

# MEDIA DAY: Teammates defend Lynch

Continued from 1B

About 200 reporters crowded around Lynch’s podium for at least 15 minutes before he arrived. But the media-shy Lynch made it clear right from the start he wasn’t saying anything except variations of his scripted answer.

Lynch set a timer on his phone and told everyone he showed up just to avoid a fine. Lynch caught a bag of Skittles tossed from Olympic gold medal gymnast Shawn Johnson and stopped to pick up a reporter’s recorder off the floor before he walked away.

Lynch later spoke to “Entertainment Tonight” about his foundation, the “Fam 1st Family Foundation.”

The Professional Football Writers of America was talking to the league about the session and Lynch had been apprised of a potential fine. He is also required to be at media sessions Wednesday and Thursday.

In November, the NFL fined Lynch \$50,000 for violations of the league’s media policy in addition to collecting the \$50,000 fine that was imposed against Lynch for violations last season. The fine from 2013 was held in anticipation of future cooperation from Lynch.

“I’m fine sitting up here, but not everybody is comfortable with it so I don’t think he should be forced to do it,” All-Pro cornerback Richard Sherman said.

Lynch has much more to say when the price is right. Insurance company Progressive and candy maker Skittles released commercials featuring Lynch saying a bit more than his usual: “Yeah” and “Nope” and “Thanks for asking.”

At Media Day last year, Lynch’s reclusiveness became a major story. Lynch appeared for 6 1/2 minutes, left the arena, and then returned to a “mixed zone” the NFL created for players not on podiums or in microphone-equipped speaking areas at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey.



Seattle Seahawks’ Richard Sherman answers questions during media day for NFL Super Bowl XLIX football game Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015, in Phoenix.

With the exception of briefly speaking with the NFL Network’s Deion Sanders, to the Seahawks’ website, and to Armed Forces Network, he did not deal with reporters that day.

Sanders, the Hall of Fame cornerback, tried again to interview Lynch, but got nowhere this time and left laughing.

Teammates defended Lynch’s behavior. “This is who he is. I don’t nitpick or judge, so I just accept a person for who they are,” All-Pro safety Earl Thomas said. “I just love who he is. He is so random.”

Sherman even continued answering questions after the 60-minute session ended.

“I don’t think (players) should be obligated any more than the commissioner is obligated to

speak to the media,” Sherman said. “I think that if players are going to be obligated to speak to the media then every one of the NFL personnel should be obligated to speak to the media weekly, and that’s not the case.

“It’s unfortunate, but I think that every team should be forced to present certain players, obviously a few of them. Obviously, if someone is uncomfortable in front of the media and uncomfortable answering questions, then you have to find a way to accommodate the NFL. This is a game; you find a way to accommodate everyone else who’s uncomfortable.”

Lynch was fined \$20,000 for making an obscene gesture during Seattle’s overtime win over Green Bay in the NFC championship game.

# Gronk ready to roll in Super Bowl

## Health not a concern for Pats star Tight End

By HOWARD ULMAN  
AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX — Rob Gronkowski’s ankle is fine. So are his forearm and knee. He’s way past those injuries that ruined his last three postseasons.

You can’t even hurt his feelings. So when Seattle nickel back Jeremy Lane says “I actually don’t think he’s that good,” the best tight end in the NFL says, simply, “Everyone’s entitled to their own opinion.”

Of course, the 265-pound Gronkowski can change that opinion when the Patriots face the Seahawks and the 190-pound Lane in the Super Bowl on Sunday. Healthy again, he should be a handful. “Ready to roll,” he said Tuesday.

Gronkowski missed the AFC championship games the past two years with a broken left forearm in 2013 and a torn ACL and MCL in his right knee in 2014. In the Super Bowl in 2012, he was limited by a high left ankle sprain. New England lost all three.

The fun-loving but hard-working Gronkowski was back on a Super Bowl Media Day platform on Tuesday. His laugh and smile were present, just as they were three years ago.

“It feels good to be 100 percent healthy,” he said, “and not get a million questions like last time about my ankle.”

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