

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, November 14, 2021
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Mike Tomlin

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 16, Lions 16

MIKE TOMLIN: Just met with the team in there and acknowledged the fight, but didn't congratulate them for it. Quite frankly, that's going to be required when you are trying to do and be what we're trying to do and be. That fight, that competitive spirit, and that smiling in the face of adversity has to be a component of anything and everything we do. I did being acknowledge it. I'm appreciative of the efforts. Just too sloppy to win.

Core fundamental things, man. You know, we didn't tackle well enough throughout the game defensively, and then in the most critical moments we didn't maintain possession of the ball on offense, and so we've got to accept responsibility for the outcome of the game, and we do. We look at what it is that we can do and how we could have done it better in terms of changing the outcome of the game, but we didn't do enough, and those are two of the things that highlighted it just from a knee-jerk response or a feel in terms of watching it from within the stadium. We'll make the necessary corrections and learn from this hopefully and move forward.

On the injury front, Joe Haden has a midfoot sprain. T.J. Watt has a hip and a knee that's got to be evaluated. Trai Turner has an ankle. Dotson has an ankle. We'll assess those guys, and I'll give you an update regarding those guys on Tuesday the way that we normally do.

Tip of the cap to those guys. Detroit, man, they played. They were competitive. They challenged us in a lot of ways, but it's not about them or us. It's not about anyone that we play. It's about us and the quality of our work and execution, the completeness of our plan and so forth, the adjustments we make from a staffing standpoint, and there wasn't enough of that to secure victory.

Questions?

Q. Mike, was it just tackling with the run game early, because you shut it down kind of midway through the

second half.

MIKE TOMLIN: It was, largely. There's a guy out of place or two there initially, but if you had to wrap it in a bow and talk about it globally or largely, we had to tackle better. As the game went on, we did, and we were able to settle it down, but the damage was the damage.

Q. What did you think of Rudolph's performance?

MIKE TOMLIN: He did what we expected him to do. He gave us a chance to win, but that's not the first opportunity for him. This guy has been at it a while, and so we expected him to play well, and we thought he gave us a chance to win.

Q. How much did the game plan change with Rudolph going in for Ben?

MIKE TOMLIN: It did not.

Q. Mike, first drive of the second half you had first and goal at the 5 and had three straight passes. Why not Najee in there?

MIKE TOMLIN: We had a run pass option on first down. Man, they gave us a look. I think they had six defensive linemen in the game, and so we had an opportunity in the passing game, but when it's incomplete, it opens it up for that judgment, and so I own all of that.

Q. Mike, you said sloppy game. For those of us that weren't down on the field, what were the conditions like?

MIKE TOMLIN: The conditions were the same for both teams, and so we don't seek comfort there.

Q. Can you take us through the last 24 hours learning that Ben was not going to be available, what you guys had to do to adjust, and just that whole process?

MIKE TOMLIN: Really wasn't a lot of adjustments. He was symptomatic on Saturday. We tested him. He was positive. We're thoughtful about distancing him from the group anyway in an effort to protect him and so wasn't a lot

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of concern about contacts and things of that nature. We just simply elevated Dwayne Haskins and moved forward.

Q. You mentioned that they played six defensive linemen down inside the 5. They also played a lot of tackle eligibles as well. That contribute at all to their running ability?

MIKE TOMLIN: Not taking anything away from them, but their running ability had a lot to do with our tackling or lack thereof, and that's why I acknowledged it. Obviously, they had a good plan. They had a bye week. They did some things that were challenging in all three phases, but that's life in this league. You're going to play people coming off of bye weeks. We came off of a bye week. That's just life in this league. For us the significant component of their run game was our sloppy tackling at times.

Q. What do you attribute the missed tackles to? Is there a scheme-wise, technique-wise?

MIKE TOMLIN: I'm not going to attribute it to anything other than what it is.

Q. End of the first half you had fourth down at the 2. What went into the decision to take the points there?

MIKE TOMLIN: Just decided to take the points.

Q. How would you assess the play of the guys that had to step in for all the guys that ended up going down?

MIKE TOMLIN: We expect those guys to play well. You know, you're a starter or a starter in waiting. There's a fine line between being a starter and backup. We have respect for the men. All the guys in the helmet are capable of being a component of helping us win, and so we proceed with that understanding and expectation. We're not surprised. We don't throw pep rallies when guys answer the bell and play well. We expect them to be competent.

Q. How much has Joe Haden worked at guard since he has worked with you?

MIKE TOMLIN: He is very versatile. That's one of the reasons why we had interest in him in free agency. He has played tackle, both tackles. He has played guard. It's all over his resume.

Q. Did you consider putting Mason under center more with the issues Kendrick was having?

MIKE TOMLIN: Not really because of that, no.

Q. Was there any reason for the high snaps that you could see? There were about four or five of them.

MIKE TOMLIN: It's really irrelevant, when you think about it, isn't it? There are things we got to do and do it in an acceptable level, fundamental things. CQ exchanges is no different when we're in gun than when we're under. We're a professional football group, and there's a certain expectation there.

Q. How did you feel the other off side linebackers did after Watt went out and you see Highsmith take his play up a tick as the overtime in fourth quarter went on?

MIKE TOMLIN: I'm never surprised when guys step up and answer the bell when given an opportunity. We expect it. We prepare for it. We prepare them for it. They prepare themselves for it. That was expected.

Thanks, guys.

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