

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

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Matt Ryan

Postgame Press Conference



Falcons 20, Lions 16

Q. Arthur was talking after the game and he was really talking about the ethos of the team being a team that plays well situationally, closes out games, one-possession games to this point. What does that say about the winning culture this team has?

MATT RYAN: It's a gritty group for sure. It hasn't been perfect by any stretch of the imagination throughout the year, but we've done a good job when we have had opportunities to win games where we've been in those one-score games. We've done a very good job. We made a mistake offensively there at the end, but our defense goes right out on to the field, doesn't blink and steps up and makes a pick when they need to. Great play by Foye. But that's what you've got to do to keep yourself in the mix when you're in late-game situations. You've got to find a way to get the job done, and in those one-score games we've done a pretty good job throughout the year.

Q. Sometimes offense is going to have their day, today was the defense. What was going through your mind as Detroit gets the ball back with a couple minutes left to go?

MATT RYAN: Yeah, I think as a player you'd always rather be on the field. I'd always rather have the ball in my hands and trying to determine the outcome that way, but being part of a team, that's not how it is sometimes. You've got to trust other players to go out there and make the plays, and I thought our defense did a great job there at the end containing the run and then stepping up and creating a pocket push, getting the ball out early and Foye being in the right spot.

You've got to trust all three phases, and at different times throughout the year, all three phases have stepped up for us.

Q. You've had a lot of games (indiscernible) the last couple years you've had a lot of games where the

other team (indiscernible).

MATT RYAN: Yeah, I think so. The balance, the competitive balance is strong, and you said it, Earl any my career, we did, we had a lot of success finding ways to win games late. For whatever reason, the last couple of years we weren't able to do that.

I am proud of this team this year for finding ways in those situations to make plays, make plays when we need to win, and hopefully it's flowing back that way. The end of my career can be much like the beginning.

Q. What did you all put together today to get the offense going?

MATT RYAN: I thought Kyle played extremely well, and he's been trending that way all year for us, continuing week in and week out getting better and playing with great effort. I thought he made an unbelievable catch on the sideline on the go ball today.

Only a handful of wide receivers in the league can make those kind of plays, and we're fortunate to have a guy at a tight end spot that can go do that. It was a special play. But really some of the intermediate stuff, moving the chains for us, those are huge, where you're getting eight or nine yards on 1st or 2nd down and getting into 3rd and 1s and very short yardage situations.

I see that continuing to expand for him throughout his career, but I'm certainly proud of him. It's not easy, that rookie year, and he's continued to push and get better and has never really hit a wall. He's just continued to excel, and I'm excited about what he can bring to this team in the future, but certainly what he's doing for us right now.

Q. What did you say to Russ after the tough play there at the end?

MATT RYAN: Well, you know, I just tell him in the locker room that you have his back and the ball is coming back to him. I also tell him that I've been in that spot where it's a pick or something at the end of the game where you're driving, and it's lonely. There's no doubt about it. But let

him know he's not alone. We've all got your back, and the next time we have that opportunity, the ball is coming his way. I certainly believe he's going to make the plays for us in future situations.

Q. How did your protection kind of change as the game went on? I know it started out the first five drop-backs had three sacks but kept it pretty clean (indiscernible).

MATT RYAN: Yeah, I thought our guys just battled. They settled into the game. Did a good job of balancing getting the ball out quick but also firming up protection when we had chances to push it down the field. I just think sometimes games shake out like that. There's an early push, and our guys just didn't blink. They just continued to work at it, made the adjustments on the sideline, and I thought they played tough.

Q. How was it to be able to see Foye come up with that pick?

MATT RYAN: Yeah, it's huge when you see your defense make a play to bail you out, to get the win. But that's what good football teams do that. You pick up the other side of the ball, and special teams finds a way to make a play when you need it. In this league, you need all three phases to be successful. I thought our defense did a great job stepping up there at the end and icing the game.

Q. Do you think your 7-2 record in one-score games is kind of indicative of (indiscernible)?

MATT RYAN: I think so. Art talks all the time about trying to be a very good situational football team, and I think for the most part we've done that. We've made mistakes at certain spots, but again, one of the three phases have found a way to kind of make up for that. Again, I go back to it. I really do think when you have all three phases that you're confident in to go make a play to end the game, that gives you a lot of belief.

Our locker room should have a lot of belief.

Q. Talking about practice weeks and all that comes from a week, Kyle said you might give him however many go balls based on game plan and how you feel. How many times do you think you've repped that call?

MATT RYAN: It's hard to put a number. He probably gets annoyed with me sometimes because he's got to do the bulk of the running. I'm just kind of throwing it up there. But I do hammer home with those guys, I believe the way you get better is you work at it and you do it, over and over and over and over. Then you just fall into rhythm during a

game. You just do the same things that we've practiced for eight months or however long it's been now from when he was drafted.

I think for him, you're starting to see both of us being on the same page and really having a feel for what the other is going to do. Again, it's hard to put a number on those things, but there's been quite a few.

Q. Did you realize right away he was going to be a guy to do that work? As a rookie you never know until you see a guy on the practice field.

MATT RYAN: Yeah, early on he had a great work ethic, was willing to go out there and put in the work. I always think that there comes a time in the season where it gets tough, and I've been very impressed with him for pushing through that and continuing to go out there and put the time in, even when it's uncomfortable, because my belief is that pays off.

You know, I appreciate that from him.

Q. (Indiscernible) are you conscious of that when a guy is getting close?

MATT RYAN: Yeah, you know, you get asked questions about it which start to trigger your mind on what could happen. I have to say all three of those guys never brought any of those things up, and that speaks to the kind of teammates they were and what they were about. They were all about winning.

I do find that you answer questions about it so you kind of understand where things are going, and you always want to get it for them personally, but I've been really fortunate to be around guys that it didn't come up. It really didn't come up in conversation, and they were all great teammates.

Q. Is Kyle the same way?

MATT RYAN: No, he hasn't said anything, man. He's just out there just playing. He, again, falls into that category of some of those really good players that I've played with that are great teammates, and they put in work, they work really hard. They're not selfish. I know everybody wants to play great. There's nothing wrong with that. But they truly are team-first players.

That's fun to have those kind of guys in your locker room.

Q. I asked you Wednesday about Kyle (indiscernible) have teams played him a little bit differently the last month?

MATT RYAN: I think it's always unique because you go into it and each team has their scheme of what they do, and so every week is always a little bit different of how people are going to play you or trying to take certain things away. We talk about that during the week, hey, here's some of the things I might do within the scheme that they have. I think he's gotten a lot better through the year of understanding during the week of preparation how certain things can shake out.

I think that's a growth, a step of growth that he's made. Today and the last couple of weeks, I think he's playing really high-level football.

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