

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Wednesday, December 18, 2024
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



Q. How much in regards to slowing the Ravens down, also slowing down Mark Andrews?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think they have weapons obviously. Starts with the quarterback. Mark Andrews has been his favorite target since he's been in the league and he's really starting to come into his own. I know he was banged up earlier in the season but he's rounding into form and always been really, really tough player to guard.

I know in my six years here he's gotten our full attention. He'll continue to get it. He is getting better every week.

Q. What was the key to your guys' success the first time around against Baltimore?

TERYL AUSTIN: We did a really good job I thought in terms of eliminating a lot of really big plays. Did a good job in terms of tackling. You have to be able to tackle against this group. One of the things they're really good at is yards after catch, yards after contact.

I thought we did a really good job of that and that eliminated big plays. Made them have to drive the field, and so we felt pretty comfortable that if it was long drives, that those usually work in the defense's favor.

Q. Following up on that, looking at what happened last Sunday; Mike talked about the missed tackles. Mentioned it several times. Are you confident that was a one-off?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, I would think based on the amount of reps and the amount of -- the way we played so far, that we're hoping that's a one-off. We have been a pretty good tackling team all year, and I think our guys will bounce back from that and make a concerted effort to be better tacklers this week.

Q. When you're the second best defense as far as stopping people on third downs; on top of the missed tackles, there were also some plays looked like just

pass offs didn't happen quick enough; DeVonta touchdown. How do you guys correct that when teams are looking to try to create those moments with their different alignments?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, it's just a matter of work. It's like anything. When you come up a little bit short you get back in the drawing board and see what you could have done better and give those corrections to the players. You look at the tape, we work on it again here in practice, and then hopefully have a better result on Sunday.

That's really all you can do, is give your guys the tools to try to combat things that have hurt them and let them take it from there.

Q. Your success against Lamar over the years has been so TJ dependant. Anything you can't do with the other guys that might be filling in for TJ against Lamar this week that you have to have a Plan B?

TERYL AUSTIN: No, I don't think so. I think with a young Nick coming on and having Preston as a veteran guy. I know those guys aren't TJ, but we feel they're good quality players that we can fit in our system and do the things we need to do.

Obviously if you don't have an impact player like TJ it affects your game. I don't think it'll affect our overall schematics.

Q. How do you commit to stopping the run without selling out to the point they allow the pass? They do very similar skillset as last week.

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, just last week, you know, we had to make choices. Last week the choice was we didn't want Barkley to get going and have a 200-yard game or something like that. We just didn't hold up well enough.

We'll get back to the drawing board and figure out the plan this week. There are some things you have to take away because you can't do it all, right? Can't double all of them and have enough guys in there for a run. Some guys will have to stand up and try to give them the tools to do some different things maybe schematically.

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There will be times there are one-on-ones guys have to win. And we're going to. We feel confident with our guys. We've played enough good football that we know how to win in those situations.

Q. When do you anticipate knowing whether or not you'll have TJ? Is he one of those guys you never count out?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think all the medical questions, I don't get into that. I just know if he's available, we'll be happy. If he's not available, we won't be very happy.

Q. When you're playing a quarterback like Lamar, an offense like the Ravens, what kind of stress do they put on your edge guys when you're defending them?

TERYL AUSTIN: They put stresses on everybody when you play those type of guys. They put it on your edge guys because in terms of the rush and the different things, you count on your edge guys to get pressure and get them down.

A lot of times these guys can step in and then get back out, and then when they get outside the pocket they put pressure on everybody. Now people break off routes, do different things.

So those type of quarterbacks really do, they stress your whole defense at all times. That's why I think when you look at the league it's moved to the mobile quarterbacks, not the guys that can just sling it and stay in the pocket. Sometimes we like to call them lawn deer.

You don't see that a lot. You see guys able to move and get out and create. That's what our business has become. As a defense, it puts a lot of stress and we to, again, continue to coach our guys on how do we plaster, try to keep them in the pocket, all the different things you do combat quarterback mobility.

Q. How much trust do you have in the speed you have in the second and third levels of your defense in terms of how you balance defending Lamar and Derrick, especially read option plays? Obviously Lamar is making a read there. How much do you trust the speed you have in the back end?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think we have good speed on the back end. I think since I've been here, this is as fast of a defense we've had. You can see that. So I feel comfortable with the speed and how we'll get the balls and how fast we would be able to possibly close things down if things get bad.

Q. How would you evaluate how Joey has played the last couple weeks?

TERYL AUSTIN: I'm not going to get into evaluations in that regard. He's going to play some top receivers and there will be some times it goes his way and sometimes it don't. He's played Chase and AJ and Tee Higgins and DeVonta, so those are pretty good core receivers right there.

Sometimes in this league you're going to lose some; sometimes you're going to win some. I know about him that he's out and coming back to battle. He doesn't lose confidence.

I think in the long run that's going to be -- he's going to be fine, and I don't worry about Joey at all.

Q. Where see seen improvement in James Pierre from when you resigned him?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, I think the big things with James, he's always been this way. I know for, shoot, I forget what year it was, he ended up starting for us for a while. Had a rough stretch. It never affected his work ethic and how he practices.

What you see in practice is a lot of high effort, high energy, attacking the ball. What happens is in the game he goes in and does the same thing and usually good things happen. I don't feel much more different about him as a backup now as I did before he left.

So I think he's done the right things and I see the way he practices, so I have no qualms about him stepping in and giving us some quality snaps when he has to.

Q. Does his familiarity with Lamar help or pretty much two-way street?

TERYL AUSTIN: It would be a two-way street I would think.

Q. (Indiscernible.) Where are you seeing that manifest and how do you adjust to that?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, I think you see it the last couple weeks. He's hit Bateman on a couple big ones down the field, and so those are things that will account for that. He's hit Zay Flowers in a two-minute drill. A lot of big plays out. He is going down the field, but those guys once they catch the ball down the field they're making guys miss and scoring touchdowns.

So he's going down the field. I don't think like when I look at him overall, I don't see a big change like he's just chucking it up there. I think he's just creating time, taking what is showing up, and doing a great job.

He's been doing it all year. Guy has a million touchdowns and like three interceptions. We got our work cut out for us.

Biggest thing for us is we don't want to give up big plays and we got to stop the run.

Q. We've talked about TJ's status. How much did not having DeShon last week impact the structure of the defense?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, it changes a little bit in terms of job description and who does what, but in terms of structure, didn't change us a ton.

So we'll see. Hopefully he'll be back out here this week and we'll get back to that. The biggest thing with him, though, is in terms of how physical he plays and the temperament he brings and the things he does in the run game are pretty exceptional. I think the guy has been having a great year.

We know all about TJ and those guys. But I think quietly this guy has been having an outstanding yeah, really top notch.

Q. How tough is it to replace a player of that level?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, it's kind of what the NFL is all about. You're going to lose guys from time to time. The guys behind, we have confidence in them coming in and playing and being able to hold the job down and get it done.

Doesn't mean they'll get it done the same way. Nevertheless, counting on them to get it done. That's how we'll move forward. We don't have a pity party because we are losing somebody. Play everybody is missing people at this point of the year.

The biggest thing is how do the guys that have to step into roles, how do they do when their opportunity is presented to them.

Q. It's later in the season; practice time is shorter. Does that limit what you might want to do on the practice field to shore up the tackling if it was maybe two months ago compared to now?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think obviously more time gives you

more opportunities to correct some things physically. But, I mean, I think really the biggest thing when you have a short week is you just allocate your time to the things you think are important for that week.

If it happens to be tackling, might be tackling. If it happens to be play structure or some things we do, that's what we do. Just depends on what we feel is really important for us this week.

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