

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

## Chargers Week 14 Media Availability

Wednesday, December 7, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

### HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

**On if the team is conducting a walk-through today:**

“We are. Walk-through only today.”

**On injury updates regarding WR Mike Williams, C Corey Linsley and T Trey Pipkins III:**

“Mike Williams, you will see him at practice this week. Corey [Linsley] is progressing through the protocol. Trey Pipkins [III] will not be at practice tomorrow when we go full.”

**On Linsley’s progression through the concussion protocol:**

“You can’t be too specific when they are in the protocol. You can’t be specific, but he is progressing through it.”

**On if Linsley is still in the concussion protocol:**

“He is. Progressing through it.”

**On S Derwin James Jr.’s injury status and when the injury initially occurred:**

“From the Arizona game. It’s the same residual from that game.”

**On if he is ‘concerned’ regarding James’ injury:**

“We’ll see. He’s going to be day-to-day.”

**On an injury update regarding DL Sebastian Joseph-Day:**

“He will be day-to-day, as well, with his knee sprain.”

**On the team’s current projected postseason standings:**

“We’re a game out in the AFC. We have to search to play our best football down the stretch and find that formula each week. I think that’s what we have had to do all season is really week to week, we have really had to adapt every week to a new week. That’s how the NFL is and that is how this week is going to be versus Miami, is finding that formula for this game with the group that we have that is going to be at the game. We’re going to be working hard at practice, get our team back physically for this game, and then go try to play our best.”

**On ‘how he has managed his frustrations’:**

“You just know that it’s part of the NFL. You do it as a team. You don’t do it alone. You surround yourself with a tremendous coaching staff, with a tremendous group of players. I think that’s how you build a team to get through the NFL season. I like who we get to compete with every time we go out there. We have needed so many people to do that this year. There is a bright spot that way, that we have really learned about a lot of our players through this season. Hopefully, we can get more back here down the stretch, and, like I said, play our best ball.”

**On Dolphins QB Tua Tagovailoa:**

“He’s playing the position. He is playing fast. I think you see quick decision-making. They have really surrounded him with a lot of weapons. I think that they have really crafted an offense that plays to his strengths, as a player. I think that you are seeing that, just him playing with confidence, good decision-making, and getting the ball to his playmakers. It has been consistent throughout the season. Like I said, they are a very dangerous skill position group.”

**On ‘the key for the defense’ this week against the Dolphins’ offense:**

“You have to put a roof on the explosive plays. They can get them a lot of different ways with a variety of players. They have outstanding team speed. They have a lot of guys who can get deep within the coverage. They also have guys who can catch it short, and then turn short plays into big plays. They have two outstanding runners, who are also good pass receivers. They have been in that offense for a lot of years now. [Dolphins RB Raheem] Mostert and [Dolphins RB Jeff] Wilson [Jr.] are really quality players. Then, [Dolphins TE Mike] Gesicki is a big-play tight end. He can really make plays in the deep part of the field. They have outstanding skill players and that is why you are seeing production from their offense.”

**On if he ‘talks to’ QB Justin Herbert ‘about the 2020 NFL Draft class and comparisons’:**

“The thing that I talk to [QB] Justin [Herbert] about, in terms of comparisons, is himself. I measure his game against himself because that is where I think the comparison should lie, in his own game. I truly think he is one of the unique players in the league to ever have played. I just think we focus on his game and where he can go with his game and how he can improve, and, always as a quarterback, as a leader, competitor. That’s what we focus on with him and all of our players.”

**On how ‘different’ the Dolphins utilize WR Tyreek Hill compared to the Chiefs:**

“They have done a good job of tailoring the offense to his strengths, incorporating some of the things that, I think, he has trademarked in the NFL that is kind of unique to him and what he can do. They have incorporated some of that. Then, certainly, they have crafted an offense that they have done in the past where [Dolphins Head Coach] Mike [McDaniel] has been, where [Dolphins Offensive Coordinator] Frank [Smith] has been. They are utilizing him as you should. They are really featuring him as a guy who can get the ball in a variety of ways, and then, obviously, clear out a lot of coverage for other people. He’s having an outstanding season.”

**On former Chargers Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line Coach and current Dolphins Offensive Coordinator Frank Smith:**

“I am really happy for Frank [Smith] and Kelly. He was outstanding for us and did a great job with our O-line — with our offense, in general. Really helped us have a prolific season last year and did a good job developing his group. He’s a great friend. I really respect him as a competitor. He has done a good job there, joining up with Mike [McDaniel] and getting that group going, too. It’s going to be a good matchup for us on Sunday.”

**On Dolphins LB Bradley Chubb:**

“He just brings a lot of championship-type experience and high-level play. You can really trust who he is going to be on gameday. Not only the production on the field, but the type of leader that he is, too. I thought it was a really good move by them to trade for him because it really gives them a front-line EDGE player to complement the other good players that they have on defense. Again, he is one of the top players in the league.”

**On if Herbert ‘is better now than he was a year ago’:**

“He is a lot better player. Not even close. Not even close. Not even close. Every game, he improves. Production is a very misleading way to judge somebody, in terms of just their raw numbers. It’s how they are playing and what they have gone through. He is getting better every single week at becoming a pro quarterback. He is playing at a very high level for us right now. The last three weeks, really since the bye, playing at a very high level for us. He is practicing well. Playing better and better. His best football is out there for him down the stretch.”

**On if 'taking sacks' over the last few weeks has 'had an impact' on Herbert:**

"No. Number one, he is not taking sacks. I think that would imply that he is holding on to the ball or something like that, and that's not what is happening. He is making very good decisions. You have to judge a quarterback by their decision-making. I think that is number one with a quarterback, is that there is a decision to be made on every play for him. When he gets a play call, 'Hey, is there a run, a kill, an alert on this play? Hey, if it's a pass or an RPO, am I going through this progression? Am I making the right decision?' That is the thing that, I think, when you look at his being able to protect the football, I think that is something that truly makes him special is he is a very good decision-maker and that gives you a chance in every game. We are plus-four in the NFL in takeaway margin right now. We are plus-four. We are in the top five in the NFL. What that does is it gives you a chance to win every game that you play, regardless of what your injury report is. It's that if you are going to hang in there in that place, you will have a chance in every game that you play. Beyond how special of a passer he is, special of a player he is, he is an outstanding decision-maker and he has really given us a chance in all of these games that have been super tight here since the bye. They have all been tight games. You have to have premium decision-makers in order to have a chance to finish at the end."

**On if there is a 'benefit' to playing the 49ers offense and 'using that game as preparation' Dolphins Head Coach Mike McDaniel's offense:**

"They are really different, offensively. They are a very different skill group. San Francisco, the way that they are constructed, is probably like a 180 from the way Miami is constructed. There are elements to their offense that you recognize, for sure — concepts, run and pass — but how that is expressed from a personnel standpoint is much different. That is a sign of a good coach. Mike [McDaniel] and Frank [Smith] are doing a good job. It's going to be a tough challenge for us on Sunday and it's going to bring out the best in our group."

**On specific areas were Herbert 'is a better quarterback' compared to last year:**

"He has experienced a lot of adversity in his first two years. I just think there is more that has happened in all ways around him. I think there has been a cumulative effect this year that, probably, didn't exist in the first two [years]. I just think he is improving as a player, in all ways; the way he is seeing the game, the way he understands the offense, I think the way he throws the football, him understanding his fundamentals, him understanding the timing and rhythm of a play and how that is impacted by who you are playing with and what is on the other side on the defense. I have seen him make great strides in playing the game the way it needs to be played. Sometimes, you don't get to play the game the way you want to play it and you have to learn that as a quarterback. I think that he has done a great job of staying disciplined and true to how the game needs to play and that is something that, I think, is a very difficult trait to find in a quarterback is you hear that all of the time of like trying to do too much or force something to happen. That is something that he doesn't do. He really plays the game straight up. Like I said, he is getting better every time he goes out there. His best football is ahead of him this season."

**On if Herbert 'has more freedom to call plays' this season:**

"He takes more ownership of the offense every single time he goes out there. There is also a progression to that, and he is earning more of that every time and he is comfortable. He did a really good job in the Las Vegas game of making some critical adjustments. He did it in the Arizona game, which was a heavy blitz game. The more you see as a player, especially at that position, the more experiences that you can bank on, the better that you are going to play over time. That's what is happening for him right now. Confidence comes from experience. Experience, sometimes it's tough, and sometimes it's positive, but experience, either way. He's working through that right now, as a player."

**On Herbert 'leading the league in completions outside of the tackle box':**

"Since we've been here, there has been plenty of design outside of the framework of the tackle box. Then, certainly, he has that ability to create outside of the tackle box when there's pressure. He's very accurate on the move. You try to do that as much as you can in the gameplan to change the launch point of the quarterback, within the framework of the offense, so that you're moving the launch point. Sometimes, you may play a team that doesn't allow you to do that as much, but you're always trying to do that because that's a big part of protecting your quarterback and forcing the defense to defend every blade grass. Then, he also has that element, outside of the rhythm of the play, where he can create, and then be accurate, in the deep part of the field. You saw that the other day with Keenan [Allen]; you saw it in two-minute to Keenan. He has had that ability his whole career. That's something he really can't teach. He just has that ability. He's a playmaker, and we're going to try and continue to feature him the best way we know."

**On if Herbert's ability 'causes defenses to pressure less':**

"No doubt. I think that you saw that last year. We went from one of the most pressured teams in the NFL, last year, to one of the least, in my first year. A big part of that is the types of passes that you implement; changing the rhythm and timing of the play where you have a mix of quick passes, movement passes, deep passes, well-protected passes. I think that that's all part of what you're trying to do when you're building an offense, to keep your quarterback protected the best you can. When there's attrition up front, again, in order to move the ball, you can't just limit yourself to that way of playing because you have to move the football. We are always going to try and think of [Herbert] first in everything that we do, from a protection standpoint."

**On if the team's 'mindset' is that 'each game the rest of the season is a playoff game':**

"After the bye — once you get past halfway — every game, it means a lot. It's not like the Atlanta game didn't mean as much as this one, or the Kansas City game didn't mean as much as the Las Vegas game — they all mean a lot down the stretch. Every game is positioning you for the postseason. I think that what we're trying to establish here is that every week, we want there to be that same approach. Every week has the same approach. The NFL demands your respect that way. That's what we're trying to do is have consistency in our approach and find a way to play our best football down the stretch because that's what needs to happen in order for you to make a run."

**On S Derwin James Jr. being named the team's nominee for the Walter Payton Man of the Year:**

"Derwin [James Jr.], I think, is the ultimate representation of that award. That award, to me, represents the very best players in the NFL — what you see on the field — and then the very, very best man off the field. I think that his versatility as a player and his playmaking ability — how he does it, how he expresses it so many different ways — that's kind of how he is off the field. He doesn't just have one thing that he does, that he's committed to, he's committed to helping a lot of different mission statements. I think that when you see his nomination and what he did, just in one calendar year, it's humbling. To think about all of the things that he's done to use his platform to affect people, and in the variety of ways that he's done it. I think that that's also special, when you can impact a lot of different groups of people. That's how he is on our football team. He doesn't just impact the defensive players, he impacts offensive players, kicking game, veteran players, rookie players, coaches, media. He has that magnetic way about him. That's what that award represents to me, and I'm really proud that he is our nominee."