

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

Sunday, November 26, 2023
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Desmond Ridder

Postgame Press Conference



Atlanta Falcons 24 - New Orleans Saints 15

Q. Congratulations on the win. Can you walk us through what your mindset was in the week kind of leading up to this game?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, I mean, this week was huge as a team for a whole. It was go out there and get a win, however it came, good, bad, ugly, go out there and get a win. And that's what we did, came out here and played as a team, both offense, defense and special teams. Obviously, a lot of things we can go back and clean up a lot of things we can be better at, but we're pretty happy because we came out of here with a win.

Q. Des, obviously the two picks, but then Arthur was talking about how what he likes about you is you were able to respond, and you had that big pass to Bijan. How important was it to respond the way you did?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. I mean, it's always the next-play mentality. No matter what happens, good, bad, ugly, just move on to the next play. And not only with myself, but everyone on the field, everyone's gotta move on; everyone's gotta keep going and play each play as a new play, and obviously we got the matchup we wanted, Bijan on the backer, was able to give him a ball. The O line did a heck of a job all day of giving me enough time to stand in the pocket, deliver a ball, and they did a heck of a job on the run game, moving the line of scrimmage, not only the offensive line, but defensive line as well. That's through our team is where we're going to live and die at is our up front five.

Q. Yeah, Des, I just wanted to add on to that. How happy were you to see the offense play the way they did at the end of the game to kind of just salt that thing away on the ground?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, it was huge. You know, all week they were challenged to go back and be that line that we know they can be. They stepped up to the challenge

and did a great job. And right there before we took that field with like seven minutes left, Drew Dalman, our center, told me, he said, hey, let's end this game with the ball in our hands, and I said, yes, sir, let's go. And obviously we did, and we came back. And the defense, great job of shutting them down, and we were able to finish with the ball in our hands. Obviously Koo coming down and making the kick, but yeah, it was a huge drive.

Q. How did Dave moving up to the box help you just another set of eyes from upstairs and maybe something in previous games he might not have noticed because he was on field level, how did that help you tonight?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, I mean, like you said, it was just another set of eyes being at that level. Usually it's Art and Rags up here, and then we got our assistant coach Kramer up in the box. But, yeah, it's another set of eyes. It's able to see from a different vantage point and then, you know, communicating with them on the sideline, communicating with Kramer on the sideline. And then, like we said, too Taylor and Logan do a great job of being another two sets of eyes just to be able to help me out there in whatever I need.

Q. Looked like you involved yourself as a runner at some pretty key times in this game. Was that something you guys really wanted to emphasize in your style of play kind of moving forward this season?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, I mean, it had nothing to do with the offensive scheme or anything like that. We saw throughout the entirety of their season that they struggled with quarterback play extension, with quarterbacks scrambling up and out of the pocket. So that we knew if one, two and possibly three wasn't there, that three was probably going to be my legs and just take off and go. So I got off a couple of the reads and just found an open spot in the pocket and got out.

Q. Des, when Jessie gets that interception and then is able to keep going and take it for a touchdown, what's going through your head as you're watching that play unfold?



DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, that's huge. Obviously that's a huge momentum swing in any game when you get a pick 6, especially one that long. It obviously kind of deflates the other team. But for us as an offense, we kind of had to stay ready, because at that point -- and then they go back out on the field. It felt like we hadn't been on the field for quite some time. So it was a great job with the offense coming back out and responding, but obviously like you said, a great job with the defense stepping up, creating the turnover and creating points off that turnover.

Q. Kaden called Jessie a game changer and just said the way the team can feed off a momentum like an energy play like that is so big. Just what are your thoughts on how he can change the game for you all?

DESMOND RIDDER: Like you said, energy and then play making, the way he's able to play the field, play that safety position, be able to be all over the field and confuse quarterbacks. I mean, he does a great job of it. That's obviously, you know, why he's our number one safety back there, and like you said, just the energy. He's not only a great energy provider, but he's a great leader on this team, great person to have on our team, and he's just going to continue to do great things for us.

Q. Des, can you just talk us through the touchdown pass to Bijan? You kind of had a guy right in your face there.

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, it was the same play we ran earlier that I kind of scrambled on down there in the red zone and like almost ran into Kyle. It was the same exact play. That one was zone coverage. This one we got matched up in man. Felt pressure, took my drop, saw the matchup with him and Demario and just put it up for a ball to get him.

Q. I know it's just one game, but Coach was stressing the importance of this moment today. Relief? Is that the way to describe how the team feels right now?

DESMOND RIDDER: I wouldn't say relief. More so just excited, just excited to go out there and get the win. Obviously having a tough three or four weeks, just being able to go out here and get a win at home is huge.

Q. Arthur mentioned the Wednesday practice and how much he liked the intent. What do you remember about Wednesday?

DESMOND RIDDER: I mean, yeah, Wednesday was a day that we went out there. I mean, it's week 12. A lot of guys on Wednesday when you put the pads on can go out

there and maybe have a softer practice or a jog-through practice or not full speed, but what we do in our style of play is full speed and pads, you know, almost every time we can do it. So our intent out there on Wednesday was just fast, physical, great energy, great practice. The weather wasn't perfect, but it was what we needed. And like we said, it was just a great one to start off the week with.

Q. Was there anything you tried to do specifically that day to sort of foster that culture?

DESMOND RIDDER: No. I mean, like I said, I think my entire time just coming out this week was playing free, playing fast and having fun. I think I did that out there in practice and obviously did it today.

Q. The 95-yard drive, I think you were 4:04. What do you remember specifically about the keys to that drive, to being successful there?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. Like we said, I think the number one thing for the key of all the drives was the guys up front. Those five men up front did a heck of a job of, like we said, giving me enough time, blocking or Bijan, blocking or C.P., blocking for Tyler, and did everything that they could do to move the line of scrimmage.

Q. Des, Coach told us that David Ragone was up in the box today. How did that help the operation? He was talking about logistics and so forth.

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, no. Like we said, it was just another set of eyes up there. Being able to communicate, having another set of eyes not only up in the box, but like we said, we got multiple on the field with Taylor and Logan and Coach Kramer, but it was just another set of eyes to give a different perspective and hopefully be able to communicate and see things better.

Q. And on the interception at the two or one, we couldn't tell, looked like Janu and Bijan were in the same area, vicinity. What happened on that play?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, I was just going to Bijan. You know, I probably threw about six inches too far inside. He kind of -- you know, there was hands up down there in the red zone, might have lost it, whatever it was. Gotta be a better ball. Gotta put it on him.

Q. And what was it like in the huddle in that last key drive, not the kneel-down, but the one where you all ran it nine times in a row. Were the linemen all fired up about that?

DESMOND RIDDER: The linemen were all juiced up. Like we said earlier, we had to challenge them earlier in the week to go out and play their brand of ball, which is tough, nasty and physical and move that defensive line, and which we did. We wore them down in that fourth quarter, was able to possess that ball for the last five-and-a-half, six minutes, whatever it may have been, and they did a heck of a job of being able to get up there and keep the ball moving forward. Props to Bijan, Tyler and C.P. of all being able to go out there and take control of the ball, get those first downs and keep it moving.

Q. Desmond, you guys, the next time you take the field, will have the division lead in December. What does that mean to this team to have the division lead this late in the year?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, I mean that just means we gotta show up every week to be able to play. We obviously knew this game was huge for that, which was one of the driving reasons of going out here and get a win. But now we gotta keep it. We haven't won back to back games since the first two weeks. So we gotta go on the road against the Jets who is a great team, great up front on both sides of the ball and we gotta be able to go out there and get a win.

Q. Des, I got two things for you. Can you shed some light on what it felt like for you to get pulled and now to come back in the starting lineup? What did you learn from that experience? How did that help you in this moment?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. You know, I think, honestly, you know, it taught me how to be a true backup. It taught me that you're obviously preparing as a starter every single day. But like I told someone earlier in the week, you know, I don't think I've actually been a backup in my career. I've never came off the bench in the fourth quarter of a game to go in and have to play and go win a game. So, for me, that taught me not only respect that you gotta have for backups, but just the ability that doesn't matter who it is, whether it's the quarterback position, safety position, center position, it's the next-man-up mentality. When your number is called, you gotta be ready to go, and you gotta go out there and execute the same game plan that everyone else has been working all week that you might not have got the same amount of reps at.

Q. Did it make you appreciate it even more or do anything in your approach when you are the starter?

DESMOND RIDDER: I mean, yeah. I mean, it makes you appreciate everything, obviously, just being grateful to have the opportunity to come out here and play the game

we love. Obviously everyone who's on that field, everyone who's dressed wants to be out there playing. Obviously in our position as a quarterback position, it's only going to be one person. So, yeah, it obviously feels great to get back out there, and like we said, to go get a win as a team.

Q. And one last thing. Your decisions to run today, spot on in multiple situations. What went into some of those decisions, and have you processed it a little bit better on when to run versus not?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. Like we said, I think I did a good job of just going through my progressions, and then like we saw on film from numerous teams before, they kind of struggled with quarterbacks play extending, quarterbacks getting out of the pocket. So once I saw the first couple reads weren't there, I found a window and made it get out. Because they run a lot of match coverage, whether it's one high or two high. Underneath they're all matched, eyes are off the quarterback, so at that point it's taking a run.

Q. Desmond, you might have answered this already, but the touchdown pass to Bijan, how much did you actually see Bijan versus see the rusher coming and just kind of know maybe where you were throwing to a spot?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. I didn't really feel the rusher. I knew he was coming and whoever was coming was coming hot. And I just saw the back of Demario's jersey and Bijan running with him. And like I told Bijan, at that point that was just backyard ball, threw it off the back of my foot, gave him a ball he could go get, trusted him. Like I said, we repped it before, and that was the play we ran earlier in the game that I actually scrambled on, kind of ran into Kyle down there in the red zone, and we went back to it, got a different look, and we executed it.

Q. Early in the game you guys went out for fourth and two. What was supposed to happen on that play?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, I mean we were supposed to get a first down.

Q. Right.

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah, no.

Q. I mean, was that a bad decision on you to keep it?

DESMOND RIDDER: No. We ended up kind of filtering it through wrong up front. We had two ended up coming off outside, so if you're handing it off, Tyler is getting smacked. I pulled it. I got a guy sitting on me waiting outside. So we

go back, I could probably re-idea better, work things out, and we'll get it blocked up.

Q. From talking to a couple of your teammates it sounds like maybe the last two weeks before the bye you guys maybe felt a little sluggish overall. Did you sense that, too, because you've talked a lot about energy in the last like five, six days. Is that kind of what you were referring to in some ways?

DESMOND RIDDER: Yeah. I wouldn't say sluggish. But sometimes, like we said, it's week nine, ten, eleven, twelve.

Things can start to get in a routine and become repetitive and go day after day, week after week, and sometimes guys can get lost in that. Obviously, especially rookies obviously, me being a rookie last year, and you know, it's a long season. And obviously those rookies aren't used to it, but just everyone in general, it's a long season. So just being everyone having the energy and passion to come up here every single day, go to work and get better. That's something we gotta keep up and keep that energy going.

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