

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Cam Heyward

Postgame Press Conference



Pittsburgh Steelers - 20, Tampa Bay Buccaneers - 18

Q. (No microphone.)

CAM HEYWARD: It's very necessary. It hasn't been easy. But that doesn't absolve us of our record. This is something we have to keep working towards. It's great to get a win today. But it's a learning moment for a lot of guys. And as many good plays as we made there was bad plays out there. So you take the good with the bad. You just try to keep growing from this. Keep stacking wins.

Q. Brady, your ability to get pressure on Brady. Can you talk about his comfort level as you perceived it?

CAM HEYWARD: Brady is a heck of a player. You got to rush forward. You blitz too much, he's going to dice you up. There's not a coverage he hasn't seen.

I think the best pressure is always up the middle. I thought we applied that today. We have to be cognizant of the rush and work together as a unit. You're not going to get multiple times to hit Tom Brady. So get pressure up the middle. So when you do, you got to make sure you hit home. It's a four-quarter battle. It's not like you're just going to keep stopping him. But I thought we did a great job of winning early on third down. Making 'em settle for field goals. I think that was the game changer in the game for us.

Q. As far as how the defensive backs interacted with the new pieces that were out there, the changing parts, the way they described it was like this wasn't like the COVID game where Baker came in and was introducing himself to offensive linemen that they hadn't met before. Can you talk about how that came together so quickly under game circumstances?

CAM HEYWARD: Kudos to our back end and our linebackers. It is a tough position to be a DB in this league. And it's even tougher when you're going from one day of being activated to the next day you're starting right away. I

think our defensive back coaches, our linebackers getting 'em all lined up and them just mixing it up. Understanding that if we could win first and second down that we could disguise some things.

And I thought they did a really good job tackling. A lot of stuff went to the edge. And they're not playing slouches. You're playing Mike Evans, Chris Godwin. These guys are top notch Pro Bowl players. So you got to make sure you keep mixing it up. I thought they did a great job today.

Q. You guys, either before the game or during the game had fun together, got the swag back, got your identity back. Is that a fair way to put it? Was there a mindset like that where we're back to being our defense?

CAM HEYWARD: We got some work to do. I thought we applied pressure. Stopped the run to a degree. But, man, we ain't back yet. We got some work to do.

Q. You guys had a number of big, short-yardage stops. Were you giving 'em different looks up front? What was the key?

CAM HEYWARD: We stemmed the front a lot. Moved things around. Never just became sitting ducks. I just thought we were ready for every situation.

Playing Brady you always think about those sneaks he's had. I feel like I kept telling our guys, Be ready for the sneak. Be ready for the sneak. And then we finally got after 'em.

But I thought we did some really good things up front. Hopefully this is something that we can just keep building on.

Q. What did today show you about Mitch?

CAM HEYWARD: That he's ready for the moment. When things aren't going well, you get Kenny in, and then Kenny gets hurt. And then he has to step up. We've always talked about next man up. I know it hasn't been easy on Mitch being here so far. But when we needed some big plays, he was up for it.



Q. You touched on a little bit with the red zone defense and what all went into that one touchdown. What was the challenge to keeping receivers, tight ends, in front of you, especially inside the 20 with Tom Brady under center?

CAM HEYWARD: I'm a D-linemen. I can't really speak about a defensive back keeping 'em in front of you. Rallying to the ball. Getting your hands up. I don't know if it was Devin -- I know Devin had the big play at the end on the two point which was huge. He doesn't get a lot of credit for that. But, man, that was a big play.

But I don't know if it was Myle or Devin, but I saw them get their hands up and it just floated over just a little bit. That's a big play. Just getting your hands up and making it sail just a little bit.

I told the guys before the game that you're only guaranteed 12 left and these opportunities are precious. So those red zone stops were very precious today.

Q. Mitch a couple times referenced what Mike Tomlin said last night. He said Mike told us this and that. Was it a speech? Was it just normal every Saturday night he says some words to you guys? Was anything different in terms of the mindset or the message or anything?

CAM HEYWARD: I don't think it's anything different. Mike T's always been consistent. That's the one thing I've always appreciated. It's not like you have to go ask him for something different. Coach just said the opportunities are in front of us. He challenged us. It's up to us to deliver on that.

Q. I know that the defensive game plan is a collaborative thing between Mike and TA and Flo. But how much does having Flores on the staff help in a week like this just to get inside maybe the psyche of Tom Brady for the people who haven't faced him?

CAM HEYWARD: I played Tom Brady enough. I don't think Flo's going to say anything different. I think it's a four-quarter challenge. You have to be able to mix things up. You got to rely on your four-man rush. Because you need to drop those guys in the back end. You need to have at least nine most of the time. It's a team effort.

Beating Tom Brady is not an easy feat. If we see him again, we'll see him again. But he does not make it easy on you. Flo is always stressing that.

But the big thing with him that everybody forgets about his

running game. He's had some really good running games. And he knows how to maximize that. Whether it's running game or dropping it off to the running back out of the pass. But he knows how to use pace to his advantage. He knows how to get the running backs involved. And if you're not careful you will get exposed on that.

Q. You're a captain. Mitch is a captain. How difficult was that for him and how important is it for him maybe as a captain to be able to come in and do what he did?

CAM HEYWARD: It's very important. It shows resiliency. It's easy to get lost in it. It's easy to pass the baton off and just say, This is Kenny's shot and I got to deal with that.

But I can't speak enough to Mitch just stepping up in the moment. We needed a guy to step up and play quarterback for us. And he did that today.

We rally around our quarterbacks. We know it's not an easy situation for either of the quarterbacks. Mitch, Mason, Kenny, they competed their butts off. But I thought Mitch just showed a great professionalism in going out there. He delivered some big plays when we needed it.

Q. After the two point seemed like Brady was tapping you on the chest talking to you.

CAM HEYWARD: He was trying to argue with the refs and I was just trying to wall him off (laughing.) Having a little fun there.

But he was talking about there was a hold there. And maybe there was or not, but I wasn't going to give him the chance to even talk to the refs. (Laughing.) That was my blocking for the day.

Q. It seemed like you guys did a lot of different things from a formation standpoint on defense. Maybe more than usual. How difficult is it to get, to be able to run six or seven different looks, especially when you have some different guys in those positions?

CAM HEYWARD: I think it comes down to your communication. And it really starts in practice. Really harping on just the little things. Guys getting better. Making sure -- not assuming that we know things, but making sure we communicate to make sure we know that.

I thought we did a really good job of, whether we got the stops or not, just coming to the sideline, communicating what we did. Making sure we knew where we were going to go from there.

But that's something we just got to continue to keep



improving on and keep going into practice that way.

We can't assume guys know. We got a lot of young guys and we got a lot of guys playing in new spots. So it's going to help us in the long run and we're just going to be better because of it.

Q. How different was practice? Some guys talked about practice after the last game. Some guys talked about it again today. Was it appreciably different the days leading up to this?

CAM HEYWARD: I don't think it was different from the standpoint of physicality or anything. But I think it was just communication on the field and off the field.

Making sure that we talk up every play. Understanding the tendencies. And guys have to grow in that. You look at a guy like Malik Reek. Shows up right before the season starts and we're throwing so much on his plate. But I thought he grew on that front today.

Larry played very well today.

It takes a group effort up front. The back end has to fill in as well. We knew with a runner like Fournette you can't let him go north and south. You let him go north and south he's going to run down your team.

That takes an 11-man job. And corners, safeties. There was one play where Terrell Edmunds did an amazing job of just going down hill. And having those plays from your secondary, they're invigorating. They set the tone. We need every one of those plays.

Q. What did you think of Connor's catch and run?

CAM HEYWARD: Man, I was excited. It was a little bit unexpected. I'm glad he was ready for the moment. But I needed him to score on that. But it was a great catch. He's got to get in better shape (laughing.)

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