

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

Friday, October 4, 2024
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Kirk Cousins

Postgame Press Conference



Falcons 36, Buccaneers 30

KIRK COUSINS: What a night. I'm exhausted. Proud of the way our team fought. Proud of the way resiliency we showed to just keep going, keep playing, play through things. Proud of the grit. That's what this league takes.

We were gritty tonight. Win or loss, I would've been pleased with the offense tonight, but it's a lot of fun to be able to be on the field with your teammates and your home fans. Love the environment tonight. Great energy.

Tampa is a good football team. Thought they played well all game long. Zac kind of put the ball in the pass game's hands tonight and let us spread it around. Players made plays.

Grateful for the progress we've made as an offense in the last four days as an offense. As a group moving forward. ^ felt like we took another step tonight. Take some questions.

Q. 509 passing yards tonight, a record. Can you summarize what that means for you but also to the organization right now as well?

KIRK COUSINS: You know, the key is we got more at-bats. We had some games this season that has 50-some plays, so 30 more plays. That's like another third of a game.

Just gives you more chances to spread it around, get guys involve, be productive. We talked about we got to be on the field for that production. To be on the field we need to be avoiding penalties, converting third downs.

Still fought against penalties all game long. Felt like we were able to be on the field more which made a difference.

Q. Five different receivers with over 60 yards. Receiving tonight. You talk about the game being in the pass game's hands. What was working for you

guys as things really came down to the wire?

KIRK COUSINS: I think we spread it around. That's how we're built, is to get a lot of people involved. We have a lot of trust in several skill position players.

It was pretty heavy drop back, spread it around, and proud of the way guys fought, made plays, got open, caught difficult catches.

We took another step tonight.

Q. Going into the bye 2-0 in the division, I asked you last week what it would be to have done it. Now you've done it. How do you feel about that?

KIRK COUSINS: I'm pleased with 302. Makes the weekend a little more enjoyable. There is so much football left, so we've given ourselves a little bit of a wind at our back, given ourselves a step in the right direction.

Now we got build on that.

But so much football that you're going to enjoy these two, three days, and then get right back to work and keep your foot on the gas, because when you let up, it can hurt you. Looking forward to that challenge ahead.

Q. (Regarding finding Kyle Pitts.)

KIRK COUSINS: Same answer when we didn't find him. I go where my reads take me. I never drop back and say, where is Kyle? Let me play to him. When you have 81 plays, 58 attempts, that gives you that opportunity. He did such a good job after the catch turning five, six, seven-yard catches into much bigger gains.

Q. What does a win of that nature do you're your confidence?

KIRK COUSINS: Well, you hope it pushes us forward, builds confidence. But remains to be seen. You know, the other side is does anybody get complacent and think we can go out there and just do that, which you can't.



Important thing is to come back when we get back together Monday and really stay on it, have the same sense of urgency, fight that we had tonight every day.

Q. Could you discuss the touchdown play at the end from your vantage point?

KIRK COUSINS: I can. I will discuss it. I played a lot of football. That one is going go down as a memorable one. Man coverage, not an ideal route for man coverage, so I was expecting to progress back side.

But the corner didn't attach as fast as I thought he would. I thought, you know what? I'll just drill it on him, avoid a sack, get out of dodge, and move to second or third and four.

Put the ball in his outside half because I felt the corner drive it on his inside half. He pulls out of it, and was I just kind of standing back there. We call him Red. I said go Red, go.

Man coverage he's able to split the defense. At that point there is a reason we have him on our football team. He can pull away from people.

What an unbelievable play. We won the toss, or when we kicked the field goal to go to overtime the narrative was on the sideline, we score a touchdown, game over.

I thought, well, yeah, but you guys are acting like it's easy to go down and score a touchdown. With the way Red did it, I guess they were right. That was fun.

Q. First of all, apologize. I feel like I was responsible for you going viral last week when I asked you the question about intensity and you talked about swag surfing and everything.

KIRK COUSINS: I love it.

Q. Anybody teach you how to do that?

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah.

Q. Also talk about how great it was just to celebrate with the team like that.

KIRK COUSINS: It's so fun. That's why you play. That's why you play. I was taught this week by Taylor Rooks at Amazon. Sat down with her. She's from Atlanta and she taught me how to do it.

The key is when the beat drops. Initially it gets going, gets everybody in the stadium aware of it, but when the beat

drops, that's when it really gets going.

It's good energy. There is a lot of good songs they played throughout the game. Good environment. But that one does it for me.

Q. Kirk, physically you look like you're 100%. Do you feel that way? Like 26 instead of 36?

KIRK COUSINS: That's a good question. I think I feel somewhere in between there. I feel good. I think being a pocket passer, and I've talked to some retired quarterbacks and asked them, do I need to be a scrambler to maintain the production in this league, because there is so many talented running quarterbacks?

The feedback I got was, no. You're always going to have to do it from the pocket. Be accurate. That's the key.

So that's kind of the way I've always played. I think it sets me up well as I get older to be able to still do it even if my body isn't at its best, because standing back there from the pocket, you know, you don't have to be quite the same athlete.

No, I feel good.

Q. So do you feel you've fully recovered from the injury?

KIRK COUSINS: I do, yeah. Yeah, I do. And then there is always the bumps and bruises that come from playing. My thumb hurts right now. My left knee. You're always going to have stuff. Just play through it.

Q. Kirk, two questions: One, you were here Sunday and you were I think kind of downcast, talking about going to have to send a lot of voice memos and all those things. At what point, and I don't know if it always works this way, but at what point do you start to think, okay, I think this offense is going to take a step forward on Thursday night?

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah.

Q. And the other thing is does this feel like this is how you normally play or like I feel really, really sharp tonight? How would you describe that?

KIRK COUSINS: It was a drive in the second quarter when I threw a couple passes where I was basically anticipating where Kyle was going to be or where Drake was going to be. I was ahead of it a little bit in a good way and threw it decisively.

I just haven't been that decisive the first few weeks. I've been trying to ensure that's where they're going and ensure that's what I'm seeing before I let it rip.

Felt tonight there was a little bit more now after four games, no, I know where they're going, where they're going to be. I'm going to let that rip early.

I think that helped me.

So the anticipation took another step tonight, and that's what I was used to kind of having when you play with guys for three, four, five, six years.

Can feel it starting to come.

Q. Second drive, touchdown drive, you all were able to overcome (indiscernible) which you weren't able to do on Sunday, (indiscernible.) 24 yarder. Can you discuss how you all can dig in and overcome a couple first and 20s?

KIRK COUSINS: I said in the fourth quarter, I said I'm sick and tired of first and 20. We were having a hard time. You shouldn't be able to overcome it really. I'm glad we did a few times. That's not the recipe for success. We have to avoid the penalties, and some of them are hard to know what exactly took place.

But, you know, even a five yard penalty is a lot more manageable than these ten or fifteen yarders. Made life tough for ourselves at times with these penalties.

Q. You mentioned not too long ago, you were talking about taking a step in the right direction with this offense. I know that you always want to improve things. You watch the film and find things to fix. How much was tonight an indicator of not only what you think you're capable of but where this offense is going?

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah, it's a step in the right direction. It's such a week to week league. Can be all over the map. You just never know what the next game will bring and what the next game will call for.

But when you have 81 snaps and 58 pass attempts, you certainly get some opportunities to spread it around, and we were able to do that tonight.

Q. And then you've clearly played in a lot of crazy games in your career. Where does this one sit for you?

KIRK COUSINS: This is up there. I've played some crazy

games that have been on the losing end, and so to come out with one like this in overtime, walk off at home, Thursday night, against a good football team in the division, it was a great performance.

They showed a lot of character, a lot of resilience. We had to claw our way back into the game late. You know, gratefully won the coin toss. You know, it was a big night. One I'll remember, yeah.

Q. Kirk, just to follow up on that, when you threw the pick did you think it was over?

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah, I kind of did, Jared. I kind of felt like, you know, fourth and 15, I was thinking I needed to go up to Drake and throw a high ball it Drake.

I don't know, I saw a window to Mooney and I didn't get to put as much on the ball as I wanted and Tae made a great play.

I walked off the field thinking, there it is. Weren't able to do it.

But defense stood up, forced them to punt, which is a big deal, and then found a way and played with fire a little bit by trying to rip that slant in there and get a silent clock and one second left. But we did it and Koo made the kick.

Q. When you win games the way you guys have, three out of the last four, could have been four out of four.

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah.

Q. What does that do for the psyche of this team or the confidence?

KIRK COUSINS: It may remain to be seen a little bit. We've got to go prove that we're building character and we can build on it. That's still out in front of us.

We also found a way to lose one of those games against the Chiefs. It goes both ways. That's pro football.

But we got a lot of young players too have -- I mean, I sat with a guy pre-game in the hotel, eating the pre-game meal and he said, I've never played a Thursday game.

I looked him like, I've played like 12, what do you mean you never played one? I've been in the league two years and never had one. I was like, oh, my goodness.

Sometimes I'm reminded how young some of these guys are. So to put these experiences on the wall I think helps us build in the right direction.



Q. Kirk, that you did that on a night where Matt Ryan, you break Matt Ryan's record, a night that he goes up in the Ring of Honor. Does that mean anything else different to you, that like that happened on this night specifically?

KIRK COUSINS: No. I just wanted Matt to be able to have a special night and be able to kind of enjoy all that he's earn and worked for.

You know, he was just so consistent for so long. Probably above all, I know how hard it is to keep showing up week in and week out, year in and year out, stay healthy and be productive and consistent.

That's who Matt was. You talk about character, grit, resolve. He had all that in spades.

You know, I remember being a rookie and watching him play. I was just a back up and just trying to study him from the sideline. I admired his game and wanted my game to look like his.

So I saw him -- he was walking out as I was walking in at halftime. Got his attention. I said, hey, Matt, congrats. It's something that is pretty special. I don't know that I'll have an opportunity to be in a Ring of Honor, so it's just a special deal for him to be able to do that.

Q. For you tonight to hit 500, does that mean anything to you specifically? Have you hit 500 at any point in college?

KIRK COUSINS: Fitzzy asked me on the field. He said you hit 500 in Pop Warner? I said, no, I didn't hit 400 until the NFL, and this is the first time doing that.

Honestly, I mean, needed an extra quarter to get there with overtime. Zac kept putting the ball in my hand. Gave me a lot of at-bats; 58 attempts, 81 plays.

It's amazing what you can do when you're out there on the field and get more chances.

Q. What did you say to KhaDarel when he made the touchdown, got up to him and saw him.

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah.

Q. What's it mean for a guy like that who is not the No. 1, No. 2 receiver to step up in a huge moment?

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah, he only substituted in because Drake was down for a second. You know, Red, we call

him Red, he just has made plays all through camp. He shows up on special teams all the time. You're coming from Prairie View; to get noticed out of college, you got to have some serious tape and put stuff like he did tonight on tape to get noticed.

So doesn't surprise me. Once he pulled out of that catch he ran away from everybody I thought, that's probably how he got in this league and probably how he stayed in this league, because he can do stuff like that.

So grateful we didn't have to trot our red zone offense out there on the three yard line. He just ended it. What a great play by him.

Q. A couple people in the locker room have suggested you guys had to go away from your game plan tonight, what you guys came in with, kind of sling the ball a little bit more; is that pretty accurate?

KIRK COUSINS: I think Zac was planning on slinging it around. I don't know. He could probably tell you. I think Zac felt -- as we got going, he felt like that was our best chance tonight.

When you do that, you open yourself up a little bit to some sacks and some challenges that come with throwing the football.

But tried to stay in positive down and distances to keep giving us that chance. You ask a lot of the O-line when you have 58 pass attempts, so those guys really handled that and just did a great job protecting all night.

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