

Philadelphia Eagles Media Conference

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Coach Nick Sirianni

Weekday Press Conference



Q. Good afternoon, Nick. Talking to AJ after the game, he was asked about his emotions now that you start this sort of ramp up for the Super Bowl. Curious if you learned anything or one or two things from that first experience that maybe you can impart to the guys going to go through this for the first time?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, I think there is obviously different things that go into the week. You have two weeks to prepare, right? You have media obligations when you get there and the game is a little different as far as the breaks that are taken in the game.

So I think at the end of the day it does come back to what we've talked about all year, just controlling what you can control and being in the moment of where you are. I think when that is what you're conscious of and focused on during an entire year it serves you well going into this.

It's going to have to be the same stuff just under some different circumstances as far as the way the game and the week lead up to it.

Q. Are you changing anything specifically based off the experience of the first time?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, obviously you go through everything. I won't get into details there, Jeff, of what we're changing, but you go through -- after each week you talk about what you can do better and what you did well. That's a constant every Monday. That's what we did after 2022 as well.

So we have notes that we're going through and that we've been going through. Couple tweaks here and there of what we will do differently. Couple things that will stay the same. Of course like any time you go through any situation like that, you take notes like that and you try to get better from each circumstance you go through.

Q. Will Brandon Graham be available for the Super Bowl?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, we'll see. We'll see how that goes and plays out. I can't answer that question right now, but we'll see how the week works out, the two weeks work out.

Q. What are the main factors in that decision?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, we'll see.

Q. Just to go back to that tush push play in the championship game when the Commanders kept jumping offsides. Players thought it was pretty funny. What was your reaction to that? Were aware of the rule that existed that the official could award a touchdown?

NICK SIRIANNI: I actually was. We had a coach that I was with that did game management with the Chargers, Smash. I don't remember where we were talking about it but I remember us talking about it. Hey, they can award a touchdown in a moment like this.

You know, I do remember why we were talking about it. If you were on the 1 with not a lot of time left, the defensive back keep holding, why not keep holding, and whatever it was -- I don't remember. That's why I shouldn't have gone into it.

I remember him telling me if you do that enough times in a row the referee can award them a touchdown. I remember like saying to Smash, that's not a rule. Are you out of your mind? I remember saying that to him. That's not a rule.

I remember him being very emphatic with me. He knows the rules really well and telling me it was. I texted him after the game. I'm like, Smash, you were right.

We have talked about that since so we did know that in that scenario. I said to the referees on the sideline, hey, they keep doing this it can be a touchdown, right? They said, yeah, that's correct.

Q. Did you think it was funny? Did you get a kick out of what they were doing?

NICK SIRIANNI: Do I think it was funny? Not really. Not particularly. (Smiling.) Just wanted our guys to be -- obviously always thinking about the safety and health of



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our players.

Q. We've talked so much this year about turnovers and takeaways. Last 16 games since the bye week you guys are plus 27, which is kind of an outrageous number. I guess the question is, two-part question, how pivotal is that to your overall kind of what you guys do and how you win? How important is it? And you have 18 different guys that have takeaways, which is another crazy number. So like anybody on the team can force a turnover at any point. How valuable is that, it's not just one, two, three guys; it's really everybody.

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, first the players going out there and being able to do it is incredible because you're taking chances at times, too. Because we've tackled well, too. I think sometimes you see in those scenarios that teams take chances there but don't make tackles. Well, we been in the top 10 of missed tackle percentage in the NFL, which we take a lot of pride in. Again, goes back to our details.

But the players, when they go out there and execute that on the defensive side of the ball, that's easier said than done. Just really proud of them of how they've been able to tackle well while also taking the football away. It's something we emphasize an awful lot. We've always done a good job of emphasizing it on offense.

I think this year we've taken another step and really emphasized it even more so this year as a defense. You know, every team meeting we're looking at ball security, any mistake that's made in a ball security. Every team meeting we're looking at good strip attempts or missed strip attempt opportunities.

You know, this year Pat Dolan our video guy got me every peanut punch that he forced a fumble with his entire career and we watched that on a loop as coaches, and then we showed that to the players as well.

So we emphasize the crap out of it because we know it's a telling stat in this game. The guys have done a nice job protecting it and defensive guys have done a good job taking it away, as well as special teams guys.

You saw Will get one in the game as well. We drilled the heck out of it, but you got to have talented players to be able to do both, because it is a skill to be able to tackle and take the ball away. And I think the other thing it shows is the effort to the football.

We had our second man in with Zack Baun. Coop had him tied up and Zack was able to come in and get a hit on the ball on the one on Sunday.

That shows you relentless effort by our guys of getting to the football. We talk a lot about good things happen when you get to the ball, whether that be Zack going in and cleaning it up on Sunday, Grant Calcaterra being there behind the football on Dallas' fumble against Washington on that Thursday night.

It's just you got guys in great shape. You can't be relentless effort unless you're in great shape. It's just another notch to these guys of how good they have their bodies in shape and the strength staff and the training staff of getting those guys in shape and the guys themselves just being relentless.

Q. With how often you talk about facing adversity, what do you think you showed your team with how you dealt with adversity coming into this season?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, everything that I ask them to do, you know, it's like I think about if I'm asking them to do something, I better be pretty darn good at it, whether that's detail, whether that's mental toughness. They don't need to see me physically tough. I don't need to be that anymore. Mental toughness, connecting, those three pillars of our culture, that I better be doing those things like crazy.

And so I don't know, hopefully I provide a good example for them in moments like that; but I also hope that I provide a good example to them of blocking out the things that you can't control and outside noise. There is always going to be outside noise.

Again, just try to be an example and lead by example. Culture is not words up on your wall or a T-shirt that you wear. It's your habits. If I want our guys to have these habits then I better have them myself and our coaches better have them. I guess I just try to live by that, Dave.

Q. You guys have like eight new starters on defense compared to the team that you took to the Super Bowl two years ago. A, what does that say about the job you guys did drafting and bringing in guys? Also, considering that, I assume it's tough to stay among the elite teams in the league to be back in the Super Bowl with such a big turnover.

NICK SIRIANNI: I think there is unfortunately, fortunately, however you want to look at it, there is a lot of turnover in this league. There is no team that's the same year in, year out. There is free agency; guys retire. So many different things play into it. Salary cap, all the different things that play into it.

That's what is special about each individual team. You're



starting the journey again. You have principles in place and all those things but you're starting the journey over and over again. We do have key members that have been here for the last three years.

You know, I've said how many times -- I can't tell you how many times I've said how good a job Howie has done getting these guys in here. Then it's about building the team and building the habits and the guys continuing to get better.

I think that's what you've seen. With eight new starters on defense, really good defense in 2022, really good defense here in 2024.

So, yeah, so much credit to Howie and his staff and the guys themselves going out there and playing their butts off.

Q. You guys might've had one of the greatest bye weeks ever this year considering what you did afterwards. I think you said a few years ago, you asked Andy about how to handle bye weeks. What advice did you get there? How is the Super Bowl bye week different than maybe the regular season bye week?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, obviously will keep my conversations with other coaches, players private. Always so appreciative of any coach that is willing to help in scenarios and situations. I'm always so appreciative. So many of these coaches have so much good knowledge to be able to share. Hopefully I can pay it forward to other coaches that ask me questions that I can help them with at some point.

As far as the differences between a bye week here and a bye week in the middle of the season, the one major difference, Bob, is that in the season you might not practice that week, right? The guys will be off. They have to have a certain amount of time off. This week is a little bit different because you're going into a week next week that's a little unusual, right, with some of the things.

So you got to get a lot of the game plan done. Got to get practice in. You also want to get guys rested and healthy and ready to go.

There are definitely differences, one, by the rules of it; two, just about what the following week looks like.

So it's handled a little bit differently.

Q. We talked to Cam in the locker room after the game. He said that he expects he'll be great for the Super Bowl. Didn't get to talk to Landon. Between his

just general toughness and the fact you got two weeks to get ready for the Super Bowl, how confident are you that he will be good to go?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, we'll see. We'll see. I know that these guys, I mean, how tough these guys are and do everything and how hard they work and all these guys are playing through bumps and bruises right now.

You know, I just see their relentless work and relentless effort to get themselves in the best shape they possibly can with their bodies to be ready together. Time will tell. We'll see as that goes.

I know that these guys are doing everything they can do. I can't tell you how much I respect what they go through and what they put their bodies through to play this game we love. Yeah, just got so much respect for that. Toughness is a characteristic that I value so much in life and in football.

We got a tough team. These guys, the guys you're asking about, they're tough as heck. You can go a long way with toughness.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Jalen's straightjacket comment after the game here, just kind of your interpretation of that. And then also, how much of what you're asking him to do, the way you're asking him to play the game this year, is factoring into the fact that it wasn't the most prolific passing season for him?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, I think he was having fun after the game. We been winning a couple different ways this year. I think he was just having fun after the game.

You know, I know this: He said this plenty of times he doesn't care how we win. I don't care how we win, as long as we win. We do everything we can do to be able to win.

You know, as we've talked a lot, there has been different circumstances of how games have gone and where we been at late in games. But we found a way to win and rattle off 15 out of 16.

I thought he was having fun with that after the game. Just loved how he went out and executed and prepared for this game. I always admire that. You guys have asked me about that. I always admire the heck out of how hard he works regardless of the situation. Same guy every day.

His mentality, work ethic, you know, we had to win a different way this game, and we did. We showed we can win multiple ways. I think that shows the type of team we have and the type of selflessness we have on our team



starting with Jalen.

Q. They said on the broadcast that you emphasize that when guys are coming up from the ground that's a good time to try to get the ball out. How did that come to be. When that became a particular focus?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah that's been a particular focus. I think you go back, shoot, you go back to 2020 and Zach Pascal had one in our Buffalo game, Indy versus Buffalo in the playoffs. Zach was getting up with the football. I think Micah Hyde ripped at it as he was getting up.

The ball tends to be -- there is moments that ball is at risk. I don't want to get into everything that we teach there. I won't get into everything we teach there when that ball is at risk. One of the moments where the ball is at risk is you getting up off the ground because -- and vice versa. The other time the ball is at risk when you're going to the ground.

Naturally your body as you get up tends to loosen up. When you're going down, the same thing, you tend to brace. So those are things that we drill. Jemal Singleton has done an unbelievable job of finding creative ways to drill those two things. Just like the other ball security stuff, we also -- if the guy misses a strip opportunity in a moment in practice, where he's getting up and we don't take advantage of that, we talk about it.

It also happened in our 2022 game against Washington with Quez Watkins. He caught a pass from Jalen. Getting up off the ground the ball was at risk, and I think No. 25, who's still playing over there, knocked the ball out.

So, again, sometimes you don't have a wide -- if it happens during the league, in a game during the league year, we'll show that as well.

So that's not one that's real common because doesn't happen a ton, but you are excited when it happens. I think Oren, right -- and to be able to mentally think about that in the game that Oren did, the way Oren did, is pretty incredible. He's got coverage responsibilities. He reacts. He sees Ekeler going to the ground. He's going there. Ekeler gets up and he's like, oh, shoot I'm going to punch here.

Those are things you can't do in the spur of the moment unless those are your habits. That's why the habits are so, so critical. It's like we can talk about it all we want. Unless you're practicing that, unless you're emphasizing it after you practice it, then they're not -- it's got to be part of who you are. They're split-second situations where these things happen.

And so, yeah, I guess you just sometimes our best coaching points and our best things we think about or happen to you because of something negative that happened to you. Those are both situations. In the Buffalo-Indy game they called Zach down. I think we might have got away with one there. Quez definitely was a fumble, and it turned that a little bit.

So sometimes your scars of the things you went through help you become better. I think that's just another way of our team especially facing adversity and trying to get better from each individual thing we go through.

Q. What's the plan for this week as far as how much will you guys be on the field? Will all the game planning be in before you go to New Orleans? How are you handling logistical meetings? All the stuff that happens during the bye week?

NICK SIRIANNI: Yeah, we have a plan. We are still sorting through some other things of it. So I mean, a big chunk of it is ready to go. Won't share everything with you guys. We'll practice and be on the field and installing things. To give a percentage or a time, still some of that stuff is up in the air.

You got to get a good portion of it done because of the schedule, like I was saying to I believe Bob. Schedule is a little different next week. There is some different things you got to handle next week and you might not have the all-day Tuesday meeting or all-day Monday meeting because of media night that you would normally have as coaches.

So won't get into percentages with you. You got to get a lot done this week and refine it and make sure everything is on point for the following week.

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