

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

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Pete Carroll

Postgame Press Conference

Seattle Seahawks 38, Atlanta Falcons 25

PETE CARROLL: To get out in the first ballgame and everybody, all the questions, how you going to play it how you going to do it, what's it going to look like, I thought it was a really pretty clean game.

Some tackling issues I think late. The game was long and it took awhile, both sides of the ball, both teams I think, that I think will grow into the conditioning part of the game. But what I was really excited about is what we've been doing in practice showed up, and rest has been extraordinary all camp. He had a great summer as I told you guys in throwing the ball to everybody and he had you know perhaps his best throwing day numbers-wise just about you could have. Was in great command of the game.

We messed up a couple sacks but after that we really cleaned things up and were able to really move the ball. So it was a big day for Tyler Lockett, eight catches, was all over the place. Big day for D.K., particularly the big touchdown pass. Really big showing for Greg Olsen like to see him have games where he can have games where he catches eight to ten passes as we go along and the running backs ran really hard, too.

I think you're going to want to know about the sacks and all that kind of stuffs numbers early on, but guys settled in the second half and protected Russ and we really had command of the game on the offensive side throughout.

Defensively, you couldn't help but watch Jamal Adams, all over the place, 12 or so tackles, a sack and was close on a couple others and just made some beautiful plays, tackles and hits and pressures and all of that. He's an extraordinary football player but all the guys played well, Bobby, the guys up front in the running game in general.

I just liked the way we played together as a team today, and I thought probably the play of the game was Blair on the fourth down when they faked a punt, he makes a great hit to knock the ball loose and Rook (ph) free swing,



jumped up, made a great recovery to get the ball.

So I think what happened in the game to really make the difference was the defense went in on fourth down. Had he went on third down, went O-for-4, giving up on fourth down, so really great job, guys came out pretty healthy and we'll get ready for next week.

Q. What did you make of how Schotty called the game on the first two drives of the offense?

PETE CARROLL: I thought he called a terrific game all game long. He just went with the stuff we've been doing, looked good in practice. Wasn't anything out of the ordinary for how we have been preparing to play. Looked very much like we had been practicing. That's a good statement about the looks they have been getting and the work we have been getting to get us ready. I thought it was a terrific football game for us offensively.

Q. How did you come to the decision of locking arms before the game?

PETE CARROLL: That really was handled by the captains for the most part. Mo Kelly helped communicate with Atlanta so they knew what we were doing together. I thought it was a really good statement by both teams, and to make a statement, you know and we don't know what -- how much we can do to help but we are going to keep trying. We don't ever want to go back. We know that. Never go back was really the thought of the day. We'll see what happens next week -- the leadership of Bobby and Russ and those guys to get it all wired so everybody could get comfortable with how we did it.

Q. We could hear you screaming in the press box --

PETE CARROLL: Really? I've been kind of anonymous for a long time --

Q. Russ, 35 passes in 21 play calls, how much was today a sign of what you want to do the rest of the season with him?

PETE CARROLL: I think it's just a sign of how we've worked in this off-season and like I said it three or times already, it's really the way we've been practicing and Russ was in total command of the game and had a beautiful



game. But there's so many things that factor in on that. Schotty making the calls, all the preparation to get there, it's the guys coming through with their plays and all that, Russ will be the first to tell you.

It is a statement, though, off the off-season, that this whole Zoom season, our guys did a marvelous job. Russ was extremely involved integrally involved with all of that and it just showed. It showed. We were together and tight and functioning well. I don't know what we did on third down, I don't know if it was any good. Even backed up with penalty situations or sacks, we came back and converted. That's confidence and belief. These guys, first game, they have earned their way right here. They have earned their way to play like that by the way they practiced.

Q. With Jamal, how much does he just change entirely how you play defensively because of all he can do to --

PETE CARROLL: Totally freelancing on his own -- we have no control over the guy.

No, that's not true. He is such a marvelous football player. You have to put him in positions to give him a chance and stuff happens. I thought Kenny called a terrific game to keep him off balance, even though they put up a bunch of yards because we were way ahead. I liked our tackling style and our guys really played to it well.

So we'll go from here.

Q. How do you resist the urge not to blitz him every down?

PETE CARROLL: Well, maybe we should, I don't know. I haven't thought about that.

Q. The fourth and three call, 38-yard line to Metcalf, that's something we saw a lot of in practice. What went into the decision with you and Schotty to pull the trigger at that moment?

PETE CARROLL: Really believing in our guys. Look how much belief and how comfortable Russ was in that situation. He didn't think to just dink it to try to get the conversion. He took what was there and took a great shot to D.K.. beautiful execution by both those guys.

That's Russ. That's Russ just making the most of the opportunity and I think it was a really good illustration of that. You know, to execute like that under that circumstance is what we really hope to see, and first game out, gave him a shot, went for it and up it goes. That was a huge play in the game.

Q. You mentioned Jamal making plays. The secondary did have some ups and downs today. How long do you think it will take to kind of get to peak performance in terms of them playing together?

PETE CARROLL: I don't know. I don't know. We gave up that big play in the third quarter which was really a blunder and we need to do that way better. That really was the play that kind of gave them -- changed the field position and all of that and we were even playing for the situation. So we didn't do that well.

We've just got to get better and keep working at it. There's a lot of good play making in these guys, and you know, you can see that they are really aggressive, they really played in tune with the game, because they are such good communications during the game we really played to the situations and I think that's what you saw rise up on fourth and get all those nice wins.

Benson Mayowa had a couple terrific plays for us today, the ball he knocked down in a crucial situation and also the sack he had in fourth down. Two huge plays come through for us.

We'll need to play cleaner. A little bit loose in the throwing game.

Q. Being that you didn't have any preseason games, wondering what surprises stood out to you positively or negatively about the way you guys played today?

PETE CARROLL: You know, it seemed pretty much like we have been practicing. I don't think there was many surprises today. Really thrilled to see Benson make two crucial plays but he's been looking good in practice. I think, not surprised but what's really pleasing is to see us carry that whole camp and all this off-season and go play football and execute like that on offense.

I think that's the thing that will take the most out of this first game is that we were able to go out there and really function, and Russ was -- I've been telling you, Russ has looked great, all camp, he's been so integral in everything that we did in kind of the process of teaching what we are doing offensively during the Zoom period. I told you, also, we looked like we are smarter, like we are farther ahead than normal in the off-season. I don't know what to tell you about that, but that's just the Zoom process really brought out the best in us somehow and I think the coaches had a lot to do with that and the leadership did, too.

Q. What's your initial impression of how the D-Line played, the group as a whole and how did it fit in with the fourth down plays, too?

PETE CARROLL: I think we came through in crucial situations and we were playing backup here at the end, knowing they couldn't win the game if we did it right. Gave them some good yards there.

I'm really anxious for us just to come back after this first game and start building on it. I really think this is a very good offense. The quarterback very good. He has an all-time receiver and all-time tailback and good tight end and terrific line and play caller. They have a lot going for them and they are going to put a lot of points on the board during the course of this season. Giving them credit. I thought that we played the game really well, offenses, defenses and went through it and gave up a little bit at the end.

Q. I know you mentioned earlier this week that you were possibly looking to play more guys, Jordan Simmons getting some reps and Jordyn Brooks getting on the field some. How nice was it the first game of the season to get some of those other players experience while getting a convincing victory?

PETE CARROLL: That was by design. We wanted to rotate. I don't know till we see what the numbers were but we tried to really rotate guys. You saw a couple guys did cramp up by the end of the game, so we don't rotate well enough, a couple of those guys, they weren't even playing all the time, so we have to figure that out.

But we hope to continue to keep the rotations going and let a lot of guys play. I think it's good for us in a lot of ways and shows our depth and shows our players that we believe in them.

Q. The visible energy and spirit that Jamal played with, is that infectious? Does that rub off on the rest of the defense?

PETE CARROLL: There's no doubt. There's no doubt. He is such an energetic just personality. He's got so much fire in him. He's an incredible job competitor. Does it rub off? Yes. And I'm so thrilled he's on our team and we got him as much not just for the play but what you brings and how he affects other people and he'll continue to do that.

I thought during the day, when we go back home, our fans won't be able to see it in the stadium early in the year, and I wish they could, because a lot that goes on that's happening off the play field and off the sidelines and cheering up guys. This game now with nobody in the stands, really does call on us to really maintain the juice and the energy, and he's a wonderful player to exemplify that.

Q. Have you ever scored a touchdown on a play where your tight ends run into each other pre-snap?

PETE CARROLL: That was pretty good, wasn't it. That was by design. Let them think we were confused. Kind of a rope-a-dope thought there -- indiscernible -- no, I can't remember that happening. They did score a touchdown when our guys ran into each other on the other side, I don't know if you noticed that one, that was the corner route that they caught. Shouldn't have happened.

Q. The atmosphere, what was that like?

PETE CARROLL: It was different. But it didn't matter. It didn't matter to the game. You know, like I say, we were on the road and we didn't have a crowd screaming at us, either, but like way back when, I always felt like this was going to work out okay because the guys don't really -- they don't play for the fans on game day. They play the game the way they are supposed to, and there was enough juice and energy there that, you know, it was really fun.

It was really a fun game, and locker room was cool before the game, at halftime and after the game, you know, all that good stuff that we love to -- we share all the energy, the build up of the game and the finish. It was all there. It's more exciting, I guess, there's more atmosphere, of course, but when these guys are playing, they have got to go. The competition on the field was really, really good, both sides.

Q. We saw Rasheem Green go out would shoulder injury. Anything significant?

PETE CARROLL: Who?

Q. Rasheem Green.

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, yeah, he was okay. He had just a little something going on for a bit. He was fine.

Q. You mentioned the cornerbacks struggled a little bit --

PETE CARROLL: No, I didn't see that. I didn't see the cornerbacks struggled a little bit. I said pass defense, we messed up a play, so I didn't really say that. I'm not trying to correct you on that. I just don't want guys to think I'm talking about them like that because I didn't think they played bad.

I'm sorry, now ask the question.

Q. Sorry about that. Just with the rotation, with Quinton and Trey at right corner, is the plan keeping them both come in and out, try to get a feel for who --

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, we are just taking it as we go. Trey played a lot during camp and did a really good job and all that and I felt like they deserved to rotate and we'll just go to the next game and see what happens. That was a lot of work for Quinton today and it's the most work he's had, so see how he recovers this week and all, but it's great to have the ability to rotate.

We had some flexibility, too, with the other backup spots at the dime and nickel stuff which was great. A few other guys got in the game, too, which really just helps us down the road, the more guys play early.

Q. Obviously Russ was kind of the leader of the offensive prowess, but Chris Carson had some nice catches. Just how have you seen him come along as a pass catcher over the last couple games?

PETE CARROLL: Chris has great hands. He really does. He can catch the ball as well as anybody, and he doesn't get nearly as much work at it but just naturally he's got great hands. That was an incredible job perfect screen pass that we hit for the touchdown. All the guys, can't wait to see that and show that in highlights and stuff. He also ran it beautifully and the timing was beautiful and the execution was exquisite on that one.

But Chris will continue to be a target for us. He's just too good at it. He's really a natural catcher. If a ball gets away from him once in a while, I know how he can catch the football -- it's like D.K. didn't handle a couple balls today, but he's incredible, and we're going to keep throwing it to him because we know that he's a great player.

Q. Bobby looked like he was a step ahead several times today. What did you see from him?

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, he's played so well, he's been so healthy throughout camp and been able to get all of the work. He had been doing great and so it's no surprise he would play well. This is an illustration of how you practice, you can play, and trust how you prepare if you don't go out there and make stuff up and try to do things that you normally wouldn't do, you can play football like that. And you can tell, it doesn't matter where we go. A lot of trips coming up on the road to the East Coast and we're okay about it. Everybody asks about the two days and what's going to happen and that. I can't tell you until after we get back home and do a lot of testing and all that.

But I thought it was another beautiful illustration of the way

we like to travel and just thrilled about that because it's so important. We got four more times coming to the East Coast to this time zone and we need to get really good at it.

Q. Curious if the rotation at running back is how you want to keep things moving forward, getting everybody in there and making sure you keep Carson fresh for the entire year?

PETE CARROLL: I don't know what the numbers came out today, but it felt good. It felt good giving those guys the chance to keep them fresh. Those were two guys that hammer the football and T-Home was such a good change of pace, I just like the three-guy rotation. Again I don't know what the numbers were today but it felt good.

Imagine how much fresher you can keep a lead guy that doesn't have that opportunity, and so we'll just go one game at a time right now. We don't need to call it any way -- never have, and I don't think there will be a time in the season where I'll tell you, oh, this guy is going to get all the snaps or this guy is not. I don't think that's what's going to take place. We'll just keep moving through the game and see what's happening and the style of plays and the runs and all, and I thought we ran the ball well today. We didn't run the ball a lot but we ran the ball well when we did and really pleased with that.

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