

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



Q. You had a timeout before that fourth and four, fourth and goal. Did you contemplate blitz there?

TERYL AUSTIN: Always. You contemplate everything at that point, what would be the best. But we went into it, we thought our coverage would be good. He was able to make a throw. He made a heck of a throw. It was a varsity throw and catch.

I thought we were in pretty good position in terms of coverage. They just made the play.

Q. How much is the decision to blitz impacted by your level of faith in the four guys, if you don't blitz, getting home? And how does that change without Alex Highsmith and Nick Herbig?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think whether we blitz or not, a lot of it depends on the quarterback and what we think he is. When you watch Dak against the blitz, I think it was -- I forget what game, but maybe a game before, maybe it was the Cleveland game, they tried to bring pressure, and he just drifts back and threw the seven cut to Cooks. So he knows how to create time and space on the blitz.

We just thought it would be better to go coverage. Not having those guys in, it always affects a lot of the stuff you do, but in that particular moment, that's what I'm really talking about. That's what went into it.

Q. The defensive guys have said over the last two weeks that communication has been an issue. Partially you had a lot of crowd during the Cowboy game, but you did play home against the Chargers. You made the Falcons go silent on the road. Why has the communication been more of an issue here the last two weeks when it was really tight when a lot of guys were brand new to the system over the first three weeks?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think it's just like anything. It's always a work in progress, just like your scheme and the things that

you do. So we've just got to continue to work at it.

When I say it's a work in progress, like a lot of things you do, you don't always do everything the same every week. So we just came up short in that area the last few weeks. We've got to continue to work at it to try to make it better.

We do things in terms of practice and how we practice and the crowd noise and signals and communication, just to -- it just has to continue to be like any other part of your game an emphasis for you. So we have to continue to emphasize it so we can get the best out of it.

That's how we attack problems. It wouldn't matter if it's a problem in terms of a guy covering somebody or a guy defeating the block. How do you fix that problem? You attack it and try to practice to be better at it.

Q. What do you have up your sleeve this week in outside linebacker?

TERYL AUSTIN: I don't know. What have you got for me?

(Laughter).

We're going to be shorthanded, in the sense of guys that haven't played for us here, but we've got a couple of the young guys that will possibly be available to us. We used Milk in a pinch last week. He's athletic. He's big. I know he's not going to rush from the outside like the other guys, but in terms of the run game, he'll be fine.

We'll count on probably a couple of these young guys to kind of step up. Moon stepped up, played a little bit more than we thought he was going to play last week coming off the -- just coming out of the bullpen. Then we have a couple of practice squad guys, and we'll see how they shake out at the end of the week in terms of who may be a guy to help us.

Q. Could those guys be in a third position, learning under T.J. throughout the week or anything like that?

TERYL AUSTIN: They've been here now -- Ade has been here a little longer than Eku. I think being in the room and being around really helps them in terms of acclimating and

being able to step in. That's why we've got those guys.

Those guys have played NFL football before, and they're here just for that reason so that, if we do get banged up, we can bring them up and we can play, and they'll give us a good day's work.

Q. Other than just the communication things we talked about, are there differences you've seen from the first three games versus the last two, things that you think are recurring issues or things that you want to get cleaned up?

TERYL AUSTIN: There's always things to be cleaned up. I don't think there's recurring issues. I just think, again, we're not executing the communication part of our game plan as well as we did in some earlier games.

So we'll go back to the drawing board and work to get it right. I'll probably stand up here another time before you at some point in the season, and we may be talking about the same thing because that's how the game is. You're always working on something and different problems arise in different weeks, and it's up to us to try to get them fixed hopefully before they start, but once they start, we've got to make sure we get them done and fixed fast.

Q. You guys have been pretty good against the passes over the top. But I think you had five of them the other day, four for sure. What was going on there? Is it something you can correct?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think, when you looked at them, they were all correctible errors. That's what I said to the guys. I didn't think it was a physical mismatch where somebody just got out there and they got beat. That happens, it's the NFL. I thought what happened on those big passes were more of things that we could correct.

I'm not going to say it was all our doing, because they did a good job and those guys are professionals and they work at their craft as well, but I think that's what we have to understand, the margin for error is slim and we've got to be better.

Q. Without Davante Adams for Vegas, how have you seen them vary their approach, and how have you seen it being different with O'Connell versus Minshew?

TERYL AUSTIN: Last week, he got in kind of -- they were behind, so it was a bad situation, more of just a two-minute drill for him. In terms of what they do, they have their scheme they run, and I think 16 is a very capable receiver, 89 as a young player is a really good football player. So they can pick up the slack, I think, with those two guys.

And No. 11 has been doing a really good job in terms of blowing the top off some things.

So they compensate. I don't think it's been one guy doing it. I think they kind of spread it out a little bit, which makes it a little bit tougher. When you have Davante, you know you'd better take care of him, and the other guys, you kind of work at it. Now that they're spreading it around and everybody is able to get it and working hard to get it, we've got to be really on top of our stuff this week.

Q. Just if you go back to communication, cross patterns and motions were problems during the game. Second play of the game, you had T.J. in the middle, the motion guy went off to the right, nobody picked him up. How do you even correct simple situations such as that?

TERYL AUSTIN: Like I said, it really is the same thing as I said before. It was, again, as we go back in terms of how we communicate, who has what, and then go from there. We'll just continue to work at it. It's a situation we've seen before. We just didn't run it right that time.

So we'll work at it again to correct the action. I think that's really the best thing that we do. We also have to understand me as a coach that, hey, listen, some of the things that showed up on tape last week are going to show up again this week, and we'd better be ready for them. So we'll work in that vein.

Q. (Indiscernible) started to take advantage of Beanie out there? If so, how do you stop that moving forward?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think when you're talking about Beanie, I think what he ran into is what happens to emotional guys. There's going to be a game where you're tested and it doesn't go your way. I don't think that's going to be a recurring theme, but a lot of that's going to fall on Beanie and how he reacts to the things that happened to him last week.

But I think he's handled himself well. Like everybody, there's probably a game where everybody would look at and go, boy, I didn't play very well that game. I didn't do what I wanted to in that game or whatever it may have been, and then get back to the drawing board. I think that's where we are with Beanie.

He's a young guy that got tested, and I think he'll bounce back this week.

Q. Do you see another role for Patrick Queen compared to what you've seen so far?

TERYL AUSTIN: I'm assuming he's as good as we're going to see and he continues to get better as he gets more comfortable with what we do. But I don't -- I'm not sure where that comes from because I like Patrick Queen. I think he's playing really good football for us. He is leading us out there. He is running and hitting. He's doing all the things we thought he would do when we got him.

Q. Maybe in regard to some splash specifically.

TERYL AUSTIN: I don't worry about splash right now. What I worry about is us getting lined up, us being in the right spots and making the critical plays. That's where he helps us in that regard right now.

Q. Do you have to be more creative when you're trying to create pressure without Herbig on third down?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think you could, but you've got to be careful in terms of overdoing it, in terms of just throwing stuff out there to try to get something done. We still hold to our principles here. If you guys know, we'll pressure, but we also like the four-man rush when we get in some situations and let our guys win. So I don't think that's going to change a whole lot.

We'll count on the guys we bring up to give us some pressure. We know we have a premier pass rusher on one side and we have a premier pass rusher inside, so we've got to generate some good work from the outside guys that are filling in, and we'll go from there.

Q. Speaking of one of those guys, T.J. got his 100 milestone, second fastest to do it. Got lost in the shuffle of the game, but do you have a favorite over the years? Anything come to mind for you?

TERYL AUSTIN: I like them all. When he takes them down, I think it's awesome. I just think -- one I think we all remember is when he tied the sack record down in Baltimore. That was kind of cool being a part of that type of one of only two guys to ever do it, and that was pretty dang cool.

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