

Chicago Bears Media Conference

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J.J. McCarthy

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Vikings - 27, Bears - 24

J.J. MCCARTHY: Obviously it's huge to come out of one of these games with a win -- divisional opponent, very tough opponent. I thought they did a tremendous job and played very hard and played well.

Gotta give a lot of credit to the defense. They bailed us out in that first half. They were throwing a lot of things at us defensively, and the defense stuck in there. Especially on the special teams side, too. That field goal unit, the punt return unit, Jug, I think it was 119 all-purpose yards. And that's just tremendous from a young guy like that to step up.

But there's a lot of things we've got to clean up. Gotta be better on third down. And we're on to Atlanta now.

Q. What was kind of your reaction when you got the play call that it was going to be read-option (indiscernible) there?

J.J. MCCARTHY: I was absolutely fired up. It was like the perfect time to call it. Coach McCown actually brought it up in his little pregame speech at the hotel. He was talking about how he was running Wanda Bear (phonetic), that's what we call, in 2013, and I was probably running in seventh grade somewhere. I was actually 10 at the time. So I was pretty close on that one.

It was just a perfect play call. The offensive line did a great job. T.J., with that block on Jaquan, and just finishing the job, that was one of my favorites, for sure.

Q. You talked a ton in the lead-up about how you wanted to stay in the moment. How well were you able to do that amid what that game was?

J.J. MCCARTHY: I felt like I did a really good job of that. Just feeding off the energy of my teammates and my coaches helped me out tremendously. But at the end of the day, you know, we're so blessed to be able to play this game. So every snap we get is a complete blessing.

And that's something that I was mentioning to the guys in the huddle when we were down, where else would you rather be? I felt we did a great job and this team showed a lot of poise and responded very well.

Q. After the pick-6, what's your mindset at that point? That's certainly a momentum swing there in a lot of ways. What's your mindset and how do you move past that?

J.J. MCCARTHY: You know, you never want to earn wisdom that way. But it just brought me straight back to TCU when I had that first one early on in the game and then the second one later.

And at the end of the day, yeah, it sucks. It's one of the worst things you can do as a quarterback. But you can't do anything about it. You've got to focus on the next play. Defense kept us in it the whole time. It was on our shoulders just to go out there and execute and play as one and move on from that.

That's one of those things I don't really hang on. And I was really grateful the way Coach McCown and Coach O'Connell handled it next play.

Q. When you started to come back, was there a throw of yours where you thought you were getting into a groove late in the game?

J.J. MCCARTHY: I would say the one at the half to Speedy. That got me into the groove. And it turns out, one of the biggest plays of the game, because Will is striping it from the 59. We walk out of here probably a little bit later than we do tonight right now.

But I feel like just how it expressed itself, how the ball came off my hand there, I felt like it was one of those throws that really gave me that "we can really do this."

Q. You said the comment in the huddle where would you rather be. Aaron mentioned the same thing. Have you always had that mentality in the huddle or is that something that just came over you tonight?

J.J. MCCARTHY: I've never actually said that before. But I feel like it was at the perfect time. Guys were kind of, you

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know, just in their head a little bit. I feel like if you could -- a smile goes a long way. There were a lot of smiles after I said that. Just a little bit of a perspective shift. Yeah, things weren't going our way but we're here doing this together. And the boys, they responded perfectly.

Q. Do you remember when exactly that was in the game?

J.J. MCCARTHY: I know we were around the minus-20 or minus-25, in the end zone with the Jumbotron. And I think it was third quarter, something like that.

Q. Looked like late, after one of the touchdowns, Kevin came over and patted on you the head. What was your favorite moment working with him tonight?

J.J. MCCARTHY: My favorite moment working with K.O. was probably just the whole game. Like how he managed it. They showed a lot of things that we didn't expect. And the calm, cool, collected nature that he had just gave me so much confidence to try to filter that into my teammates as much as possible.

But after that, running touchdown and seeing how fired up he was, that was really special.

Q. At any point, maybe after the game, did you take in the larger picture of how long it took you to get to this point?

J.J. MCCARTHY: I think I'll feel it on the plane ride home. Yeah, it's been a long journey. 609 days, I think I saw, was my last competitive football game which was the national championship.

It's been a while of just being in the training room, watching a lot of film, learning the playbook and trying to master that.

But at the end of the day it's such a blessing to be an NFL football player and play in this league. I'm grateful that we get to go out there next week and play the Falcons on Sunday night.

Q. Kevin said he told you at halftime you are going to lead us back in this game. What did that mean to you at that point in the game?

J.J. MCCARTHY: It meant everything. That guy is one of the best coach, if not the best head coach, in my opinion, in the National Football League. Any kind of compliments or belief like that, it means the world. And that just gave me all the confidence to go out there and just execute the ball plays and have a fast arm and make quick, decisive decisions. And it worked out.

Q. What was your vantage point behind some of those Jordan Mason runs in the second half?

J.J. MCCARTHY: It's just so fun when you watch a guy run, and you're like, oh, that's not a tackle before it happens.

And credit to the O line. They really strained the entire night. And just being able to -- being game one you don't know how the team's conditioned and how they're going to strain when it comes to the fourth quarter. And they did that.

JP obviously showed that. Aaron showed that. It was really cool to see.

Q. As far as the connecting with Aaron for the touchdown, you guys did that a bunch of times during training camp. How was that experience through camp that helped you when it came to that moment?

J.J. MCCARTHY: Extremely big. I still wish I would have gave him a pretty ball where he had it in stride and ran through the end zone with it; but at the end of the day, it's a touchdown. And he's such a special player, I can't speak highly enough about who he is as a person. He's one of the pillar guys of our team, pillar personalities, and he's really a special guy and I'm so grateful to play with him.

Q. How many friends and family did you have here?

J.J. MCCARTHY: I didn't ask, but my dad said, like, 200 to 250. I'll have to see that. I don't think that's very true. But, yeah, it's probably extended, family, friends and all that. But there's a lot of people supporting, and I thank them so much because Chicagoland area, La Grange Park, it made me who I am.

And I appreciate being able to be out there and have the opportunity to play in front of those great human beings. It was great. But it's on to the next one now.

Q. Did you get a sneak into that section to see before the game, after the game?

J.J. MCCARTHY: Actually, I saw my dad's roommate from college, Uncle Adam. And it was when we were down. He kind of wasn't instilling that confidence into me. I was like, I'm going to say something to that after we come back and win.

Q. What did he --

J.J. MCCARTHY: Just acting like I'm not looking at him



and all that. It's all good. I love "The Adam."

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