

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



Q. Mike T said as much the other day that replacing Cam is impossible, so how do you divide it up?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think it'll be by committee. We have a lot of good young guys in the program, and so we'll try to get them in and let them play to their strengths and different things that we think they do well. But it's not going to be one guy that replaces him. He's right about that.

Q. How much better positioned are you guys now? Obviously you don't want to lose Cam at any point, but the way you've drafted the last couple years, how much easier or less of a challenge is it to replace him now versus one or two years ago?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, I think that the important thing is like you mentioned we added a lot of depth and I think these guys now have an opportunity to prove themselves and to see if they can step up to the challenge. We like what we have, but until they get into games for an extended period of time, we won't know, but we like the young guys we have, and we'll see how they respond.

Q. (Indiscernible) played 21 snaps in his debut after Cam went down. How versatile do you think he can be?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, to answer the first part of your question, he showed that he's kind of what we thought. He's really powerful. He moves well. The things that he's going to be inexperienced on are the blocking schemes coming at him, how those things affect him and how he should play. But I like him. I think he can play multiple positions along the line, but right now we want to try to keep him coming, so we may try to keep him a little bit where he is and let him grow that way.

Q. Steelers have said a lot that stopping the run is a number one priority. When you face a team that has an elite running game as their priority, is it the same or different -- how much more is it emphasized?

TERYL AUSTIN: It's always emphasized but you really know the challenge it takes on. Obviously Nick Chubb is a great runner, and he's really the thing that makes them go. If he gets going and the run game gets going, I've always been like this, if the run game gets going, that really affects all of our defense and it makes us less effective. Last week was a prime example. We didn't do a good job, and that opened it up for everybody else.

Q. Do you expect to see more of the same until you guys show that you can -- you've got Vegas after this. They've got a guy that likes to (indiscernible). Do you expect to see it until you guys get it cleaned up?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think so. Especially in this league if you show some vulnerability, if you show some weakness, teams are going to take advantage of it until you correct it, and until we correct it, we can expect it to happen. It's our job starting with me to make sure we put our guys in the right place to make the plays so we can correct it and get it corrected so people aren't doing it to us.

Q. To what degree were you in the right place pre-snap and after they adjusted?

TERYL AUSTIN: Obviously didn't do a good enough job either way, me coaching them, getting them in the right spots, those guys playing. It just snowballed and we did not do a great job, and those guys did a better job than we did last week. The great challenge and great thing about the NFL is you get another week to do it, and I think our guys will respond to that challenge, and our guys will be up for it this week.

Q. Why do you think it played out that way? You guys seemed pretty on point about --

TERYL AUSTIN: I wish I had an answer for you. I don't know. I just know that once it didn't happen the way we wanted, first thing we did, we come in here Monday morning, we try to figure out a way to get it right, and it starts with my meetings and what we do and how we're structured and we go from there.

Like I said, I think the beauty of it is this week we have another opportunity to correct what happened last week.

Q. What was your first impression of Benton in his first game, and how does he factor into the whole rotation now that Cam is gone?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, I thought for a first time I thought he did well. He's active, he's strong, all the things that we thought, and he did a pretty good job. I think in terms of rotation, I think he got a good amount of snaps. I don't know if we're going to be in a position to move him around to a bunch of places as a young guy. I don't think that's always effective. We'll just kind of let him play out where he is and see where that takes us.

Q. (Indiscernible) got down near the box a lot. Is that kind of how you envision him playing right now, a little bit free safety peppering him around everywhere or are you sitting back --

TERYL AUSTIN: I think it's going to depend on who we play and what we're trying to get done. That could change weekly. I can't tell you that in case it's supposed to change this week. I don't know. But we'll just let it go.

One thing with Minkah is he's pretty good wherever you put him, so we'll use him wherever we have to.

Q. In replacing Cam by committee, how much more of a chess match is it to put some of the younger guys in the right spots based on what you've seeing offensively?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think it's always a chess match because just for example this week they're going to go up against a veteran offensive line. Those interior guys are really good. They work well together, same offensive line. Coach Callahan does a great job with them. You've got to make sure that the guys don't get overwhelmed in there in terms of by experience, so we've got to make sure we put them in places that they can excel, and if we start moving them around and now we're seeing different schemes, they're going to be at a disadvantage versus (indiscernible). We've got to try to as much as we can keep it simple for them, keep them in the things that they're really good at and go from there.

Q. What's your take on (indiscernible)?

TERYL AUSTIN: My take? I think like anybody, there's really nothing to talk about that was really good last week, but I was encouraged by their physicality and encouraged in terms of the way they came downhill and did some things, but there's always things that we have to do better, but I'm encouraged by that group.

Q. (Indiscernible) Robinson in any way?

TERYL AUSTIN: I'm encouraged by the guys we have playing right now.

Q. Everybody knows what T.J. is going to do. Everybody game plans for him and he remains -- do you still watch him sometimes and sort of wonder, man, how does this dude do this week in and week out?

TERYL AUSTIN: All I know is I'm glad he's on my team because he's a phenomenal football player, and I'm glad I get a chance to go out there with him, and I love watching him play and what he does. He's unbelievable.

Q. What separates him from the other guys?

TERYL AUSTIN: He's an unbelievable student of the game, in addition to what he has in terms of physical traits. Obviously in terms of how he rushes, but I think maybe what gets underestimated is just his understanding of football, period, and he's off the charts at it.

Q. How does that manifest itself?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, just like everybody else, you see it by sacks, you see it by the splash plays that he makes. Those aren't by accident. Guys don't just fall into him, and that's where I think he's special.

Q. Joey being part of the dime, is that a function of assimilating him in as a rookie or is it just better guys than him on the outside to play every down?

TERYL AUSTIN: That's kind of where he is right now.

Q. Should we have been surprised by the defense struggling with so many new players in the opener?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, you don't want it, and so yeah, I was surprised because I thought the way we functioned early that we were working really well and we'd be able to take that into the game, and it didn't happen, so it's my job to figure out why that happened and what went on and how we can fix it and that's what this week is for.

Q. You talked about getting communication better on the back end of the defense. Do you feel like the secondary match very well (indiscernible) what did you see from that standpoint and how do you guys as veterans get that going?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think that's, again, communication obviously. When you make a communication error in the

back end, it results in a big play, and we saw a few of those happen last week. So I think it's important that we do get that ironed out.

That's something that we've talked about from day one. It's always been an emphasis, whether you have a new group or an old group because when you get in the stadiums and you're working in that back seven, any mistake cuts a guy free, and most times when guys get cut free in this league, they find the open guy. That was what happened last week.

So we've got to do better at that. We've got to, again, continue to emphasize it and we've got to make it come real on Sunday -- or actually we play Monday this week.

Q. I know Aaron has been limited in practice. How do you evaluate how he played last week and how much more important is he on the field in leadership without Cam there?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, I think he had been limited. He showed some good stuff. Again, I don't think we can single out anybody really other than T.J. that really played well last week. We all have to do better.

We'll look at -- for the amount of sample size we got from Larry out at practice, I was pleased with his effort. I was pleased with those things, but like anything, there's a lot of things we can all do better.

Q. Is there any similarity when you go from a team that played so much 21 personnel to playing a team that plays so much 12 personnel?

TERYL AUSTIN: No, I think every game is different, and everybody, they have their schemes and how they use their people. I think every week you come in and we just look at what we see on tape and that's going to dictate what we do defensively.

Q. Cole Holcomb was talking about some of the challenges that San Francisco presents, that it's tough to replicate. Are there similar things that are difficult to replicate when it comes to the Browns?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, Nick Chubb. You can't replicate that guy.

Q. Anything up front?

TERYL AUSTIN: Those guys, I think their cohesiveness of their offensive line is really good, just like San Fran, so there's not going to be a stunt they haven't seen, there's not going to be a front they haven't seen, so they're going

to react accordingly when you start moving guys around, and I think that's really the challenge for us, that you can't replicate that in practice. We draw cards with (indiscernible) and sometimes our card doesn't give us the same look that he would give us, but that's the challenge of it, and we've got to be able to navigate that and be better.

Q. What is the challenge of playing a team that goes so tight in multiple that can spread you out, condense you, run, throw, do whatever, when they have weapons that block really well?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, you have to make sure that you have enough in your game plan to handle those different things so you're not shorthanded. When you're out there, they're spreading you out, you don't have enough people to cover, or they bring it in and they're just pounding you off the ball and you don't have enough big bodies on the field. That's going to be a schematic challenge for us, but we'll adapt to it the best way we can.

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