

MAHOMES

FROM PAGE B3

the Chiefs a chance. But he was picked off by Derwin James on a jump ball intended for Travis Kelce with 14 seconds remaining, sealing the Chargers' season sweep of Kansas City.

"I hate the situation. I hate that I couldn't deliver the win and keep our hopes alive," Minshew said.

The loss, along with wins by Jacksonville, Buffalo and Houston, eliminated the defending AFC champs from playoff contention.

"It's very frustrating, man. It's been hard to watch for Pat, a dude that puts so much into it," Minshew said. "I've never seen someone give so much of themselves to the team. I have confidence in him and his ability to come back better than ever."

The 30-year-old has dodged severe injuries for most of his career.

The worst previous injury may have come in 2019, when Mahomes dislocated his right kneecap on a quarterback sneak against the Broncos, a fluke injury that may be why Reid has not called

another traditional QB sneak in years.

Mahomes has dealt with a concussion, turf toe and other minor injuries, but his most famous may have occurred during the 2022 playoffs, when he sustained a severe high ankle sprain. Questions swirled around whether Mahomes would be able to play the next week, and he not only was on the field but the led the Chiefs to victory, and then to an eventual Super Bowl title.

CHIEFS BANGED UP EVERYWHERE

The injury to Mahomes, who threw for just 189 yards with an interception, was merely the latest — and most severe — in a series of setbacks that had turned what had been one of the NFL's best offenses for the better part of a decade into a shadow of itself.

Kansas City started the game with left tackle Josh Simmons on injured reserve with a fractured wrist, backup Wanya Morris out with a knee injury, right tackle Trey Smith inactive with an ankle injury and right tackle Jawaan Taylor dealing with a triceps injury.

Backup right tackle Jaylon Moore hurt his knee during

the game, too, leaving journeyman Esa Pole and Chukwuebuka Godrick — an international pathway player who had never appeared in an NFL game — to protect Mahomes down the stretch.

The Chiefs also were missing Marquise Brown, who was inactive while dealing with a family matter, and fellow wide receiver Tyquan Thornton, who was crushed by Chargers cornerback Tony Jefferson after a 20-yard catch and was evaluated for a concussion.

Another receiver, Xavier Worthy, missed part of the game while clearing the concussion protocol.

It hasn't just been the Chiefs' offense where the injuries have mounted.



Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes (15) is injured after being tackled by Los Angeles Chargers defensive tackle Da'Shawn Hand (91) during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 14 in Kansas City, Mo.

Reed Hoffmann/AP photo

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