

# Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

Sunday, October 16, 2022

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

## Arthur Smith

### Postgame Press Conference



San Francisco 49ers 14 - Atlanta Falcons 28

**Q. Coach, can you discuss the play today?  
Quarterback Marcus Mariota was 13 of 14.**

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah. That's a really good defense. We knew we had to be efficient, and Marcus certainly was. Made a lot of really good plays. And credit to our O Line, too, because he was able to progress on a couple of plays and made some really big throws for us and made some huge plays with his legs, too. It certainly helps us. It certainly helps us stay on track and efficient. And can't say enough good things about Marcus the way he's leading this football team.

**Q. With the way that your offense did play today, I know I think I've asked you this a couple of times. Is this ideally kind of what you want to see in terms of maybe not your run-pass balance, but what Marcus is doing within the offense?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah. I mean, certainly. You want to have a game that's efficient. You know, both teams, similar styles, physicality. So I don't know that I have the play number on me. Anybody have the play total number? There were some lulls. Both teams possessed the ball for some pretty long drives. That was good defense, and we were able to run the football, too, and Marcus was a big part of that.

**Q. And just in terms of A.J. and Casey, any updates?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Not any updates. Obviously it was nothing that we've got major news right now. A lot of those guys will get imaging done and meet with the doctors, and we'll go from there.

**Q. Everybody is going to see Marcus 13 of 14, but how did the run game supplement what he was able to do and what you guys were able to do as an offense entirely?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, there was a lot to defend. So whether we -- some of them were designed quarterback runs, some of them where he was able to extend the plays. Huge third-down conversion. Because the way they like to attack the pocket, and if they drop out of there, a lot of room for him. So that was a huge conversion before the half, he was able to get that touchdown. So those are the plays, and you gotta rush them a little bit differently. They can certainly hurt you outside of the pocket and certainly can hurt you on the quarterback run game.

**Q. Could you speak to the run defense and the tackling of Rashaan Evans and Troy Anderson making his first NFL start?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, I thought obviously Rashaan called in today with Mike being out, and Mike's been playing really well for us, and our inside linebacker group is strong. Certainly, like all of us, we'll get back and look at the film and see what we can do better, but Rashaan had an efficient day, and so did Troy. You could feel them out there.

**Q. The play of Kyle today, he was part of that first drive and got a touchdown right there to give you the lead back.**

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah. Part of the team. D-11. Good to have him back out there. All those guys contributed. I thought everybody helps. Maybe it doesn't go on the stat page, but even some of the stuff our receivers do in our run game, made some critical plays when we needed them. Pruitt made a huge catch, MyCole, that's somebody who we got a lot of faith in, got the first touchdown. Hesse, all those guys, it was good to see.

**Q. AK, Troy, getting their first starts, but a lot of guys on defense kind of having to take on more significant roles with injuries. What did you see from this defense collectively and the guys having to step up when it mattered?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, it's kind of been our -- it's the kind of theme of this group. It's our team. And it's why we practice the way we do, and we gotta believe in everybody

that's up. There were guys that certainly weren't up today for different reasons. These guys believe. They understood the focus. When you're playing a team like that that does a lot of different stuff pre snap. They got some really good players, some of the better players in position, and they were locked in. A play that Casey came out on, I mean, he knew exactly what was coming and read it. Again, Deebo is a good player, and he was able to extend a little bit, but those were huge plays. Guys were really tuned in. I thought we had a good week.

**Q. Congratulations on the win, Coach.**

ARTHUR SMITH: Thank you.

**Q. What does just this overall confidence, with a win like this what does it do for the confidence of the team?**

ARTHUR SMITH: I think perspective. Really all season I think this team's been fairly confident. Certainly there's things that we gotta do better. That's the whole -- that's the nature of this game. If you don't have perspective, whether you win or lose, you can't go back tomorrow and say, hey, what do we gotta go fix, who's possibly going to be up next week. And as you put a plan in. And we're not going to be satisfied. This team, we're going to continue to grow and improve, and it's just a fun group to coach. Really proud of those guys.

**Q. Coach, you said that you liked how Marcus Mariota was also leading the team. So the six games into the season, where have you seen him grown and what specifically are you liking about his leadership on the field?**

ARTHUR SMITH: It's who he is. He's genuine. His guys believe in him, and those are things you can't put in a stats sheet. I just watch the way these guys played. He didn't play for two-and-a-half years, so it took a couple of games. He learned some things, a little rusty here and there. But I feel like every game he's getting more comfortable. Certainly can make you defend a lot of things every snap. Whether we're doing it or not, or giving you the illusion of doing it, he can put stress on people pre snap. And our guys really believe in him. I think he's a very accurate quarterback. I think you saw that today.

**Q. The two interceptions and the fumble return were the kind of plays that you had almost made several times earlier this year. To convert those, just to make those plays, how big was that in the flow of the game?**

ARTHUR SMITH: It was huge. We worked with A.J., and I told them the DBs work with Mike Pitre on the ball security

drill, all in one hand. In all seriousness, that was a huge play. He was able to get the edge, but if Jaylinn is not finishing that play, that could have been a touchback the other way. But in all seriousness, we gotta work on that. Great play, but we can do that better, and we need to, because that could have cost us. But by going to the ball, Josh, Hawk finishing, we were able to get the touchdown.

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