

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



Q. How do you operate without a safety like Minkah who plays so many different spots?

TERYL AUSTIN: We have multiple guys that have to step up. Guys are going to have to do some different things, and it's our job on a short week to try to get them in there in the right positions to they can play to their strengths. But it's hard, you're not going to replicate that guy. That guy is really good, and he does a lot for us.

We'll do it by committee and have that committee -- hopefully get the committee in the right spots so they can perform well.

Q. How does it schematically -- does it limit what you do because of so many different things you do with him?

TERYL AUSTIN: I don't think so. I just think in terms of the other guys it may put a little more on their plate in terms of where they have to be and how they have to get there, but I think it's doable. We'll make that determination because we'll be working this right up until game time in terms of the things that the guys are going to do and what they feel comfortable with.

Q. As a rookie quarterback in your building, second career start, does maybe a little bit of disguise become even more important this week to try to force some of those mistakes?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think so. I think whenever you're dealing with a young quarterback, you have to try to make them uncomfortable, however that is, whether it's disguise, whether it's pressure, whether it's different things that you do in terms of, as Mike likes to call them, schematics, but you have to do something so they don't feel comfortable.

The kid is really talented. He threw the ball great last week, made some great throws. They've got a great receiver. Obviously everybody knows about the running back. The job is to make sure he's not comfortable around

those guys.

Q. Does it make it tough for you, talking about what you have to do without Minkah, and you touched on the short week. Obviously you don't have as much time as you would like perhaps --

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, we won't have as much time, but I think we have enough time to get what we need done. Like I said, we'll work that all the way up until game time to do the best we can to make sure we give our guys -- get them in the best positions so we have the best opportunity to operate at a high level next week.

Q. Did it look any different, what they did last week versus any tape you looked at of the first six games?

TERYL AUSTIN: I'm not sure it looked any different. The thing that was different was the way the guy threw the ball down the field, and he's really got a strong arm. In terms of throwing, that gave them a little different dimension.

I think that maybe showed up a little bit more last week, and they got Hop involved, and he had three touchdowns last week.

That's really -- if anything changed, it was that. The runner is the runner, they're going to do the things that they do. They've got an identity.

But I think he added something to it last week.

Q. Do you have a faith in Miles and maybe Elijah or somebody if you have to go down the safety depth chart to replace Minkah, you don't have to play three safeties, like at times I think you have. Do you have faith you could do that?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, I do. Those are veteran guys. That's the nice thing. When you have veteran guys, sometimes they're backups, but they have a skill set. They have an ability to learn and they can adapt and do different things.

Like I said, the biggest thing for us is to try to give them in the right spots to execute the things we'd like them to do.

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Q. Is this like a Landon Roberts type of game, downhill, Derrick Henry, sticking his head in there --

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, I think anytime we play big people teams and running teams, you see E on the field a lot more than when we're playing spread teams, and it is. It's his type of game. He's a thumper. He loves it. It's good for us. I love the energy he brings.

You may see a lot of E out there this week.

Q. I know Miles Killebrew doesn't play a lot in your regular defense, but what about him that you like that he will be able to step in there and play some?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think like last week you saw he played in some of our three-safety packages, and he can play on the edge in terms of that. He's a good athlete. He can tackle in the open field just like he does on special teams, and he's been doing that role for us since he's been here.

I think in some of those instances when we need a big guy to play on the edge, he can do that, and I think that's why we have faith in Miles.

Q. Mike indicated yesterday that Joey is the starter now on the outside. Is that the case?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yes.

Q. What have you liked about the mix of Kazeo and Neal, two guys who have obviously played a lot of football together before here? Has that showed up for them?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, those guys play well together. I think like anything, when you have new guys, it's always fitting into the new system, and how does that new system compare to the old system, so you don't get confused and do some different things.

But those guys have been adapting well. Keanu it was his first year, and obviously Kazeo has been in it.

I'm excited about how those guys are and looking for them to have an opportunity to play together like they've done before, so I expect it to be a pretty smooth transition.

Q. Montravius isn't the biggest guy, but does he use his speed to his advantage at that position, get in the backfield and making plays?

TERYL AUSTIN: Absolutely. Montravius is quick. He's got a really good first step, and he does that. You'll see

him sometimes he'll beat guys right off the bat, and he does it with his quickness.

I think he's playing pretty good football for us right now.

Q. With Joey, is that a reflection of what he showed on Sunday, or is that --

TERYL AUSTIN: I think it's kind of what you guys kind of asked me a lot of times about him. I'll just say a few times, but maybe every week.

But the point is, and what I kept telling you is he's growing, he's getting better, and when it's time, you'll know it. I think it was his time. I think each week we've put him in, he's played a larger role. He's played better. He's doing the things that we want him to do, and we feel comfortable now that he's able to handle everything. So that's why he's the guy moving forward.

Q. What did you see from the four-man front? Did it deliver as you'd hoped? And has that made you (indiscernible) to tighten up the run defense?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think we did some of that, but we did our normal fronts. I think some of the things our guys did is we made some adjustments like we're supposed to to give our guys an opportunity to play well, and they played well. Like I said, we know there's room to get better, and so that's all we're doing. We're just trying to figure it out.

I don't know if it's a four-man front or a five-man front. It'll be whatever is necessary to win this game is what we're trying to do.

Q. Does the responsibility of calling the signals in the secondary fall to Kazeo now?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think it'll be by committee, but I think both those guys will have to take some ownership and responsibility for what goes on back there and making sure that we're in the right calls, making the right defense.

I think the thing that I've stressed to those guys is, hey, just make sure you get a call out. The things we do are sound, and if it's not the right call but we are playing the same thing, we're going to be okay. What's the staying? If we're all wrong, we're all right.

Q. Playing as much without Fitzpatrick against Jacksonville could be a little read into how it's going to go for an entire game or however long he going to miss --

TERYL AUSTIN: No, I think you have some days to now

prep and get guys in there and get them ready for expanded roles, and I think that's always different. When it happens during a game, it's never -- I don't think it's ever how you want it.

I think having a few days to prep, it'll be a different look for those guys.

Q. Didn't look like the wheels came off, though?

TERYL AUSTIN: No, we're just expecting to be better this week, just like we do every week. When we line up, we expect to play better each week, and that's our goal. If we don't, we go back to the drawing board and try and do it again the next week.

Q. We've seen Killebrew make a ton of plays on special teams. Does he have that kind of splash play ability at safety?

TERYL AUSTIN: He does. He's been a backup for us. I drafted Miles in Detroit, and I had him, so I know about his ability to make plays. I've seen him intercept -- run it back for a touchdown and make big hits, so he has that ability to make some splash plays.

The biggest thing with him is really the consistency in his play, and that's what we'll be looking for. If he's on the field this week, that's what we'll be looking for.

Q. Is he a big safety or a middle linebacker?

TERYL AUSTIN: He's probably both.

Q. You guys tried him at that, didn't you, in Detroit?

TERYL AUSTIN: I wasn't there when they moved him. He was just a safety for me when I left and they moved him to like a dime linebacker and then special teams and then when we got him here it was more -- it's more of a big safety, he'll play some dime linebacker for us, but it's more of a safety position.

Q. When it comes to Levis, four touchdowns in his first start, what did you like about what he did last week? What stands out to you on the film?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think you watch him, he can spin it. He can spin it. He throws that ball, it's a pretty ball, gets there fast. I think when you look at his arm talent is really what kind of stands out to me when you watch him. He's not afraid.

The one cross field he had towards the end, the long one, a really good throw all the way across the field about 50

yards. It was really impressive.

Q. Is DeAndre Hopkins still the same DeAndre Hopkins?

TERYL AUSTIN: Did you watch the game last week? Are you answering your own question right there?

Yeah, you watch him, he's got unbelievable catch radius. He knows how to sell routes. He's just really good.

You don't see anything less from him. I know this: He'll get all of our attention the best we can this week.

Q. (Indiscernible) what goes into deciding how (indiscernible) and what side he gets those (indiscernible)?

TERYL AUSTIN: That's why you do it. You do it to try to get him away from the double teams and giving him an opportunity to rush one-on-one. They don't know where he is. I think we talked about this last week. If he lines up and they know where he's going to be every snap, then it's easy to set up the protection plan against him. But if they don't know where he's going to be, then you put some uncertainty into the offense.

Like I said, our goal is to try to get him at different spots and get him to different places to rush and affect the game, and I thought he rushed well last week, and we've got to keep it going Thursday.

Q. When it comes to Pat being in the mix there, as well?

TERYL AUSTIN: He could be. He's done some of that for us. Again, we're going to try to get our guys and get them in the best positions possible this week to kind of make up for Minkah not being there, so if it requires him playing some safety, then we'll do it.

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