

Philadelphia Eagles Media Conference

Monday, November 15, 2021

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Head Coach Nick Sirianni

Weekday Press Conference



Q. Hey, good afternoon, Nick. First of all, how's Dallas Goedert doing? And second off, did you think that the hit was dirty and did you discuss the hit with the referees and what was their explanation?

NICK SIRIANNI: Dallas is in the concussion protocol. Yeah, you know, those hits happen a lot of times. I'm not here to ever question the integrity of another player or anything like that.

Like, those happen. You're going in there and you're going to get a hit and Dallas goes to the ground and the guy's coming in to hit where his name normally was probably perfectly fine, but as Dallas goes to the ground, it becomes an illegal hit or whatever.

So I'm not going to question the -- I have a lot of respect for Justin Simmons. He's a really, really good football player, phenomenal tackling. And he showed a lot of good open field tackles yesterday. And I think he's first class player and person, as well, of what I know of him. So I'm not going to ever question that.

We always look at stuff. We always have a list of questions that we want to ask the referees after the game, just so we can help our players, you know, teach our players.

But, hey, they got a hard job. The referees got a hard job and they got to make those things. You know, we always talk about this in our coaches' office. We have that remote in our hands and we can slow it down really slow, right, to show what's happening in that play.

They got to have -- they got to make those decisions in split, you know, game -- with the speed of that game, that game moves so quick.

And so, yeah, we always -- but we always want to know some things like that that happened in the game with officiating questions so we can teach our guys how to play the game right without being penalized.

Q. Hey, Nick. You have really, really committed to the run the last three weeks, especially. And it's a shift, I think, in philosophy or whatever. Can you take me back to a moment, maybe -- was there a moment watching film, conversation with coaches or linemen or anything where you kind of had that shift?

NICK SIRIANNI: You know, again, we just want to do what we think's best for us to win each football game. And, you know, that always starts with what you think you do well first, right?

And then it goes into what -- so, you know, you kind of look at the things you're doing well and what's working for you. And then it goes into the scheme you're -- the team that you're playing's scheme and their players.

And so, you know, that's just something that we've wanted to -- we've known we've had a good offensive line the whole time, we've always wanted to get the run game going to help Jalen be more successful as a quarterback. You know, because that takes some of the pressure off him.

But, you know, I don't know if there was a shift or more so just the sense, like, you know, it got going early in those games -- a couple of those games.

Starting with Las Vegas, that kind of got going early in that game. We, obviously, gotten ourselves in a position where we got down there. So maybe you can say that shift happened in Las Vegas.

But that has always been our emphasis, to run the ball. We ran the ball well. You know, you don't all of just sudden -- I don't know, I think we're in top five --

Q. Top in the NFC.

NICK SIRIANNI: Top in the NFC?

Q. Yes.

NICK SIRIANNI: There you go. John, I knew you'd know the stat right there. But that just doesn't happen after three good games, right?

It is the culmination of the entire year. So, you know, we felt like we've been running the ball well throughout. I know that -- I know that, you know, there's -- that we wanted to run it more, that people thought we should run it more.

And, you know, just -- it's just the way games go sometimes. And so, I don't want to say it was a shift. Because, again, I think we've been running the ball the entire year. It's looked different game in, game out. But that's going to be different for the course where it goes, whether you're under the center, the gun, running gadgets, et cetera.

Q. Hey, Nick, as you look back at some of the tough losses, tough moments you guys had earlier this season, how did you get the players to keep believing in you and your process, even when it wasn't yielding the results?

NICK SIRIANNI: I think what we've been talked about before is that when you just kind of -- when you're talking through things and trying to get through hard times and just -- also just your core values and your beliefs.

Like, I don't think we're saying anything as a coaching staff that's outrageous, right? It's, like, Okay, oh, the best teams that connect a lot do well? Well, yeah, that's pretty obvious, right?

The teams that are cohesive teams, they get their -- they find themselves through tough times. You know, compete -- oh, you -- teams that compete hard, you know, it's the same that have accountability, that have football IQ, that have fundamentals.

So it's not like we're saying anything that's off the wall. I think I've kind of said that in here before. These are our core values that I think our guys know in some aspects have been true on all the good teams that they've been part of.

So it's just continuing to hammer home the things that we believe are a common denominator in good football teams. And so, that's the coaching side of it.

I think the player's side of it is we just got good guys on this football team. We got good leaders on this football team, high football character guys, we got high character individuals, you know, away from the game.

And so, when you have guys like that in the building, you know, that goes a long way. And so, you know, just can't say enough for the -- of the job that Howie and his staff has done in putting this team together and the character of the

guys we have in the locker room and the leaders in the locker room.

And that helps get through some stuff times, as well. Again, we had a good game yesterday. We got to look to build on that and try to go two in a row.

Q. Nick, how has Davion Taylor compensated for what he's lacked in experience? And have you been more, you know, willing for -- with a young guy like that to maybe overlook sometimes when there are mistakes because of his upside?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, he's definitely got a lot of talent, Jeff, with his athleticism, his speed. You know, he can make up for some of those things, you know, some of that lack of experience because he has that ability.

And so, that -- you know, playing that position, I think that's -- you go through some of those growing pains, too, that a quarterback has to go through, right, diagnosing all those things that are going on, run, pass.

And so, there's no doubt, what you said, you know, his athleticism has allowed him to make up for a little bit of his lack of playing time. But that will grow.

You know, he'll grow more and more and more each week through the reps that he's getting. And so, you know, as long as he's willing to put in the work and he's definitely one of those guys that is, another high character guy that works hard, that loves football, that's tough, that's willing to put in the work to get better every single day.

And so, you know, when a guy gets better every single day, it is: One, they're getting more reps; and two, they care about their teammates, they care about the sport, they care about being the best version of themselves that they can and they got no choice.

When it is like that, they have no choice to get better. And so, that's definitely something I've seen from Davion throughout this year.

Q. Hey, Nick. Yesterday, you mentioned that DeVonta has -- could be, like, a good player in this league for a long time. And I was wondering if you could expand on that a little bit. I mean, I know you've had a lot of experience with some really good wide receivers. Like, where do you see DeVonta's potential compared to, you know, some of those guys and how -- I assume he's probably just, like, scratching the surface for what his true potential can be. Am I right?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, where I see -- again, I think it all

starts -- forget the -- forget any physical tools. He's a smart player and he's tough. You just see that over and over.

And, again, I think I've mentioned that before, smart and tough guys, let's get a lot of those guys, right? Because you can't get on the bus without those guys.

So it starts there, just his mental makeup of who he is. He's mentally tough, physically tough. So it starts with that mental makeup of DeVonta. And then you add in the skill, right?

Because there's a lot of tough people out there; mentally, physically, but then they don't have the skill to play in this game. He's got a ton of skill.

Where I see it is -- you know, I think he catches -- he's just got really solid hands, really good hands. I know he's had a couple drops, I don't know exactly how many he has. I don't think it's a lot.

But, you know, he's got really solid hands that's going to be able to make tough catches. And he's just really good -- he's -- he knows how to attack defenders at a very young age.

Like, he's seeing different looks of how he needs to attack defenders. And then he's just -- he's really good in and out of the break.

I think you saw a couple times yesterday him just drop his weight, be able to transition in and out of breaks to separate and create throws for Jalen to be able to make easy throws.

And so, those couple things -- you know, the -- obviously, the mental makeup of DeVonta and then those physical skills that I just mentioned right there are going to be why he continues to ascend in this league.

You know, him playing through an injury yesterday, you know, that's something that -- it's a long season in this season -- in this NFL. And, you know, he just -- you know, I can't say enough how tough he is to be able to play through things that he has got to play through and play the type of game that he did.

So I'm really happy that he's on this football team and look forward to continuing to watch him develop as the season continues.

Q. Hey, good afternoon, Nick. With the running backs, you've spoken during the past few months about keeping players fresh, riding the hot hand. But how specifically do you determine that rotation? Is that up

to Jemal Singleton during the course of the game or scripted out in the game?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yes, to both of those, Zack. Again, you do right the hot hand as you go. And, you know, as we're calling the game, Shane and I are calling the game and going through it.

That's something that, you know, is left up to Jemal in a lot of senses. You know, he's got the feel of what's going on in there.

But there's also plays on our call sheet and, you know, it could be anywhere from 10 to 15 plays out of all the plays on your call sheet. It could be more than that, where you're like, Hey, I'm in 11-personnel and I want 14 in the game.

And so, that's dictated out before, you know? Or I'm in 12-personnel and I want 24 in the game. Or it can be, like, any of those. So sometimes, yes, it's done throughout the week and sometimes it is the feel of the way the game is going.

And so, yeah, that's the answer, is that we handle it both ways, Zack. So I'm pleased with the way the running back rotation has went.

Obviously, we've been running the ball well. We've been running -- and it's, like, you know, we continue to even out those reps.

You know, I think they all -- they both had 80 yards or something yesterday. And so, it was good to keep them fresh and keep going.

They were running the ball well. Both made a lot of really good runs. Really, what I continue to see this football team do, and it starts with these running backs, is protect the football.

Like, there's a couple plays that could have went -- you know, Jalen gets hit, right, on a -- on a deep ball -- or on a play yesterday, and Jason Kelce is right there to fall on the ball, right?

And then you saw DeVonta come across the middle and he got in some traffic and he put two hands on the ball like we always talk about and what he's practiced a thousand times.

And then what you saw from the backs is -- you know, I just really want to point this out with the backs. We talk a lot about keeping the ball away from the defense.

So, I mean, this is just football 101. If I'm carrying the ball

on the left sideline, I want the ball in my left arm so I can protect myself.

And you saw Boston do that two times in the game yesterday where he was trying to go right, so he had to put it in his right arm, he had to cut back left and he was able to use the stiff arm.

And then you saw Jordan Howard, you know, a lot of times in this game when you're going to the ground as a ball carrier, your natural tendency, if you guys would all stand there and start to go to the ground, your natural tendency would be to put your arms out. But just to put your arms out.

You know, there was a couple times, especially in that when we were kind of milking the clock and running the clock out where Jordan Howard was on his way to the ground, but he kept that same ball security that he needed.

And so, I can't say enough about how well the guys have done taking care of the football. And really protecting that football.

And you saw there was some opportunities for the Broncos, you know, to have some of those yesterday. But our guys protected it well.

And conversely on the other side, right, that we took one away in a very critical moment to help us get a touchdown.

And that starts with the running backs and Jalen. Because they're touching the ball every play. So I wanted to make sure that I said that about our backs and how good a job they're doing protecting the football, you know, throughout this season.

Q. Hey, Nick, what would you say to anyone who has already come to the conclusion that Jalen hurts can't be a franchise quarterback? And for the record, I'm not saying that he can't.

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, watch the last three games. And that's -- that's the biggest one right there, right? And so, you know, you look at -- he started -- is it 13 or 14 games? I'm looking at Bob right here. 14 games now.

And so, when you start that many games and the other rookie quarterbacks in this class, again, all I can -- I'm not really even thinking about them. But all the rookie quarterbacks in this class are about 10 -- it's about 10 or 11 -- or 10 right now. At the most, 9 or 10.

And so, like, you know, you just got to -- to me, it's, like, Well, he's still a rookie, right? He's still in his rookie season

and, essentially, if you count the amount of games started.

And so, all I see is improvement every day from him. Because, again, it starts with the type of person that Jalen is and how much he loves this sport and how much he loves his teammates.

And so -- and how tough he is. And he just doesn't make the same mistake twice. And so, I just see his arrow completely pointed up.

I think we've all seen the way he's played. The way he played yesterday, you know, again, when we got into the second half, we -- you know, we kind of took the air out of it a little bit and we played a little bit different the way our defense was playing and the lead that we had.

But if you look at that first half, the way he played, he was doing some things yesterday that were really special.

The play he made to Dallas Goedert is a big time football play. And I think if you look back and you look maybe five weeks ago, I think that he probably tucks that and runs and maybe gets 10, right?

And yesterday he stepped up in the pocket, he stepped up with two hands on the football. I mean, and look how good he's done taking care of the football just as far as interceptions and fumbles, right?

He steps up in the pocket, he rips through, he slides in the pocket, keeps his eyes down the field, and then he delivers a strike across the middle.

And so, that just -- again, I just see him making strides over and over and over again. I mentioned yesterday in the press conference that, you know, we had a shot play called, the one that DeVonta scored on and we actually had that called a couple times earlier in the drive.

And they didn't give us a look that we liked and Jalen was able to check out of that play and get us into a better play that got us two first downs on top of that.

And so, you know, again, I just see him making strides in all aspects of his game. And whether -- and my job here and Jalen's job is to not focus on franchise quarterback moving forward. It's about what can we do today to get us ready for Sunday and what can we do tomorrow to get us ready for Sunday.

And I know I sound like -- I say this every week, but my message isn't going to change, right? What can we do today to get ready for the next day?

I promise you guys, I do know who we play after that, I happened to see our schedule today. I don't know who we play the week after that.

And so, all I'm focused on is how we get ready for this team to play the New Orleans Saints, how do we make the corrections we missed against the Denver Broncos, and get ready for the New Orleans Saints in the process.

So I think that's Jalen's mindset, that's my mindset, how we're going to keep getting better each week and the rest will take care of itself.

Q. Hi, Nick. It's pretty easy to see DeVonta Smith's improvement. Obviously, he plays a skilled position. Someone like Landon Dickerson, what has he brought to the line. The physicality he plays with, how much does that mean with what's happening with the run game and how has he gotten better from week one till now?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, I think he had a really good game yesterday. We graded him out really well. And he played a really good game.

Again, when you -- I can't -- I haven't met with the team yet. We gave them today off. But he'll be getting a game ball with the rest of the offensive line. Any time you rush for over 200 yards, that O-line is going to get a game ball.

He was a big part of that, obviously. He's just getting more and more comfortable with the different looks that he's getting.

But from the defense and the different movements and the speed of the game and the strength of the game, you know, he did a couple nice things.

There was our last run of the day yesterday when we were in that four-minute, we had to get another first down to end the game. We couldn't take a knee because there was, like, 2:35 left.

We saw him pull around the edge. We've seen him dominate and be able to move and yesterday he was able to pull and get out in the space and show athleticism in space, too. So I just continue to see him develop.

I think that a big credit of that goes to, obviously, Landon. A huge credit to that. Because, again, he's the right -- he's got the right makeup to reach his potential.

And then having a player like Jason Kelce next to him, that's big time, right? And Jordan Mailata on the other side.

But Jason's seen everything in this league, right? So I think Jason's experience is oozing off to Landon. He's got such a good presence to him.

The type of game that Jason played and Lane Johnson played yesterday, man, those guys -- that offensive line played really well and it really started with Jason and Lane and moved on to the other guys as well.

So I continue to see Landon get better. He cares. He's tough. He's physical. And he's going to just keep can getting better. And Coach Stout's a great coach that will -- if Landon comes in a day and he doesn't feel like getting better that day, I promise you that Jeff Stout will make sure he's feeling ready to get better that day.