

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

Sunday, January 1, 2023
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Desmond Ridder

Postgame Press Conference



Atlanta Falcons 20, Arizona Cardinals 19

Q. Can you kind of just take us through that last drive and kind of your mindset going into it and what you felt really worked for you guys?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. I mean, our mindset and my mindset going into it was get the ball in the end zone, as is every drive that we want to go out there and play.

Obviously, it's about maintaining the ball. Now you start to get into the situational football of once we get the first down, do we get down? Do we score? What do we do? Making sure everybody is on the same page there.

Our O-line did a great job up front of handling them, and Tyler and the backs did a great job of executing that.

Q. When it comes to obviously the fumble early in the game and to have the drive after that that y'all did, how much did that kind of mean not just to this offense but do you think to the team as a whole in that moment?

DESMOND RIDDER: Obviously, got to clean things up. Under center with me and Drew, that was all on me. But then it's huge for our special teams to come back and make that play. And then for us to go out there and obviously put points on the board is huge.

Q. This team, it's really interesting. I saw a stat recently that this team has the most players under 26 years old, and you're one of those players. I was talking to A.J. in the locker room, and he said this is really a chance to build your résumé, these final two games. Is that something that you feel, in and of yourself, and also kind of with the guys around you as well?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, 100 percent. We want to just play our best game every single day. Then, you know, obviously, we know we can't be in the playoffs this year. One thing we talked about is we want to finish the last few

games strong. Finish it for something good for the future. Obviously, that started well today.

Q. Were there any nerves going into that final drive? Anything for you? Is there something, as the offensive leader in those moments, like what are you trying to project to the other ten guys?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. Obviously, you know, first of all, just a calmness. Just going out there, not necessarily saying you've been in those moments before, but just go out there, see that you're calm, composed, and can execute things. That's going to kind of filter off to the other guys and, you know, they're going to want to execute more, execute better. Sometimes it's just being calm, being poised. And everyone else sees that, feels that, and goes out there and executes.

Q. In terms of just throwing the football, how did today compare for you to the last few games?

DESMOND RIDDER: Obviously, we only pushed it down the field a couple times. I feel like I took what was there. A couple times early, felt a little pressure, and I might have mixed up my footwork a little bit. The one over the middle to Drake early on.

Other than that, I felt like I took what was there. I felt like I did a good job. The O-line gave me plenty of time back there. When there was pressure, I felt like I did a good job of making plays with my legs and taking it when it wasn't there.

Q. Can you walk me through the throw, the 3rd and 7 throw to Pruitt at the end there and what all goes into how you throw that ball in that situation?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. You know, like we said before, going into it just calm. Just, you know, was another 3rd and 7, 3rd and 8, obviously for the game, whatever you want to say. It's just playing within the play. It was a play we ran multiple times in the game. We just went back to it and executed it in a different way.

Q. But you know you've got to get that ball there.



You've got to zip it in there. You clearly understand, when you let that go, it's a tight window. How does that affect the way you executed?

DESMOND RIDDER: Oh, yeah, I mean, obviously, you're in the red zone, first of all, so windows are going to be tighter. From my perspective, I saw him drop off in zone. Just knew I had to get him the ball that we throw every day at practice. That's what I did. He obviously caught it, drop stepped, and got us a couple more yards.

Q. I know you said before that handing the ball off to Tyler is almost kind of like a security. Arthur said earlier, he made the comment about Tyler being harder to tackle as the game goes on. Is that something that you've seen in the last three games or even well before that? I mean, is that something that you see from Tyler?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. Tyler's a workhorse, and his balance is wild. For him to be able to get the ball and then make one guy miss and then get hit by two or three guys but still be up is something I haven't seen before.

So credit to him and credit to the guys up front doing their job and moving their guys. But yeah, he's a heck of a ballplayer.

Q. Desmond, you may have been asked this already but what's the next step you feel you need to take in your progression? I feel like you've talked about different steps each week at this point.

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. It's just about finishing, doing whatever you can to win. I'll go back into this next week and see what I could have done better from this pass game. And then, obviously, keep continuing to try to get better.

Q. As far as, I mean, you haven't thrown a touchdown pass yet. You haven't thrown an interception yet either. Is there something that's maybe happening just kind of in the red zone? Obviously, the one to CP looked like it was pretty close today. Is there anything to explain it?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, no. Obviously, you know, the red zone is obviously the toughest place to score in the game of football. And, you know, we're doing a couple things. I could have took OZ maybe a little early on the little flight route, and he might have scored. But, you know, it's really just about executing. And so, you know, obviously, when the pass plays are called, I got to execute better.

Q. Des, what happened for you all in the last two drives to get the field goals after the three punts to start the second half?

DESMOND RIDDER: One more time.

Q. You all had three punts to start the second half. What started working for the offense in the last two drives, drives 8 and 9, that ended in field goals?

DESMOND RIDDER: You know, obviously, our whole goal this week and every week is to start fast. We did that in the first quarter coming out. Obviously, there's a little lull. We got to get going on both first, second, third, and fourth quarters. We didn't do that coming out in the second half. That will be something we'll look to improve on every single week.

Q. They get the lead there with 4:57 to go. What's your mindset as you all have to set out on the game-winning drive?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. Go down and score, as any other team's mindset would be in that situation. We want to go down there and get in the end zone, put points on the board. If we were able to do that with running all the time off, perfect. If not, obviously, we'd trust our defense to back us up.

Q. Getting your first NFL win, does that really mean something, even in the moment?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, 100 percent. You know you can't take anything for granted, and this is one thing obviously I do not take for granted. And, you know, coming out here next week, this will obviously be my last game of our rookie season. And so, you know, we're not taking any of these games for granted, any of these plays for granted. Grady Jarrett, one of our leaders on our team, brought us up and said, men, we only get two more opportunities to do this. Everyone took that, and that's something we rolled with.

Thank you, Happy Holidays. Happy New Year.