

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

Sunday, December 4, 2022
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Arthur Smith

Postgame Press Conference



Pittsburgh Steelers 19 - Atlanta Falcons 16

Q. Arthur, are you planning on making a change at quarterback?

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, we're getting ready to go into a bye. We'll evaluate everything, every job.

Q. I guess at this point what goes into that decision?

ARTHUR SMITH: The game, obviously, have some private thoughts, but we need to decompress. We need to meet as a staff. There's a lot of things. Sure, we've been close, but we gotta evaluate everything. We gotta get back over the hump, get back in the winning category. There's a lot that needs to be evaluated, talked about and discussed. And I understand the questions right now. The game just ended. But bye is coming at a good time for us.

Q. Flipping that to defense, what changes do you feel like you need or can you make at this point defensively?

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, we're going to watch the film. Again, feelings right now after the game, obviously it's kind of disappointing last month. We've got some explosive talent and they hit the one with the missed tackle on the third down. But we gotta make sure -- we're getting some of these long drives. There's been low possession games here the last month or so and we gotta do a better job in all three phases, right? So that's what I'm saying, everything is on the table. We got this late bye. We got a quarter of a season left. We'll come in tomorrow, talk as a staff this week, but certainly every option is on the table.

Q. Following that up, I know you haven't seen tape or anything yet, but could you just sort of give me impressions of what you saw watching the game?

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, they were a little more aggressive early. Knowing that they had kind of packed the paint in there and they were sitting on everything. That's why we

tried to press the ball down the field. We hit that shot to Drake. Again, like all else, nothing is perfect, clearly. Come up three points short. There's a lot that we need to make sure we get in there and evaluate fairly and objectively and look at everything on the table. Obviously it's not good enough when you lose a game, and that's what happened. Came up short.

Q. Going off of that, you talked about the Steelers running the ball six times in that first half but then able to have 100 yards on the ground in the second half. Was that more in terms of Pittsburgh kind of coming off the line or is that just something that you all took --

ARTHUR SMITH: I mean a couple of things, you know. Staffs can be a little misleading. I believe taking out that last two-minute drive, I think we had 19 plays, give or take. I don't have the number in front of me. That's what I was told in between the series. So we had thrown the ball a little bit more. We got off track with the holding call. So six out of 19 plays we had runs. One of them was a possible run that may have been checked. So we weren't on the field much. Start the second half, you know, I think we got one first down and then we had to punt. And thankfully we got going a little bit at the end of the third quarter. So not enough plays, not a lot of possessions. So there's a lot of things we need to get fixed.

Q. Do you think the offense was able in the second half to kind of get back to the roots of what you all want to do in the run game?

ARTHUR SMITH: Not necessarily the roots. It was 19-6, right? We were able to hold them to a field goal. We had that drive. So we were able to get a couple of positive plays. Thought we had some good momentum. I thought we got into a little more groove offensively. I thought our guys were coming off the football and certainly that aspect got us back in the game, got us down there. Unfortunately we had to kick the field goal. And then we got the ball back late.

Q. What roles do you think penalties played kind of in the second half -- you talked about getting off track, what roles did those penalties play in that?

ARTHUR SMITH: Certainly we gotta look at them all and see what we can do. Better fundamentally so we don't get those holes. Those are big calls, and I don't have an opinion until I really watch the film. But certainly that'll get you off track. We had the one early in the game. Decent run, but we gotta be able to overcome that, and we didn't.

Q. Arthur, what's the biggest area of concerns you'll address during the bye week offensively for I believe just one touchdown in the last six-plus quarters?

ARTHUR SMITH: Again, I think a lot of it is going to have to do with not getting enough opportunities. We got the only down there twice and we stalled out in the fringe, we were moving the football at a decent level, but not well enough to win more of these games. So everything right there we need more possessions. Let me be clear, and we need more opportunities down there. We got down there twice today. We scored on one. And then we had the penalty after the touchdown and then had to kick the field goal. Certainly we need to get down there more, and we need to possess the ball more. So we'll start there.

Q. Arthur, they had the fumble that was reversed on replay. What explanation were you given by the officials on that play?

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah. I don't think he ever really had possession of it. So I think that's what they saw.

Q. When you're making your evaluations in the next two weeks at any point is there value -- is it strictly black and white or is there value in just making a change just to try to get a different result, whether it be a quarterback or some other thing?

ARTHUR SMITH: I mean I think everything -- I mean sometimes you want to be -- like I said, you want to make sure you're doing the right thing, not over reacting emotionally. Sometimes change. There's plenty of examples, you're right, Josh, that can help. It can start something. So like I said, every option is on the table.

Q. Arthur, you were close enough these last two games that you had a first and goal for a go-ahead touchdown both times. Is it harder because this ending is so much like last week.

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, it was kind of different. Last week we were down there at the end of the game. Ball got tipped. This one, we scored a touchdown and we got a hold. We were first and 20, trying to get something back and then played soft. Thought we gave ourselves a chance. I'd have to look at it again, get the ball to Drake.

Went down there and make the play. Completely different. Completely different, but that's the way the football goes.

Q. You talked about getting more possessions. I think y'all did convert a third down in the first half or maybe there was just one. What was going on there and how much did perhaps not having Pitts in the lineup effect that?

ARTHUR SMITH: We were not going to make this useless. I think the biggest thing I think we credit to Pittsburgh too when you get the line of third and longs it's not a good thing. So I thought we were too many third and longs. Obviously when we were able to get back on track, I thought we were able to convert some key third downs. That's the one, too. Obviously doesn't go down and slow down diversion. We converted the fourth down. And so we took a shot on another third down. That's the biggest key is staying out of third and ten plus.

Q. On the play in the end zone that at least Drake looked like he was very much campaigning for a flag, do you feel like there should have been one there?

ARTHUR SMITH: I'm not going to answer that. I understand why you're asking. Again, I have to look at it. Not going to give my opinion on that.

Q. And with as you're making decisions as you're looking through these evaluations, how much does the unique opportunity, you've been calling it for weeks now, the division come into play versus what you kind of need to look at?

ARTHUR SMITH: I think as a team, there's a lot of things we can improve on. And we need to. It's going to be hard when you have low-possession games and you're playing in the teens. That's not what we want. Obviously we want to get back in the winning side. We've had a lot of close games. Not an issue of guys and you see the result we had no matter what. There's no moral victories. We gotta get over this hump, so we gotta look at everything and we gotta get back to the other side of winning. There's a lot of reasons why. Like I said, it'll be good to be able to take a step back. There will be changes made. We gotta look at everything.

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