

# Pittsburgh Steelers

## Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



### Q. (On Minkah...)

TERYL AUSTIN: He's been working, he's been running, he's been doing some things, so we'll see where it takes us at the end of the week. One thing I do know, if he is ready, he won't need a lot of reps because he's played a lot of football.

### Q. Is he in your office, in your ear?

TERYL AUSTIN: He's always around, yeah. He's still running -- the nice thing with Minkah is he's got a routine and that routine hasn't changed one bit since the injury. Like I said, if he's ready to go, he'll be ready to go.

### Q. Does it take some time for a guy -- like I said, he's only missed three games in his life. Is that something new for a guy like that, to deal with that type of, I have to sit out for a bit?

TERYL AUSTIN: Absolutely. For guys that are great competitors like him who don't miss that, it is, it's a tough situation, and he's champing at the bit to get back. Obviously when he's ready and healthy, we'll get him out there.

### Q. Going forward without Cole, obviously there's a high confidence in your inside linebackers as it sits right now, but what's the challenge of replacing a guy like him with the production he had this year?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, I think like anything when you lose a starter, you always want the next man up. Nice thing is we had what we considered three starters between those guys that we have in there, and then the two guys now are just going to end up probably having a few more reps and we'll get Mark Rob and get him ready to go, but I think because we had what we thought were three starters, we're good. We feel pretty confident in the situation.

### Q. What was unique about what Cole did compared to maybe what Wong Orlander are able to do for you?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think because he carried the green dot most of the time, that was a pretty big thing. One think I think Cole is, he's a really good communicator, not just in the huddle but like when he comes off the field and different things like that. And I think those other guys will take up that slack.

### Q. How familiar were you with Kwon just coming in maybe before he got here?

TERYL AUSTIN: Just know he's -- across the league, you know a good player when you see one, and you knew that he was a good football player. Until you get him in the room and get a chance to deal with him personality-wise and see what kind of guy they are, you never know, and he's been good.

### Q. It seemed like he was on quite a track, all-rookie, Pro Bowl third year before he had that knee injury. Are you starting to see that guy?

TERYL AUSTIN: Absolutely. I think he's a fine football player. He makes some big plays for us. Obviously the interception to end the game last week, he had a fumble caused the week before, and he's just trending upward. His play is getting better and better as the season goes, and that's kind of what you expect from a veteran guy and a guy who's a really good football player.

### Q. Where are you at with Mark Robinson and his confidence level to give you guys quality reps?

TERYL AUSTIN: I feel confident in Mark in giving us some reps that we want. Mark is a great kid, great guy, tough, so I feel confident Mark will have an opportunity to get in the game and have an impact on the game.

### Q. Do you have to rep Nick at all just in case there?

TERYL AUSTIN: Nick? Oh, no, man, Nick is an outside guy.

### Q. Just in case?

TERYL AUSTIN: Nope, we're good. We'd better not blow



through three linebackers this week.

**Q. You have two guys on the practice squad, but Walker is a guy that comes in with I think 20 games of starting experience. Do you have confidence in him if needed?**

TERYL AUSTIN: I think so. I think we're gaining that. Right now I couldn't say we have great confidence because I've got to figure out what he knows and we're starting to see that this week. Yesterday we got a chance to see him in there with some regular reps and not card team reps as we were getting used to him, so I have a better understanding or idea of him, but he has been a starter in this league. He's made a lot of tackles. He's played football.

That's comforting in that way. How he adapts to our system and the things that we're doing, that always is a matter of time and how fast a player gets it.

**Q. Is it keeping the lid on Derrick Henry because of Heyward coming back?**

TERYL AUSTIN: I think it's a part of everything. I think our guys as a unit we did a really good job, I thought, in terms of keeping the running lanes minimum. I think he really only had one chance at a breakout run that Kazeem knocked down, but other than that he was earning every yard, and that's really what we wanted him to do.

We know he's a tremendous back, and having Heyward -- having Cam back helps, but I think it has to be a whole effort. Cam could have played his tail off, but if everybody else wasn't holding their own, it could have gotten bad.

**Q. Is it a confidence builder for you now? You had some struggles against the run --**

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, but we know we can be better and we've still got to be better, and we're going to continue. I don't know if that's a confidence builder because every week is its own unique challenge, and this will be a good one this week with the two backs that they have. They have a big back and they've got a back that can cut back, he can get the edge, he can get outside, he can do a lot of things. We'll have a very similar challenge this week.

**Q. What led to Joey getting the green light to shadow Hopkins last week, and what's your review of the performance?**

TERYL AUSTIN: I think what happened is he liked that, and we thought that match-up would be good based on how we were doing some coverage things. Hop is a bigger

receiver. He's a bigger guy, kind of matches up with him. I thought he did well.

The big thing that we always talk about with Joey is -- and a lot of young guys, not just Joey, but a lot of guys coming out of college is in terms of how they'll call the game here, best contact maybe you're allowed to have in college, and so the penalty part of it we'll have to work on.

But other than that, everything else I was pleased with what he did and how he competed and all those things.

**Q. Could he become a guy that does that on a consistent basis?**

TERYL AUSTIN: We're hoping so. I can't tell you that now. We're nine games into his -- what are we, eight into his rookie year? I think the jury is still out on that.

**Q. Is that something you want? Is that a matter of having a guy who's good enough to do that, because you've always talked about the left --**

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, but if you have a guy that can do that, then that's what you want. I had Darius Slay, and we did that with Darius Slay. He had the best receiver every week because he was that good.

If we get a guy that we think is that good that can play their best receiver every week, I think that's a good thing to have.

**Q. You've talked before about keeping him available to stay on the one side. The penalties theme, was that an issue with him? Did he pass that test?**

TERYL AUSTIN: He passed the test playing both sides, and like I said, you're right, playing him outside is the key. If he plays one position, it's a lot easier. So he handled that well, having to flip from both sides and doing that. I was actually very pleased with that.

**Q. With Minkah out you had to make some changes in the secondary. How did you feel like Pat P did in a little bit of a different role and how has Darius Rush done joining you guys and assimilating into the group?**

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, I think the guys did well in terms of adjusting. We had a couple days to kind of go over it once Minkah was out, once it was a little different than last week then when he got hurt doing the game. So I think the guys have adjusted well. We've got guys that have played a lot of games in there. You're talking about Kazeem and Keanu and Pat P, there's a lot of football been played amongst

those three guys.

I had a great deal of confidence they would be able to execute what we needed done.

I thought Darius has done a good job since he's been here, and we threw him into a situation where he had to do a lot of things for us, and he did, and we're just hoping that he continues to grow and get better.

**Q. Using Dillon and Jones together as much as they did against the Rams, or is that --**

TERYL AUSTIN: I think every game plan is unique. I don't know if we can expect to see the same thing, but I think if they do that, we'll be -- we've seen it on tape. We should be ready for it.

But if they put both those good guys on the field, it just makes it harder for us to figure out what they're doing.

I mean, we're going to be prepared for it and be ready for it, but if they don't, we'll be ready for that, as well.

**Q. Were you in on the meetings with Darius Rush when he came? I know he came for a visit. Was there anything about him that intrigued you during the pre-draft process?**

TERYL AUSTIN: I just thought he was a great kid, solid family background, guy who really had to earn his spot, was a specialty performer before he became a starter his last year, and he showed some good promise.

I thought that obviously when he was available and we had an opportunity to get him, I thought that would be a good opportunity for us to work for him. We had no red flags on him coming out. We liked him coming out.

So far it seems to be working for both of us.

**Q. With Joey now that he's a starter -- he's still a rookie, but not just a young guy there, is there anything different? Is he more confident?**

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, Joey is Joey. He knows he's a young guy, and he's got a lot to learn.

One thing I think Joey does, he does a good job listening to the veterans and talking to the veterans about how the position is, how it works, how things go, in addition to what he gets from his coaches and us. He talks to those guys that have been in the battles to kind of figure some things out because sometimes they'll have a unique perspective on things that may be a little different than we do.

So I think that's really good, and he's kept that up, and he's in early trying to get the meetings and get right, so he's doing -- he hasn't changed a bit, and that's a good thing.

**Q. Was that a big leap of faith to have a guy starting only his second game following or shadowing a receiver like DeAndre Hopkins as much as he was?**

TERYL AUSTIN: It was a leap of faith, but it also matched up to how we were going to run our coverage package and body types in terms of him matching up well with him. We thought it was a good mix, and it seemed to work out in our favor.

**Q. Obviously you had the faith that he could do it, though.**

TERYL AUSTIN: Absolutely. Of course I did now. I'll tell you that all the time right now. I knew he could do it all along.

**Q. I know he's been an injured reserve, but how has Cory Trice stayed in tune with everything throughout his rehab?**

TERYL AUSTIN: He's doing great now that he's up and moving and everything, and he's in the meetings and he's coming out here to practice. He's doing well. I mean, it's tough when a young guy does that because sometimes you can feel disconnected from the team, but he's doing a good job of being around. He's in the meetings. He's in all the meetings now.

So it's good. I'll be glad to have him back in the off-season and get to work with him.

**Q. Does he help give input into those meetings?**

TERYL AUSTIN: I'm not sure he's in a position to give input, so he's probably just trying to learn is what he's trying to do.

**Q. What has allowed the rookie class to make an early impression?**

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, I think a lot of it is those guys themselves. Those guys themselves, they've done a good job of terms of getting themselves ready, and I think really speaks to the culture here with our older veteran guys, and they want these guys to be good to help them. They're not afraid. They're not like, hey, I don't want to tell a young guy because he might take my position. That's not how we operate here. I think that's why some of these young guys are able to play, because in addition to the things that they

have to do, the older guys are also helping them along because the older guys understand that, hey, if they're better, faster, then we're better, faster as a team.

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