

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, October 18, 2020
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Mike Tomlin

Postgame Press Conference

Pittsburgh Steelers 38, Cleveland Browns 7

MIKE TOMLIN: We were varsity today, really kind of all across the board and met a challenge versus a very good and a team that was very hot. Appreciative of the efforts. It's not without consequence. Devin Bush appears to have a significant knee injury. He's being evaluated.

Pouncey (ph) went down with a foot. He was able to get through the majority of the game with it, but we pulled him at the end as you saw him come off. And Mike has a shoulder that needs to be evaluated but can't say enough about the effort of our guys.

Part of being good in this league is identifying problems and eliminating them, hopefully before they happen but once they happen you have to eliminate them quickly. We acknowledge that third down was an issue for us last week defensively. I thought they answered that challenge well and emphatically today. It was necessary to slow down a dangerous Browns attack, one that had been bringing up a bunch of points per game. Just can't say enough about the effort all the way around in all three phases of the game. Appreciative, and now we transition our attention toward the Battle of the Oasis in Tennessee. Questions.

Q. What caused change in third down success?

MIKE TOMLIN: We had a better plan. It starts with us as coaches and then the guys performed better and they finished it off. But we both were JV last week, players and coaches, and we got better this week.

Q. It was all three phases, not just third down but you stopped them three times on fourth down and slowed that top rushing attack and held them to seven; as complete a defensive performance as you've had?

MIKE TOMLIN: We did what we needed to do today. I have not painted with a broadbrush yet or compared it to other performances. This is a group that thrived -- to the tune of 188 yards per game. We didn't wait till the end of



the week to acknowledge that we couldn't allow that to happen. Today is really kind of borne out of our commitment to minimizing that element of play and it came together for us.

Q. What does Minkah's early interception return do for the team to get you the ten-point lead?

MIKE TOMLIN: I don't know what it did for us but I think it sent a message to them that third down wasn't going to be easing sledding today and we needed it obviously. Minkah is an A-player. It was a significant play. He's capable of delivering those type of plays and we'll keep snapping the ball and watching him do it. That's the type of player he is.

Q. That opening drive, you only had a field goal but seemed like you wanted to establish your physicality. Was that the case and did you like what you see there?

MIKE TOMLIN: We were just interested in moving it. We want to have balance. We want to run it, we want to throw it. Physicality is an element of play regardless what we are doing, run or throwing. More than anything we want to move the ball down the field and score.

Q. You were 4-0 entering this game. What kind of statement do you guys make today beating this Browns team?

MIKE TOMLIN: We are not into statements. We'll let you guys make the statements. We'll just lineup and play against those that we are scheduled to play against, and they were next.

And I'm glad we were able to get the job done, but you know, we've got a significant challenge in the form of the Tennessee Titans coming up this week. That's life in this game, man, we're appreciative and more importantly we're really excited. You can't take anything for granted in this environment. We appreciate all the sacrifice that everybody is making in an effort to keep that ball rolling, man, and it just needs to continue.

Q. What did you see of Robert Spillane and what he was able to do, and what can you say about what you liked about him and Gilbert that you liked in training



camp if Devin is out for a while?

MIKE TOMLIN: Spillane more than answered the bell but we have a great deal of confidence in him. He's a capable guy. Guys that make plays in special teams, that's usually a precursor to them making plays in defense. Since we brought him up the middle of last year he's been a consistent performer for us. I don't think any of us are surprised from quality play from him. If did he have sin down for a while, those will be called to step up. He will be among them, Gilbert will be among them, Marcus Allen will be among them. We'll put together a formula that allow us to function in the interim, believe it.

Q. What led to the improved run game today and can you speak to the game from James Conner?

MIKE TOMLIN: I don't know if it was improved. We have run it when we wanted to run it essentially all year. We desire to have balance, and that's how we get down.

Q. What do you think went into your success in stopping the run and how much is getting out to an early lead a big part of taking that away from them?

MIKE TOMLIN: Our bigs, this game was going to be defined by the bigs. Our bigs' ability to stop the run, our bigs' ability to protect Ben and win the line of scrimmage for us in the run game and we talk openly about it all week. A synopsis of this game in a nutshell is our bigs, our big people on both sides of the ball, really answered the challenge and played A football.

Q. I know you like to say the standard is the standard and you expect championships here, but when you see a guy like Eric Ebron skipping off the field, showing five fingers, showing so much joy, does that do anything for you?

MIKE TOMLIN: You know I'm appreciative of what we were able to get done today. I know that Eric appreciates this environment and he's new to this environment and we appreciate his enthusiasm and the hard work he's displaying to fit in.

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