

# Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

Thursday, November 18, 2021  
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

## Arthur Smith

### Postgame Press Conference



New England 25, Atlanta 0

#### Q. (No microphone.)

ARTHUR SMITH: We worked him out about two and a half hours before kickoff, give or take. Didn't think it was in the best interest. Obviously a guy that wants to play. He's a big part of this team. But it wasn't going to be. Wouldn't be good for him. But two hours and a half before kickoff.

You have contingency plans. When you go in there, can't ever just be one for one. He's a special player. Tried everything we could. Clearly it wasn't good enough. Credit to New England.

#### Q. Fourth and long, were you trying to get back in the game there?

ARTHUR SMITH: Sure. Yeah, I mean, it was obviously -- we knew it was going to be a physical game, it was slow moving. We had our chance down there. We tried to go in a huddle on third-and-one. As we backed up, tried to make a play, then get sacked, then the penalty on the field goal. It kind of snowballed from there in that possession.

Too many times we were behind the sticks. When you do that against a really good team, that's why they consistently win. We're going to get there, I promise you that. We're going to continue to fight, get out of this thing.

It's been obviously -- last two games haven't been good enough. But it's a long season. We got seven games and we're going to figure this out.

#### Q. Running game question. The productivity wasn't there.

ARTHUR SMITH: Sure. I mean, there wasn't a lot of things that we did well tonight offensively. I mean, you don't score points, you don't take advantage when you do have the opportunity. Like I said, a low-possession game. Defense fought and fought. Our guys fought. It's not like

they didn't fight on offense. But we didn't do enough to put us in a chance to win at the end, so...

#### Q. At this point what do you need to do to fix the issues you are having on the offensive line?

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, I think you got to look at everything. We'll take this weekend and do a lot of self-reflection. Like I said, we're going to get out of this hole because we have to and we will. We got the right guys to do it.

#### Q. As far as Matt Ryan, did he injure his toe? Is there an issue there for him?

ARTHUR SMITH: We'll look at it first thing in the morning. Obviously he finished the game. We took him out at the end when there wasn't going to be enough time left. Like all our players, they'll come in tomorrow, get treatment, we'll see what the doctors say about them all.

#### Q. Was there any sense that was affecting how he was able to move?

ARTHUR SMITH: I think if anything, it's a tough game. You're playing on a short week. You're going to have to alter plans if you think. But Matt's a warrior. He's going to keep fighting. That's what all our guys did.

If something comes up, you got to have a contingency plan. That's every player. That's what we tried to do tonight. We tried to adapt. It wasn't good enough. So we'll go back to work and we're going to get out of this hole, like I said.

#### Q. What gives you that confidence that you'll get out of this hole?

ARTHUR SMITH: Because we've done it before. It feels ugly right now and in this moment. Yeah, you feel obviously pretty poor when you go there, you get to 4-4, you get a big win. You guys all watched the last two games.

We've done it before. Like I said, it's continual



improvement. You hope not to ride the roller coaster. We got to fix things and we are going to get them fixed and we'll get them fixed in a hurry.

**Q. When you kind of look back over the last two games with the struggle with the offense, what part of it has been the most disappointing for you?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, I don't know there's one thing you say it's the most disappointing. I mean, we're not executing. We're getting ourselves -- there's too many penalties that are putting us behind. You get into some of the fundamental mistakes you're making up front or on the perimeter, I mean, so everything.

We got to go in here, use it as a mini bye, do everything we can to self-reflect and get it fixed because there's a lot of things. I mean, it's everything we got to look at. It's never one thing.

A lot of times it looks like, Hey, this guy missed this block. We may have had a protection call, guard may not have come down with him. Those are things that happen unless you don't know the play call and the scheme.

**Q. With all the absences you have on offense, is there a risk or have you seen at all Matt trying to do too much?**

ARTHUR SMITH: No, I don't think -- I don't know if people try to do too much. These guys, they're all sitting there trying to win. As the game gets down, you feel it, you can feel it as a coach, guys are pressing, trying to make a play. Certainly there's moments. It's happened at different times at a lot of our positions.

I know he's a warrior. He's going to come back. We're going to work and get it fixed.

**Q. The fourth-down play in the red zone.**

ARTHUR SMITH: What is that?

**Q. The fourth down in the red zone. What was the decision to run versus maybe try a quarterback sneak?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, you get different looks. I think the biggest misnomer, if you get certain looks and you like them or you're going with a play you felt pretty good about.

People package plays all the time. If you may not get the look you want, like I said, obviously everything's on the table. We got to look at it, we got to fix it, so...

**Q. Does Matt have the option there?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Every offense in the NFL people package plays. Watch New England tonight, whether they hit the helmet, do the throw thing, it's very center issued. People call them audibles. They're not really audibles. Most people package plays now.

I'm not going to get into every single detail of our scheme. But that's pretty common in the NFL, how people package plays.

**Q. Short-yardage situations, physicality of the offensive line continued to be an issue. What gives you confidence things can improve in that area?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, a lot of it is about matchup. Like I said, it feels bad now, but we have had some success this year and moments. We've got to look at the matchup, maybe schematically what we're doing. It's not all on the offensive line. We've got to get things fixed all over the offense. That's where we're at.

You sit there and you ride the roller coaster, you feel like you're improving. Obviously the last two weeks clearly not good enough. But they've done it and we're going to continue to work. That's the only thing we know how to do. That's what it is. We're going to play seven more games. As bad as this feels, a lot of things can happen in seven games.

If we hadn't done it at all, sure, you'd be, All right, what are you going to realistically do? But we have and we will get it fixed. All the options or on the table. We're going to look at everything.

**Q. You made some changes on your defensive front. Can you talk about the decisions.**

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, I mean, a lot of them, you're on a short week. If you got guys that are maybe a little banged up, where you're at in the season, you got guys that maybe are fresh, comes to matchups. We knew it was going to be a pretty physical game, so that's why we made the decisions we did up front.

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