

Philadelphia Eagles Media Conference

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Coach Nick Sirianni Weekday Press Conference



Q. Hey, Nick, I wanted to ask you about Slay and the year he's having. Seems like every week he's leaving the field, we see him in the blue tent week after week, and he comes back out and makes plays. What can you say about his I guess physical toughness, resilience, and just what you've seen from him this year?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, you nailed it. I think every time I think about Slay and talk about Slay I talk about how good of a teammate he is. That's true. How good of a player he is.

But he's physically tough, physically and mentality tough. He's resilient and able to fight through things that he's going through and come back out and still play great football.

So, man, there is a reason Slay has the C on his chest.

Q. How do you think Jalen managed the finger yesterday? He said it did affect him.

NICK SIRIANNI: You guys saw the game. I thought he played a really good game, outstanding game. Jalen is extremely tough, physically, mentally.

Again, I thought he played a fantastic game in many ways. Was able to run for yards, threw the ball really well against a really good defense.

Just thought Jalen was in complete control and just another week of good football from Jalen Hurts.

Q. What have you come to learn about AJ Brown's leadership style over the years that you've had him?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, again, I've said to you guys, AJ is you one of the best people we have. One the best people we have on this team. Just know he deeply cares about being a great football player. I know he deeply cares about his teammates, and I get to see that on a daily basis.

He's been phenomenal since the day he stepped foot on this team. Man, I think the way he's played elevates everybody. The way he plays football elevates everybody.

And so, again, AJ, everyone leads a little differently. There is also a reason that AJ has the C on his chest. So everyone leads a little bit differently. AJ is a good leader, good player, great person.

Great to all those. Great player, great leader, great person.

Q. What did you make of Lane Johnson's game yesterday? How special is it to be able to let one guy deal with TJ Watt one-on-one for most of the game?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, Lane gives you a lot of confidence going into the game because the rushers in the NFL don't come much better than Watt. He's one of the best players in the NFL; Lane is one of the best players in the NFL.

Any time our game gets to see two of the top players at their positions battle I think it's always special, fun to watch. You know, it's fun to watch as a coach; fun to watch I'm sure as fans.

And so Lane played a really outstanding game yesterday against, again, a phenomenal player. It just gives you a lot of confidence to have 65 out there week to week.

Q. Correct me if I'm wrong, but it seemed like you went with empty sets a little bit more than you have recently. Is that about -- Jalen was talking about getting into a rhythm. Is that about trying to find that rhythm or more of a game plan thing?

NICK SIRIANNI: Every game plan and everything kind of goes into that. Every game plan is a little bit different in how you want to attack and how teams come out in empty and the things that they do in empty.

We're able to do multiple things out of empty, whether it's push out ball down the field, get the ball out quick, run the ball. We have a lot of different options that we can do.

It's been a good set for us. A little bit more than we had done in the past yesterday, but that was just the way the



game unfolded and things we were doing. Jalen did a really good job operating from that empty set. We did it the very first play, and he makes a great play to start off with that plus-20 completion to Grant and the guys did a good job.

I thought the protection, I wrote that down multiple times as I'm watching it. The protection that we had in empty against a really good rush.

Q. I was curious if you had an update on Landon Dickerson? Tyler Steen came in for him and took over at left guard. What were your impressions of the way he played from the holding penalties until how he settled in afterwards?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, still going through our process that we go through every Monday, Tuesday. Have more information for you guys on Wednesday of where we are with that. Obviously he didn't go back in the game so we're still going through things.

And I thought Tyler did a nice job when he got in. We've had that all year. Guys have stepped in. And, again, that's not an easy game to step into against a team like the Steelers.

Tyler came in and helped us get a victory.

Q. Good afternoon, Nick. If you had to identify what makes this defense work, what makes this a good defense, what would you say it is?

NICK SIRIANNI: Man, I don't know if there is one thing I can say, you know, this is the thing. But I think that the players are playing relentless, physical, getting to the football. I always say teams play good defense when they're on the same page. Teams play good defense when they block destruct and tackle. Teams play good defense when they're relentless in getting 11 guys to the football.

Most definitely we've had that. Most definitely we have good players on our defense. So tribute to Howie and his staff of the players they've brought in here. And then our defensive staff has done a great job, starting with Vic of putting the players in positions to succeed and getting them better.

I think one thing we talk a lot about as a staff is like identify talent, right, and then once you get the talent in here, it's our job as coaches to develop that talent.

I think, again, very talented players that we have, and then the guys have done just such a good job developing it, right? Zack Baun hasn't played a lot of inside linebacker.

Make no mistake, Zack Baun gets all the credit for that because he's playing his butt off. Bobby King has done a great job helping him develop in that area. Nakobe has done a good job helping him develop in that area.

That's what we always think about, is how can we identify the right people and the right players with the right talent for this team, and then our job as coaches is to develop them. That was always the thing at Mount Union that we talk about a lot of the recruit, retain, develop; recruit, retain, develop; recruit, retain, develop. Like these things I heard on a daily basis I have them etched in my head.

The big thing is the develop part is that's where you got to do your job as a coach. Again, I think that all those things have played into that, Zach.

Q. I think you mentioned yesterday about Jalen's pass ratings being over 100, and it's been like that in eight of the ten games during your streak. His rating yesterday was like his fourth best during that stretch. A, what does that say about the way he's played Sunday and has been playing, and would you go so far as to say this is his best stretch of his career?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, again, I don't think I'm in a state to say, yeah, this is his best stretch or that was his best stretch, meaning I haven't thought about the other times he's done that in a little bit.

So I think it just says how efficient he's been playing quarterback. There is a reason a couple weeks ago I said, you know, Jalen should be up for the MVP discussions. I mean, you win ten games in a row and touch the ball every down. I get that we haven't thrown for a lot of yards, but he's been so efficient.

To be able to do the things we're doing, and, again, it's not just efficiency like the quarterback rating we talk about, right, but it's not like we're completing five yards an attempt. It's up there, 8+, 8.5+ yards per attempt. That's when you know you're playing efficient football.

That's hard to do and take care of the football all the same, so he's done a great job taking care -- I know they got one yesterday on us. He's done such a great job playing quarterback. I can't say enough -- like just things that are kind of unseen too, the way he's handled situational football.

We had the ball for ten minutes at the end of the game yesterday. That doesn't happen unless the quarterback is managing the huddle, getting the guys up to the line of scrimmage at the right time, breaking the huddle at a certain time, and snapping the ball at a certain time.

Drives don't continue unless you're efficient on third down, which we were. We had a third and long that we converted that got us to fourth and one.

We had a penalty in four-minute. We were behind the sticks and he was able to get us out of that with a great completion to AJ. He's been doing that all year in our four-minute offenses of being able to, when we need to do something where he has to make a play, he's done that.

Again, I can't say enough about how good of football he's playing. That's why it was kind of funny all the things that we talked about last week as far as the perception of what was going on here. Shoot, I mean, I just thought he had been playing football really good. You don't win ten games in a row without your quarterback playing really well, and our quarterback is playing really well and he's been playing really well for the last couple months.

Q. I wanted to ask about Kenny Gainwell. He came in your first draft class. He's in the final year of his rookie deal now. He's been with you the whole way. Feels like you've always gone to bat for Kenny. Why is that?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, shoot, I think the guys make fun of him sometimes because they know he's one of my favorites. I say, don't say that to anybody. I think they just perceive that because I'm always talking to Kenny to reinforce what you want your culture to look like. Hey, guys, it takes everybody. Watch this. The two opportunities that Kenny got, watch what he does with it.

Now he's contributing on special teams. And I don't just mean returning, like he's making tackles on special teams. Every opportunity that he has he takes advantage of.

Kenny is extremely tough. Extremely tough. So I find myself -- what an unbelievable spin move he makes yesterday on third down to avoid the tackle.

What I loved even more about that was two things: One, he lowers his shoulder at the end to gain four or three more yards or however much it was. Then the excitement that his teammates had for him on the sideline. That happens because he's such a great teammate. He's tough. He works hard. He could be a guy that got opportunities elsewhere, but he gets limited opportunities and takes advantage of them.

What's there not to love about Kenny Gainwell? I think you set me up here because you knew I was going to gush about Kenny. Man, I love having him on this football team. I've loved getting to know him more and more over the last

four years of being together.

He's a special, special player. He's a special, special teammate. Really, he speaks so much to what our culture is here. He may not have a C on his chest, but he leads in his own way. He's really taken advantage of all the opportunities that he's gotten here, and that goes back. That has been consistent through the last four years here with the Eagles.

Q. You're were caught on camera after the Jalen play, Jalen Carter play on the field, I don't know, talking to Clint about it. How important was it for you to get your message across to Jalen? Do you worry he could be suspended for something like that? One other part of that: How important is it to relay to him that you can cost us a game by doing stuff like that?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, sure. We correct everything. As Jalen was coming off the field I was kind of getting after him there. You know, there was part of me that wanted to go back and really -- so I kind of made my point as Jalen was coming off the field.

Then I went back and Clint was saying, Coach, I got it. I already handled it. So I had said something to him, Clint had said something to him, and it wasn't -- knowing Clint and how he's coached him for the past half a year that he's been here, I knew he had it.

Kind of went away.

As you can see, Jalen came back over to me and we had a moment there after the fact. I know how good Jalen Carter wants to be. I know how aggressive he plays. My message to him always and all our players is we want to be aggressive. We want to be physical. We want to do all those things. But we want to do that within the rules.

Same thing I say to the guys when they're celebrating after a big play. I we want to have joy together. We want to show our personalities. I want them to be everything and show who they are within the rules.

So just kind of the same message there. We got to do the things within the rules. Again, because you want them to be physical and want them to be relentless. We got to be better and he knows that. We'll be better from this moment.

Q. Wanted to ask about something you've said to us and I know you've said to the players, you'll say in a team sport like football you can't be great without the greatness of others. I want to ask about the others you referenced in the past. Last week you referenced

Steve Kerr and reading about him and culture. I know you mentioned Coach Dan over in South Jersey. Some of your assistant coaches will reference things. Like the last time you played the Commanders they talked about how you had a wave of turnovers, and Bobby King was saying watching surfing clips to emphasize that. It feels like you'll go to any lengths to find information that will help. Where does that come from?

NICK SIRIANNI: I think just, again, I want our players to continuously try to grow. I want to make sure I'm being a good example of that. There is so many good coaches out there. Really at the end of the day, I'll do anything to win and I'll do anything to help our team win.

So I have all these coaches that I'm able to reach out to, Jay Wright, coach Kehres, all these guys I'm able to be able to reach out to and get information from these great coaches around the country.

I talked to you guys last year about how I talked to Rick Pitino. Be crazy not to use those guys that are willing to help you. Because, again, you're just trying to get better in attempts to continue to rising as the season progresses.

And so we'll do that with anything. Again, I've never talked to Steve Kerr but I've watched -- that's something I like to do, is watch the documentaries on things. I watched a documentary the other night on the 30 for 30 with the New York Jets. Again, anything you can get your hands on to get better from, do you.

Again, you want to be an example. I know our players do that as well. I just see them work relentlessly and over and over again just how they get better. That's something that's probably been in my DNA since I've been in high school probably is when I -- it's been in my DNA since then.

We got a lot of guys on this football team it's in their DNA as well.

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