

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, December 27, 2020
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Mike Tomlin

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 28, Colts 24

MIKE TOMLIN: Really proud of every man in the locker room regardless of role, player, coach, support personnel, equipment, training staff, et cetera. It took everyone today. Just loved the fight of the group. Was very necessary, man. Victory is sweet. It's been a month or so for us, so we've been through some adversity. But just growth in the midst of that.

Hopefully these negative experiences can galvanize us, man, and strengthen us as we move forward. We got some big battles that lie ahead, man.

But today we're humbled and honored to be AFC North champs. When we started this journey on July 20th, that was the initial goal, then we go from there. It's good to be at this point, good to push forward.

Can't say enough about the guys. We're far from perfect. Our warts are well-documented. I'm sure you guys continue to chop those up. We'll continue to work on them in an effort to get better and increase our chances of winning every time out.

Not a lot to speak about from an injury standpoint, thankfully. We've struggled with that in recent weeks. Hopefully we start to get some of these guys back. It was good to get James Conner back today, for example.

Questions.

Q. How does or how did a team turn it around so dramatically from one half to the second?

MIKE TOMLIN: We missed on some opportunities in the first half. I don't know if it was that dramatic. It's a fine line between drinking wine and squashing grapes as we say in this business. Sometimes it's very subtle.

We didn't change drastically in terms of our approach, in terms of what we were doing. We just acknowledged that

we had some opportunities we didn't make and we needed to make more plays in the second half in all three phases. That's the mentality we took the field with.

Q. What went into the thinking to start throwing the ball downfield in the second half?

MIKE TOMLIN: We threw the ball downfield in the first half. We just missed on some connects.

Q. The ability to go downfield, one play to Diontae, what does that speak to him about his abilities, hold onto the ball to make that catch, for Ben to make that play?

MIKE TOMLIN: We've all had our struggles of late. None of us are removed from that. This is a fighter's business. This is a competitor's business. I expect all to compete and to smile in the face of adversity, and he did.

Q. How big was it for your defense to hold them there at the fourth down stop at the goal line, get the ball back quickly?

MIKE TOMLIN: That's why we went for it on fourth down. We had a lot of confidence in our defense's ability to leave them down there. Now, that's easier said than done. I appreciate the efforts in terms of making that real.

Q. Can you speak to Ben's turnaround from the first to the second half. Looked like he was more in sync, clicking more in the second half.

MIKE TOMLIN: I've been watching Ben like you guys have for 17 years, man. Half a play is not going to define him. He's a competitor. As long as there's time on the clock, he's going to keep coming at you.

Q. Tell us about the locker room, how big of a celebration, if any, was there in there?

MIKE TOMLIN: We're excited about the hats and T-shirts, man (smiling). We've been waiting to put them on for a few weeks now. It's a lot of excitement in there, and rightfully so, man. They've earned that.



Q. How much did Conner help you in the second half there? Wasn't in the goal line sequence prior to getting into the game, more later. How much did he help your offense down the stretch?

MIKE TOMLIN: No question, he brought an energy and an intensity and a demeanor that was contagious. But he always brings that. That's consistent with who he is. He just hasn't been very available of late.

Q. It was reported by CBS at halftime that you thought there were chunk plays available in the first half that were not converted.

MIKE TOMLIN: Correct.

Q. Anything consistent with that? Why were you able to convert them in the second half?

MIKE TOMLIN: We played better. We got open more. We made better throws, you know. We protected better, what have you. It's all a collective. We thought some chunk plays were there. We didn't necessarily get them or capitalize on them, but that wasn't going to stop us. We weren't going to be deterred.

It was a critical component in terms of us getting back in the game. You're not going to get back in the game three yards at a time when you're down the way we were down, especially when you give up a field goal to start the second half.

Q. You're locked into the three seed, maybe the two seed. What goes into the decision next week of who you play and how long you play them? Something to keeping the momentum going?

MIKE TOMLIN: We'll ponder those possibilities in the morning. Tonight we're going to wear our hats and T-shirts.

Q. What does what this team was able to do in the second half say about where you go moving forward?

MIKE TOMLIN: I think we're going to write that story. We're not trying to say anything. We're trying to win football games because that's our business. So that story is going to be written as we go forward.

Thank you.

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