

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



Q. What can you tell us about this offense?

TERYL AUSTIN: Obviously they've been struggling a little on offense. They have a quality run game. I think their offensive line is outstanding. Teryl Austin. They really put hands on you and move you in the run game. We've got to really make sure we stack up against the run.

We did not do as good a job as we needed to this week. This week we have an opportunity to do better.

Q. What have you learned about Blake Martinez since he's been here? What do you know about Myles Jack and the confidence in what he can do?

TERYL AUSTIN: What I've learned about Blake since he's been here, he's really sharp, really attentive. I think -- and again, until you get him on the field, you don't know. I think he's got a really good football aptitude, blends in well with our guys. All that stuff is positive moving forward.

As far as Myles Jack, Jack's getting back into shape. I know about Myles. We like Myles as a football player. Myles is -- obviously the things that have held Myles back are just he's got long-term injury stuff, but as far as a football player, I have no doubt about him as a football player.

Q. Teryl, you lost your three starters there on the inside, obviously that's the biggest loss, but how big now is communication?

TERYL AUSTIN: It's very big, and it always is. When our communication suffers, sometimes our play suffers. So we have to do a better job as coaches helping our guys and communicating better, and when I say us helping him, in terms of demanding it more, making sure that we get it in practice.

If somebody else -- if somebody goes down, it's not always just one guy because sometimes, I think we all think that guy is always going to be there. Then when he's not, hey,

what do we do?

I've got to do a better job of making sure we get that stuff done and there's more guys that feel confident communicating and talking to people because it's important.

Q. Is that a main reason for giving up more rushing yards than you had the previous week?

TERYL AUSTIN: I don't think that was the main reason. The main reason was we just didn't do a great job. We've got to do a better job coaching and playing all around. It wasn't all communication. There are some aspects of it, but I think we just had a bad day at the office. Sometimes that happens.

Q. How hard is it when -- you're already trying to get Roberts ready to do a job he hadn't done all year. You're trying to get Mykal Walker ready to do a job and he wasn't even on the team. And you have to think about what if these guys get hurt? What is it like to think about at this point in the season to try to have those contingencies ready?

TERYL AUSTIN: That's my job. My job is to have those contingencies ready, and we'll work towards it this week so if something goes off, a bomb goes off, we won't miss a beat.

Q. Have you ever been in a position where you've had this many injuries to this one position group? That many parts of communication on a team?

TERYL AUSTIN: I'm sure it's happened. I can't recall right now. I'm sure it's happened. I'm sure it happens across the league, and really nobody gives a shit. It's just do you get it done? So we've got to get it done.

Q. Do you remember Chad Brown?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yes.

Q. He moved from edge rusher to inside linebacker middle of his rookie year. Why can't Nick Herbig do that?

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TERYL AUSTIN: I'm not saying Nick Herbig can't, but I'm not sure that's the best thing for Nick Herbig and for us. Nick will get some quality reps outside as we get down the stretch and help us there. I think he'll be more helpful for us as a rusher right now than as an inside backer.

Does he have the ability and aptitude to do it, yeah, but we're talking about a guy stepping in whatever week, 14, whatever it is, and being a signal caller and doing a lot of things he hasn't done. I don't know if I'd strap him with that at this point.

Q. T.J. voiced his frustrations about being held. How do you navigate him through that? Not only that, but also the quick starts by the tackles?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think T.J. runs into what all the elite rushers do. These guys are going to hold you until they can't because a lot of times that's the only way they can block them. I share in his frustration, but I don't think there's anything we can do about it.

We can complain, and we can do all that, but that really doesn't solve the problem. I think we just deal with it. We just continue to fight and go. It's almost like the Hack-a-Shaq. People would Hack-a-Shaq all the time, and he got fouled so much. But after a while they didn't call it because he was so dog gone good.

We've got to keep plugging away. When he has an opportunity to win, because he'll still win, that he does that. I wish I could, but I think, as Mike likes to call it, it would be sport bitching, and we're not going to bitch about our circumstances. We're just going to play and fight through it, and T.J. will fight through it because he's a good pro and a great player.

Q. Forgetting about T.J.'s circumstance, is that kind of becoming an epidemic in the league?

TERYL AUSTIN: It is, and you tack that together with those guys being so deep off the line of scrimmage to try to block edge rushers, and it does become a problem. The only thing we can alert them to is illegal formations and getting guys closer to the line of scrimmage than they should be, those type of things.

Again, that's not my deal with the league and with the other stuff. Right now I just worry about our guys and making sure we're in the right mindset to really go play hard on a short week.

Q. What does it say about T.J. that even though he's getting held and he's not getting all the calls that you

might expect, that he's still able to have such an impact on the game?

TERYL AUSTIN: He's a great player. He is a phenomenal football player. Sometimes, if you're around him, you've been around him a long time, you might take him for granted, but you shouldn't because that guy is a special player. You're not going to see a guy like that for a while.

Q. You alluded to it, but do you think it's a tactic of tackles to do the holds because they're not going to call them off?

TERYL AUSTIN: I would think. Until they're calling it, why not? Sometimes that's what you have to do to survive. I think, like anybody, if those guys aren't surviving out there and they're letting their quarterback get battered, that's not a good thing as well. They'll do anything they can to protect their quarterback.

I understand it. It's the NFL. I'm not complaining about it. That's what happens. We've got to find a way to beat it and get to the quarterback.

Q. When we talked to him after the game on Sunday, he took it further than they're holding, they're false starting. He seemed to think there was something personal going on with him and the league. Have you had a conversation with him about that at all? Or do you feel a need to?

TERYL AUSTIN: No, I don't feel a need to.

Q. (Indiscernible) had some reps where he really just wrecked things. Are you still seeing him grow? What's the potential there?

TERYL AUSTIN: A lot of potential, a lot of growth, and I love what I see from the young guy. He just continues to get better. I can't say enough about him. I'm glad we got him, and I think he's going to be a real force in that middle four for a while.

Q. A few months ago, Martinez and Jack had hung up the cleats. They were retired. How unusual is it for those guys to want to come back, for them both to end up here? Is it part of the new NFL where you put guys on the practice squad who are vets and they can kind of ease their way back in?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think so. I think for guys, I don't know the reasons they retired or why they retired. I just know they expressed an interest in coming back. I think the practice squad gives us an opportunity to get guys who have not been in play shape an opportunity to get in



playing shape to see where they are and to see if they still measure up.

I think we like what we see with those guys, and we'll move forward. At some point I would expect that we'll see them on the field.

Q. Nick talked a lot about the challenges of playing on a short week, but for you guys specifically, what are some of the challenges in terms of the quarterback you guys may or may not be facing on the other side here?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think what you do, because they have played all their quarterbacks, is that you look at all of them. That's what we do. We look at them. We kind of see some of the things that are -- that each of them may like, that each of them do well, and I think you go from there and you map a plan out that whoever shows up on the field on Thursday, we have a plan for them.

So I think that's what we do. Our guys are receptive to those type of plans, and that's what we're going to give them.

Q. Is Mark Robinson still not quite there yet in terms of being ready to step into these roles as a three down player?

TERYL AUSTIN: Mark played. I'm not sure he's ready to be a three down guy, but Mark played. He did like 44 snaps or something like that.

Q. He did that the first time somebody got hurt in game, but as far as preparing for the next game?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think like that, when you have a guy that can step in and take those snaps, that's always a good thing. If he wasn't ready, you'd probably be alternating those snaps of those snaps. But I think he is. He's moving along. He's moving in the right direction.

At some point, he'll take a step one way or the other, and we'll find out for sure.

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