

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

Sunday, October 25, 2020

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Coach Matt Patricia

Lions Postgame Press Conference



Lions 23, Falcons 22

MATT PATRICIA: Well, I think we'll just dive right into it. Honestly just super proud of our players, our coaches. I think everyone did an unbelievable job there, amazing situational football right there. But just every single play, staying in it, staying in the moment and just going out and executing to the best of their ability and a lot of stuff through that entire game but especially at the end. Just so proud of these guys, our offense, obviously, unbelievable job at the end of the game, Stafford, Kenny, T.J., the O-line, all those guys that were out there, Danny. That was amazing, great job by them.

I thought the defense played really hard. They had some big plays and some great situational plays and special teams, too. Obviously Prater, amazing there at the end. Just really proud of these guys, the way they come to work every day, what they do every single day in the building, how they approach it and how they handle themselves. Just amazing game; we needed every second and took advantage of it, and just really proud of those guys for that.

All right, we'll hit a couple questions then we'll get out of here.

Q. You preach situational football and at the end of the game there that was it right there. Just take me through that drive, and I think that's the 30th drive Matthew has had one of those. When he goes out on the field with a minute or so left, with how much you guys have drilled that and work on it, what's your confidence level when you get the ball there?

MATT PATRICIA: Yeah, obviously your confidence level is as high as it can be. You know you're going to go down and score, and you're just trying to figure out what are the different situations that are going to come up on the clock so you can try to help him out with that. But honestly, tremendous job. He was unbelievable all the way through the game. We really had two different called end-of-half two-minute situations. The one before the half, too, was

great, very well executed all the way through it, and nobody works harder at that stuff than he does.

When we study and we go through all those calls and those situations, we have great conversation on the field and he's just phenomenal. It was unbelievable. Just so happy for the guys, and certainly Matthew Stafford, it was great, unreal. Unreal.

Q. When Todd Gurley is running toward the end zone on Atlanta's final possession, what's going through your head because it looks like he stutter steps and then he's maybe in, he's not in. What's that emotional two-second swing like because that changes everything?

MATT PATRICIA: Yeah, I mean, it was great situational defense -- great situational defense awareness right there. I thought it was perfect. The defense, give the players credit. They executed an outstanding job and very situationally aware right there. It was honestly exactly how you want it, so it was a great job by them.

Q. Kenny Golladay, what does he mean to this offense because it looks like some of the plays he's making are better than you would even expect could happen.

MATT PATRICIA: Yeah, no, he's a great player. He makes unbelievable catches every single week and made some amazing ones again today. I love Kenny, everything he brings to the table for us and his way that he competes every single day. Our conversations are great. He's competitive. It was a great job today by him coming up huge, and we just love it, we absolutely love it.

Q. Because they mentioned it on TV, how bad was his right hand injury?

MATT PATRICIA: No. No. (Smiling.)

Q. They said he was playing with a right hand injury on TV.

MATT PATRICIA: Yeah, I think they got the body part wrong.

Q. Romeo Okwara, I think, kind of quietly had a pretty good season, had a big game today, a couple big plays



for you, got you the second opportunity at the end of the fourth quarter. Can you speak to how well he's played this year and his contributions?

MATT PATRICIA: Yeah, I think Romeo has been unbelievable. Really he and Trey Flowers are two guys that come to work every single day and they make each other better. They really spend a lot of time together talking about the game and techniques and how they practice, they stay after practice a lot and they work on individual just fundamental skills and stuff like that, and I think you can just see the growth that Romeo has had certainly just being out there and playing and getting better every single week, but it's not a surprise because he works really hard. This guy works extremely hard. He wants to be great, and I think that, like I said, he and Trey do an unbelievable job every single day, and really glad for him, happy for him. Give him all the credit in the world; he made some big plays. It was great.

Q. Could you walk us through that last play, the touchdown pass to Hockenson? And maybe how Stafford and Hockenson freelanced a little bit to get it done?

MATT PATRICIA: Yeah, a little bit different than how it was drawn up. They actually covered the play that was designed very, very well. I think they had the linebacker sitting right there, so they did a great job on that. And after that, again, give credit to Stafford for getting out of there, keeping it going, keeping the play alive. He found a great space to step up into. T.J. for working away from coverage and getting away from the leverage and then just finishing the play, unbelievable, unbelievable job.

Q. It's two really good performances in a row from your defense; what kind of momentum -- I know we talked about momentum earlier this week, but what kind of feel is that group getting for each other, especially coming against an Atlanta offense that was averaging something like 35 points with Julio in the lineup?

MATT PATRICIA: Yeah, great offense on the other side of the field, absolutely. I think our defensive guys, again, we've talked about this before, just continuing to learn to build that trust with each other and continuing to grow and push each other, and I think we took another step with that today and we'll have to take another step this week. But right now just really proud of the guys for what they did on the field today. Just proud of their effort, and again, just their unwavering mentality that it didn't matter, we were just going to go out and do everything we could to win and just stay in there and just hope that the clock didn't run out before we had a chance to do that, so just really proud of

everybody.

Q. The catch with Kenny getting reviewed at the end, just brought back flashbacks to the Golden Tate 10-second runoff that we all saw here. I'm just wondering, we didn't really get a clear explanation in the press box. You caught it at like 13 seconds, you snapped it three seconds. What was the actual ruling there? Was there a runoff on the review?

MATT PATRICIA: Yeah, so I a little bit confusing on the sideline with the situation because then we had that penalty, too, and I was trying to get a feel for exactly what the penalty was. They had actually stopped it before we killed the last play and before they threw the penalty, so they were reviewing the catch at that point and then the conversation was is this going to be a 10-second runoff or are we going to be able to snap it and kill it, so that was what they were trying to straighten out after that point.

Q. T.J. obviously had the play at the end. At the start of that drive he had the play where he caught it, didn't get out of bounds. What's it say about him that he was able to bounce back from a moment like that and still come up big?

MATT PATRICIA: Yeah, I think just staying focused and staying in the moment. Good catch, got to get out of bounds, and just to come back and forget that play, move on, take the emotion out of it and just try to come back and execute the best of your ability on that last play, and like I -- I think Kyle maybe asked or whatever it was, but the last play was a little bit extra, kind of a little bit of an extended-play situation because they actually covered the route really well and then we moved away from it and T.J. got open. Really good job by him and Stafford of really just kind of reading body language there.

Q. I'm sure you won't get too much into the specific strategy here but you guys did take sort of the Hockenson inadvertent one that kept the clock running but then a couple shots down the middle of the field in that last drive. Wondering where the line is for you there where you still don't feel comfortable anymore sort of attacking those spots?

MATT PATRICIA: Yeah, we have that all kind of calculated on a per-play kind of basis of what we think we have and how much field we have. We were pushing it a little bit.

Q. You mentioned the possibility of the penalty right before that. When the guys runs into Kerryon. What is the potential call there?

MATT PATRICIA: Yeah, defensive penalty, yeah.

Q. And then Flowers didn't start the game. I don't know if you addressed this earlier, so I apologize, but you used a little bit different rotation up front. Can you explain why that was?

MATT PATRICIA: Again, I don't really get into the whole who starts in packages and all the rest of it. We've got guys we've got to play, and Trey Flowers is one of our starters. There's not a question or conversation there. Just we had -- some of it depends on the personnel they put out there, and then when we put the packages together based on guys that we have available to us, obviously being down Julian Okwara right now and being a little bit thin at a couple positions, we decided to try to -- some of the package kind of space out where everybody was to make sure the reps didn't get too high so we could have everybody at the end of the game.

Q. The letting them score the touchdown, Gurley's touchdown run there, just the strategy behind that and you hold your breath there for a second when he seemed to realize what you were doing and tried to hold himself up from going in the end zone?

MATT PATRICIA: Yeah, unfortunately I've been in that situation before in a very large game and it didn't work out the way we wanted it to, so I'm glad this one did.

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