

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Tuesday, October 14, 2025
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



Q. When you make the additions that you make in the offseason.

TERYL AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

Q. You have the Cincinnati Bengals in mind with that? What type of matchups, opportunities does it give you now?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, I think when you do -- make the moves we did, they are absolutely in mind because of the firepower they have on offense.

And so we wanted to be able to try to combat that in a lot of different ways, and hopefully we can have some situations where we matchup a little bit better than we have in the past. Maybe give us a little opportunity to play some things a little bit differently than we have in the past.

So we'll see how that goes this week in that regard. I think it does give us some flexibility in terms of just maybe always playing soft zone or playing some different things, you may have certain ability at certain time to be a little bit more aggressive.

You can't make a living like that against those guys. They're really good.

Q. In this five-game window to start the season already, the plays Jalen Ramsey has made, what have you seen from him?

TERYL AUSTIN: I don't think there was any doubt from anybody out there that he was an outstanding football player, and so I think he's just showing what he has been. You know, around the league he's a standout performer.

There is a reason was a top 5 pick or whatever he was. He shows that in his play, in his preparation, all the things that you need from what we feel is a really good player.

Q. Along those lines, a lot of people had high praise

for Ramsey, the way he was able to work back from the injury, play in a short time frame. Were you planning -- did you expect him to play or did you have to prepare as if he was not going to? What were the conversations like? How much was he really trying to lobby to play in that game?

TERYL AUSTIN: First of all, we're not going to play a player unless the doctor says he's able to play. Guys can lobby all they want, do all the stuff they want. I don't make that choice; the doctors make that choice.

But going into it wasn't expecting him. As it got a little bit closer there was a chance that, hey, he might have a chance. It's like we do with a lot guys, we leave the light on. We had to go ahead with your planning as if he wasn't going to be there, and having him there was a bonus.

Q. ...with your approach and execution against Minnesota and does that prepare you maybe for Cincinnati?

TERYL AUSTIN: I missed the first part of your question.

Q. Looking back on the Vikings game, were you happy with the way you planned and executed the plan, and does that help you in any way getting ready for these guys?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, I think every week we go back and we look at our plans and what we put in and did we execute it well.

I think what I kind of think all along is as we start to play together more we will continue to get better and have better execution. I think we have good players. I know obviously everybody wants to start out and be great from the beginning, but sometimes these things take a little bit of time.

I just think we're trending in the right direction, and I think our play will continue to reflect that. But we have to go do it on the field. I know what I think in my mind and what I see from our guys, but we have to make it happen when we step on the field.

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

Q. How does the Flacco dynamic change what they're doing now, especially with Chase and Higgins?

TERYL AUSTIN: I'm not sure it does. I just think they're going to throw the ball, try get the ball to those two guys. When you add Flacco, you add a big arm, a great arm talent. He's seen all kind of stuff. So you add a more experience passer in there.

But in terms of what they do and how they do it, they're going to run their offense. They have to run their offense because those guys are that good.

And so I think Joe just helps them because he gives them a real veteran arm, a steady presence, the ability to deliver the ball in tight spaces down the field, all those things.

I'm a Joe Flacco fan. I like Joe. I like Joe. Joe is a great dude. Obviously I was with him in Baltimore and I know he's a really good quarterback, so we have our work cut out for us. We are going to have to play.

Q. TA, kind of going off that, you guys prepped for a rookie a couple days ago; now you're going up against a vet. What differences does that present for you guys?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think it always does because you know that some of the things that usually -- what it looks like, a lot of times if you make a mistake sometimes against a rookie he may not punish you. If you make a mistake against a veteran, those guys usually punish you because they find it and see it.

So that's really the big thing for us, is to really be good in that regard. Don't give him an opening to get the ball to the guys that can make the big plays, because he'll make -- he probably won't miss a guy.

That's really sometimes the things you see between a young guy and a veteran.

Q. Is there anything you can learn from going back to watch the game against Indianapolis last year and how Flacco wanted to attack your guys' defense?

TERYL AUSTIN: No. They're two different offenses. Really what I would focus on is Joe the passer and how Joe throws the ball, which obviously I know and we all know and we have seen a lot.

But Indy's offense is different than Cincy's offense, so have to prepare for Cincinnati's offense.

Q. What differences are you seeing in PQ's play from

last year, learning the defense and learning how to communicate it to this year?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think he's really -- boy, he just is really coming along, man. He's been playing well. I think there is a comfort level now in this defense. I think there is -- being the green dot, he and I are always talking and he feels really comfortable about doing the job and doing the task at hand. So he's really playing fast right now and it really shows. I think you watch last week and the week before, I mean, he just kind of jumps off the film at you in term of his speed and violence.

And we need that. That's why we got him. It's good to see that he's really starting to feel comfortable and confident in that regard. He's always been a confident player, but you know how it is. Sometimes you get into a new system it takes you a while to really get your feet on the ground and going.

He's got it going right now.

Q. Couple week ago, Denzel Martin described having TJ, Alex, and Nick all at the same time as having the full metal jacket for you guys. What does it do as a playcaller when you have all three of them to set up the different variations of blitzes you've been throwing at people this year?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think you're seeing it. You know, you can do that, you can rush. I think when you get some of those guys that are outside rushers that can also rush inside on guards, that makes it tough. Guards usually aren't used to the speed and different type of rushes they get, usually power rushers, working against bigger guys.

So it works to our advantage. Also gives us an advantage if you have a mobile quarterback that can run because you have guys that can really run and track them down.

Glad we have those guys, and we'll continue to deploy them. I think Jack Sawyer helps because he's coming along as well. Gives us a fourth option, so that if something happens and somebody gets dinged we can stay in those type of packages when we need them.

Q. As a coordinator you didn't have a high blitz rate the last three years with this team. You guys got pressure but weren't one of the leading sack teams in the NFL. This year definitely been a ramping up of that. What led to the decision of making that a central core part of this year's defense?

TERYL AUSTIN: As you look at it, it's personnel. Who do you have doing what. I think we have good blitzing



linebackers. Obviously upgraded what we feel is our coverage people. So it all says maybe you can do a little bit more of that.

You know, you don't want to just do something because, hey, I'm supposed to be this type of guy. You try to do what your players do to give them an opportunity to be successful.

If you're not doing that, then I don't know if you're doing -- you're not doing right by the players, not doing right by the team. My job is to try to do what we're good at and what our guys are good at to get the most out of them; not what I think is cool and good.

Q. You've never hesitated to have your corners travel.

TERYL AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

Q. I don't think you've done that at all this year. Ever feel tempted to do that are you guys you past that because the quality of players you have at that position?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, I think right now we've looked at the quality of our guys and we feel pretty comfortable playing them left, right, moving them around, in terms of that, and then just being where we are and letting guys sink down.

We feel pretty good about our matchups most of the time. You know, sometimes you have a day that maybe matchup doesn't go with your way. Doesn't mean we lose confidence in the type of guys we have.

We just played him there. We didn't feel like we a deficiency and we had to put one guy over here because we had a deficiency, so we feel good about that.

Q. ...was saying one of the things that helped him is trust. Are you seeing that not just with him, but throughout the defense, guys kind of believe that people are going to be where they're supposed to?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah. I think that's a big part of it, you know, guys basically doing their job, what we're asking them to do and they're doing it and guys feel comfortable. The thing that happens sometimes, if guys don't believe a guy is going to do his job sometimes they try to do too much.

I like the way our guys -- again, I told you I like the way our guys are coming together and working at it and doing those things. It's always going to be a work in progress. We'll be working and talking about these things throughout the

course of the year to make sure we continue to build that trust.

Because you have to earn it all the time. It's not like, hey, not I got trust and now we're good for the rest of the year. Those are things that we have to build week in and week out, day in this, day out, meeting every day. We will continue to do that.

Like I said, I think we're going in the right direction. I still think we have a lot of good football ahead of us. We are starting to play better, and our guys will tell you that we can play a whole lot better.

Q. The speed and the violence you talked about with Queen, is that starting to resonate throughout the group? How important is the violence part as opposed to just being in the right spot?

TERYL AUSTIN: It's a violent game, and so you got play it that way. We try to play within the rules and play as violently as possible. I think when your green dot guy, guy talking to the defense every day is leading that charge it does everything. It's no different than a quarterback. When the quarterback steps in the huddle and the guys believe him and the things he's talking and he's showing it, they're going to do it, come right along with him, and I think our guys are doing it as well.

Q. Flacco lost his starting job in Baltimore seven years ago now. Is there an appreciation for guys that had second, third, fourth acts in their career and why he is still able to do it at age 40?

TERYL AUSTIN: Absolutely. You know, the guys that do that, you see them come back, man, you know -- obviously I had been in the building with Joe so I know he's mentally tough. Doesn't let things bother him. He's a good football player and never wavers in that belief.

So I have a big appreciation for guys like him, guys that maybe bounce around a little bit and then all of a sudden you see them and they show up and they're really good players.

You know sometimes you just need a change of scenery to do what you're doing and do it better. But, yeah, I got a big appreciation for veterans around this league that do that and go to different places and people think, hey, that guy wasn't so good, and he shows up with a new team and does a great job.

Hats off to Joe.

Q. In a way does having Aaron on the roster, a 40-plus

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

year old quarterback on the roster being successful when you face Joe who is getting long in the tooth, does that sharpen the skills and say this dude might be old but he's not washed? Does that sort of help that?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, but I think that sometimes you don't think guys are washed, you just think they're in a situation that's not correct for them. But we played two years ago. Joe came in the game against Indy. He can still throw the ball and he knows who to throw it to. As long as they protect him do those things, he's going to get the ball to the right guys.

It wasn't like I thought Joe was washed up and done. My take is guys that play in this league can still play in this league. It's just how much you want them out there and how much the particular team things. They can do.

Q. Maybe not you thought they were washed, the players, make sure the players don't take it for granted.

TERYL AUSTIN: We don't take anybody for granted. If you're out there and playing in this league, you're playing because you deserve to play. We talk about that all the time. Nobody plays in this league because I'm friends with him or friends with the owner or I know the coach. You play because you're deserving to play.

So we approach every game like that. We don't short anybody. We go into a game and we prepare to play our best versus whoever happens to be there.

Q. ... last couple games; what do you think that's a result of?

TERYL AUSTIN: I just think we're playing better. We're attacking things. You know, we had some injuries early in the year and we are starting to get everybody back. I think we're healthy and starting to gel.

It was the same thing we added a lot of new pieces in the offseason, and you know, you start playing games early and we needed some time probably to just get out there and gel a little bit.

I think we're starting to play together and understand each other, like we said earlier. That's why we're playing better. I don't think -- because I know and I knew we had good players; now we're starting to play better.

Q. Harmon out there for a couple games. What have you learned about what he can bring to the table and add to the future?

TERYL AUSTIN: It's good to get him back. Each week he's gotten better. Missed some time, and like all rookies, there is always going to be a learning curve in there. But what I've seen is a guy who is exactly what we thought he was when we drafted him. He's going to be a good pass rusher, really big and stout versus a run. He's got a really high football IQ and really he's got a big, big ceiling.

I like D. Harmon. He's serious about his work. He doesn't mess around. You can just look at him and his goal is to be a heck of a football player in this league and he's on his way.

Q. Nick Herbig was able to win from the inside a little bit in this game. What does his speed present on the inside for guards and centers and what does that allow you to do up front when you are cooking up some blitzes?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, it gives you flexibility. Again, the guards aren't used to going against guys with that body type and speed. If you can get the matchup and get the space. You still got to get space in there because if it gets jammed up then they get their hands on the and those guys usually lose.

Being able to get space is a big thing. One of the things we're trying to do obviously is always want to try to get our edge guys and get them in some one-one-one situations as well.

So being able to put some pressure on the interior, you know, sometimes leave those edge guys alone. So it's a give and take that we're trying to get weekly. It changes weekly on how we're going to do it and who we're trying to get after.

The bottom line is if we do a good job of it and we're playing good defense and get them this third and long and two minute situations, then our sacks go up, all the things that show that we're getting it done surface.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports