

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Eddie Faulkner

Weekday Press Conference



Q. Players were praising you for your leadership last week. Did you notice a change in your demeanor in that regard?

EDDIE FAULKNER: No, not really. I mean, I always consider myself being a leader, but that's a compliment coming from those guys. Obviously they're the product, and for them to say they saw that leadership quality, that means a lot coming from them.

Q. You probably had to stand up in front of the entire group for the first time.

EDDIE FAULKNER: Absolutely. Totally comfortable doing that. For a lot of my career, I was a special teams coordinator, offensive coordinator. I've stood in front of the room like most of my career. When I came here, I wasn't doing that, so I'm totally comfortable being in that capacity.

Q. How did you feel the guys responded to you?

EDDIE FAULKNER: I think they responded well. I only got positive feedback. I like how they went about things last week, so we've just got to fine tune and see if we get better at it.

Q. What was different with the way you went about it?

EDDIE FAULKNER: We scheduled meetings. Did some things a little bit different to make sure we had total clarity on things. That's really it. It wasn't much different than that. We just really, really honed in on the detail.

I've got to say the offensive staff was incredible, man. Those guys were awesome. I could say them by name. You guys know who they are. They were awesome. I'm talking about everybody in that room. Everybody put their hand in the pile. Everybody had something to do with the process of preparation for that game.

I'm just really proud of that. That was awesome. It was fun.

Q. How do you feel things flowed from a communications standpoint in game, whether it was relaying plays or relaying to Coach Sully about what exactly you wanted to do?

EDDIE FAULKNER: It was fantastic. It couldn't have been better. If I was over there telling Sully, hey, let's do this, he was right on board with it. It wasn't like any sort of pushback. It was awesome.

Sully called a great game. Sully was awesome in that game. I'm just really excited about the trajectory and what's going on.

Q. When you say you were excited about how Sully called the game, do you feel the game was more fluid from an offensive perspective? I think that's what Mike wanted to emphasize, fluidity in the plays and the way the ball flows down the field.

EDDIE FAULKNER: I heard some of the guys in their comments say the play is coming in quicker. I don't know. I just feel like he just called a good game, you know what I mean? I give him credit in that game for sure.

Q. What's the next step in this offense? You guys got obviously over 400 yards. What do you want to see going forward this week against Arizona?

EDDIE FAULKNER: We've got to score points.

Q. How do you go about doing that?

EDDIE FAULKNER: We just keep hammering away. I think I said last week about the details and ironing those out. I think it will come with that. I think the guys are all in on understanding.

I know the points weren't what we want, but the success we had last week really gave me a good stage to be able to coach, like sink the hook in and get the guys to buy in and be like, okay, let's go.

It just made this week easier in the process of preparation. From that standpoint, I wouldn't expect anything for us to

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continue to be on a steep trajectory moving forward.

Q. Did you move the pocket more for Kenny last week than you had been doing?

EDDIE FAULKNER: Maybe not in particular, like when you're talking about the naked game and the boot game, stuff like that, a lot of times it's in large part the success of your run game, because they play off each other, and so you may see more of that because the last few games have been getting the run game rolling.

Q. How do you turn three into settling when you get close to the end zone?

EDDIE FAULKNER: We've got to keep getting close to those details. When you get down in the tight red, you got 22 grown men in that tight space, the details are so much more intensified in those moments. That's what we're going to keep doing.

Q. Why does the 50/50 running back split work so well for you guys?

EDDIE FAULKNER: Both those guys have skill sets to help us win. I think we all see that in watching the game. I don't see any head to head or them -- I don't see them contradicting each other. I see them complementing each other. I think they look at it the same way, and we need that to win.

Q. I think Naj is on pace for 200 fewer snaps. Is that only going to benefit him as it gets into December and January?

EDDIE FAULKNER: I think so. He's getting fresher. Big backs like him, this is when they go to work. I hope that's the case.

Q. How easy is it to find backs that complement each other that way rather than contradict?

EDDIE FAULKNER: Sometimes I think it happens just organically. The way Jaylen got here and the way that it fits, we were fortunate it could play out the way it did.

Q. Jalen said, last week I asked him about you, and he said he feels like he's watching his son grow up. He said that's not really it, but what's your relationship with Jaylen? What is it like for you to see him get to where he is now?

EDDIE FAULKNER: I've got a great relationship with my guys, but I work hard at it. I'm not going to lie to you. I try really hard to have a relationship with them because I feel

like football is the kind of sport that, if you don't have any emotion involved in it, you're not going to be successful like you want to.

I'm totally engaged with those guys, and I want to have as good a relationship as you possibly can with each one of my players individually.

Q. The coordinator, run game coordinator, pass game coordinator, I know you don't have those labels, but is that true here in a way?

EDDIE FAULKNER: The way that we go about our business is naturally going to kind of be the case. When you really want to start to get detailed and you're meeting in small groups, you may have the O-line and tight ends and running backs together and you may have the receivers and quarterbacks together.

When I'm talking about the details and kind of ironing things out, that's the thing we're focusing on, is scheduling meetings so all parties can be involved to get the detail that's in it.

There's a coordination effort going fluidly through all positions without the title anyway. So that's just how it has to kind of happen for the whole group to be on the same page.

Q. Does that speak to what you said to us last week? I think you used the phrase, "I want to empower others around me; not just the coaches." But does that extend to the quarterbacks too in particular?

EDDIE FAULKNER: Absolutely. I can't do it by myself. No individual can do it by themselves. I see all these great coaches on staff. Why would we not just absolutely use their skill sets to the best ability? We did that last week, and it's even intensified this week.

Q. What kind of a role does Glenn Thomas have? Has it evolved given the changes with you and Sully?

EDDIE FAULKNER: Glenn Thomas is awesome, man. He's been a coordinator in Power 5 schools for years. The expertise that comes with that kind of resume, you would expect to get good information from him. He's been fantastic.

Q. You seem so impressed by the assistant coaches all pitching in. Is that new?

EDDIE FAULKNER: We've always all pitched in, but like our guys told you last week, I'm just such a detail guy, that I'm going to always intensify things in that regard when it

comes to details and people's more involvement because I feel like that's part of the equation.

Q. I just saw you had the play sheet as well with Sully. Did you suggest any?

EDDIE FAULKNER: Absolutely.

Q. Was the expanded use of the three tight ends, was that matchup specific or something we can see more of?

EDDIE FAULKNER: I think you go into any game plan and you're looking at like where we can take advantage of these guys and what sets and structures they give you based on personnel in the game.

Last week that 13 personnel was advantageous for us. That will be the way we go about the process. I can't promise it's going to be every week, but I can promise you every week we're going to take a look at what best fits the team we're playing.

Q. Did you guys do a better job, kind of looking back at it, or an effective job of creating clearer windows and passing lanes for Kenny? It looked like he was able to step into his throws and deliver it with more authority in that regard.

EDDIE FAULKNER: Whenever you're really hunting the details and staying on that, I think the by-product of that is a little bit clearer picture.

Whatever may be the reason for why a play is a play is because the understanding of the guys, and I think the detail is helping attribute to that.

Q. I think you spent some time coaching James Conner. What was that like? What do you remember about coaching him?

EDDIE FAULKNER: Man, I love that guy, man. How can you not? I love his story. I love how he comes to work every day. He's a competitor. He's tough. I love J.C. We stay in contact. Looking forward to seeing him this morning.

Q. What's impressed you the most about Jaylen Warren just over the time you've worked with him?

EDDIE FAULKNER: He's humble. He comes to work every day, does his business. He'll literally run through a wall for you. I can't say enough good things about Jaylen. He's a really fun guy to be around and coach.

Q. He says he never takes his helmet off at any point during a game. Is that something you noticed? What does that say about a guy?

EDDIE FAULKNER: I never noticed until somebody told me. I never noticed. I guess you're right. It goes back to high school and how his coach went about the business in his program, and it just stuck with him.

Q. In terms of how you try to be a leader, is there a component to that that you can rely on in whatever situation? Do you have like a go to leadership style?

EDDIE FAULKNER: For me personally, I'm going to always stay ten toes down. Nothing is ever going to knock me off the rocker and start acting crazy. If I'm understanding your question correctly, that would be my answer, is that I'm going to be solid.

Q. You talked about the buy-in earlier. Now that we're a week into these changes, what is the players' interaction?

EDDIE FAULKNER: The buy-in felt great. I love the energy. I don't think they can fake it that good, you know what I mean, enough to feel real, and it feels real.

Man, we're just going to take that momentum and keep rolling with it.

Q. Your run game has become really multiple. Different schemes, gap schemes, guards, zone runs, personnel usage. It seems like you guys have kind of plucked things from different teams. How has that helped your run game energize over the season? How hard is it for teams to guard when you can do any kind of different thing out of that scheme actually?

EDDIE FAULKNER: I think whenever you get multiple personnels rolling around, teams got to get their personnel in and out and they have to practice it, I think that makes you more dangerous.

Man, if we're going to talk run game, I've got to send a shot out to Pat Meyer, man. Pat Meyer is the real deal, and not only technically, but schematically. He's awesome. He's awesome. A lot of what you see in that regard is the coaching job that he's doing with the O-line.

Q. Ten toes down that you referenced, did you sort of figure that out as you went, or did you see that in somebody, in one of your previous experiences?

EDDIE FAULKNER: I think I've always been like that. I had some good parents that raised me the right way, and

got to say solid with me. That's how I am.

me saying that had T.A.'s picture in it, I'm like all right.

Q. You talk about the run game getting going, and motions been a part of that, pre-snap motion, getting guys going through the alley. A. Rob is moving around. How has that motion aided you guys in getting those blockers out front and getting like-on-like personnel, simple things like that?

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EDDIE FAULKNER: Again, it goes back to scheme. If we think a certain motion can position a player to make a block or get one of their guys out of position, we'll utilize it. That's what we'll kind of see there. I'm glad you said A. Rob. We had an appreciation post in the meeting for A. Rob.

Like here's a guy who's had an unbelievable career. He's caught, whatever, 600 some balls, made a lot of money, and he does all the dirty work on a regular basis and is excited to do it.

Whenever we're trying to make an example of the consummate professional that is 11, and he is awesome. He stays solid, just like we're talking about the ten toes down thing. He stays solid, and he's been good for the group. Unbelievable addition.

Q. You gave a shout out to Pat Meyer. How has he been involved in meetings in the last week? Has it changed the amount or the rooms that he's in? What does he do on a day-to-day basis that we're not seeing?

EDDIE FAULKNER: Nothing's changed in terms of his involvement in meetings, but he's that good of a coach. He's a technician. The players trust him and know he knows what he's talking about.

So when he gives them information to go execute, they trust and they go do it. I just really, really inspired by him and being around him as a coach.

It's hard to start mentioning guys' names because I feel like that about so many people on the staff. That's not fake. That's real. I think, as we just continue to empower people, that's going to bring the group closer together.

I think we keep doing -- like I keep saying on the trajectory that we want to be.

Q. The big question, though, do you clear up the confusion of people mistaking you for T.A.?

EDDIE FAULKNER: I thought I had that conversation last week. The next article I saw that came out talking about

