

# Pittsburgh Steelers

## Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Coach Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



**Q. How do you or do you do anything different with that quarterback push play on the sneak? Do you do anything differently defensively against it?**

COACH AUSTIN: We haven't seen it. There are some things you can do. I won't reveal what we may try if that happens, but you have to do something because if not you're just giving up a first down.

**Q. Do you have anybody like Troy who can dive over the line and stop?**

COACH AUSTIN: I don't know. If Troy is available, we can call him up. I don't know.

**Q. The mix and matching with the inside linebackers, how is that working out for you?**

COACH AUSTIN: I think it's good. I think we have three starter-capable guys. It keeps them fresh. It keeps them engaged, and I think it's working well. I like what all three of them are doing, and we just gotta keep them healthy and upright to the end of the season.

**Q. Do you like how they play off each other?**

KENNY PICKETT: They do. They've learned. They're veterans, so they've learned how to play off of each other and they know about each other's strengths and weaknesses, and I think they're learning -- they're not there yet, but they're learning to play really well with each other.

**Q. (Indiscernible) this last game. Was that a package thing?**

COACH AUSTIN: I think Mark, we think Mark is a young guy on the rise. We like Mark and we felt he earned some reps and he went in there and did a good job. Had a couple of tackles, couple tackles on special teams.

I think Mark's trending in the right direction we're going to keep him growing. That's what we have to do. I think if

you see a young guy that's gaining momentum doing the right things, and you think he has a chance to be a good football player then we have to try to give him live reps because that will only accelerate his growth.

**Q. How do you perceive the crowd noise and its effect on communication relative to what you dealt with at home the first two games?**

COACH AUSTIN: Steeler Nation was great out there, that's for sure. But it's obviously a lot easier to communicate when you're on the road and so our communication was better. But it had gotten better in the second season when we were here at home.

That's one thing we're always going to stress. We may get to week 17 and we still may be talking about we need to be better because we want to be perfect in that area. It's hard to do. But we're trying to be perfect in that area.

**Q. You're first in the league in sacks, which has led you to being second in the league in takeaways. Is that pretty much how you draw it up? I know the run defense struggled early but is this what you look forward with?**

COACH AUSTIN: Absolutely. We have a culture, trying to build a culture of being able to sack the quarterback, get him in the long-yardage situations, end drives and being able to take the ball away and give it back to our offense so our offense has more possessions to try to score.

That's really when you look at football games, if you win the turnover battle you've got a great chance to win the game.

**Q. Even when you don't get home, the pressures, how much do you see that affect quarterbacks maybe later in games after guys like T.J. and Alex get home early?**

COACH AUSTIN: I think when you watch quarterbacks, you see them moving, they start feeling that rush. Feet get a little hot. Maybe a little bit -- just makes the throws a little bit less accurate.

And that thing, if you have a big back and you're pounding

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the big back at the end of the game, you start feeling all of a sudden those three-yard runs become five- and six-yard runs.

And it's the same thing with a pass rush. If we're getting hits on them, we're getting home, the quarterback gets a little bit antsy because he doesn't want to get hit.

**Q. Is that a zero-sum thing? I know you -- would you rather you give up a couple more yards, but you get more turnovers, is that the kind of defense you want to be known as more so than limiting yards?**

COACH AUSTIN: I don't want to limit us on anything. I want us to be a complete defense. We've got a long way to go there. But our guys are really working at it. Each week I think we've gotten better and that's really what we want.

Our big thing in our room is to make sure we focus on us and what we do, not so much on what everybody else, who we're playing against because they really have no, they don't affect the outcome of how we prepare and how we play. And that's really been our focus with our guys.

Hey, let's get our room right. Let's do the things that we can do and the things that we can control.

**Q. What are you seeing from C.J. Stroud and what you like about him (indiscernible) the quarterback?**

COACH AUSTIN: Very accurate. I think he takes care of the ball. He does a good job, I think, in terms of getting rid of the ball, getting out of his hands. He's had some sacks.

When you look at it overall, he really is doing, I think, a really good job. He doesn't look like a rookie when you watch him play.

**Q. Is a three-game sample size enough to figure out what a quarterback can and can't do?**

COACH AUSTIN: No. No. I think it kind of maybe gives you some indicators of things that he likes and things that he may be good at. But I don't think a three-game sample size for anybody is a big enough to say, hey, that guy is that.

**Q. 121 attempts would indicate that they're not insulating him. Are they at all within those attempts?**

COACH AUSTIN: No, they're letting him be a quarterback. I think the thing they're doing well is playing to his strengths. He's looking at some -- they get a lot of four-wide looks. And he's able to get the ball out. And he's

able to get it to the right guy, get it in terms of his ball placement really good. And I think that's why you see them spreading the ball.

If he was inaccurate and couldn't do it, they'd be hunkered down and running the ball. He can do it. So he's doing a good job.

**Q. What's the breakdown on the fourth-and-one, the deep ball to Adams?**

COACH AUSTIN: Are you really asking me to lay somebody out right here? Not going to happen. Not doing it.

**Q. Are his sacks, is it results simply, the big pressure? Or is part of it being a rookie, not sure what you're looking at and then the pressure?**

COACH AUSTIN: I think some of it is just didn't have the reads he wanted, and so the line breaks down a little bit, because, again, when they're getting five out, if it's not there and he can't get rid of the ball in a timely fashion, then you're open to those things. I think that's a lot of it.

**Q. (Inaudible) so far, and what's he need to get on a roll?**

COACH AUSTIN: I like Dez. I think Dez is working. It's like anything, when you come from another system there's certain things and details that you have to get used to that may be different from where you came from. That's the biggest thing with him.

I think he's smart. He's tough. He had a hat next week. So we're hopefully accelerating him and keeping him going. And at some point we'll see him on the field.

**Q. Montravius, he's kind of been the forgotten guy (indiscernible). You talk about (indiscernible) and the young guys coming up. But he's a guy, seems like he's playing a lot, playing high leverage snaps?**

COACH AUSTIN: I think Mon is a doing a real great job. Really impressed. He just plays so hard and he's playing really good. I think he's taking -- it's his third year now and all of a sudden you see all of the teaching that he's been getting in his room.

The technique stuff has really taken off in terms you pair it with his motor you're starting to get some really good results. He's been playing really well for us.

**Q. Cole has said he and Kwon have shared some green-dot duties through these first three games. Is**

**that a week-to-week thing or a is it a matchup thing?  
What determines who wears that?**

COACH AUSTIN: It's going to determine the matchups of who is in the game, who is going to be the guy most likely to be in for three downs to start the game. That's who gets the green dot. And then we move it from there.

**Q. Is anything different happening when you have a rookie compared to a veteran this week in terms of preparation or the things you can dial up that you might not be able to dial up against a vet?**

COACH AUSTIN: No, I don't think there's anything, because their scheme is their scheme and you've got to be able to match up with what they do. If you're just trying to do something because you think you're going to get the quarterback and maybe he won't look at this look -- those guys, those coaches over there, they've got good coaches. They understand.

They'll be able to teach him and say, listen, if you get this, this is going to be open.

We've got to go through our normal game-planning things, try to do what works for us and the things that are going to help us frustrate him and get home and sack the quarterback, all the things we want to do.

**Q. We all know that T.J. is a big film guy. Is there any example in your mind where you say this play he would not have made if he didn't put that type of effort into the nuances of who he's facing?**

COACH AUSTIN: His first sack of the game. Watch him on that play-action pass. A lot of times guys coming out on that play-action pass stretch right at him. He'd be out there trying to play the, oh, it's run at me. But he knew something because of the film study that he's able to get through.

Those are just the things. That's just kind of the tip of the iceberg for him. He's unbelievable in that aspect. That's why he's a great player.

**Q. Do you keep track of the time how long he does film a week? Is there a timer on it?**

COACH AUSTIN: No.

**Q. (Indiscernible) said there's a timer on it. It's prime time.**

COACH AUSTIN: No, he's always watching tape. I don't know what he does when he's away from the building but

I'm sure he doesn't just go home and kick his feet up. I'm sure he's looking at it trying to get better, trying to get an edge.

**Q. Highsmith and (indiscernible) are pretty tough assignments for left tackles, especially (indiscernible) game three. How do you think he's handled those?**

COACH AUSTIN: I think he's done great. He's really good. He's caused some pressures. He's going up against their best linemen all the time.

And I can't say enough about Alex Highsmith. I think it's going to be -- he's going to work his butt off and those things and the sacks are going to come. But really what he's doing for our team with those two edge rushing guys, both those guys, they're unbelievable. Alex has faced some good guys right now.

**Q. They have another rookie in Tank Dell, kind of exploded on the scene the last two weeks. What have you seen that allows him to do that?**

COACH AUSTIN: First of all, he can run. You watch him, he takes off. He gets down the field fast. He's really quick in and out of his breaks, and he does a good job of catching and locating the ball.

So it's like anything. When you show you can make some plays, the offensive guy will try to get you the ball. That's what happened. He's shown that he can make some plays. He's getting more opportunities to make them.

**Q. You talked about turnovers and (indiscernible) limit the defense, saying that's all you want to be. But as a play caller does having that ability make things any different for you from maybe those times when you can live to fight another day and not have to feel like you have to take risks, (indiscernible) make a bigger play later?**

COACH AUSTIN: I think always have faith that we'll be able to make plays within the drive. And I don't let that -- I don't think about the takeaway part of it as, hey, I'm not going to do this because we might get it later. I don't think like that. I think in the moment and what's good in the moment and what's good for our team in that play.

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