

Chicago Bears Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Matt Eberflus

Postgame Press Conference



Eagles - 25

Bears - 20

MATT EBERFLUS: Okay, first thing, my hat's off to Philadelphia. Played a good game. Congratulations to them.

But overall I thought that our guys did a good job of battling, but we have to learn how to finish better. We have to learn how to finish. That's one of the things we need to get done here in the next few games. That's the biggest thing, biggest takeaway for me as the head football coach.

I do think there was a lot of good things out there. Defensively we had three takeaways. I thought that was outstanding. That's what we're more used to. Also think that we stopped them on downs on a fourth and six, which is excellent. They had that long drive, ended up missing the field goal. It was banged off the side of the goalpost.

I thought the guys had passion, had energy. I thought we tackled well overall as a group. I was pleased with that for sure.

Looking at the third downs is where we need to be better. The third down battle, they won that battle, which is sustaining drives, making critical plays when you need to. For example, that last third down. They end up throwing the slant to Brown. That was a critical down for us there.

Overall for us we sustained some injuries today, which is unfortunate. I know it was announced, but we'll take these things day by day.

EQ had the concussion.

Teven had his neck, he's out, but everything looks positive there. Just so everybody knows that. That's encouraging.

57, we'll look at, the ankle and MRI that, get a situation with that.

33, Jaylon with the ribs. Again, we'll see where that is. Tomorrow we'll get more information.

Then Justin. He really just had cramps. He had to come in for an IV. He's all set, ready to go.

Again, I was also encouraged by the last drive the offense that. That's a two-minute situation. We were hurry up on the ball. We end up scoring a touchdown, which was outstanding by the offense. We're certainly excited to see that going forward.

With that I'll open it to questions.

Q. Teven's situation was scary. Is he...

MATT EBERFLUS: He was responsive. We could see him moving his hands out there. Again, I don't know much more than that. They just told me it's encouraging. That's all I got from the medical staff right now.

Q. A loss like this against a team that's considered the best in the NFL, does it mean anything more because it was as close as it was?

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, we don't look at it that way. We really don't. We focus on one game at a time, preparing to play our opponent and beat our opponent. We didn't get that done.

It's more about us. It's always going to be about us, how we do things. Our execution in the critical moments needs to be better. Like I said, third down, in the red area. When we get takeaways, the one thing we need to do better on offense is when we do get takeaways in a short field, we got to punch it in. In one situation, we ended up fourth and 27 I want to say it is. We decided to take the delay there because we were out of kick range.

Cairo's kick range today was the 27 yard line. We were at the 31. I believe Philadelphia did the same thing. They were at the 33. They elected to punt and pin, too, or go for it I believe. That's the way the wind was out there today. It was tough sledding out there in the kicking game.

Again, in the kicking game we need to do a better job. We had that big kick return to start the second half. I wasn't excited about that. We need to do a better job covering



there on the left side of our kick cover team.

Again, the rest of the day they did a nice job. I thought Trent had a couple good nice punting pins. He had a couple nice punts. It's unfortunate that Cairo missed another extra point. That was unfortunate. We got to get the operation there squared away. Have to look at the tape, see where that is.

Overall, again, like I said, we just got to be better in critical moments.

Q. Hurts hit the touchdown run, what did you see on that play?

MATT EBERFLUS: You'll see it when we watch it again. We had two guys in the same gap. Safety is supposed to be in the other gap. We should have had that. That's unfortunate that that happened. I think Alan called a great pressure there in that situation. That's what it was.

Q. As the season is winding down, you're eliminated from the playoffs, injuries are racking up, what is the goal for you as a coaching staff for your team?

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, I would just say championship habits. I put that in front of the guys every week. Doesn't matter win, lose or draw, we want to see championship habits from the individual.

That means the minute you come into the building you are laser focused on the job at hand till the minute you leave, and afterwards you're studying to make sure you're going to perform at a high level.

Each guy we challenge to play at an A-plus game every week. It is based on practice and how you play in the game. Guys are rotated in and out based on that production. We challenge those guys every single week. As a football team we want to play complementary football. We want to be able to finish the games, have the competitive instincts at the end to make sure we are focused and finishing the games the right way.

We're getting better. I think we're getting better as you watch it. It's important for us. Every one of these plays, every one of these games is real important to us going forward to look at everybody and really also the morale of our team, how we're competitive as a football team.

Q. Teven's injury, I don't know if you had a situation that looked that scary on the field, do you know if he's okay? Was he taken to hospital?

MATT EBERFLUS: We said it earlier. I'll give it to you

again.

It's encouraging. That's all I really have from Andre and the medical staff right now. It looks encouraging. They're evaluating him, but it does look encouraging.

Q. Was he taken off-site to hospital?

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, he was.

Q. (No microphone.)

MATT EBERFLUS: I don't like that. I don't like it. I don't like when guys lose the football. It's not good. Guys have to do a better job securing the ball.

Again, I'll look at the tape. But when you're in traffic, you have to have five points of pressure on the ball and put your (indiscernible) over the other hand. That's an important piece to it. Like I said, we'll look at it and see where it is.

Q. It has been a consistent issue for him.

MATT EBERFLUS: The other two, you have two muffed punts because it's different, not when you have the ball secured. We'll look at it.

Again, he's got to stay encouraged. He's got to keep working and do the right things. I know he can do it right. We'll coach him to do it that way.

Q. 22-yard touchdown run by Hurts. How did you see that?

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, the same play they were talking about. The safety was in the same gap as the D tackle. He should have been in the other A gap.

Q. What do you see from Jaylon Johnson going up against some lead wide receivers?

MATT EBERFLUS: We had him travel today. He was traveling to Brown the whole day. If he was outside, he was covering. If he was inside, we let Gordon cover him.

That's going to be a tough matchup for any corner. That's one of the top receivers in the league. He's got a big body. He's very competitive, very strong. I think he caught two big fade balls today, and also Smith, No. 6, caught one also.

But those guys are dynamic players, some of the best in the league. But we got to rise up there. Really we got to finish. Those are plays that we got to finish. You're never

out of it as a defensive back. Even if you're out the position a little bit, you can still strain to make the plays at the very end.

Jalen did a really good job. A lot of other plays where the balls with overthrown, made a lot of competitive plays where he knocked the ball off No. 11 today. There was a lot of plays, too. He was very competitive against them at the end of the day.

Q. Is a tolerable rookie mistake on the run (indiscernible)?

MATT EBERFLUS: Assignments are important, right? If you're a guard or a tight end, you have a protection and you end up not doing it the right way, it's important.

It's alignment assignment key technique. If you want to execute in the critical moments, which that might have been a critical moment, third and 10, you have to get that done. We expect our players to do that. We challenge them to do that.

It's not only them, it's the coaches. Who is coaching that guy? Are you responsible for this guy? You are. It's a partnership. When your player plays great, man, that's a partnership. If your player ends up doing some things that you got to get it corrected, it's a partnership. It's the coach and the player.

Q. On the Field's touchdown to Montgomery, why did you go for two there?

MATT EBERFLUS: That's the situation where it's a color, in fourth quarter, it's definite go for two. In third quarter, you can or cannot. We decided to just kick it.

Q. Justin went over a thousand rushing yards. What is your reaction to that?

MATT EBERFLUS: It's great. It's a franchise record for quarterback, goes over a thousand yards. One of three quarterbacks in the history of the league with Levar and Vick. That's pretty special. He's a special guy.

The run he made down there, it's just phenomenal. He's doing an excellent job. He's doing a really good job of leading our football team. I think it's where he's growing the most over the second half of the season. He's just getting more and more confident as he goes.

Q. What did you decide to weigh other than trying to figure out whether or not you could on-side kick?

MATT EBERFLUS: The numbers there tell us we were

on-side kick there all the way. We got to kick a better kick there. I think it only went nine yards. Cairo has been kicking that excellent in practice, that spinner kick, he's been doing great in that. We got to execute there at that moment.

Q. The number is the time on the clock?

MATT EBERFLUS: Time on clock and timeouts they have.

Q. What is your level of frustration not being able to get more out of the takeaways you got? You end up with the ball down inside the red zone, end up punting.

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, it's called sudden change. It happens on both sides of the ball. When we take the ball into that plus field, inside that 30, 35 yard line, special teams or taking the ball away, which we did, the offense has got to score touchdowns. That's how you put guys away. You create momentum that way.

I think that's something we have to learn to do as a football team. Conversely, when it happens to the defense, you have to hold them to a field goal. A return comes into that situation, an interception, you're right there, need to bow up and make them kick field goals.

Q. With Cairo, is he dealing with some sort of injury that you know of?

MATT EBERFLUS: Not that I know of. Not that I'm aware of.

Q. Do you think it's more of a psychological thing for him at this point?

MATT EBERFLUS: I think it's just execution. You look at the details of where everything is. The snap, the hold, the plant foot, all those things that we look at with detail. Just look at it that way.

It's just like anything else, any other skill that you're trying to do, it's about the details of it. Just got to look hard at that. We're going to continue to coach him up and Cairo is going to be fine.

Q. When you talk about execution, Cairo specifically?

MATT EBERFLUS: Everything. Got to look at the tape, snap, hold, plant foot, everything that we're squared away with there. Just got to do a good job of executing.

Q. On the punt from the 32, whatever, did Cairo let you know that was too far?

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, we talked about that. I'll say it again. That's fine.

His kick line was 27 yards with the wind today. When it was there at the 31, we were out of our kick line there. We were going to take a delay, pun and pin. Did a pretty good job of punting and pinning today. He did a pretty good job.

Q. (Indiscernible) once today, was there a setback?

MATT EBERFLUS: No, it's just day to day. Just wasn't ready. He's the back. Clay has the knee. We're hopeful for those guys coming up. Hopefully it looks good for tomorrow. We'll know more information then.

Q. We talked all week about how good their defensive front was. What makes them good at stunting? How did you handle that today?

MATT EBERFLUS: Obviously it's not good enough because we gave up too many sacks. A lot of time that's getting ready of the ball, handling the stunts as the offensive line versus that defensive line. They do it well. They're aggressive. They're violent. They have talent, a lot of talent up there.

You could see from Haason, to Sweat, Hargraves, all the guys in there, they throw it in there with violence. Hard to pick up, especially when you have those five-man stunts. Pretty effective. They did a nice job.

Q. What was your perspective on the 39-yard run that Justin had?

MATT EBERFLUS: Just special. I mean, I was on the far side, moving my head, trying to figure out what he was doing. He stayed inbounds and kept going. Exciting player to watch.

Q. Is it difficult for you as a coach to try to view things as progress beyond wins and losses this season, to see progress regardless of the results, or you're hardwired it's win or lose?

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, that's a great question.

I think you got to have perspective. I think you have to have perspective. Again, when you're in the game, when we're in the game, I think that obviously it's 100% get after it by any means necessary.

After the game, you have to evaluate the performance. It goes back to what we said, the game is the game. If you win by five or lose by five, you have to have that perspective, how do we get better next week, each

individual and unit.

Q. What do you lean on in terms of trusting the process that this is going the right way?

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, I mean, you can look at a lot of things. You look at different teams in the past. Everybody has to go through this. We're in the process of doing that right now.

To me, it's more about the work habits of each guy and the work habits of the units, having that championship work habits. That to me is the most important thing. That's what you can stand on. You can stand on that along with our hits principle. That's the foundation that will last time. It's always going to be there. It's never going anywhere, okay?

As you start executing better, okay, finishing games better, wins will start to stack. That to me, you always have to have that. If you don't have that, it's not going to work, but we do have that. We have it. Our guys are working their tails off. We have that foundation that we're building right now.

Q. How do you reconcile believing that things are going the right way but being 3-11?

MATT EBERFLUS: By the tape. Watch the tape. To me, you watch the tape, sometimes the results aren't there. But I see what I see in practice and in the games. We're heading the right direction.

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