

# Tennessee Titans Media Conference

Sunday, October 25, 2020

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

## Coach Mike Tomlin

### Steelers Postgame Press Conference

Steelers 27, Titans 24

MIKE TOMLIN: First of all, I've got to start by tipping my cap to the Tennessee Titans. They are a mentally and physically tough group. We talked about it all week, man. We knew they wouldn't flinch. They've been in these type of games more than we have to be quite honest with you. We knew that was a winning edge for them. And it showed. We had something to do with how the game got, as well. We gave up a big play for a touchdown, we turned the ball over. You do those things against good people they're going to get back in the game 100 percent of the time. Thankfully our guys didn't blink. They were able to hold it together and make enough plays to secure victory. Not a perfect product, we understand that, but I appreciate the efforts. We are perfect from a record standpoint, so we respect that. We realize that we've got an AFC North ball next week on the record, going to a group that has seven days advantage on us so there's a lot for us to be urgent about. We won't spend a lot of time celebrating this or appreciating this because there's just more work that lies ahead but we like that element of the journey, and we're excited about assessing what transpired, hopefully making necessary improvements and positioning ourselves for next week's challenge.

I don't have a lot of information regarding the health of the group. I'm sure there's bumps and bruises associated with the play, but again, I'd be remiss if I didn't talk about the Tennessee Titans and Coach Mike and just their commitment to their style of play and the manner in which they go about it is really challenging. They're a good group.

Questions?

**Q. On the ball that got intercepted in the end zone on your second-to-last possession, I think it was Smith-Schu's throw on a linebacker, is that considered open in you guys' estimation and is that a shot worth taking to put the game away?**



MIKE TOMLIN: Man, it's NFL football. We play to win, we don't live in our fears. Is it a combat play, is it tight? Yes, but we've got a quarterback that's been doing that for 17 years. Sometimes you've got to acknowledge that they made the play in the moment. We desire to, and that's why we're not going to live in our fears. We're going to go in those instances to secure victory.

**Q. What kind of second half adjustments were they making defensively, the Titans making defensively, to stop you guys from being able to do those long drives that were working in the first half to keep Derrick Henry off the field?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, it's just football. I don't know that they changed anything that they did. I mean, we had a tipped pass that got intercepted and we were penalized some, things that happen when you stop yourself. You know, they were competent, no doubt, but I don't know that they changed anything schematically or anything substantial changed. We've just got to play better. We didn't play well enough in the second half for it not to be as tight as it was.

**Q. At the end of the first half when you got the ball back there and you took the shot in the end zone, did you just figure it was one shot into the end zone or was there much consideration given to something shorter and then kicking the field goal?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Prior to the false start, all the things that you mentioned were on the table. Once we lost the five yards on the false start, then our mindset changed.

**Q. What went into your thinking of taking the ball after you won the coin toss?**

MIKE TOMLIN: We wanted to answer all questions from you guys about how we start the game, and so we took the ball, we went down the field and scored a touchdown, so now you guys can stop asking me about it.

**Q. Can you speak to the combat catches your receivers, tight ends were able to make in this game?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Man, you know, they made the necessary plays, but it was also extremely tight coverage. That was five-star ball, man. That's a good group. Guys like JuJu,



man, others stepped up and made those plays, but man, you've got to tip your cap to Tennessee. They made those plays combat catches, man, with tight coverages.

**Q. You mentioned that winning is the thing, obviously. At the same time, can your team take something, can you benefit in any way from what happened in the second half? Do you know what I'm saying?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Hey, man, we're looking to learn every Sunday. Hopefully we're learning while winning. So you're absolutely right, there's some lessons to be learned.

I mean, you don't win many games minus 3. I think we were minus 3 in the turnover game today. You don't win many games giving up 70-yard touchdown passes. So it kind of speaks to how our group is positioned, man. But definitely things to be learned from what transpired.

**Q. Both in terms of execution and in approach and strategy, can you speak to how you handled Henry in the first 30 to 35 minutes and was it at all similar to your thinking going into game 1 against Saquon?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, we talked about the importance of minimizing him and from that standpoint it was similar, but we didn't do anything that we don't normally do. We played the defenses that we normally play. We've just got to defeat blocks and make tackles and try to prevent them from falling forward. Tall task with a guy like him and particularly as we talk about from an attrition standpoint over the course of the game, and you felt that. You felt him getting going, and that was troublesome.

But that's just the attributes that he brings and they bring to play. So that's why it was important that we got started early.

**Q. Were you able to get a view on how Spillane did in your opinion?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, I know he played winning ball. I haven't looked at it with a fine tooth comb, but like we said even prior to this performance, we weren't concerned about the quality of his play. I definitely was not. I was concerned about fatigue as snaps setting in. We supplemented him on position downs with Ulysees Gilbert, who also did a really solid job, and together they were able to stand in for Devin. Not that we didn't have complete confidence in Robert, but we didn't want him playing 65 or so snaps. We thought he'd have a better chance to play a winning performance if we kept it around 45 or so and that's why supplemented him on possession downs.

**Q. I know Deonte left early with an injury, but how**

**much of an emphasis was it to get him involved after missing most of two games?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, I don't know if there was an emphasis. We try to maintain balance and take what the defense gives us and spread it around and maybe their intentions were elsewhere because he hadn't been on recent video. But we just tried to take what the defense gives us.

**Q. Sort of along those lines, a lot of James Washington today; was that just a match-up thing?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Again, oftentimes we're willing to let the opponent determine who the hot hand is, and so we're just trying to distribute the ball. We've got a bunch of capable men. James is obviously capable and I'm sure if called upon next week he'll be the guy that we'll be talking about.

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