

# Pittsburgh Steelers

## Media Conference

Thursday, November 6, 2025

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



**Q. Jalen Ramsey at free safety, is that something we're going to see for a while now? Also, 13 passes defense the other day; extraordinary. What was the reason for that?**

TERYL AUSTIN: I think we'll see with Jalen where we need to keep him. Obviously he did a heck of a job last week playing full time free safety for us. Really did a good job of -- you know, he can overlap, he can run. He's just a good football player.

So we'll see where that leads us moving forward.

As far as the 13 passes defense, I think part of the success we had last weekend were guys getting in the right spots. Again, I think I've told you we have good players, and if we get in the right spots, we have the ability to make plays. I think that's why that total went up.

**Q. Gadsden had that really big game kind of continue for a while, for a couple weeks. How do you -- how is he different if at all from some of the other really good tight ends you've faced in recent weeks? How has his emergence changed their pass offense?**

TERYL AUSTIN: He's not -- he's just like those guys: A converted receiver from college. Has the ability to go outside, go inside. Has a bigger route tree than maybe a lot of tight ends because he has a receiver background. And he's been good for them. You see that they can really stretch the field with him.

And so it is, it'll provide a challenge. We've struggled against some of those guys this year, so we're looking to be better. But we acknowledge where we came up short in some of the other ones and we're working to -- we'll work to make that a hopefully where it's not a difference in us giving up some big plays, some chunks.

**Q. Teryl, a lot of guys said last week and this week that the defense was simplified and that they felt like maybe that helped on Sunday. How much from your**

**perspective did the simplification lead to some of the splash plays?**

TERYL AUSTIN: I think performance, and I'm not -- you know, when you say simplification, I think we maybe cut some costs because we had some new guys and it was a simple fact of necessity.

And I think our guys really, when you look at how we made the plays, I think the biggest thing to happen is our guys played fast, tackled well. We did a good job, like I said, getting in the right spots.

I think, you know, it's easy to say it's simplification. I just think we ran probably more of our base calls than normal, and that's where we were.

**Q. What is Brandin Echols showing you that allows you to...**

TERYL AUSTIN: BE really has shown from the beginning the one thing we really liked about him is in terms of his competitiveness and how he approaches each day.

So we had the utmost confidence being able to put him in full time and moving Jalen back. So that's what he's shown, the ability, he competes all the time, makes good plays, got good coverage. He's tough. He can really run.

So he has all the attributes you like. His temperament was in there. Just happened to be in a position where we had those guys in front of him.

But he stepped up when called upon and I anticipate he'll be able to do the same when we need him.

**Q. Because you were in the base calls and they worked last week, do you anticipate using more base and keeping some of those play calls out?**

TERYL AUSTIN: We'll see.

**Q. Two months ago you were talking about the versatility you have. Jalen obviously a big part of that. Can the coaching staff sometimes get too deep in bag and you miss the forest for the trees a little bit and**

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**self-evaluate, that kind of thing, and say...**

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, we always do. We always do. Yeah, there can be. I mean, you want to screw a coach up, give us a bunch of time. We'll find stuff to do, you know what I mean? That's our job, to try to, hey, how can we make this better, how can we make this better. Sometimes when you have too much time on your hands you do that that.

I think you watch a Thursday game or guys preparing on a short week, sometimes you see some really good football because hey, you go in, get your nuts and bolts done, and move forward, because you know you don't have the time to do extra stuff.

But, you know, to say that you won't do extra stuff, you can't live in the NFL that way in the sense of just if you're just doing the same things over and over, people will understand it, they'll attack it, they'll know what you're doing to be in and they'll have success with it.

So you have to have change-ups and mixers. We'll continue to do that. You know, it's my job to be judicious about it and try to make sure that you don't go overboard with it.

**Q. ... simpler because Dugger was new. You've done that a number of times where you brought guys in. (Indiscernible) where you're really scrambling, come up with a game plan that worked.**

TERYL AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

**Q. What is it that is crucial in those circumstances to getting guys ready to play quickly and then fitting them into a defense to have success?**

TERYL AUSTIN: I think, you know, a lot of that goes to the player and their professionalism when they come in and how they study.

And the communication between player and coach as we start to put in the game plan. Hey, guys, what do you feel comfortable with; what do you -- and us knowing what they're good at and trying to meld all that in a short amount of time.

That's really I think does it.

Then it allows the guys -- it doesn't burden them too much in terms of overthinking and, hey, what am I doing on so many different levels. They can go out and so to speak play and we can get the best of them as a football player.

**Q. ...pretty stark difference in the schematics versus the Colts versus what you had done up to that point. I know that Greg Roman's offense is not the same. Offenses are different. Can you still look at that game and the things you did really well and be like, I still want to go back to doing some stuff regardless...**

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, I think the thing we've done really well the last two weeks is really we've gotten after the run game, and so for us, it still all starts there. If we stop the run game we give ourselves a chance.

And I think going into this game, whatever we need to do to stop the run game, that will give us an opportunity to be good in other areas, and then it's up to us to finish in those other areas.

You know, things we looked at and things that I look at and things that we want to do is first and foremost stop the run. We're continually getting better at that. If we do that we'll get better as a defense.

**Q. Was the execution better our guys being in the right spot making plays? Was there an adjustment?**

TERYL AUSTIN: Right. I know, I know, but in terms of that, I'm just saying in terms of what we strive to do, I think sometimes, you know, it's a human game. Sometimes guys, we don't get it right and don't play as well as we should, coach as well as we should, and we have those games.

But I think it speaks to the character of our guys. We understand how we got to butter our bread and stop the run game, because that allows us -- it gets guys in the passing situations so guys like TJ, Alex and Herb and Cam inside, those guys have the ability to get after the quarterback and it kind of makes the game a little bit tilt in our favor. If we can get it that way.

And so we'll just continue to work. It's never going to be perfect where we're always going to be able to stop it the way we want to, but that's what we set out to do each week.

**Q. ....Dugger played and now you have Clark coming back. How do you do distribution there?**

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, we'll just continue to look at it and see what's best for us. We'll see how we end up the week in terms of practice and how guys look. I'll make a decision as we get closer to the game.

**Q. ...done some different things with (indiscernible) linebackers on the field at the same time? Just what**



**do you like about that personnel package and how does Payton Wilson's versatility allow to you attack?**

TERYL AUSTIN: That goes back to the versatile discussion, question that came up. He's a guy that plays linebacker but can do some stuff like a strong safety because he's big and he can run.

So that's really where that came from. We were obviously down some safeties and down some players, and he's a great kid and he understands football.

So we kind of used him in a little bit of a hybrid role last week. I thought he did a heck of a job in that role.

**Q. ... nickel essentially?**

TERYL AUSTIN: Kind of a hybrid role. I don't know, you can phrase it however you would like. I'm not sure.

**Q. You and Mike continue to emphasize the important things is the baseline stop the run because it sets everything else up. When you get that first thing, stopping the run, seemed like you guys were more consistent at taking away that early read from Daniel Jones. How much did the two-high safety looks, increase of the two-high safety looks help with that and what lessons can you draw from that as far as putting your defense in those spots moving forward?**

TERYL AUSTIN: I think a lot of it is like anything, we always look at ourselves and what we do. If you look at us, we're a majority single-high defense. When you throw teams curve balls, sometimes it screws them up.

We're going to be who we're going to be, but at times you got to be able to mix it up and do those things. I think maybe that was some of the issue. They were probably expecting some single high and didn't get it.

Next week or this upcoming week is another, hey, what are we going to do this week? What kind of chess match we going to have here with Greg Roman? He knows us; we know him.

And so we're going to see who kind of wins that as we get to Sunday.

**Q. TA, Jalen has been an elite corner at times. Was that a conversation where you had to convince him at safety? How did he accept that?**

TERYL AUSTIN: Oh, he was great. When the conversation came up he knew where we were at the time at safety and he would do anything to win. Because I think

guys like him, man, they're just football players. They just love to play ball and they love to win.

Whatever you need to do to win, he's all for. So it was no problem. There was no kickback. It was actually like okay, hey, what do you need me to do? Let's go.

**Q. Was that last week?**

TERYL AUSTIN: Last week. Yeah, and he's -- obviously he's played, but it has never been the full game at safety. This is one of those where we said, hey, listen, we need you to play this game at safety.

**Q. Was that one of the first conversations you guys had with him when you acquired him knowing...**

TERYL AUSTIN: That was part of the thing we told him. We told him when he came in we knew he had the ability to play multiple positions and that's what we were going to use him. We were going to kind of use him all over the place because we like the matchups that he can give us.

You know, but this week we had to play him and settle him down at one position.

**Q. Mike always talks about his relationship with games; pretty dialed into some of the greats over the years at corner who have made that later career move to safety.**

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah.

**Q. ...add that to their resume.**

TERYL AUSTIN: I think he is. I think he knows that. He's seen that. He's aware of those guys, you know, but I think right now he's trying to make his mark and continue to be at the top of his profession the way he does it.

**Q. Did you watch Rod Woodson closely when he moved to safety and is there any comparison?**

TERYL AUSTIN: There could be, because I remember when Rod moved. You know, I actually did an internship at Baltimore when he was playing safety down there. I got a chance to see him and you obviously knew he was a top-notch corner before he wedge down there.

I'm assuming he probably looked at that and that would probably be a nice blueprint. I was aware of it and saw it and saw how well it could go. Obviously because, you know, Rod, Hall of Famer, great player, great dude.

So I'm sure he was aware of that. I'm aware -- I was aware

of that as well.

**Q. Comparison?**

TERYL AUSTIN: I don't want to compare like that. He's played one week of full time safety. (Laughter.) I tried to get out of that. You see that? I was trying to get out of that.

**Q. What do you think of some of the hits he had?  
Kind of like an enforcer role there in the secondary.  
What do you think of those?**

TERYL AUSTIN: I love it. It's football. It's a violent game. I like the way that he does that. I think the hits were clean. I know he got flagged for one, but when you look at him, he levelled his shoulder. He wasn't doing anything dirty.

We like a physical brand of ball. When you play that type of ball receivers take note of that, that if you're going to be running across the middle of the field there will be somebody that might tag you, so it helps us.

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