

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, September 26, 2021

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Head Coach Zac Taylor

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Cincinnati Bengals - 24, Pittsburgh Steelers - 10

Q. Zac, what did you tell your team after the win?

ZAC TAYLOR: Yeah, just proud of them. This is something we needed. It's just a small step in the journey for the rest of the season.

We expect to be on the road, win divisional games to achieve all the things we talk about internally as a team, this was something that's necessary. And it's a big win. But we got turn around and we play on Thursday night. So these guys got to turn around and get focused right now.

Q. What was most meaningful about this win?

ZAC TAYLOR: Just our team's ability to finish on the road. You know, we found ourselves in similar situations to that over the last three years and just the mind set of our team that nothing is going to be able to take that victory away from us.

And you saw it last week with a different way. But our guys just finished. And we needed our defense to be in a bend not break mode at the end, and they were. And they made the stops when they needed to.

We'd like to finish with the ball on offense. Really, that last play is the one you want to take back. But I thought our guys were physical in the run game.

They tried to throw a lot of different stuff at us to slow us down in the run game. We were efficient enough early to get that lead and play the type of game we wanted to play today against Pittsburgh. So it was really just a credit for all three phases for us to do that.

Q. (Question concerning Logan Wilson's value to the team.)

ZAC TAYLOR: You know, I feel like he -- I guess I can't say if he gets enough attention or not. But I know his value

to this team. The team knows his value. He quietly just steps up and makes tremendous play after tremendous play.

And I couldn't say he gets the respect he deserves nationally. But he's going to be a great player in this league for a long time. And we're really glad to have him.

Q. Zac, obviously, the last drive in the first half and the pass to Ja'Marr Chase, can you talk about that last drive in the first half?

ZAC TAYLOR: It's the same as Minnesota. It was 7-7, we got the ball back before the half, hit the same play to Ja'Marr to go 14-7, get the ball back to start the half, score points.

You know, against Minnesota we got seven, this one, three. Very similar. That's how we want to play. We want to dominate the end of the half and start out strong to start the third quarter. Puts you in a great position and then to play how we know we got to play on the road.

So the only difference, they didn't go for fourth and one on the minus 30 to give them seven points. So that's the biggest difference there. But I was proud of the way that our guys played the second half.

Q. (Question concerning the low sack number for the Bengals offensive line during the game.)

ZAC TAYLOR: That's our expectation. You know, it is our expectation. And, again, yeah, there's been a lot made of the sacks the last two weeks.

But you don't want to make excuses for what happened. But we know they were very easily fixable and it was just one guy.

It's at a young part of the season right now. It's going to take some time for everyone to gel as a team. The O-line is no different.

Joe knew he needed to protect himself. Really proud of the way that those guys played. And, again, our defense putting us in that position to play the way we needed to



play.

We weren't down 20-3 because of self-imposed shots we took to ourself last week. And that's just how we want to play football, play with the lead and then it allows you to do a lot of good stuff.

Q. What was it like to harass Ben on the other end of that?

ZAC TAYLOR: You know, it's good. It's fun to watch the other quarterback on his back. And, you know, our guys were relentless with their pressure.

And sometimes you don't have to bring pressure to get the pressure. The guys upfront have done a tremendous job whether it's a three, four, five-man rush. They're making it count. And, you know, that's great to see.

Q. (Question concerning Jackson Carman's performance.)

ZAC TAYLOR: I thought overall -- it's a little hard for me to evaluate the line coming off the game. I saw some good stuff. There were a couple good things that got him early and then he just calmed down.

Not to be expected on the road in a divisional game. From my eye, he calmed down and did a good job. And we ran the ball to the right a lot. And he was right there in the mix on that stuff.

So that was really good to see. And it's a credit to Riley and Trey. You got two veterans around him to kind of help him through that.

Jackson had the right mentality. We've been talking to him all week about it. And, obviously, he must have played pretty well to have the runs over there.

Q. Do you feel like it's something that he built the belief that you need for those guys to move in the direction headed at this point?

ZAC TAYLOR: I just think this team has believed in each other. And losing a game early in the season last week, there's no setbacks for us. We just needed to learn from that game and we did.

And I think that's critical in the league. How many teams have finished 17-0, 16-0? Two? The critical part is to not let it beat you twice, which we didn't today, but to learn from all those critical mistakes that set us back.

And I think our team did that today. And, again, there's just

a lot of belief in that locker room right now. And we just got to capitalize and keep it going.

Q. (Question concerning the divisional game and the future success.)

ZAC TAYLOR: Well, again, we need to have more success in our division. And today is just the first opportunity we had to do that.

I'm thankful that it came on the road. I'm glad our first divisional game was on the road. Because it's just a great -- a great part of our early season momentum that we needed to build.

We would have -- if you could have drawn up the schedule, I would have wanted a week three divisional opponent on the road. I would have wanted that. We just got to finish strong on Thursday night.

Q. You said you needed to learn from last week's loss. What was the biggest thing?

ZAC TAYLOR: Yeah, the turn -- you're facing a good defense, you're playing a physical team on both sides of the ball. We lost the turnover battle 4-1. We didn't do some smart things sometimes with the field position. I'm talking to myself, as well.

So, you know, all of our coaches and players just learning from some of those things that happened and just making sure we didn't make the same mistakes twice. And I thought we all did a better job today.

Q. (Question concerning the defense's performance.)

ZAC TAYLOR: Great job. You know, we're up three possessions there in the second half. And they're tired, they're out there, they're facing good players, Najee Harris is a physical back, you know, he wears people out, whether he's running or catching -- I think he had an amazing amount of catches today. So you still got to tackle him whether he's getting the rushes or not.

But it was bend but not break. You're up three scores. You know, let the clock keep bleeding. They're not giving up huge chunk plays, for the most part.

Kept them out of the end zone with touchdowns. Limited them to field goals or limited to the stops on fourth down. And that's just what we needed from those guys in the second half. And we had that lead coming out of that first possession in the third quarter.

Q. (Question concerning the interception Joe Burrow



threw.)

ZAC TAYLOR: Oh, you know, he's being aggressive. That was a play we wanted. He pushed the ball down the field and was aggressive with it.

You know, we'll see it on the tape. You know, I don't know whether he missed it by a little bit. Potentially, that's a possibility. And, again, we want our quarterback to be aggressive.

Q. After that long drive that ended in just a field goal, I think a lot of people figured run the ball, run out the clock. Was there a message there with staying aggressive?

ZAC TAYLOR: Yeah, we thought there was some good opportunities there. We didn't get exactly the look we would have liked to get there. And they challenged us a little bit and we just had an incompleteness.

But, again, we weren't just going to concede and get under center and run the ball. They were mixing their fronts upfront. So we knew we were going to have to get them off a little bit.

And, you know, we missed and threw an incompleteness there. And Riley went out on that one drive, so you got to protect yourself a little bit. So you got to be smart there with Riley missing a couple plays. And, you know, played a little conservative there on that possession.

Q. (Question concerning the team's performance in all three phrases.)

ZAC TAYLOR: I think we can lean on all three phases. You know, I really do. You know, you look at the field possession our special teams created, you look at the mindset our defense has played with for three weeks, the belief they have in themselves.

And then what the offense is capable of on a moment's notice of being explosive and scoring some points, if we can get the ground game going.

So I really think that the team believes in all three phases that we can do whatever it takes to win, depending on the style of game we're going to play.