

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Thursday, December 12, 2024

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

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Weekday Press Conference



Those two tackles are two of the best in the business, deservedly so. So I think they're going to work, they're going to trust them to get their job done and go about their business like they usually do.

TERYL AUSTIN: All right. Fire away.

Q. As you studied Philly, what has worked against them?

TERYL AUSTIN: Not a whole lot. They've won nine in a row. The things that have given them pause, teams have slowed the running game down, they had to change. I think Carolina slowed it down some last year and gave themselves a chance in the game.

But the bottom line is if you don't slow that running game down, you have no chance. That's the biggest takeaway, that's the biggest thing you'll learn from them. If they're able to run the ball, whether it's Saquon or the quarterback escaping, quarterback design runs, it's going to be a long day.

Q. What makes Saquon so special?

TERYL AUSTIN: He's strong, he's fast. He's got good vision. I think the thing you see with him, is he can get in a hole, it looks like it's clogged up, he has good enough vision and feet, he can stop. He can accelerate so fast and get to the second level. That's what makes him difficult.

When he gets to the second level, you're not talking about a small back, you're talking about a big back that runs fast. When he breaks these long runs, you see him get on safeties, get on corners, boom, he breaks and he's out.

He's super difficult because you don't expect a guy his size to do some of the things that he does.

Q. Most teams don't leave their tackles on an island against you guys. These guys seem to have a lot of trust. Do you expect them to leave him on an island?

TERYL AUSTIN: I expect them to play how they play. Just like we would do, we expect our guys to kind of hold up in certain situations. I think they will do the same.

Q. After the Bengals game, Tee Higgins is Shaq, what is A.J. Brown? Karl Malone?

TERYL AUSTIN: He's one of those big, physical guys (laughter). He is. I don't want to give a basketball reference because I don't want to insult any of those old basketball players.

But he is a physical matchup. You got to fight and claw and scratch when that ball's coming his way because he is a physical player. Contested catches, he wins most of them. Like when you're looking at it a lot of times, you got that's a 50/50 ball. When it goes A.J.'s way, it's a little bit more.

Q. (No microphone.)

TERYL AUSTIN: I don't know. You're kind of asking me a little bit of strategy there.

We'll just say that we're going to do our best to try to limit both of these guys, however we do it, as far as traveling, whatever we do coverage-wise to try to help whoever has him. I don't think it's a job for one person. I think you got to mix 'em in terms of who covers it, you got to mix 'em in terms of what kind of coverage. Is he double, single.

I think we have a to do a good job - excuse me - I got to do a good job of helping our guys make them guys face a variation of coverages, various coverages, different looks, different things. That helps them probably more than individual matchups, mano-a-mano out there.

Q. Do you remember the game three years ago? Stick in your craw?

TERYL AUSTIN: Do I recall that game (laughter)? That was not a good game for us. That was a game where they got the better of us.

Like I say all the time, every game, each week is its own



entity at this time. The only thing you can take from that game is they were better than us that day. Then this Sunday we'll find out of the, figure out who's going to be better on this Sunday. That's really all we can look forward to.

Q. A little bit more of a chess match game given how much they run out of three-wide, you got to figure out whether to play base or nickel?

TERYL AUSTIN: It's always a chess match. I think the first piece you put on the board is what do I need to do to stop the run. That is the first piece.

It's not really a big chess match. You got to figure out what defenses you have that are solid against the run, whether it's three receivers or they go 12 personnel, two receivers.

Bottom line, they were playing out of a lot of three receiver groupings. We have to stop the run. So we're going to put groups out there that we feel can stop the run.

Q. How does the way they use their offensive line stress you guys with communication up front?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, it's good. They're unique in terms of their offensive line because a lot of times you look at offensive lines and guys have certain specific jobs that they do. These guys seem to be able to kind of do it all.

The center pools, the guard pools, tackles, all of them. Some you might say the center might pool in this place a majority of times. Not with these guys. It gives them maximum flexibility in their run game which I think is important and which I think is why they're good.

We've got to be able to handle that. We feel pretty good about our guys up front being able to handle the different schemes that they'll give us. Then it just becomes a matter of executing and playing and playing at a high level.

Q. When it comes to the push play, is there anything you can do sort of tactically or is that mostly just your guys got to get lower and fight hard?

TERYL AUSTIN: That's a hard one. Just physics. They know where they're going, they got a yard to go, they get a head start because they know the count. There's no way really to get the heads up on them when we can attack 'em or get a jump-start on 'em. That's probably why that play is so successful.

Q. Is there something they do that makes them better at it than everybody else?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think they have really good people doing it. Obviously they were the first ones that really came up with this. They got a level of expertise that others don't.

They just do a great job of it. I mean, I wish I could give you an answer like why. I think they do a great job.

Q. (Indiscernible) a week where they have trouble passing the ball or they don't pass the ball. Does that put you on any more high alert, come out early, get A.J. going and get that sort of thing out of the way?

TERYL AUSTIN: No, I think at the end of the day the most important thing is winning. What do we do to win. If it means running the ball, it's running the ball. Obviously everybody wants to do everything well. Sometimes there's going to be weeks or days that you don't.

But at the end of the day their identity is they're going to run the ball and they're going to take some shots down the field. I don't expect to see an uptick and all of a sudden seeing guys throwing the ball down the field. That's not what I think.

Q. You guys have only given up 10 points off turnovers this season. Is there an intangible thing that teams develop in this situation?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, I think it's really just a mindset. Every time we step on the field, turnover or not, we don't want them to score. There's always a heightened sense of urgency when there is a sudden change. I think our guys have handled that really well.

I remember a couple years ago we weren't so good at that. We didn't take the field with the idea we were going to get 'em. I think this time our guys don't care. They put that ball down anywhere, we're going to stop 'em. That's a really good feeling when you send guys out like that.

Q. What would you say the level of Kam is playing at? Is he in that defensive player of the year?

TERYL AUSTIN: He's playing really well. I mean, he is outstanding. I wouldn't know who I'd trade him for. There's a couple big guys that are playing well. He's right there with him.

His impact is unbelievable for us. What he does for us. I mean, I'd love to have him in that discussion. I'm not a part of that. Not my purview. If he got it, would I be surprised? No. Would I be disappointed to say there's others deserving? Maybe. He's really deserving, as well.

Q. (No microphone.)

TERYL AUSTIN: I mean, his level the consistency. Last year he kind of fought back because he came back from the injuries. Wasn't quite himself.

But you see him, and the things I admire, obviously his play, but his leadership. He is always involved in all the things that we're doing. Still asks good questions. I don't want to say his age because he'll get mad, everybody know how old he is.

He asks a lot of really good questions for a guy. I think that all rubs off on some of the younger guys. In addition to how well he's playing, I think the way he conducts business, the way he carries himself is really important and valuable for our room. Not just the D-line, but just for our room.

Q. How rare is it for a guy that is his age to be playing at a level this high coming off a season where he was injured?

TERYL AUSTIN: It is. I'm assuming you could probably go back and dig up the record books and look through all the film and all that stuff. There's probably just a handful of guys that have been able to do it.

To his credit, he's one of them. I'm glad. I'm glad he's with us.

Q. (No microphone.)

TERYL AUSTIN: A little bit of that. I think that's what we're doing. We know experience, youthful energy, stuff that gives us, the growth he still has in front of him. We're going to try to get the most out of both of them because we think we have two good football players.

Instead of playing one and sitting the other, we're going to do what we can to get them both out there because we think both of them could help us.

Q. Knowing this franchise's history, how does it blow your mind that the Steelers haven't won in Philadelphia since 1965?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think I saw that yesterday. Dang, that's my age. That's a long time. That's old (laughter).

It blew my mind. I would have never thought that. But then I also know we don't play every year. So that's one of the those things.

What makes it difficult I think is, like in any opponent

setting, they have really good fan base, they're loud, they make it hard for you. They usually have pretty good teams. I think that's the most important thing, they usually have pretty good teams over there. That's what really makes it difficult.

Q. At the beginning of the game, do you go to a referee to ask or pretty much get a feel of how the game will be officiated or is that something you'll look for early in the game?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, that's something the players got to figure out, how is it going to be officiated. No different than basketball. I was in school here at the old Big East Conference. You had to figure out how that game was going to be officiated that day. Guys, sometimes they would call it a little tighter than others. Sometimes they let you bang and go.

I think it's up to the players as the game goes on to see how it's going to be officiated.

Q. (Indiscernible) did coach tacking a guy that can hurdle over you in regards to everything?

TERYL AUSTIN: Keep your eyes open, run through. See, it's simple. That's what you tell 'em (laughter).

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