

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

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Raheem Morris

Postgame Press Conference



Atlanta 27 - Dallas 21

Q. Coach, did you plan to discuss the business meeting on offense and the ability to get a pass rush in the game today?

RAHEEM MORRIS: Yeah, that was absolutely outstanding. We talked about going out and what it looks like to be the best version of ourselves on offense. We still hadn't seen it. We had a couple of setbacks there, whether it's been the holding, whether you agree or disagree really doesn't matter, or whether it's been penalties that's kind of set us back to now allow us to be as good as we possibly can be, so we're still searching for that greatness, right? The in perfect game where you're constantly searching for perfection, as a good friend of mine would say.

And then on the pass rush, man, that was absolutely outstanding to see come to life, right? To see your practice preparation and your practice performance become game reality like it did for the pass rush is something that you like to see. The ability to go out there and be able to use different guys, different players, to be able to keep those guys fresh, gotta give a lot of credit to our coaching staff, gotta give a lot of credit to Jimmy Lake and being able to be efficient to able to call those things and get those guys out there in the mandatory fashion and special teams just keeps showing up every single week making plays.

Q. Any update on Drake London and Grady Jarrett's injuries?

RAHEEM MORRIS: You know, I was kind of focused on the game, but obviously Drake was out, and then obviously at some point Grady got ruled out. Looking forward to getting those guys rested and recovered, getting those guys back as soon as possible, whatever that is. But I'm very proud of the guys that were able to step up and fill roles in those shoes, whether it was Kentavious Street, or we had the ability to get Red out there and be able to go out there for Drake, and whoever else has been asked to step up on this team has done an outstanding job.

Q. You held them to 3 of 13 on third down and 1 of 5 on fourth down. One of those was a big stop by Kaden Elliss in the second quarter that led to a touchdown. How big was that?

RAHEEM MORRIS: Huge, man. Just gave him the game ball; 13 tackles, I believe, the sack on the day. I think you mentioned the big fourth down stop. All of those things, just team ball, be able to get the ball back there with the short field and go down and score, all of those guys playing together and playing for each other are really important in this game of football that we all love, and it's always nice when you get a chance to go out there and get a win doing that.

Q. I imagine that you expected Kirk Cousins to play well, but I'm wondering, the way he is playing, where does it fall on the scale of what you thought you were getting when he got here?

RAHEEM MORRIS: Are we talking about today or just in general?

Q. Of late.

RAHEEM MORRIS: You know, I mean, Kirk Cousins is still doing exactly what I thought he was. He's poised; he's able to get the ball around and spread around. He can do all the things that we described when we first met going way back to the Combine. Talking about what we were looking for, what we had to go get. I wasn't taking shots at anybody when we said it the first time, I know we took it that way, but realistically is having the ability to get a quarterback in here that absolutely deal to all of the guys that we have, all the different talent that we have. Whether it's Drake, whether it's Kyle Pitts, whether it's Mooney. Whether it's Bijan. He's just a play maker. Last week he showed us he can run a little bit, better than we thought, particularly at the beginning of the season, and he's been able to go out there each week and get better and better, and I am so proud of him, and more importantly, I'm more proud of his leadership that he's been able to show throughout the whole process. Whether it's been in his quarterback room or spread throughout the team, I think it's

just been awesome.

Q. How does the way he's playing right now affect the way you game plan? By that I mean you might have thought that you all would run the ball a lot against Dallas today, and it looked like maybe you tried, and then Kirk is hot again, and so we're just going to roll with that.

RAHEEM MORRIS: You know, realistically for us, it's go out there and do what they're giving us, you know. Like they probably thought the same thing, they gotta go buckle down in the run. They had a couple big-time play side internals. 13 made a bunch of big plays in the back field running through, but that opens up things for us on the back end. When you open up things for us on the back end, it can get ugly for you, and I love the way Kirk is able to see the whole process, go through it and be able to get the ball where he needs to get it to.

And some of those timely fourth downs, a lot of that aggressive play call mentality is because of the guy you have, the people that's doing it, the execution that you know is going to get done. Zack Robinson, another great game for him and all those guys. His coach, T.J. and D.J. and what they're able to do to keep me poised, keep us in the mindset of what we want to do and how aggressive we want to be.

Q. How big was it to have the first and third quarters have the defense hold Dallas to three points? I mean in a close game like that, to have six points in two quarters. That seems like a big deal.

RAHEEM MORRIS: Yeah, defensive life is just you're going to be angry regardless, right? So I'm going to go in there and talk to Jimmy like he's going to be made about the last touchdown that we gave up. But like when you go out there and you're able to get stops and you hold guys, particularly when it's coming out of halftime or you're talking about when the ball gets flipped to those guys and you're able to stop the guys hold them to three. They kicked the long field goal, I believe. That was always awesome, and I am so proud with the grope mindset of our whole team. We watched that happen to our offense and then we became this hot offense that everybody wanted to talk about, and now we're going to watch it happen with our defense because of the trust and the belief that I have in the guys doing it and the guys coaching it and the guys leading it. And I just think that the sky is the limit, and we gotta go out there and keep getting better and better every single week.

Q. Coach, I know this was a great team win, but personally for you, this is your first win over Dallas

since 2019. What emotions do you have?

RAHEEM MORRIS: Is that true? The first win since what?

Q. 2019. If that's wrong, then --

RAHEEM MORRIS: I don't even know. Well, it's awesome. Forget Jerry Jones. No, just kidding. (Laughs).

No. It's always big every time you go out and get a win, and I don't hold grudges or hold anything personal against anyone. I really just like going out and having a team have success and being able to spread the wealth and spread the love amongst our franchise, our organization, our people, our players, our coaches alike and everybody that helps and everything that we do. So like I really don't look at it that way, but if that's the case, that's awesome.

Q. What did you think of the offensive line play, especially with the Ray Ray touchdown? He was maybe the third or fourth option. It seems like they were just giving him more time than usual to throw and stay in the pocket.

RAHEEM MORRIS: Zach, I know you've been around the last couple of weeks, man, but it's been kind of going down that way, man, giving Kirk the ability to go through his progressions. And when you have a quarterback that has the ability to be able to do that, you gotta hold up the extra tick and be able to string a little bit longer. And to watch those guys go out and string every single week the last couple of weeks or whatever it's been has been amazing. It's been outstanding.

Like the known passing situations, whether it be fourth down, third down, second-and-long, some of those things, these guys have gone out there and done just a marvelous job all around.

Q. You guys have been focused since the Seattle game. Anything in particular that you've done to kind of get them more focused the last couple of games?

RAHEEM MORRIS: I think the mindset, when you're talking about focus, is just to be absolutely clear and obsessed with your process, and I think the guys -- when you're able to point the things that you do wrong out to the guys and be able to be really clear and transparent in your messaging when we're talking about everything that we do and what it takes. I think those are the things that the guys give them something to focus on to be able to go out and make sure we have the right mindset.

And then it's also nice to throw some subtle reminders up there what it looks like when you don't have that focus and



that mindset that you need in order to go out there and win these home games that you want to go out there and win, particularly when people are coming in, whether they had a loss or coming off a losing streak. And I was able to use that example this week to the utmost and the highest level with those guys giving them a nice friendly reminder on what it looked like when we approach the game the right way.

Q. We talked about pass rush a lot. What was different this week? It seemed like DeAngelo Malone was getting more reps than he has been.

RAHEEM MORRIS: More people, different people. Kentavious Street got back up on the board. We were able to get DeAngelo back out there. We were able to get A.K. some more reps. We were able to get people out there in more significant roles in the times that we wanted to get them out there.

We also played a team that was doing some hurry-up offense and needed to pass the ball a little bit more than you normally would. With us having the ability to go out there and get a lead from the offensive standpoint. With us being able to run the football, that shortened the game. They gave us a little time to possess in edge until it wasn't, but that made us get more opportunities to rush the passer and we were able to see the fruits of that today.

Q. It's been a while since the Falcons were 6 and 3. Just your thoughts on that. I know there's more football, left to play but just general thoughts.

RAHEEM MORRIS: I know he wants more than six wins, and I know it's my job to go out there and get it. So, like, this organization deserves more, and this team deserves more. These coaches deserve more, and we are hungry, man. We just want to go out there and keep getting them.

Q. Raphael Haynes with the 3 point conversion. Bijan played a big part in the game, but he had a block on that Mooney touchdown that locked the linebacker who was blitzing. Is that the type of example as far as what you see in the team as far as of late, as far as winning, just playing that type of team ball?

RAHEEM MORRIS: He does everything. You know, like I can't say enough positive things about Bijan. Like running the football, blocking on protection, catching the ball out the back field, scoring touchdowns, cheering for his guys, being locked and loaded, being a positive leader, our inspiration behind everything we do, what he does in our community. I mean, he is the definition on what is a Falcon. And when we put that slide up, Terry and I, and we talk about going and looking for these people and our

process of bringing them in here, you can just put a picture up of Bijan and say that is it at the highest level, now where do we work from there.

Q. Overall would you say this is the most complete game the team has played so far this season?

RAHEEM MORRIS: Hard to say right now before I watch the tape, but when you talk about some of the complementary things that happened, I was pretty positive. I can say that was a really good feeling and a good look. There's been some really well-done, complete games orchestrated by these guys on the comeback and the execution of a slider with a timeout, kicking a long field goal to put you in overtime, going out there on offense and executing, being able to run right down the field and score, not let them go back out there, while at the same time causing some big-time turnovers in that Tampa game. It's hard to put this game over that until I can go back and watch it and get a chance to look at it, if that makes sense.

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