



**NFL PLAYERS**  
ASSOCIATION

George Atallah: [00:00](#)

Do you want to kick us off?

DeMaurice Smith: [00:02](#)

Hey, happy holidays, everyone. Thanks for joining us again, George. Everybody else. Thanks for putting this together. Let me run through a little bit of data as we always do to start, and then we'll turn it over for questions. Data for the time period between December 13th and December 19th. Our overall positivity rate remains at 0.11, 0.11%. That's unchanged from last week. Our incidents rate of 0.65% is also unchanged from last week. Just to focus on the players for a second. Our positivity rate is 0.09% again, unchanged, and our incidence rate of 0.59% for players is also unchanged. Staff positivity, breaking it down for the staff is 0.12%. That's unchanged from last week and the incidence rate of 0.68% for the staff has also unchanged from last week.

DeMaurice Smith: [01:12](#)

A couple of things, just macro picture 41,000 tests were administered to players. A total of almost 7,000 test administered to players in team personnel from for the same time period, the 13th to the 19th. There were 14 new confirmed positive tests among players, 31 positive tests among personnel. As far as the metrics are concerned are there any questions? I was going to kick off a little bit into as we are, focused on the last remaining weeks of the regular season, but before we get into that, any questions about the test, testing, test results? All right.

DeMaurice Smith: [02:11](#)

We are in the final stages of the season. As we have said almost every week, this is a week to week endeavor there. It has been a masterful job, frankly, by the players and their leadership and the league. George and I have scanned or we actually, he does more than scan. I scan the clips and the only thing I would want to, probably set the table a little bit better than where we left it last week, this has been a, literally a Herculean effort by the players, by the league, staff, coaches and everyone between tier one and tier three. And I know that there have been times where we have had to dust it up with the league and, our relationship union and management is necessarily confrontational, but this has





## NFL PLAYERS

ASSOCIATION

DeMaurice Smith:

[03:16](#)

been something that everyone has accomplished extremely well together.

We knew it would be tough. We knew it wouldn't be perfect. We started off the season with a mission in mind to accomplish a number of goals. And yes, sometimes those goals, if you isolate them can be viewed as somewhat binary and conflicting with each other, but the goal has been to accomplish all of them. And as we enter the last few weeks, we have to double down our efforts to get through the season and also to finish out the playoffs and the super bowl. But I would be remissed, especially at a time where we try to give thanks for a number of things. I'd be remissed to talk about the effort by everybody on the league, union and partner side. With that, I'll turn it over to George or to J.C who wanted to add anything.

George Atallah:

[04:11](#)

Yeah. Jason, you want to add some thoughts about heading into the home stretch and some of the extra vigilance that is needed?

J.C. Tretter:

[04:17](#)

Yeah. I think we've talked about it quite a bit. This is all going to come down to a 100% compliance and we've said it week after week, that that's what we need. And the other big thing is this is something that there's no, momentum doesn't help. It's making the right decisions every single day. And what you've done in the past has no bearing on what's going to happen in the future. Making the right decisions, following the protocols a 100%, that's what gets us to the finish line. So we are close. We are not there yet. Like De said, this has been an extraordinary job done by everybody involved. Our players have done amazing getting through this season so far, we still have some work to do, and it's going to continue to take all of us to get to the end.

George Atallah:

[05:06](#)

All right. Just a fun fact for those of you guys who are interested in numbers. Total remaining and two weeks left in the season, total remaining combined salary and bonus money left to players is equal to \$446 million dollars in salaries and bonuses are left to be earned over these last two weeks. We always mind the data and want to be transparent with everybody about where we stand, \$446 million dollars in salary and bonus left on the table for players in the last two weeks of the season. Before we get to questions, there is something that flew under the radar that we think is



**NFL PLAYERS**  
ASSOCIATION

really important on the health and safety front that we wanted to mention. And that was the new and revolutionary ACL procedure that has been approved by the FDA. And De I think it's worth getting into the history of that and what it means, not just for NFL players, but for athletes and those who suffer from that type of injury around the world.

DeMaurice Smith: [06:16](#)

Yeah. And I mean, it's a little bit of, I'll tap in the older people on the call. It's a little bit of jumping into Mr. Peabody's Wayback Machine, but a long time ago, 2011, we created a collective bargaining agreement where we, the players decided that it was important to fund a systematic approach to player health and safety. What grew out of that was the Harvard medical study for football players. Some of you might remember that we took a little bit of heat when we set that up because it was designed to be a joint project between the league and the players. The league wanted to go one way. We wanted to go another way. We made a decision that we wouldn't partner with some people because we wanted the focus to be on the health and safety of NFL players.

DeMaurice Smith: [07:22](#)

And I'm proud of that. I'm proud of the leadership who came up with the idea to do that because it was revolutionary. No one else has done it since then. Fast forward to 2020, nearly a decade later that study and a partnership with the NFL players association resulted in not only a study, but an investment into revolutionary technology that would grow or regrow torn ACL tissue in the human body. As someone who has had his fair share of knee reconstructions, putting into perspective, there's hundreds of thousands of those injuries every year. A lot of the recovery time, a lot of the problems that result from those injuries and surgery is doctors are left with utilizing other pieces of tissue from other parts of the body or using cadaver tissue or given the first one that I had way back in 1982, I think they just used random pieces of plastic, but we're now at a point where for, that the FDA has approved this technology that we were fortunate enough to partner with where in an injured person, they can actually regrow that individual's ACL.

DeMaurice Smith: [08:50](#)

This will cut down on rejections, cut down on the amount of rehab time. And we also believe that it will make the knees stronger. But again, hats off to the people 10 years ago, who had the vision and the level of



**NFL PLAYERS**  
ASSOCIATION

leadership, player leadership to make a decision of not only that we were going to invest in a player only study, but to have the foresight that we were going to go at it with world-class doctors, world-class researchers, but also have the vision to push the envelope on things that we know will have a lasting impact, not only for NFL players, but to the myriad and hundreds of thousands of people who suffer from these injuries every year. So it is a fantastic story. And I want to get my hat off to Sean Sansiveri, Tom Mayer, and others on staff here. And the folks at Harvard who championed this, we're looking at something that will be revolutionary for years to come and congratulations.

George Atallah: [10:01](#)

Thanks for that. And I dropped the anybody who wants more information on that, or wants to do a deeper dive, please reach out to me, I'll be around. I dropped the initial release from the FDA and the chat. With that, Masky you have your virtual hand raised first, go ahead.

Masky: [10:20](#)

[inaudible 00:10:20] De or J.C, when the club, when the league sent a memo to the clubs, the local bubbles during the post-season, it said no mandatory local bubbles, but it said voluntary local bubbles were allowable. I just wanted to know if have you spoken to players on likely play off teams yet about that issue, whether they would be amenable to that, or they even want to initiate that themselves and giving them any guidance or gotten any feel for how many teams that is a possibility [inaudible 00:10:48] ?

DeMaurice Smith: [10:52](#)

You broke up a little bit at the end. I think you were asking J.C and I, at the end if we had any conversations with players or playoff teams. Was that it?

Masky: [11:02](#)

Right. [Inaudible 00:11:03]

DeMaurice Smith: [11:06](#)

Got it. I'll let J.C jump in. I mean, we've had general discussions with our players about the no mandatory bubble scenario. And we've had those conversations with the league as far as conversations among players, I'll leave that to J.C.

J.C. Tretter: [11:25](#)

Yeah. I think when we start talking about voluntary bubbles, it comes down to, again, the same situation we're in now, which is personal accountability and doing the right things. And just adding the term bubble to something doesn't mean it's safer. You're just calling



**NFL PLAYERS**  
ASSOCIATION

it a bubble. And the way I look at a virtual bubble is it just dictates where you would sleep at night, where I'll go to the hotel to go to bed. But when you leave the facility, there are plenty of hours to, do you want to go visit family? If you want to do this. You're still out in the community in that world. So I'm not sure if it would be effective that way, because again, just like we're relying on now, we're relying on personal accountability. We're relying on doing the right thing, following the protocols, both at the facility and away from the facility. So I'm not sure if much changes, even having a team institute, a virtual bubble.

George Atallah: [12:16](#)

Ben, go ahead.

Ben: [12:23](#)

Hey guys, thanks for doing this again today. I know we're talking about COVID. I was hoping to ask you about the news you guys made last week, when you announced that the social security offset to disability benefits would be extended by three years, you pushed the deadline back for three years. It was obviously widely praised your decision to do that. And I'm just curious, how did you guys come up with the funding to be able to do this?

DeMaurice Smith: [12:55](#)

For the, well it's a benefit cost, so it's not so much a question of coming up with a way to fund it. It will just continue to be funded out of player benefits going forward. So to put it another way it eliminated whatever costs savings there would have been, had the offset gone into practice. Does that answer your question?

Ben: [13:34](#)

Yeah. Someone suggested to me, maybe you guys had to move money around from different NFL PA properties or things of that nature, but just I'm curious how you did it. Because, obviously this was an important thing for a lot of former players.

DeMaurice Smith: [13:48](#)

Yeah. And I mean, look, our leadership is invested in doing the right thing and the idea, I mean, going back to the history of the social security offset, just to completely bore the people who are here, the social security offset issue is tied to the decision by my predecessor, Gene Upshaw, to allow people to qualify for total and permanent disability, if they qualified for permanent disability under the social security system.



**NFL PLAYERS**  
ASSOCIATION

DeMaurice Smith:

[14:27](#)

So the history of that was the union realizing that fewer former players were able to avail themselves of total and permanent disability because the system that had been set up by the plan 20 years ago even longer than that was not adequately providing for players who were suffering from disability. So it came into existence from the union at the beginning, as we moved forward and more and more people have moved into the system, the league had a concern that there were people who were qualifying for TMP, who under the social security definition, who may not be completely and totally permanently disabled under the NFL system.

DeMaurice Smith:

[15:25](#)

So when we did the new CBA, the idea was to come up with a better plan to ensure that the people who needed the disability payments got it. And to make sure that as we go forward, that we we're making prudent decisions about rewarding or compensating the people who were disabled because of football. So we're going to continue to work on a plan that does that. The only thing that we decided to do was push out the time that we were going to be taking away the offset until the time that we will come up with a more comprehensive whole body plan.

Ben:

[16:10](#)

Great. Thanks for that.

George Atallah:

[16:12](#)

And J.C, I mean, recent history, give everybody a flavor of how this came about.

J.C. Tretter:

[16:20](#)

Yeah. Our executive committee, as well as our player leadership has been very passionate about this as you from the start. And we've heard from our former player community, and we understand that this is something that impacts our most vulnerable former players and their families. So this is something that we're really happy with, that we were able to get this delayed till 2024 to give us that time to find a more equitable solution for those men and for their families.

George Atallah:

[16:49](#)

Okay. Nancy Armour, you're up.

Nancy Armour:

[16:56](#)

Yeah. Thanks for doing this guys. This is for J.C, it's a little bit off topic, but given the COVID restrictions that you guys are all under, I'm wondering what kind of conversations you've had, whether it's with your own, just your teammates or whether the membership as a whole about charity activities or charitable activities at



**NFL PLAYERS**  
ASSOCIATION

this time of year. This is typically a very busy time for you all in terms of charitable efforts, and obviously I know that that has had to change. So I'm just kind of wondering what, if any discussions you guys have had about that?

J.C. Tretter: [17:26](#)

Yeah. I know, it's tough because this is the year we do such a great job players giving back to the community. And it's always awesome to watch, especially this time of year. We have events with players, shop with the pro and bringing in youth and giving them all have a bunch of pros, show up a bunch of the teammates and walk them around the store and buy them their Christmas gifts, and due to the protocols that stuff has to change. Just like everything this year, you kind of have to evolve and change what you want to do.

J.C. Tretter: [17:56](#)

I think our men, as a whole are still looking for ways to give back and do the things they've always done, especially this time of year. So a lot of it just working with guys, if guys have questions, helping them find a way to do what they want to do that fit within the protocol and make sure they keep themselves and everybody who would be showing up there safe. That's a priority as well. But our men have always done such a great job giving back. Now it's just helping them through that and giving them ideas on how to best do that in this world.

Nancy Armour: [18:29](#)

Great. Thanks.

George Atallah: [18:31](#)

And a note on that and Nancy, our union, our community MVP program, we do virtual events with youth in the schools every single week with the winner and players who want to participate to spread some virtual cheer in this environment as well. Michael Phillips, and then Ken Belson.

Michael Phillip...: [18:54](#)

Thanks for doing this. With the Dwayne Haskins situation in Washington, I was wondering if you guys could take me through what your role is, as far as looking into that and working with the league on potential repercussions there.

DeMaurice Smith: [19:08](#)

The role that we serve is when an incident like this comes up, obviously it's going to be investigated by the team, investigated by the league. We always believe in having constructive conversations with our membership



**NFL PLAYERS**  
ASSOCIATION

as well, I won't get into those because that's private, but after the league conducts its investigation and the team conducts its investigation then if it moves further along the disciplinary chain of events, then the union could have a role in that, depending on what the team or the league decides.

Michael Phillip...: [19:51](#)

And is there any communication with the players as far as, examples or, I don't know, is this a thing that has been common or uncommon perhaps in this season?

DeMaurice Smith: [20:05](#)

You've probably been on these calls with me before. I never go into conversations about the talks that we have with our players. We've got a very strong, very good player leadership, and we get on calls approximately every month or every other week. It seems right to talk about what we all need to do, think about in order to get through the season. And J.C has led a number of those calls, not only with our player reps, but with our star players. And look, we all understand where the risks are. We understand the importance of as J.C kicked off with 100% compliance, and we just try to keep those conversations going and urging our guys to finish strong.

George Atallah: [21:00](#)

Thanks very much. Ken, if you're out there somewhere.

Ken: [21:03](#)

Yep. I'm here. Thanks. De and JC, just a follow up question to bore everybody on the disability question. Why not grandfather in the players that are already approved the 400 that were going to be taken off? Obviously you've extended it for three years, but why not just sort of grandfather them in and change it going forward? The second question is completely unrelated. I'm just wondering whether the union's going to have kind of a smaller contingent going to the Superbowl this year.

DeMaurice Smith: [21:29](#)

I don't know the answer to number two. With respect to number one, Ken, the goal of the benefit, right, is to compensate players who are permanently and totally disabled, and to come up with a whole body plan to ensure that those player dollars, because it comes out of the player, salaries are going to those individuals who are totally and permanently disabled, and just like the nation's social security system or any benefit system, you would want to make sure that the people who are receiving it are the people who need it because dollars





**NFL PLAYERS**  
ASSOCIATION

are scarce. So under what scenario would you not want to have those players avail themselves of a whole body plan that takes into consideration not only physical, but mental or psychological disability and ensure that the right people are being compensated for being totally and permanently disabled?

Ken: [22:48](#)

Got it. Thank you. So over the next three years, they're going to go through or I guess after three years, they're going to go through a different set of tests to see how they qualify for this new whole body plan?

DeMaurice Smith: [23:01](#)

It's actually the end of your question. We're going to come up with the whole body plan and then evaluate potential recipients of total and permanent disability benefits.

Ken: [23:12](#)

Got it. Thank you.

J.C. Tretter: [23:14](#)

Yeah. And in the end, we want a better plan and that's what we're working for. We want a better system in place to work through these issues and make sure we have people receiving the benefit they need. The benefit again, this is for our most vulnerable, the people who are totally and permanently disabled. So that's what we're working so hard towards, is getting that system in place. A better system than we have now.

Ken: [23:37](#)

Thank you again.

George Atallah: [23:41](#)

Other questions from the floor. If not, I think worth noting. Congratulations. De, you want to give your congratulations?

DeMaurice Smith: [23:57](#)

Well, it's been a year of first for Mr. Treader. He's our first COVID precedent. First post CBA three deals in four months president, and last week he became the proud father since our last call. So congratulations to J.C. Congratulations to his family and [inaudible 00:24:22] wonderful Christmas present.

George Atallah: [24:27](#)

If there's nothing else as usual transcript will be up on the site sometime later today or tomorrow morning, reach out if you have any follow up questions and we will see everybody again next Tuesday. Thanks everyone for joining.