

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Teryl Austin

Weekday Press Conference



Q. Teryl, as you face your running teams, what's it like to face the problem with multiple gives?

TERYL AUSTIN: Obviously they have two different styles of running. Gibbs is in terms of speed, ability to make guys miss, home run hitter. Montgomery is really a tough tackle, great lower body strength and balance. So they're two different types of runners. And their line is really good. I think that's one of the things that's overlooked. There's a lot invested in that line. I think that line is very good.

So the challenge is being able to get multiple bodies on the guys and wrap them up and make sure you wrap them up and these guys don't go down with an arm -- if you just try to shoulder them down. You've got to tackle and you've got to bring them and take them to the ground. That's the biggest thing.

Q. Do you know Hank Fraley, and how much of his impact do you see in that offensive line?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yeah, he's a Pittsburgh guy. We like to think of our being from Western PA, how football is played, it's tough, it's grimy, it's won in the trenches. I think that's the mindset he brings to that line there.

Q. When you have T.J., you know not only is he going to make plays, he's going to attract a lot of attention in terms of double-teams and shifts. When you don't have him, how does that adjust things from a play calling perspective or playing perspective?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think we just try to plan appropriately for the guys we have and try to play to their strengths. Then I think sometimes obviously we know where the protection is going to go, so we always run into, hey, how are we going to protect it if T.J. is not in there?

So there's some trial and error during the game until you see how they're doing it. Other than that, we just try to make sure to play to our guys' strengths that help us play well. That's really my job all the time.

Q. What's Jack Sawyer's strengths?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think for a young guy Jack's pretty consistent in terms of what he does, how he prepares, how he works. The one thing I always like, when you watched Jack in college, when it was tough and they needed a big play, he was a guy that was around. So he's not afraid of those moments.

I think he'll be able to step up and give us what we need with an expanded role again this week.

Q. Got to be pretty expanded against Penei Sewell as well, right?

TERYL AUSTIN: Yes, that's one of the guys who's going to be on the field. So he's going to have to go against Penei. It is, we expect our guys to play. We have a lot of respect for the people we play against, but I don't think we fear anybody we have to play against. We just know we have to do the things we try to work on and do those well and let everything take care of itself.

Q. How much does it help that you all played Chicago this year with Ben Johnson, given that Ben Johnson was the offensive coordinator last year for Detroit? So from a planning standpoint, how much does that help?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think there are some things obviously that they do -- because culturally that's what they were building there and how they want to do it. Everyone calls the game differently. I think that, as you look at them, the game may be called a little differently. I think Dan's calling it, so he's going to have it with -- he wants to make sure he pounds people and runs the ball.

I know last week they ended up getting in a shootout and they had a couple hundred yard receivers. My guess is he'll take that, but he'd rather control the game with the guys up front. So there's a little bit of difference in terms of how they call a game, but I think overall mindset offensively, the fourth down mentality, all those things, those were things that I think Dan put in when he got there and they just continue to roll with that.

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Q. I've asked Mike this question before. I want your perspective. What does Derrick Harmon do so well against the run that allows the entire team to stop the run significantly better when he's on the field versus when he's not on the field?

TERYL AUSTIN: Again, we talked about obviously he's talented, but he's really good with his hands. He's an athletic mover. He doesn't stick on blocks. He can do all the different things you want. He can handle things. He can get off fast. He can close down spaces, and he's got a good feel. He's getting a better feel for, again, how the game is here in terms of the blocking schemes. So he'll just continue to get better.

I just think you've got a big, athletic man that can do a lot of different things in there, and that makes us -- you know, it helps us be more solid, more stout and those type of things.

Q. Jack is a little bit different body type from the normal outside linebacker that you guys have had over the years. How have you seen him fit into your system, and how has that helped you, I guess?

TERYL AUSTIN: He does a good job. He kind of reminds like when we had Bud. Bud is a big 265-pound guy, and Jack is that way. So it was all new for him because he was a defensive end in college and all this stuff is new, but I think it helps us because it gives us a little heavier anchor sometimes on the edge. Where sometimes guys, they'll use their quickness to move around, this guy can actually set down and set an edge.

So those are some things that are a little bit different in that regard, but he's really making the transition well. We've just got to continue to keep him going that way.

Q. There's only two more guys in the NFL that have more targets than St. Brown. Aside from his skills that he can get himself open, how do they get him open, and how much does it matter being deployed from different places on the field?

TERYL AUSTIN: Obviously he's got a ton of targets, ton of catches, super productive, got a ton of touchdowns. But what they do is move him around. He's able to run a lot of different routes. He doesn't just have one route in the route tree. You'll see him in the flag. You'll see him run option routes. You'll see him run digs. He runs it all, and he knows how to set up people. So he's good in terms of receiver, in terms of setting up and how to get open.

So I think that's why you see him get a lot of targets and a lot of catches. He's going to be a real challenge for us to

try to keep him in check. So that's one of the things because we know he moves the chains and he catches touchdowns. So that's a big part. If you want to stop guys from scoring, you've got to stop the guys who score.

When you look at it, 1's a big play, 0's a big play, and 14's a touchdown. That's really got to be a big focus for us.

Q. We just got done talking to Arthur. He was talking about how DK credited him for listening and for the communication that's been opened to help them fix things on offense. We heard guys talk about you listening to guys on defense. How have you seen that grow with your leaders and the guys that you can talk with in meetings as far as in-taking what they envision, what needs to happen, combining it with your plan and putting the product that you want collectively out on the field?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think that's part of coaching. It's a cooperative. Obviously you know who's in charge of the room and who's making the final decisions on things, but you also want input from the guys that are in there that are seeing it, how they see it from an on field perspective. We know how we see it as we watch it from the periphery.

So you take all those things and you put them together and you try to make it the best you can. The guys always have valuable input, just like -- it's like a lot of things. We take input. It doesn't mean we use it all the time.

I think a lot of things in terms of that is, if players are heard and they know you're listening to them and they know that everything's not going to be used but they know you're listening to them and they care about it and there are some things that are positive that we can take from it and use, you'll have buy-in. You'll have the buy-in you want, and you'll get the results from it.

I think that's what's starting to show is our guys we're getting, we have the discourse we need. We have the suggestions we need. The guys are in. They're in it. We're in it, and I think that builds for a good team.

Q. Is there a marker of growth that you point to where you saw that work that you guys put in to find that balance during the week out on the field?

TERYL AUSTIN: No, there's no marker because it's always ongoing. So whether we hit it last week doesn't mean we'll hit it this week. So we've got to continue to work on it. It's always a work in progress, and you can't ever take it for granted in terms of the working together, the communication, all the different things that are needed because, if you think you've got it solved, what you're going



to do is you're going to take a step back.

So I think our guys, every week we're working to make sure it's better, getting better, and we'll continue to do that.

Q. The challenge with the receivers, how do you feel Samuel played in that start? Where do you think Joey's at right now?

TERYL AUSTIN: The first part is these receivers, yeah, they're a real challenge. You're talking about -- their numbers speak for themselves. Their play speaks for it. They're a big, big challenge.

I thought Asante did well in his first start, but he's been a starting corner in this league, and I think the big thing is you see him really start to go get his feet underneath him in terms of feeling comfortable playing again. You saw all the body quickness, the movement, the ball skills when he was with the Chargers.

I think Joey has been playing better. The big thing with Joey that we've worked on, always continue to harp with him is penalties and doing that because he is really competitive in a press sense, so he's cut those down, I believe. Feels like it at least. There's some times when it happens, but that's going to happen out there. I think overall his game has developed, and he's getting better.

He's still growing. He's only in his third year. I like the trajectory we have with him. He's just got to continue to work and keep working at it. Just like anything, man, we've all got to know, if you stop working at it, you're going to go backwards. You're not going to go forwards. That's really the charge with everybody, just continue to try to get better each week.

Q. Is PQ's job to be noticeable or is it to not be noticeable?

TERYL AUSTIN: I'm not sure what you mean.

Q. For example, the stop, the TFL on Monday night, it sort of seemed to provide a jolt. His job mostly is to get from sideline to sideline and tackle guys and stuff, whereas T.J., Alex, Herbig, those guys, even Wilson, does it where he's in coverage more.

TERYL AUSTIN: I noticed him quite a bit because I think, when he's on and he's playing really well, you can feel it for us, and most of the time he's been on. I really don't know how to answer that question because I feel his impact. I know his impact. I think it's just as big as some of the other guys on the bench.

Q. I guess what trait do you see from him the last two, three games?

TERYL AUSTIN: He's been good. He's a run and hit guy. He quarterbacks the defense. He's done a good job in terms of how we communicate back and forth and making sure we're all on the same page. It can get hectic out there sometimes, but he does a really good job.

So I think he's been outstanding. He's making plays. A lot of tackles, talking on the sideline, doing all the things that a guy that's leading that group should do.

Q. Jared Goff is having a really good year. What will it take to have success against him?

TERYL AUSTIN: I think, if you have some success against him, the biggest thing you do is you've got to -- obviously he can't get to his first read really fast, and then you've got to be able to get him and move him off the spot. Try to collapse the pocket and get him out of there because, if he sets his feet and he's comfortable, he throws with great accuracy. He's got really good arm talent. He knows where to go with the ball.

It's going to be our job to try to make him uncomfortable, try to get him off the spot somehow. Hopefully he won't be as accurate.

Q. You just have a really strong connection with Minkah, give and take watching how you guys operated. How has that been with Jalen Ramsey this year? You're a former DBs coach, as far as identifying what needs to be worked on and going over stuff with him?

TERYL AUSTIN: The relationship is Jalen is good. It's good. He's a football guy, so he wants football answers and things that will help him get better, help us get better. That relationship, again, it's a building one because it's new.

Obviously I was -- shoot, when I got here, we got Minkah about three weeks into the season, and I was his position coach and coordinator. I've been with Minkah for a lot of years.

We're just in our first year of this. So it's a growing thing. You can tell he's a real pro. Understands the game, loves the game. We'll just keep working on it. It's not going to be where Minkah and I were because that's just a matter of time that we developed that relationship, but he has all the good things that you want in a football player.

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