

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

Sunday, November 5, 2023

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Head Coach Arthur Smith

Postgame Press Conference



Vikings 31, Falcons 28

Q. After the first half offensively you had some chances to get some distance and didn't do it. Did you get a bad feeling at that point?

ARTHUR SMITH: No, I didn't get a bad feeling. Obviously, you're disappointed when you don't take advantage of it, but I wouldn't say a bad feeling.

We took our chances. Obviously the one after the fumble, we had the procedure, and we get the screen down one. We knew they were going to shift the front. Obviously they got the penalty, and then we got back down there, second and one. They moved their front. We were trying to get outside, and we didn't, and they stopped us.

Q. Given the circumstances Minnesota just added Dobbs this week. They come out of here with a win. Do you feel like this is a missed opportunity and a stumble for you?

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, certainly a missed opportunity. Give them credit, but yes. You can't sugar-coat it or make excuses. We had our chances, and we didn't get it done.

Q. Can you run through the play-calling decisions on the last drive when you guys got the ball back?

ARTHUR SMITH: With two timeouts. 20 seconds; right? Yeah. So they just dropped out of there and played shell coverage. So we had timeouts.

The first one they bailed out, got some yardage. So they kind of packed the paint, so you're trying to work the corner. One of them.

Same thing. Just trying to get in there. You can still play the middle of the field, but they packed everybody in there. It was three-man rush, so we tried to hit a bench route.

Same thing. Different combination into the boundary. So

we get five seconds when he got the ball out. Bijan, get the five seconds there. You can signal something. Otherwise, you're in a Hail Mary, and so that's kind of how it played out.

Q. Was there a consideration to try to go for a chunk play and get down to --

ARTHUR SMITH: That's what we were trying to do. They just went drop, like soft shell. I mean, they're going to base giddy underneath, and that's the game you're trying to play. I don't know many people that would come after you on that one, but that's what they were doing.

Q. In terms of how Taylor played today, how do you assess how he looked?

ARTHUR SMITH: I mean, obviously he did turn the ball over, but I thought he operated on third down pretty well. So we'll obviously huddle up and evaluate everything, but definitely he gave us some chances. He did make some plays on third down, but we did have a couple of penalties, but turnovers will always hurt you.

We didn't take full advantage of the ones we got, and that was a big swing after the Jonnu touchdown. Came back, and we fumbled. Led to their touchdown drive, and then we came back, and that was the one pick.

Q. You have said all week this was a one-week thing. Have you made -- is Taylor your guy next week?

ARTHUR SMITH: Not right now. We'll just have to get back and evaluate it. I'm not going to give you some answer that we haven't sat back and looked at everything.

Q. Back to the earlier red zone drive that you referenced earlier in the game. You had the false start, and then you had the pass to Jonnu down at the one. Can you talk about the next two play calls and why --

ARTHUR SMITH: We were at the goal line and -- back then we were trying to get outside and didn't. So we had the procedure, different play call there and got the procedure penalty. Moved us back. I believe that got us

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

down to about the one.

Just trying to get outside. It's a play that he scored on before in the past, so it wasn't like a giant leap of faith. Obviously we didn't get it done, but that was the thought. Trying to get outside because they moved their goal line front. They stunted the front, tried to bully up. It's a thing that they've done. We didn't get outside.

Next one, same thing. We tried to take advantage and get Tyler to punch it in. It obviously didn't happen. Obviously got to be better there.

Q. I think a lot of people were considering Bijan and Kyle as maybe your two best offensive players. Is there any reason they weren't involved in any of the play calls down there?

ARTHUR SMITH: Kyle is out there on the goal line. We had another call, but it's just the look we got. He was out there on that series. He was in there in the goal line.

The first play we got the penalty on, we got him in a look. Same personnel package we ended the game with when we scored.

So the first play we were in 21. He was not out there. It was Pru. Backed up; right? He was out there on the one that hit the screen. We had the look to Jonnu kind of on one, and then we were on goal line personnel. Kyle was in there.

Q. He was out there as a blocker; right?

ARTHUR SMITH: We also have package plays. The ways you push plays together. You're on the one. They condense it, and they executed it better than we did.

Obviously in hindsight, yeah, that's the thought. You know they're going to stuff the front, so you're trying to get outside, and we didn't. We also have a look, depending on it, if you want to get into the pass. So that's the whole package.

Obviously hindsight, we could have spread them out, but we didn't, and we didn't get it done.

Q. A couple more things on the Tyler's touchdown drive. He carried the ball a lot towards the end of that, and you had Bijan on the sideline. Is there something going on? Is there a personal preference? You like certain guys --

ARTHUR SMITH: I think Tyler was in a good rhythm. Obviously Bijan made a few plays. It wasn't just because

of the fumble. I mean, it was working, and clearly it worked down at the end.

Just with the way that it was going, there were certain looks they were doing. They were doing a lot of pressure looks and different personnel. We thought we kind of had him locked into a look. That's why we stayed in that personnel group we did.

Kind of a little mix-and-match, but I mean, it was working, so we stayed with Tyler.

Q. Lastly, you guys have kicked quite a few field goals these last few games and haven't gotten into the end zone very much. As a guy who prides himself on play calling from the offensive side of the ball, is it frustrating to you to see what's been going on with the offense?

ARTHUR SMITH: I mean, any time you don't win or get the results you set out to, it doesn't matter if you had 100 yards or 300, whatever we had today. Bottom line, you have to score more points. We all know that.

So 28 wasn't enough today. Yeah, I think at times have been there, but when you lose, it's not good enough.

Q. You made the change at quarterback this week. What else do you feel like needs to change, or what's missing in order for this team to get back into the win column?

ARTHUR SMITH: We have to play in sync. That's the thing. You have your opportunities, and we didn't take advantage of the defense. Made some plays. Got many some turnovers, and we had it held to three.

So then you get in a rhythm, and unfortunately, the turnovers, and they extended plays. Give Dobbs credit. He made some big-time plays with his feet.

So we just never played in sync, and you get the lead. Obviously we didn't get it done. Yeah, that would be the biggest thing is us playing in sync.

At times it's been good at one phase, and we obviously need to do that to get back in the win column.

Q. We've seen you working in practice trying to eliminate the turnovers and holding onto the ball security in practice. What else can you do to eliminate the turnovers?

ARTHUR SMITH: Keep finding a way. Have to continue to find ways to coach it, keep working it. Obviously it's

been a problem.

Q. Finally, any injury updates on any of the guys that were out?

ARTHUR SMITH: No. Mack didn't come back in. I don't have an update right now.

Q. I know you're a proponent of week-to-week and you get back to the drawing board, but after losing three or four, do you feel like you need to do anything more dramatic than that in terms of changing the way you do things?

ARTHUR SMITH: You look at things every week. We're always looking to improve. We look at ourselves as a staff and what we're doing in practice. That is week-to-week.

You lose these games like this close, you know, yes, we have to do something to get over that hump to get back in the win column. I don't know how drastic it would be in the season, but yes, we're always looking for anything that can help us.

Q. Has there been any thought of shifting play-calling?

ARTHUR SMITH: Every staff has been on. You do whatever you can to win. I mean, it's just how you set things up. You collaborate. Like I said, their yards are up.

I know these are natural questions. You get them in the cycle, and then when you don't win, you have to stand there and look at it. It's not an ego thing. It's we'll always do what's best for our team.

Yards are up. Great, but obviously we're not scoring more points than the other team. So you look at everything. That's at every phase.

Q. Every game is different obviously, but does this feel like a game that you felt that was there to win, I mean, that you could have won easily?

ARTHUR SMITH: I don't think anything is easy in this league, but we certainly had our opportunities to win this one. That would absolutely be fair, so yeah, it's disappointing. I felt that way most of our losses.

We are where we are. We're 4-5. We have eight games left, and we have to do something about it. Otherwise, I'm going to keep coming up here, and it's not going to be what you want.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

