

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, December 19, 2021
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Cameron Heyward

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers - 19, Titans - 13

Q. Ben talked about this being somewhat of a playoff atmosphere. Is that how it is in the entire locker room? Is that how it feels right now, it's a do-or-die mentality considering where you're at in the standings?

CAMERON HEYWARD: Yes, just run down the list, every game here on out is a playoff game. Backs against the wall. E put ourselves in this situation. But we've got to be ready for it.

It's not going to be perfect football but it's going to be playoff football. And everything's going to count a little different.

Q. Cam, is this an example of the game that splash plays can win it? Like you said, it wasn't perfect, the run defense and offense whatever, but the splash plays, it's pretty cut and dried, won you the game?

CAMERON HEYWARD: Splash plays are always an equalizer. How many turnovers did we get? Four? Man, they came at crucial times and got us back in the game, gave us the lead.

We've been saying the dam is going to break. You've got to keep practicing. And the practicing and the drills we're doing are starting to pay off.

Q. You were right there on the final play when they were measuring it for a first down or not. What was your vantage point? It looked like you were trying to sway them a little bit. Was there anything that you said that made it go one way?

CAMERON HEYWARD: It just wasn't even close to begin with. It was a yard short. They got a generous spot to begin with. I knew it was short to begin with. And then they were trying to hurry up to the ball so they couldn't even look at it. I'm, like, it's under two minutes. We have

to look at it.

And I was just annoyed that it was even going to that because it was clearly short. Glad we got it overturned and glad it went in our favor.

Q. You said you want to give up less on the rush. But speak of the significance of a couple of those drives holding to field goals, especially on that 19-play drive to keep them out of the end zone?

CAMERON HEYWARD: Yeah, guys had to knuckle up. 19-play drives usually end up in touchdowns. But for us, we were able to hold them to three. Even early on, I was ticked off that we gave up seven early, but if you want to keep fighting in these games, you've got to settle for field goals, give your offense a chance, get some turnovers. And that's what outweighed getting it done.

Q. You guys started slow as has happened in the last couple of games. I think last week Mike Tomlin said if you guys keep playing like this you would be home in January. What was the message this halftime that kind of got you guys going after the break?

CAMERON HEYWARD: You know, defensive-wise, we got the stop to begin the game. But we were already in bad territory off the punt. And then we gave up a touchdown.

But, I think, after that we just went in thinking we can't give up. Doesn't matter our field position, we've just got to get off the field or surrender three. And we did that from there on out.

There were a couple of times we were very cognizant of Tannehill's running ability and try to close the pocket. It wasn't just one guy doing it. It took a boat load of guys to do it. And I'm proud of our guys.

Q. I know a win is a win and it doesn't matter how ugly, like you said, it doesn't have to be perfect. But when you give up 201 rushing yards, does that eat at your craw or is it just we won, who cares?

CAMERON HEYWARD: I'm still ticked about it. I never

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want to surrender that many yards. There's a lot we've got to clean up. But it's better to clean it up in a win than a loss.

I'll be banging my head tonight trying to figure out what we need to do. Too many times we set the edge, he cuts back or stays front side and it gets out. Teams are going to do the same things from here on out. If we don't do it, we're going to be in a world of trouble.

Q. To that point, you didn't stop the run, you didn't run the ball very well, but you took it away four times. Is that all it takes sometimes, especially in games like this?

CAMERON HEYWARD: Yeah, the equalizer. I think, I've said it before, turnovers and making them settle for field goals with the -- changes in the game. Do we want to keep going down this formula of not stopping a run? No. But there are things we can take that are positive -- turnovers, getting off the field in the red zone and surrendering three.

Q. What does a win like this say about this team and potentially this defense in terms of those things that you guys do want to improve upon?

CAMERON HEYWARD: I think all of our wins have just been gutted out. And they're very close, come down to a couple of plays. Hopefully it's something we can build on. It's better to win and learn, than lose and learn at this point.

But there's a lot we can improve on. There's things we can take. Turnovers were huge in this game. We were able to capitalize.

But at the same time we've got to work on the run game. We can't continue to keep giving up these long -- not even long runs -- but too much falling forward for them.

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