

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

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Raheem Morris

Postgame Press Conference



Q. First of all, how does it feel to get your first win at home this season?

RAHEEM MORRIS: Oh, man, you have no idea. The elation in that locker room, what it means to this city, what it means to take over this city. The dirty birds are back. You get a win at home, you feel the energy, you feel the juice, and you never apologize for anything that went wrong in a game. You just go out there, and you win football games.

Q. When you look at the fourth quarter, how critical was Grady's pass rush and Ricardo Allen's interception in the grand scheme of the game?

RAHEEM MORRIS: That's what we've been talking about the whole year, how you end those games. You want to end those games with correctible moments that you can go back, correct at the wins. Today Rico Allen getting the big pick, Grady on the pressure. We shined the light on that early in the week. We knew we had a clear-cut advantage in there for him to take advantage of some opportunities to rush, and he absolutely did. Our backers just keep stepping up. I can't say enough about Foye, can't say enough about Debo and the things they're able to do out there.

Q. What was the plan behind the cornerback rotation for Sheffield and Blidi Wreh-Wilson and Isaiah Oliver at nickelback?

RAHEEM MORRIS: You get a guy back, you're getting healthy and get a guy back as talented as Queze, you want to find roles for him and get him going. You get those guys in the rotation. Blidi is leading our team in interceptions, I think that's still the case, you want to get him out there. All he does is make plays. You want to get Shef up and running. He had a tougher day today, gave up a couple of plays -- one down the stretch that was arguable as far as the penalty, but it is what it is. But you want to get those guys going.

26 has been having a nice time inside playing nickel for us, and 24 has been a stud outside the whole time. I want to keep everybody going and everybody playing and everybody playing fast. Can't have enough corners.

Q. So you're up by 21 in the fourth quarter. What change allowed Denver to make things interesting late in the game?

RAHEEM MORRIS: They started playing that catch-up ball, put you in two minute must situations, and you want to have better pass rush to be able to get to them, and we're not there yet. Let's just be clear-cut about that. So you've got to force some pressures. You give up a couple of things in the secondary. They've been moving the ball little bit, have some success.

But you mentioned the two ones right off the bat--: The interception, the sac fumble -- the guys get at the ball, don't matter had a couple more there -- maybe could have went to New York, maybe taking a little bit of time there. I was kind of pointing up to that clock, slowing it down. Glad I didn't have a flag because I certainly would have gotten a penalty by mistake.

Q. What do you think of Olamide's contribution to the game and kind of the status of the depth chart you guys have?

RAHEEM MORRIS: The depth of that receiving corps, as you know, I hold near and dear to my heart, but to see O.Z. go out there and play some Z for us and jump in for Calvin and get an explosive, to see Blake go out there, Christian Blake, and make some plays, all these things we know these guys are capable of doing. Brandon Powell go out there and play a little inside for us so we can have the ability to put Russ outside.

These guys, like I told you, they're like my children. They're like my kids, man, little brothers, whatever we want to call them. They go out and make me proud every single week. We can't wait to get Cal back, but these guys are fired up and ready to play.

Q. So many games came down to the wire when one could argue they didn't have to. How do you take these games for what they are, which could essentially be described as games in which the finish wasn't quite



there?

RAHEEM MORRIS: I don't think anybody is arguing about the National Football League being a three-point league every week. All these games go down to the wire. Everybody's got fight. Everybody's got dog in them. These guys are going to come out. We knew they were going to come out fighting. We knew they were going to come out slinging that ball around.

There's only a few games a week that don't go down to the wire, and they're usually extreme situations, loss of quarterbacks, things of that nature. When you got guys that are capable of playing in this National Football League, you'd better be ready the whole game.

Q. How do you think the team has responded since the changeover? Did you ever sense that they were emotionally down at any point in the season?

RAHEEM MORRIS: I wouldn't say emotionally down, but when you lose, you go 0-5, it's going to be an issue. And now having the ability to win, that's called a streak, guys. Guys know what a winning streak feels like. Let's get the streak going and see how far we can take it going into the bye week and just feel good about it.

Q. How close was Calvin to playing today? What's his status heading into the bye week?

RAHEEM MORRIS: Calvin is always a fighter. Calvin was in my ear pregame. We sat on the bench. I know a couple of you guys might have saw it. He always going to want to play. He always going to want to go. Sometimes you've got to protect your guys versus themselves, and that's what we did today.

Q. Why did the offense stall after scoring on five of the first six possessions?

RAHEEM MORRIS: Why are you guys so negative is what I've got to ask? We scored on five of the six possessions. Stop being so greedy, guys (laughter). They played better defense.

Q. So what did you get from your backup defensive ends today?

RAHEEM MORRIS: You know, they went out there, they played hard. They played tough. They stopped the run. Obviously, you don't get the sack numbers when you go in with the heavier guys. We got some big and thick guys out there rushing for us. It is what it is, man. When you get the win, all hands on deck. Everybody's going to feel it, man. It's nice to see us get a win.

Q. What's the plan for the bye week now?

RAHEEM MORRIS: Relax, rest, get everybody back. Get your coaches out of the building and get them a chance to go home and do some things for themselves. Get an early jump on the Saints and be ready to play when we get back. Watch everybody else be miserable next week while I sit on my couch and enjoy it.

Q. Ownership in the front office often are assessing players for the future in situations like this. In your situation, can you afford to do the same, or are you just focused on trying to win games and less on player evaluation?

RAHEEM MORRIS: I know you know the answer to that one, Alison. We're a 1-0 mentality. We're in the moment. We're going to do what we do.

Q. Is Kendall Sheffield still dealing with some lingering foot issues, or was today just a tough day for the office?

RAHEEM MORRIS: You don't make excuses. You know, gave up a couple of catches. It is what it is. Played against a really good player. That Alabama guy is a pretty good player, and that stuff happens. When you go out there and you play against those kind of guys, those Calvin Riddleys, those Julio Jones, those Jerry Jeudys, those people like that, they can play, and they're going to catch some balls on you. You just got to keep fighting, keep digging.

Q. In the past, this team has seemed to struggle to find their identity on defense. Do you feel you've done that now, a better job of doing that?

RAHEEM MORRIS: We different. Yeah, we different. You just keep singing that to yourself. Man, let's go out there and play games and get ready to play.

Q. How worried were you after the third down run resulted in an illegal formation penalty, which stopped the clock and allowed Denver to have 44 seconds on the final drive?

RAHEEM MORRIS: I wasn't nervous at all. Good thing I had that mask on. It is what it is.

Q. What did you see from Isaiah Oliver in improvement in the last few weeks? Is nickel a better spot for him?

RAHEEM MORRIS: He's certainly playing nickel well.



He's certainly been rushing the passer well from the nickel position. He's starting to get his feet under him there. Let's see if he can continue to grow and make us a better team.

Q. It's no secret the hardest part of your schedule is now coming up after the bye week. Do you believe the guys are up to the challenge? I know you said 1-0, but 1-0 more weeks than just a couple, just two in a row?

RAHEEM MORRIS: Somebody obviously doesn't know me that asked that question. We have a 1-0 mentality. We play the guys that come up. Every single week in the National Football League is a tough week. Every team you play deserves that credit. It's a privilege to play in this league, and you'd better be up for the challenge every single week.

That's got to be it, Alison. That's got to be it. You've got to let me get out of here now.

Q. One more. What's the biggest thing you're looking forward to doing in your bye week?

RAHEEM MORRIS: Just relaxing. Enjoy the kids and do some of those things. Go with the family and hang out and do some of the stuff we need to do, man. Come back, relax, rest, get our mind right, our mentality right, and be ready to come back and play.

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