

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

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Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Arthur Smith

Postgame Press Conference



Eagles 32 - Falcons 6

ARTHUR SMITH: It's a long season to go but I certainly didn't do a good job of getting us ready to go today.

Q. Coach, what did you say to the team afterwards?

ARTHUR SMITH: Just that. It's a long season. Nothing matters. But what goes on there, we gotta improve. We've been in worse spots. It's week one. We got 16 games to go, and hat's off to Philly. They did a great job coming in here. They took advantage. Situational football. They scored in the red zone. We didn't. And then we got down and we played right in their hands. That's what happens when you get down multiple possessions and you get out exactly what happened what you saw at the end there.

Q. Those two red zones, what happened there?

ARTHUR SMITH: The first one, I think we were first and five. Trying to plug a run in there. Went for a quick play action right there. Didn't get it, clearly. And then third down, they got a little bit of pressure there. But that's what happens. You get to the third down. They're obvious. I gotta go do a better job. I gotta go look at the film. I don't want to over react, but that's what it looked like on the field. Second one down there, D led, we make mistakes. We go a little play action, cover the guy out. If he had caught it, it would have been ruled back. Those are self-inflicted wounds. And that's what I'm really -- I gotta do a better job there.

Q. 3:38 you were backed up at the eight. You had a false start.

ARTHUR SMITH: Sure. That's bad football. I was talking about the one where we got down on the 2. We kept getting backed up at the end of the first quarter, I believe, going into the second. So hat's off to the Eagles. Like I said the yards don't matter. You go down. You gotta score touchdowns. It changes the momentum of the game and right before the half the one you're talking about. Yeah

we get the false start. We're trying to get it backed up to get into a drive and be smart there, because they get the ball coming out in the second half. And you're backed up. When you're backed up, they won the field position battle. You name it, right down the list, and credit to Nick and their staff and really their players. Like I said, we didn't win that situation. You get the false start. We don't get the first down. We get a defensive short field. They're fighting and they score right before the half.

Q. Why do you feel that that happened?

ARTHUR SMITH: Oh, because you go there and you have -- if you're going to have penalties, guys. Nobody that's in this league is coaching the hold. That doesn't happen. Those are fouls play of the game. I gotta go back and look why those ones late. What we need to do better. Again, I don't want to over react to that. The officials have a hard job. I don't want to blame them for anything. I gotta see what we're doing, make sure it's something obvious we made a mistake there. We're just dropping back and they're playing zone coverage and guys going routes. So I don't know. I have to look at that. It's the stuff, presnap, false starts, the things you try to pride yourself on, and we do that in situation. You're backed up, you're going to give them a short field. You get down on the two yard line and you have an illegal formation. I've got to clean that up. So, yeah, I do put that on me.

Q. Was there anything you saw this week in practice that led you think this would happen?

ARTHUR SMITH: No. But historically you go to a lot of week ones and you go in there. It's hard to answer that without sounding like I'm making excuses. I gotta look at the film. I gotta evaluate what we're doing just to make sure these guys understand. When we're getting fatigued, like we just gotta do the basics.

Q. (On the game plan).

ARTHUR SMITH: No. The narrative you're going with about Matt and deep shots, no. The game plan was to not let what happened at the end of the game, when you get obvious and you gotta play obvious football and that's a

damn good front. I wasn't just sitting there pumping their tires. It's the truth. When you get obvious, it's hard, and so when you look at the stat line and, what, we gave up three sacks late? So you're playing three-quarters in a two-position game. Certainly not pretty, but when you've got obvious and you're playing right into their hands and that's what happened and what's that I was trying to avoid all game. And I thought we did a pretty decent job in the first half. He was pretty clean. And we obviously didn't score the touchdowns, which led us we got down too many possessions. That's on the offense. Defense is out there fighting, and we didn't put any stress on them.

Q. Did they make any adjustments after the first two drives?

ARTHUR SMITH: No. They played it there, and that's not a shot at John. Line in the front and they're going to play zone coverage. And, again, when you get behind the sticks and you're not moving the ball, you're playing right in their hands, and that's what happened.

Q. The pace and the tempo on those first two drives was there and it stalled.

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah. I think we had four possessions right at the first half so, we had two go down and only come away with six points. Hat's off to them. And the one before, we gotta go back and look at that one. Obviously we needed to get something going there. It's about scoring touchdowns in this league and eliminating self-inflicted wounds, and we didn't do a good enough job, and I've gotta do a better job. And then the one before the half you're trying to play the game there. You want to get going on the drive. You're backed up. But you also don't want to go three-and-out in ten seconds and give them the ball back. We had the penalty. We didn't convert. And you saw the end result. They scored a touchdown. And then we had another penalty on the extra point. Those are subtle things. And then they end up going for 2. And that's completely on us. That's what happened.

Q. You've mentioned a couple of times trying to avoid being predictable when those obvious passing situations put heat on your working offensive line.

ARTHUR SMITH: They would have put the heat on anybody at the end of that game when you're down multiple possessions like that. That's not our excuse. Credit to them. They beat us. And whether we had a rookie or you're just back there and you're throwing 50 times, that's a good front. Put it right in their hands.

Q. Specifically with Mack Jones, where do you go from here with him?

ARTHUR SMITH: We gotta get better. I gotta get better. So I think that one is pretty obvious. I gotta go back and look at the film. Certainly he didn't look like they were doing anything for him the first couple drives. But as the game wore on, whether it was Jalen or anybody, we didn't hold off at the end when it was obvious.

Q. End of first half, it looked like you thought they overturned and then you had a confrontation. What was going on there?

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah. Again, you're in the heat of the game. My opinion doesn't matter. I was pretty much asking what they're seeing out there. So it's a scoring play. So it doesn't matter whether you're under two minutes or not, they're going to look at it and confirm it. Again, they got a hard job. I was trying to ask him what they were looking at is pretty much what I was doing.

Q. Is that what your second conversation as well?

ARTHUR SMITH: Yes. Pretty much.

Q. I just want to be clear. When you say you should have done a better job...

ARTHUR SMITH: I'm going to evaluate everything. Whether we win or lose, we gotta turn it around. We got 16 more of these things. Like I said, I've been in worse situations. The narratives write themselves. We had won, you can write the narratives. You lose neither one of them are true, because we got a long journey ahead of us and we gotta get better. So where I think I'm frustrated is I gotta evaluate what I'm doing, whether it's coaching, messaging, about let's get lined up and not when you're on the two yard line get in an illegal formation. That's the stuff that really concerns me. So whatever you feel like it is there, that's just the truth. That's coming from me. I'm not trying to be a martyr here. That's my job as head coach. I'm responsible for the entire team. When you go out there and you have those self-inflicted wounds right there, that's a problem.

Q. How fragile is the team right now?

ARTHUR SMITH: If we had won or lost, you always worry about guys believing stuff that's not true, because it's such a hard journey. And if we don't come in tomorrow and correct what needs to be corrected on the film and we don't turn around and get ready for Tampa, who's had a couple days, then we got issues. And that's the same whether you win or lose. That's going to be my approach every Monday, or I guess Friday after we play on New England. That's the name of the game. You've got to improve. So

you want to send a message, we're not going to be the team today, whether we won or lost, that we're going to be in October or November or December. So we gotta get better and I gotta do better.

Q. (On positives taken away from the game).

ARTHUR SMITH: I don't know about that. I'd have to look at the film.

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