

Philadelphia Eagles Media Conference

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Coach Nick Sirianni

Weekday Press Conference



Q. On those two long Saquon runs yesterday looked like Jalen made some checks at the line. How much does he have on him in those situations and how much has he grown in that part of his game?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, I think he's been phenomenal at that part of the game, being able to get us in and out of plays and versus different looks.

I that's obviously super important for your quarterback to be able to do that. Jalen really does a great job of thinking and doing the things he needs to do to get us in and out of plays at the line of scrimmage.

So it starts with him. Starts with him and Cam putting everybody on the same page; then it goes down to the efforts of everybody else to make those long runs happen.

I think what you saw on those was excellent blocking up front and displacement up front by our offensive line, but also you got really good efforts on those two long runs also from receivers blocking.

AJ on the second one had a really good block. Then AJ and Smitty on the first one had great blocks. I think the way I kind of said it in our team meeting today, Smitty had -- on the first one, AJ gets the block on the nickel and then Smitty has kind of a textbook stock block.

Like if you were in receiver school 101, you would use that clip of Smitty on the stock block for the touchdown.

What I mean by that is like stock blocking, there is an art and technique to it. You have to break down and not get locked up with the defensive back too soon. If you get locked up he'll shed you, but Smitty kept space; then when he felt the ball getting up on him he locked on and made the play.

And so efforts by everybody to make that thing go. Obviously that yardage goes to Saquon. He's phenomenal as we've all seen, but it truly takes everybody, and it starts

with Jalen to get us in and out of the right play.

Q. Jalen Carter gets a lot of attention for his athleticism and brute strength. What can you tell us about his football IQ?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, his football IQ and instincts are very high. He just has a feel for -- I think you see he has a knack to be able to get the ball out. He's done that a couple times this year. And hitting the right spot of the football when he's getting the ball out.

He has an ability to field double teams and be able to beat double teams, as you saw yesterday. His football IQ is very, very high. You know, it takes more than talent to be a really good player in this league. It just does, right? Talent is a starting point. You need to have talent to be a great player, but there are other things that go with it.

Football IQ and instincts are high, high up on that list. He has those. Doing the right things off the field and making sure your body is in shape and you weigh the right things, like I talked about yesterday, he's done that to elevate his play.

And just loving football, which he obviously loves football because he works at it so hard. So all these things are why -- the at that point, football IQ, love for football, toughness that he has, being in great shape are all the reasons why you're continuing to see him raise his level of play.

Q. Hey, Nick, it seems like whatever is going on with the offense, Dallas Goedert always shows up, clutch catches. Obviously I guess seven games this year you didn't have him. How big has he been these last two games? He's got eight catches and eight targets. What does he mean to this offense?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, he has a knack to make plays in big moments, that's for sure. I think back to the games that -- and he makes these really big splash plays, too, like where sometimes they're not even more a lot of yards, but it's so energetic. The physicality that he brings to it is huge.

He runs a route yesterday on that 30 plus gain. We had great protection on the play. Jalen puts a good throw on



him. Dallas did a such a good job of getting open on that route against man coverage. It was a really great route.

Just got into it, stuck the defensive back the opposite way, put a seed of doubt in his mind, and then continued on. And then there's all the things he does in the run game for us, which is so important. Having to hold down the C gap on the backside or on the front side against guys that are huge players on the other team.

And so I can't say enough about what he brings to this football team. You're right, Roob, he has an ability to make plays in big moments. You know, I think that just speaks to how calm, cool, and confident he is. When you're confident in yourself in those moments you shine in those moments.

He had a great game yesterday, run game and pass game. Yeah, just been playing good football.

Q. You guys have performed well against the blitz all season; struggling a bit yesterday. Were the check downs where you wanted them to be?

NICK SIRIANNI: I'm sorry?

Q. Were the check downs where you wanted them to be against the blitz yesterday? What went into some of the problems you guys had, do you think?

NICK SIRIANNI: With check downs sometimes when you're in a six-man protection and they blitz you lose your back, and so you lose some ability sometimes for your back in the check down.

Now, there are different ways you scheme things up to make sure you're holding underneath defenders to hit things over top or vice versa. Guys were in the right spots yesterday. Sometimes you lose the check down though. Sometimes they cover the check down and something opens up over top. There are all different things there as far as that goes.

But it's never just one thing when you -- when it doesn't go right against the blitz; it's never just one thing when it does go right against the blitz.

Yeah, sometimes you lose that back when they bring the guy that he's responsible for in protection.

Q. Hey, Nick, wanted to talk to you about the offensive line as a group. I think everybody knows Saquon is having an historic season. I've heard some comparisons over the past week or so with this offensive line. Do you think they're having an historic

season?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, they're probably -- obviously any time you run for that many yards, you know, yeah, like of course. They're the guys that make it go up front. Saquon is phenomenal, but he can't be great without the greatness of others.

You know, I love that about the offensive line, the selflessness. They don't score touchdowns, right, and sometimes on an offensive line the stats that you keep on an offensive line are how many pressures you gave up and how many sacks you gave up.

So like those are the stats that we all know as an offensive lineman, so it's like sometimes you only get focused on for the negative thing. But I love offensive linemen, I've always lovely offensive linemen because of the selflessness they have. They're protectors, right? They're there to protect and serve other people.

Like that's like the best thing you can say about a human being, is that you want to do well for yourself to do well for others. I just see the selflessness of the group.

Obviously we're highly talented there and we have really good players and Stout coaches his butt off to get them to perform at a high level. Man, and so of course, yeah, I see them as having a historic season being able to send three guys to the Pro Bowl, two guys on All-Pro team.

That's a result of just all the hard work that they do, and I love when they get recognized because, again, like I said sometimes you don't get recognized for that.

I was able to go to Jason Kelce's show the other day. What an awesome experience that was. I thought it was phenomenal. They had a conversation. I don't know if you saw it. They had a conversation on there like, why do we give an offensive MVP, a defensive MVP, player of the year, but we don't give the offensive line award?

I'm like, man -- and I think that was Andrew Whitworth who said that. I don't remember who said that. I'm like, man, they should do that. What a great idea that is. I know who my vote would be for if that happened, if they gave me a vote. There is a reason they don't give coaches votes. I would vote for Lane for sure. Probably if I had three votes I would vote for all our guys. That's probably why they don't allow us as coaches to have votes on the Pro Bowl for our own team or All-Pro or anything like that.

But, yeah, just to answer your question, I think they're having a great season and we want to continue that.



Q. Just ask you about Jalen Carter and Nolan Smith. We talk a lot about them. We saw pretty big plays from Moro Ojomo and Jalyx Hunt, sacking Stafford. Just their development. It seems they get better each game.

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, can't say enough about those two guys. Jalyx I think I -- you know, I want to talk about Nolan and Jalen for a second. When you said that about those two in the same sentence I think you saw something yesterday of how good they worked a stunt together. That doesn't just happen. They spend a lot of time doing that together, Nolan and Jalyx.

So you appreciate the time they spent together in college working those different games and the -- what's it called -- the connection that they have together to be able to work that.

But then answering your question, Jalyx on his sack, I just thought he gave relentless effort. I think he really has taken to that. He's been giving us a lot of good reps, Jalyx. He started off as a really good special teams player for us because of his motor and how hard he goes.

I can't say enough about guys that play -- I would love to just sit here and talk about how hard Jalyx plays. I would talk about it forever and keep giving you play examples. But he has this relentless effort to the football and relentless effort to beat blocks and a relentless effort to tackle.

That's what was a result of yesterday. We had going to match in the secondary on that play and Jalyx continued to hustle. There was a play that Stafford had to extend a little bit more and Jalyx just continued his approach and finally got him.

With Moro, yeah, it was exciting. We see him in practice all the time just giving great looks when he was on our scout team, but in practice when he's with -- on the defense. I'm thinking back to last year of how many good looks he gave us on the scout team of how he can rush the passer and everything like that.

It was good to see all his work pay off. He played a good game yesterday. It wasn't just on -- I know he's recognized because of the sack, but I think he played all in all a really good game yesterday in the run game and the pass game.

And I'll say this: To be able to create that pressure that we were able to create in those conditions, you know, I know they're playing under them, too, but sometimes it's harder for the defense in those conditions. Our guys did a really nice job being able to create that pressure when that snow

was piled up on them.

Just I can't say enough about our equipment staff, Greg, and our equipment staff of how much detail and how much effort went into making sure those guys had the right footing. You know, I asked Greg to write up earlier this week everything he has that he's ever done for a snow game in his career. The detail that he came back to me with was outstanding.

Again, just goes to show you it takes everybody. Just so appreciative to Mr. Lurie and this organization that we have the right guys in place in each department. Greg's guys, Greg and his guys were on full display yesterday of how good they did.

I mean, shoot, the pressure we got at the end ended up helping us win the football game.

Q. Jalen's legs are obviously such a big weapon for him. Saw it again yesterday. When he's not capable of running as well as he has, how much does that change and how much do you have to consider that as you put together a game plan when and if that's the case? You obviously had games when he wasn't -- I guess last year there were times he wasn't able to run quite the same.

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, everything is always accounted for, Bob. You try to account for everything. That's your job as coaches. When you get out there in the game, you have to -- these guys have to make split-second decisions and that's us as coaches, too. We have to make split-second decisions.

So the prep you do all week tries to account for everything that you could encounter, whether Jalen can go, run, or not, whether it's snowing, whether it's raining, windy, whether they got this player on the other side or that player on the other side or you're without this player, that player, how many time have you played the team.

All those things are accounted for. That's our job as coaches throughout the week, to make sure all these things are accounted for.

Q. Wondering what your level of concern I guess would be with AJ Brown? He's had three catches for 24 yards the last two games. Obviously the weather being what it was yesterday probably had something to do with it. And also his knee. Also in general with the passing game, you know, haven't been that many explosive plays and passing. What do you see is going on there?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, we're doing everything we can do to win each football game. I think you saw yesterday we were able to win the turnover battle. We were able to take care of the ball in the elements.

They had some turnovers that we were able to create yesterday. So, again, you do everything you can do to win each and every game. There is going to be a game that we're going to have to throw a bunch and a game we have to run a bunch.

Again, I wouldn't say I have a level of concern of anything there. I know we're able to win both ways. I know we can win passing the ball and running the ball. Just so happens a little bit more this year we've won running the football.

We're in this position now to play for the NFC championship game, which is special. I know we got the right people in place all the way on our offense, coaches, and, yeah, just we're doing what we need to do to win each game.

Like I said, if that means throw it 50 times, we'll do that. If it means run it 50 times, we'll do that as well.

Q. How did Jalen Hurts and Quinyon Mitchell come out 24 hours later? On the backup quarterback for the playoffs, what made you decide to stick with Kenny Pickett?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, again, we'll have more information for you. Obviously still going through the process of the day here. I know those guys will do everything they can do to be at their top part of their game on Sunday. I'm confident in our training staff and those guys. We'll see how that goes as the week goes on.

As far as the backup quarterback goes, Kenny played really well when he was in and Tanner played really well when he was in, so makes you have tough decisions and that's a good thing to have. The entire year Kenny was our backup. When he played, I thought he did a really nice job and put us in positions to win games. When Tanner played, he did a really nice job and put us in positions to win games.

We have three guys that we're so excited about to have on this roster, yeah.

Q. ...Jalen throw the ball away when he's out of the pocket, but rarely from within the pocket. Is there a team philosophy against that? Also like when he doesn't like what he sees downfield, obviously you don't want to take away his ability to scramble, but how do you balance that versus chucking it at

somebody's feet and living to see another day?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, that's a good question. When you're in the pocket and you got a lot more -- like if you throw the ball away when you're in the pocket and you're under duress in the pocket and there is nobody there, you're going to get -- it's going to count as a sack anyway.

It's easier -- I think you'll probably see more quarterbacks have throwaways on the run more so than in the pocket. Jalen has a unique ability that when something happens within the play concept, whether that's a breakdown in protection, whether that's somebody not getting open, whether that's a coaching error of not getting guys open in a particular spot, whether it's a missed read, whatever it is, he has this unique ability to get out of trouble and create plays.

I think what you see is I think it's easy to look at, oh, he got sacked this many times or that many times and not account for all the rushing yards that he's had when he's been able to extend. You know, happened three or four times yesterday when one of those things happened that I mentioned.

Again, whether it was a breakdown, a coaching error, whether it was a receiver not getting open, whatever it was, where he scrambled and got a big play out of it and got positive play out of it.

And so you're going to have a little bit of that balance that there will be times where they finish on the sack as well. But I know this: Like it's got to be a balance, right? But I know how many plays he's made with his feet. That doesn't mean you just extend and make a play running. It's also the ones that he extends and throws and finds the guy down the field.

Conditions yesterday were sloppy, as we know, the way the field was. Both teams had to play in it. Their pass rush did a good job, too. I thought our O-line did a really nice job protecting. We had a couple breakdowns here and there, but again, like I said it was always -- it's never -- like when you make a big play, like Saquon's run, it's not just on Saquon. It took everybody.

Same thing when there is a sack. It's on everybody. It's every part, coaches, players. It's just the greatest team sport there is. You can't pin it on anything. Like I said I know he takes some heat sometimes about taking sacks, but we don't account for all the times he makes big plays out of it as well. It's just a unique ability that he has. Not a lot of the guys that have it. He's unique in that and has an unbelievable feel of how to extend plays and, again, the efficiency that he's playing quarterback with and the way

he's taking care of the football gives us a chance to win every single week.

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