

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Fire away.

Q. They got a great left tackle obviously. They've got really good skill position guys when it comes to blocking. Beyond the personnel schematically, what do they do well to make their run game unique?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think they do a great job. Obviously they're well-coached I think in terms of the blocking schemes. They do a good job of getting good matchups, getting angles on guys. I think they do a good job in terms of mixing their personnel, formation adjustments, but still being able to run the same plays. That makes them effective.

Guys could be in different spots, which puts us in different spots. Now they're running the same blocking scheme and hitting holes. They got a way that they run and attack the line of scrimmage, which is really good.

Q. How big a test is this scheme for your inside backers and how much of a key is it to stop those yards after the catch?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, the first thing in terms of tests for the backers, it will be a heck of a test for all of our defensive guys. We're going to have to tackle, control the line of scrimmage up front if we want to have a chance. We're going to have to tackle well and fit our gaps at linebacker, and outside the secondary guys are going to have to tackle because they're going to make you tackle and show up in the run game. So all those things we have to do well in that regard. If we want to have a chance to stop them, we all have to show up.

Second question?

Q. Yards after the catch.

TERYL AUSTIN: Best in the league. Same thing when they do catch it. We know they are going to catch some balls. We have to rally to it. We have to make sure in your

in terms of when we come, we're wrap tackling guys. We're not trying to butt people down, we're not just trying to cut them down. We have to wrap tackle. We have to have multiple guys get there to the ball to keep them and keep the yards after catch to a minimum.

Q. Coaches in the NFL usually catch up to schemes and stuff like that. He's running his dad's offense, his dad's offense was great 25 years ago. His offense is similar. Why has that lasted? Why has the style been so effective?

TERYL AUSTIN: Because I think there's certain things in football that never change. If you block well, you run hard, and you're sound in what you do, it passes all the tests and you don't have to worry. That thing will always continue to do well and flourish. I think that's what it shows you.

Q. You have three rookies that look good. You have good depth at these spots. They're all different individuals, of course, but how to assimilate them into the defense, are they ready to contribute, hit the ground running?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, we're counting on them to contribute. What that and how much that will be, that will be determined. Obviously Sunday is going to be their first real live NFL game. We'll see how that works.

Obviously it's like anything, if they continue to practice well and then we get them in games and they do well in the games, their roles will increase.

Q. When you guys were working against the scout team, I think you had about five jerseys highlighted.

TERYL AUSTIN: Don't be telling everybody what we're doing (smiling).

Q. These guys are as diverse as any team in the league.

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, that's what it is. You have these guys highlighted because you have to know who's getting the ball and the danger they bring when they to get the ball. That's probably why we had all the jerseys on there.



You better know where Kittle is. You better know where Deebo is. I can go on and on.

The point being is we put that on for our guys so we understand the urgency with what we had to practice, and we have to practice, the urgency we have to play when they do catch the ball or get the ball to be able to get those guys surrounded and get them on the ground.

Q. Obviously McCaffrey is another one of those guys. How do you kind of keep an eye on him, keep him accounted for?

TERYL AUSTIN: We're going to try to play with 12 guys (laughter).

He is a special talent coming out of the backfield. What really makes it special is he can split out and he can run the wide receiver stuff. I mean, that guy is really unique. He catches the ball. He runs the ball well.

We're just going to have to make sure that when he gets the ball, he's not getting it in space by himself, and that we always have some type of ability to really corral him and keep his yards after catch down.

Q. Run-pass, they're one of the heaviest run teams in the league. Some of those things they do with guys in space, might be hard to play heavy against them?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, you're not going to line up and play that goal line defense and pack the box because they're going to spread you out. One of them may go out, one of them may come back, then all of a sudden they're in a spread run game, or they want to pass it.

You have a dilemma there. They make it hard for you because those guys are interchangeable and they are both really good at what they do.

Q. Because Williams is as good as he is on the left side, generally he just takes care of whoever the pass-rusher is on that side, they double on the other side. If so, how do you counter that? Do you just say, T.J. go beat one of the best ever? Is that what it comes down to?

TERYL AUSTIN: We think we got two really good ones, too. So we're expecting Alex to win his share. We know 71 is going to win some. But we expect Alex to win his share. We expect T.J. to do what T.J. does. Maybe we'll have a couple of schematic things that try to help us where we can get some one on ones.

We also feel like we have some guys inside that can give

us some balance in that rush with Cam and Larry and Leal and those guys in there. We feel pretty good about our rush and the things we can do.

The question is: do we get them in third-down situations and passing situations where we can use those guys?

Q. Has Desmond King been able to hop on the preverbal moving train?

TERYL AUSTIN: He's getting himself ready. If he's going to be ready this week, I can't say for sure. But he has jumped on a moving train. You can see he's a good pro. He understands obviously NFL ball. He's played a lot of football. He's getting himself up to speed as fast as he can.

Q. Do you think you have to rotate a lot of guys on the defensive line, at least in this first game?

TERYL AUSTIN: We'll see. I think we'll see what happens. I think a lot of that, it always depends. You like to say, Okay, yeah, you rotate. It depends on how many snaps you have.

If you have a bunch of snaps, guys are a little bit tired, yeah, we're going to rotate and try to keep guys fresh. If we're playing well and getting off the field, and they don't have to rotate, then we're going to keep our good guys out there.

Q. As a coordinator, how much do you enjoy playing that chess match, especially with this group? A couple safeties can be interchanged, guys in the slot, corner, be able to mix and match personnel?

TERYL AUSTIN: It's a challenge. It's fun. But I think it's why you like the NFL and why people love the game. It is football at its highest grade, whatever you want to call it. But it is something that really goes on weekly. This week is really a challenge because of what they do there. They're really good at it.

I think it's fun. I think we're always up for the challenge and trying to meet that challenge because I think the goal is at the end of the season, you want to be able to make the Playoffs, get in the Playoffs, make a run in the Playoffs, get to the Super Bowl. You can't do that if you don't beat really good teams with really good offensive schemes.

Q. What do you make of Purdy?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think he's a really good quarterback. He's obviously exceeded a lot of expectations. You watch a guy that's played a lot of college football. He's got a lot

of starts under his belt. He has a lot of moxy. There's not a lot of things that get him rattled. He doesn't panic in situations. He knows what to do with the ball. He knows when he has a good play. He knows when he doesn't have a good play. Sometimes that's the biggest thing. He gets rid of the ball if he has to. He knows how to get the ball to the right guys, then boom, they take it from there.

I think what I like about him is I like all those things. He is a really solid young guy on the rise.

Q. If Larry can't go, do you feel confident in what Leal can do, taking over a bigger role this year?

TERYL AUSTIN: Absolutely. I think Marv has done a good job. We really like Marv. He is a good young player. He's still ascending. If for whatever reason if we wouldn't be able to have Larry, then I absolutely count on Marv.

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