

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Weekday Press Conference



Q. They have not run the ball well, but they've been very -- I think the split is still 53/47 pass to run. They've been trying to get it going. You guys have obviously had some struggles in that area. Do you expect them to continue to try to pound it?

TERYL AUSTIN: I would. Right now we're not playing the run very well, so I expect every team we play, until we show that we can stop the run, to come in and run the ball at us.

Until we show up and do a better job in terms of stopping the run and doing those things, I anticipate teams to run. They have a heck of a running back. We know what he is. It's going to be up to us to make sure we get that stopped.

Q. Commonality in the two long runs? I mean, is that going to happen every once in a while? Is there something --

TERYL AUSTIN: It should never happen. 60 and 70-yard runs should never happen. That becomes a thing that we've got to make sure as we coach our guys up, in terms of proper pursuit angles, in terms of gap fits, in terms of hit, wrap, tackling, all of those different things, there's all of it that comes into play.

When it's not, if there's any mishap in there, you leave yourself open for a big run. That's what we've done the last two games.

Q. Alex and T.J., I don't know what more you can say about that tandem at this point, but do you feel like, even through two games already this year, they're coming into their own more as a duo, especially now that it's cemented here for the foreseeable future?

TERYL AUSTIN: We know both of those guys, really good players, and they really showed it last week. They've shown it time and time again, but it really stepped to the forefront last week when we needed it.

Those guys are awesome. They're awesome dudes. They're awesome football players. They're awesome teammates. And I think it's going to continue to get better.

Q. Is it even more dynamic this year now that Alex had to go through the process for whatever it was, the first eight weeks last area of not having T.J. there, and he was the guy. It's a little different with both of them coming into the season completely healthy, and Alex had a breakout year. Is that helping the duo get to even better heights maybe?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, but I think Alex felt that last year. Even last year before camp he was telling everybody he was going to get double digit sacks that year, and he did. He could see his growth and the kind of things he was doing and the path he was on. So now that you have that, you have a guy that's really confident, and he achieved that goal, and now he's on to bigger and better goals.

Pair him with T.J., that's a really good combination of those guys playing together. Obviously it helps us because, when you have two guys that can control the edge like that, that makes it hard for offenses.

Q. You just played this Raiders team late last season. How is their offense different, or is it different with Garoppolo in there?

TERYL AUSTIN: It's hard to say because it's such a small sample size right now. The bottom line is they have good players and they do a good job of trying to get the ball to the good players. That's really what we have to do.

For us, again, it's going to start with us stopping the run. If we don't stop the run, things are going to be tough. We stop the run, and then we've got to stop -- obviously they have an outstanding receiving corps led by Davante Adams, and you've got to stop it.

So our work is cut out for us. We're going to have to play a really good game. We're going to have to play better than we've played the last two weeks in all facets of the game. If we don't, it's going to be tough.

Q. Minkah said he hates what happened to Chubb. He

hates to see it happen to a great player. At the same time, he says there's no regrets. That's how you have to play in this league. From your perspective as a coach, any issue with kind of the heat he's been taking from some people on the outside about such a difficult injury for a player?

TERYL AUSTIN: It's part of the game. We all know Minkah is not a dirty player. He's a stand-up player. I have no problem with the way everything shook out. You don't want it to happen.

I've got a lot of respect for Chubb, unbelievable player. From what I know, unbelievable guy, and you hate to see it happen, but it's just part of the game.

Q. Is Porter still a third down guy, or is he starting to --

TERYL AUSTIN: That's kind of where we are right now. We'll continue to see if he can continue to do things well. There's a possibility of expanding his role, but like we said, that's kind of all the same things we've talked about all year. As he gets better and gets more snaps, if he earns it, then we'll give him more reps.

Q. How did he play the last fourth down?

TERYL AUSTIN: He's fine. Got the stop and got the win. It was outstanding. I didn't see anything. I know everybody talked about it.

Like those are two guys, they're both jostling. The rules in the NFL are, obviously if one guy's just running, the other guy is just draped all over him, obviously that's interference. But if they're both hand fighting for the ball a lot of times that is not called, and we know it. That's just kind of how -- that's why you'll see guys will be complaining about OPI, and they don't get it because they're all hand fighting.

It's just part of the game. We just kind of let that go. The refs make their calls, and we coach the game. We tell our guys how to play it and let the refs call it how they see it.

Q. You've already got seven forced fumbles for your defense this year. Last year you had nine all season long. Did you do anything differently this off-season? Is it fumble luck?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think we've emphasized it. We were doing it. We knew we were down on it, so we wanted to make it a part of our process in terms of creating turnovers. We were getting our hands on the ball. We were getting plenty of interceptions, but we weren't knocking the ball loose.

I think we've really concentrated on getting the ball loose from runners by knocking it out of their hands, and it's starting to show. We've got to continue to do it.

It was. We worked on it. It was an emphasis point for us. I think it's like most things in football, you get what you emphasize.

Q. Your two outside linebackers are pretty good at --

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, I like that too.

Q. -- creating those too.

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah.

Q. Raiders haven't had a lot of sacks, have they, the two games? What are they doing so well? . The tackle play, getting the ball out quick? Is it a combination?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think it's a combination of all those things. The tackle play is good. They get the ball out on time. The quarterback knows -- you're talking about a veteran quarterback who's going to know. He's not going to fall. You're not going to dupe him into anything and have free runners and have him get hit like that.

He knows, if he's in a bad position, to get rid of the ball, throw it away if you have to. That's why they don't take negative plays, and he's really good at that. That's why they haven't given up a sack.

Q. From your experience over the years, have players ever come to you and get upset by fans booing them? Do you say anything? You're in the pros now, and you don't have to bother with that.

TERYL AUSTIN: It's just part of doing business. I don't think I've ever had a player say, hey, they're booing me. I would be like, well, that's kind of part of the deal. You line up, you put on the shoes. You put on the jersey. You go out there to represent your city and the team, and you take all that comes with it, the good and the bad.

Q. Is it your experience that, when you go up against a running back who's renowned for being a Pro Bowler or All Pro and he has a bad week the week before, that the opposing offense compensates then and feeds him even more the next week? Do you expect more of a dose of a Jacobs because it didn't go great last week?

TERYL AUSTIN: I don't think that will be the reason. I think the reason they'll look at is because we've given up a whole bunch of yards rushing and a few extremely long

runs. I don't think it will have anything to do with he hasn't had the touches he normally has or maybe the yards he normally has.

I think it has everything to do with us and what we put on tape. Right now what we put on tape is not good enough in the run game.

Q. When an offense struggles, does it change anything how you approach or coach defensively?

TERYL AUSTIN: No.

Q. Do you try to be more cautious or more aggressive or anything?

TERYL AUSTIN: No. Our goal every time we step on the field is to not allow the other team to score. Whatever happens on the other side of the ball, we never take that into consideration because the only thing we care about is stopping the other team and not letting them score.

Q. A whole half without Minkah, one of your best players, how did that unit, the three or four safeties, and specifically Elijah made a couple of big plays down the stretch there?

TERYL AUSTIN: They did. Those guys did a great job. I think our guys do a great job in terms of staying prepared, staying ready, being the next man up so we don't miss a beat. I think that was pretty evident.

Obviously you're not going to replace Minkah in terms of what he brings to the team, but those guys did a fine job in terms of coming in, making the plays they had to make, and helping us get out of the stadium with a victory.

Q. Elijah covering that ground, a couple plays there. Is that part of what makes him good?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, I think he -- we got Elijah last year kind of on the run, and this year he had the whole off-season and the camp. I thought during the preseason, he made some nice plays during the preseason. Sometimes you forget that because he goes into a backup role.

Then he got on the field, and he was still able to make those plays. We felt pretty confident in the guys we've put out there because they've shown they can do it.

Q. Facing a former player like Spillane, he was here for a long time. He's been in your guys' meetings. You guys know all of his strengths and weaknesses as a player. Do those things cancel each other out when

you have a guy like that who's now on the other side?

TERYL AUSTIN: He's in their system. He's doing their stuff. We're in ours. Everything changes a little bit year to year in terms of what you do and how you do it. He may have some knowledge of players and some knowledge of some things, but I don't think it's enough to ever sway a game plan, to sway what you do because that person's there.

I think we're going to do our things the way we do them, and they'll do things the way they do them, and we'll let the chips fall where they may.

Q. That's a good Vegas reference.

TERYL AUSTIN: That's pretty good. I wasn't even thinking like that.

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