

# Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

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Atlanta, Georgia, USA

## Michael Penix, Jr. Postgame Press Conference



New York Giants 7 - Atlanta Falcons 34

**Q. Mike, can you just talk about the win today, your preparation and then the fact that it's over and the results?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: Yeah, man, it was great. Man, I've been preparing each and every day for this day. I always prepare like I'm starting, even though I wasn't at first. But it's a blessing to be able to come out here and get a big-time win for the team, and defense played a heck of a game. Big credit to those guys. Two touchdowns on the defensive side of the ball, and the offensive line, the way they played, kept me clean all game, and obviously getting the ball to the play makers that we have, they're going to make plays, and they did all game. So it was such a blessing, and it was a great game, great team game.

**Q. You've been in this league playing before, in terms of earlier in the season. But did it feel different?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: I mean, yeah. It's different. Being a starter, you're up there, the other two times that I got to play, we were down, and it's a different feeling in the game at that point. But being out there first snap, it felt a little different, but I was excited, I was ready for the moment.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about your interaction with Kirk Cousins before the game and then just your overall evaluation of your first performance in the NFL?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: Yeah, man. Kirk has been great all week, just always being there for me, anything I needed help with. He's been great. He's a great leader, great teammate, and we talk all the time. Coming off on the sidelines, he always asked me what I saw and he continued to encourage me throughout the whole game. And what was the second part of the question.

**Q. Your evaluation of your first performance in the NFL?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: Yeah. There's always going to be things that you look back on that you could clean up. I feel like I could have did a couple things better, and we'll get that cleaned up. But it was a blessing that I was able to come out with a win and whatever needs to get fixed, it'll show on film and we'll make sure we target that throughout this week so that we'll be ready next week.

**Q. You got your first start out of the way. Now you're going to get your fist Sunday night football coming up. What's your thoughts on playing in Washington on a Sunday night, playing in a must-win type of situation?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: Yeah. Like I said, just take it one day at this time. I always live by the 1 and 0 mindset, just go one day at a time. So each and every day I practice just make sure that I'm preparing and make sure that whenever game time do come, we're 100 percent ready and we got everything down and we feel good about the game plan, and just go out there and execute. That's what it's going to come down to is execution. Yeah, it's a must-win game, but that's not how we're looking at it. We're looking at it as just the next game, we gotta win each and every game and that's our mentality going in each and every week.

**Q. You looked like you were totally composed out there. Were you as composed as you looked?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: Yeah, man. I was. Man, I'm just blessed. Like I said, right before the game, I just let God take over, you know. I know that I'm here for a reason. I worked extremely hard to get to this position, and I just had to go out there and execute, and we executed to get a win today. So big credit to the defense as well, like I said. So it was great.

**Q. Thinking about that one play in the second quarter where you were about to be sacked and you kind of got rid of the ball without getting an intentional grounding call on it. Talk about that. It was like you'd been there before in that type of situation.**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: I mean, I've played a lot of football.



So I've been in a lot of situations before. I thought I should have broke that tackle, I should have got out of it. But he had me and he was about to tackle me, and I saw Drake and I knew I could throw it at his feet to save some yards. So that's what I did.

**Q. Were there any moments of nervousness coming out I mean for the first NFL start? Again, you looked incredibly composed like it was just another day, I've been doing this for 15 years, but were there any moments you had to kind of catch yourself or kind of revel in it a little bit or prevent yourself from revelling in the moment a little bit?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: Yeah. I mean you do feel that stuff, but once I hit the field, it goes away. It's the game I've been playing since I was five years old, and obviously it's different, it's at a high level. But it's the same game. I just gotta go out there and execute. So once we hit the field, I was good.

**Q. You said earlier this week you would be nervous during the running out to the field portion of the game and then once you got out there, you would be good. Did you nail that part of it? You got it?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: Yeah. Yeah. Exactly what I talked about. I was good once I hit the field.

**Q. You hadn't thrown to the starters a ton in practice this season. What is that like chemistry-building process like and how will that continue to evolve?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: It takes a lot of reps. That's the biggest thing, just getting those reps in practice as many live reps as we can, and we did a lot of reps this past week, and we're going to continue to grow. So what you saw out there today, a couple missed throws, stuff like that, it's only going to get better as we continue to work, continue to get more comfortable with that, that connection, especially like I think about one to Drake today, he's a bigger seed where I threw a fake to him. I just gotta know I gotta get that ball up higher and he's going to make that play. Like I said, just the more reps we get, the more comfortable we're going to be with it, and game time we're going to show it.

**Q. Raheem said that when he was in here one of the things he liked most about your game today was how you were able to verbalize some of the things that maybe you didn't do perfectly coming off the field. What were some of those things that you thought you needed to clean up?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: Yeah. Just some of the reads, just

processing stuff. I know at the end of the half making that throw to Kyle Pitts, just trusting my guy, trusting my guy to make the play, but at the same time just understanding the situation and stuff like that, how much time was on the clock, no timeouts. Just make sure I'm making the right decision, but knowing the next play we gotta go spike the ball and we'll probably have like six, seven seconds. So just stuff like that, just evaluating some of that stuff, going over it, and that'll come as we continue to keep going throughout these weeks as we continue to make those talks and stuff like that. But just small stuff like that. For me and this team, I know we want to get first downs each and every drive. So if we have three and out today, it's like, that's unacceptable. We gotta move the ball and give our defense great field position if we don't get in the end zone.

**Q. Michael, when we spoke back in April, you said you felt you have a lot of unique things within your skill set, unique talents, particularly you said your arm talent was different than other people. How do you feel like that is and how do you feel like that shined through today?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: Yeah. I mean I just trust in it. I just in it. I trust in my reads. I trust in my preparation. So whenever I go out there I'm able to play fast and make those throws on time, on rhythm and anticipate and stuff like that. But like you said, I feel like I trust my arm because of the reps that I have. I see it each and every day throughout practice. I'm making those throws, those guys are making those plays, offensive line keeping me protected. So when it comes to game day, it's like just another day for us and I'm just trusting myself, trusting myself, trusting that guy in our direction.

**Q. Did your game day routine from the time you get up, what you eat, et cetera, et cetera, change either intentionally or unintentionally today do you think?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: No. Everything was the same. Everything was the same. Like I said, I've been preparing as a starter each and every week, so I'm not changing what I've been doing.

**Q. Very clean game on your side, but also it helps when the defense played like it did. Can you discuss having a little bit of a comfortable zone because of the defense's returning two pick sixes? It does make things a bit easier on the offensive side.**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: Like I said, man. It's great. It's wonderful to have that. Credit to those guys. They do it each and every day in practice. They work extremely hard. You see the attention to detail they have. We go in the



locker room and I'm next to Jessie Bates, and the way they talk in the locker room about stuff that they saw on the field, and it's non stop, man. It's credit to those guys, credit to coach lake leading those guys, and the defensive line doing a great job putting pressure on the quarterback to allow those turnovers. So it's all around great efforts.

**Q. Mike, I talked to Bijan in the locker room. He said on that swing pass in the third quarter, he was trying to dive, get into the end zone, he wasn't able to do it. He said he, quote, felt awful about that and he came back to the huddle and told you -- he apologized to you. What does that kind of mean to you for him to say that and try so hard to get you that first touchdown of your NFL career?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: Yeah, man. Man, I told him, it's all good, man. We won the football game. That's the biggest thing, but, man, it just shows the person he is, the character that we have, not just with him, but everybody on this team, everybody caring about each other. He talked about getting me my first touchdown. Like it'll come. It'll come. The biggest thing we want to do each and every week is win. So we were able to do that. So I'm super excited we did that. But, yeah, he did come to me and say that, but I told him it's all good, bro. You got in the end zone, we're good.

**Q. Michael, before the came cameras caught you and Kirk talking in the tunnel. What did he say to you and what did you say to each other?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: Oh. Each and every game we pray. We pray. Kirk prays over the group and just prays that we go out there and execute at a high level and we stay safe doing it. That's what it was, he was praying.

**Q. Michael, what was the final ticket number that you had for family and friends today and will you be celebrating at Costco? (Laughs)?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: I know I gave 25 tickets maybe. But we won't be at Costco. Hopefully it's something better, like something like fancier. Costco is great! Costco did me up.

**Q. Michael, was there anybody that played in the NFL that hit you up this week to give you some type of motivation or pep talk or anything? And then what was it like getting in the locker room and the guys celebrate you after this win?**

MICHAEL PENIX, JR.: My teammates, you know, just being there for me just encouraging me, just letting me know that I don't have to do anything outside of what I do

and just go out there and be myself, and then after the game, the love in the locker room is great, man. It's like that each and every day. We have that strong bond on this team, and I'm super thankful for it and it starts with Raheem, the way that he leads us, and just shows what it's like to be a family, you know, more than just a team, to be a family. And it's a blessing to be able to be on this team, and it was a lot of love in the building.

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