

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, December 5, 2021
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Mike Tomlin

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 20, Ravens 19

MIKE TOMLIN: I instructed the guys to say very little. I have also instructed the guys to say very little today. It's put up and shut up time for us. That's just the state that we're in, and we talked about it all week. I appreciate the efforts in terms of putting up, but we got a short week. We got to go to Minnesota. I'm appreciative of the efforts. Man, it was much needed. I'm appreciative of the atmosphere that Steeler Nation provided and working in the comforts of Heinz Field.

I'm appreciative of the Ravens, man. It takes two to Tango. They bring the best out in us. Those games are always like that. I don't think anybody that's looked at them over the last 15 years or so are surprised by what transpired in terms of how the game was played. We are appreciative of the efforts and the things that produced victory. We realize we got a short week, man, and we are going to get to work.

B.J. Finney hurt his back. He is being evaluated. I'm sure we'll have some other things. That's all that I have to report at this time.

Q. You say the Ravens bring out the best in you. It that competitiveness, ability to execute in critical situations?

MIKE TOMLIN: Just the competitiveness. Whether we like it or not, I'm talking about us and the Ravens, man, we're tied together. There's been some significant games. It's about the men that have played in these games, the standard that they hold the current players to. Guys like Ray Lewis and Ed Reed and others, guys on this side like Alan Faneca, Troy Polamalu, those gold jacket types that have had an opportunity to watch for 15 years that really kind of set a standard in the series that we all have to play to and uphold, and we are appreciative of that. Hopefully we made those Steeler alumni proud with our efforts tonight.

Q. Did you see more, Mike, of what you had hoped to see last week in Cincinnati, meaning the physical part of everything?

MIKE TOMLIN: Yes. Anybody got a tough question?

Q. What did you do this week to kind of bring that physicality back? Was it a point of emphasis?

MIKE TOMLIN: Like I said during the course of the week, it was more ceremonial than anything. It's not one day's work is not going to change your trajectory, but the point needed to be made because we didn't uphold the standard a week ago, and so that's what it was about for us.

Q. Did it surprise you they went for two?

MIKE TOMLIN: No, it did not. They aggressively play analytics. From that standpoint, they're predictable.

Q. There was speculation about Ben this week, the way he just blocks everything out. I assume you weren't surprised by what he did in this game?

MIKE TOMLIN: No, not at all, man. His relationship with that organization and the men. Ben and Suggs, for example. I told the team during the week, I had a ring side seat as a young coach watching Brett Favre and Warren Sapp, and Ben and Suggs' relationship over the years kind of reminded me of that. And so it's just a lot of depth to this matchup, and I'm appreciative of it. Hopefully our guys are, and they understand that when we play them.

Q. How about the way Diontae bounced back after dropping a touchdown pass for you?

MIKE TOMLIN: Diontae has been unbelievable all year in terms of his approach to business, and that's why he is playing well. I don't think any of us are surprised. I think we're just surprised by the drop probably more than anything because of what we see him do day to day. He is the first to the field. He is the last off the field just about any day we work.

Q. You had seven sacks in the game. You had Lamar to 55 yards rushing in the game. What was the key to

keeping him in check with such an elusive quarterback?

MIKE TOMLIN: Live every down. That guy is an unbelievable challenge. We were fortunate to do what it is you said we did.

Q. Based on the way T.J. played today, is he going to practice ever again?

MIKE TOMLIN: Yes, and there won't be music either.

(Laughter)

Q. Xxx was that an example of why you do Seven Shots so much offensively and defensively?

MIKE TOMLIN: Those moments, it gets thick. We don't need to be discovering ourselves and figuring out what we need to run in those moments, and so we pay respect to those moments with how we practice, and so when we make calls, everybody can anticipate the call, and they can communicate and do the things that you need them to do when that air gets thick, and so the only way to do that is you repeat, you repeat, you rep, you rep, and that's the investment that we have in that area to feel for those moments.

Q. Benny Snell, coming into the game late. He obviously hasn't had a lot of action and was pretty effective. What went into your thinking of getting him involved there?

MIKE TOMLIN: We want to stay committed to the run. They were doing a good job of stopping it, so we wanted to keep 22 fresh, and so we needed to supplement him, and we did, and he got good assistance from Benny. We're appreciative of those efforts.

Q. Anything happen last week or out there today that give you some insight into how to keep that competitiveness going and dial it up again?

MIKE TOMLIN: Last week was last week. This week was this week. Next week will be next week.

Q. How disciplined did you have to be with your pass rush around Lamar? It seemed like you were staying your lanes and collapsing on him.

MIKE TOMLIN: Scary, scary but a challenge.

Q. What do you think about the way 77 stepped up?

MIKE TOMLIN: I can't say enough. How about guys like

Leglue? How about Adams? Adams just got here and played a bunch of snaps for us. Witherspoon started in place of Joe Haden. I just can't say enough about the contributions we got from new Steelers or Steelers that are getting an opportunity to get their train out of the station in terms of their careers. Leglue, awesome.

Q. Defense was on the field a lot in the first half. They minimized the damage of that. How do you feel like they were able to accomplish that?

MIKE TOMLIN: Largely, I think we got off on possession downs, but it's never easy. Even when it's third and long. Lamar just challenges you in that way. We probably lost more third and longs than we did third and mediums. It's difficult to find a package of plays that you are comfortable with because of the many ways that he can get you on those type downs, and so not only that, but just limiting you in terms of the personnel groups you put on the field. You always hold your breath putting six DBs on the field because it could be a quarterback draw or things of that nature. Quarterback runs on possession downs are a big component of what they do, and that guy can easily get 10, 11 yards when you got six DBs on the field. It's just a lot of challenges in terms of trying to minimize him, and I'm appreciative of the efforts of the guys and the coaches.

Q. Mike, you were talking about the analytics of the two-point play. Doesn't the time of the game, the momentum of the game all factor into it, too?

MIKE TOMLIN: Yeah, they were coming from behind and all of that. Analytical equations help people come to decisions we're familiar with.

Q. Chris Wormley seemed like he just had a nose for Lamar Jackson.

MIKE TOMLIN: I told "Worm" when he got here, I said, man, when a team trades you within the division, they're telling you what they think of you, so I hope he always plays like that when he sees him.

Q. The tactics, though, of your defensive call on the two-point conversion, looked like it was pretty much a zero blitz. Is that something that you coach up all the time on?

MIKE TOMLIN: Yes. We start with the premise in two-point football, and there's no secret, so I don't care about sharing it that people not going to run it down there. We start with that premise.

Q. The secondary has seen the whole Lamar Jackson in the pocket. He was in the pocket quite a bit. I think



the secondary helped force those sacks. Can you just talk about that?

MIKE TOMLIN: Rush and coverage works together. It's always scary when you play him because you have to play zone because you play man when he breaks out, it's too many chunks of real estate, but when he extends, zones get challenged. The seams in zones get challenged. That's what I mean when I say it's pick your poison. You play man, he escapes the initial rush. He can run forever. You play zone, and he extends it. Then the zones get stressed later in the down. It's just challenging. It always is. It's challenging for everybody that plays against 8.

Q. I apologize if you touched on this before when we were over there, but what does a win like this, especially the way that you guys run at the end, mean more for this team --

MIKE TOMLIN: You can only get one a week. I'm appreciative of it. We needed this it week. That's the perspective I have.

Q. The dialogue going forward is this may be Ben's farewell tour. How do you manage that, coach that within your locker room?

MIKE TOMLIN: There is nothing to manage. Ben doesn't allow it to become an issue. Ben has been pretty solid in terms of his expressions that he is singly focused on what he is dealing with now. He will deal with those other things on the other side of this journey, and I'm with him on it. It is not a distraction. I thought it was funny that it was seemingly a story this weekend to be quite honest with you.

Thanks.

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