

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, November 14, 2021
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Mason Rudolph

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 16, Lions 16

MASON RUDOLPH: He has always been great with communication, making sure guys are aware as soon as he knows. He told me before we had meetings at the hotel, so it was good to have a quarterback meeting and a walk-through last night to kind of get yourself mentally acclimated ready to rock.

Q. Mason, was it good to have the couple of days during the week, too.

MASON RUDOLPH: I think it's always good when you can get as many reps as you can during the week to stay sharp, so make the most of those, and I think it's fortunate to be in the situation to get those reps on Wednesdays, and, yeah, keep sharp. A lot of other guys around the league don't get that work as a backup, so I look forward to those days.

Q. Mason, how was the ball? Wet? Hard to throw?

MASON RUDOLPH: I think everyone was dealing with that, both sides of the ball. There's things you change, but obviously some throws I want to have back. I think the weather affected everybody out there a bit, but you got to find a way to get it done, and we didn't tonight, so we'll take a look and try to fix those mistakes.

Q. Mason, it looked like Kendrick had a couple of high snaps. Is there anything you can point to there, and what do you kind of say to him to settle him back down in a game to get on the same page?

MASON RUDOLPH: We got some in between those series and made sure he was honed in. That happens. He has done a great job. That's never been an issue with Kendrick, so I don't expect that, but he is a young player, and obviously we're all dealing with those weather conditions, and it affects different people differently. Like I said, I've got a lot of confidence in K.G.

Q. Did he call you last night, or did you talk to him and get any advice from Ben?

MASON RUDOLPH: No. No, we did not communicate, no.

Q. There were a couple of throws you wished you had back. You seemed to react like one of those was the one going to Ray-Ray in the end zone. Was that one that you just saw him --

MASON RUDOLPH: Glove kind of grabbed it a little bit there at the end, and I've got to make that throw. He did a great job of getting open there for us in the Red Zone. It's one I've got to make, and I don't want to make an excuse. I've got to make that throw.

Q. Mason, when you found out you were going to start, is it too late in the process to address the scheme to your liking?

MASON RUDOLPH: No. I think we talked last night, Coach Canada and Coach Sullivan. They have always done a great job whether it was last year the last week of the season just giving me a lot of input, and every quarterback is different with what they like and the situational football, third downs, Red Zone, two-point play. We had a long conversation and kind of they were honed in on what I like, which I don't think we changed much, but there's different plays that you like, maybe that Ben didn't like, and we like different things. You try to get that communicated.

Q. You guys got down to the 5. You had a lot of run plays. You had a couple of scrambles at first and goal and then three straight pass plays. What was the play-calling sequence there? What happened there?

MASON RUDOLPH: I think that first one, RPO football, and it's obviously a box count type of a situation. When they pack the box, you got to make a throw, make it happen, and then I think we rolled out the next. Then third down play escapes me, but, yeah, when you get down there that close, you need to come away with seven and not three. We know that, and so I was pleased with the way we -- we did that on the opening drive and punched it

in, but we got to close the door on them early and go up by a few more scores than we did.

Q. What did you think when you saw that defensive back coming at you on that scramble? You were pretty pumped after you got up.

MASON RUDOLPH: Yeah. Yeah, trying to extend the play with my legs, and it doesn't happen often, but I think when there's room there to call your own number, I enjoy that, and just always try to think about ball security and two hands on it and don't try to be a hero and then lose the football. I enjoy that stuff.

Q. You took a big hit there.

MASON RUDOLPH: Yeah, I did. Yeah.

Q. He didn't get up.

MASON RUDOLPH: No, he didn't. I hope he is doing well. Those are violent collisions, and that's what football is. I hope everyone is safe and recovering.

Q. Mason, what was Najee's demeanor like in the huddle? You, obviously, lean on him a lot. Do you feel like he is a rookie, or how do you see him?

MASON RUDOLPH: He is wise beyond his years and very calm. He has played in big games his whole life, so he is a smart dude. He is great in protection and, obviously, catching the ball out of the back field. You saw him tonight, he extended some of our drives there at the end to give us a chance. He has a long career.

Q. They've been so successful again the run, especially the last time out. Is there something that they showed different defensively today that even in this weather you decided to throw as much? You as a team. Not decide to throw as much as you did.

MASON RUDOLPH: I think we want to run the ball. That's been an emphasis for us all year, and I think we've done a better job of that if you look at the last few weeks. Every team is different. A lot of times when they have seven people in the box and you got six to block, you got to make a play on the outside and know that running into that, it's a numbers game. It's how we teach offensive football. We had to throw it at times, but I think there were times we ran the ball well, but we've got to get better across the board.

Q. Do you have total autonomy there to make all those calls?

MASON RUDOLPH: RPO is our box count, and when they

pack the box, there's routes, combinations that you have to throw the ball, so, yeah, that's what you do. That's what the coaches teach you to do when things are packed. You've got to make a play on the outside.

Q. (Off mic)

MASON RUDOLPH: He was trying to get out of bounds, and I thought that was our best opportunity to get quick five, six and get out of bounds, and he is a good player. Obviously, hurt for him. He has never had a ball security issue. It happens to all of us in those moments at times. Young player. He is a hard worker, and I know he is going to come back and attack this week. We all have things to correct, trust me. I have plenty of balls that I would like back. So does everyone on our offense.

Q. Were you almost too keyed up? Sometimes it seemed like a couple like the short slants to Diontae a couple of times looked like it came in a little hotter than he was anticipating.

MASON RUDOLPH: The one at the end to Diontae, it was high and hot. Those are throws I've got to make despite the weather conditions.

Q. Mason, this was your tenth career start. How much do you feel like you have been able to show growth from especially where you were in '19 when you were starting a lot from there to where you are now?

MASON RUDOLPH: I'm so much more comfortable out there. Comfortable with Coach Canada and our offense and the young players on our offensive line. We just gel well as a unit. Those are my friends. Those are my brothers. We enjoy each other's company. Yeah, there's a level of experience that you have. Experience is the best teacher, and these opportunities don't come around often, so, obviously, I was excited to get it, and we got to make more plays to get in the win column.

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