

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Weekday Press Conference



Q. A lot of guys are talking about going back to basics this week. From your perspective as the guy who runs this defense, what does that look like? Are you reinforcing things that maybe usually do early in the year?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think it's what you said. It's more reinforcing. You know, getting back to the things and making sure we are not missing any steps in terms of how we prepare and what we do and the things we do. I think that's what the guys are doing in terms of that when they talk about that, and that's really what it is. I mean, we know what we are, what our identity should be, and obviously we haven't played to recently.

And so what do you do to get that back. What do you do to get going back in the right direction. It's to the going to be changing and moving a whole bunch of different things and doing a whole bunch of new things at this point. It's going to be reinforcing things that you know you do well and making sure that we do them well.

Q. Is there one thing you want to clean up that you think if you get that solved, the rest falls into place?

TERYL AUSTIN: No, I don't think it's one thing. I think it's like anything. There's always in different areas of your team, there's going to be things that you have to clean up and it's always a moving target because you should be cleaning some things up and some other issues should always open up. That's how this game is. So we'll work on the things that we need to to try to get those straight and keep us moving in the right direction, and like every week, we'll come in here and we'll have some other things to clean up next week.

Q. As a coach how do you deal with the emotions or when it's gets frustrating and things are not going well and guys might speak their mind?

TERYL AUSTIN: That's okay. Grown men. Would I much rather have them be emotional and be upset about things

not going their way than really don't giving a sh-t or not giving a sh-t. Our guys give a sh-t. So to me, that's important, and that's an important thing to have, and that tells me that they want to get it right and they are not satisfied with it going the way it is.

So I'm perfectly fine with that. We have good men in our building. They have been through a lot of stuff together and you know rightfully so, a little bit frustrated but out of that frustration, I think we can find some prosperity.

Q. How do you make sure that frustration doesn't boil over into guys pointing fingers at each other?

TERYL AUSTIN: I don't think guys do that. I think we have good enough relationships in this building that we won't point fingers at people. We just know there's issues that need to be solved, and so I think in that regard, I think because of the open defensive line log and the transparency we have, starting with Mike, and that we all aspire to have in our rooms, me as a coordinator, the position coaches as they have their rooms, I don't think you'll have something like that. I just think, you know, guys are just frustrated right now.

Q. How is Joey coming along health-wise and what do you say to him this week after the way things transpired against T last time?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think obviously Mike mentioned, he's trending towards on the good side. So that's a good thing.

The last game is like anything. They are just learning experiences. It doesn't mean this game will be the same as last game. And so we'll look to Joey. He has a good work -- if he has a good work week, then we expect him to play well, and that's really like we do every week. If guys have good work weeks, we expect them to play well and we move on with that assumption.

Q. Joe Burrows, playing at MVP-calibre level, what's it like to see his progress or the way he's elevated his game since the last time you faced him?

TERYL AUSTIN: He's been unbelievable, but the guy has been unbelievable all year. I just think they haven't won as

many games. And so he doesn't get the credit that he probably deserves.

But this guy, he's unbelievable. He's going to make -- he's going to make all the throws. We've got to do a good job of trying to defend, mixing it up and making it hard for him. He's playing at an MVP level. There's no doubt about it. And we're going to our work cut out, you know, getting things together this week.

Q. You guys have a lot of moving pieces with the secondary this year with you one constant has been Patrick. How have you seen him be a leader in the secondary?

TERYL AUSTIN: He balances that fine because I think Micah is a good leader, he's a good communicate tore. So when different guys are in there, he'll know maybe which guys need I will extra help, a little extra direction, which guys may not need it. So I they he's good that way and I don't think that bothers him.

I think a lot of times what happens is you get used to playing with certain guys and certain things they do. There will be some nuances of the game. Other than that I think he's done a great job in terms of that and I don't think the moving parts bothers him. I think I'm glad we have him because he's a steady performer back there for us. He's kind of the blue that keeps things, you know, when things do get a little frazzled, he's a guy that can keep things together.

Q. How important is it to change the momentum of this defense before you guys get into the postseason to kind of fix some of the things that have been popping up?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, you'd like to get it but we all know that momentum can change in a heartbeat, and it could be this week. It could be next week. Because momentum is a funny thing. I don't think it's -- I'm not going to, you know, go crazy if we don't. We'll just get back to work and work to get it next week.

But I'm looking forward to getting it done this week and having our guys turn the tables and get things right.

Q. When you have all those injuries on the defensive side on the secondary, how does that impact just the communication between the players? Does it change at all, guys communicate differently with different players, things like that?

TERYL AUSTIN: In terms of the structure or communication, the structure doesn't change, but maybe

sometimes guys receive information differently, and that's the biggest thing you have to learn.

I think we've been together and we've been through camp and most of the guys have been here all year, so they know how to communicate. We have to do a really good job of that, especially at home, because our crowd has been great at home. They are loud. Do a great job supporting us, and that makes it harder on the defense to get the communication right. But that's part of the job. We like that and we'll just have to do it.

Q. DeShawn mentioned you guys have an extra walk through today. I know you don't want to change too much but are there things you're willing to implement to try to get back on that same page?

TERYL AUSTIN: We'll do whatever we have to do to try to get right, and the guys went out a little bit extra today. They wanted to go out. That was something that the players wanted to do, to get out to make sure they are in front of some things. We have passionate guys, guys that want to get it right and they are willing to do whatever it is and whatever it takes to get over the hump. Because they know we can be much better than what we've shown and what we've played the last few weeks. So they are working to get back on track.

Q. How often do they say they want to do something extra?

TERYL AUSTIN: Plenty of times. Guys always extra suggestions. That's one of the things we talk about in terms of we're grown men working together. It's not like, hey, you do this and I'm going to yell at you and you do this and that's the only way we're going to do it. There's always collaboration between grown men as to what's great and best for us. Obviously I'm going to have the final decision on what moved forward but I want that input. I want the guys to be invested in the defense and what they do and how they get better.

Q. Along those lines, DeShawn said something, everybody knows I'm honest and I'm going to say what needs to be said. A lot of guys have been here for many, many years and he came in this year. How does he fit in and does he -- when somebody comes in from the outside like that, are they welcomed?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, like I said, if you put in the work, I think if you put in the work, your voice is welcome.

You know, DeShawn is DeShawn. He likes to talk. He's great for you guys.

Q. The last couple games this team has had trouble covering tight ends. Have you seen anything from a defensive standpoint that could change for you all to cover the tight ends better?

TERYL AUSTIN: Obviously the tight ends, they have had some success but I don't think it's been a long-term problem. So we'll probably just make a few adjustments to try to make sure we're funneling those guys the right way, get them to the right help.

He's more of a big receiver tight end outside and does a lot of different things. So we'll have our work cut out trying to make sure that we don't let Chase and Higgins run and also paying attention to him. That's just part of the problems of this offensive football team because they are really good. They have really good skill position guys, number 80, everybody talks about those three guys and number 80 is hitting big plays every week.

There's a lot of -- they have a lot of good things going on, and so we're going to have to really be on top of our game to do a good job against these guys to slow them down and to keep them out of the end zone.

Q. Sacks and turnovers have been the team's calling card, especially early in the year. How do you guys get back to that and how important is that, and how do you guys get back?

TERYL AUSTIN: Those are very important things because sacks and turnovers change the game. Sacks stop drives. Sacks with strips and turnovers, interception, all that stuff. They change the game. So that's part of what we do. We aspire to do that, and we'll just have to work.

We know we have a process. The process works, and sometimes there's a lull in the process in terms of our production during the course of the year. But it doesn't stop us from continuing to work at it and continuing to grind at it until it does flip back over because we know if you do give it the attention it deserves like we do, that the results will come, and so right now, they haven't come but they will be back. I have total confidence in our guys, and how we work and the emphasis we put on rushing the passer, the emphasis we put on getting turnovers, will show its head again.

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