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## Chargers Media Availability

Monday, December 20, 2021 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

### HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

#### **On COVID-19 updates:**

“For the game this week, [OLB] Joey Bosa and [CB] Kemon Hall will be out for the game. Everybody else that’s on the COVID[-19] list will be day-to-day.”

#### **On ‘how many guys he expects’ will be added to Reserve/COVID-19:**

“I don’t know that. Everything is kind of hour-to-hour right now. We had our initial meetings this morning. We’ll just have to wait and see as the week progresses how that list either decreases or increases. We’re underway with all of the new protocols with the NFL. We’ve kind of spent most of the day today making sure that we’re underneath that umbrella of enhanced protocols and that we’re up to date on all the new protocols that are in place. We’ve spent the better part of the morning making sure, as an organization, that we’re airtight and doing the best we can moving forward this week. We’re going to look forward to keeping this place as safe as possible.”

#### **On if the new protocols:**

“I think it’s just good strategy, in terms of altering the return to play mechanisms, especially with the vaccinated. I think that they’ve done a really nice job of following the data, following the science, in terms of how this is expressing itself within the league. There have been so many asymptomatic positive cases. I think that what they’re trying to do is avoid the asymptomatic positives, those people not being able to play in the game. I think that altering their stance is what you need to do. As we talked about way back when is that this thing’s moving and you need to move with it. I think what the NFL is trying to do, and I think they’re doing a really good job of setting the leadership, is altering your strategy based on the facts that we know. That’s what we’re trying to do, as an organization, is to move with those facts. Hopefully, that can get us to a healthy end to the season and a positive postseason.”

#### **On T Rashawn Slater:**

“Rashawn will be back today at practice.”

#### **On S Derwin James Jr.:**

“Derwin is feeling better than he was last week. He’s going to be day-to-day with that hamstring. Like I said, he gave it a go with the game and competed, it just didn’t quite happen for him that night. He’s definitely better than he was at the game, but definitely day-to-day.”

#### **On CB Asante Samuel Jr.:**

“He’ll be out here at practice today. He’s still kind of day-to-day, but very, very close, near the end.”

#### **On RB Austin Ekeler:**

“Austin is day-to-day.”

**On WR Mike Williams has ‘anything lingering’:**

“It was just a contact play. Nothing is lingering, just soreness from the game. He’ll be out there at practice today. Day-to-day.”

**On WR Keenan Allen’s injury status:**

“Doing well, just soreness from the game. Really nice play, a nice route on that play, a really good run after the catch. He should be out there at practice today.”

**On the AFC playoff picture:**

“The standings are tight, and it’s been that way all season. When you look at the standings, you know that we’ve played most of those teams, so you know how competitive it is. Each team that’s on that list is in a fight right now. As the season has progressed, you’ve seen all of those teams kind of slide back and forth. I know that we feel really confident in the team that we have because I know that we’re battle-tested. Our message was that we needed to learn from the reality of the game against Kansas City. Like I said, I was really proud of the way our guys competed. Then, what we wanted to do is really focus in on those things that we can improve on from the game, for sure, that we can carry with us to Houston, and then really expound upon the strengths of the game because there were plenty of them. What we have to continue to do on this practice field, we have to continue to improve because I think that our team still has another gear it can get to. That’s your goal, as a coach, is for your team to truly play its best at the end. There are a lot of obstacles in everybody’s way right now. There are plenty of obstacles, depending on how you look at it. With obstacles, there is a lot of opportunity. We’re going to try and have a great week of practice this week. We have full respect for the Texans. You know what they just did last weekend. They have a lot of quality players. It’s going to be a tough game on Sunday.”

**On Texans QB Davis Mills:**

“I think that it says a lot about him that he earned the opportunity to start. I think there’s a reason that he’s earned the opportunity to start for that football team. I think that he clearly has the poise, he clearly has the leadership, he clearly has enough command for him to be out there first because I have so much respect for [Texans QB] Tyrod Taylor and his resume as an NFL starter. We all know that Tyrod, as a starter, has had a really quality record and is a quality quarterback, so for Davis to be the starter there, I just think it says a lot about him and where they think that he can go. Certainly, Sunday was a good illustration of that. I think that he played a very good game that allowed them to win. They scored over 30 points. There were a lot of big plays in the passing game. Just a lot of respect for him as a young player, being able to go into that type of situation and play quality football. I think it says a lot about him.”

**On Texans WR Brandin Cooks:**

“I have so much respect for his game, so much respect for his game. [Offensive Coordinator] Joe Lombardi is on our staff, who was with him in New Orleans. I know [Patriots Offensive Coordinator] Josh McDaniels, who was with him in New England. Then, being with [Rams Head Coach] Sean [McVay] last year, this guy has been an impact player every year that he’s been in the NFL. He has real deep speed. He has an innate ability to track the ball deep. Not only can he get deep, but he can track the ball deep. He’s an explosive playmaker. He’s a strong guy, not a tall guy, but a strong guy. He’s been productive everywhere he’s been. If you go back to New Orleans, there’s some stat where, like, he’s been 1,000-yard receiver — New Orleans, New England, L.A. Rams, Houston — and I don’t know how many people that have been like that in NFL history, that have gone through four teams and have been a 1,000-yard receiver. From being with Sean [McVay] last year, I know that he’s an amazing person, too. He has our full attention. He’s a guy that is a threat to score every time that he has the football.”

**On which players will contribute at EDGE with Bosa not playing this week:**

“It’s going to be a team operation. You’re going to be borrowing from a couple places. You’re just going to have to have a lot of hybrid-type groupings available. It’s going to be all hands on deck. That’s what the NFL is showing right now, that you need to have depth this time of year and you have to be able to figure it out. That’s exactly what we’re going to do.”

**On OLB Uchenna Nwosu:**

“This guy is one of the impact players on our defense right now. This guy’s having a fantastic season for us. I thought that he played as well as anyone on the field on Thursday. I thought he played as well as anybody on the field on Thursday. Just a quality performance, talking to the group again this morning and going out over it one more time. This guy is playing so well for us. I’m so proud of the guy. He is really a complete player, he can play in the run game and in the passing game. You saw how instinctive he was on that tipped interception; almost had one prior to that. This guy can find the football for you. There was this play on the goal line — they actually scored on it, when [Chiefs FB Michael] Burton scored — he actually fixed one of our problems. He went from the left side to the right side and he kind of solved that problem for us. We had an alignment error and this guy, in the middle of the play, went to the other side. I think it’s just an example of who he is and his toughness and then his play-making ability. He’s been a bright spot for us. I’m hoping for a big, big finish to the season for him.”

**On Nwosu’s development:**

“I think so much of his game is just confidence, confidence and the time on task. I knew that he was made for us. I did a lot of work on him in my first year in the league in Chicago. I really felt like, in our system, he could thrive because he can do all those jobs really well. Being with him every day in person, you know the character of the person. Uchenna has real toughness, real instincts, real play-making ability. He has that versatility that you need to play, that we like to play within our defense. I think his best football is still out there for him. He’s the type of guy that you need in a game like that against that type of quarterback. Uchenna has played well in both games against Kansas City. I think he’s having a great year for us. Excited for him down the stretch.”

**On TE Donald Parham Jr.:**

“I talked to D.P. just a little bit ago. I talked to him twice over the weekend. Number one, he is safe and sound. His mom and his girlfriend, Brittany, were with him throughout the weekend. He was under great care at UCLA Harbor [Medical Center]. We thank them for everything. [Sr. Director of Player Engagement] Arthur Hightower and Dr. Herb Martin were by his side a lot of the time. Thankful for all of those people that supported him; his position coach, [Tight Ends Coach] Kevin Koger, and his wife, Tiffany, our entire organization. It’s a great feeling to know that he’s safe and sound. Now, it’s just day-to-day. We’ll have more updates as they become available, but I know that his spirits are high. It’s been great to know that he’s well and that he’s on his way to recovery.”

**On if Parham is out of the hospital:**

“Yes. He was discharged Saturday.”

## **DEFENSIVE LINEMAN JUSTIN JONES**

### **On Thursday night's game:**

"That was pretty tough, it's pretty tough, it's pretty frustrating — but after of these beatings, we have learned a lot. We learned a lot about our team. We are very confident. I love who I am battling with, that's one big thing. I love the guys who I go to war with, the guys that I go to the trenches with, the guys who take the field with me when we go to battle, when we go to face these top-tier teams. It's a really good feeling knowing that you have guys who have your back, just like I have theirs. That's some of the biggest qualities of this team that I love so much. I know that when it comes down to the fourth quarter and it comes down to the wire and both teams are tired and both of you guys are fatigued and exhausted, mentally and physically, I know that my team is not quitting. That's one of the most amazing qualities and I love that."

### **On moving forward after Thursday's loss:**

"Going in and focusing on us. Focusing on us, the identity of our team. Correcting some of the things we need corrected and just keep moving on, keep getting better. One thing I can say about our team is that we do progress every week, we look better every week. Defense looks amazing every week, we are getting to that complete team and we are getting to that point to where whoever we play. They know that it's going to be a long day. Regardless of where we are at what time of day it is, it's going to be a long day. It's going to be four quarters, you are going to have to go through us to win. That's the biggest thing for us."

### **On the AFC playoff picture:**

"We have Houston this week. They are going to have to go through us. We are going to Houston and they are going to have to beat us. They are going to have to play their best ball to beat us, and we're coming with our best ball, as well. We have a chip on our shoulder, obviously, from last week, with a tough loss and stuff like that, but we have to move on. We are focused on the next week."

### **On if the 'mini-bye' following *Thursday Night Football* 'coming at a good time':**

"We knew when the Thursday game was going to be, so we were going to have to cross this bridge at some point. That's why I don't think too much about it. I just know that we had a Thursday night game and that it was fun. Obviously, it didn't turn out the way we wanted it to, but it was fun. We learned a lot and we played a hell of a game."

### **On the team's identity:**

"We have some warriors on our team. All 11 guys on the field, everybody not on the field who are cheering us on, our coaching staff, our players who dress, our players who don't dress, we have some true warriors on our team. That's our identity. We fight through adversity. When things don't look good, we know that we have each other's back. That's a really good quality to have."

### **On OLB Uchenna Nwosu:**

"Uchenna has been playing well, I feel like, all season. He's been rushing well. I feel like he's a really good player and a smart player, and that helps him make a lot of plays. He puts himself in great positions to make a lot of plays because he knows the game so well, which is a testament to how he works. He works really hard, studies a lot of films, stays on the field after practice to get extra work in. He's with [Outside Linebackers Coach] Jay Rodgers, working his hands a lot. He understands his fit in the scheme and his fit in the defense. He's taken on that role of being a dog and it's just really showing up right now to everybody else. As a team, we've seen it since game one."