

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

Sunday, December 5, 2021
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Head Coach Arthur Smith

Postgame Press Conference



Atlanta - 17, Tampa Bay - 30

ARTHUR SMITH: Before we get started, I just wanted to give my condolences to the family of Claude Humphrey. Obviously, Claude was a great player in this league and a great person, and another guy that was ended up coming here to Atlanta. So I just wanted to send my condolences to his family. With that, I'll open it up.

Q. Yeah, Coach, the touchdown before the half, and then you come out driving and then the fumble happens. How deflating was that when you had an opportunity to take the lead?

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, I wouldn't call it deflating. I mean, those aren't mistakes that you don't want to, obviously, make there.

But our mindset is, you know, if you're going to say things deflate you or concern you in the middle of the game, it's a battle.

We got to be cleaner with the football, there's no doubt about that. Deflate is not a word we use. We're going to keep fighting and swinging.

Q. How damaging was it? You got a chance to take the lead and then you --

ARTHUR SMITH: You can rephrase it however you want. I mean, they made a play. You know, we got to continue work on that. We'll be cleaner.

So I -- call it damaging, call it deflating, we don't use those words. We continue to swing and fight. We'll fight to the finish.

Q. Arthur, take us through the thought process of the play calling on the goal line.

ARTHUR SMITH: What part of the --

Q. Just trying to run the ball.

ARTHUR SMITH: We did. We had a fumbled snap.

Q. Definitely --

ARTHUR SMITH: I'll show you the call sheet.

Q. I guess what were you -- were there things that you saw, a little play action --

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah. I mean, like, you're asking a pretty -- you have a question here. So the thought process is you're trying to call plays to score a touchdown. I mean, that's pretty obvious, Michael. That's a pretty obvious -- again, what are you asking? You're asking the type of plays called?

Q. Yeah, I mean, what was -- was there something that you saw --

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, I wouldn't have called it if I didn't. I mean, you're asking kind of, like, the no-brainer. You don't call plays to think, Hey, I hope this works, we don't think it's going to work. That's just a -- if you're asking if we had called a run, yes, we did. And then we had a snap issue.

Q. (No microphone.)

ARTHUR SMITH: What kind of issues?

Q. (No microphone.)

ARTHUR SMITH: We didn't do what?

Q. You had one touchdown in the last -- the last four games. You had a -- where do you feel -- (no microphone.)

ARTHUR SMITH: We had one offensive touchdown in four -- however you want to phrase it. Look, we're going to continue to improve, Michael.

Again, I understand what you're trying to ask to create a



narrative. If you look at the last two games, you know, we did pretty good running the football. Had a chance here.

That's a good football team. We made too many -- you know, we turned the ball over. You make some mistakes, it's hard to beat a good football team like that.

If you want to squish that in certain spots to fit a narrative, great. All I know is this team has improved. You look at last week, you look at this week, I don't have the number in front of me, but I know we had over 150 -- what was it, 150 yards rushing? So however your mind works.

Q. How much did the -- the way the score of -- the halftime score, the way the game was affected the second half play calling?

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, it's still -- the game wasn't, you know, ever -- really, you got to get in the hurry-up at the end. A ten-point game for -- you know, as you get into it, it's still early in the fourth quarter, it's not going to alter your game plan.

Q. Tampa Bay had 11 quarterback hits and five sacks and y'all had one quarterback hit.

ARTHUR SMITH: Right.

Q. How did that, I guess, those two stats shake this game?

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, certainly the sacks are going to hurt you. I mean, when you read a stat like that, they did a nice job of protecting, they kept Brady clean.

It's everybody's intention to get after the quarterback. They did a nice job. They got good players upfront. Certainly, we'll look at it and see, you know, what can tweak here. But, yeah, that's usually a pretty good tell of how it went.

Q. I guess follow-up to that: Is there really a way to defend Brady if you don't get pressure on him?

ARTHUR SMITH: Sure. I mean, catch the ones he throws you. Marlon caught one. You know, he threw Deion another one. We didn't catch it.

He's a great player. If he gives you opportunities, we got to make a play on the ball. But there's other ways to defend him. But, I mean, he is a great player.

Q. How close were you to going for it on --

ARTHUR SMITH: If it had been fourth, probably eight or less. That's where you would have considered it. Fourth

and 12, where the ball's at midfield, you know, the way they were rushing, you know, the odds are stacked against you there.

You're basically going to hand them the ball with one first down pretty much for a field goal. We punted it down there, we had confidence. And to their credit, they made plays and they converted. And, you know, that's how the game ended. We'll reassess everything every Monday.

Q. How do you feel like that went today?

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, we'll have to watch the film. The surface level, the snaps, we got to clean that up. Surface level. So that's kind of -- but we got look at the film. Vita Vea is a good nose. They got good guys in front.

Q. I'm just curious, you're five and seven but you're still in the playoffs race.

ARTHUR SMITH: Sure. Still in the mix.

Q. Is there anything you do as a head coach to sort of convey to your players about, you know, We're still in it?

ARTHUR SMITH: Sure. That's a good question, Jeff. Because you know how it is, you've covered sports a long time. You're sitting there and looking at it however you want to shape it up in your mindset.

The truth is we're still in the mix, we got five games to go. That's a lot of football left. Like I said, we'll get back to work.

We've seen a lot of improvement the last two weeks and we're excited about the challenge to go on the road again and play a divisional opponent.

So we got to be ready to go because the opportunity is still there, Jeff. That's a great point. They know it and we know it, and that will be a great charge.

Q. Coach, Tampa Bay only ran the ball 17 carries, 57 yards. Do you think that's a recipe for wins going forward, being able to keep a team one-dimensional still being in the game even though they had so much success passing?

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, I mean, that's kind of who they are. I believe going into this game they're 31st in the league in rush attempts. I mean, they got good players upfront. When they got the talent level they got outside and you got Brady at quarterback, and they protect pretty well for most of the year.

I mean, there's -- I mean, they throw it. That's kind of always been Bruce Arians MO. They got a decent run game. They had to run it when they needed to. But that wasn't a surprise if you looked at the numbers going into this thing.

Q. Is there something that you guys are doing well on the road that maybe that just is not working at home?

ARTHUR SMITH: You know, we constantly look at everything. You know, we didn't win the ones that I felt, you know, we should have.

I mean, there's a reason why. You know, some of its matchup based. We got to play better certainly at home. So there's a lot of factors to it.