

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

Thursday, August 24, 2023
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Arthur Smith

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 24, Falcons 0

Q. (No microphone.)

ARTHUR SMITH: Everybody's got to do what they think is best for their own team and where they're at. It doesn't matter. There's a lot of ways to look at it.

But those young guys are guys that are out there fighting for roster spots. You should want to play against guys that we know are going to play on a high level on Sunday.

Every team's different in where you're at. You got to make decisions what you think is best to get yourself ready for week one, evaluate where we're at.

The way our schedule fell after Monday, we had a couple guys nicked up, it wasn't a regular-season game, so do you want to do a mash-up unit, which we considered. Then ultimately say, Hey, let's make sure we're as healthy as we can be and give these other guys an opportunity. It helped make our decision.

Q. (Question regarding Logan getting hurt.)

ARTHUR SMITH: He came back in. I wouldn't have put him back in. Certainly wouldn't have thrown the ball if there had been something seriously wrong.

If he wakes up tomorrow, something bizarre... We never would have put a player out there injured. Even throwing the ball, Taylor would have gone in there, we would have handed the ball off.

Q. The second unit, how much can you give from that film?

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, I mean, some of them, it just depends, guys that are out there. If you want to call them second or third team, it doesn't matter. There's some guys we held on tonight that are not roster locks. It was no injury consideration. Now you're getting more depth plays,

see what you're about.

I mean, you come out, get into a third down, they hit a go route. They come back, hit another one on the sideline. That's a recipe. You give up two explosives, negative plays, give up a punt return, it's a recipe for disaster no matter who's out there. Those are tough lessons to learn.

You want to evaluate, embrace those opportunities. Certainly nobody wants to ever lose. But you got to keep the big picture in perspective.

Q. How do you think Josh did?

ARTHUR SMITH: That's a snap judgment. The way they kind of play Josh is a good test for him and Tyler. They're aggressive the way they rush the edge with their fronts, bring a lot of five-man pressures. You won't get a lot of one-on-one evaluations tonight.

Certainly have to watch the film. But I thought it was at least improved as the half went on.

Q. You played Brooks a lot tonight. What has he shown you?

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, he's one of the more competitive players I've coached. He's got an instinct for the football. A guy like him, you want to see what it looks like against three guys of their starting receivers.

Going to have to see those on the far side. The one that Pickens caught, that's an NFL play. You guys probably had a better view. I saw a review up there, making sure he was in so I don't have to challenge it. You want to see him compete.

Competitive, a lot of instinct.

Q. At this point how many decisions do you feel have been made for you guys versus you got to go back and figure out stuff?

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, I mean, there's a lot of decisions you got to make. I mean, there's a lot of things next couple



days. As you mix and match, we've got a lot of tough decisions ahead of us.

Q. All the questions you have going into this game maybe got answered for some you were back and forth on perhaps?

ARTHUR SMITH: There was a couple guys I would have liked to have seen play tonight that weren't able to. So I wouldn't say all of them. But a lot of questions did.

Q. Do you expect to have all these players back before these next two practices on Saturday and Sunday?

ARTHUR SMITH: Just got to see where we're at. We'll be smart with it. I fully anticipate maybe other than one or two, that Monday of week one, Carolina, we'll be ready to roll. So there's guys that we'll be smart with, we'll be cautious with. We've had a really physical camp. Going down to Miami, coming back, turn around, playing last week. We went after it in practices after Cincinnati.

We may be a little risk/reward, but we need to be smart here. That played a lot into the decision tonight about who played, who didn't.

But I feel very confident going into that Carolina week, we'll be as close as we can to fully healthy.

Q. Where do you feel like you are with Des and all that?

ARTHUR SMITH: Feel good. Feel like we had a good camp. It's the chemistry I think he's developed with the skill players. It will evolve as the season goes on. I mean, people in the roles, where they kind of fit in. Certainly what we try to do early in the year, he's done a good job.

He's got real leadership skills. Those are natural, not forced. I thought he's done a good job. As camp has off and on on, I thought he's throwing the football really well. That's what we'll continue to see rolling into week one.

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