both of our times; it's his first time as a head coach and it's my first time being a signal-caller, being a captain of the team," James said. "We're both learning new challenges, new things every week. I feel like we're leaning on each other and getting better and helping our team. He's leading and I'm leading. We're going to do whatever we can every week."

The win over Pittsburgh keeps the Chargers in the thick of the playoff hunt heading into a divisional game at the Denver Broncos on Sunday (4:05 p.m. ET, CBS) and could set up a whopper on Dec. 16 at SoFi Stadium against the Kansas City Chiefs, who are currently a half-game up on the Chargers in the AFC West.

"For Derwin to keep everybody connected like he did," Staley said, "he's a G. He kept everyone connected. We had everybody banged up out there. We had a bunch of new D-linemen. Everybody kept their poise. We didn't flinch. We kept playing hard."

As did James, of course, especially with his cleats on.

The comeback story of Chargers' Derwin James: 'I'm coming back to be dominant'

By Gilbert Manzano
Orange County Register
September 6, 2021

Derwin James, the freakish athlete for Auburndale High School, was at the free throw line with an opportunity to win a road playoff game against Rockledge.

With the score tied and two seconds left in regulation, the opposing coach called two timeouts to ice the then-freshman forward. James was alone with his thoughts as the crowd rooted against him.

"The spotlight was just on him," recalled Eric Robinson, Auburndale's varsity basketball coach. "I remember shaking my head and feeling bad for the kid because he was put in that position of having to come through as a ninth grader."

James missed both free throws and was forced to prepare for overtime in the first round of the 2012 Florida boys state basketball playoffs.

"I just gave him a hug after he missed and told him we're going to make up for it in overtime and get this win," Robinson said before the Bloodhounds lost 67-63 in overtime.

Nearly 10 years later, Robinson and James haven't spoken about the missed free throws. Initially, it was because there was no need to remind a 15-year-old about his disappointment when the outcome wasn't going to change. But then it quickly became an afterthought.

James had other priorities as the school's star football player with an offer from Florida State. He was also a sprinter and long jumper for the school's track and field team in the spring.

But the cheerful freshman still used his disappointment with his free throw performance as motivation to improve in basketball, a sport he didn't play before high school.

As a freshman, James was already better than most football players in Polk County, but that wasn't good enough for the ultra competitive James, who needs to be great at everything he does.

James returned to the hardwood his sophomore season as a defensive menace who could guard any position. He did the dirty work and was on the receiving end of many alley-oop dunks during Auburndale's memorable 25-4 season.

DEVASTATING SUMMERS

The disappointment of missing two free throws in high school doesn't compare to what the Chargers' star safety has endured the past two seasons.

James, the most beloved and respected player on every team he's been on, had the worst luck on the Chargers for back-to-back summers.

"I was devastated because I had just got hurt on that same field," James said about the knee injury he sustained in last year's training camp, nearly a year after his foot injury in August of 2019.

When James, 25, injured his fifth metatarsal on his right foot while celebrating a play during a joint scrimmage against the New Orleans Saints, there was a sense on the Chargers that they could stay afloat until James returned. He missed the first 11 games of the 2019 season and the Chargers finished 5-11.

When it happened again the following training camp, there was no hope of a James comeback, at least not for that season. The torn meniscus in his right knee sidelined James for the entire 2020 season. The Chargers missed the postseason for a second consecutive year and finished 7-9.

James asked, "Why me?" And the Chargers asked, "Why him?"

Many went to James' house soon after his knee injury to lift his spirits, including former teammates Casey Hayward and Melvin Ingram, former Chargers head coach Anthony Lynn, and David Mulugheta, James' agent.

"Having those guys cheered me up at the moment, but that (expletive) was devastating," James said.

Perhaps James didn't want to discuss the missed free throws as a freshman, but he has no issues revisiting his injuries. It's a part of his comeback story, one he wants to tell with a dominant ending — even better than his memorable rookie season in 2018 when he was named an All-Pro at two positions.

"A lot of times guys get injured and they just want to try to come back and just to be healthy," James said. "No, I'm coming back to be dominant. To be the same person that I was before, and that's the kind of mindset I look at it as."

It's all starting to come together for James in his fourth NFL season. He got through August healthy, just one of many accomplishments on his lengthy checklist for 2021. Next on the list will be playing in Sunday's season opener against the Washington Football Team.

"This year I told myself, 'Everything, I will speak it to existence,'" James said. "I was positive. I'm like, 'We're gonna get healthy, we're gonna make it to the season, we're gonna speak it to existence.' Because everything you say with a tongue is powerful. That's why I believe it."

Leadership and positivity are two of many traits that make James "one of a kind," according to Chargers nose tackle Linval Joseph.

He's the heart and soul of the Chargers, and he's probably their most talented player — even on a roster that features quarterback Justin Herbert, wide receiver Keenan Allen and edge rusher Joey Bosa.

James has been compared to legendary safeties Ed Reed, Brian Dawkins and the late Sean Taylor. Current and former NFL players are clamoring for James' return, and many people in central Florida are itching to watch James on Sundays.

The traits that make Derwin James Jr. special — leadership, competitiveness, versatility, freakish athleticism — were on display in his youth while growing up in Auburndale and Haines City, two cities an hour east of Tampa, Florida.

THE MAKING OF DERWIN JAMES Jr.

"Freakish athlete" were the first two words that Robinson uttered when asked about the kid who wore No. 23 on the Auburndale basketball team for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 seasons.

"I couldn't forget him," said Rick Smith, who coached James in football and in track and field at Auburndale.

Without much prior experience, James jumped 20 feet, 11 inches in his first long jump competition as a freshman. He finished the event with a high of 21 feet, 10.75 inches.

"We only had drills at this point, but he could not stand to not actually compete," Smith recalled about James. "So I said, 'OK, I'll let you do one jump and if you look like you know what you're doing, I'll let you do the rest.' ... He nailed everything. I'm like, 'Yeah, you can keep jumping.'"

Before James was a three-sport high school athlete, he played left tackle for his pop Warner team at age 6. James was needed on the offensive line because there was a lack of size on the roster.

"I had me a couple pancakes," James said about playing left tackle. "My coach used to always get hyped and get crunked. Like that used to make the coaches get excited, especially in pop Warner. Especially if we're skinny guys getting pancake blocks on the line. I got me a couple just being more athletic and physical than guys."

The following football season, James moved to running back and primarily played the position until his freshman season at Auburndale High School. James grew up in Haines City, but his mother, Shanita Russell, moved the family to Auburndale when James was in fifth grade to keep him out of trouble.

James was required to play junior varsity on the Auburndale football team because the coaches wanted the freshmen together to build camaraderie before jumping to varsity. But James didn't want to play on Thursday nights. He knew he belonged on Friday nights, and so did most of the coaches.

James noticed a safety opening on varsity and pushed the head coach to play him there. He eventually listened and offered James a tryout in the form of an old school Oklahoma drill.

The ball was put on the 5-yard line with two defensive tackles and two offensive linemen. James, the brash freshman, lined up at safety and needed to prevent the senior running back with "hella offers" from crossing the goal line.

"I had to meet him at the hole two times," James recalled. "I won those drills and then my coach said, 'That's enough, he's playing varsity.'"

For James' first varsity game, he had two interceptions. He played on defense, offense and special teams.

"Poor guy it seemed like he was playing every down," said Smith, who's now the behavior interventionist at Auburndale.

By James' sophomore year, there was no feeling sorry for him. He was able to handle the workload after putting in countless hours in the weight room.

James went from bench pressing about 135 pounds as a freshman to more than 300 pounds by his sophomore year.

"He was a dog, as we would say," Smith said. "We would get in there and he'd lift those weights. Those weights were clanking around."

James' father, Derwin Sr., is a football legend at Haines City, but Robinson is convinced the younger James got his weight-room competitiveness from his mother.

"I'll tell you, man, I seen her at the gym and my mouth has just dropped, like, the hard work that she puts in at the gym," Robinson said. "I've told her before, 'OK, I see where your son gets it from.' Knowing how good dad was at school and then just seeing her in the gym putting in work at the gym, like there was no way (James) could lose ... he got it from both sides."

James didn't miss a weightlifting session his freshman year, and that included both sessions, one with the upperclassmen and the other with the younger students.

James wanted to push himself by lifting with the older students, but he didn't want to leave behind his fellow freshmen.

"What (James) ended up doing was he would lift with the older guys and any of the younger guys who would come in, he would go and help them and coach them up on how to lift," Smith recalled. "That was my first inclination. 'Hey, man, this guy is a little bit different.'"

Smith quickly noticed James' leadership qualities, but his determination to be better in many areas were just as noticeable. James was getting A grades in all his classes and asked Smith to help get him in the tougher classes.

"I tell my athletes all the time about this," Smith said. "Derwin was the kind of guy that challenged himself. He came to me one time and he asked me about getting into harder classes. ... He's always challenging himself."

Robinson went to every Auburndale football game in the fall of 2011 looking to recruit James to the basketball team.

"Every time (James) turned his shoulder on Friday night, I was right there," said Robinson, who's entering his 20th season at Auburndale. "So I built that relationship with him."

James had Nick Saban at Alabama and coaches at Miami and Clemson trying to get him to decommit from Florida State. But Robinson was also in a recruiting battle for James because the wrestling coach wanted James for the winter season.

"He probably would have been a state champion if he would have wrestled," Robinson said. "I just got lucky enough to get the chance to coach him."

James was torn when he had the opportunity to return to his hometown and transfer to Haines City High School for his junior and senior years. He was loyal to his teammates at Auburndale, but he couldn't pass on the chance to sport the green and white at his family's alma mater.

COMEBACK STORY

James' athletic ability is a reason why he's universally respected in the NFL, but it's also because of his leadership, loyalty and passion.

"I feel like I can relate to him so well because we just have that same love, just love playing football," Chargers linebacker Kenneth Murray said about James. "You could put me on the other side of the world, in like Antarctica, and give me a football and I'll be fine. He has that same attitude.

"He loves the game. He wants to be the best. He's competing to be the best. When you have guys like that on the team, it makes it easier for everyone else around you. I enjoy competing with him and I enjoy being out there with him. Looking forward to dominating this season with him."

No one is doubting James' comeback, especially not after the dominant training camp he had last month. He's still the same Derwin James, the do-it-all defensive stud who always seeks the best.

James challenged Allen, a four-time Pro Bowl wideout, throughout training camp, and called out 49ers All-Pro tight end George Kittle when his team came to Costa Mesa for joint practices.

"He's just kind of a freak of nature," Kittle said after James got in front of him at the goal line to intercept a Jimmy Garoppolo pass and return it for a touchdown to end the joint practice. "He can do whatever you like. He can follow. He can chase you, he can be in your hip, he can play on top, he can try to jam you at the line."

James is back to playing safety, linebacker, cornerback and edge rusher for the Chargers. But the positionless player picked up two more roles for the 2021 season. He'll be calling the plays for the defense and was named a team captain to start the season.

It's strange that the Chargers' top leader has never started a season with a "C" on his jersey. But he quickly won over his teammates during his rookie season and was providing leadership from afar while rehabbing his injuries to start the past two seasons.

Chargers coach Brandon Staley has coached the NFL's best defensive players in the past four years, from the Rams' Aaron Donald and Jalen Ramsey to the Chicago Bears' Khalil Mack to the Denver Broncos' Von Miller and Justin Simmons.

But Staley made a case for why the 6-foot-2, 215-pound James is the most complete player in the NFL.

"There aren't many players like him in the league on any side of the ball," Staley said. "There aren't many players like Derwin James because you have rare talent. Rare talent. Rare size and speed, which are critical factors for the position. He has rare skills for the position. He can do anything on the field and play anywhere. He's your signal-caller. I'm not aware of any other (defensive backs) in the league that are the signal caller.

"You can make the case that he's the leader of our entire football team and the face of your football team — certainly one of them. I haven't been around too many guys like that regardless of the position. Normally, it's quarterbacks. Derwin is one of the few defensive players that I'm aware of in the league that can carry that mantle."

Bosa wants to see James put it all together in 2021 and he's not going to let anyone get in the way. That's why Bosa shoved 49ers wide receiver River Cracraft when he tried to get in James' face during the joint practices.

"Joey don't even act like that," James said about Bosa participating in the camp scuffle. "That's my brother. I treat all them boys as my brothers. Every day is bigger than football for me. You can ask anybody in the locker room. I'm always, 'Man, how's your family?' I want to have a relationship bigger than football. That way when we are in the heat of the battle, I know you got my back.

"See, I know Joey Bosa has my back. Same thing vice versa, man. I have his back."

It makes Bosa happy when he sees pictures of him and James on the field together because it's a glimpse of what they plan to do for the 2021 season.

"I love looking at pictures of us both lining up on the edge together," Bosa said. "It's a scary sight. I always say he's one of the best in the league and I truly believe that at any position, honestly. He's one of the most gifted athletes I've ever seen. And his energy is unbelievable. So just to see him out there happy and healthy, it's great."

It's hard not to be happy for James, just like it was hard not to be disappointed for him when the devastating injuries occurred.

"The kid always had a smile on his face," Robinson said. "He just continues to bounce back. I continue to see that practice clip of him and Keenan Allen going at it. I've seen that clip probably 20 times. And man, I just get chills every time I see it because it just shows the hard work."

James' latest comeback story is almost complete. Auburndale and Haines City will be watching James and Chargers start the season Sunday in Washington.

They want to see James dominate the 2021 season.

"I'm healthy," James said. "Why not?"

Why Derwin James Jr. is NFL's most unique defensive player: 'Mr. Versatility' set to do it all for Los Angeles Chargers' defense

By Jeremy Fowler
ESPN.com
August 26, 2021

COSTA MESA, Calif. -- Derwin James Jr. is a walking espresso, team-chemistry blend.

The Los Angeles Chargers had just finished a two-hour training camp session, and James, freshly stretched, was conducting an animated FaceTime call -- or at least he was trying. He couldn't help himself, engaging every teammate who walked past while he swayed, swung his hair or smirked.

For the Chargers' standout, everyone is a "bro," from offensive linemen to cornerbacks, and they all got shoulder pats from James' yellow-gloved hand or shoutouts as they crossed his vision during the call. Safeties who blitz, play in the post and cover tight ends in the slot were subject to multitasking.

After ending the call, the gifted defensive back greeted a credentialed bro under a tent, made clear his two-year absence is over, those injury labels buried somewhere in L.A. and his league takeover back on.

"I'm not out here half-stepping; I'm not worried about getting injured, bro," James told ESPN. "I'm out here, full speed. That's the only way I know how to play the game.

"It just feels good to be back playing football."

The Chargers don't seem to care that James has missed 27 games over the past two years due to foot surgery in 2019 and a torn meniscus in 2020. The NFL is a cold, calculated business known to discard injury-plagued players, yet the Chargers are building their entire defense around James, adding more cornerback duties to his already loaded plate. His otherworldly talent is the primary reason, with a 6-foot-2, 215-pound frame emblematic of today's positionless football that coaches covet. In a given practice, James will line up as a safety, corner, linebacker or on the edge, all while handling the green dot and calling the defense.

The possibilities seemed endless in 2018, when a healthy James burst onto the scene as a first-round rookie with 105 tackles, 3.5 sacks, 3 interceptions and 13 pass breakups. And anyone watching James move with no limitations this camp has no doubt he can again make a massive impact.

His recent interception and 99-yard return when guarding San Francisco 49ers tight end George Kittle in a joint practice even hyped up LeBron James on social media.

But the Chargers might be even more excited about his leadership. The way the team sees it, he has basically been a team captain since the Chargers drafted him 17th overall three-plus years ago.

"He just has a glow," first-year head coach Brandon Staley said. "People are really drawn to him, a spirit and energy that brings people to him, brings people with him."

Some teams might be inclined to place a protective bubble around James, but the Chargers have let James be himself. There are no limitations here, largely because his injuries didn't linger.

As James described, his 2019 injury was "getting a new screw in my foot after the old one bent on me" in his fifth metatarsal. The original screw was from a surgery prior to joining the NFL. The procedure cost him 11 games that season. And then the 2020 meniscus tear was a routine four-to-five-month injury, but it just happened at the worst time: late in an Aug. 30 scrimmage.

"All of it was simple fixes," James said. "They fixed it, and I feel stronger."

This helps explain why the Chargers picked up James' fifth-year option of \$9.052 million for 2022 despite all the time missed. That says a lot about how they value him. And with other first-round picks from his class -- including quarterback Josh Allen, offensive tackle Kolton Miller and center Frank Ragnow -- already getting extensions, James is poised for a major payout if he has a big season and stays on the field.

And James spent all offseason confirming his good health, leaning heavily on a player who has been there.

Before Keenan Allen became a perennial Pro Bowl receiver for the Chargers, he fought the injury-prone label as he recovered from an early-career torn ACL. So, Allen adopted a rigorous offseason routine -- a blend of band work, mobility and balance training and running on a track that he calls "prehab" -- to engender longevity.

James asked Allen to teach him the workouts. Throughout the offseason, Allen would text James at around 10 most nights to plan a meetup at a local track near the Chargers' facility early the next morning.

"Bet," James always responded.

"We're both the same dogs -- same animal, different beasts," Allen said. "We both have that dog, get it by any means."

Allen called their training together "special" and "personal." And his advice to James was clear-cut: Know what you bring to the table, control what you can and stay in the lab.

In fact, Allen has urged James to guard him in one-on-ones all camp long because, according to Allen, "He's the best cover guy we have right now" and has the best technique, which James showed off with a deep-ball interception against Allen in the second week of camp.

James was not lacking for confidence, but he emerged from those sessions with Allen ready to address any questions about his durability.

"When I'm back to making plays on the field, those [critics] will be the same people rooting for me again," James said about those who question his long-term viability due to injury.

"I don't really get too caught up in, 'Hey, he's too injury-prone.' I'm ready to go back out there and show the world what I can do, showing he's a guy that bounced back from adversity and took it and ran with it. That was the hand I was dealt, but it's not who I am."

The time away from the game also has challenged James to refine his leadership and mental capacity for football.

He said he can walk into any position room in the Chargers' facility to fire off friendly banter, asking offensive linemen if they are ready for his blitzing or notifying receivers it's "no slants day" on the practice field. He gets away with this because he invests in teammates first.

"A lot of players are going through a lot, and guys don't often take the time to get to know players," James said. "I can go in any room -- quarterback room, O-line room, whatever -- and start off with a smile, bringing that energy every day, speaking to them. How is your family doing? How are your kids doing? All the little stuff that some people tend to forget in this game."

James also has expanded his knowledge of formations and offensive tendencies, consistently giving quarterback Justin Herbert different post-snap looks in practice. James takes copious notes on every position in defensive meetings to understand all the moving parts. And in practice, his directives to teammates at the line of scrimmage are urgent but unstartling: "Line up ... we good, we good ... I'm here."

Staley coached cornerback Jalen Ramsey, James' good friend from their Florida State days, as the Los Angeles Rams' defensive coordinator last year. And here's the ultimate compliment: James is one of the few NFL players Ramsey views as his peer, Staley said. That's how immense the talent is. So why wouldn't Staley use James as an all-over-the-field weapon?

"He can play anywhere in the deep part of the field, he can play in the half, he can play in the post, he can play in the quarter, he can play in the slot man-to-man, whether inside in the slot, he can play star -- which is our nickel -- he can play money, and he can rush the passer," Staley said. "And he's our signal caller. When you talk versatility to me, he's Mr. Versatility."

And that's what James wants, he said. Yes, he is a box safety. He's just nine other things too.

Teams have prioritized positional flexibility for years, with the Kansas City Chiefs' Tyrann Mathieu and Washington's Landon Collins being other examples at safety. Safeties who can make linebacker-type splash plays at the line of scrimmage add value to their teams.

And at linebacker, the Cleveland Browns and Pittsburgh Steelers recently drafted Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah and Devin Bush, respectively, because of the advantage their open-field speed provides. But James might be the most valuable of all because he can cover like a true cornerback at 6-foot-2.

The Chargers are expecting James to put an already decent defense over the top. They were middle of the pack on that side of the ball in 2020 despite another slew of injuries, finishing 16th both in the Football Power Index's defensive rating and yards allowed per play (5.5).

"We know we can be special, but we say that every year, so let's just not say it" has become sort of a running joke with Allen and other Chargers.

It's hard not to say it this year, though. Herbert is considered a top-10 quarterback leaguewide after just one season, and the talent at the offensive skill positions is top-shelf. With \$135 million man Joey Bosa off the edge and a good mix of complementary veterans and young talent, Staley should be able to maximize the play of the defense with his scheme.

James wholly believes the Chargers will make a deep playoff push.

"We've got the guys," he said.

And he has no plans to be sidelined for it.

"It feels amazing to be myself again," James said. "I feel like guys gravitate toward me, and being that leader that they need me to be, knowing they drafted me in the first round for a reason, is a blessing."

Chargers' bolt is BACK: 'Alpha leader' Derwin James drives culture of accountability in Los Angeles

By Jim Trotter
NFL.com
August 26, 2021

COSTA MESA, Calif. -- Chris Harris Jr. has been around long enough to understand the importance of conserving energy as training camp nears its close. So at the end of a practice last week, with one day remaining before the end of camp, the Los Angeles Chargers' 11th-year cornerback took the longer route to greet a visitor, walking along the waist-high chain-link fence until he found an opening that allowed him to reach the other side.

He took a seat on a white folding chair, removed his mouthpiece and exhaled. The light at the end of camp's long dark tunnel was bright and welcomed. But the smile on his face moments later had nothing to do with that. It had everything to do with teammate Derwin James, who walked to the fence, placed both hands on top of it and easily hopped to the other side.

The moment was a testament to not only James' youth and athleticism -- now 25, he is seven years younger than Harris -- but also a metaphor for the standout safety's approach to the season. He isn't interested in circuitous routes. He's all about direct lines, whether seeking out a ball-carrier or attacking questions about his health. He understands why people keep bringing up his physical well-being after missing 27 of 32 games the past two seasons because of foot and knee injuries, respectively, but the questions have grown stale.

Rather than attempt to sidestep them, he runs through them, just as he would an opponent. He drives home his point with an unmistakable intensity, his normally infectious smile vanishing and his eyes wide and unblinking.

"I hate when people say, 'If y'all stay healthy ...,' " he pronounced, speaking of both himself and the team in general. "I'm tired of that. I'm going to stay healthy and we're going to stay healthy. We're speaking that into the air."

If so, the Chargers could be the sleeper team of 2021. They have the 2020 Offensive Rookie of the Year in quarterback Justin Herbert, an offensive line that was upgraded with the signing of the top available center (Corey Linsley) in free agency and one of the top tackles (Rashawn Slater) in the draft, plus a deep stable of pass catchers and a defense that features impactful edge rusher Joey Bosa and athletic inside linebacker Kenneth Murray. And then there is James. His return after missing all of last season because of knee surgery is the tide that can lift almost any team.

The 6-foot-2, 215-pounder transcends labels. In some situations, he's a defensive back. In others, he's a linebacker. Then he's a pass rusher. Then a returner. There really isn't anything he can't do, which is why he was voted first-team All-Pro as a rookie. Veterans like Harris normally temper expectations or comparisons with players still seeking to establish roots in the league, but not when it comes to James.

"I've played with a lot of great people in the secondary -- Hall of Famers like Champ (Bailey) and Dawk (Brian Dawkins) -- but it's hard to say anybody is like this kid, the way he loves the game, the way he competes every day," Harris said. "He's very smart and has a great enthusiasm about him, a great spirit about him. And he has freakish talent. He can run, has great quickness, very physical and strong. The season could definitely change with him out there. He's that special of a player."

James was among the first in line when the football gods were handing out athletic intellect and ability. But what takes his stature with teammates to a higher level is his unbridled passion for the game. Some people love the game for what it can do for them; others cherish it for the competition and camaraderie. James is the latter, which has earned him the respect and the right among teammates to push and pull them.

During a recent 11-on-11 drill, the defense was short a corner. Rather than let it pass, James immediately called out the culprit, whose name has been withheld by protective team members. It might have been a simple lapse to some, but to James, it was much more than that. He's trying to establish a culture of accountability on a team where there were issues getting the right people on the field during multiple games last season.

"Do you want to be out here?!" James demanded.

Two days later, when asked about his reaction, James didn't back down.

"I challenged him because there's no reason we should ever have 10 guys on defense," he said. "If anything, we should have 12 guys out there. The coach should have to pull you off the field, not hold things up to get you on the field. That's telling me that you don't want to be there. It's all about mindset when you take the field, and having the right approach. Having 10 guys, I don't like that."

His commitment and dedication is a reason he wears the captain's "C" on his jersey, and why he has the respect of those around him. The next malicious bone you find in his body will be the first. He is unfailingly positive and enthusiastic, with an intuitive sense of how to get through to people.

"He holds guys accountable, but he does it in the right way," general manager Tom Telesco said. "He knows when to push on guys, and he knows when to pat them on the back. He has a great feel and we missed that last season. He's that alpha leader that everyone follows."

James was regarded as one of the more gifted players in the 2018 draft, but inexplicably fell to the Chargers at No. 17 because of concerns about a knee injury sustained during his Florida State career. It didn't take long for James to make clubs regret passing on him, as he started every game for the Chargers as a rookie.

He opened the season at free safety, but the coaches soon realized his athleticism and intellect could make him a force on every level. So defensive coordinator Gus Bradley switched him to strong safety to allow James to play closer to the line of scrimmage, where he could rush the passer, neutralize tight ends and, sometimes, defend receivers in the slot.

He finished the year with 105 tackles, three interceptions, 13 passes defended, six quarterback hits and 3.5 sacks, a stat-stuffing effort that immediately proved his standing as one of the most dynamic defensive chess pieces in the league. More importantly, his presence helped the Chargers reach the playoffs for the first time in five years.

"He elevates everyone around him: defense, offense, special teams. Shoot, he even elevates coaches," Bradley, now defensive coordinator of the rival Las Vegas Raiders, said recently. "You see the way he competes and the way he goes out and plays the game, and his love for the game, and it forces you to match it. If you don't, you have to ask yourself: Who's the leader here? Who's the one who's taking charge and setting the tone? It's just unique, the impact he has."

He's particularly impactful when using disrespect as a motivational tool, such as last week on the final day of joint workouts with the San Francisco 49ers. Niners wideout River Cracraft was looking to catch the eyes of the coaches and ultimately land a spot on the team's receiver-rich roster, and one way to draw attention was by showing he would not back down from anyone. Enter James.

Cracraft stuck on his block of James a little too long during an 11-on-11 drill near the goal line, nearly setting off a scrap between the sides. Two snaps later, the two had words again. Word to the wise: You might get away with poking the bear once, but not twice. On the next snap, James undercut tight end George Kittle and picked off a pass that he returned 99 yards for a touchdown, raising his right index finger as he crossed midfield.

A point needed to be made, and James made it. It didn't matter that Kittle had gotten him for a TD earlier in a similar situation. All that mattered is that he felt tested by Cracraft, by Kittle and by quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo.

"I love it. I love odds against me. I love it all. It's just how I was raised," James said in general, not specifically about the interception return. "You're going to see what type of person you are when there's pressure. Me, I'm going to come with it."

He doesn't care what's before him -- an All-Pro tight end, a former Super Bowl-starting QB, a young receiver trying to make the team, or a chain-link fence. He knows what he wants and is committed to take a direct line to get there.

"There ain't no ceiling for me," James said. "I'm going to continue to get better. I don't put a cap on me because I'm always trying to find a way to get better. I feel like I can do so many things better, so I don't try to put it like: OK, you need five interceptions, you need 100 tackles, you need to go to the Pro Bowl. I just want to be available for my teammates and come out and get better every day. Everything else will take care of itself."

ZION JOHNSON

How a bus driver nudged Zion Johnson on his unlikely path to the Chargers

By Gilberto Manzano
Orange County Register
May 4, 2022

Hank Lloyd had lost track of Zion Johnson until the plumber from his church mentioned the name while fixing the hose in Lloyd's backyard.

"That name sounds familiar," Lloyd said. "That sounds like this kid that I asked, could he play football? Why didn't he play?"

Lloyd was the mystery school bus driver that Johnson credited during pre-draft interviews for getting him to play football as a junior at Riverdale Baptist High School in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

"Well, you must be the guy," said the plumber, who heard the bus driver story from other church members.

A few weeks before last week's NFL draft, Lloyd was made aware that the lanky golfer he encouraged to play football had transferred to Boston College and developed into a first-round prospect. In a span of seven years, Johnson went from being the "nerdy kid" who was clueless about football to the most NFL-ready offensive guard in the draft.

The Chargers selected the 6-foot-2, 312-pound Johnson with the 17th overall pick last week, viewing him as an immediate starter at right guard and a cornerstone piece to their offensive line for years to come.

"What you don't want to do is reach for a tackle and then you have an issue somewhere else," Chargers coach Brandon Staley said. "We just really felt like (Johnson) is a really complete player and this guy is a first-round-level guard."

It was a stretch to assume Johnson would become a reliable offensive lineman after what he displayed in his first spring workouts at Riverdale Baptist. Johnson spent most of his first year in football in the weight room and standing on the sideline before seeing game action as a senior, including a tussle against Chase Young, the star edge rusher for the Washington Commanders.

"Undersized is an understatement," Johnson said. "I was 225 pounds and I played right tackle and our team played Chase Young, so it wasn't like we were playing scrubs or anything."

NO REGRETS

Initially, Johnson wasn't interested in football, but Lloyd kept asking and mentioned the idea to his mother, Tammie Edwards, and recommended him to the high school's football head coach, Caesar Nettles.

"He would come home and say, 'Mommy, the bus driver keeps saying why do I keep getting on the bus with these golf clubs,'" Edwards recalled. "He had to haul those to school every day."

Johnson eventually agreed to try football and Edwards gave Nettles permission to meet Johnson at his bus stop.

"I was talking to his bus driver and said, 'Well, can you point out Zion for me'" Nettles said. "He came on out (with the football team) and he was really, really raw."

Lloyd pushed football and Nettles showed interest because of Johnson's long arms and large hands and feet. He was a few inches shorter than most offensive linemen, but once he filled out his arms, he made up for it with strength.

At the NFL Scouting Combine in March, Johnson had 32 reps on the bench press, the most among offensive linemen who participated. He was measured with 34-inch arms, an 82-inch wingspan and 10 5/8-inch hands.

"With that size he had, he needs to be playing football," Lloyd said. "When you get blessed with a body like that and you're smart ... I thought he would have no problems picking up the offense."

But there were problems early on, and Johnson's size wasn't enough for Keith McIver, Riverdale Baptist's then-offensive line coach. After what would become the first of many rides home, Johnson explained to McIver in detail why the garage was structured near the front of the house.

"He was saying this and that," McIver recalled. "I was like, 'Son, just get out my car.' The first thing I thought was, 'This kid ain't going to make it.'"

McIver didn't realize it then, but Johnson's technical side and affinity for learning the ins and outs were reasons why he quickly developed into a polished offensive guard.

Staley called Johnson pro-ready and Chargers general manager Tom Telesco raved about Johnson's strength and determination. Johnson continued football at Davidson, where he struggled financially for two years due to the private college's non-scholarship program. He then went on to earn a scholarship at Boston College and left with a master's degree in cybersecurity policy and governance.

Johnson had the right coaches and mentors during his meteoric rise in football, but it was Edwards, who raised Johnson as a single mother, who made this improbable football story possible. James Stacy Edwards, Johnson's uncle, also played a role in why Johnson went from no-star recruit to the Chargers' prize first-round selection.

"It was really my mom who pushed me to play," Johnson said. "She always taught me that you should try things so that you don't have regrets later on in life. I'm glad that I tried football because that would've definitely been a regret that I would have had."

DRAFT EXPERIENCE

McIver has been one of Johnson's strongest supporters since he started football, but he was still surprised about being in the draft green room with Johnson in Las Vegas.

"If we look back and look at when you first started and look at where we are at now, we would never have believed it," McIver told Johnson before the draft began.

Johnson said he was glued to the prospect's chair, a location for TV cameras to easily spot the draftees, for the first hour until he learned he was allowed to walk around. The draft experience moved rapidly after Johnson left his seat.

Johnson was expecting to get drafted after the 19th pick, with the Dallas Cowboys at No. 24 being the most likely destination. Johnson grew up in Bowie, Maryland, an area outside of Washington D.C. Most of his friends and relatives are fans of the Commanders and dislike the Cowboys.

"Then the Cowboys were calling, that would have been very difficult," McIver recalled. "I had mentioned to (Johnson), it might be nice to go to the Chargers. He was just chilling and then the phone rang. I knew something was up because the cameras came over."

Nettles wasn't surprised about Johnson being the 17th pick and thought he would go sooner after speaking with about 20 teams who showed interest in Johnson, including the Chargers.

"Zion was one of those prospects that teams didn't really try to find dirt on because they know they couldn't," Nettles said. "He's that good of a kid. He's his authentic self. They were just trying to see what made him tick and all of that, because the film doesn't lie. And once you meet him, he's infectious."

Johnson had a whirlwind first 24 hours with the Chargers and briefly met some of his new teammates. Johnson will have plenty of time to get to know them, especially on the Chargers' starting offensive line with left tackle Rashawn Slater, left guard Matt Feiler and center Corey Linsley.

"From everybody that I've talked to, people that know him, they have all raved about him," Linsley said. "The kind of person that he is and, obviously, the kind of football player."

NEW KID ON THE O-LINE

Johnson played golf and basketball before the bus driver suggested football.

Tammie Edwards was a basketball standout at Virginia Tech, where she set rebounding records, but she knew basketball wasn't for her son.

"He didn't have the passion for basketball like I did," Edwards said. "But football, I saw it differently in his eyes. He has the passion, he loves the game. I think he loves the mechanics of it. He loves figuring things out. He likes breaking it down."

But before Johnson gave up basketball, he won back-to-back championships with his mom as the head coach of his youth team. Edwards was the only female coach in the U13 basketball league.

"Some of the fathers who would come with their kids and they would say, 'Dad, here's my coach,' and they would walk past me and look for somebody else," Edwards recalled. "No, it's me."

Johnson credited his mom for his athletic gifts and some of his coaches credited her for Johnson's competitive side.

"He is the most articulate, genuine, young man I've probably come in contact with," Nettles said. "But on the field, he's going through the whistle on every play, and he's gonna give you 110 percent on every play. And it doesn't matter if somebody gets him on one play. ... He's coming right back and he's going 1,000 percent at his throat. I think (the Chargers) have a silent assassin."

For a period, Johnson's passion was golf. He was the only middle-school student on the high school's golf team. Johnson learned to golf during summers spent with his grandmother, Rosa Edwards, who was a principal at a school in Norfolk, Virginia.

Johnson participated in the school's golf camps and received coaching from a golf instructor. But Johnson stopped carrying his golf clubs after Lloyd physically nudged him to play football.

"I gave him a little elbow to the chest," Lloyd said. "I asked him, 'Did you feel it?' He said, 'I didn't even feel it.' I was just telling him you ain't going to get hurt because you'll be doing the hitting."

Johnson gained the respect of McIver and Nettles with his work ethic and how quickly he learned the playbook, but the coaches didn't rush his development. Johnson weighed only 225 pounds when he joined the football team.

"This is a very bright kid," McIver said. "I'm thinking, like, 'OK, this is a little nerdy kid. Not sure how much he's gonna play or anything like that.' But his work ethic changed everything."

Johnson bench-pressed 135 pounds the spring before his junior season and increased that to 225 by the fall.

Johnson didn't see the field until the final game of his junior season when he filled in at left tackle for Christian Darrisaw, who later starred at Virginia Tech and was a first-round pick of the Minnesota Vikings last season.

"You need to give (Johnson) a test," McIver remembered telling the coaches. "He did a heck of a job (at left tackle) and he proved that he belonged on the team."

Johnson had a productive senior year at right tackle with Darrisaw patrolling the left side, but Johnson joined the recruiting process too late and went unnoticed until Davidson called.

"Me and Christian were pretty close in high school because our O-line coach (McIver) would have us over to the house," Johnson said. "With him going to Virginia Tech, we weren't able to stay as close because it's like, 'I want to beat you.' He's definitely someone who has pushed me, especially in high school and throughout my career, because with his level of play, I've always wanted to outdo him as a rival sort of thing."

Johnson improved at Davidson under the guidance of Matt Applebaum and Phil Trautwein and later reunited with the offensive line coaches at Boston College. With Johnson in the ACC, he got to measure his skills against Darrisaw and Virginia Tech.

McIver wore a Boston College shirt with a Virginia Tech hat when the game was at Boston College and vice versa for the game at Virginia Tech.

"I would sit on the Virginia Tech side for one half and the Boston College side for the other half," McIver said.

CREDIT TO THE BUS DRIVER

On Sunday, Johnson called Lloyd to reconnect and told his former bus driver that his advice got him drafted to the NFL.

"I told him, 'That's gonna be my second team now (the Chargers) that I'm gonna be rooting for,'" said Lloyd, a fan of the Commanders.

Lloyd, 68, coached high school basketball, volleyball and softball for 40 years before being a school bus driver. He coached former NBA players Michael Beasley, Nolan Smith and Thomas Robinson, and WNBA players Shakira Austin and Tianna Hawkins.

Lloyd's only request for Johnson was to get one of his Chargers jerseys to hang next to his Wanisha Smith jersey – another former basketball standout he coached.

"He's a great kid," Lloyd said. "He's going to be a great asset to the Chargers."

Zion Johnson reveals inside info on journey to become Chargers' new starting guard

*By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
April 29, 2022*

Zion Johnson spent most of his first full day as an NFL player in a place he'd never been before: Southern California.

The Chargers' 2022 first-round pick grew up in Maryland and went to school at Davidson and Boston College before being selected 17th overall in the NFL draft Thursday.

On Friday, Johnson traveled to meet his new team in person and take questions from the local media.

"When I was driving from LAX, I was like, 'It kind of does look like L.A. on TV with the palm trees,'" he said.

"There's this certain lighting ... it's like this vibe ... I don't know how to explain it, but it looks like L.A. on TV, like one of the cop shows."

Highlights of Johnson's first face-to-face session with reporters covering the Chargers:

Humble first steps

Johnson never played football until his junior year at Riverdale Baptist School in Upper Marlboro. Instead, he was a member of the school's golf team, having picked up that sport after trying it during a summer camp.

The first person who suggested he might be good at football was the driver of a bus Johnson rode home after golf practices. But he wasn't the one most instrumental in launching Johnson's career.

"It was really my mom who pushed me to play," Johnson said.

"She always taught me that you should try things so you don't have regrets later on in life. I'm glad I tried football because that would definitely be a regret I had."

Tammie Edwards played basketball at Virginia Tech, where she was a record-setting rebounder as a center and power forward. Johnson said his mother has been the most influential person in his life, noting her work ethic.

"A lot of the qualities she taught me," he said, "have made me the person I am today."

Asked if he also inherited his athletic ability from his mom, Johnson smiled and said: "I think most of it comes from her. She was definitely a force in the post."

From undersized to big-time

When he began playing football, Johnson said he was a 225-pound right tackle. Today, he's a 6-foot-3, 314-pound right guard.

"Undersized is an understatement," he said. "Our team played Chase Young. It wasn't like we were playing scrubs or anything."

Young, who went to DeMatha Catholic, was the No. 2 overall pick of the 2020 draft, selected by Washington. He made the Pro Bowl as a rookie defensive end.

“Really for me at that point, I wanted to play football, wanted to prove that I could be a good player,” Johnson recalled of his debut in the sport. “Being undersized, I just had to strain on every play and try not to give up a sack.”

Said Chargers coach Brandon Staley: “It’s one of those great stories of a guy that really worked at it, really developed his game. He worked at it, and here he is today.”

One of Johnson’s high school teammates was offensive tackle Christian Darrisaw, who was the No. 23 overall pick by Minnesota last year.

“He’s definitely someone who has pushed me throughout my career with his level of play,” Johnson said of Darrisaw. “I’ve always wanted to outdo him, kind of like a rival.”

The road to BC

Because he was a strong student, Johnson made it into Davidson, where he played for two seasons on a partial scholarship before money became an issue.

“There was a financial strain to my family that I didn’t want to happen anymore,” Johnson said.

So he entered the transfer portal and ended up at Boston College, he explained, because he liked the school’s academics and the football program’s history of developing offensive linemen.

In three seasons with the Eagles, Johnson grew from being a nice story of perseverance to the fifth offensive lineman selected Thursday.

Man of many languages

Johnson graduated from Boston College in 2020 with a degree in computer science and earned his master’s degree in cyber security last fall.

He said he does computer programming “in my spare time” and has coded in at least six languages.

“When you learn one language, it’s not that hard to learn a new one,” he said, “because there’s a lot of similarities and things you can pick up on after you learn your first one.”

SEBASTIAN JOSEPH-DAY

Sebastian Joseph-Day brings a load of experience to middle of Chargers' defense

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
March 17, 2022

Having had one of the worst run defenses in the NFL last season, the Chargers added what they believe will be 624 pounds of improvement this week.

Tackles Sebastian Joseph-Day and Austin Johnson agreed to free-agent contracts, both deals announced Wednesday when the new league year opened.

On Thursday, Joseph-Day met with the Chargers media for the first time.

Highlights from the day at the team's Costa Mesa headquarters:

A Rams redux? With the Chargers, Joseph-Day will reunite with Brandon Staley, who is now his head coach after serving as his defensive coordinator with the 2020 Rams.

Joseph-Day smiled widely — something he does often, by the way — when he recalled his first meeting with Staley. At the time, Joseph-Day was a relative unknown having not played during his first season in the NFL before starting 15 games in 2019.

The Rams' defensive front that season also had included, among others, Aaron Donald, Michael Brockers and Dante Fowler. Still, when he introduced himself to Staley, Joseph-Day said Staley told him, "I know who you are."

Staley then proceeded to praise Joseph-Day and tout him as someone on the verge of breaking through.

"Hearing that as a young player," Joseph-Day said, "that gave me a different kind of confidence."

Under Staley, Joseph-Day started all 16 games in 2020 and totaled career highs in tackles (55) and snaps (481). He was on his way to an even better season last year before suffering a pectoral injury in late October.

The defense rushes in: During the 2020 season, Joseph-Day had his best grades against the run and overall, according to Pro Football Focus. Last season, he was showing an improved pass rush — with a single-season best three sacks in only seven games — before getting hurt.

But he and Johnson were acquired to — first and foremost — upgrade the Chargers' run defense. Both players arrive with reputations as stout stuffers up front who have performed with some consistency.

Joseph-Day said that, along with being "strong" and "powerful at the point" and "heavy handed," in order to play the position well in Staley's scheme "you have to be intelligent, be able to read what you see, read formations ... stuff like that."

He said the lasting lesson from his previous experience under Staley was the importance of film study.

A year ago, in their first season running Staley's system, the Chargers struggled early on grasping and executing concepts. Joseph-Day will have no such issues when he joins his new teammates on the field.

Where does Tillery stand? Barring anything unforeseen, the defensive line in 2022 will include Jerry Tillery in some role. But Staley has indicated the Chargers aren't done adding help up front, so the circumstances remain unsettled.

On Thursday afternoon, they re-signed veteran defensive tackle Christian Covington, who had a career-high 52 tackles in 16 games as a rotational player last season.

The Chargers appear to be at least one defensive lineman short, with both Justin Jones and Linval Joseph free agents.

Tillery, a first-round pick in 2019, started 15 games last season and has 26 starts over the last two years. He has had his moments but overall has not distinguished himself. Tillery especially has lacked the sort of consistency NFL teams crave.

The intangibles: On Wednesday, Staley noted that Joseph-Day will bring a "spirit" that he said the Chargers lacked on defense in 2021. In his session with reporters, Joseph-Day practically oozed personality.

Asked specifically about the spirit to which Staley referred, Joseph-Day said: "I can't really explain it. It's just me being myself. I'm just a happy guy. I appreciate each day. ... You'll have to see, honestly. I can't really describe it."

About more than football: Joseph-Day called switching from one L.A. team to the other "a perfect mesh" since the transition will allow him to continue his off-field interests.

He is extensively involved in several charities and started a program called "Dine N Bash" that highlights and assists local restaurants. Joseph-Day also co-hosts a podcast with Mike Tyson.

"I obviously take pride in playing football and what-not," he said. "But I don't try to box myself in as that."

One more to go: Cornerback J.C. Jackson, the Chargers' biggest-ticket free agent, is scheduled to meet with reports Friday morning. He was undergoing his physical Thursday.

Jackson has agreed to terms on a five-year deal that guarantees him \$40 million and is worth up to \$82.5 million. That average annual value of \$16.5 million is tied for the fourth-highest among all free agents this year.

KHALIL MACK

How Khalil Mack's family helped him annihilate his 'soft' reputation

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
July 26, 2022

FORT PIERCE, Fla. — He could see the potential in all that mass and all those muscles, the physical promises so pronounced that the kid's high school coach begged his father to let him play.

Robert Wimberly knew Khalil Mack could fit in at Liberty University right away and maybe, if things went well, with two more years of development be ready for a larger football program.

Then a Liberty assistant, Wimberly was the only college coach who showed interest in Mack, a prospect left on the periphery because of a high school career that covered a single season.

The staff at Florida said Mack couldn't play in the Southeastern Conference. Miami's coaches expressed similar doubts about his Atlantic Coast Conference chances. Others questioned whether Mack was explosive enough or flexible enough.

A sport that values so highly what it can see on tape lacked sufficient evidence — just 12 games? — on Mack.

But Wimberly had seen enough of his 140 stops during that one fall at Westwood High to appreciate that, as a linebacker, he played with something all defensive coaches believe they can build upon: a solid base.

What Wimberly didn't realize until he sat down with Mack one night for dinner — along with Mack's parents and two brothers — was how impressive the kid's foundation was, as well.

"It was almost like the Huxtables, you know, on the 'The Cosby Show,' " Wimberly recalled. "There was sincere love among them. Everyone was genuinely excited for Khalil. Just a lot of love and respect in that household."

When the Chargers aimed to rebuild their defense this offseason, the first move was to trade for Mack, who came from Chicago in mid-March at the cost of two draft picks — a second-round selection in 2022 and a sixth-round selection in 2023.

With Mack now 31 and trying to rebound from a season in which he missed 10 games because of a foot injury, it is fair to wonder where the six-time Pro Bowl pick is heading.

But there can be no questioning where Mack came from, a former two-star recruit reared in a five-star home that as recently as last year gained even more glow.

"It's just all the grace of God," Mack's father, Sandy, said. "This couldn't be orchestrated. You couldn't write this. We don't take any credit for what God has done. That would be robbery."

The name "Khalil" came from one of Sandy's muscle magazines and proved prophetic when the baby boy debuted at nearly 11 pounds and with definition in his arms, legs and everywhere else.

This was a toddler with traps. Doctors were so concerned about Mack's size that they had him tested for diabetes.

"He came out with quads," Sandy said. "Big shoulders. Big legs. Right away I thought, 'This boy's different.' "

Sandy and his wife, Yolanda, were high school sweethearts at Fort Pierce's Central High. They were married in the cafeteria of another school nearby, Lincoln Park Academy, where Yolanda's mother worked.

Having lost his father at an early age, Sandy never had the chance to play high school sports despite his own muscular, athletic frame. He and twin brother Sammie Jr. had to work instead.

"Mom told us," Sandy explained, " 'You can either play sports or you can eat.' "

As an adult, he became a corrections officer at the St. Lucie County Jail, and, concerned with protecting himself, Sandy began working out at a local gym. He and Sammie Jr. soon were battling to see who could get bigger.

That's the way it was with these twins, who competed against each other with the intensity of worst enemies or best friends.

And that's also how it was for Sandy's three sons — Sandy Jr., Khalil and Ledarius. As the oldest brother, Sandy Jr. loved challenging Khalil, the quietest of the Mack boys. So did Dad.

Years later and still today, observers marvel at Mack's ability to go from talking soft to hitting hard in the time it takes to stride across the white lines that define a football field.

"Between Sandy Jr. and I, we used to put it on him pretty good," Sandy, 57, said. "Khalil got it from both of us. You better throw a switch in that situation because crying's not going to work."

He took it, but Mack also gave it back. Sandy recalled more than once having to halt a backyard basketball game to remind Mack that Dad had to go to work in the morning and he'd prefer to do so without multiple bruises. Yolanda's half of the family is where the quiet comes from. Mack loved spending time with his maternal grandfather, Alfred Booker, the two bonding after Booker would pick him up from school.

"He has a personality like my dad — real laid back, no worries," Yolanda said. "Khalil is just Khalil, you know. He was kind of a homebody."

"Boring and focused" is how Mack has described himself when he was growing up, those qualities leading some people around the family to question his toughness. The doubters included a cousin who used to call Mack "soft."

The fact he wasn't especially drawn to football added to the notion that a kid who would become a three-time NFL All-Pro and quarterback terrorizer somehow lacked sufficient aggression.

"He just never really wanted to play the sport," Sandy said. "But I'd tell people all the time, 'If I get him off this leash, you'll see.' "

When he was 12, Mack decided to give organized football a shot. First, though, he and his father had a discussion.

"I sat him down and told him, 'OK, these guys are saying you're soft,' " Sandy remembered. " 'The first guy you hit out there, I don't want him to get up.' That was my little pep talk."

To understand how things went from there, it's not inaccurate to report that Mack put the pop in Pop Warner. Early in his first game, Sandy recalled, Mack caused a violent collision near the sidelines after appearing only as a blur.

"I didn't even know it was Khalil," Sandy said. "People were saying, 'Mack, that's your son!' I was like, 'Yeah!' While I was celebrating, I didn't see the paramedics coming to get the other guy. I didn't know Khalil was going to do it for real. The kid had to go to the hospital. I felt kind of guilty about that."

Still, Mack, more interested in basketball, wouldn't play football again until late in high school, during the spring before his senior year. By then, a torn patella tendon had sidetracked his hoops plans and, while rehabbing from the injury, Mack had thrown himself into weight lifting, first asking to join his father at the gym and later insisting on it.

At the time, Sandy had concerns about his son's academic standing, particularly Mack's struggles with math. Admitting he hadn't been a great student, Sandy said he understood the difficulties in falling behind in school.

Sandy also had worked at a juvenile detention center and was aware of the dangers that lurked for teenagers, especially outside a structured life. He figured the military might be Khalil's best chance to get out of Fort Pierce.

But one day at work, Sandy's phone rang and it was Westwood High's new coach, a man named Waides Ashmon, who had just pulled Mack out of class to talk to him about playing football again. Mack's response: "You need to talk to my dad."

"I called and said, 'Mr. Mack, I've been doing this a long time,' " Ashmon said. " 'I've never guaranteed a parent that their kid's gonna go to school. But if you allow Khalil to play for me, I promise you he'll go to school free.' "

Ashmon was so certain of Mack's potential that he made the assurance even after glimpsing Mack only in a collared shirt and shorts. He figured that physique alone would be too enticing to college coaches.

The conversation — and enclosed guarantee of a continued, free education — convinced Sandy, who agreed by the end of the call to allow his son to return to football.

With that decision, Mack went into full pursuit, this player who later would become famous for his ability to chase down quarterbacks.

In one of his first practices that spring, Mack proved he could do more than just look as if he belonged. With Yolanda waiting in the parking lot to take her son to a class at a nearby community college, Westwood's coaches told Mack to go first during a tackling drill.

"Khalil beat the block and smacked the running back and it was like, 'Oh, you're done. Go to class, kid,'" said Jabari Williams, then a Westwood assistant. "It took just one hit. After that, we knew we had ourselves something."

Yet, Mack was regarded as only the third-best prospect on a team that would finish 10-2. Defensive lineman Luther Robinson, who went to Miami and eventually to the Green Bay Packers, and quarterback Isaac Virgin, who played at South Florida as a tight end, were ranked ahead of him.

As much as the Westwood staff promoted Mack — Williams: "We were begging schools to take him." — the pleas went unheard.

"I was like, 'What are y'all ... we can't be watching the same film,'" Ashmon said. "But I also knew Khalil's work ethic and how with college coaching he would get a lot better."

Mack's lone offer came from Liberty, which is where he was headed until Wimberly left to take a job at Buffalo. Mack followed him, receiving the full-ride Ashmon had promised Sandy.

That summer and into training camp, Wimberly remembers the Bulls' coaches debating about whether to play Mack or redshirt him. Asked his opinion, Wimberly sided with redshirting, noting that Mack, with more experience, could be "super special."

Buffalo did redshirt him, slowing the start of Mack's college career but hardly the beginning of his rapid growth. Actually playing wasn't a requirement to show he could make plays.

One day, a reporter from upstate New York called Sandy with a question:

"Mr. Mack, do you know what your son is up here doing?"

"No. No I don't."

"Your son's doing some things we've never seen before."

"Really?"

"Mr. Mack, I think your son is going to be something real special here at Buffalo."

Wrecking practices, that's what Mack was doing, to the point where Wimberly said he was asked more than once by a fellow Buffalo assistant, "Wimbo, can you talk to him, please?"

Mack was leaving impressions — the black-and-blue kind, and others much more permanent.

Sandy took another call from Buffalo one afternoon. This time, it was an assistant coach telling him his son was doing something the coach had never seen before: Mack was cleaning the locker room.

When his boys were young, Sandy would bring them along anytime he would do volunteer work in and around Fort Pierce. "Because it's just the right thing to do," he said he'd tell them if they asked why they had to go.

Today, Mack is widely recognized for giving back. His foundation made a \$500,000 donation to a Fort Pierce park that now includes a football field bearing Mack's name.

Westwood needed football uniforms a few years back and, the school's athletic director said, Sandy wrote a \$20,000 check. Just a couple weeks ago, a box full of several pairs of cleats showed up unannounced at Westwood, compliments of Mack, who also has done things such as pay off all the layaway bills at the local Walmart around Christmastime.

"It's a family thing," Ashmon said. "Khalil's mimicking his dad. His dad was giving back way before Khalil became Khalil."

After he signed his first NFL contract, Mack bought his parents a home in nearby Vero Beach. He also paid off his dad's truck.

The BMW and Mercedes in the driveway of that Vero Beach house came from Mack, who has rewarded some of the younger members of the extended household with cars in exchange for maintaining their grades.

This is a family anchored in its faith and its church, Sandy and Yolanda both deacons at the Miracle Prayer Temple Worship Center. They all love music and have been part of the church band. Sandy has written and recorded gospel songs.

Mack can sing, too, and also taught himself to play the guitar while in college. Sandy thought he was the best piano player in the family until Ledarius came along.

As the church's music director, Sandy would arrange songs so that the Macks could sing four-part harmony. They still can do it, on cue, which happened recently when the boys were back together.

So, when that Buffalo assistant called with the news that Mack was picking up his teammates' trash, Sandy said the words came wrapped in reassurance.

"That made me feel like, 'Wow, he got it,'" Sandy said. "For me to get a call from somebody way up in Buffalo to tell me that made me think Khalil's going to be OK."

OK, plus plenty more. With the Bulls, Mack would develop into a freakish force — one capable of lifting offensive linemen off the ground one-handed — and easily the greatest player in program history.

As a senior, he had 2½ sacks, nine tackles and an interception for touchdown against Ohio State in the game that cemented Mack's status as an NFL prospect and a Bulls legend.

"Buffalo plays in the MAC," Sandy said. "It can't be coincidence that that happened. I told him, 'Khalil, they're spelling Mack wrong. Make sure they know how to spell Mack before you leave.' And that's what he did."

(Five years after Khalil left Buffalo, Ledarius joined the Bulls' football program for two seasons. He debuted in the NFL last year, appearing in three games for the Bears. How rich is the athletic DNA in this family? Ledarius attended a high school — Lincoln Park Academy — that didn't have a football team and then went to a small college in Miami to play basketball before giving football a try.)

The story goes that in the lead-up to that 2013 season opener in Columbus, then-Buckeyes coach Urban Meyer was talking about Mack when, suddenly forgetting his name, referred to him as "No. 46."

After Ohio State's 40-20 victory, Mack approached Meyer, extended his right hand and introduced himself.

Longtime coach Lou Tepper was Buffalo's defensive coordinator during that time. He spent nearly a half-century in football and literally wrote the book on linebacker play, putting Mack on the cover of the second edition of "Complete Linebacking."

To grasp the totality of Mack's impact, though, consider that Tepper, to this day, texts Mack a Bible verse every Saturday morning and speaks of him with a reverence rooted in nothing having to do with football.

"I love him," Tepper said, "and if he had never played a down in the NFL, if he had never been drafted, I wouldn't love him any differently."

So what's left? Just this: Remember that line about the five-star home gaining more glow? In June of 2021, Sandy and Yolanda heard from a man named Jalen Parmele, who, using one of those ancestry programs, discovered he was a Mack boy, as well. The original Mack boy.

Sandy and Yolanda had a son before Sandy Jr. arrived. At the time, they both thought they were too young to properly handle the responsibility, so they put the baby up for adoption.

Parmele grew up in Michigan to be a football player and made the NFL, a running back who spent parts of five seasons with Baltimore, Jacksonville and Arizona.

A month after Parmele reached out to the Macks, everyone reunited in Florida for a genuine Sunshine State celebration. They filled in the gaps of their life stories and shot selfies, embracing a previously unknown family chapter.

Sandy smiled when he pointed out that Parmele played in college at Toledo, which is in the same conference as Buffalo. That's right, another Mack in the MAC.

"I'm telling you, you couldn't orchestrate this," Sandy said. "No way. This was orchestrated at a higher level."

How the Bears and Chargers became perfect trade partners for Khalil Mack

By Daniel Popper & Kevin Fishbain
The Athletic
March 31, 2022

The Chargers introduced Brandon Staley as their new head coach on Jan. 21, 2021. Speaking to reporters on a video call from the team's facility in Orange County, Staley knew a long process awaited.

Roster turnover is a painstaking, meticulous process. Staley was inheriting a talented collection of players, led by emerging superstar quarterback Justin Herbert. He had a clear vision of where he wanted to go and what he needed to get there. But it was going to take time and patience.

"You know that you got to do things in a sequence," Staley said earlier this month. "It's not college, where you can recruit and turn things over and just have everything at once."

That sequence had to begin with creating the best possible structure for Herbert, from the coaching staff down to the supporting cast of players. So in that first offseason, Staley and general manager Tom Telesco invested in that structure — step one in what Staley has referred to as a "two-year vision." The offensive line was a mess. They bolstered that group through free agency and the draft. They added weapons and a veteran backup quarterback in Chase Daniel, who was familiar with new offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi's scheme from their time together in New Orleans.

The structure they built worked. Herbert excelled. The Chargers had a top-five offense. But they missed the playoffs, primarily because Staley's defense did not coalesce or perform as expected.

And that brings us to the second step in Staley's roster-turnover plan. This offseason was always going to be the time to overhaul the defense and rebuild that side of the ball with players that truly fit Staley's vision.

They needed playmakers. They needed more elite talent that could help take Staley's system — a system that, with the right players, proved to be one of the best and most innovative in football with the Rams in 2020 — and make it come alive on the field.

There was a player who could be available via trade, the type of edge rusher who the Chargers felt could improve all of the defense's weaknesses and provide the pedigree, standard of performance and mentality that could reshape the unit's identity: Khalil Mack.

Meanwhile in Chicago, Ryan Poles took over a franchise that had gone from 12-4 with the best defense in football — led by Mack — in 2018 to 6-11 last season, firing both general manager Ryan Pace and head coach Matt Nagy.

The Bears' roster is nowhere near Super Bowl-caliber, and as Poles hopes the Bears have a quarterback in Justin Fields to build around like the Chargers do in Herbert, the process of doing so required tough decisions, such as potentially moving the highest-paid player in franchise history.

Teams had begun to inquire, and the more calls Poles received, the more the 37-year-old, first-time GM realized that trading Mack was a possibility. It would signal the start of a roster makeover and could get the Bears some badly needed draft capital.

Mack had arguably the best season of his career with the Bears in 2018 when Staley was his position coach under then-defensive coordinator Vic Fangio. Staley was determined to push for Mack. Telesco, who has always listened to his head coaches and tried to provide them with the tools they need, was on board. With Herbert on a rookie deal and a championship window clearly open, owner Dean Spanos and president of football operations John Spanos were in lockstep with their coach and general manager.

"It showed the alignment of our organization, starting with Dean and John Spanos, starting with the Spanos family," Staley said. "Because that's where it begins: with leadership."

A similar sense of agreement was taking place in Chicago.

"There was buy-in from (head coach) Matt (Eberflus), from ownership, from everyone," Poles said. "They understood that it was the right move at the right time."

The Chargers possessed the cap space to take on Mack's initial \$17.75 million cap hit. But they were not going to overpay in draft capital. It is doubtful the Chargers would have made the deal if the Bears and Poles had demanded a first-round pick in return. But a 2022 second-round pick? That was a sweet spot.

"Any time that you're going to get involved in a move like that, there are very few players that you're going to do that for," Staley said. "That list is not very long, and so when you assess, OK, this player — doesn't matter what position — hey, this is what we think that he's worth. The Khalil trade, that's representative of that. We feel like that was really good value for a player of his caliber."

The final price: A 2022 second-round pick and a 2023 sixth-round pick.

"We made a trade that we felt like really added a premium player to our team, but without it mortgaging our future," Staley said.

Poles' familiarity with the star pass rusher came predominantly when the two were both in the AFC West — Poles in the personnel department with the Chiefs and Mack as an NFL Defensive Player of the Year with the Raiders.

He'd have to have a tough conversation with a player he never acquired in the first place — part of the gig for a new GM.

Poles didn't necessarily owe Mack anything, but he understood the magnitude of the trade and what Mack meant to the Bears.

When it became time to make a trade, Poles called Mack to tell him that he wanted to put the player in a good situation. Poles considered everything about the situation he'd send Mack to, including how a warm-weather team would benefit the 31-year old at this time in his career.

"The big thing was just letting him know how much the organization appreciated him, how much I appreciated his career," Poles said. "I think the world of him. But also to let him know that it's best for the club that we go in different directions. But I took the time to let him know that I was going to make sure that he was going to be put in a situation that was going to be good for him, where he could compete."

Poles probably wasn't going to get pushback from Mack, who moves from a team in transition with a new coaching staff to a team with Super Bowl aspirations in Los Angeles for his former position coach. Trading for Mack was a seminal moment for the Bears in the past decade, but moving him signaled a change, and that might have been a tough decision for George McCaskey to give the OK.

In the new power structure at Halas Hall, Poles reports directly to the team's chairman, and McCaskey is nothing if not a die-hard Bears fan.

"Well, Khalil is a great player," McCaskey said. "And showed on many occasions for us how he can take over a game, so when you have a player like that, you want to have a good discussion. (Poles) explained to me the reasons why he thought the Bears should do it and it made sense to me."

Trading the highest-paid player in Bears history wasn't an easy decision for new head coach Matt Eberflus, left, and general manager Ryan Poles. (Nam Y. Huh / Associated Press)

Another important person in the organization who might have had to be sold? Eberflus. Imagine being a new head coach, one with a defensive background, and getting the opportunity to work with a player like Mack, only to see him traded less than two months into the job. But Eberflus understands the business, and what Poles is trying to build.

"Yeah I mean, Khalil has had a great career," Eberflus said. "He's going to continue to do well and do a lot of good things in the future. But we just thought what was best for the organization going forward, looking at the whole piece of it, you know, the contract, looking at everything. Going forward for us, the club, it was the best move for us. We all signed off on it. It will be good for us in the long run."

Poles had everyone on the same page, but he still called the move one of the hardest moments of his first two months on the job.

This wasn't just any trade, and Poles didn't treat it that way, starting with his call to Mack.

"I wasn't going to send him somewhere that he wasn't happy," Poles said. "I wanted to make sure he knew that I cared and I wanted to put him in a good situation. I think he really appreciated that. I know the agent appreciated that. It's really ... I think a win-win for Khalil, the Chargers and the Bears in terms of the direction that we're all going. (But) that was a hard thing to do to move on from a guy like that."

Mack was at home watching the new Peacock drama “Bel-Air” — a re-imagining of Will Smith’s classic ‘90s sitcom “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” — with his fiancée, rapper and actress Brianna Perry, and his infant son, Deuce, when his phone rang.

It was his agent, Joel Segal, and there was some news to share.

Like the main character in the show, Mack would be making an unexpected move to Los Angeles.

“Kind of a strange coincidence,” Mack said.

The Chargers had traded for him, and Mack would be reuniting with Staley.

Mack said he went through a range of emotions after hearing the news. But he settled on a positive note because of that familiarity with Staley.

“It was weird to hear,” Mack said of his initial thoughts. “But understanding the team and the coach, having a relationship with Coach Staley and knowing his mindset and knowing his passion for the game, it went from bittersweet to kind of excited; knowing who I’m dealing with — the type of man he is, first and foremost — and how much he truly loves the game of football. You can feel it whenever you speak to him.”

Staley did not have to ride the same emotional roller coaster.

The negotiations had progressed quickly. Staley said Telesco and Poles first connected around the NFL combine in early March. After the two sides agreed to terms on March 10, Telesco walked to Staley’s office and told his head coach that the trade was happening.

The only feeling for Staley: Elation.

“Tom came down to my office and (was) pretty casual,” Staley said. “He acted like he’d been there before.”

Telesco, though, had not been here before. In his previous nine years as general manager, Telesco had traded picks for a player only twice — a conditional seventh-round pick for defensive tackle Sean Lissemore in 2013 and a conditional seventh-round pick for quarterback Cardale Jones in 2017.

This was new territory for the organization. And it is evidence, more than anything else, of where the Chargers stand entering 2022.

They traded for Mack. They signed the top cornerback on the market in J.C. Jackson.

The time to win is now.

“You partner up with a GM who believes in what you do, and you have a vision for how you’re going to build a team and what you need,” Staley said. “And so it was just exciting to see it all come together.”

Based on Poles’ moves and focus on the long-term view, it’s evident how he evaluated this roster. But he said he didn’t take the job thinking, “I’m going to trade Khalil Mack.” The volume of calls made it a reality.

The move, however, tracks with his plan. That’s not to say it will ultimately prove to be the right plan or the correct approach — a lot of that will depend on Fields and how the Bears use their draft picks, then what they do with their extra resources in 2023 — but moving a player like Mack to get a second-round pick signaled the start of the strategy.

“To me, it kind of just kicked it off in terms of executing our plan to be successful and to get this roster to where it needs to be,” Poles said. “But it was definitely mixed emotions because it’s a guy who’s a good football player. I know what he’s meant to this organization. I remember that night game when he first got to Chicago, it was incredible.

“That’s a tough player to move on from, but again, when you know what you need to do for the betterment of the club, it was like, let’s go, the clock has started. We’ve got to move and do what we can to improve the roster.”

Poles said they took a look at analytics, Mack’s age, his playing time, and then the timing element — when could they get the best compensation for Mack?

“If you wait, what does that look like? If you do it now, what does it look like?” Poles said. “And we just thought, right now it would allow the Bears to have more ammunition to add more players.”

From his first day at Halas Hall, Poles noted the low number of draft picks the Bears had in 2022 — only five, in part because of the Fields trade. That’s a difficult foundation for a GM who wants to infuse the roster with young talent and ultimately try to build through the draft.

The Mack trade might have added only one more pick to the 2022 Bears haul, but it’s a significant one, as it’s in the top 50.

“It was just looking at our future,” Poles said. “It was looking at where we needed to go. Again, the (number of) picks were low. And like I mentioned, using the different tools, analytics, everything, it just seemed like the right time to do it in terms of value where we can help this team out now and in the future.”

Mack has still been a dominant player ... when healthy. That durability question mark, his age and his cap hit are all going to be viewed through the prism of the team’s direction. While the Chargers believe they acquired someone who gets them closer to a Super Bowl, the Bears believe this move gets them closer to where they want to be as well with the extra draft picks and cap flexibility for a franchise that was not going to contend in 2022.

Staley is a defensive coach. Yet the priority in his first head-coaching gig was elevating Herbert and ensuring his continued growth and development.

“We had to get that right,” Staley, who played quarterback in college, said in January.

That started with protection. The Chargers signed three starters in free agency — All-Pro center Corey Linsley and guards Matt Feiler and Oday Aboushi — and drafted a franchise left tackle in the first round in Rashawn Slater. They added two more offensive players in the top 100 of the draft in wide receiver Joshua Palmer and tight end Tre’ McKitty. They signed tight end Jared Cook, who also played under Lombardi with the Saints, and Daniel. The Chargers hired Lombardi from the Saints, where he was Sean Payton’s longtime quarterbacks coach, and he brought a version of that New Orleans passing offense to Los Angeles.

The vision for the structure around Herbert turned into production. The Chargers finished fourth in both TruMedia’s offensive EPA/play and Football Outsiders’ offensive DVOA. Herbert passed for more than 5,000 yards and finished third in the league in QBR.

The defense, though, struggled.

The Chargers had one of the worst defenses in football in 2021. They finished 28th in EPA/play and 26th in DVOA. They could not stop the run consistently. They could not get off the field on third down. They did not generate enough pressure on the quarterback. They did not force enough turnovers.

Their Week 18 loss to the Raiders provided the final evidence that the Chargers needed to shore up their defense in 2022. (Stephen R. Sylvania / USA Today)

The Chargers had built an offense for Herbert. Now they needed a defense that could take some of the pressure off his shoulders. Herbert can keep the Chargers in games almost single-handedly. He put together one of the most remarkable comebacks in recent NFL history in Week 18 against the Raiders in Las Vegas with a heroic three-drive stretch in the fourth quarter and overtime of that season-ending loss. Herbert is capable of doing those things, but that does not mean the Chargers want to live in that world.

“It’s not just enough to outscore people in this league, because there’s going to be a game where you don’t shoot it well, and you’ve got to win in a lot of different ways in this league,” Staley said. “When you have a quarterback, it’s not just surrounding him with offensive weapons. It’s surrounding him with a complete team where the pressure isn’t on him every single game to score 35, to throw for 350, to bring you back. And I think that’s what we’re trying to do.”

The Chargers had several key defensive players hitting free agency: edge rusher Uchenna Nwosu, linebacker Kyzir White, defensive lineman Justin Jones, nickel corner Chris Harris Jr. and defensive lineman Linval Joseph. That meant a boatload of cap space and open starting positions at all three levels of the defense.

Mack was the first piece in reassembling that defensive puzzle. The team was initially interested in re-signing Nwosu as its second edge rusher opposite Joey Bosa, but then the Mack trade materialized. It was no longer financially feasible to bring back the 2018 second-round pick. Nwosu ended up signing a two-year, \$19.055 million deal with the Seahawks.

In Mack, the Chargers believe they have added a player who can affect all facets of their defense, tangible and intangible. His edge-rushing prowess is well documented. But he is also an outstanding run defender, and, along with the interior additions of Sebastian Joseph-Day and Austin Johnson, the Chargers are expecting significant improvements in that area.

“He brings a lot of the elements that our team needs right now,” Staley said. “He brings the play style that we really value, that toughness. He’s a complete player. I think that from a culture standpoint, we really wanted to have somebody join up with Derwin James up front. Derwin plays in the secondary, he’s our signal caller, but someone up front that can really maximize him.”

Mack is coming off a foot injury that limited him to seven games last season. But the Chargers are confident that he has good football left in him. Part of that confidence is embedded in Staley’s existing relationship with Mack.

When Mack was traded to the Bears in 2018, he arrived in Chicago less than a week before the season opener against the Packers. Staley, then the Bears outside linebackers coach, spent hours and hours with Mack, late into the night sometimes, teaching his new star player the complex Fangio playbook.

Staley got Mack ready to play, and Mack had a strip-sack, a fumble recovery and a pick-six — in the first half.

“I don’t think y’all understand how fast I really had to learn a whole defensive playbook,” Mack said, “and he made it easy.”

Staley now has a full offseason to integrate Mack into his Chargers defense.

“You’re not envisioning the fit or projecting the fit. You know the fit,” Staley said. “You know exactly how to use that player, so the ramp-up time is going to be very short with that guy.”

The Chargers still have 10 picks in April’s draft after trading for Mack. That additional capital made parting with the second-rounder more palatable.

“You’re trading for one of the best players in the game, and you know exactly what you’re getting,” Staley said. “The cost was very minimal for a player of his caliber. I think it was an excellent trade.”

In a month that saw Russell Wilson, Deshaun Watson, Carson Wentz, Matt Ryan, Davante Adams and Tyreek Hill change teams, the Mack trade took a back seat. It is an offense-first league, after all.

But Mack himself has become the symbol of the direction of a team in two separate offseasons.

Nearly four years ago, the Raiders moved Mack to a Bears team that saw an opportunity to win in 2018, and he led them to a 12-4 record while his former team hoped to take advantage of its extra draft picks.

Then near the start of the 2022 league year, a Chargers team that sees its Super Bowl window as right now made the move for Mack, while the Bears hope to make the best of their additional draft picks, as they are now the team in transition.

Before the 2019 draft, Pace quipped that when the Raiders were on the clock for the first-round pick they received from the Bears, the personnel department would turn on a highlight reel of Mack’s first season in Chicago. At that time, the Bears still had high expectations, and Mack was a major part of it. He had 12 1/2 sacks and six forced fumbles. He was the centerpiece of the league’s best defense.

When the Bears are on the clock at No. 48, maybe Telesco and Staley will flip on clips of Mack, and let their minds wander as to what he can mean to the 2022 Chargers. And maybe in Lake Forest, Ill., Poles will let his mind wander with that pick, and whatever he does with it, hoping it will help get the Bears to be where the Chargers are.

It’s the right move at the right time for both teams, using different roster-building strategies. But the Chargers get to reap the rewards of their side of the deal much more quickly. The Bears understand that. This is part of their plan.

Mack hears the doubters. He is aware of what he calls “the narrative” — that he has lost a step, that he is not the same player.

“Turn on the TV. You’ll hear what they’re saying,” Mack said. “And it’s like, OK, bet. You know what I mean? I’ll bet on myself any day.”

The Chargers bet on him, too. This is their big swing. And if the Chargers want to win a Lombardi Trophy in the 2022 season, then all parties involved — from Mack, to Staley, to Telesco, to the Spanos family — need those bets to cash.

“If people are saying that, then they certainly don’t know him. At all,” Staley said. “And if they are saying that, then good luck to them. Because you’ll see. You’ll see.”

New Chargers defender Mack happy to be reunited with Staley

By Joe Reedy
Associated Press
March 16, 2022

COSTA MESA, Calif. (AP) — Khalil Mack was watching the television show “Bel-Air” with his fiancée and son last Thursday when he got a call from his agent that the Chicago Bears were trading him. In a strange coincidence, Mack’s new team is close to the real Bel Air.

Mack met with reporters on Wednesday after his trade to the Los Angeles Chargers became official with the start of the new league year. The Chargers sent a second-round pick this year and a 2023 sixth-round selection to the Bears for one of the league’s top pass rushers and a three-time All-Pro defender.

“It was weird to hear, but having a relationship with coach (Brandon) Staley, it went from bittersweet to excited, knowing who I’m dealing with and how much he truly loves football,” Mack said.

Staley was Mack’s linebacker coach when the Bears acquired Mack from the Raiders during the 2018 preseason. Staley was in Chicago for only one season before going to Denver when Vic Fangio was hired as Broncos coach.

Staley is hoping this reunion with Mack lasts longer.

“I’m excited for him to be around our team and build a team with him (on the roster),” Staley said. “It was an amazing year in Chicago, but that didn’t last long enough. To be able to do it again is very special, and I’m excited about it for sure.”

Mack, who turned 31 on Feb. 22, will be going into his ninth NFL season. He was the fifth overall pick by the Raiders in the 2014 draft and was The Associated Press Defensive Player of the Year in 2016. He was traded to the Bears after a contract dispute.

Chicago opted to clean house after going 6-11 last season. It fired general manager Ryan Pace and coach Matt Nagy — who were both instrumental in acquiring Mack — replacing them with Ryan Poles and Matt Eberflus.

Mack got off to a good start last season with six sacks in seven games before being placed on season-ending injured reserve in November and undergoing foot surgery.

Mack said he didn’t hear from Poles until after his agent, Joel Segal, informed him about the trade. Mack did acknowledge the possibility of being traded entered his mind.

Staley said conversations might have started during the NFL scouting combine two weeks ago and that the deal came together quickly after that.

“The cost was very minimum for a player of his caliber. I think it was excellent,” Staley said. “We know everything about this guy. and what he’s bringing to your team. And, you know, vice versa.”

The Chargers get an established playmaker who can not only rush the passer but effectively stops the run. Last season, Los Angeles was 9-8 but missed the playoffs with losses in three of the final four games.

Staley brought in an attacking 3-4 scheme that made the Rams the top-ranked unit in 2020, but he didn't get the same results with the Chargers, who were 23rd in total defense and third worst against the run.

The 138.9 yards per game allowed on the ground were the worst by a Chargers defense since 2003.

Mack is the first move in an overhaul of the defense. Los Angeles has also added cornerback J.C. Jackson and defensive linemen Sebastian Jones-Day and Austin Johnson.

"He brings the playmaking ability and style of play that we believe in," said Staley about Mack. "I don't think we had enough of that last year, not even close. He's a dominant, complete defender."

Mack will be paired with Joey Bosa to form one of the AFC's top pass-rushing duos, which is critical in a division with Kansas City's Patrick Mahomes, Denver's Russell Wilson, and Las Vegas' Derek Carr facing LA twice a year.

"I've been watching Joey from afar since his rookie year. And that guy has been flying off the ball," Mack said. "It's special to see him. I could keep going on and on about this guy. It's understanding what we're going to do. It's a big picture. I just can't wait."

Los Angeles also announced Wednesday it agreed to a contract with long snapper Josh Harris.

Chargers coach Brandon Staley, linebacker Khalil Mack were a dynamic duo before

*By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
March 17, 2022*

The remaking of the Chargers defense took its most tangible step forward yet Wednesday when Khalil Mack was introduced at a news conference.

The Chargers traded last week for the three-time All-Pro edge rusher, bringing him in to help upgrade a unit that was the team's shortcoming last season. They also signed three young veteran defenders in free agency: cornerback J.C. Jackson and interior linemen Sebastian Joseph-Day and Austin Johnson. That trio will speak over the next two days.

Mack was first to go. Here are the highlights of the day from the Chargers' Costa Mesa training facility:

Hard-hitter in more ways than one: The Chargers are looking for Mack to make an impact that can be accurately described as profound. Head coach Brandon Staley has seen it before.

Staley was coaching the outside linebackers in Chicago when the Bears acquired Mack from Oakland just before the start of the 2018 season.

"When he got to Chicago, our entire team changed," Staley said. "We were a top-10 defense. ... When he got there, we became the No. 1 defense. We had a good defense. When he came, we became the best defense."

Staley explained that Mack will affect the Chargers both on and off the field, saying he can change cultures as much as he can games "because of who he is on a day-to-day basis."

"He's not one of these guys that's going to tell you something," Staley said. "He's going to show you. And you feel that right away."

Indeed, Mack called himself "an action guy" and "not a talker." Staley suggested the Chargers' lacked enough of that type of presence on defense last season. It was notable that Staley also referenced his desire to pair Mack with safety Derwin James Jr., the widely acknowledged heart of the defense. This is a partnership upon which the Chargers will lean in 2022.

Sacks and a whole lot more: On the field, Staley said Mack's impact should be easy to spot. He talked about his consistency, durability and toughness.

"He also brings a style of play that we really believe in," Staley said. "I don't think we had enough of it [in 2021]. Not even close."

The Chargers struggled last season particularly against the run and on third down. They gave up an average of 138.9 yards on the ground, one the worst single-season performances in franchise history. Their season — and playoff chances — ended in the most fitting of ways when they failed to prevent Las Vegas from converting on a third-down run in overtime in Week 18 and lost on the field goal that followed.

Staley said Mack's 76.5 career sacks tell only part of story of how Mack impacts offenses, which is especially important for the Chargers. "Complete defender because he can do everything," Staley said. "He can dominate the edge in the run game, which is where it starts. He's athletic on his feet to be able to run and catch anybody."

Staley explained that the ability of edge rushers to move is vital in today's NFL with "the ball on the perimeter as much as it is." This was another area where the 2021 Chargers no doubt lacked.

A player-coach reunion: Mack almost certainly wouldn't be a Charger without Staley also being here. Their relationship is rooted in the long hours they spent together after Mack joined the Bears in early September 2018. Following the trade, Mack had barely a week to prepare for Chicago's opener against Green Bay.

"He made it easy," Mack said. "You could see his passion through it, understanding he knew how much I wanted to get out there for that first game, and we were able to do it."

Against the Packers, Mack had a sack, a forced fumble, a fumble recovery and an interception, one he returned 27 yards for a touchdown. How's that for instant impact? The time together for Mack and Staley was brief, Staley leaving after the '18 season to join Vic Fangio's staff in Denver. "It was bittersweet in Chicago," Staley said. "It was an amazing year. All these great things are happening. But then it was like, 'Man, that didn't last long enough.' To be able to go do it again, is very special."

Healthy and motivated: Mack said his surgically repaired foot is "100%, good to go, whatever you want to hear." He missed the final 10 games last season after being injured in late October. Before going down, Mack had six sacks, which represented a single-season career-best pace. He hasn't reached double figures in sacks since that '18 season when he finished with 12½.

Mack, 31, suggested he has heard rumblings about his fading production. He dismissed the notion by saying, "I'll bet on myself any day."

"If people are saying that, then they certainly don't know him at all," Staley said. "And if they are saying that, then good luck to them. Because you'll see. You'll see."

Added Mack: "It's going to be fun. I know ya'll going to enjoy watching it for sure."

More defensive help on the way: The roster rebuild will continue, Staley saying the work is far from complete.

Even with the addition of Jackson, he said the search for defensive backs won't stop. As for the defensive front, Staley said there would be more to come. "We're much closer to where we need to be," he said. "We're not there yet. But we're much closer. ... It's about depth in this league."

Specialist added: The Chargers signed long snapper Josh Harris to a contract that guarantees him \$1.92 million. He spent the last 10 seasons with Atlanta and made the Pro Bowl in 2021.

KENNETH MURRAY JR.

Los Angeles Chargers' Kenneth Murray Jr. playing with heavy heart in aftermath of brother's death

By Shelley Smith
ESPN.com
October 4, 2021

COSTA MESA, Calif. -- You can hear the sadness in his voice. It's not outwardly noticeable if you didn't know to look for it, but it's there -- the kind of sadness you would never wish on anyone.

Los Angeles Chargers linebacker Kenneth Murray Jr. is a 6-foot-2, 241-pound chiseled athlete who cares passionately about the game of football. He also cares passionately about his family, especially his adopted siblings, all of whom have a chromosomal abnormality known as deletion.

His father, a Baptist minister, and his mother, a retired police officer, learned of the children from his church congregation and took them in when Murray was 11. And when their middle son, the one he was closest to, Lenny, died unexpectedly in April on what would have been his 14th birthday, Murray was devastated.

Murray had pledged to take care of the kids if something happened to his parents. But nobody expected something like this to happen to one of the children.

"One day I was doing something with football and I got a phone call and I kind of had to drop everything and jump on a flight and go through that," he said. "Since then I've just kind of stayed to myself."

He took to Twitter to process his grief:

Not wanting to divulge more details, all Murray would say about Lenny's death is that it was "like a bad nightmare," and something he tries not to think about.

"It's too hurtful to do in the media," he explained simply.

The children, Niya, Lenny and James, were born with deletion, a condition in which part of a chromosome is missing crucial genetic material. Lenny was the most severely affected and used a wheelchair. He was also Murray's biggest fan.

"He was super enthusiastic about coming to the games," Murray said. "That's what makes it such a sore spot for me."

The family would often make the seven-hour drive from their home in Missouri City, Texas, up to Norman, Oklahoma, where Murray played for the Sooners. He started at linebacker for three years and racked up 334 tackles and 9.5 sacks. His biggest year came as a sophomore in 2018, when he had 155 tackles, including a school record 28 in an overtime win over Army.

Murray was co-Big 12 defensive freshman of the year in 2017 and second-team all-conference in 2018 before being a first-team All-Big 12 and third-team All-America pick in 2019. His work ethic was legendary. He'd often watch five to six hours of film a day early in the morning before class. And when he was selected in the first round of the 2020 draft by the Chargers with the No. 23 pick, his entire family was with him as GM Tom Telesco made the call that would change his football life.

He's carried his work ethic with him to the NFL, where he had 107 tackles as a rookie a year ago and 20 through three games this season with the Chargers (2-1), who host the Las Vegas Raiders (3-0) on Monday Night Football (8:15 p.m. ET, ESPN). Murray will miss Monday's game with an ankle injury suffered in practice Saturday.

"We have just a great group on defense including Kenneth, we have him and [S] Derwin [James Jr.]," Chargers defensive end Joey Bosa said. "All the guys during practice every week, every day, they always bring energy so they have been great."

"He has worked extremely hard," Chargers defensive coordinator Renaldo Hill said. "We have talked about playing him downhill, being back and being able to run sideline to sideline. He has all of those traits."

When the children arrived at the Murray home 11 years ago, Murray and his biological sister, Kimberly, had to grow up fast. With their parents, they helped shuttle the kids to various doctors' appointments and therapy.

Niya is now 19 and reads at an elementary school level. James, the youngest, is 12 and uses a wheelchair. Lenny was the sports fan in the group and used to spend hours in front of the TV watching whatever sport was being played. And they all loved traveling to Oklahoma to watch Murray perform.

Lenny and Murray would go out in the backyard and do whatever they could to emulate playing catch and other sports and activities.

It's been a painful five months since Lenny died, but Murray says his family and his faith have gotten him through the hardest times. Of his compassion, he points directly to his parents.

"I'm from them," Murray said. "It's where I get all of this."

In his pre-draft interview, Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones asked Murray what challenge has made him who he is on and off the field. He pointed to his experience growing up with his siblings.

"I look at it not as a setback, but as a blessing," he answered. "When I was growing up, my mom and my dad did things that were true acts of selflessness."

It's what inspired him to work as a church counselor during summers growing up. He also volunteered at El Modena High School in Orange, California, last month to help honor the Chargers' high school coach of the month, Matt Mitchell, and be part of El Modena's pregame coin toss. Murray is an active member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and regularly visited the Children's Hospital at the Oklahoma Medical Center. His first task after the draft was to set up funds for his siblings for long-term care.

Murray cherishes every interaction that he has with his siblings, which is why Lenny's death hit so hard.

"He had special needs and you learn to appreciate the small things because you know the small goals that a lot of times, we as human beings we take for granted," Murray said. "And you learn to appreciate them when you see somebody who can't do those things and still finds a way to be happy."

"That was Lenny."

JOSHUA PALMER

With his friend's health on his mind, Joshua Palmer aiming for bigger Chargers role

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
July 31, 2022

His position coach called him “so, so serious,” adding that Joshua Palmer is “straight-laced” to the point where it becomes “almost too much.”

To be more businesslike on the field, Palmer would have to line up in a three-piece suit. Yet before opening his second training camp with the Chargers last week, the 23-year-old wide receiver was heavily into his emotions.

Palmer's childhood friend, John Metchie III, had just revealed that he'll likely miss his rookie season with Houston after being diagnosed with leukemia.

“You hear about these things, but it never hit so close to home,” Palmer said. “I was just speechless. You don't know what to say or how to say it.”

Palmer and Metchie grew up together in Canada, in a town called Brampton, a suburb of some 600,000 northwest of Toronto. Their friendship goes back so far that Palmer said, “I don't remember not knowing him.”

Both eventually moved to the United States to pursue football and ended up in the SEC. Palmer played at Tennessee before being drafted by the Chargers in the third round last year while Metchie at Alabama before the Texans took him in the second round in April.

They were scheduled to share the field again this season in Week 4, when the Chargers play at Houston. But their next reunion is on hold indefinitely.

“John's a soldier,” Palmer said. “Right now, he's just in a different camp, a different camp that he has to get through. He'll come out with a full head of steam next season.”

With his friend on his mind, Palmer arrived in Costa Mesa for what the Chargers hope is a season of significant development. After Keenan Allen and Mike Williams, there's a need for more consistency at the team's third wide receiver spot.

Palmer finished his rookie season trending upward. Starting in Week 14 against the New York Giants — a game Allen missed because of COVID-19 — he had 18 of his 33 receptions and three of his four touchdowns. He caught a 23-yard scoring pass from Justin Herbert to convert a fourth-and-21 play late in the fourth quarter of the Chargers' dramatic season finale in Las Vegas.

“That Giants game was a huge boost for him,” Chargers wide receivers coach Chris Beatty said. “He was able to do multiple things in Keenan's role and see, ‘Hey, I can do this.’ Now, he has the confidence and it's more about mastering what he wants to do.”

Beatty almost worked with Palmer long before the two came together with the Chargers. He was an assistant at Maryland and recruited Palmer out of Fort Lauderdale's St. Thomas Aquinas High.

Palmer also nearly played in Southern California long before he was a Charger. Before committing to Tennessee, his college visits included a stop at UCLA, where a higher source evidently intervened.

“Someone told me it doesn't rain in California,” Palmer said. “The one time I was there, it rained the whole weekend. So I took that as a sign.”

Palmer's serious nature showed itself when he left Canada for South Florida to finish high school, St. Thomas Aquinas a traditional football powerhouse. At the time, he described it as “a business decision.” He was 15.

At a position that famously can produce divas and distractions, Palmer retains something closer to tunnel vision. His personality, Beatty explained, is the quietest among the Chargers' receivers.

“He's different like that,” Beatty said. “He balances the room. You can't have all comedians in there. With Josh, everybody else is joking and he's over there looking at his iPad.”

That's not to suggest Palmer lacks a lighter side. Asked if he played hockey growing up, he said only the street version before adding, “I could skate. I just couldn't stop.”

Palmer is an athlete who prefers to remain locked in. At Tennessee, Palmer prepped for the NFL on and off the field. He said during his final year of college he pretended he already was in the league. He became a harsher self-critic. He studied more film. He started taking better care of his body and tried to develop the routine of a professional athlete.

Beatty praised Palmer's approach and commitment but admitted there are times when he can dig in too deeply. The coach offered the example of Palmer trying to improve on an otherwise perfect route because the ball didn't come his way.

“He's just really so straight ahead, which is good in a lot of ways, but sometimes you overthink things,” Beatty said. “That's kind of where he is, trying to learn how to get out of his own way a little bit.”

The one thing Palmer has mastered entering this season is perspective, the situation involving Metchie and how his friend is handling it are both reminders of what's most important.

Palmer said the two have been in touch, adding that Metchie already is bouncing back. “The whole thing is hard to describe in words,” Palmer said. “But John's going to be fine. He's going to get through this.”

DONALD PARHAM JR.

Chargers' Donald Parham Jr. on injury: 'A life-flashing-before-your-eyes kind of thing'

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
April 18, 2022

DELAND, Fla. — He re-emerged here, on a small set of metal bleachers, next to an empty practice field, 2,500 miles from SoFi Stadium.

On a windy and warm spring afternoon, Donald Parham Jr. sat alone with a visitor sent to chronicle his comeback.

Nearly four months had passed since Parham disappeared from view under much brighter lights. A national television audience and sellout crowd watched as he was strapped to a stretcher and rolled out of the most frightening scene of the 2021 NFL season.

The Chargers tight end remembers all of it: the touchdown pass slipping from his grip, his head snapping back onto the turf, his body stiffening and ignoring the pleas to move even as the tremors shook his otherwise rigid arms.

"I was just thinking about if I'll ever play again," Parham said. "Really thinking about everything else I still wanted to do. It was a life-flashing-before-your-eyes kind of thing. Was it all going to be taken away from me in that instant?"

Watching the game from the family home in Lakeland, Fla., Felicia Parham said she and her husband, Donald Sr., were pulled from their seats and found themselves pacing. And praying. Mostly praying.

On their TV came a close-up of their son's face. His eyes were shut, and he wore no discernible expression.

Just moments earlier, Felicia said, she had been bouncing on the couch, shouting at the TV and rooting on her firstborn — just as always — much to the concern of the family's anxious, barking Pomeranian, Cash.

"All of a sudden," Felicia said, "everything went on pause."

Before long, she was on the phone, first with her son's girlfriend. Then with his agent. Then his girlfriend again. Then his agent's secretary. Travel plans had to be made — and right now.

A few sleepless hours later, Felicia was headed to the airport in Tampa for a 6 a.m. nonstop to LAX, an uneasy 5½ hours for a mother to do little more than think.

Brittany McGee, Parham's girlfriend, picked her up and they drove to Harbor-UCLA Medical Center.

At that blurry-eyed moment, Parham's future was very uncertain. He had talked to his mother on a video call hours earlier from the hospital, had told her he would be OK and assured he would play again. But Felicia needed to see for herself.

By the end of the weekend, everyone knew that, yes, Parham was going to be fine. But not many know the details of a situation so sobering that today Parham has no memory of that video call.

What follows is a collection of those details, an account that began with a quiet conversation on a small college campus.

Stetson University is a private school of roughly 4,300 students located among mossy oaks and waltzing palms about 40 miles north of Orlando.

Parham played here from 2015-18, two plaques displayed in the athletics building commemorating a final season in which he was the NCAA per-game leader in receptions and yards.

This is where he first truly stood his tallest, where he grew those final two inches to reach 6-foot-8, fulfilling forecasts of the pediatricians who had repeatedly told the Parhams their son was, size-wise, "off all the charts."

Parham is a student here again, working toward a communications degree he hopes to complete in the spring of 2023.

His picture hangs along the fence that encircles the practice field. A wall inside the football offices will soon feature another giant likeness, one of Parham in action as a Charger.

"He has lived up to all the expectations and become an overwhelming figure for this program and our league," said head coach Brian Young, who was the defensive coordinator during Parham's time as a Hatter. "Donald is Stetson."

State Road 44 passes next to campus and is dotted by nearby businesses with names such as Dolly's Olde Time Tavern, Lucky Ducky Arcade and DeLand Feed & Pet Supply.

To be sure, this is not a road that traditionally leads to the NFL. Parham and former teammate Donald Payne are the only Stetson players to make it to the league since the school reinstated football in 2013 after a half-century hiatus.

In that sense, the horrific scene in Inglewood on the night of Dec. 16 was another twist on a path that has seen Parham overcome going undrafted, failing to make it with a handful of NFL teams and ending up in the now-suspended XFL before the Chargers signed him.

"He's already had a detour coming out of the XFL," Payne said. "He worked his way up from that detour to make it to the biggest stage ever, catching touchdown passes on 'Monday Night Football.' Those of us who know Donald know he's got this, 1,000%."

That night, Kansas City won the coin toss and deferred, giving the Chargers the ball to start a matchup the NFL couldn't have scripted better. Young superstar quarterbacks Justin Herbert and Patrick Mahomes would battle with the AFC West lead going to the winner. Set up by a 75-yard kickoff return by Andre Roberts, Herbert and his offense quickly moved to the Chiefs' five-yard line, where it was first-and-goal. Three incompletions brought fourth down and coach Brandon Staley's decision to go for it.

"A routine play," Parham said. "We ran it a few times in practice. We were comfortable with it."

Lined up in a standing position on the right side, Parham cut inside between two linebackers, working his way toward the back of the end zone, where he ran away from safety Tyrann Mathieu as fellow safety Daniel Sorensen closed in.

He went airborne lunging for Herbert's spiral and landed on his back before coming to rest on his right side, Parham's body frozen with his arms extended in front of him and bent upward at the elbows in what experts call the fencing response, a condition that can follow trauma to the brain.

Running back Austin Ekeler arrived to help Parham to his feet before realizing something was wrong. Medical personnel were summoned and rushed from the Chargers' sideline.

Many of Parham's teammates began to gather around him. Tight end Stephen Anderson knelt nearby, dropping his head. A TV camera caught linebacker Drue Tranquill staring solemnly from one knee.

With this being a Thursday night, there were no other NFL games being played. The next day, it would be determined that 18 million people — the second-most to watch the Chargers all season — were tuned in.

"It was all very traumatic," Felicia said. "Then to be so far away and not be able to ... I was sick with my stomach. My husband was sick to his stomach. I immediately packed my bags. I had to see him."

Amid the scrambling, she sent a text message to a group of friends she called "prayer warriors," seeking support.

Payne, who also was watching the game, said his ongoing group chat "started blowing up, you know, praying for him. It was definitely something intense."

It was something familiar, as well. In August 2017, a sophomore linebacker named Nick Blakely collapsed at a Stetson practice and later died. An autopsy revealed that he had an enlarged heart.

"The Stetson community already had something along these lines happen," Payne said. "So to be in another situation where it was one of our own who was down made it even scarier."

Only 93 seconds into the most-anticipated of games, the mood inside SoFi Stadium struggled to recover, the image of Parham being wheeled out through an end-zone tunnel powerful and lasting.

And then his arms — restrained but still trembling in a way that was visible to all — caused wild speculation from people who couldn't possibly know the specifics.

"It was extremely scary," Felicia said. "To see him shaking, I didn't know what that was. So I'm checking social media and I'm seeing things about people counting him out, talking about him being paralyzed."

"I was so disheartened to see people say these things. They're not thinking about how he has a family. How are they saying such things when he's got a mom and a dad and a brother and others who love him?"

Parham said he was intubated in the ambulance en route to the hospital and remembers nothing more until awakening early Friday. He started by trying to wiggle his fingers and called his body's immediate response "a blessing."

He underwent a variety of scans and other tests, all the signs encouraging. Doctors repeatedly checked Parham's motor skills, those results similarly positive.

By mid-morning, the Chargers were able to provide an official update, announcing on Twitter that Parham had been diagnosed with a concussion and would be leaving the hospital soon.

Later that day, he posted a photo of his right hand flashing the thumbs-up and a proclamation that he'd return better than ever. The tweet was liked more than 80,000 times.

"The doctors assured me nothing was wrong in terms of paralysis or anything like that," Parham said. "My first thought was, 'OK, well I need to get out of here.' That was the biggest thing, getting out of there and getting back to reality."

He ended up spending three nights at Harbor-UCLA, his mom and girlfriend sleeping in his room on chairs, Brittany's pulled up next to his bed so the two could hold hands.

Around noon Sunday, they all left the hospital together.

A few days later, Parham walked into the Chargers' Costa Mesa facility, headed toward the locker room and was greeted by a series of friendly but disbelieving faces.

"They were freaking out, almost like they were seeing a ghost," he said. "It was kind of funny. A lot of the guys were like, 'Just go home, bro. You don't have to be here.' I was like, 'Oh, OK, my bad.' And I left."

He wanted to return as quickly as possible, Parham said, because playing in the NFL has been his truest passion for years. He also wanted to prove he was tougher than even the scariest of career-threatening incidents.

Parham has a very practical, measured approach looking back on something that has so much emotion attached.

"I didn't have to dive," he said. "I could have possibly stayed on my feet or slid almost like a baseball player. But it happened. I have to learn from it and grow from it.

"Really, it's just a learning experience. Nothing more now. I gotta protect myself. That's just my character. I'm pretty even-keeled, level-headed. I'm always able to re-evaluate and reassess and go from there."

After missing the final three games of the season, Parham was medically cleared in early February. He said he expects to rejoin his teammates for offseason workouts in May, after the semester ends at Stetson. The first day of offseason workouts for players is Monday. His want to play has not been diminished, he promised, adding that he anticipates no issues the next time he's hit or takes a hard or awkward tumble. He said he never thinks about the play, unless someone asks about it. He called the whole scene "an afterthought."

Football is "just what we do," Parham explained, his father having played running back at Albany State and his little brother, Donovan, now a linebacker at Robert Morris.

As for those tremors, Parham said no one has been able to provide a specific reason.

"One doctor explained it as having seizure-like symptoms," he said. "But they weren't sure. I saw a specialist and he said they weren't exactly seizures. No one could really pinpoint it. It was just a reaction to what happened."

The Chargers' expectations for Parham will only grow in 2022. At 24, he's entering his third NFL season and will be part of a tight-end rotation that includes veteran Gerald Everett and 2021 third-round pick Tre' McKitty.

Parham will be counted upon to stand tall again, this time after taking the most frightening of falls. Following a pause that could have been so much longer, so much worse, a twisting NFL journey will continue.

Recalling the moment she first entered her son's hospital room, Felicia said she can still feel the relief.

"I was finally able to put my eyes on him and see that he was alert and OK," she said. "It was, 'Thank you, Jesus.' It was great to see him and see that he was Donald. He had stuff wired up to him and all that, but he was Donald."

They talked about family and about faith, Felicia studying her son's answers by the word to make sure he was all right.

The subject of the game didn't really come up, Parham, in fact, admitted he was unaware the Chargers had lost — 34-28 in overtime — until days later.

But there was one thing from the night before he did mention.

"Mom," Felicia remembered Donald Jr. saying, "I should've caught that ball."

TREY PIPKINS

Chargers tackle Trey Pipkins eyes starting job after productive offseason

By Daniel Popper
The Athletic
June 23, 2022

As the 2021 season was winding down, discussions in the Chargers' offensive line room centered on offseason plans. And Trey Pipkins was looking for somewhere to work.

Rashawn Slater was coming off an All-Pro rookie season at left tackle, and he was planning to head back to Texas to train with offensive line coach Duke Manyweather, who had also trained Slater in the lead-up to the 2021 draft. Guard Oday Aboushi was still rehabbing the torn ACL he suffered in Week 5, but he, too, was planning to return to Manyweather once his knee was healthy enough.

Slater and Aboushi raved about the offseason offensive line training sessions Manyweather holds in Dallas. Pipkins asked questions and listened, and he liked what he heard.

"I just knew I wanted to go somewhere where I could get a lot of good O-line work in the offseason, along with lifting and running and stuff," Pipkins said after practice earlier this month. "I kind of talked their ear off about it and just decided to go down there and see what it was about."

After the season ended, Pipkins packed up and went to Dallas with his wife and young son, renting an Airbnb in the area. And alongside Slater and a number of other NFL offensive linemen, Pipkins honed his craft in what unavoidably amounts to the most pivotal offseason of his professional football career.

It is no secret that the Chargers have an opening at right tackle. They did not address the position in the offseason. And that means they will be looking for an internal answer. Storm Norton was the starter there last season. Norton and Pipkins will compete for the starting job in training camp.

Pipkins says he is a changed player — physically, mentally, technically. That improvement has been ongoing since he was drafted in the third round in 2019 out of Division II Sioux Falls. But he said he took another big step in Dallas this offseason. And Pipkins, who is entering the final year of his rookie contract, is eager to show Brandon Staley and the rest of the Chargers coaching staff that he is the solution at right tackle — for 2022 and beyond.

"I'm excited to get into training camp, really," Pipkins said, grinning.

Pipkins headed into his offseason with considerable momentum, but it was a battle to get there. He was fourth on the tackle depth chart coming out of training camp last season, behind starters Slater and right tackle Bryan Bulaga and swing tackle Norton. When Bulaga went down with what ended up being a season-ending injury in Week 1, it was Norton who took over at right tackle for the remainder of the season.

Pipkins' only snaps through the first six games came as the extra offensive lineman in jumbo packages. He did not play well in that role. And after a particularly poor performance against the Ravens in Week 6, Pipkins was benched. He was inactive for four straight games from Week 8 to 11.

"I was irritated with myself," Pipkins said.

Pipkins waited for another chance, and it eventually came in Week 15, in a prime-time Thursday showdown with the Chiefs. First place in the AFC West was on the line. Slater was unavailable after being placed on the COVID-19 list, and Pipkins was the next man up.

He got the start at left tackle and played the best game of his career. He was stout in pass protection. He was a force as a run blocker.

This was a turning point.

"Getting out there and showing that I could still play tackle, that was big for me — because I knew I could still do it," Pipkins said. "I wanted to prove to people that I deserve to be here and playing."

Two weeks later, Norton was inactive as he was still recovering from a stint on the COVID-19 list. Pipkins was once again called into action. He started at right tackle and played another stellar game in a must-win game for the Chargers. He did not allow a single pressure in 67 offensive snaps, according to Pro Football Focus.

Those two games from Pipkins turned heads inside the Chargers building. It certainly looked as though Pipkins had made a jump in his development. He was no longer the baby-faced neophyte who had been forced into action earlier than expected as a rookie. Pipkins rocks a full beard now, and he has also fully filled out his 6-foot-6 frame. When asked how different of a player he is now compared with his rookie season, Pipkins said, "It's astronomical."

Players develop at different speeds. For every Slater, who emerged as one of the best left tackles in football from his very first NFL game, there is a Pipkins. When the Chargers drafted Pipkins in 2019, they knew he was going to be a project. He had tantalizing athletic traits, but he had a long way to go from a technical standpoint to compete consistently in the NFL.

Were these performances Pipkins realizing his full potential? That remains to be seen. But, along with Norton's positive moments last season, it was enough for the Chargers to feel comfortable passing on a right tackle in the offseason.

Pipkins, meanwhile, got to work with Manyweather in Dallas. He pointed to several key takeaways from his training.

He spent time around established NFL veterans, like Terron Armstead and Charles Leno.

"The best part about it is just all the guys that are there," Pipkins said. "You get to hear so many different ways guys think about the game. ... The work, the lifting and the conditioning and stuff is all really good, but the best part was just being around the guys, hearing how they think about their pass sets in certain situations and run blocking these techniques and stuff like that, I think that's what helped the most, for sure."

Pipkins also found tremendous value in Manyweather's approach to teaching and coaching the offensive line.

"He's so good with just the biomechanics behind stuff, stuff that you never think about," Pipkins said. "O-line coaches ... are super good with all the football stuff and stuff like that, but they don't necessarily know all of the biomechanics stuff that strength coaches know. So (Manyweather) kind of knows both aspects of it, and the way he implements that biomechanics stuff into the O-line drills is really cool."

One example, Pipkins said, was activating the glute muscle on his hind leg in his stance before the snap. On tape, Pipkins showed that he was keeping that muscle relaxed in his stance so that he could put his weight on the instep of his foot. At the snap, Pipkins would have to activate his glute muscle to explode into his set. And that was a millisecond he lost in his initial movement.

"As soon as I would start to move, my knee would lock to activate my glute to push off," Pipkins said. "And so if you stay activated, you can push off without that extra movement."

This might seem like a minor adjustment. But winning pass protection reps is all about the margins. A millisecond here or a millisecond there is the difference between standing up a pass rusher or giving up a sack. And the same goes for things like hand placement, elbow angle or the direction you push when you make initial contact with a pass rusher — "raising up and not pushing out," as Pipkins said.

"It's just little stuff that makes a huge difference," Pipkins added. "I've changed a lot about my set that I like a lot and I feel really good about."

Pipkins returned to Dallas on Saturday, three days after the Chargers wrapped up mandatory minicamp. He will train with Manyweather over the summer break before coming back to Southern California for the start of training camp in late July.

There, Pipkins will use what he has learned — both this offseason and over the past three years — to earn a starting job for the first time in his career.

"It's definitely an opportunity," Pipkins said, "and I can't wait to take advantage of it."

CHRIS RUMPH II

Chris Rumph II Explains 'Invaluable' Situation Entering 2022 Season

By Cory Kennedy
Chargers.com
July 14, 2022

It's a sunny Tuesday afternoon in early June and the Chargers have just wrapped up their seventh practice of organized team activities (OTAs). Although Tuesday's practice is voluntary it feels like more than that, especially for a team that has had a busy offseason like the Bolts.

You can feel the energy and hear the communication as veteran players like Joey Bosa, Derwin James and Khalil Mack sub on and off the field. Amongst the proven NFL players are promising young stars like OLB Chris Rumph II who is as eager as anyone to take the field with the Bolts' new-look defense.

Heading into his second year as a pro, Rumph has set big goals for himself and is using every tool available to accomplish them.

Focus and mindset during the offseason

As rookies get drafted to their respective teams, there is a lot of information to process at once. Many players are balancing getting used to a new city and meeting a plethora of new faces all while focusing on performing well on the practice field, weight room, and in the meeting rooms.

This was the reality Rumph faced last season.

"Last year, you have so much stuff to deal with and as soon as you get drafted, I mean you're thrown into the fire," Rumph said.

In 2021, Rumph appeared in 16 games, registered 19 tackles, and got his first career sack in a win over the Cincinnati Bengals.

Now as he heads into year two and his first full offseason as a Charger, Rumph explained what his sophomore offseason has allowed him to do and how resources like his father, Minnesota Vikings defensive line coach Chris Rumph, are invaluable.

"I'm just focusing on what my job is, football," he said. "So, that was very important to me. Also being able to talk to my pops, try and pick his mind [and] everybody's mind. This is the time where you figure out what you're going to do heading into next year, what things you did good last year and what things you can carry into the next year."

Inspiration for giving back to the community

As the pressure and time commitment of an 18-week NFL season fades and the Bolts transition into the offseason, players like Rumph are given more opportunities to give back to the Los Angeles community and the Chargers fan base.

Since getting drafted by the Bolts in 2021, Rumph has made an effort to give back to those in need and has put thousands of smiles on football fans and Chargers fans alike. He's taken full advantage of that time as he's participated in numerous events like a beach cleanup, helped co-host the Chargers first-ever Draft Fest at SoFi Stadium, and played in the Chargers' third annual golf tournament that benefitted the Chargers Impact Fund. For him, a chance to make someone's day is part of his inspiration for giving back.

"Just knowing the position I'm in [and] my parents raised me well." Rumph said. "We are a God-fearing house. I'm a believer in Jesus. Any chance I get to give back and knowing I'm blessed, if I can show up and make a kid smile for five minutes, I mean that makes my day, I know it will make theirs. Just having a heart, being a great human being and following Christ."

What stands out when you get a chance to meet Rumph in person or see him at SoFi is his outgoing personality, his passion for the game of football and his penchant for giving back. Going back to his childhood, Rumph credits his dad's profession for helping build his personality and get used to life in the NFL.

"Being a coach's kid, you have to have that type of personality just to be able to move around a lot and make friends in different places and different environments.

"I look back on it now and I'm very gracious for it and appreciative because that attributes why I'm always happy, why I'm always smiling. I always talk to everybody making sure they're having a great day. I try to be that guy in the locker room, you know any time you feel like you've got to talk about something serious you can come to me you know I listen and really feel involved."

Being live at SoFi while the Bolts selected guard Zion Johnson out of Boston College was a full circle moment for Rumph, who played at fellow ACC school Duke. Rumph and Johnson played against each other in 2020, and two years later the two ACC rivals now join up on the other side of the country.

Rumph, who was just in Johnson's shoes a year ago, talked about the importance of being a mentor to the rookie class.

"[The rookies] already know they can come to me with any questions, and I'll answer them, I don't care how many." Rumph said. "I was talking to Khalil [Mack] and he told me, 'As an older guy, you've got to give what you learned from the older guys back to the younger guys and give back.' That's the thing about the community of the NFL, everybody's just giving back from stuff they were told from the older guys so I'm just trying to do my part."

"We're going to do some big things here."

The Chargers created quite the buzz across the NFL when they traded for All-Pro outside linebacker Mack back in mid-March.

Rumph used one of those tools and wasted no time reaching out to his dad, who was the Bears' defensive line coach last season, to find a way to welcome his new teammate.

"I was excited! Once I saw that news, I texted my dad and I was like, 'Let me get his number and tell him congratulations.' I texted him, 'Can't wait to work with you and we're going to do some big things here.' I mean I was really excited when I saw that and I'm looking forward to see what we can do with these sack numbers this year."

A few months later, the Chargers added another OLB in two-time Super Bowl champion Kyle Van Noy. Rumph talked about how 'invaluable' it is to have veteran outside linebackers like Mack, Van Noy and Joey Bosa in just his second year and what it's like to practice alongside the veteran trio.

"It's a lot of listening for me," Rumph said. "I mean you've got guys who have played shoot, 20-plus years combined in the NFL and I'm going into my second season. Just being able to be around them, hear them talk football, see what they see, see what moves they like, and try and take bits and pieces from their game and see if I can apply them to my game. I mean it's invaluable, especially as a young player, so I just soak in everything I can take in and at the same time, try to compete with them and be on their level or even better."

Chargers defensive coordinator Renaldo Hill talked about how good Rumph has looked with the added weight he's put on during the offseason and how beneficial it is for him to have Bosa, Mack and Van Noy as mentors.

"There are a lot of tidbits that he can gain from being in that room," Hill said. "Just how to be a pro. He'll continue to watch those guys and see how they do things on and off of the field. It's going to be a benefit for the young guy ... He's been doing everything that we've asked him to do. I know that he is going to have a huge jump, just by having those guys in the room ahead of him giving him some nuggets there."

When looking at the Bolts' OLB room, it's easy to get excited about the potential for the 2022 season. Ask Rumph, and he'll tell you why he feels they can be the top OLB group in the league this season.

"[We can be] the best. I mean if you don't think you're the best, why are we out here? I think we are going to be one of the best groups in the NFL, but at the end of the day, a lot of talk is cheap, so you've got to do it."

Goals for 2022

Despite all the new additions through free agency and the draft, Rumph has his eyes on the prize for 2022. He showed flashes of his potential during the 2021 season, but with a year under his belt, the 23-year-old is looking to do much more than that this year.

"[I'm looking to be an] impact player, I'm looking to make plays next year. I'm looking to be somebody they can count on to make big plays in big, crunch time situations. So, it starts in training camp and just keeping my head down working, keep learning the playbook and just trusting my coaching."

When it comes to working with head coach Brandon Staley and Hill, Rumph will directly learn from outside linebackers coach Giff Smith. Smith makes the switch to the OLB room after serving as the defensive line coach last year. Rumph detailed how he personally sets goals to be a better athlete and teammate each season.

"Me personally, I want to be the best, that's the goal heading into every year. I want to be top in every category, tackles, TFLs, sacks. In the NFL, I know it's harder, but I'm very confident in my abilities. I know what I can do. I have a year under my belt, I kind of know what the feel of the NFL is like and I know for sure that I'm capable of doing that."

"I've worked very hard to get here and I'm going to work even harder to stay here."

With OTAs and minicamp in the books, the Chargers now shift their focus to training camp and the preseason. Training camp gives the chance for the Chargers' best players on defense to face the best players on offense.

As the old saying goes, iron sharpens iron, and the Chargers have a lot of iron in their arsenal.

"I'm really excited, I mean I love football, this is what I want to do for the rest of my life, so any time you head into training camp you know that's another opportunity. At the end of the day, you can't take any of this for granted. Being in the NFL is an honor and a privilege. I've worked very hard to get here and I'm going to work even harder to stay here."

ASANTE SAMUEL JR.

Asante Samuel Jr. has trouble learning from one former NFL player — his dad

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
September 10, 2021

They share so much. Both defensive backs, both 5 foot 10, both known as playmakers.

These two even share their name, Asante Samuel — Sr. and Jr.

But there is one thing neither is particularly comfortable sharing with the other:

Himself.

When the Chargers drafted Samuel Jr. in the second round in April, the convenient assumption was that father helped make son, that two players so similar in style, so alike in technique just had to be close.

Turns out, that assumption was too convenient.

"People say, 'Oh, he's the son of Asante Samuel, so of course,'" Samuel Jr. said. "That's kind of giving to his legacy and taking away from mine.... For some people, it's like I'm trying to live off his name."

Said Samuel Sr.: "It's unfortunate that he still thinks that way. He's making it difficult. He's going to drive himself crazy. He should embrace it."

These two do have a relationship, one Samuel Jr. characterized as "far-distance." In separate interviews, they expressed love for each other.

But they haven't spoken in months, each saying the other struggles to communicate.

Samuel Jr. is about to begin his NFL career, Sunday when the Chargers visit Washington. Samuel Sr. played 11 years in the league, intercepting 51 passes and making four Pro Bowls.

He said he has no plans right now to attend any Chargers games.

"I don't know if he wants me there or not," Samuel Sr. said. "It seems like he doesn't want me there because of the energy he puts out."

The Chargers have 11 players who use a name suffix. There's one II and two IIIs. Samuel is one of eight who use Jr.

Not one of the others, however, is named after a man some observers argue belongs in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, a father who made cornerback the family business and passed the trade down to his only son.

Now 40, Samuel Sr. was 18 when he and his girlfriend at the time, Candice Doe, had their lone child together. They nicknamed the boy A.J.

The couple didn't stay together and both have since established families with other partners.

When A.J. was a child, Samuel Sr.'s mother, Christine, helped raise him. In fact, she was the one who started him playing football, a decision made possible only after a bold audible.

"Granny Chris" changed A.J.'s birth certificate when he was 4, instead making him two years older and eligible to enroll in a Pee-Wee league at a park near their Florida home. This is something else the Samuels share, since Granny Chris did the same thing years earlier for Samuel Sr.

"That time's over, so I guess we can't get in trouble no more," Samuel Sr. said, laughing. "She would white it out, retype it and then make a copy. I watched her do it. That thing was amazing. It looked so real."

Samuel Jr. laughed at the memory too, recalling how convincingly overmatched he was on his very first football field.

"I used to cry every time I'd go out there," he said. "But then when we started hitting, I'd get happy. That's what they've told me."

Samuel Jr. said his grandma was "like my second mom." He said she taught him to be kind to everyone and thankful for each day. Remembering her contributions, he said she "put spiritual things in me."

While Samuel Jr. was attending St. Thomas Aquinas High in Fort Lauderdale, Granny Chris died. She meant so much to Samuel Jr. that, a few years later, he delayed submitting his letter of intent with Florida State to honor her by signing on the anniversary of her death.

"She was the holding piece to the family," Samuel Jr. said. "It was hard for everybody who was close to her."

This is about the time, Samuel Sr. explained, that he and his son seemed to start drifting even further apart. He said he can recall Samuel Jr. telling him to not attend St. Thomas Aquinas' football games.

They already had a strained relationship going back to when, as a child, Samuel Jr. refused to agree with everything his father said.

"He has a lot of 'yes' men around him," Samuel Jr. said. "I was the only one who would say like, 'Oh, you could have done better.' He'd get mad at me for that. I think he pushed me away a little bit because of that."

A telling incident came in 2010, when Samuel Sr. and the Philadelphia Eagles played Minnesota. On a pass down the sideline, Samuel Sr. was defending Sidney Rice and the two went up for the ball. Rice made the catch but landed out of bounds. Afterward, Samuel Sr. recalled, that was the play his son mentioned before any others.

"It was like, 'What are you talking about? That didn't even count,'" he said. "The point is, I'm still waiting for some positivity from my child."

Samuel Jr. said he doesn't remember being a critic of his father, only someone who wouldn't always agree with him.

"You can ask anybody on this team," he said. "When they ask me about my dad, I tell them good things. I don't have no problems with him. I'm not sure why he makes it seem like I have a problem with him."

There is confusion between father and son, to be certain. Both contend the real issue is with the other. During training camp, Samuel Jr. noted that his father hadn't visited. Samuel Sr. said he can recall showing up for his son's events in the past and receiving strange looks. Their differences have seeped into social media, the blocking and unfollowing happening among members of the extended family.

There is consensus that the disconnection doesn't seem to be improving, Samuel Jr. admitting, "We both could have done better."

On Sunday, he will trot onto an NFL field for the first time in the regular season. The Chargers have expectations for the player they selected 47th overall.

There also will be expectations based on the name on the back of No. 26's jersey — "Samuel Jr.," those final two letters the heaviest of all.

"It's kind of disrespect to my hard work that I've put in," Samuel Jr. said. "People try to take that away from me just because my dad was in the NFL. But my dad's not out here with me every day practicing and making plays. My dad's not out here lifting weights, running. I did a lot on my own and with other people."

Samuel Jr. said he has heard the narrative for years, from "my peers, reporters, everybody." He wouldn't have become a high school star, wouldn't have made it to Florida State without his name.

But during the height of quarantine last year, when so much was about isolation, they came together. They worked out at a field in Florida, sometimes climbing over a locked gate to do so.

Samuel Sr. said the sessions happened every day for at least a month; Samuel Jr. said they were much less frequent than that.

But they did agree on what happened one morning when they were focusing on Samuel Jr.'s speed, running extended sprints. At one point, Samuel Jr. fell to his knees and became sick.

"He's looking at me in disbelief," Samuel Sr. said. "He can't believe this is happening to him. He's like, 'Dad, if you did this with any of my teammates at Florida State, they would be throwing up just like me right now.'"

Samuel Jr. initially balked at the story until admitting it was true, saying, "OK, I'll give him that one." He also was reluctant to talk about his father at first. Unlike Samuel Sr., he prefers to remain quiet, reserved.

Samuel Sr. will talk about pretty much anything, and he'll talk plenty about A.J.

"Will I go to a game this year?" he said. "I don't know. What am I supposed to do, just pop up? If he invites me, I'll be there. My son knows I'll be there anywhere, anyhow if any problem occurs or he needs me."

A "far-distance" relationship, indeed. And yet, Samuel Jr. is willing to offer words that suggest little distance at all.

"That's my dad," he said. "You only get one dad. I love him to death."

RASHAWN SLATER

Chargers' young star Rashawn Slater working hard to improve — even on his honeymoon

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
May 16, 2022

He produced a highlight reel of a rookie season that ended with his selection to the Pro Bowl. Even more encouraging for the Chargers, though, is how Rashawn Slater feels now when he re-watches his 2021 performance.

"I look at the tape and a lot of it kinda makes me cringe because I know there's detail and technique and sometimes I'll be like this close," the young offensive tackle said. "There's always that little room for improvement that can make a big difference."

Who knows what, exactly, a better Rashawn Slater might look like, but the Chargers would love to find out.

He was impressive as a rookie, grading out as the sixth-best left tackle in the NFL, according to Pro Football Focus.

Slater allowed only four sacks and six quarterback hits in 752 pass-blocking snaps. His run blocking ranked fourth among left tackles who played at least 800 snaps, according to PFF.

This effort came after Slater sat out his final season at Northwestern amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unlike a year ago, he is no longer trying to find his way around the Chargers' Costa Mesa training facility as a first-round pick determined to prove his worth. He's now a pro attempting to build on a solid first step.

Slater called the shift in his reality "a huge game changer."

"I just get the opportunity to take care of business and go about my day," he said Monday following another session of organized team activities. "It's a lot different."

Slater's rookie year was capped with the Pro Bowl, but his experience there wasn't all positive. He said he contracted food poisoning during the week, something made even more unfortunate because of the game's locale.

"We're in Vegas," Slater said, laughing, "so like no one would believe me."

Slater, who turned 23 in March, is growing up in more ways than one. He got married two months ago, and he and his wife, Stassney, spent their honeymoon in Bora Bora.

During the Slaters' time there, the Chargers traded for Khalil Mack, giving Slater another notable edge rusher to work against in practice. Slater said coach Brandon Staley texted him after the deal, saying "Get your mind right."

"I better start doing some pass sets on the beach or something," a smiling Slater recalled thinking at the time.

By Monday afternoon, as the story began circulating on social media, Stassney shared on Twitter a video of Slater doing exactly that — pass sets in ankle-deep ocean water with a forest of tropical trees nearby.

Chargers rookie Rashawn Slater's football love affair: 'The sacrifices only made it grow fonder'

By Daniel Popper
The Athletic
August 2, 2021

Reggie Slater wanted his two oldest sons to love basketball the way he did.

He had devoted his life to the game, going from undersized and undrafted to an eight-year NBA veteran. He played all over the world: Spain, Turkey, Italy. He had even spent two seasons playing in the now-defunct Continental Basketball League. He loved the game, and it loved him back. This was his calling, his passion. And he was determined to pass it on to his oldest sons R.J. and Rashawn.

The boys, though, gravitated to the gridiron. There was mystery in football. Reggie had never played. Kids needed their parents to sign a permission slip to start football when Reggie was growing up in the '80s, and his mom refused. "She thought I was going to get broke up too easy," Reggie recalls. So she directed him to the gym.

R.J. and Rashawn's conscious minds were made up. They loved football. Still, Reggie was undeterred. He decided to try and coax their subconscious minds instead.

Late at night, after R.J. and Rashawn had gone to bed, Reggie would check on his sons. He quietly opened the door to the bedroom and made sure they were still sleeping. Then he tiptoed his 6-foot-7 basketball frame across the floor, leaned his head down and whispered "basketball" in their ears.

"It never worked," Reggie said, laughing.

R.J., two years older than Rashawn, led the way, as big brothers do. Football was different. It was his own path. And he loved the physicality football offered. Rashawn felt the same pull. "Sibling admiration," Reggie says.

In the Slaters' hometown of Sugar Land, Texas, a new sports love affair was blossoming — foreign for Reggie, but undeniably magnetic for R.J. and Rashawn.

On paper, Rashawn Slater was destined for the basketball court. He had all the resources a kid could ask for — namely, the right athletic genes and an experienced father who was a willing and avid teacher.

But the heart is a fickle beast. Quick feet, natural strength and a 6-foot-5 build can be passed down from father to son. But desires? Those are generated and cultivated by the individual.

Rashawn desired, craved to be on the football field, to achieve greatness there.

And thus started his journey to the Los Angeles Chargers.

Rashawn entered into that unknown, onto that blank page, and willed himself to this point — to the highest levels of the sport he loves — through determination, through 6 a.m. wakeup calls at 15 years old, through three-hour workouts in the Houston summer sun, through late-night film sessions.

"He just had a drive at a very young age," R.J. said. "He knew what he wanted, and he was going to work for it despite what anybody says."

Rashawn Slater's athletic career started with a wide array of activities. Soccer. Baseball. Yes, basketball. Even taekwondo.

Reggie owned a gym in the Houston area. One section of the gym was a martial arts studio, and Rashawn took lessons there starting in middle school. He also competed. More like dominated.

"He was in matches and people were trying to bow out because he was a big kid and he was knocking the shit out of everybody," Reggie said. "People didn't even want to fight against him, man."

No weight classes in sixth grade.

"He kicked the guy and it was something out of a Marvel movie," Reggie said. "He'd get up, whoop somebody's ass, and then sit down for two or three hours. The matches weren't long. I can tell you that."

On Saturdays, Reggie would beckon R.J. and Rashawn to the family's outdoor basketball hoop. In the driveway, Reggie would run his sons through drills — dribbling with both hands, layups, footwork, mid-range jumpers.

When they were done, R.J. and Rashawn would scamper inside to the couch and turn on college football.

Reggie might not have been able to foster a love of basketball. But there was still plenty to impart. So Reggie would sit down beside his sons and tell stories from his career and life — not necessarily to draw them back to basketball, but to instill his pillars and values: work ethic, professionalism, drive, determination, focus, loyalty.

These stories and discussions were filled with pet idioms. Writers are taught to avoid cliches. Reggie basked in them, lived by them, parented by them. Sometimes, cliches are cliches for a reason.

"He's just always been in our ear," Rashawn said. "We didn't know it at the time, but all that stuff he was telling us, it was kind of shaping us under our skin."

The people that do well are the people that do what others aren't willing to do.

Talk is cheap. Actions are way louder.

You can sit and point fingers, or you can just get better.

Control the situation; don't let the situation control you.

Enjoy what you can enjoy while you can, but once the job's at hand, it's time to go to work.

These are the lessons Reggie learned in his playing days, from veterans such as Buck Williams, Kevin Willis and Charles Oakley.

Reggie would field calls from former teammates while in the car. They would reminisce and cycle through what-ifs from their careers. Rashawn would be in the passenger seat, listening intently, internalizing these valuable nuggets.

"Here's the recipe," Reggie said. "It's up to you to put it all together."

That recipe applies to football, just as it applies to basketball.

That is because it applies to life.

"As we worked, we saw it happen," R.J. said. "It just became real and it became what we did."

These idioms were the street lamps illuminating Rashawn's path.

The boys both attended Clements High School in Sugar Land, their local public school. Clements played in the fierce and competitive Fort Bend district, part of the top flight of Texas high school football reserved for the largest schools. Clements was the district punching bag. They went 3-27 in Rashawn's four seasons.

Rashawn had opportunities to play for private schools.

But he refused. Don't point fingers. Get better.

Still, garnering recruiting recognition was like hiking through mud. R.J. was a quality high school football player and had interest from Ivy League schools. He ultimately decided to enroll and play at the Air Force Academy.

Rashawn watched his brother's recruiting process and had an epiphany. He needed to get better — much better — if he wanted to reach his goal of playing at a high-profile Division I program.

"It definitely helped Rashawn," R.J. said, "because he kind of realized some of my shortfalls."

"In Rashawn's eye, if his brother was that good, and he wasn't highly recruited, what is it that I need to do?" Reggie said.

Reggie owned that gym, Slater's Sports Zone in Fort Bend, Texas. And there, local trainer Alonzo Ford was renting out space to work with Houston high school athletes. Ford worked in tandem with Antoine Murphy, a former Baylor offensive lineman and NFL camp body who specializes in offensive and defensive line development.

One day, Ford saw Rashawn playing basketball with his dad. He was big — very big — and light on his feet.

Ford approached Reggie in the parking lot.

"Man, you got to bring your son to me," he remembered saying.

"He saw a prime specimen ready to be molded," Reggie said.

Then the work began.

Ford headed the strength and conditioning. Murphy oversaw the football-specific training.

Together, they helped Rashawn groom into a Division I prospect.

Murphy, in particular, was essential in teaching Rashawn the details of the position that laid the groundwork for the pinpoint and polished technique that made him a first-round pick.

“At an early point, I realized that you put yourself ahead by the way you work, but you also put yourself ahead by the way you execute technique,” Rashawn said. “Everyone is strong, everyone is fast. But do you have great technique? That’s when it started to build.”

Ford pushed Rashawn physically, concocting exercises and workouts to test his pupil’s genetic gifts. He put 500 pounds on the workout sled. He had Rashawn put one leg in a suspended loop and then jump with the other leg onto a 24-inch box.

“It’s fun training those type of athletes where you don’t really have a limit,” Ford said.

Murphy remembers meeting Rashawn for the first time.

“Big glasses,” he said. “So he looked kind of like a Poindexter kind of guy.”

But then Murphy saw him move.

“He could run like the wind and he could run all day,” Murphy said.

The glasses were misleading. Rashawn can come across as quiet and unassuming. He even says that during the pre-draft process, teams accused him of being “too nice.”

Rashawn’s response? “You’ve never watched the film.”

“I kind of have the ability to flip a switch like that,” he said.

Murphy saw it firsthand during those years of training. If Rashawn was getting ready to “lock in,” he would take off his glasses and hand them to Murphy.

“That’s how he gets if you beat him or if you do something that he feels like got a little dirty on him,” Murphy said. “When he hands you those glasses and he’s sweating profusely, that’s when you know, uh oh, it’s on now.”

“He’d go Clark Kent on them boys,” R.J. said.

Rashawn lived in the trenches as a high school player. He played every snap of the game as an offensive and defensive lineman. He had 10 sacks as a senior defensive end, earning All-District honors for offensive and defensive line.

Rashawn trained at both spots with Murphy.

“He would just beat guys,” Murphy said. “I had guys that were getting recruited by every school in America, and he would just beat them consistently and beat them easily and kind of put their mindset in the dumps. He would just do it easily, run back to me just laughing. ‘Ha, ha, ha.’ Just giggling.

“He’s approachable. He’s well-spoken. He’s sweet,” Murphy said. “But I’m telling you, if you make him mad, or when it’s time to turn the lights on and he’s focused, he turns into the Hulk.”

Ford and Murphy trained a group of local high school players, including Will Farrar and Dakota Crawford, two offensive linemen at Travis High School, and Dennis Osagiede, a defensive lineman at Ridge Point. All three went on to play college football.

The group saw Rashawn flipping that switch every day.

“If you look at him, yeah, he’s a big guy,” Osagiede said. “But his demeanor isn’t like, oh, he’s a fucking crusher. Nah. You just got to get in that ring with him. Ya feel me? You got to get on that field with him, and then you’ll see.”

“That dude is a whole different animal when you piss him off,” Crawford said.

The weeks during the football season were long and arduous. On top of his high school responsibilities, Rashawn was spending four days a week either training or studying with Ford and Murphy.

“That’s all I’ve known him as — a hard-working silent assassin,” Ford said.

Murphy developed Rashawn’s hand placement and usage by working him out on a boxing heavy bag. He regularly would go over to the family’s house to watch film with Rashawn upstairs. There, his football IQ took center stage.

“He’s a scholar,” Murphy said. “He doesn’t want to be surprised during the game.”

This eventually led Rashawn to create an idiom of his own.

“He says he feels most confident when he’s most prepared,” Reggie said. “I’ve heard him say that. I’m like, ‘Damn, that’s a great quote! I wish I had told you guys that.’”

The sessions with Ford and Murphy went year-round, including three times a week in the spring. Miles and miles of running, followed by footwork in the sand volleyball courts at the local park.

Inside, timed sprints on the basketball courts. Speed, conditioning, agility and technique work.

Osagiede, Farrar and Crawford became numb to Rashawn’s superhuman workout feats.

“He is so explosive, it’s ridiculous,” Crawford said.

The summer Houston heat was stifling. And Rashawn, well ...

“That dude is the sweatiest person I’ve ever seen,” Crawford said.

“I’d come home, and he had his laundry hamper that was filled with soaking wet, sweaty clothes, because sometimes he’d work out twice a day,” Reggie said. “I knew that they were doing something positive there.”

Murphy would bring film cutups of NFL offensive linemen — Tyron Smith, Jason Peters, Andrew Whitworth — and watch with his players before and after their training sessions.

“I can remember waking up early on Saturdays at 6 a.m. and it would be me, Rashawn, Coach Ford and Coach Murphy just working,” Farrar said.

The workouts were ultra-competitive.

“When we went through one-on-ones, I knew I had to come with my shit if I wanted to win the rep or even like faze him,” Osagiede said.

Osagiede trained with Rashawn for three years.

“I can count on my hand how many times I beat him in reps,” he said.

Fueling all this was Rashawn’s inquisitive mind and unquenchable thirst for greatness.

“He took care of business at a young age,” Ford said.

Reggie remembers when a Northwestern recruiter came to the house to visit with Rashawn.

Typically those visits are simply sales pitches. Not with Rashawn.

“They were going over techniques,” Reggie said. “They went into the living room and moved some furniture and started talking about how do I become a better, more skilled NCAA player. It was very unusual. I’m sitting there eating brisket and biscuits. And these guys are in stances, talking about pad level.”

Once Rashawn committed to Northwestern, he “never wavered,” according to Murphy. After his standout senior season on both sides of the ball, bigger programs came calling. But they stood no chance.

“He made his mind up and gave his word,” Murphy said. “It’s over.”

There, the foundation that Murphy and Ford laid allowed Rashawn to blossom. He started for three years, first at right tackle and then at left tackle, before opting out of the 2020 season. He spent the fall working in Dallas with offensive line coach Duke Manyweather to prepare for the draft.

Rashawn never forgot the programs that passed on him.

“I’ve been an underdog my whole life,” Rashawn said. “It’s not leaving, because that’s just part of who I am now.”

His commitment only strengthened in college. The Slaters — including Reggie’s wife, Katie, the couple’s daughter Aliyh and youngest son Rylan — went on a cruise after Rashawn had finished his freshman season and started 12 games at right tackle.

The family lounged in pool chairs, sipped on piña colodas and ate at the buffet. Relaxed. But there was often one seat left empty.

Off on the cruise deck, not far away, Rashawn was doing pass protection sets.

Cruise-goers, including his own family members, looked on, befuddled and bewildered.

“Obviously, he got made fun of,” R.J. said. “The pass pro set looks kind of goofy sometimes. But that man did not shy away from busting it out anywhere, because he was going to hone his craft regardless of where he was. If it was a vacation or not, he was going to get better.”

This was deeper than early wake-up calls or exhausting workouts. This was a lifestyle, a love affair.

A calling.

“That extra level that a lot of people don’t get to,” R.J. said.

Moments after the Chargers selected Rashawn with the 13th pick in April’s draft, the baby-faced offensive tackle was asked on the ESPN broadcast for his message to his new quarterback Justin Herbert.

“I got your back,” replied Rashawn, the franchise’s new cornerstone left tackle.

For most, this was merely a generic stock answer. Player-speak. A cliché.

But, to the Slaters, clichés are clichés for a reason. They are not throwaway sayings. They are defining, essential principles.

They are how you create your own destiny.

Ford was watching the draft from a barbershop while his son got a haircut.

“That put chills through my body,” Ford said, “because he’s been a man of his word for so long. ... I hope this quarterback understands he means that. No one is going to touch that guy. I’m putting my life on the line for this one.”

Basketball is in Rashawn’s blood. Football is in his heart.

A different game. A familiar devotion.

“He still has a love for the game that I feel like a lot of people lose once you get to the level of sacrifice he’s taken,” R.J. said. “But I feel like the sacrifices only made it grow fonder for him.”

MIKE WILLIAMS

'He gave everything he had': How Mike Williams earned his extension with the Chargers

By Daniel Popper
The Athletic
March 8, 2022

If you want to know what Mike Williams means to the Chargers — and what the Chargers mean to Mike Williams — you can start in the fourth quarter and overtime of the team's season-ending loss to the Raiders in Las Vegas.

Justin Herbert was leading and willing the Chargers on one of the most improbable comebacks in recent NFL history. And he was doing so by peppering his most trustworthy weapon with targets. Throw after throw headed Williams' direction, and catch after catch was made. Williams was in pain, though. He had banged up his leg diving for a pass in the end zone on a third-and-21 with less than five minutes remaining. After the play, Williams limped to the sideline and crouched, looking on as Herbert hit Joshua Palmer for a fourth-down touchdown.

Williams returned for the next series, diving and selling out as Herbert kept firing his way. He saved the limping for in between plays. When the ball was snapped, Williams went into playmaking mode. The Chargers fell short, of course. But over the final 8:23 of the fourth quarter and in overtime, Williams was targeted 13 times. He caught seven of those targets for 111 yards and the game-tying touchdown. Five went for first-down conversions, including two on fourth down.

"I was hurting," Williams said after the game. "But I needed to get back out there and try to help the team get the dub."

Chargers general manager Tom Telesco had walked down to the field from his box to watch overtime.

"He gave everything he had," Telesco said of Williams' effort that night. "He had nothing left by the time he got to the end of that game."

That effort — and a career season of production — was rewarded Tuesday when the Chargers reached an agreement with Williams on a three-year, \$60 million contract. The Athletic confirmed. The deal includes \$40 million fully guaranteed at signing, according to a source, a massive number considering the total value of the contract. And it came hours before the franchise-tag deadline. The Chargers could have tagged Williams and given themselves until July to negotiate a long-term extension. That they got this deal done before the deadline shows, better than anything, how the organization feels about Williams.

At \$20 million in average annual value, Williams is now tied with Amari Cooper as the fourth-highest paid wide receiver in the NFL, just behind teammate Keenan Allen, who signed a four-year extension in 2020 worth \$20.25 million in average annual value. Williams' \$40 million in fully guaranteed money is tied with Cooper for the third-most among wide receivers. Only DeAndre Hopkins and Julio Jones signed for more fully guaranteed money.

A year ago, this level of contract for Williams would have been shocking. But the former No. 7 overall pick realized his full potential under head coach Brandon Staley and offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi in 2021.

Staley, specifically, had a defined vision for what Williams could be: Not just a deep-field 50-50-ball threat, but a fully-rounded receiver who could attack in the short and intermediate areas of the field. Williams ran more slants, shallow crossers, digs and out. He was incorporated as the feature receiver in the Chargers' advantage-look game, a branch of their run-pass-option scheme. Oftentimes, Lombardi would call a run play into Herbert with what the Chargers staff termed an "advantage" tag. If Williams was covered one-on-one, Herbert could kill the run play and throw to Williams on a number of routes, often times a slant, a smoke route (a quick horizontal throw to the outside) or, if the Chargers were in the red zone, a fade route.

This vision unlocked Williams, and his production soared. Williams set a career high in targets with 129. His previous high was 90. He set a career high in catches with 76. His previous high was 49. He set a career high in yards with 1,146. His previous high was 1,001. And he caught nine touchdowns, one shy of his career high of 10.

Underlying this breakout season was a profound and burgeoning connection with Herbert — one that will only continue to grow with Williams locked up for multiple seasons.

"Mike's a special player," Herbert said in January. "I knew, as soon as I got here, how gifted he was, and what he's able to do with the 50-50 balls. I don't think he gets enough credit for the routes that he runs and the separation. He does such a great job in practice, in games, in the meeting room and in the weight room. He's a really good teammate."

With Allen and Williams both on lucrative extensions, the Chargers are devoting a solid chunk of their salary cap to one position group. But that is possible thanks to their elite quarterback playing on a cheap rookie contract.

Based on the contract numbers, I would expect Williams' 2022 cap hit to be around \$10 million, give or take. That is well below the franchise-tag cap hit of \$18.419 million, and those added savings this season were certainly a factor in the Chargers getting this extension done.

Williams earned this contract. No question about it. And do not overlook how much his willingness to play through pain — something he has done throughout his Chargers career, including in 2019, when he had a bone bruise in his knee for the final 14 games of the season — contributed to this payday.

Toughness is just as much a part of Williams' skill set as his contested-catch prowess.

He proved that in Vegas.

"If we would have won that game, it would have been a performance we would have been talking about well after the fact," Telesco said in January.

We are talking about it now.

"I'm thankful we drafted him," Telesco said. "I'm thankful he's here."

Mike Williams credits Chargers' coaching staff for throwing new contract his way

By Jeff Miller
Los Angeles Times
March 9, 2022

Brandon Staley's impact was obvious during his first season as an NFL head coach, from his fourth-down decisions to his viral news conference clips and decidedly untraditional candor.

His influence also was profound when it comes to Mike Williams and the contract extension the Chargers wide receiver signed this week.

Under Staley and offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi, Williams' role expanded exponentially in 2021, leading to a deal that guarantees him \$40 million and is worth up to \$60 million over the next three seasons.

"I'm very grateful for that," Williams said Wednesday during a media conference. "I tell them that all the time. I always tell them, 'Thank you. I appreciate you' because, I mean, without them, I probably wouldn't be in this situation."

Williams finished last season with 76 receptions for 1,146 yards — both career highs — and nine touchdowns. He was targeted 129 times, 39 more than his previous single-season best.

After being more of a red-zone and deep-ball specialist in his first three seasons in the league, Williams was dispatched all over the field and in a variety of routes by Lombardi.

His emergence included setting an NFL season record with five go-ahead touchdowns in the fourth quarter or overtime.

"When the big light's on, I'm ready to make plays," Williams said. "When everybody's watching, when the team needs a play, I feel like I'm capable of making that play. I just trust in my ability."

Williams, 27, is now one of six NFL receivers with a contract worth as much as \$20 million per season. The group includes one of his teammates, Keenan Allen, who signed a four-year deal worth up to \$80.1 million in September 2020. A pending free agent, Williams said his motivation from the start of this offseason was to remain with the Chargers, citing, among other things, the presence of quarterback Justin Herbert, who made his first Pro Bowl in his second season.

"That was a big part of it, too, just to be with a quarterback who's a franchise quarterback and able to do the things he's able to do to get me the ball," Williams said. "That was huge."