

# Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

Sunday, December 10, 2023  
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

## Coach Arthur Smith Postgame Press Conference



Falcons 25, Buccaneers 29

**Q. Coach, the offense was able to get moving late. What happened on the last stand for the defense there?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Couple things. You got to give Tampa credit. You know, made some plays. Obviously hit some plays on the outside or had some breakers, and, you know, got the big first down. They got the chunk yardage and obviously the one for the go-ahead touchdown with the tight end.

So we had plenty of opportunities really in all three phases. Credit to Tampa. Obviously frustrated losing like that, but plenty of opportunities. We'll get back to work.

**Q. On the last play, was that ball supposed to go into the end zone?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, yes, but it's also what you're trying to set up. So similar -- probably didn't develop the same way, similar to that (indiscernible) play. If anybody saw that. That's pretty common in the game. Don't have a shot, you know, if you got something underneath, but, yeah.

Got to take another look at it, too, but that was what we were trying to do.

**Q. And then the other critical error was right before the -- get the safety, you get the ball back, miss the field goal, and then get the ball to start the second half and not able to put a couple things together there.**

ARTHUR SMITH: We had opportunities. Yeah, we did. Obviously I believe we missed two field goals. Had decent field position at times. Had our opportunities. Same way on defense. That's the NFL.

Like I said, we found a way to get back and made some plays late. Were able to go ahead. Unfortunately they

made one more play than we did.

Yeah, there was plenty of opportunity.

**Q. You guys held Mike Evans to one catch for eight yards. What were you doing to basically take him out of the unfortunate game?**

ARTHUR SMITH: That was the plan, and that's why you saw some -- probably their run game was working better, and to their credit, they stayed patient. They didn't get greedy.

Yeah, Mike is a great player. Held him pretty well for the most part. Obviously they made one more play than we did late.

**Q. What do you say to them right now? That was such a seems like up and down and very emotional game as well.**

ARTHUR SMITH: Sure. Yeah, and it was. You know, both teams fighting, you're dealing with a lot during the game as you're trying to adjust. Unfortunately had a run here the last two weeks of some injuries.

A lot of different O-line men were playing, some D-linemen were playing, and it's our job to problem solve and find ways to go win.

But when you look at that, we're all going to be frustrated, but we got to regroup and fix what was at issue today. We got to get back on track, because we still got a lot of opportunity ahead of us.

**Q. You talked about wanting to see progress incremental progress? Is it happening fast enough?**

ARTHUR SMITH: That's a subjective question. I understand the question, Josh. At the end of the game, thought we made some big plays, big throws. Every game you look at there is always things we can all do better.

Like always, we got to go back and watch the film.



**Q. The hitch on the safety, he didn't get any help on the block on the backside there. Is that coached to come out first time without that hit?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Again, I got to watch the film. You take a risk on every play. We liked the look. Trying to get the ball to Drake. We've been pretty conservative back there. Unfortunately they brought pressure.

You know, things happen in a -- you talk about a half second here or there. So I got to really look at it. We're not in the blame game. You take a risk there and they made a play, and I got to go back and watch the tape.

**Q. How do you did you think your offensive line held up down three starters most of the game?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, that's what you're trying to do, problem solve, make sure those guys got into the fold. That's why we preach development. It was Tyler Vrabel's first action. Storm played. Neuzil's first real meaningful action as a starter at center. Chris came out for a minute; Kyle went in there.

Unfortunately, Street game out. Travis Bell, who we got a couple weeks ago was in there grinding it out. That's what have to do. That's the NFL.

Unfortunately, Josh, you get in the game like that, and we had our opportunities. Credit to Tampa. We came up short.

**Q. Looked like Andre Smith, Jr. punched out a ball on that last drive.**

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah.

**Q. Did you call timeout in hopes that they would review it? Did you receive an explanation?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, I did. That was a judgment call because I thought the ball came out. I thought he had it.

You know, they went to hurry up to try to snap it, so I did, I used the one mechanism I had, which was to call a timeout.

The ball did come out, but they said there was no clear recovery, so that's way it went.

**Q. In terms of Jake, is there a concern he's going to be out a while?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Again, have to see tomorrow. He was ready to go back in if he had to. Obviously didn't feel great;

that's why he didn't. Hope to get some good news tomorrow with a lot of those guys.

We'll go from there.

**Q. In terms of what this does, you've talked a lot about maybe not the situation you want to be in, but you're still in the divisional race. How do you approach that with these guys now? It's even maybe more muddled than it would've been had you guys won.**

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, we had our opportunities. Credit to Tampa. I guess we didn't get it done today, but we're not -- spirit is not broken. We have opportunities. It'll be a wild adventure towards the end of the NFL season. You guys have seen it. It changes so much week to week.

We got to get ready to go. Get on the road and go to Charlotte, and we have to win that game. It's kind of what it is. Down the stretch we have to playoff type game like today and was, and thankfully we got another opportunity next week.

**Q. How do you not let a loss like that become demoralizing?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Because it won't. Watch our guys play. I mean, it's been our spirit. Unfortunately we've lost -- we've won some games in the clutch and we lost a couple. But this team never, never has ever had their spirit broken. Certainly that won't happen.

We know it's a tough challenge every week. I'm not predicting anything, but just look at the evidence and watch the results today.

It felt -- we had some opportunities we missed. They were bring a lot of pressure, jumping a lot of things. We tried to back them off. It was a give and take. We made some plays in the fourth quarter and game could've gone any other way.

All you need is the evidence, and obviously we need to get on the other side of one column. So that's not -- not sitting here trying to celebrate losing a closes game. That would be my answer. Evidence of watching us week in and week out.

**Q. Drake had a career high, including the 45 yarder at the end of the day. Obviously Desmond has a ton of confidence in him.**

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah. Absolutely. We have a lot of the confidence in a lot of those guys. He had some opportunities, and kept calling his number.

Like I said, I got to look at the one in the end, what you're trying to set up. Obviously we know we got to get in the end zone there.

But the way they backed off, and, again, I got to watch that, but, so, yeah, he played it well.

**Q. The interception that Davis had early on.**

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, an alert on a bubble. A little bit late, they change the covers, went to a -- rolled into a two, to a cloud corner, so a lot of things we could -- we could have done better there.

**Q. Is maybe the most frustrating part of this for you that you had opportunities that were clearly missed, whether it was the safety, two missed field goals? Like you said, they really rolled coverage on what in theory would've a safe play on the interception.**

ARTHUR SMITH: You know, we just got to look at it. That's the NFL. I'm sure they can say they had a couple opportunities they could have done something better. You know, obviously not happy when you lose a game like that. Like I said, we can be really frustrated, but, again, our job is to go back tomorrow and find a way to get the stuff fixed, get cleaner, and thankfully we have another opportunity.

That's the reality of it. We have another opportunity thankfully in front of us.

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