

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Derek Carr

Visitors Postgame Press Conference

Las Vegas - 26, Pittsburgh - 17

Q. So the long touchdown pass to Henry Ruggs: Did you guys just decide, We're going to try to end this thing right here and put it away early? Was that the mind set or just the look? And then how good does it feel to be able to have all the parts working in order to make that happen?

DEREK CARR: Yeah, it feels so nice to have the guys to be able to do that. Because I had a read and a progression and all that kind of stuff just in case that wasn't there, you know, that I could go through and all that kind of stuff.

But, you know, they gave us a good look. Almost got home with a blitz, too. But Henry is so fast, you know, speed kills us.

And that's one of the advantages of his speed, showing up to where he could get open like that. So fast and so quick.

That the blitz, they didn't even, you know, really -- I mean, it got there but I had time to throw it. And so it was a progression. You know, it wasn't, like, This is the time -- we were looking for it all game.

They played a lot of coverages. And I would, too, to Waller. You know, you don't want him to beat you on one play rather than beat you eight times. You know, they did a lot of things but it was good.

Q. Is that one of the things that -- I think Darren made the safety get looked off. Is that one of the little things on a play like that -- not a lot of people -- you know what's happening, then you just look to Ruggs?

DEREK CARR: Yeah, absolutely. There's so much little detail. Even, like, me taking my hand off the ball or the shoulder like I do throughout the game.

You know, before the snap, I'm looking for over here -- you



know, quarterbacks, we're playing chess all the time. Because you got guys on that defense that, my goodness, they know almost what's coming every time.

They're just so smart. Very well coached. And, you know, in my eight years, it's one of the well coached teams. They've always been.

Coach Tomlin does such a great job with his guys in that group, that they're smart. Their reactions are a little bit quicker than everybody else on certain things. So you try and play the chess game against -- especially good players that they have back there.

Q. Did anything change for you in the course of the game when you see several players on the opposing defense with an injury like T.J., et cetera? Do you say to your team, Hey, this is going to be different, these plays might happen that otherwise wouldn't?

DEREK CARR: Honestly, you know, any time No. 90 is on the field, he wrecks everything. You know, he's one of those players. He's a Von Miller, a Kahlil Mack, Aaron Donald.

He's one of the best players. He's been paid like it, too. It's well deserved. When he punched that ball out of my hand, he had a touchdown to Henry.

And he -- that's the things that a guy like that can do for you. I'm getting and looking at Waller to beat him, and then he punches it out. You know, that's a -- that type of play is a game-saving play. And that's the kind of player he is.

Now, when he's out of the game, you, obviously, know he's out of the game. That doesn't mean you can do this and that.

We run our stuff in Las Vegas and we have full confidence in our guys. And that's how we'll always play. We'll always be smart and not reckless. But we just play football.

Q. On the touchdown pass to Foster, he said he didn't know that you were hurt and you didn't also know that you completed the pass and it was a crazy sequence.

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How did you see that play out?

DEREK CARR: Yeah, from my vantage point, I saw 93 get the outside leverage of it and I knew that on Foster's corner route, I would get his back to me so he wouldn't see the ball.

And I tried my best just to put an accurate ball. I didn't think I was very accurate in the first half last week. I wasn't. I just don't think it was up to my standards.

And so I was very emphasized that I set my feet and make the most accurate throw that I can. And right as soon as the ball was just coming down, that's when I got -- I don't even know, hit, rolled up, I don't know, on that moment.

So I remember laying there and Derek Carrier comes over and everyone's, like -- all of sudden I look up and there's 30 people, I'm, like, Oh, my gosh, we'll be okay.

But the first thing I asked was, Did he catch it, did he fricking catch it? Yeah, he caught it. All right, then get me up.

But, you know, Carrier came over and a lot of my teammates. It was an amazing moment. You know, I try and be someone who gives so much, you know, in that moment.

They all came over and started praying for me. And it was just a beautiful moment for my teammates looking out for me.

And that right there is family to me. I loved the touchdown, don't get me wrong. But that moment right there, I was, like, Man, I just want to win this game for this team. It was a beautiful, beautiful thing that happened.

Q. You guys only had 17 yards rushing until the end.

DEREK CARR: Oh, wow.

Q. How impressive was that, especially, with a banged up O-line?

DEREK CARR: Yeah, you're missing a superstar, in Jacobs. You know, O-line is banged up, all these kind of things.

You know, the AFC North, they want to stop the run, all those things. So we knew we were going to have to throw it to have a chance to win.

When we had to run it, it was a beautiful thing. We were able to do it. I'm sure we can look at the film and think we

can do this and this better. But that's every game, win or lose. Proud of our guys.

Coach Cable, again, I try to give him as much credit, especially you guys that have been around the organization.

But when he was here before me, he's unbelievable, you know, at what he can do with not just the first string guys. I've said it so many times, I think, standing up, what he can do with anybody that's in his room, they come in and they're ready to play and they fight.

You know, they did at the end and we were able to run the ball and kill some of that time. Never want to give Big Ben too much time. He's one of the best quarterbacks to ever play the game. Especially with those wideouts and that back, you got to be able to take some time off the clock.

Q. Derek, how does it feel to get back in the stands with fans in the hostile environment?

DEREK CARR: Yeah, it was nice to get -- they said a few choice words. I was called moron today, an idiot. I was called a few things that I probably won't repeat either.

But it always feels good to hear those things again. Honestly, it's funny. Because then at the end of the game, you just look at them -- they're just football fans.

They give you a thumbs up and, you know, it's part of the game. It was fun. And that's everywhere except Kansas City. They're just never nice.

You know, it was nice to be back. You know, I hadn't been back here -- what was it, 2015 the last time we were here?

I remember it was, like, my first time coming to Heinz Field and I was, like, Oh, my gosh. Now, playing a whole bunch of games since then and being in my eighth year coming here, I was, like, Man, this is just awesome. It was just a total different feel for me.

Q. Foster said how much fun it is to watch Henry. How much fun is it to have Henry on your offense?

DEREK CARR: It's really fun. You saw some of them in training camp. Some of those throws, I shouldn't even throw them but I just throw them pass the coverage and he just goes and gets them.

Even that one, it's still an iffy decision. But I can throw it pass the coverage. And there's a fine line there.

But he goes -- it's unbelievable. The one I threw to him



and he just looks at it and you just see this gear that not a lot of human beings have.

But it makes it fun for me. It was definitely a moment and we had a progression, like I said. But as soon as they gave it to us, that killer, I'm going to see him go and get it.

And he does it in practice. That's the beautiful thing. You know, a lot of the speed guys they're hurt and can't practice, and you're, like, I can't trust to throw it in the game. He has shown over and over again in practice.

So I think his mentality -- y'all know, he's bigger, stronger. His mentality gave me the confidence and letting those things go to him. So it was good.

Q. There's been a lot of talk about that, like, the philosophy of the coach and how everyone is kind of buying in with the camaraderie. What do you think has changed with the group?

DEREK CARR: You're talking about the whole team?

Q. Yeah.

DEREK CARR: Yeah, I think we have a bunch of guys that, one, love football. We love football. There's not one guy on our team where you're, like, I don't want to talk to this guy. And I've been on teams where there are.

I'll be honest, you know, it makes work not fun. You know, and every guy in that locker room makes it so fun. They bring joy every day.

And so they love football. They're great guys to be around. And you know they're good football players because Mr. Mayock and Coach Gruden are unbelievable at bringing guys in.

If they see a guy and they're, like, I think this guy can be good, they bring him in. It's a hard business. But you see a group of guys that have just done this (indicating hands bonding together.)

You know, our team in 2016 -- you know, I'm not comparing the records and anything like that, but I'm saying the chemistry of the team, it was close.

And that's how you know you have a good football team. And I feel that that's been built. You know, I felt that way last year.

You're, like, Man, I just love these guys. Even this year, you just wrap your arms around them and you want to win with this group. That's the feeling.

It's not pulling your teeth to go to work. Like, I look forward to tomorrow going in the training room and seeing those guys and grinding and trying to get better for the next week. And, you know, that's an exciting feeling for me.

Q. Derek, between the two teams you guys played, we'll start there. A lot of people didn't think you'd guys be two-zero. Why is that?

DEREK CARR: Well, the absolute worst things in the world are the preseason ranking and talk shows. Sorry, Dave. But, you know, all that stuff, right? He's one of y'all, too.

So all that preseason stuff, none of it matters. That's the beautiful thing about football. I say it all the time, you still got to put the ball down and play.

And whatever team put the work in, it's on their stuff. It's on the details. That's the team that is hopefully going to end up winning, you know?

And that's why -- I don't blame them for thinking that we wouldn't be -- I mean, we haven't done what we wanted to do for the last couple of years. We haven't been to the playoffs since 2016.

I don't blame that thought process. But at the same time, like, just as a competitor, you're just, like -- like, I don't care about any of that. Just put the ball down and see if we can turn them into wins.

Now, we've started 2-0 before. But we got to keep going. So keeping the mindset, staying in the process, staying in the channel, those are all the things that matter.

Q. Derek, what does it mean to you to face a future Hall of Fame quarterback like Ben and did you have a conversation with him?

DEREK CARR: Yeah.

Q. Because, obviously, with his age and different questions around his career, this could be the last time you face off against him, obviously, and see him for a while.

DEREK CARR: I love Big Ben. I was able to be around him at -- what year, and Coach Tomlin was the coach. I talked to him a lot. Especially about a golf simulator we talked about. And just had fun.

You know, got to know the guy and always rooted for him. I've always thought he's one of the best players in our

game.

And, yes, he's closer to the end of his career than he was to the beginning, but he can still throw a football. And he can still play at a high level.

And he -- it's so cool to be able to compete against, you know, a walking Hall of Famer. The guy has two rings, done everything in this city that you can imagine. And it's an honor.

It's just a joy for me. It's cool to play against guys like that and get to know him. And I talked to him a little bit after the game but, you know, nothing anything different than usual. But I always have rooted for Big Ben.

Q. Foster said it's gotten to the point it's fun to watch the defense. When you do get to see them, does it kind of bring you a joy they've been playing?

DEREK CARR: It's just -- yes. Yes. Yeah, it does. You know, you look up and you go get the lead and you get back up and it's fourth down and you're, like, We get the ball back.

You know, it's just a good feeling, you know? It's a good feeling to have the lead and to keep it and things like that.

They have, in the last two weeks, come up so big for us. And you just got to give all the credit to Coach Gus and their staff and our players.

You know, they've done a great job of keeping us in the games and keeping the leads for us. And it is fun. It's a lot of fun. Especially watching that D-line.

There's a bunch of adults. Like I said, there's no green bananas on that D-line. Those guys are grown men. Fun to watch them play.

Q. Just going to the question about being 2-0. You said, We got to keep going. What makes this group different that you think, you know, this is the group that can continue to win?

DEREK CARR: Well, there's more than just a couple voices saying that, you know? I think that that's what gives me the confidence in it. Time will tell, right?

We've got a tough opponent at home, you know? And can't wait for that. But I think the thing that gives me the confidence is that they're -- it's not just three or four voices.

Like, everyone after the game is, like, Hey, we'll celebrate on the plane. But as soon as we land, it's time to get back

to work.

And I learned that from John Backstrom and Pat Hill at Fresno state, You celebrate all wins because they're hard to get. You celebrate all wins.

But you got to get back to work for the next one. We'll celebrate, have fun, laugh on the plane. It won't be a sad flight home, which is nice.

But at the end of the day when we wake up tomorrow morning, it's time to move on. You know, make the corrections, go see if coach makes the corrections and time to go forward. Hopefully, sustain it. You know, that's the goal. Thank y'all.