

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, November 13, 2022
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Cam Heyward

Postgame Press Conference



Pittsburgh Steelers - 20, New Orleans Saints - 10

Q. Cam, you guys got turnover, interception, stop on downs, interception in that second half. How important was it for the defense to put it away?

CAM HEYWARD: Giving up the touchdown in the first half was -- we were a little bit annoyed with ourselves about that. But in the second half, I thought we did a good job of either getting off the field by turnover or just those fourth down stops were huge.

Q. Cam, how much important was it just to get a win?

CAM HEYWARD: Very important. You know, we've had a long time to think about our last loss, especially with the bye week. But I think it was just important to go out there and play football. You know, that sick taste after that last loss, and then just having to deal with that for the past two weeks is, you know, you're raring to go and ready to get out there.

Q. Cam, you listed after the last game areas you'd like to see growth in the defense. Where did you see the most growth?

CAM HEYWARD: I thought the run defense was really good. I think just everybody playing assignment football. Even there was one play, T.J. took the assignment of, you know, taking Taysom Hill out of the play. With that, getting the ball out of his hands, I think we gave up a ten-yard run, but you could see the execution there.

So the execution I just thought picked up in the run defense, and then that led to the sacks, a couple of sacks and the turnovers as well.

Q. The third and 1 and the fourth and 1 stops, you and 99 had the third down stop. Can you tell us anything behind the scenes? Anything interesting in those two plays?

CAM HEYWARD: It's funny. I was kind of annoyed we called it a time-out because I thought we were going to get the stop before that. Most of those times when you see the quarterback getting underneath, you know it's a sneak.

It's mano-a-mano, who gets lower on the pad level, who turns their feet, making sure there's a big pile up in the middle and then making sure on the third and 1 was actually the run to Kamara. And, you know, Kamara is in the game, you're either thinking he's getting out quick or they're giving him the ball somehow.

Then the fourth and 1, it's just about making sure there's a pile and then making sure our linebackers can throw over top.

Q. What caused that pile? Who was in the middle of that pile?

CAM HEYWARD: Me and Larry.

Q. That was third down too. You guys made the tackle?

CAM HEYWARD: Yeah.

Q. You said you thought you were going to stop them there. Why?

CAM HEYWARD: I think just awareness and understanding what they were going to run. I felt good about the call. And then we called a time-out, and I don't think they were ready for it. So, you know, knowing where the ball was going to be. But we stayed ready and got off the field.

Q. A different energy today with T.J. out there?

CAM HEYWARD: I don't think it's just T.J. I think T.J., Kazee, they both play with great energy. I think just having more of our defenders back. I know we lost Minkah right before the game, but, you know, it's a breath of fresh air to have him back.

Getting guys like Larry and Myles healthy were huge and, you know, the more guys we can have to the party, the

more we're going to be successful going forward.

Q. T.J. was crediting Rob for his communication out there. How valuable was he in this game and other things that he's done in other games?

CAM HEYWARD: You know, we put a lot of stress on our linebackers, including me. I am the first to talk about my linebackers and get in their face and, you know, let them know what I need. Because communication from that position is critical. And I thought they did a great job -- Rob, Devin, Myles -- in just reverberating the calls because we all need them. When our crowd is loud like that, they've got to be loud as well.

Q. Cam, every defense wants the splash plays. Today those came for you on the back end. How connected is that to you guys winning up front, stopping the run, getting them behind the chains and getting pass rush too?

CAM HEYWARD: It starts with stopping the run. When you can make a team one-dimensional and they have to pass the ball and go down the field, it's huge. Then our back end, you know, being opportunistic, you know.

Even the Levi play, you look at it, he had to go and take it from him. When you do that, it makes you successful. So kudos to that. But it's just about playing good team defense, everybody just working hand in hand, being complementary.

Q. Those are the plays the guys in the back weren't making in Philadelphia, Miami. That's an example. What's it do when you make the play?

CAM HEYWARD: It's teach tape. It's something you can continue to grow on and say, hey, when we make these plays, we're in a much better defense.

Q. When did you know Minkah wasn't going to play? Was he hurt in practice?

CAM HEYWARD: Saturday, before the game. I mean, you know, after walk-through. I just saw something on my phone. Texted him. He was like, yeah, I had to get surgery. We saw him during the walk-through. And not thinking anything. Minkah's just, you know, Minkah's grumpy all the time so didn't think anything of it.

But, you know, after seeing it come across my phone and, you know, checking in on him, you know, Mike T explained to us. He was, like, first things first. You got to take care of the player. We got to make sure we take care of our business while Minkah's out.

Q. Testament to the defense, a little bit of what the offense was able to do, sustaining drives and you guys staying fresh?

CAM HEYWARD: Yeah. I think the best defense is a defense on the sideline. When the offense can sustain drives and continue keep pounding them, it's huge. We love seeing their defenders tired and, you know, kind of annoyed that they got to keep going out there. I will be the happiest guy if I only have to play 20 snaps in a game. Hasn't happened yet, but looking forward to it.

Q. You mentioned Kazeo and the energy he brings. In terms of having a veteran like that to fill in for Minkah at the last second like that, what's it do for the defense?

CAM HEYWARD: It does wonders. He's a veteran guy. Plays with a chip on his shoulder. If you've been in our locker room, Kazeo has been one of the louder guys this week. I think him and Myles were about to fight every day, in a playful way.

But Kazeo is just -- he's small in stature, but big with his voice. His play, he plays big as well. Having a guy like that, being able to put out there when a guy like Mink is down was very huge.

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