

Philadelphia Eagles Media Conference

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Defensive Coordinator Jonathan Gannon Weekday Press Conference



JONATHAN GANNON: Happy Tuesday. Let's go.

Q. John, so I guess you've probably heard the passing numbers the five quarterbacks that have completed against you guys. Is that reflective with how the team defense has performed in those the games?

JONATHAN GANNON: Yeah, that's what the numbers say. You know, we definitely have to get that completion percentage down. And there's a number of ways to do that.

It starts with us, as coaches, to, you know, detail out some things and change some looks. And rush and cover, cover and rush have to get a little bit better.

But, you know, when you're playing good quarterbacks with good skilled people, you -- you know, we played well at times, but probably not consistent enough. So that number has to come down. We have to improve that with our pass defense to, you know, be able to provide some resistance to good offenses.

Q. It looks alarming from the statistics. Is it alarming to you or is it something that you feel is fixable and not --

JONATHAN GANNON: Definitely fixable, absolutely. I mean, I -- it's -- I wouldn't say alarming to me. I would say that, you know, we know the areas that we have to get better at. And we've done that at times. We just got to be a little more consistent.

And that's -- and it really, though, again it starts with us setting it up a little bit better. You know, how I call the game a little bit better at some certain spots where, you know, you can throw a wrench into what the quarterback is seeing or, you know, when they call certain plays, you'd like to be in a couple better calls here or there.

But, ultimately, it's about all of us just improving and being a little more consistent.

Q. With Slay Nelson's background and the quarterbacks handing the ball off so quickly, what's your impression with playing press with man?

JONATHAN GANNON: Yeah, we do play press a little bit. And, you know, there are certain spots that we would like to tighten up. And that comes down to me, calling it to get tighter.

But we feel good about those guys in the backend to either play off or press and some of that goes into the call. Some of that goes into the situation in the game.

You know, and so we just got to do a little bit better job, myself, of calling it a little bit better when we need to get tight, get tight.

Q. What changed from Andre to Marcus in the nickel?

JONATHAN GANNON: I just felt like both of those guys have played that spot and I wanted to see what Marcus could do in there a little bit. And Drake came in and played okay for us.

But, you know, Marcus has been playing winning football for us and I wanted to get him on the field with some other guys.

Q. When the quarterback is getting the ball out quickly and maybe quicker than you would expect it, I don't know if that's the case game day, but how does it change things for you at that point when you say, All right, this is coming out really quick, what can I do to adjust to that?

JONATHAN GANNON: Yeah, you got to adjust the coverages a little bit. I thought they did a good job -- they mixed in a little more quick game than we expected. But teams have done that because of our D-line.

And in our back pocket, we have to have a couple more calls or me calling them a little more to say, Hey, this is how the game is being played, this is what we do to combat that a little bit.

So, you know, the rush and cover, cover and rush, those -- that's all 11 guys. So, you know, when it D-line is not getting there, there's reasons for that in the backend.

When the back end, you know, is not covering great, there's reasons for that in the front end. It all marries together.

So to play really good defense, to play really good pass defense, run defense, you need all 11 to be on the same page and execute at a high level.

And that goes into, you know, do your job so your buddy can have success doing his. That all blends together.

Q. It's not a stretch to say personnel-wise your D-line is the strength of your group. Overall this season, how do you think they're playing?

JONATHAN GANNON: I think they're playing well. We've made some strides I think in the run game. That's -- I think that's improving.

And there's been times where our D-line has dominated games. Now, that game two days ago, they -- like, it was very apparent that they were not going to allow that to happen.

So, you know, we -- again, all 11 on have to play a little bit better. We got to coach a little bit better, I got to call it attics better to get those guys, you know, some rushes where they are singled up and the ball's not coming out so fast.

Q. Just one sack at home in four games and on the road, six. You've played good quarterbacks on the road, too. Why is that?

JONATHAN GANNON: You know, I don't know that.

Q. You should have the crowd noise --

JONATHAN GANNON: Yeah, yeah. It's just a little bit how those -- I guess off the top of my head, the teams that we've played at home, those styles were a little bit different, those teams that came in here and played us as opposed to the teams on the road.

But we definitely have to look at that and say, Hey, not just home or away, how can we be a little bit better weekly to affect the quarterback a little bit more.

Q. Your blitz numbers were, I guess, overall -- I don't know if you look at the same -- it seems like the a little bit the past game and the last two drives, a little more

than four-man rush. Did you feel maybe looking back upon it that you should have sent some more when things were --

JONATHAN GANNON: A little bit. You know, they caught a couple of pressures into some runs. But, you know, when you look at it in passing situations, what they were doing, you know, they were not going to let us hit the quarterback.

So you saw, like, double chips, you saw some six, seven man protections. So, you know, when typically when you see that as a defense, you do more to coverage. You put more in coverage knowing that pressures aren't going to get home and you're kind of leaving your cover guys out to dry.

I think, though, I can set it up a little bit better when teams are doing that be with be a little more creative how we are aligning or pieces and generate more pressure so teams can't say, Hey, this is what we're going to do so you have to play a certain way.

I think that I can -- we can be a little more -- we can dictate a little bit more just with the plan, how we set that up to where teams can't always dictate that.

Q. What are your statistic priorities, if you could --

JONATHAN GANNON: Wins and losses.

Q. Right. In terms of defensive production, what's -- what do you hone in on?

JONATHAN GANNON: It changes weekly. You know, I mean, some games we say, Hey, we got to keep the yards per rush down.

Do we -- do we want to keep a guy -- do we want to keep the team under a hundred yards passing? Explosives are big ones for me.

The quickest way to get beat is get the ball thrown over your head. So that's always in my mind when we set up the plan, you know, how many chances are they going to take to where we're not in a great coverage versus those shot plays.

So wins and losses to me. And then by game plan, what you decide, Hey, this is what they do really well, these numbers have to be pretty good to give us a chance to win. And, like -- again, that changes weekly. Good question.

Q. Your defense checked out of the blitz multiple times, from what I understand. What do you do when

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

they have a formation that is not accommodating to a blitz to try to get to the quarterback? And it's, obviously, more than just a --

JONATHAN GANNON: Yeah, just by situation and formation, you can change some things up. So that's a good question, Howard.

But I think, ultimately, when we set up the plan, we say, Hey, these, however many calls are very aggressive, we're going to call them and run them. And it is what it is.

Other times where if you call those calls and they're in certain formations or certain situations, you're -- it's not good for the defense, typically.

So there is a couple, actually, that I would like to have back in that game when we were ultra-aggressive to not great formations and plays that we caught plays into. And, Oh, that's not -- on the headset, That's not what I wanted that for, you know?

But, you know, with saying that, there's a blend of that because you can't put too much mental stress on the players of always, you know, checking out of something or checking into something.

So that's always a blend of how we set it up; the mental stress, the physical stress within the game.

Q. The quarterbacks getting the ball out so quickly has been sort of a theme. After games, just talking to guys and you talked about it, I think over the course of the season, the quarterbacks are getting the ball out quicker faster than any other team. What is it about this defense that makes it --

JONATHAN GANNON: I think, one, personnel driven who we have with the front, you know, I think teams are very aware of our D-line can rush.

And the other thing is, is, you know, because we are set up to take away some explosives, they said, Okay, well, in these certain plays, by the look, presnap, if the explosive isn't there and you know it's not there, get it out of your hand.

So that goes into us setting the plan up better to say, Hey, let's not either show those looks or change the pitcher pre and post-snap to the quarterback. Or be a little aggressive at times how we tighten up on people.

Q. (No microphone.) Like, are the offensive linemen playing him differently? Are they still playing him as well as they were earlier?

JONATHAN GANNON: Yeah, I think he's playing just as well. Teams are playing him a little bit differently. There was a couple times where the back actually chipped his way out.

So they're kind of, you know, changing the chips. But he's playing well. He had a couple pressures in there.

I know the sack production isn't there, but he's doing a very good job in the pass game of rushing the quarterback when he gets one on ones and typically wins those. And I'm not worried about, you know, Graves. The production will keep coming.

Q. What does TJ Edwards do for your defense?

JONATHAN GANNON: I think, you know, from a standpoint of being in the right spot, playing in the run game, running the defense, he's doing a really good job. He's playing winning football for us.

You see how physical he is. And there was a couple times where they ran iso plays or lead plays and he took on the fullback, knocked him back, and made the tackle.

He's doing a good job as far as, you know, what I look for in the Mike as running the show, being in the right spot and playing winning football in the run and passing game.

Q. (No microphone.)

JONATHAN GANNON: A combination of kind of the guys that are playing -- that are playing well right now that we have playing.

I think that that's really the major reasons. It's not so much what Eric didn't do, it's what other guys did do. And we feel like the guys that we have right now that are playing or that are backing up those spots can play winning football for us.

Q. What have you learned about this job and being in this position now that you've coached as a defensive coordinator and played nine weeks? What have you learned about this job?

JONATHAN GANNON: Man, that's always a good question. Coach better. Coach better. I think it's always -- I always look at -- you know, everything that we do on that field, you know, and the completion rate, it's like I'm a DB guy, Man, 80 percent completion.

That's not -- that's not great, you know? And it's always -- comes from me, what I learned is, you improve daily.

And not to say that I didn't have that mindset before when I was a coordinator. But, you know, it's really on -- it's, you know, on myself and the coaches to say, Hey, let's set our guys up a little bit better and strive to be a little bit better and a little more consistent with how we play the game.

So, you know, the hardest thing for me is not having, like, a group that I have my hands on, is -- not the hardest thing, but the thing that is most different that I learned the most is, you have -- it's not just hands on one group, you got to have hands on all three groups, you know?

And how much you coach those guys, myself, it has to be impactful. Like, when I tell Davion something, it has to allow him to get better and play winning football.

Same thing as when I talk to, you know, Barnett or a guy in the secondary, or whoever, to get those guys to be able to, you know, make improvements, when I'm telling those guys to coach them up and serve the player to get them better.

Where that's a broad view where I'm sitting now, when I was a defensive back coach, I wasn't worried about the D-line or the linebackers, I was just handling my room. And, obviously, we can get better to learn and get better.

Q. Going back to where you said how certain offenses are playing you: The quarterbacks get the balls out quickly, the explosive plays not there, you say, how much can you dictate the presnaps, though, changing things up?

JONATHAN GANNON: You can. But, you know, when you do that, we always -- you know, what is this look, this look with this call, what do you want to show?

And then you got to go through all the formations, and where people are, and different things like that. And, you know, without getting your guys -- you know, a lot of people -- here's a good one, like, there's -- way back when you're studying different disguises and things, right, a team -- we did it on a Minnesota team that has a safety on the line of scrimmage, well he plays in a deep post after the ball's snapped, and I always thought to myself -- I got this from the players, they would say, JG, that's all cool and everything, but I have no shot to make any play in the middle of the field because I'm coming from the line of scrimmage.

So the disguise is great, but you're really hamstringing me to be able to make plays. So there's a blend of how much you can tilt the coverage and disguise, and make it look really, you know, different on the quarterback pre and

post-snap with also getting your guys in position to get what they need to get done within the call.

And they're -- like everything, there's a blend to that. When can we be, like, really aggressive with how we're aligning people and when we really can't.

Like, you know, this guy has three vertical and he's on the line of scrimmage, hash, plus two, like, Good luck.

So that's always an ever evolving thing. And with situationally, where can you, you know, take those chances, so to speak, to align people in certain ways.

Q. You mentioned Barnett a second ago. What's the message to him after another damaging third down penalty?

JONATHAN GANNON: You know, he's doing a good job. He's improved that part of his game, I think. He's playing, I would say, more disciplined with what we're asking him to do with the penalties thing.

I'm very happy with Derek. You know, no one's going to be more harder on him than himself. And -- but it's just to, you know, lock in and make sure that we don't have presnap penalties and keep doing what he's doing, because he's doing a good job in the run and pass game.