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## Chargers Media Availability

**Monday, December 13, 2021 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.**

### HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

**On if T Rashawn Slater tested positive for COVID-19:**

“Yes, he tested positive this morning.”

**On the possibility of Slater being activated off of Reserve/COVID-19 prior to Thursday’s game:**

“There is a chance that he could play Thursday.”

**On ‘contingency plans’ for who would start at LT in replace of Slater:**

“That’s what we’ve been doing this morning, preparing those contingencies. I think that we’re working through that today. Then, tomorrow, when we get out there on the field for a walk-through, we’ll be able to express that plan and get it started for this week.”

**On the potential of moving G Matt Feiler to LT:**

“That would be a later contingency. It’s certainly an option. I don’t think that will be the primary option.”

**On the potential of G/T Brenden Jaimes ‘filling in’ at LT:**

“Right now, our intentions are for him to play guard. Then, he would be an emergency option at tackle.”

**On DL Linval Joseph ‘seeing limited snaps later in the game’:**

“It was more of a function of how the game went. We got control of the game pretty early. Then, based off of the groupings that we were playing, we had a plan for him going into the game about the specific groupings that he would play in. He did that. He was in the plan within those packages. Then, when the game sort of tilted in our favor, we felt that we could rest him, when it turned into a pass-rush game. When the score kind of tilted our way, we felt like we could kind of rest him a little bit for Thursday. He came out of the game healthy.”

**On injury updates following yesterday’s game:**

“[DL] Justin Jones made it out of the game OK. He was sore, but he should be at practice tomorrow. Then, [RB] Austin [Ekeler] is sore, but, again, he will be at practice, as well — soreness and a little bit of swelling, nothing major. Then, [S] Derwin [James Jr.] reported better today than he was yesterday. He’s day-to-day.”

**On taking a delay of game penalty on fourth-and-four in the red zone:**

“Just to create a little bit more room for [K] Dustin [Hopkins]. From that left hash, he has a particular comfort zone from that hash mark. We wanted to get him into that sweet spot. If we had drawn them offsides, fourth-and-two, maybe put some pressure on them by just getting a little bit closer in that half-the-distance type of deal. Maybe that gives you an opportunity to go for it. But, it was more or less to get to the comfort zone for him.”

**On if the initial third-down gameplan featured moving LB Kenneth Murray Jr. to edge rusher in an ‘adjusted nickel’ sub-package:**

“We had it up at the beginning of the week, to be truthful. We just ended up having Nas [S Nasir Adderley] take Derwin’s spot and [CB] Kemon [Hall] take Nas’ spot. It was a grouping that we liked, in terms of getting playmakers on the field, getting speed on the field. From an identification standpoint, getting some things dictated. Then, having some flexibility to play some different covered systems, different pressure systems, then also isolate some of the blockers on our interior with a four-man rush plan. We feel like that is a nice grouping for us moving forward.”

**On ‘if it was a called quarterback sneak on the procedure penalty’:**

“Yes, that was a called quarterback sneak.”

**On ‘the response’ to last night’s postgame recovery treatment:**

“It was ultra-positive. I was super proud of our performance staff; [Head Athletic Trainer] Damon Mitchell, [Director of Sports Performance] Anthony Lomando, [Head Strength and Conditioning Coach] Jonathan Brooks, [Team Dietician] Paige Crawford. It was all hands on deck. Our doctors were there. It was kind of remarkable to see people working like that, just being there for our players and getting that recovery process started the day of the game, not waiting until Monday. I’m just really proud of our team and proud of our players. I think it’s one of those things where you’re just trying to create the winning edges for your guys and show them that we have a plan for them and that we’re going to pour everything we can into them so that they can be at their best. Hopefully, it helps our guys be at their best for Thursday night. Like I said, I’m really proud of all of the work of so many that made it happen. Before I went to see you guys, one of the stations was happening in the room next to you guys. It was a really cool thing, as a coach, to see so many people working hard after the game.”

**On ‘if this week is a man versus man matchup’:**

“It’s probably a little bit of mano a mano. Both teams have kind of defined themselves, expressed themselves. Then, there’s a little bit of that chess match, the game within the game. That’s what probably has given both teams a chance to be so successful. I know that we’re excited to compete and have full respect for the team that we’re playing.”

**On his ‘talking points’ to the team for this upcoming week:**

“I’m kind of working through that right now. We haven’t met with these guys yet, so I think that I have some time. I’ll definitely let you know what those talking points are when they happen because I’m still working through it right now. But I think that I’m just always going to start with the truth. I think you just start with that this is just a very dynamic football team in all three phases. They have outstanding specialists, outstanding return guys. Their defense is playing at an extremely high level; their front seven is, in particular. They’re covering, I think, a lot more confidently than at the beginning of the season. I feel like they’re playing as a team on defense. You guys have heard me talk about the discovery process. I think that that’s something that they went through this season. I think [Chiefs Defensive Coordinator] Steve [Spagnuolo] has done a great job with that defense in the last however many weeks, really figuring out that sweet spot for his team. On offense, all those guys over there that are such matchup players, they’re doing a nice job mixing the run with the pass. [Chiefs QB] Patrick [Mahomes] is playing a really, really high-level quarterbacking. You have the knockout punch threat every snap with that group. They’re playing at a really high level, playing with a ton of confidence. 3-4 went to 9-4 pretty fast, and that’s because of what they are capable of. I think that you see the full version of that team. That’s why Thursday night is going to be such a good matchup.”

**On if the team currently is ‘where he envisioned the team’ at this point of the season:**

“I expected us to be in the [playoff] hunt, that’s for sure, and I expected us to be able to win any game that we played. That was my expectation coming here. That was my vision going into this position, that we would be able to go into any game we play and be able to win it, no matter who it is, no matter where it is. I feel like we’ve demonstrated that. I’ve talked to about us being a work in progress and I think that we’ve had to fight really hard this season to define who we are and where we are. We still have a ton of games left to continue to do that. I think that this is just another game to really prove ourselves and measure ourselves. Obviously, we know that there is a lot at stake with it being a division game and an AFC game. It’s in our stadium, so I’m excited to compete in front of our fans. You’re trying to measure yourself against the best competition in the league and this team is certainly one of the best teams in the league.”

**On if he is ‘worried’ about the increase of positive COVID-19 test results across the league:**

“Not really. It’s just a part of life. It’s just part of the world that we’re living in. you just make your adjustments when things happen and you keep it moving. I know that we’re doing our best, within our ecosystem, to make sure that our ecosystem here at the building is safe and that we follow the protocols the best that we can and that we know how. I think that you also just accept that there’s the reality of the world that we live in. That’s just a part of life. You don’t make it more or less than what it is, you treat it with the type of respect that it deserves. That’s what we’re trying to do. We’re trying to do the best we can. Then, when things like that happen, you make your adjustments and you keep it moving.”

**On the Chiefs defense ‘completely shifting over the last couple of months’:**

“I know that they got [Chiefs DE] Frank Clark back. Frank coming back is such a huge thing because he’s one of the dynamic [pass-] rushers in the game. He has real toughness and physicality and play-making ability. Moving [Chiefs DT] Chris Jones back inside, where he’s one of the dominant players in the league — this guy is a premium player. They’ve been able to onboard a couple of players. I think, more than anything, it’s just getting comfortable within their coverage systems and what they like to play. Sometimes that takes some time to figure out exactly what that is. I think that they’ve really taken that discovery process and have gotten their guys into rhythm, where their guys are playing those coverages that they are comfortable with and that they’re executing. I think that their front is playing really. They’re rushing the passer at a high level, putting pressure on the quarterback. Their linebacking crew, they have some young linebackers that I think are playing really well. Those guys are playing at a high level. They’re just playing team defense. The spike in their good play is just that they’re playing together in all three phases.”

**On if CB Asante Samuel Jr. has been ‘cleared medically’:**

“Not yet. He’s still working through the final parts of it. He’s day-to-day. We’ll get you that information as it becomes available.”

**On the offense:**

“I have a lot of confidence in our offensive football team. I feel like we’ve played a lot of different types of games against a lot of different types of defenses. I have so much confidence in us going into every game. What I also have full respect for is how well [the Chiefs] are playing. It’s going to be a tough game. It’s a tough matchup because they’re playing at a high level. We feel like we’re playing at a high level, so there’s going to be that chess match, that game within the game. In big games like this, it’s who is going to play with more energy and with a higher level of execution? That’s always where the game is. I think that it’s going to be a great matchup for both teams because I think that both teams are playing well.”

**On preparing for a Week 15 matchup:**

“We know what point of the season we’re in. We know that playing on Thursday night in front of the world, that there’s that great opportunity. I think that we’re just excited to dive into this preparation so that we can take advantage of that. You can’t take advantage of the opportunity if you’re not ready for it. We’re trying to prepare the best we can, really pour into these guys on a short timeline and make sure that we’re taking advantage of every moment that we can. That way, on Thursday night, we can try and perform at our best.”

**On WR Jalen Guyton’s ‘emergence’:**

“I think it is us getting him lined up in positions for him to really take advantage of who he is as a receiver. I think that Justin [Herbert] has gained a lot of confidence in him. I know that they played together last year, but I think in some of the different things that we ask him to do within this offense, I think that there’s that comfort zone in some of the routes that Jalen is featured in, I think some of those locations, those spots on the field where Justin can really feel confident throwing it to him in a tight space. Jalen has improved as a receiver. He’s becoming a more complete receiver. I think a lot of people just played him to run deep. If everyone knows that you’re running deep, then you’re an easy guy to defend, no matter how fast you are. I think what Jalen has done a nice job of, and why I’ve liked him from the beginning, is because I think Jalen can be a complete receiver. He is a fast receiver, but I also think that he has enough route detail. He has enough position flex that he can get open in a lot of different places. He has good hands. He’s on that quest and journey to becoming a complete player. I know that Justin continues to have more confidence in him.”

**On ‘if there were any breakdowns’ on P Ty Long’s seven-yard punt in the fourth quarter:**

“One breakdown. [LB] Amen [Ogbongbemiga], on the left side, blocked the wrong player.”

## **OUTSIDE LINEBACKER JOEY BOSA**

### **On winning each of the team's last two games:**

"Two big wins. I think that we're trending in the right direction. We've had some ups and downs this year, but I think that we're peaking at the right time. This is obviously a huge game coming up this Thursday. Coming off these last two wins, we're feeling pretty good."

### **On creating takeaways 'rather than just going for the sack':**

"It's something I just focus on way more. Every time I get an opportunity, I'm going for the ball. I think that's how you really change the game; sacks are good, but being able to get those turnovers and get it in the hands of [QB] Justin [Herbert] is way more helpful in getting those wins. In the past, in that opportunity, I would have probably just went for a big hit, when I was a rookie or in my second year, but now, I'd rather just reach out and take the ball because it's a lot simpler and you get the forced fumble. Luckily, J.J. [DL Justin Jones] was there. We did a good job communicating. We were going to run a game on that play, but I iced it and [Jones] kind of knew that I had a plan to get there. He just bull-rushed and was ready to recover. I was over there celebrating while they were fighting for the ball, so I was no help with that."

### **On preparing for the Chiefs:**

"They're in a similar position as us. They're playing good ball right now. I think they have a six-game win streak, or whatever it is right now. It's the chiefs; they have [Chiefs QB Patrick] Mahomes, they have a bunch of weapons on the outside. It's always going to be a challenge. It's always been a challenge playing those guys. Thursday night, after a quick turnaround and, obviously, primetime, it's going to be pretty tough. Luckily, this game, I think a lot of us came out feeling pretty good. It's definitely the best I've felt, probably, going into a Thursday game I can remember."

### **On 'slowing down' the Chiefs' offense:**

"I think that we had a good plan going into the last time we played them, and we executed it pretty well. I think we need to do the same. Obviously, the point of emphasis is [Mahomes] and keeping him inside of the pocket so that he can't hurt you with his feet. Once he gets out and gets scrambling, that's where he could really work his magic, find guys open and just fit it in there, like we've seen him do a million times. He's special, even if he had a few rough games at the start of the season. The kind of player that he is, he's one of the best in the world. Obviously, the emphasis is going to be on keeping him in the pocket and trying to limit the damage because he's obviously going to make some plays happen."

### **On if Thursday's game 'is like a playoff game':**

"It's a huge game for both of us. It definitely puts either of us in a great position to win the division. We're playing well, both of us, right now. As everybody knows, it's a big game and it's going to feel like a playoff game on Thursday."

### **On Thursday night games:**

"I don't think that they make much sense for player health, but it is entertainment and that's what we're here for. Luckily, we came out feeling pretty good after this game. I've never really enjoyed having to play on Thursday. Usually, by Thursday, I'm barely starting to feel a little bit better going into the weekend. It's kind of tough, but the team has been doing a great job, they really put an emphasis on recovery after the game. We were all back there doing the ice tub and getting some massages, flushes and all of that. We're doing our best to get ready for it."

### **On 'how his body has responded' to the postgame recovery treatment last night:**

"I usually do that every postgame, but I think just the limited reps, probably. I felt like we were hardly out there at all. There were a lot of three-and-outs. The offense did a great job of holding on to the ball. Towards the end, luckily, usually this happen often, but we had a nice, big lead and we were able to put some of the backups in and get some rest, with the plan that we obviously have that Thursday game coming up. We let up a little bit at the end there, but I think it was for the benefit of getting some rest."

**On the shortened week of preparation ahead:**

“We both have to deal with it. Obviously, if they were coming off of a bye [week], that would be a pretty big advantage. We both had tough games this last week. I keep saying that I feel pretty good, so I’m pretty excited to go, then have an extra-long week to recover. My whole plan, going into last week, I was really hoping that I came out feeling pretty good. I know that if I get through this game, we’re going to have the extra-long week to recover, then just a short little burst to finish off the season. I’m feeling good and feeling excited about these games coming up.”

**On his strip-sack:**

“Fourth-and-long, it was an obvious passing down. They had to get it or it was out ball, so I knew that there was a good chance they were going to chip block by a running back or tight end, so I was like, ‘Alright, I’m rushing.’ He called a game for both sides. In my end, I was like, ‘This is my last shot to get to the quarterback.’ Honestly, I thought that was going to be the last shot that I’d have. I really tried to get off of the ball well. For a second, I honestly thought that the play was whistled dead because he was just standing there and didn’t even see me. I was like, ‘Wait, he doesn’t even see me?’ I was like, ‘Alright, I’ll take it.’ Then, I just took the ball. It worked out. I was really happy that I was able to pull one out there.”