

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Matt Canada

Weekday Press Conference



MATT CANADA: All right.

Q. Matt, not a lot of teams have stayed balanced against this Jacksonville team. Been very heavy pass. How do you try to not fall into that?

MATT CANADA: Well, it's important to do that, but obviously they're a team that's certainly built for that. They have got a really, really good front. They've invested in that, and they have really good players and they're committed to trying to get you to do that.

So it's a combination of both. You got to take what the defense gives you to a point, and then you also want to be a team that runs the ball.

So be a big challenge. Really, really good defensive unit, a lot of good players, especially up front. I think all the way around they're solid.

Q. Did you think you found something in that fourth quarter with the balance in terms of the run pass?

MATT CANADA: We just started to have some efficiency. We started executing at the level we kind of want to do. Started to see that. It was really good for them. They feed off each other.

Q. With that fourth quarter, is there something -- how do you explain the phenomena of Fourth Quarter Kenny?

MATT CANADA: Obviously that's the way the games have gone. He's playing well, working every quarter. Obviously all we're trying to do is win, so as long as we get to that point it's good.

We obviously want to be better early in the game, late in the game, middle of the game, but we'll just keep working at it. He's certainly has risen to the challenge, as our whole unit has min the fourth quarter to find a way to win.

Q. When you script plays, how much of that is the hope of finding the best dozen, ten, fifteen plays to start the game, and how much of that is a probing exhibition to try to figure out what you can learn about the opposing defense?

MATT CANADA: Obviously we're trying to score every possession. It's always about trying to find the best plays. There is some appropriate probing to use your word, how they're going to play a certain look or a certain personnel group. But we're always trying to score, we're trying to move the ball, and we just have to continue to find ways to be better at it early in the game.

Q. Was that play-action pass to Connor Heyward that set up the Najee touchdown, kind of fake the trap motion there -- like is that something where you have to have some success showing the look before you can build off it and get somebody to bite on that kind of fake?

MATT CANADA: That certainly helps, right? You can do it either way and set up the run or set up -- obviously we believe the balance is there. Plays off plays are there. When you start to execute and have success (train noise.)

Q. Do you feel like you found a good mix between Jaylen and Najee?

MATT CANADA: I do. I feel like those guys work off each other. They're both playing and running hard and have skill sets that are a little bit different but can run the same plays.

Might lean more to one blocking scheme, et cetera with one or the other, but as a whole they both do everything that we do. Stay fresh, playing well, we're fortunate to have two good backs.

Q. Talked about looking to get better early on in games. Was that part of the self-scouting mission during the bye week?

MATT CANADA: Like I said last week, we try to get better at everything. Certainly we want to get out and score and do a good job at the start of the game. We're working at that as a whole staff.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

MATT CANADA: I would say last game probably so, but just depends on the game. I think, again, to the first question, it depends on how the defense plays you and what you do. There is something about front schematics and things that go with what plays you're going to work that week.

We have a base set of plays that we're trying to run, and whatever we feel works the best in a given week, the backs, we're working that every week.

Q. Follow up on the backs question, do you have a rhyme or reason for each guy's...

MATT CANADA: Yeah, we have a rhyme or reason and I'm not going to get into it, but I say that also to how I answered the previous question. They both can do everything. We don't feel like one of them limits us.

Like anything, if you think somebody is a little better at one and vice versa, we'll try to do that, but you don't always get that luxury.

Q. Young tight ends room coming on. Do you need your tight ends to be involved in the pass game, or can you just do it the way you've been doing it?

MATT CANADA: We would like for them to be. With what we're doing, ball kind of finds the guy that's open hopefully throughout a game. I think over the course of 17 games you'll probably see those balls work to the tight ends. It kind of depends on coverage and what's happening.

Have great faith in Kenny getting the ball to the right place at the right time and we are working through that. We want everybody to have a bunch of catches and a bunch of runs, and every game that's not going to happen.

Certainly obviously Pat being down a couple games has affected that a little bit, but feel good about the room. Connor does a lot of different things for us. Darnell is coming on, doing a good job; Rod came in there and played for us and did well. Things kind of felt the way they did last week. Feel good about the room.

Obviously it's an answer that depends on the game. Certainly want to be more involved, but want the ball to go where it's supposed to go based on coverage, and we feel good about Kenny doing that.

Q. Matt, do you have to worry about like if Darnell is in the game and he is never targeted and he is blocking a

lot, defense is going to say, oh, well, this is a run or...

MATT CANADA: Yeah, that would be the case. I mean, I think it's more not targeted versus run the pass. Certainly that's real, right? Obviously that's a real thing. The ball will find him at some point, and I think there is opportunities there.

But we're aware of that for sure.

Q. Diontae was saying he and George push each other. Do you see that competition, and how has that helped?

MATT CANADA: Yeah, obviously Diontae is a really, really good player. We all know that based on all the things he's got, how he's played, targets last year, all the things about Diontae.

So him coming back last week certainly enhanced a lot of things because you have to respect where he is, respect where George is, and to the previous question, know where the tight ends are.

I think they feed off each other. More importantly for us as an offense, helps having all of your weapons out there when you can. Obviously Pat being down was a little bit of a shock. Both those guys feed off each other, but that certainly helps our offense as well.

Q. Over his three years, big part of it I assume is Jaylen showing up last year. (Regarding touches.)

MATT CANADA: Well, first year obviously -- we have answered this before -- he had too many touches. That was a big question. Now it's not enough.

I think we're managing it. Obviously we want to manage him. Want him to be at full strength all the time. Jaylen has done a very good job in protection. That's not a secret. Obviously on third down he's playing more. Not that Najee didn't play, but some of those pass situations are how that works.

I think it's a situation we certainly came out after year one of Najee's career with the goal to try to watch his plays a little bit, to watch his touches just for him being full strength at the end of the year, and obviously for the long range of his career.

He's an important part of this organization, so I think as you think back to after year one, that was a concern, he had so many touches and how long is he going to hold up. It's a combination.

Again, all we're trying to do is win the game during the game, and in the game, if him playing more is what we do, we do that. As long as they're full speed and not tired, we're playing that.

Questions of certain things they do well, but they also -- it isn't just a gut call. If a guy is rolling and hot, we play him. Obviously like you guys all know that. I think over the course of 17 games it'll probably get to exactly where we want it to be.

Like I said earlier, the previous question or one of them, we are fortunate we got two really good backs. Najee is who he is. We're leaning on him and counting on him and he answers the bell all the time. For Jaylen to come in and be the next guy has added a spark for us in quite a few games in the last few years.

Q. Is there anything about the way Trevor Lawrence -- he struggled so much as a rookie, even as the No. 1 overall pick, having all the talent in the world to now being the guy he is. Anything about his process that feels relevant to you? Kenny's development.

MATT CANADA: I wouldn't -- to your point, I don't -- obviously great respect for Trevor and watching him through his career, but I haven't studied him enough to speak to that.

Q. How did Dan Moore grade out?

MATT CANADA: Dan's a guy that's played hard. Really improved throughout his career. Year three for him getting thrown into the fire as he has, and he's become a master at his craft. He works extremely hard and we're certainly glad he's back.

As I've said, it's a real fortunate situation for us to have three tackles at the level we do. Hopefully keep them all healthy and continue to go. But Dan came in and played very well. Every week he's going to have a big challenge playing left tackle. That's a tough spot in our league, and he's done a good job.

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