

# Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

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Atlanta, Georgia, USA

**Michael Penix Jr.**

Postgame Press Conference



Falcons 24, Bills 14

**Q. I feel like I could ask about a whole host of things, but to come out and have this performance as a collective unit, especially that first half, what did that mean for this team coming off of a bye and playing on Monday Night Football?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: Man, it means a lot. I feel like when you talk about coming off the bye, I feel like it shows maturity. I feel like the guys, even though we had a bye week, I know a lot of guys are still putting in the work, making sure whenever we did come back, they would be ready to go. That showed today.

Obviously, you talk about the offensive side of the ball, but I definitely got to give huge praise to the defense. The way they played, obviously playing against a reigning MVP and a good offense over there, the way our defense played every drive it was amazing to see. It gave the offense confidence.

We just knew we had to go put points on the board and protect the ball, and we did that really good tonight.

**Q. Bijan obviously has kind of this record-setting night. I mean, you talked ad nauseam about Bijan before and who he is and what he does for this team, but for him to have this performance tonight in front of a prime time crowd, I mean, how much does that mean for who Bijan is and what he does for the organization?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: Man, knowing him, he's just going to say he give all the glory to God. Whenever we talk about who he is, that's who he is. He is a man of God, and he's a great teammate, a great leader, and a hard worker.

It's only right that he gets all these accolades and doing the things that he does, because of the person that he is. So that's who he is. He's a man of God. He shines his light every day.

**Q. You said you want to give credit to the defense. I asked Coach about the secondary and how well they played. Talk about how well the secondary played today.**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: Yeah, for sure. Really good. Really good. I know earlier midway through the week I heard Rah say that defense was going to play a lot of the man today, and they did that, and those guys are up for the challenge. They played great football and allowed our defensive line to get sacks and stuff like that, because Josh had to hold the ball whenever people weren't open down the field.

It was definitely big-time, and I do feel like, like I said, man, we couldn't have won this game without what they did on our side of the ball.

**Q. Bijan, do you have a favorite Bijan moment so far?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: That screen play. I threw the screen over there on our sideline. I don't know what he did, but that probably was it. Do you remember what play I'm talking about? Anybody?

**Q. The one where it got tipped and he kind of --**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: No, no, no. What play was it? This game, tonight. He was on our sideline, and yeah, he red zoned. He broke, like, five tackles, shook two, three people. Man, I don't know. I see new stuff every day.

**Q. Drake had great stats today, but the effort and the tone-setting in the first half, how much does that mean to you guys from an emotional standpoint?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: It means a lot. That's the football we want to play, and that's how we got to come out all the time, even after half. Whenever I say that, coming out of half, I don't feel like we played our football. I feel like we had more in the tank.

For us to go out there and win that football game with the second half that I feel like we had that was a big lull, I feel



like it's going to be a scary sight whenever we figure it out and all play together and play a full game and not just one good half, you know.

**Q. Do you feel like you've done that yet, or is that still to come?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: It's still to come. Maybe next week.

**Q. Is this a new chain you got?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: It ain't new. I'm not really a flashy guy. I don't really wear --

**Q. This your Monday Night Football chain?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: My fiancée said I looked good, yeah, so I put it on.

**Q. Two or three weeks ago we heard Zac saying that with this offense, we're still building it, we're still building it, and it feels like that has been evidenced the last couple of games. Can you talk about from your perspective how you see the offense evolving as the season goes on?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: Yeah. Like I said, I feel like obviously it's tough whenever -- it's tough in the NFL. Let's say that. The NFL is tough.

I feel like each and every day we're trying to figure out, you know, who we are, what our identity is, because one game -- you look at the first game, it's like we had to throw a lot. The second game we won running the ball. I feel like tonight it was collective.

We had over 200 whatever -- 210 rushing, almost 250 passing. It was good, but I feel like whenever we look at that second half, it's so frustrating, because I'm, like, man, we definitely could have pulled away with that game. It could have been a larger margin.

Whenever we figure that out, I feel like that's when we're going to know who we are and what we're able to do.

**Q. 210 rushing yards and 233 passing yards for you.**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: Perfect.

**Q. I got you. I want to go back to what you're talking about with the defense. When Bijan was up here, he said, you know, I thought I was tripping during the summer and during training camp and the preseason, that I wasn't able to get some of these things off and wasn't really gelling, but he was, like, it's because this**

**defense was so legit, and they've shown that over five games. Did you have any moments like that over the course of kind of the training camp and preseason process?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: For sure. First day. I was, like, these boys are flying around. I just feel like obviously it's the scheme, the coaches, but outside of the scheme, I feel like it's the energy that those coaches bring. Brich and Ruudy, all those guys on the defensive side, the energy that they bring each and every day. I'm talking about the defense is going, like, 110 every day. It shows up in the game.

So I feel like the energy has been electric, and obviously with the scheme on top of that and the guys flying around, of course, they're going to do special things.

**Q. Can you tell us a little bit more about Coach Ruudy, because we hear a lot about Ulbrich, but he's kind of more -- we don't get him in the media so much. What's he like?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: He's a dog. I say that because I just saw him. He came up to me after the game just now. He's, like, Man, you're a dog, bro, I appreciate you. I said, No, you're a dog. He said, I f'ing know (laughing). I'm, like, Yeah, that's him. That's the guy. That's what he is, man.

He's a guy that cares, and you can see the passion that he has for this game and the love that he has for this team. Each and every day whenever he steps on that field, you can tell that this is what he love to do, and he displays it each and every day. You don't get up and down, emotional roller coaster. You get the same guy every day. He's going to be loud. Even when he's walking down the hallway talking on the phone, he's screaming. He's just the big energy ball.

Obviously him and Brich, them scheming it up over there, so he's a special guy.

**Q. What does this game bring for you now as a full starter, just a big-time game, big-time moment, but also knowing in six days you have to go do it again as far as momentum?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: It's just another game that we executed. I don't really like to rank how I feel like I played. You know, I feel like this team played very good and in a big-time moment. Like you said, playing on Monday Night Football. We're going to leave it with this team. I feel like we ranked up there. We upped it tonight. It was up there.

**Q. Bijan says he watches videos of great running**

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**backs before every game. Do you do anything similar to that when it comes to quarterbacks?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: I don't. I don't. I don't feel like it's -- it's not really the same for a quarterback, because when you think about it, for a running back it's, like -- I'm not going to talk about a running back.

For a quarterback it's like I can't sit here and be like I'm going to throw the ball like him. We might got different motions. Obviously I'm a lefty. There's not too many of them. I never really said I played like anybody or wanted to be like anybody. I just wanted to be myself and do whatever I can to help win football games. I never really watched other people, to be honest.

**Q. Zac Robinson, last week you guys mentioned about how great it was to have him on the sidelines. Has that gotten even better with this game? Was it about the same? Just talk about the progression of how that's gone with him on the sidelines now.**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: It's great. I guess we need him on there all the time. We got two wins from it, so I feel like it's been great.

The way that he coaches us after the drives is definitely something that helps us out a lot so that we can hear what he's thinking, so that whenever we do go back out on the field, we have an idea of what is going to be called and why it's going to be called. So it definitely is helping us .

**Q. What do you feel like this win showed the league and showed about this team and Atlanta, because when I was talking with Drake, he said, it showed we're actually good, and we're going to change the narrative around Falcon football.**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: For sure. That's it. It showed that we're one of the ones. This team is really good. This team is really legit. I feel like the talent that we have on this team, it definitely helps us a lot.

Obviously with great coaches, offensive coordinator, defensive coordinator, special teams coach. Can't forget Quice. This team is well-coached all the way around. It's awesome to see.

Obviously we had that one game that we didn't like, that Carolina game, not putting up any points on the board, but I knew that wasn't us. So I didn't soak into that and get in my feelings about that game, because I knew that wasn't us that day. I knew that wasn't me that day.

As long as we continue to trust in each other and go out

there and play for one another, we'll be fine.

**Q. I know every game counts, and you come prepared no matter what and ready to play, but it seems like on prime time you show out. Is it something about prime time that really gets you going and gets you motivated to play?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: I don't know, man. I don't know how to answer that. I just feel like there's no moment too big. You know, I feel like there's no moment too big.

I've been playing this game all my life. I've had good games. I've had bad games. I've had great games. I've had terrible games. I just go out there and try to be me the best I can. I don't let the moment ever get too big for me. I just say that.

I feel like every game is important, though. Prime time or not, every game is important. I got to do whatever I can to help us win football games, but when them lights on, I don't know, I just be ready (smiling).

**Q. Coming out of the bye week, this is the best way possible to come out of a bye week. What specifically did you work on to make yourself ready for tonight?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: Being consistent each and every day with everything that I do. Not just throwing the ball. If it got to do with my run fakes or the way I communicate with the offense in practice, you know, my routes on air throws in practice, just trying to make sure I'm completing everything and not taking any rep for granted. That's the biggest thing I definitely wanted to make sure I took advantage of and paid attention to coming off that bye week, and I feel like it's showing.

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