

# Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

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Atlanta, Georgia, USA

## Kirk Cousins

### Postgame Press Conference



Los Angeles Charges 17 - Atlanta Falcons 13

KIRK COUSINS: I'll start and I can take any questions. Obviously disappointing outcome, disappointing play. I look to myself and say I gotta play better. It hurts when you feel like your defense played winning football, you feel like your special teams made big plays, felt like the run game did a solid job. I gotta play better, and so take responsibility and you go back and kind of have to watch with a really, really critical eye and talk about how can I make sure this never happens again and that's the mindset. So disappointed right now. It hurts. Feel like that was a game we had a chance to win if I played the standard I expect to play at, and take any questions you have.

**Q. Kirk, do you think maybe it was probably a better time to kind of get a game like this out of the way heading into Minnesota?**

KIRK COUSINS: I don't know. I don't think it's ever a good time for it. I think whether it had been -- every game I say this -- a great performance, a bad performance, anything in between, you have to treat it as a (indiscernible) and be able to get back on the horse and get to work the next week, and this week is no different. So that's how you approach it.

**Q. Kirk, outside of the four interceptions, it seems like you all were able to pick up chunks of yardage. Like the drives were lengthy. So what do you think outside of interceptions in that final third that you can clean up to finally punch the ball in the end zone?**

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah. I thought we did fail to get in the end zone at the end of drives and just a couple of those pass plays that we weren't able to connect on. Each one kind of had its own reason. They did a good job in coverage, and they do a good job of mixing rushing coverage, and made it hard to get points.

**Q. Kirk, on the interception you had there in the end**

**zone, what were you trying to do there? What did you see?**

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah, I just saw Drake as I kind of ran up, I just wanted -- he's so good at going up and I just thought I'm going to give him a chance to kind of go up. But it was just trying to do too much. I think I can just throw that ball away. I think in rhythm may have been able to kick it to Darnell Mooney as well. So need to go back and watch that. But I just kind of misinterpreted where I could put the ball to Drake and tried to give him a jump ball.

**Q. I don't know how much being hot versus being cold athletically is a real thing, but the last three games haven't gone the way you've personally wanted them to. Do you have to do something to snap out of that? Does that sort of become a thing or is it all separate play to play?**

KIRK COUSINS: Well, certainly when you haven't played at the standard you want to a few weeks in a row, you know, you do want to change that, turn it around. I've never felt -- whether you're playing really well for several weeks in a row, I've never felt like the games carry over or vice versa. You just have to perform the best you can each week. Yeah, I think there's plays in the Saints game you look back outside of the interception of the end of the game felt pretty good about the execution, and then the Denver game certainly those first two drives good execution and just weren't able to sustain it and then this game certainly the turnovers, you know. So it's not any one thing that's showing up every game. You just have to go back and try to become better as a player and tough game like this gives you certainly an opportunity to do that.

**Q. Where do you think this team's confidence is at this point?**

KIRK COUSINS: Well, I feel our defense played a high level football today, and that's the thing is that it's team, it's complementary football. So we all have to do it together to create the result we want, and so I think our defense confidence should be high coming off of this game. I think there's a lot of players on offense who played at a high



level and fought really hard and executed well. So I think there's no reason to not just get back to work and believe that we can go out and play at a high level moving forward.

**Q. You've forgotten more about the game than I know. It seems like so much of this game is mental, right, and whether it's double pumps, maybe a pause in decision. For someone who's had so much success, is it a shock to the system? You don't let that doubt creep into your mind, do you?**

KIRK COUSINS: No. I think it's just disappointing. It's just disappointing. It's hard to feel good about it. So you just gotta get back on the horse and get back to work and play your best up ahead and look forward. But you don't gloss over it either. You're hard on yourself and try to learn a lot from it.

**Q. Kirk, how do you feel physically at this point to your arm and everything else?**

KIRK COUSINS: I feel pretty good. I feel I think today coming off the bye week felt really good. So I would love to tell that you I'm fighting through something, but that's not the case. I think I felt as good today as I have all season.

**Q. Being a veteran is it easier to get out of something like this than it would have been say five or ten years ago?**

KIRK COUSINS: Potentially. Potentially. I think it always helps to have experience and to draw from that, and so I certainly have that and potentially could help. But you gotta go do it.

**Q. Kirk, on the pick six, it looked like it might have been a little miscommunication with you and the target. Could you please tell us what happened on that play?**

KIRK COUSINS: No. It wasn't miscommunication. I just think it was a poor decision. Always trying to be maybe a bit too quick of a decision, be a little too decisive, if you will. I should have just let it develop a little longer, feel that, okay, it's covered and progress, which really is what probably needed to happen. A little too decisive.

**Q. Coming off a bye week and having time to recharge and now several games ahead of you, how do you not let this moment snowball?**

KIRK COUSINS: I think it's every week, whether it's a good game, a poor game, you have to get back and work hard to prepare and to not let your guard down after a good game, to not press after a poor game. You just have to

kind of be steady and go through your process and try to chase that consistency, and that's what all of us are chasing every week, and regardless of an outcome, you feel like that's always a challenge that you're trying to handle.

**Q. Kirk, you all were able to limit some of those penalties on offense. Was there something tangible or mental that you all did during the bye week to limit those?**

KIRK COUSINS: No. I don't have a great answer for you there. It is important to stay out of penalties. I think it did help us today. But nothing specific I can point to.

**Q. As a leader, knowing you're putting this one on your shoulders, what is your message to the rest of the offense and even the defense about moving past this one and getting ready to play your former team, the Vikings?**

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah. I think, no, it's similar to what I've been saying here the last few minutes. Just have to get back to work, understand each game is its own entity and just plan on putting together the right preparation all week long to be able to go to your next opponent and play your absolute best.

**Q. Kirk, the team is 500 and you're still in first place in the NFC South. So does that kind of buffer what just happened?**

KIRK COUSINS: Well, I certainly think that some of these questions have been about moving forward, and I think when we're in a situation like you just articulated, that's why moving forward is really important, because we have so much football ahead of us that if we can execute at a high level and win, we do have what we want to go get. So that's where the moving forward part is really important.

**Q. Raheem said there was never a doubt to go to Michael, there was never a doubt that it would be anybody but you moving forward. To say that now, to have your back, what does it mean to you as you get ready for the final stretch?**

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah, no, I think there's no entitlement in the NFL. You just have to go earn it, and if it ever was that, I wouldn't want it. I need to play a level that justifies being out there, and so that's the way I'll always view it, and so I've always felt through my whole 13 years that it should never be about anything but earning the right to be out there.

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