

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

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Arthur Smith

Postgame Press Conference



Washington Commanders 24 - Atlanta Falcons 16

ARTHUR SMITH: A lot going on. So they had the penalty, and then clock was stopped. We went -- we got a delay of game. Changed the scenario. We gotta be a lot cleaner there. And we will. We had some guys needed to come out, and some of our operations weren't very clean. So we'll get that fixed. And then on the third down, obviously the play extension and a little miscommunication. That's on all of us. So we have to get that fixed.

Q. Just to follow up, too, on the timeout that you all needed --

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah. Same thing. Trying to get different guys in. Was he up, was he down. And then a little bit lack of communication coming out of the huddle. Somebody asked something, slowed him down. So wasn't going to take the delay there. Like I said, we gotta do a better job.

Q. Arthur, the decision to go for two --

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, we did it last year in LA. We were down 14 in the fourth quarter. Those are consequences you live with. We did it in LA. I believe we got it to six. We did it in Tampa last year, right? Down there. Down 14, late. Got two shots at it. You get it. It's a six-point game. But we've done it before, like I said. And then we even got the penalty, got on the one, and they stopped us. But, yeah, we did it last year, twice.

Q. In terms of you mentioned communication a couple of times. Looked like there were some procedural issues, even on that last drive, too, getting guys in.

ARTHUR SMITH: Guys were coming out. We made some big plays coming in and out, and we have a substitution, under two minutes, as you know. They don't have to stay over the ball when you do sub under two minutes with a moving clock. So we were just trying to get a breather. So got in there, got a play to Pru. Got the thing going. Got it

to that 3rd and 1, and then you think you have two shots, and unfortunately we had to burn the timeout. But either way, we still had opportunities, and Davis undercut it and made the play.

Q. The TV cameras after the interception in the end zone caught you and Des kind of going back and forth.

ARTHUR SMITH: No. Like I said, it wasn't on Des. You were trying to figure out what's going on. There's a lot of logistics that go in. You always look at yourself, what's the procedure issue, some guys in the huddle, like I said. It's something we gotta -- clearly didn't do a good enough job of today. Hasn't been an issue, but it was today, and we have to get it fixed.

Q. After the delay of game penalty, he snapped with about a second left and then threw the pick. Do you think he was panicking?

ARTHUR SMITH: No, it's not a panic, Zach. There's so much that goes in there. There's so many logistics. Only thing Des is not going to is panic. That's not what it is. It's, like I said, a miscommunication. It happened. Unfortunate. We had a lot of opportunities.

Washington, they got advantage and they turned it into touchdowns. Whether it was the punt return, the big play off the hide screen, and then the interception they turned into a touchdown. Right? They got -- I believe it was 21 -- not off of turnovers, but they made the most of their opportunities on those field positions. So we didn't. They did, and hat's off to them. They won the game.

Q. Just curious on some of the procedural things you referenced and being able -- the delay of games and stuff. Is that on players not responding quick enough --

ARTHUR SMITH: No. It's on all of us, Jeff. When you have a guy go down and you're moving a guy around and you're down there and you got a ways to go down there, like I said, the ball got out of the back of the end zone. We're going back in there, somebody may need a breather. So you like the play call. Again, that hasn't been an issue.



It happened today. So obviously it's not good enough, but it's not ever on one person. But that is the way we've operated, and like I said, we have to get it fixed. But it happened today.

Q. And then on Des, he made some good throws early in the game, but he also had some big mistakes with the interceptions. Can you talk about his game and whether you think this constitutes sort of a step back from last week?

ARTHUR SMITH: Look, you get in those situations, and as they change up looks. Like I said, they made a play on the ball, the one coming out, I believe, to the field, right, in the third quarter. The guy undercut Van, I believe, and they turned that in. I believe they scored off the screen off that, to Robinson.

And then going out, rolling around. You know, unfortunately the delay happened. Like I said, it's not going to be good enough when you do stuff like that. Those are self-inflicted wounds, and like I said, you're throwing the ball away, and the guy was right there. Clearly they took points off the board. We've gotta be better, and we will. That hasn't been an issue, but clearly it was today, Jeff.

Q. Your production in the run game, was it more a function of things that they were doing or did you feel like you weren't blocking it as well as you all have in the past?

ARTHUR SMITH: Just give and take. As we're trying to evolve, I think we've been able to move the ball pretty good through the air. We're going to continue to evolve. We didn't stop running it. If they want to pack in there, which everybody is going, you gotta prove that you can go the other way. I think the pass pro was pretty damn good. I think two of the sacks they were credited for happened on Boots. One the guy got tripped up. Nobody was there. And the one kind of running out, if you're a yard short, that goes down as a sack. But I thought the protection in the pocket was good and guys were getting open. So it was give and take. Why force 45 runs when you have other ways to move it? That's the way you want to be balanced. And, like I said, it came down turnovers, the plays they made in the field position, they took advantage of opportunities, and obviously we didn't. It wasn't good enough. Credit to Washington. And we have to get it fixed.

Q. What did you see out of the defensive line guys? You matched your season sack total --

ARTHUR SMITH: We've been getting a lot of pressure,

Zack. We've found ways to affect the quarterback. Today it happened. Turned it into sacks. They've been pretty damn good all year. That's the first thing people look at, sacks. It necessarily doesn't tell the story. It was good to get them, and we got them at big times today. But we're just trying to find ways to affect the quarterback.

Q. Like you said, you guys haven't had those procedural issues --

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, but they happened.

Q. Was there anything you saw during the week --

ARTHUR SMITH: No.

Q. -- or anything that signified that could happen today?

ARTHUR SMITH: No. Sometimes it's a snowball effect, Michael. You're moving a guy around here, goes in there. Like I said, these sound like excuses, but that's what happened. Like I said, we all gotta be better. It's always going to start with me. It hasn't been an issue, but it was today. And you have to acknowledge that. And it's a tough pill to swallow. We had plenty of opportunities, but again, Washington made the plays at the critical times, and we didn't, and that was the story in the game.

Q. Obviously a lot of extreme ups and downs today. The first six weeks have been a lot of extreme ups and downs. Should this have been expected so far this season?

ARTHUR SMITH: I don't know, Jeff. I'm not in the prediction business. Like I said, I don't think you ever predict that. We had our chances. Like I said, gotta take advantage of the opportunities. We gotta find -- we turned the ball over, we've turned it over too much lately. We're making it harder on ourselves. Like I said, you can find a lot of ways to make excuses and rationalize, but the bottom line is we didn't win the game. We didn't get the job done. Washington did. So we have to find a way. We got a lot of football left.

We'll get in tomorrow. Like I said, when you have the right people, you can have the real conversations. But we're not a program that's into blaming or victimhood, but we have to get it fixed, and we will. And we have a huge game coming up next week in the division on the road. That's all these guys will do. We'll get back, and we'll be objective, and we'll find a way, and we'll put a plan together and go find a way to try to get a win down in Tampa.

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