

# Pittsburgh Steelers

## Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



**Q. What can you expect from Kyle? Did you get him ready? Today I guess is his first day in practice.**

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, we just had him for the walk-through, so we'll determine that as we get a little closer. We'll try to do the best we can to get him ready to be available for us in some capacity.

**Q. Teryl, the defense has struggled as it has been the last couple of weeks. Do you change up what you do? How you coach them? What you say in meetings? Does anything change for you?**

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, for me, what I do is I just kind of look at what we're doing, the process, what I'm telling them, how I'm telling them, trying to make sure that they're getting the right points, that I'm getting the right points across to them so we're all on the same page.

I just continue to look at my process to make sure it's right and try to help our guys, because that's my job, to try to help our guys play better. So that's playing well, playing bad. It's all the same. I think you always have to do that. We just happen to be in a bad stretch right now.

The process for me doesn't change. It's just how do I get all that across to the guys.

**Q. Speaking of your process, when you have a defensive-minded head coach like Mike Tomlin, where does he put his fingerprints on this defense? Where do you make decisions about schematics?**

TERYL AUSTIN: We always do. Ever since I've been in this position, Mike has had -- he's part of the defense obviously, and he's always been part of it. Nothing has changed in that regard. We go through our weeks. We plan. He's in all the meetings, all those things.

So there's really no change in terms of how we work together as a staff. I don't think that has any bearing on anything, because Mike has always been involved.

Nothing has changed in that regard.

**Q. They had a lot of yards after the catch Sunday. How bothersome is that when it's that much?**

TERYL AUSTIN: It is, because we pride ourselves on being a good tackling team, a physical team, and when you look at that, I mean, that can be demoralizing, and it was.

I thought in the first half of the game we started out. It looked like we were doing things the way that we should, and then in the second half, you know, missed tackles and led to really big plays and field flippers and momentum changers and all those things.

That's concerning, and so the big thing we did is, hey, what are we doing in practice, because we're not going to be tackling at this point in the season. What are we doing drill-wise? What are we doing during the periods, the team periods, to try to help our guys get themselves in position to make the tackles? I don't think it's a lack of effort. I don't think it's anything like that. It's just we're not tackling well right now.

**Q. How do you get this team to handle adversity better?**

TERYL AUSTIN: I think one of the things you got to do is you got to be steady. The game always has ebbs and flows. What you can't do is ride the roller coaster of the game. As a coach and as a player, I think the one thing you do is stay steady throughout so even when you are doing great, you're not, like, over the moon, because that's way when you're doing bad, you won't be under the mountain. You know what I mean?

So we have to be real steady in our approach. We're business-like and workman-like in our approach and just keep grinding away.

**Q. Is that hard sometimes when you have emotional -- it's an emotional game. You have highly competitive guys that have had success, and when they don't have success, it can get volatile. How do you walk that line and let them be emotional, but not let it affect --**

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TERYL AUSTIN: Right, you do, but being emotional shouldn't affect your performance. Being energized and excited doesn't affect your performance. You shouldn't affect it. You should always be that way, whether you are playing good, you're playing bad. Hey, man, I'm excited and love this game, so I'm competing. That's really the thing you talk about. You're competing all the time.

So, yeah, we know. You got to have emotion. You got to have all those energy. You have to have all that stuff to play this game, but that doesn't mean you have to ride the roller coaster, as I like to say.

**Q. Three straight games against Shane Steichen, and he has 30 points a game against your defense. What does he do well?**

TERYL AUSTIN: They have done a good job in terms of that. We just have to do a better job on a lot of fronts, but he does a good thing, schematically. They have good schematics. They get the ball to the right guys. The teams we've played of his, they always have a good running game, and they challenge you in that regard in terms of the run, the run-pass option, getting the ball down the field to their playmakers.

So he does a good job in way, and we have to do a better job in terms of combatting that and understanding who does what for them.

**Q. This defense has faced a number of good tight ends this season. What challenge does Tyler Warren present, and how much more difficult is that without a guy like DeShon Elliott?**

TERYL AUSTIN: Obviously he presents a big challenge, obviously being here. You got to see him when he was at Penn State and all the different things that he did there, he's doing the same things there. He'll line up at cornerback. He catches the ball. He can run it. They run the ball with him. They do all kinds of things with him because he's really versatile, and he's a really good player.

It's going to be a big challenge. Obviously, losing DeShon will make it harder, but that's the NFL. We have to be able to -- whoever is in the game, be available and be ready to give our best effort to stop this guy. That's the job.

We don't make excuses for guys that aren't there, and maybe that's why we didn't defend him. That's not what we're going to do. We're going to go out there, and we're going to do our best to stop him.

**Q. When you evaluate, is it a bottom line, win/lose, points or not? You see a game like Green Bay where**

**the two halves that were so different. Does that factor into how you evaluate it at all?**

TERYL AUSTIN: The bottom line is wins and losses. It's what you do. You got to win or lose in this league. That's what it boils down to, but it's like anything. A lot of things aren't binary.

You can find something to teach off, something to coach off in all these things, because what you don't want to do is go in there and talk about how bad everything is, because that's not how it is.

There were some good things that happened in that game. There were some guys that had decent performances, and then there were others that didn't. Obviously starting with me, and I'm the same way. I look at it. I go, Hey, did I do the right things in the second half to help our guys get in the right positions? I look at that.

Like I said, it's not binary. I just think there's always teachable, coachable moments, and you got to use those. I think that's our job as coaches to use those things to motivate our players, to get them going so they don't feel like, you know, the world is coming to an end.

**Q. Challenge the ball coming out quick from quarterbacks has been an issue. What about this week against the Colts, and how do you combat that globally?**

TERYL AUSTIN: You combat it. You got to mix up coverages. The thing is when the ball comes out quick, there's going to be some times it depends on the coverage that we're in. If we're in man-to-man, there will be times we're going to make 50/50 plays. The ball is down the field, and whether they throw it on the slants or whether they throw it deep, we've got to be able to -- it can't be a 70% win for the offense. Those are things that we got to win. We got to win more of our share of 50/50 balls when that happens.

We have to change coverages up on them. Our defensive line has to get in the act too, because we talk about them batting balls, and we all know Cam Heyward is elite at that.

So there's a lot of different things that go into it with the ball getting out quick and us trying to stop it. So that's going to be a never ending battle, because we do have good rushers and people don't like to just drop back and seven-step drop and throw the ball deep on us. They like to get it out fast, try to slow our rush down, do screens, do different things. So that's part of the problem and part of the things that we always have to deal with.

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**Q. There was a third down in the fourth quarter where they caught an out route on the sideline and Juan was playing center and broke over pretty hard there and looked like he misplayed where he was supposed to go. What went into the decision to have him be that aggressive in that moment, but what causes those problems when guys kind of cover the wrong space in a play like that?**

TERYL AUSTIN: Some of those things as they go in, things are moving fast, and you talk to the guys about it and find out what they're thinking and those things. It's not one answer to say, Oh, that's why he did that. Just it happens sometimes.

**Q. Whenever you see the lack of detail and the way teams are being able to throw, do you consider simplifying things that you want to do? Do you consider simplifying some things to make things a little easier to execute better?**

TERYL AUSTIN: Again, that goes back to I think Ray's question at the beginning: What do you do? What am I doing in my process to help our guys so they understand the details and do that? Sometimes it means you cut some things back. Sometimes it means you cut some things out. Sometimes it's no change at all.

But we look at everything and see what we have to do, and it is, it's we have to be in position. I think there's a lot of times you look at it, and I think we've had some -- on both ends we've been in position to make it, and we've lost. Other times we haven't been. So that's just kind of the nature of the game.

Again, we'll just keep working at the process and trying to get our guys in the best position as we can. Again, if it means scaling back, we scale back. We just go from there.

**Q. What are you seeing that's going on in the second half of these games? The last two games against Cincinnati, you gave scoring drives, four or five scoring drives, this last game -- five of five scoring drives with the exception of the kneel-down possession. Is there anything you see from a halftime adjustment standpoint that sticks out that offenses are going to you and you can make an adjustment to it?**

TERYL AUSTIN: No, I think when you look at it, you could say that's the halftime adjustments. I just think when you look at it, we haven't made the plays that are needed when it comes down to it. Some of that is you're going to have good schemes, we're going to have good things. When we call good plays, we need to win. When they call good

plays, we need to make sure we limit them.

I think what happens is we've given up some big plays in the second half for a myriad of different reasons. Not all one thing. So we just aren't getting it done in the second half.

**Q. There's some outside debate on the direction of the plays during the game on the field. Could you clear it up for us?**

TERYL AUSTIN: When you say outside debate, of what play calls and whose debate is that?

**Q. Saying that between you and Mike, who makes the calls during the game.**

TERYL AUSTIN: It's been the same since I've been in this chair. I'm calling it. If Mike wants to call something, he calls it. That's how we roll. That's how it's been.

**Q. I know you guys don't typically listen to outside noise, but objectively lately it's been pretty loud. Are you hearing that at all? What's been your message to fans that are frustrated right now?**

TERYL AUSTIN: I don't hear that. My concern is with the guys in the building and how I can get our guys to play better, because I care about winning and how we win. I don't care if it's style points. I don't care what it is. I don't care if it's 50-49 or it's 3-2.

My job is to coach our guys and hold them to less points than the opponent, and that's really all I care about and all I'm concerned with is how our guys are doing, how are we performing, how can I help them get better.

**Q. If you necessarily have a main guy that comes to you and say, I would like to make this adjustment or I've seen this, how do you kind of go about when maybe a guy does come to you and say I'm seeing this and also sticking to the plan and, hey, what you are seeing as a coach?**

TERYL AUSTIN: We always take the input. There are different guys, they'll come to you and talk to you, because that's what they do. It's their profession. They've got a good idea of what's happening on the field, and they talk to you, and you get it, and you just decide, Hey, can we make this adjustment or not? Then we go from there.

If we think it's for the betterment, then we'll do it. If we don't, then we move on and we make that decision. We don't ever look back and second guess ourselves, because we all could be good. You know, we'll all be great if we just



after the game said, Oh, yeah, I should have done this or do that. In the heat of the battle, you make a decision and move and we go.

**Q. What are your other options in terms of replacing DeShon?**

TERYL AUSTIN: We'll just work around with the guys in the and see what we got. We got Pep here. Pep is here, and Pep can play strong safety. He's a physical guy, and then we'll just go from there.

We'll see what we do at the end of the week and how we come through it. We'll see where Kyle is, and we'll have a contingency plan in place if he's not available.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, he would be in that category. Yes, for sure.

**Q. (Off microphone).**

TERYL AUSTIN: Did Pep come to us? No, but I don't think he's mad that he's here. I think those guys had a good relationship in New England, and so it's good. I think it will be good. I think Pep will help him in terms of the transition and understanding how things move around here to help get him up to speed as fast as possible.

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