

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

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Marcus Mariota

Postgame Press Conference



Falcons 37, Panthers 34

Q. Have you ever been in a game with this wild of a finish?

MARCUS MARIOTA: Man, the NFL, it's wild, right? I've been a part of a couple in the last year with the Raiders, at the end the season with the Chargers game. But this is probably definitely at the top. Just unbelievable drive by our guys. Just staying in the moment, staying present, understanding that, you know what, we got a chance.

Q. And when that field goal goes wide left. You got another opportunity. What's going on on the sidelines at that point? It's like, hey, we got to go. Let's that's go.

MARCUS MARIOTA: Yeah, really just comes down to executing, right, getting another chance to go and win the game. Again, like I said, great job by our coaches, by the entire offense of finding ways to make plays to give Koo a chance at the end of the game.

Q. Marcus, when you kind of look at this game and you weigh in, I want to make sure I articulate this correctly, but it comes down to the wire, yes, you do win the game, but how do you kind of weigh in your head there were mistakes made throughout four quarters and we had multiple chances to finish this thing early? How do you weigh that in your head as you go into the next week?

MARCUS MARIOTA: Well, first and foremost, it's tough to win in this league. It really is. No matter what, however it comes about, just to enjoy it.

With that being said, it's always easier to go in on Monday to look back at corrections when you won the game than it is when you lost.

So again, proud of our guys of staying in it and believing. Sometimes when you get into situations like that guys kind

of put their head down. Nobody did that on the sideline.

For me, it's really cool to be a part of that, and it says a lot about our guys.

Q. When you look at kind of the first half and kind of the slow start offensively, how do you feel like this team kind of picked things up in the second half, particularly in the third quarter?

MARCUS MARIOTA: I got to be better. I got to be better. I think the slow start, really I wasn't executing. Could have got -- you know, the ball thrown away, take a bad sack, obviously the pick early on.

So I have to be better. Got to be cleaner. You know, again, like I said, our guys, they don't blink. Good plays, bad plays, they stay pretty even keeled, especially when these things happen. When bad things happen, our guys are ready to step up to make a play; our guys did.

Q. You played with your fair share of different kickers and everything like that. When you're in a game that you see an opposing team's kicker miss extra points, field goals, and then you have Younghoe and you got to rely on him and you send him out there on third and nine, what do you think that says about the value of a guys like Younghoe Koo?

MARCUS MARIOTA: Yeah, I can't explain how valuable he is to this team. He's got such a cool demeanor. He goes about his business the right way. He's always working hard, so it's no surprise to me when things get down to the wire that he makes these kicks.

Q. Marcus, everybody was talking about how resilient you guys are. What in your mind that makes you such a resilient team?

MARCUS MARIOTA: Guys are unselfish, which is hard in this league. You know, being around it now for eight years, you know, you look around the league and it's kind of a "me" mentality.

What's cool good this locker room is guys are thinking



more about the team, thinking about "we," which makes it a lot of fun to play for and a lot of fun to come to work.

No matter what, guys understand that it's not going to be perfect in every phase of the game, but one side will pick up the other.

As long as we got that, you know, we'll continue to be in these games and I think we'll win more games than not.

Q. Marcus, the third and one in overtime, was that play supposed to be what it became?

MARCUS MARIOTA: Not necessarily. Yeah, in those situations I just try to make the most of it. Our guys did a great job blocking on the field, finding a way to make a play to give Koo a chance.

Q. You guys had season-high pass yards and season-high point total. What does that say about the versatility of this team and the passing game? Obviously you guys have been known for being a run team this year. What does that say about the versatility of this team?

MARCUS MARIOTA: That's a great question. What's really cool about this offense is week to week we can kind of change and do what we need to do to win.

It's not easy to do that. You got to have a bunch of guys that are very unselfish. When you got young cats like Kyle and Drake who should expect to get a bunch of targets and sometimes they don't but we're winning games, and they don't care, they just want to win, that is when this team can become just at another level.

So given opportunities, guys are going to go make plays. Today was just one of those days where we had opportunities to make plays in the passing game.

Q. I was talking to Jake Matthews in the locker room and he made the comment, he was like, Marcus is someone that this offensive unit wants to play their best for, wants to win for. When you hear that, what does that make you feel?

MARCUS MARIOTA: Yeah, special, right? Like that's -- football is only going to be so long, and really like my legacy or how I perceive myself is really truly based off that. Like statistics are cool. Those things are fun to talk about.

But I think the relationships are what mean most to me. Fact of the matter is when you got a group of guys that you enjoy playing for, it makes it that much more special.

Q. I know you spoke about your confidence a couple weeks back. Coach talked about just your resilience in general. Can you just speak on your confidence right now?

MARCUS MARIOTA: Yeah, feels great. Feels like it's where it should be. This game isn't perfect and I think sometimes throughout my career I try to be perfect, which kind of derails some of my confidence.

But at the end of the day, like if I give -- if I'm given the opportunity to have a ball and with the guys that we got, I truly believe in them. That's where that confidence comes from, is this group that we got.

As we go forward, we'll find ways to win games, whether it's throwing or whether it's running. As we continue forward, it's going to be a lot of fun to be a part of.

Q. Forgive me, Marcus, if somebody asked you about the Demiere catch. At what point did you know he was gone coming around the side there and...

MARCUS MARIOTA: Once he put his foot in the ground and went back laterally I was like, he's got a chance. Like I said earlier, we've got a group of guys in that room that just, they're special. I just got to find ways to get them the rock.

So I really try to focus my mentality on being a point guard, because once the ball is in their hands those guys will finish it.

Q. A lot of tight pockets tonight. Talk about your decision making and when to get out of there and go and when to hang and try to find those guys. Felt like you found a good balance today.

MARCUS MARIOTA: Yeah. Honestly, I don't even really think about it. You know, I really just go out there and play.

You know, I really think that if I'm thinking about it I play slow, so more times than not if I feel like there is an opening, I just play off my instincts. I could clean up a few things, but at the end of the day, it's, again, just about getting these guys the opportunity to have the ball in their hands.

Q. With that Damiere touchdown, I think it was Drake who had a nice block on it, and then also I think back to the touchdown with Tyler, the screen with I think it was Drew Dalman and Elijah Wilkinson. How do you evaluate I guess just team blocking, this offense blocking down field for each other?

MARCUS MARIOTA: It's that unselfish mentality. It really starts up top with the coaches. They do a great job of kind of setting that foundation. But you got to have guys that buy-in.

This young group of guys really do believe in it. Again, like I said, that's what makes it fun coming to work. At the end of the day, if you're dealing with attitudes or kind of selfishness, it does make it kind of hard to come to work. These guys don't care. They just want to win.

Q. Top target tonight for you was Kyle. What did you see from him that allowed you to go to him as much as you did?

MARCUS MARIOTA: Yeah, he's tough to cover. He is another guy, like I said, that we just got to continue to find ways to get him the ball. That little fly route that he caught that turned into 30, 40 yards, like that's what he's capable of doing.

More times than not, if we can do those things, just get him the rock, it's going to be good for us.

Q. And obviously Drake is always a guy that you can go to. He might not have had the production he's had other games this year, but kind of what does that say for him as a weapon, being able to be there?

MARCUS MARIOTA: Right, I think it creates matchups that are very advantageous for us. I think Drake had a great game today. Talk about a guy that was -- had a huge third down conversion by running great routes. You know, again, like I said, when you're able to have guys kind of all over and defenses can't really key in on certain players, it makes it tough on them.

So the more times that I can get the ball to these guys, create space for them, allow them to do what they do, it's going to be good for us.

Q. We're eight games in. Talk about leading the division. You guys are out in front.

MARCUS MARIOTA: Got a long way to go. I think at the end of the day our team goals are to win the division. It is taking it one step at a time. I think that's what's really cool about this team. We're not thinking about too far ahead or looking back in the past. We're just finding ways to kind of stay in the moment. If we continue to do that, I think we'll like where we are at.

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