

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



Q. TA, James Cook from Buffalo had an assessment of how he thought your cornerbacks tackled, and said that was the game plan going in, was to try to get the corners. What's your assessment of how the corners have been tackling, and how do you think they handled themselves in that game specifically?

TERYL AUSTIN: Obviously it's, you know -- you don't have to know a lot to know that we didn't play like we wanted to. To put it on all the corners would probably not be the right thing to do. There is a lot of things that go into making up a big play and how a big play happens, and so it was a little bit of everything.

I thought we could have been better on the edge in terms of how we set it and not making the corner so short. Obviously we could have shown up a little bit sooner and been there faster.

But, again being it's like anything. There is a lot of different things. It's not just one thing or one person that goes into making a bad play. That's the thing that we have with to live with.

Q. Does Baltimore try to exploit that same avenue with Henry or is that something they tend to rely on Lamar to do?

TERYL AUSTIN: We'll see. I'm assuming as we all know in this league, if you show a weakness somebody is going to come back the next week and try to exploit it and see if you fixed it. So we have to be ready for those scenarios.

So we'll work on it. Our job is to work on it, try to get better at the things we come up deficient at, and then move to it next week.

Every game is its own individual entity so, hey, just because it happened last week doesn't mean it's going to happen this next week. That's whether you play good or bad. I like to talk to our guys about that. Like, hey, whether you play good or bad, whatever happened last

week is nothing. We are starting a new week. We got to prepare and work our tail off to be good this week.

Q. Teryl, what did you see from Asante Samuel and do you expect to be able to use more?

TERYL AUSTIN: I thought he was good. I thought he was competitive. I thought he showed the quickness that we see in practice. Obviously the big thing coming off his injury was you worried about -- you don't worry about it, you just wonder how it's going to affect him in terms of tackling, and I thought he did a solid job in that area.

I like what he's done, and moving forward we'll try continue accelerate.

Q. Does that forgetting about last week apply to Baltimore game last year? Do you use that...

TERYL AUSTIN: Again, it's the same thing. We all know -- the rivalry is more important than the last game. We know what this rivalry is. It's really two teams that are built for a lot of years that are built similarly. Try to -- same type of ethos in the building: hard work, tough.

So that's well what we're doing. We know we have to go in there and play physical and play good, solid team defense.

So what happened last week is really -- or what happened last year, you know, we all address those concerns in the offseason and now it just becomes about this game and how do we handle this game and try to win this game, knowing the type of game it's going to be.

Q. (Indiscernible) address it in the draft and free agency. (Regarding last week's performance being a catalyst.)

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, it's, again, like I said, it was -- you know, we worked. We obviously didn't get what we wanted done last week, so we go back and we go back to the drawing board.

I think overall we've been pretty solid in the run area. We came up short last week so get back to the drawing board and see what we can do better this week knowing that

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they're a team that likes to run the ball. They got an explosive runner, Hall of Fame runner. They got a quarterback that can make guys miss and get out and make explosive plays.

So we have our work cut out for us, but like I like to say, it's no different than any other week. We got to get back. The only thing this solves any of these problems we have is working hard and staying true to what we're trying to do and being able to come out and put last week's performance and understand that was last week, what are we going to do this week.

Q. You guys before last season had more success against Lamar Jackson than pretty much anybody. Has adding Derrick Henry changed so much about that offense that it's not so simple for you guys to say, hey, we just got to get back to what we worked for? Is it now we have to come up with a new solutions to combat this team with those two guys together?

TERYL AUSTIN: Well, I think so. When you probably add say probably a future Hall of Fame runner you have to address it. It does -- you know, it's one of those things where it's like, okay, we make sure we stop him. Now you have two things you got to stop out of that backfield that you're really worried about that are game changers.

And so it does affect your planning sometimes in terms of that. That's part of this business, and so we have to rise up to the challenge and see what we can do better.

You know, we had a little success in the first game last year; didn't have success in the second and third games. Again, each game is different. We'll just prepare and work our tail off to try to be successful this week.

Q. Teryl, I asked you about a month ago about facing teams with two running threats. (Indiscernible) don't have Derrick Harmon. Just had Josh Allen, James Cook. What can you guys do against the Ravens that you weren't able to do last year and weren't able to do last week?

TERYL AUSTIN: Again, we will just try to make sure that we set hard edges, knock people back, we get off the ball, we're good in tackling and good with our eyes. There is a litany of things that you have to do to play solid team defense.

Again, as I explained, it's not one person or one area that determines whether you have a great run defense. It's team defense. So we have to be really good and on our screws that way if we want to have success.

The week before we went up against the No. 2 rushing team and we did a good job. We didn't have success this past week, and so we get another opportunity at it. That's the great thing about the NFL. You have opportunities each week to go back. You can wipe the slate clean and you can get up off the mat if you get knocked down and you have a chance to get back in the ring and win, and so that's what we're going to do. We're going to try to do that.

Q. Yesterday Peyton Wilson said on Monday when they got in one of the biggest things you pointed out was that guys -- when something went wrong guys were abandoning their jobs to help other people in their jobs and that caused a cascade of problems. How do you as coaches maybe create better rules or put -- keep players from doing that or coach them to avoid that being a problem? We've heard that being an issue before.

TERYL AUSTIN: I think it's guys really caring about what happens because they want to do more. They want to try to do things extra. Sometimes they're competitiveness becomes a liability if you try to do too much.

So I think I'm not mad at that. We just have to harness that. I like the way our guys compete. I think we got a tough group. I think we have a competitive group. We just got to make sure, hey, man, we just got to make sure we do our own jobs and do them the best we can. Once we finish that job then we can go on to the next one.

That's how you handle that. I don't ever squash that in the end of, hey, man, don't be so competitive. Just, hey, guys, let's just make sure we stick to the plan, work on the plan. If the plan is wrong, come back to me. That's on me and we'll try to get it fixed.

Q. How much of a challenge this year for you or for the defense or the secondary, individuals involved; this will be the third time you guys fired somebody: Peppers started a week after you got him; Dugger started five days later; Samuel looks like he might start a couple weeks into it.

TERYL AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

Q. Having to adjust on the fly like that hit the ground running have to make those changes...

TERYL AUSTIN: I just look at it as part of our business. It's our job. They don't have classes to go to. They don't have anything else to go to. This is their job. No matter when they get here, if we feel and deem they're ready, then it's our job to make sure we get them ready to go out there and play.



I could sit here and moan about all that stuff. That's not what we do. We figure out how to try to get solutions and get our guys available and ready to play the best they can.

Q. On Sunday, one of the things TJ was frustrated about was they were running the seam or similar plays and having success.

TERYL AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

Q. When you looked ahead to the game against Baltimore seems like they also run some similar plays and concepts. In what areas can you be better and have a different result?

TERYL AUSTIN: We need to be better, as I mentioned, in all areas, because it's team defense. We got to be better in terms of setting the edge, in terms of staying square, getting off blocks, got to be better in terms of tackling on the edge, cracker plays. There is a whole litany of things that you have to do for team run defense.

Our goal, like I said, we saw where we came up short last week. We've had other weeks we didn't come up short. We just got to come back each week, getting back to it and getting back and getting those things, and if we do those things consistently more often than the other guy we'll consider it a good week.

Q. Has your defense physicality been an issue in your eyes? If so, how do you address that and fix it at this point?

TERYL AUSTIN: I don't I think our physicality has been an issue. I don't think -- in that regard I think we run and we hit. There has been some inconsistencies, like always, and that's why you have -- some sometimes the performances are a little bit up and down.

But I don't question our guys' toughness and how hard they play and how physical they play.

Q. Why do you think it didn't work out with Slay here?

TERYL AUSTIN: Just, you know, I wish I had an answer. I really like Slay, but it just didn't work out. Sometimes the fit isn't right, and so it's in the best interest of both parties to probably move on, and that's why I think we got -- I wish him nothing but the best because I think he's a class individual and guy. Just didn't work.

Q. Coach, last week Cole Holcomb came back from illness. How is he doing in general, and do you think he'll see increased playing time this week to help stop

the run?

TERYL AUSTIN: He came back, he's been doing better since he's been back from the illness. He did some see playing time last week. Again, we'll base that stuff on how the game goes. A lot of it will depend on I think PQ's availability and all those things in terms of what our role will be. We'll hammer those things out at the end of the week.

Cole has come back, he seems to be back to almost 100%, feeling pretty good physically, so we'll address those things. What his role will be at the end of this week, we'll determine that later.

Q. Changing this week...

TERYL AUSTIN: Really not the same. Nothing different, excuse me. Nothing different. He always has a green dot in practice because we get four mics, so he's had opportunities to practice that and he's been doing that all year. So obviously until we get PQ back in a full-time situation then he'll make the calls like he did last week once PQ came out.

Q. TA you said when the scheme's bad, it's on me. When you looked at the review of the game against the Ravens last year, obviously the players were criticized on the broadcast for -- analyst said was lack of effort. Do you look at that as a bad scheme thing? I guess how have you attacked it differently this time around?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think, again, I don't really listen to the analysts or whatever they say. I look at the tape and what our guys can do and try to make decisions based on that.

What we thought when we came out of that game was that we needed to get -- address those areas in the offseason, which we did with our guys, you know, with our guys. We have had some scheme tweaks and different things that way.

So I think that we're in a much -- when I look at where we are from last year the end of last year and where we are now in terms of how we're operating up front and in our front seven, I like us a lot better than last year. I think our guys will bounce back and get things going in the right direction.

Q. In a weird way when you have a week where you're exploited it one area, as a coach is it almost better to have a team -- playing a team next week that's not going to do it the same way, but try to the same thing so you can get the focus -- it's not like you're playing air raid teams the next four weeks; it's immediate.

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, I think to me, the immediate thing is just getting back the next week no matter what it is. Even if we were playing a team that threw the ball a bunch we would still be working on, hey, what happened to us in the run and how can we fix it and make it better.

We wouldn't just push it aside until we got to a run team. All the things that happen we always try to? Address to make sure we're better. Having Baltimore comes up it just pushes it up and just makes us go about our business and get it done sooner.

But it would've been done anyway, regardless of who we were playing. It's just more importantly than that, that we're playing Baltimore, it's an AFC North game. These are always big games for us in terms of the division and how we can set ourselves up. We're going down to Baltimore with first place on the line.

So no matter what happened in the other weeks and how the different things that happened, man, we have an opportunity to go down, win a ballgame, and put ourselves in position to win our division.

So I think no matter how you get to it at this point in the season, if you were saying that, hey, you're playing for the division lead, you would be pretty excited about it as an organization and as a team.

Has everything gone the way you want? No, but that's football. I think our guys will fight and we will get back on the horse and go and get ready to go and play. Whatever happened last week, we'll fix those things and move into this week with hopefully an opportunity to win this game.

Q. Given Lamar's injuries, they're running him by design less; do you prepare accordingly or do you have to presume it's 100% Lamar and you have to...

TERYL AUSTIN: When you go into a stadium with him you presume it's always 100% Lamar. If you underestimate that man you're doing that at your own risk. Whether he is running more or whatever, he has the ability to change a game in a heartbeat, so we'll prepare as such.

Q. How do you balance stopping the run and covering the good tight ends that the Ravens have?

TERYL AUSTIN: That's a challenge we have. We'll have to mix some things up and try to be physical and know where those guys are. They have two good tight ends. I saw they just re-upped Mark Andrews again and he's been a really solid player for them ever since he came in the league. He's like wine. He gets a little better with age and does a lot of really good things.

So we got our work cut out for us, but at the end of the day we got to be able to do that. That's our business. We got to be able to stop the run, stop guys from getting down the field. I mean, I think that's our job every week and every week our job is hard. That's what we signed up for. This is the best league in the world. We got the best players in the world.

So that's our job to try to do it.

Q. Coach, after this past week, your temperament, you seem like you're easygoing, you're always so... After a game like that, do you not scold the team, but do you show anger? One mode I guess all the time?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think like I don't have to show and yell for guys to know if I'm upset about something. I think part of being able to talk to grown men is to be able to -- I don't want to treat them like sometimes when I had my kids when they were young and I would just yell at them and stuff. I don't do that to them anymore either.

I just let them know matter of factly what was acceptable, what's not. What we're going to try to do better, what I'm going to try to do better, and then we got to get that message and move on. I think we're dealing with grown men. I think we have a mature team, grown team, and I can address them like that.

If I thought we had some people that were less than professional then you might get after them a little bit more but I don't think that about our guys.

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