

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, December 27, 2020
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Ben Roethlisberger

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 28, Colts 24

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Ben.

Q. You hadn't thrown the ball at all in Claypool in the first half, come out in the second half and throw to him. Was that something you talked about in the locker room?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: Nope. Just the way things worked out, I guess. Trying to throw the guys that were open, trying to get some matchups and looks. So nothing planned other than just kind of calls.

Q. After the way the offense had been performing the previous three games, then into the first half, how do you turn it around so dramatically like that in the second half of a game?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: You know what, just believing in each other, believing that we can make plays. Guys made plays. That's what we needed in the second half, was guys to step up, make the tough catches, block. We just have little things here and there, little MBs, little mistakes. In the second half it just felt like we were able to kind of get into a rhythm, convert first downs and put drives together.

I think that's one of the biggest things that is helpful to both us and our defense.

Q. JuJu said afterwards you made a speech at halftime about having more fun. What did you say to the team? How much was that a part of the second half turnaround?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: I think we always need to have fun playing this game. We need to understand that we have God-given abilities. We're so thankful that He's blessed us with the ability to do those things and play football.

Just felt like we weren't having fun. I think that was super important, that we were able to come out in the second half. It's not easy to do when you're losing. We just believed in each other, were able to get it done.

Q. You came out the second half and drove down the field. Seemed like you went to a lot of no-huddle. Why at that point right there?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: A lot of the second half was that, just changing the tempo, trying to get guys balls, looks, things like that. I think it was successful because guys made plays. Like I said, we were able to convert, kind of keep the tempo going.

Q. Did anything change with the play calling between the first and second half? If it didn't, how do you explain how much more effectively you were able to throw the ball downfield, everybody making plays.

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: Just what you said right there, guys were making plays. As a quarterback, you have to be accurate, you have to give guys the opportunity to make plays. In the second half the line gave me time.

Sometimes when you're going with the up-tempo or the no-huddle, you can kind of slow down a pass-rush. Guys are getting a little tired. You can make defenses call - sometimes - less exotic things. That's kind of what we tried to do in the second half.

Q. On the touchdown to JuJu, looked like presnap you were signaling Diontae and Chase. Was that a play you drew up on the spot?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: You about said 'drew it up in the dirt', didn't you (laughter)?

It's just a play that we had a look. I don't know how to best describe it. You'd have to ask someone else. It worked. JuJu made a heck of a catch. Great route to hold the safety down. I just saw the replay of it. What a play, strong catch by JuJu.

Q. When you get the ball back there after the failed goal line stand, what made you think you could get it

all back at once? What kind of momentum did that touchdown give you?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: You're talking about the one to Diontae?

Q. Yes.

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: You know what, we were kind of doing some of the no-huddle stuff. They were trying to take away Diontae on a bunch of slants. We had a look on the sideline. Was kind of talking to Randy, Canada, saying this is a play we should go to. Of course they came out in the coverage we weren't expecting.

I figured Diontae was going to be one-on-one, so let's go over the top. He made the play. I had to put enough air on it, he ran under it, made a spectacular catch, showed why (indiscernible) football is so special.

Q. At the end of the first half, it looked about as bleak as it has around here for a long time. What compels you to resort to 'let's have fun' as the answer?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: Well, I think there were a lot of things talked about at halftime. When you're having fun playing the game, things can happen differently. So you're right, it didn't look good at the end of the half. That's why you get a halftime to make adjustments, to gather yourself.

I just can't say enough about our defense in the second half, kind of shutting them down, getting us the ball, guys making plays on offense. It was a lot of fun.

Q. What does it mean to you to be AFC North champs, especially the way you won, snapping the skid?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: Yeah, we feel it's an awesome division. We had a chance to do it the last couple weeks. We didn't get it done. So I'm proud of the guys to finally get it done. It's cool to be division champs. We knew we were in the Playoffs. But this wasn't our end goal. This is one of our goals.

We said with these two weeks to go, kind of our post-season pre-season. We played a really good football team today. Just proud of the way we could pull it off.

Q. When you talk about football being a game of momentum, having fun, that being infectious, you've done this long enough, how could you tell if this second half was enough to galvanize you how you were playing at the start of the season, you as a team?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: Well, we won't know till we get

back on the field. You feel it in the locker room. You feel the energy. Winning can do amazing things for people and for teams. That was our first goal and our first step today, was winning this football game.

Q. The JuJu pass that took the lead, the O-line embraced you. I know you love them a lot. Share that moment with us.

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: Yeah, those are the guys that I play for. I love those guys, have been around those guys the longest. Pounce, Dave, Al, obviously the other guys. It means the world to me.

If you ever watch every touchdown, I don't ever run down and celebrate with the receivers or the tight ends or runningbacks. I celebrate with those guys because without them, none of it's possible. They just mean so much to me. I want to win games and championships for them.

Q. On the Diontae touchdown, after you completed that pass, do you feel like that loosened them up a bit?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: Potentially. I mean, we saw a handful of coverages. They were doing a great job of disguising it. I just think we took advantage of what we saw. Going to the no-huddle sometimes allows you to change things or to call it as you see it.

I talk about that chess match. If I'm calling it, I can kind of see what's going on, change a play, call one thing to one side, another thing to the other side.

I think we been throwing in some new stuff. You have to take your shots when you're there. We had a couple big plays down the field.

Q. Does the success you had in the second half, especially with the no-huddle, feel like something you can do for an entire game? Do you feel you're still going to have to establish something when you go to a slower-tempo offense?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: No, we need to execute the plays no matter who's calling them. I thought Randy called a good game tonight. We didn't execute when he called the good plays. Like I said, some little MBs here, one here on this play. That's on us. We need to execute the plays that are called.

We'll see. I don't know that we need to sit here and say, We need to go no-huddle every play and every game. We just need to execute the plays that are called.

Q. After some of the struggles recently, how important

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was that second half to play like that going forward? The rest of the league has seen the way you've struggled. Do you send a message with the way you played?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: You know, I don't know. We don't need to send messages to other teams. We need to send messages to ourselves. We need to prove to each other that we can do it, that we have guys in this locker room that can make plays, that are special talents. Sometimes you just need a little shock to rejuvenate yourself and to believe again.

Q. How gratifying is this for you personally considering the chatter over the past month about you?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: If people have been talking bad, I don't read or hear or see any of it. I'd appreciate you not talking about it, if you were.

Honestly, I've never really cared so much about my stats. The only thing that matters is winning and losing. We won 12 football games this year so far and we got a few more to go.

Q. Tonight is for celebrating with your family. A decision will be made before we get to talk to you. If you have your druthers, would you rather have a week's rest before heading into the post-season?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: I'm going to take the first part of what you said and run with that. I'm going to celebrate this with my family.

Q. Did you have Johnson deep at the end of the first half? Was that play a microcosm of what had been plaguing you the last several weeks, something lacking in execution?

BEN ROETHLISBERGER: If it's the play I think you're talking about, yeah, we did. We had a shot for it. We weren't quite on the same page. I mean, we were just a little bit off.

It was something we talked about at halftime. I actually got on the board, drew it up, showed him what I was wanting him to do. That's what I was most proud of him and the rest of the guys. His touchdown in the second half was a very similar play, very similar coverage. He did exactly what we talked about.

I just can't say enough about the adjustment that he made and the play he made in bouncing back and being spectacular on the play for me.