

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

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Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Desmond Ridder

Postgame Press Conference



Atlanta Falcons 21 - Houston Texans 19

Q. Describe the week and how it was for you, and then what you were able to put together on the field today.

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. This was a week just like any other week. You know, came into work every single day, just trying to improve, just trying to get better. You know, we knew that they were just going to try to make us force and do something bad. And as long as we just played within our game and played with what we did and what we do, you know, we'd be able to have an advantage.

Q. Des, you've talked about grading yourself after every performance. What would you grade yourself after this one?

DESMOND RIDDER: Um, I don't know. Y'all are going to have to go grade that one. Yeah, I don't know. I gotta go back and look at it.

Q. What was just the biggest difference in the way that the offense performed today, because there were still some turnovers, some penalties, but you were able to overcome them in the end. What was the biggest difference from these last couple weeks?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. Again, like you said, I think it was just our ability to be able to go out there and just keep moving the ball forward. In the past couple weeks, we might have something go wrong, a turnover or whatever it may be and then that next drive or whatever it is, you're not able to get the ball moving, you're not able to change field position. So for us, you know, when things did go wrong, we were able to come back out there and move the ball down the field. And so that's really the biggest difference.

You talk about these last couple weeks, whatever it may have been, and you look at today, no, we didn't -- that first drive didn't go how we wanted, but obviously came out the second drive and was able to go, and then there was a period of time where there was a roll of punch that we had

to get off. So going back, looking at it, those are the things where if we can get out of that lull and just keep our foot on the gas from the jump, we'll be good to go.

Q. The camera was on your face at the very end. Your response seemed pretty muted. I wondered if internally you were feeling a little bit more like, you know, you showed people something?

DESMOND RIDDER: Uh, nah. I mean, that's just kind of, if I'm out there smiling or angry or whatever, like that's what it is, and then when I'm straight faced, I'm locked in, just kind of cool, calm, collected. Like I said post game, it was a two-minute drill. There was a 1:50 left on the clock, three timeouts, that's an eternity in the league, and we work that every single day. We work two-minute drill every single day. So when we get in these situations we're comfortable, and that's just where I felt I was comfortable at.

Q. Any part of you, though, feel like you've proven yourself today or you took a step toward proving yourself today? Has that entered your mind yet?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. Sure. When you talk about that, it's all within self. I really don't care what the outside world has to say as long as myself and my teammates, we're on the same page. You know, like I said, we're just going to keep getting better, not only myself, but the team as well, and just keep improving.

Q. Did you prove anything to yourself today?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. Proved that we can stay calm and we can stay collected. That was really one of my first true two-minute drives, obviously, to go win the game or whatever it was. Like we said, just calm, cool, collected, didn't rush anything, didn't try to force anything, just played it as it came.

Q. Within that final drive, I know we've talked -- and this goes back even to the first week of the season -- about how the defense can keep you guys in it, keep you guys in it and just like making sure that there is that trust there that you all can hold up your side of the bargain to. How much do you think that final drive

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showed that trust from unit to unit?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, that's huge. This is a team game, not just a game of 11, but a game of 53, and when we're all out there doing what everyone needs to do, everyone's doing their own job, you look at it, the defense did their job, got them off the field, and then we came out, did what we needed to do, and then special teams come out -- I was telling the guys on the sideline, you know, every single guy just needs to do their job. We were talking about Koo's field goal right there to win the game. As long as each person does their job to the fullest, the kick's going to go in, we're going to be good, and we'll be happy after. So, yeah, you can say it was huge, whatever you want to say. But it was great for our team just to come out here and get a great team win.

Q. Got a question about a specific play when Bijan caught the ball sort of on his hip, and I know he's a good pass catcher. What does that say about his adversity and just how special he is as a player?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, definitely scary right there going down, see the little shovel pass, whatever it may have been. And you know, he caught it, and then the ball was kind of behind him while he was still down the line of scrimmage. So I was just kind of looking at it, but made that guy miss, went and made the play, and that's what it is. It's just playmakers making a play.

Q. Does this game feel differently to you than the Green Bay game in terms of what you guys were able to accomplish on offense?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. Like I said, this game felt like more of a true team win. Like I said earlier, there was still a lull early there in the first half that we gotta get out of, we gotta be able to overcome, but as it goes, it was a true team win. And it feels great for everyone to come in the locker room, come celebrate, everyone be excited, and it was good.

Q. Des, okay. They score, 1:49 left. Take us through your mindset, what you're thinking there before you all take the field.

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. Thinking go win the game. You know, don't try to force anything. You don't have to try to force anything. You got plenty of time. Just take what they give you, which I did. They played a lot of off and soft; a lot of access, banged a couple to Drake and just got the ball moving. First play, come out, dropped back. The dropped Bijan in the flat, just give it to him, he goes makes seven, eight yards. And that's all it's about in two-minute. It's about keeping the ball moving, getting that first first

down, never trying to force anything. And that's what we did. Like I said, our O Line did a heck of a job right there at the end of two-minute, picking up ball protections and not giving anything up, and we were able to take advantage of that.

Q. Des, to follow up from some of the questions Josh was asking, were you or the team aware of the comments that Jimmy Ward made during the week, and did those provide any additional kind of motivation or maybe not even that, but just a feeling you had a point to prove when he was talking about the offensive passing game?

DESMOND RIDDER: No. I didn't see anything Jimmy said. We get a couple of the defensive quotes, but usually it's from like postgame Sunday or whatever it may have been, but no, I didn't see that.

Q. Drake and Kyle led you in catches today. I think it was the first time they've done that. Is that a function of you all trying to get them more involved in the offense or is that just a function of sticking with the plan and that's how it worked today?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, that's a function of going out there and taking what the defense gives you. You know, those were a lot of high-low reads, and a backer might have drove in the low route, just given it to him over the top of it. A couple of go balls, couple D balls, couple balls that we targeted that we know we had matchups on with them being a little dinged up at corner, and so it was just going out there, giving what the defense gave us. Like I said, different from the other weeks, never trying to force anything. Not trying to do too much and just playing the play as it comes.

Q. You made a few really nice down-field throws. I'm curious, was there one in particular that you were, I guess, especially proud of in terms of the way you were able to read it or kind of let it develop?

DESMOND RIDDER: No. I wouldn't say the one I'm proud of or whatever, but a cool throw, just because he doesn't get the ball a lot, was the one to Keith Smith. Keith Smith got through there; wasn't exactly how we designed it up, but it worked. And obviously that's obviously a big play for him to be able to go get that ball, and it was a big play for the offense as well.

Q. Then the throw to Drake on the last drive, how did that develop and how did you make that throw?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. That's a play that we've repped -- you can go back and watch film. That's a play

that we've repped multiple times, even in that situation as well. That's a play that when we know that we gotta go get something, we're going to go do it. I mean, you know, it's just routine. The backer kept standing up, gave me a window to put it in there to Drake; he made a play, and that's all it is. It's just really about letting the playmakers go make plays.

Q. The Texans were really doing a good job of stifling the run game. Was there any point in this game where you felt like this game is on me, I've gotta kind of lead this team and get the passing game going?

DESMOND RIDDER: No. That's when you start trying to force things. That's when things start going wrong is when you feel like you have to go do something different than what you've trained to do. We've trained to obviously put our hand in the dirt and go run, and when that doesn't happen, obviously pick the ball up and go throw, but you know what, it's nothing that you have to be like, oh, man, we can't run the ball today, all we gotta do is throw it. Like I gotta try to force it in here or force one there. Like, no. That's not how it is. And then, also, we're going to keep running the ball. That's what we do; that's what we trust, so it doesn't matter whether they stop us or not, we're going to put the ball in our players' hands, which is Bijan, Tyler, C.P., guys like them, and just be able to let them go make plays.

Q. Didn't seem like the Texans could really handle your snap count today. Were you changing something up from what you've put on tape before? And how much does that help your offensive line when the defensive line is off balance like that?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, I mean, that was just changing up a snap count, which we have. And IN all those situations, too, those were ones that we didn't take advantage of. I feel like a lot of those drives on which those did happen we never got points on, and that's something that we have to do better at. We have to be able to take advantage of their mistakes. So when they jump offsides and they give us free yards, we have to be able to go and put points on the board, which is something I feel like we could do better at.

Q. You might have been asked this already. I don't know. I jumped in late here. But how did you handle this week?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. Just like any other week. Put my head down, go to work. We talk about all the time a growth mindset. And for us and a lot of players in this league, you know, a lot of us try to kind of block out what's going on in the outside and really only care about what's

going on on the inside of the building, and our inside of the building, it's a growth mindset; come in every single day, get better, don't worry about what's going on outside and make sure that all 11 guys, all your brothers that are on the team are trying to get better as well.

Q. Was there a specific person, whether it was in the locker room or outside, that helped kind of helped you deal with the week or put yourself in that spot?

DESMOND RIDDER: Nope.

Q. Did anyone ask you about Bijan's catch yet? Did you put that --

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, no. That's exactly where I aimed to put it, like right here on his back and then... (laughs). No. It was a little shuffle play. He made a heck of a catch, obviously, right there, and like I said, I was a little nervous obviously seeing him going one on one with the defender with the ball still behind his back, and he was able to route it in and obviously make a play. As quarterbacks obviously you always love those because those are easy touchdown passes. Thank you all. Have safe travels.

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