

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Monday, December 23, 2024
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



Q. The theme in the locker room is if we get the communication fixed we'll be fine?

TERYL AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

Q. What are you doing this week to make sure it's fixed? How do you go about it on a short week?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, we've got get it fixed. You know, you solve a lot more problems with really good communication. The way we'll try to solve it is obviously with the walk-throughs. Even though they're not going to be high intensity, we should hear everything going on and be really demonstrative in how we communicate and what we say and what we do. Be really intentional in that regard to make it stick.

I think that's really got to be our focus. Earlier in the season I think we had an issue a couple times with some communication and our guys got right back on the job.

But it's like everything. You're always working to fix some problems because you always have problems. This just showed up last week, so we have to get it fixed. I'm pretty sure the guys will do it.

One of the things I talked to our guys about is communication is not just me telling you something. It's also receiving and giving of information. So if I give it to you, you got to let me know you got it and give it back to me. That's how we all know we're on the same page.

Not that we just take it. The fact that you give me something and I got, okay, he has it. I don't take anything for granted. That's been a big thing we're talking about this week.

Q. What was the communication breakdown on the touchdown between Queen and Fitzpatrick?

TERYL AUSTIN: I'm not going to get into the specifics of the communication. Just know that it happened and that

I've got to do a better job making sure these guys know exactly what should be said, how we should say it when things happen.

If it doesn't, it's got to come on me, too. It's not just always on them. If they don't feel comfortable they're getting the right communication, I'll take that and I'll work at it and make sure they have it and are able to get it right.

Q. ... over the course of the year about what was added by bringing Elliott on board in your secondary. What have you noticed in his absence? What's been missing since he's been sidelined?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think we know what he is. He's really a physical, really in-the-box defender. Love the way he triggers in the run game and the physicality that he brings and the temperament that he brings.

You can see that you miss that a little bit with him not being in there. So we're looking forward to hopefully getting that back.

Q. How much with him do you miss in terms of communication, when he's off the field?

TERYL AUSTIN: Who?

Q. DeShon. When he's not on there, how much of that contributes to some of the breakdowns on defense, just guys being in different positions?

TERYL AUSTIN: I don't think that's it. I just think we have to do a better job, again, starting with me in terms of, hey, guys, what are we saying here to make sure we get the right communication? How are we practicing? How are we doing it?

So that's the first thing. Always try to make sure that I'm giving these guys the correct way to do it, and so when we get into a high-pressure situation it's not foreign to them and it doesn't catch them off guard.

That's really what I'm doing. It's not missing DeShon or anything like that. It's just how we have to operate as a defense.

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

Q. Guys have talked about a big part of communication is also anticipation of what other teams are doing.

TERYL AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

Q. How do you prepare for teams that try to throw in some new ones? (Regarding Ravens lightning touchdown.) How do you communicate when teams are doing things like that?

TERYL AUSTIN: The biggest thing is the communication helps you set up and follow your rules. If your rules are sound, then you should be able to handle anything anybody throws at you. Just because you haven't seen it doesn't mean you shouldn't be able to play it.

So, again, if our rules are sound and our communication is sound, I don't fear new formations, new wrinkles, because that happens every week in the NFL.

Q. Do you feel like your rules have been sound for most of the year?

TERYL AUSTIN: Absolutely. I think we're not a gimmick or a bunch of guys in the wrong -- you know, a lot of different spots type defense. The things we do I think are very sound. We have our own wrinkles and our own communication, how we do it, and sometimes we don't stay in -- we don't fit up to what we got to do.

We got get it fixed. That's what we're in the process of right now.

Q. Cam was saying today, himself included, that he was trying to make a play and getting out of where he needs to be. How do (indiscernible) the intention is to try to make something happens and make sure they trust everybody on the field?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, the important part is the intention is great. We want them to be able to make plays. A lot of it is timing. Sometimes when you try to do too much or too soon, it leads to maybe there is a gap open and good runners and good quarterbacks will find it.

So that's really all it is. I trust in our guys' judgment and them being able to figure out to not just be, okay, you said I have to be here. That's not how we play ball. But that they'll make the right judgments about maybe when to get out of a gap, when to cross over and make the play and take those chances.

Q. (Regarding yards per carry.) What do you attribute

to the difference?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think it was just, again, we did not do a good job, again, starting with me in terms of settling down being getting into our run game fits. You know, there were some missed tackles we made. Had some fits that we had to iron out as the game wore on.

And so I mean, that's what I attribute it to. And a big back that's going to run through some arm tackles. If those holes aren't squeezed off for him and he's not stopping and starting and he gets ahead of Steve, he's a load.

We all know what a great back he is, and we allowed him to get to his strengths last week. Last week, like two days ago.

Q. What do the Chiefs do differently compared to what you've seen for other offenses this year? How do you prepare for something so different in just a couple of days?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think they do a lot of things that are different. This is a legitimate west coast offense that they're going to -- they have a number of ways to attack. They're going to spread you out, rely on the quarterback, get the ball in the guy's hands and let them do stuff with it.

And so that's different in terms of maybe the run-heavy offensives we just played. Obviously they have the quarterback and receivers and different guys like that this really make it go.

And so it is, it's going to be a challenge for us. But I think we'll be okay on the short week. We've seen teams that throw and do the different things they do. It's just going to be a matter of how we execute in a short period of time.

Q. Obviously Patrick Mahomes doesn't have the same type of mobility, but it still seems to be a problem for a lot of defenses. How do you balance keeping an eye on him running versus obviously what he can do in the air?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, that's a challenge. That's why the guys won two Super Bowls in a row. Because he extends plays. He knows how to step up in the pocket. He runs when he needs to run.

The biggest thing he does is creates time and the whole field is open to him and he makes all the throws. The biggest thing we have to do is like all these last three or four quarterbacks we've played, they're the best in the business. We have to be able to let our rush go, keep him in the pocket, you know, not eliminate because it won't

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

eliminate everything, but cut down on the amount of times he's able to step up and see the field or get outside the pocket.

That's going to be a challenge for us and something I told our guys, you know, it's 60 minutes of football that way, because you can't ever take a play off with this guy. He can turn it on any one play.

Q. Because of some of your injuries, Cory Trice and James Pierre had to step up in the last game. How do you evaluate what they did? And with Joey unlikely to play, how do you determine which one of them is going to get the nod?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think those guys did a good job. We went into the game with the idea we were going to kind of alternate those two guys and not overload either one of them, but circumstances had it where they had to play and I thought they both -- while not perfect, both really competitive, both really gave us some good snaps.

So we'll move into this week with the idea they both have to play. Whoever has the hot hand will probably see more reps than the other.

Q. Assuming Elliott would normally be part of the plan against a guy like Kelce, if he's not in there, can you put one guy on him or do you have to do different stuff?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, I think we'll probably have to do some different things. I don't think you can play this offense just one way and expect to survive. You have to be able to do different things. I think if you just line up and say, okay, we're going to play them man all day, they're going to eat you up. If you just say we're going to play zone all day, they're going to eat you up.

So we have to get a good mix in terms of coverage and disguise and the things we do if we want to give ourselves a chance.

Q. I think you talked about the versatility Cam Sutton brings. With the quarterback spot, have you considered playing him outside at all?

TERYL AUSTIN: It's always a consideration. I think he got a couple outside reps last week. Guys were all over. Hey, who's in? He's always a consideration. He's a pro's pro. He can play all positions we have back there.

And so if we need to, we'll put him out there. I don't think we want to put him out there full time because of the value he brings us inside. If he needs to go outside we can put

him out there.

Q. What do you respect about Steve Spagnuolo's defenses?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, Spags is great. Worked with Spags for a year. He's awesome. He's got a great demeanor. He learned when he was in Philadelphia and those guys and the things they did in terms of pressure and all the different things.

He's been doing this for a long time, and I really admire how he asks a lot of his guys, and they do some stuff that's really unique when you see them on film, but it's really sound and it really gives people problems.

I love watching his defense play because they play at a high level no matter who he has in there.

Q. Can you talk about the challenge that you face this week facing the team that does a lot of motion and misdirection?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, those are always challenges because they try to get your guys in positions that are unique or positions they may not have seen in practice to see if they can fit up whether it be run it pass.

And so that's always a challenge. We'll just have to give our guys what we can and, again, make sure our rules are sound, how we're handling motion adjustments are sound, and then go from there. Then we let the guys get it out and work it out on game day.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports