

# Pittsburgh Steelers

## Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Quarterback Baker Mayfield

Visitors Postgame Press Conference

Pittsburgh - 26, Cleveland - 14

**Q. Baker, I guess let's just start with, you know, sacked nine times tonight. Why was there so much difficulty kind of keeping you upright and keeping you clean throughout the night?**

BAKER MAYFIELD: Obviously, their front's pretty good. It has been for years. But, you know, when you got T.J. Watt over there and not giving our rookie tackle a whole lot of help, that's not going to be good for him.

**Q. And then for you, you know, obviously, a difficult day outside of the sacks. Did you feel kind of -- I guess when you got that touchdown to Harrison, did you still believe you could lead this team to a win?**

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, I mean, at that point, it comes down to the onside kick and getting another opportunity to get the ball. Yeah, it was a rough day overall. A lot of batted passes. Just not a very pretty day.

**Q. Baker, it just seemed like, you know, you were having to battle from the start with, you know, drops right on the opening drive, you know, to batted passes, to the sacks, one thing after another. How did you, you know, kind of keep going through all that when -- and be able to pull it close at the end when it just seemed like it was a constant struggle to get basically the help that you needed?**

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, I mean, it's not going to always be pretty or smooth. But I'm a fighter. If anybody ever questions how much I want it, just turn on this tape. It wasn't pretty but I kept going, I kept swinging. That's who I am and that's who I'll continue to be. That's how I've always been. So I don't really know how to adjust it.

**Q. Are you glad that they didn't pull you out of there just for safety reasons? Are you glad you had a**



**chance to try to pull it out in the end?**

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, I mean, when there's an opportunity to win, I'm an extremely competitive guy. I think you guys know that. But I think it's time for me to start looking for what's in the best interest for me and my health.

I've continued to lay it out on the line and I haven't been healthy and try to fight for our guys. And right now, I'm pretty damn beat up, to be honest with you. There's no way around it. I gave it everything I had tonight.

**Q. Yeah, Baker, does that mean that you're looking at not playing next weekend now that you guys have been eliminated from the playoffs and get a jump-start on rehabilitating that shoulder, among the other injuries you've been dealing with?**

BAKER MAYFIELD: That'll be a discussion I have with my agent, you know, and my family. So I don't have that answer for you right now.

**Q. Baker, you know, yesterday, obviously, things didn't go your way. You guys were eliminated mathematically from playoff contention. So what was it like going through that and trying to prepare for this game? What was just the state of mind coming in here after going through yesterday?**

BAKER MAYFIELD: I mean, it was just another opportunity for us to compete and try to come out with a win. You know, obviously, at that point we were fighting to get a winning record by the end of the year. That, obviously, didn't happen. And that's where we're at right now.

**Q. And, you know, I know we've talked about this before; your shoulder and surgery, are you to the point where now you're expecting to have the surgery? And the reason I ask is because if you're going to talk about next week, obviously, you could have it sooner than later, you know, if you ended your season. So where are you with that?**

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, you know, I've made the

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decision and have had discussions that I am going to have surgery. I am going to get this shoulder fixed and, you know, be able to come back next year at 100 percent. So that's been decided.

Now, when it's happening, that has not been decided. As I said earlier, I don't have that answer for you regarding next week.

**Q. Hey, Baker, was the plan all week to come out throwing as much as you guys did?**

BAKER MAYFIELD: You know, it's a little bit of give-and-take, trying to get them into their big personnel and spread them out and throw it.

It's just they didn't rush a whole lot. And when that was the scenario in the quick game and stuff, we got a lot of batted balls down. But, yeah, they got us pretty good.

**Q. When they do that and bat all those balls, like, how are you supposed to, I don't know, avoid that or compensate? What can you do, if anything?**

BAKER MAYFIELD: I mean, sometimes when I can see them blatantly, you know, just waiting for a pass to put their hands up, I can kind of change my arm angle.

There was a few times that I had to put the ball a little bit behind these guys to get it around them. But some of them, these are timing throws. I have to be on time, put the ball in the right place and let it fly. And so, a lot of those were due to that.

**Q. Baker, the word "frustration" has been used multiple times the last couple weeks and even body language from players on the sidelines looked lackadaisical sometimes tonight. How has that frustration set into the locker room with relationships and maybe even at times in play calling and with communicating with Stefanski?**

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, I mean, today, obviously, was extremely frustrating just because we're going out there knowing that we're eliminated from the playoffs. So guys are just going out there for pride and heart and playing for each other.

And there's no other reason why we would go out there and do it besides to get a win for each other. And so, it's frustrating when it doesn't happen.

You know, when it comes down to it, we, obviously, know our season's over after next weekend. And that's just a matter of fact. It's still -- this is our job. So guys have to

handle it correctly.

Guys have to show up to work and do their rehab, show up in meetings, pay attention, be locked in. Guys have to be pros. And if they don't handle it correctly, I wouldn't expect -- if they don't handle it correctly, I wouldn't expect them to be around for very long. That's just part of being a pro and being there for your teammates.

**Q. Hey, Baker. When you're in a game like that and you've got the situation that you're in, and it's kind of piling it up and you're looking for that help, like you said, with your rookie tackle situation, what are those conversations on the sidelines look like in a game when you're trying to make those adjustments and call for that help?**

BAKER MAYFIELD: Just a matter of looking at the game plan and what we like and seeing if some of those plays are adjustable to bring a little extra help; chipping him or staying people in protection.

So just discussions on the fly, which you -- this is the NFL, you have to be able to adapt mid game. And, you know, we didn't do a good enough job, as you can tell.

**Q. Baker, you know, you mentioned the right tackle situation and how beat up you are. I guess I'm just wondering: Do you believe that tonight and, really, all season long you've been put in the best position possible to be successful?**

BAKER MAYFIELD: You know, I'm not going to get into too many details about that as a full season evaluation. You know, we've, obviously, been pretty banged up.

You know, I believe in James -- I pray to God you guys don't spin this into something where I'm criticizing James Hudson. That's not what I'm doing. We're talking about an all-pro that he's going up against and he hasn't had very many starts.

So I'm proud of James. He kept swinging, he kept fighting. Now, when it comes to, you know, what we've had to deal with all season, there's been a lot of ups and downs.

You know, do I believe I can play better? Absolutely. Do I believe there's better that we as an offense could have been put in that are better? Absolutely.

There's so many critiques throughout the year, if there wasn't, we wouldn't be sitting here at seven and nine. So it is what it is.