

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Head Coach Zac Taylor

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Pittsburgh - 30, Cincinnati - 37

ZAC TAYLOR: In the second half and that was really important in this game, getting control in the second half. I thought our defense did a great job. Came out in the second half, after giving 20 in the first half. Really, held them to a field goal, but that came on a short field off that pick that they had.

And then did a great job allowing the offense to regain some momentum. And I thought the 93-yard scoring drive there with nine and a half minutes left in the fourth quarter really put the game away for us.

And then obviously we gave up the touchdown late, we don't want to do that. But our defense just kind of playing bend but don't break there. Gave us a chance to win.

Q. (No microphone.)

ZAC TAYLOR: Well, I thought he was really decisive. We didn't see the easiest looks tonight. They did a good job packaging their stuff. They had their defense back. They did a good job, you know, trying to put a lot of pressure on us especially on second down. Joe, I thought, handled that really well and found the guy that had the best matchup, even when it didn't entirely work out.

I thought on that last drive, TB really stepped up big time. He had the back shoulder inside fade and then he had kind of the pull away on the four verticals. That was big. So those guys really stepped up. And I thought the protection all day was really good.

I know there was a sack where an empty Burrow kind of turned it into draw on the fly and got sacked. So I know that one's going to go on the line, but that one was him trying to make a play on a makeshift quarterback draw. But I thought those guys did a great job giving him time.

Q. (No microphone.)

ZAC TAYLOR: He always does that. You know, it's every role you ask him to play, he's going to do it. Whether it's the second half, feature back when Joe's out, whether it's playing his role on third down, or some of the other packages we put him in, he's just as reliable as they come. Very dependable. And we don't take him for granted because we understand how valuable PC is for our team.

Q. Boyd doesn't do anything except for the last eight minutes, two huge catches, then he's there at the end.

ZAC TAYLOR: Yeah.

Q. I mean, he seems to be that kind of a --

ZAC TAYLOR: Yeah, I mean, over the course of the game, it was just kind of a corky game how it played out from an offensive play calling standpoint. I wanted to get him involved. It just wasn't working out that point.

So the interception actually was going to be a big play to him, the one TJ got. You know, I think TB did a great job winning. That was going to be a big play. And the next thing you know, it's an interception. Crazy.

But he's always reliable. He always just waits his turn. And knows when his number's called, he's going to be expected to make the play. And that's exactly what he did on that last drive.

Q. Can you give us your thoughts on Tee Higgins? Nine catches for 148 yards tonight. And then what type of statement do you feel like your team made tonight? No Chase, no Mixon for most of the game.

ZAC TAYLOR: Well, yeah, starting with Tee, he just -- when his number's called, you just expect him to make the play every single time. And he and Joe just have such a great rapport.

Tee is such a smart football player. He's got a great understanding of when the ball's going to come his way. He did a great job communicating with me on some routes that he wanted as the game went based on how they were playing him. I thought that was awesome.

And so, Tee's just always steps up big time for us. And, again, every team in the league is going to deal with players being out and you've got to find a way to overcome that. I think our guys -- you know, Trenton Irwin just got a game ball, stepping up, getting his first touchdown. Mike Thomas steps up. Trent Taylor steps up.

You know, so we've got a lot of faith in that entirety of that room. And those guys stepped up. Trayveon Williams, when his number was called, I think his first carry was an eight-yard, tough run. Almost broke another one there. I think he maybe had two or three carries.

So, again, just the depth has really stepped up. And they're guys that we've had in the building for a really long time and so we've got a lot of faith in them for that reason.

Q. (Question concerning the Bengals' running backs.)

ZAC TAYLOR: We got great players. We got great players. And those guys understand what the standard is and they live up to it every single week. They put in the work consistently, which is just great for me to see as a coach.

So when their number's called, Burrow's got the faith to find a way to get it to them. And they can step up to the plate and deliver for this team.

Q. (No microphone.)

ZAC TAYLOR: Yeah, I mean, we feel like we've been winning a lot of games as of late, I know that one got away from us. But I thought we played good football today.

You know, it's not perfect. But I thought we handled the conditions really well. We were mentally ready for it. We were ready for what they threw at us defensively. I thought our guys did a great job handling that. It's a really good defense.

And so, again, I'm really pleased with today. But that doesn't mean we're going to be pleased with next Sunday. We got seven days of work we've got to put in to go play a really good Tennessee Titans team on the road. And it's probably gonna be a similar style in terms of the physicality that we faced today.

Q. (No microphone.)

ZAC TAYLOR: Yeah, I mean, there's nothing we can do about the earlier part of the season and the ones that got away from us. We can just focus on the present.

And I thought our guys did a great job of just having a very

narrow focus this week and doing everything it took to feel like we feel in that locker room. That was our message, that was our theme.

We congratulated each other in the locker room and let's be ready to move on to next week. And so, I'm really happy to see that those guys are enjoying it right now.

Q. (No microphone.)

ZAC TAYLOR: Yeah, these conditions weren't great. The field isn't great. He just stepped up and delivered. I thought Drue Chrisman did a nice job. It's not the greatest conditions for him either. And did a great job with the holds and had a great punt there.

That punt had them inside the 10-yard line. And then Cal, you know, all three of those guys really stepped up and did their jobs and got us a win.

Q. Zac, who else got game balls besides Trent?

ZAC TAYLOR: The two sack masters there, the Bash Brothers, Trey and Sam. They gave us a lot of momentum there in the second half. And then we gave -- you know, the guys that had a big production on offense, there was several of those guys.

Q. Zac, can you provide us some insight on what happens with Burrow and some of the batted passes and if there's anything you can do as a quarterback or is that just --

ZAC TAYLOR: They're great at us. It's not just us. You know, you watch every game that they play, they do a great job at it. And, you know, I think Myles Jack got one of them on a twist. So some of them, you know, you're watching. And they're in twist, they're engaging the line. And then they're throwing their hand up at the last second.

The Watt brothers have always been tops in the league. My first game in the NFL, JJ Watt, I think, batted four passes when he played for the Texans. And I thought this is going to be terrible coaching in this league if that's what defensemen's do every snap.

And TJ really -- you know, LC had a -- was all over him, pushing him. And how he got the ball off, I will never understand. But they do a great job with that. That's something that they probably emphasis. They've got great pros upfront that do a good job batting balls.

Q. What stood out to you with the blocking on those first two touchdowns that Samaje had, especially the first one? What do you think of that and how do you



compare that from the performance from week one from the offensive line?

ZAC TAYLOR: I think the first one was a screen. And those guys did a great job in space. So it would have been Cappa and Ted probably were leading the charges there. And they did a great job. It's really the same -- it might have been the same exact call we had against Kansas City on the road last year. Same touchdown, same situation.

Those guys in front did a great job. And Samaje is really in phase with them to allow -- to read their blocks and set it up and get to the pylon.

Q. Let's talk about the 93-yard touchdown drive. You also had the 92-yard touchdown drive, I think in the second quarter. As a defense that doesn't give those up, I think you guys only faced one third down in all those two drives. Is that as in rhythm as the offense has felt?

ZAC TAYLOR: I thought so. I thought it was easy to call. I just felt like it was going our way. And there was a whole range of play calls we were engaged in there. And our guys really responded.

I wouldn't say we got consistent looks. You know, they were really changing up their fronts and coverages and playing different personnel groupings, even on second down.

And I thought our guys did an awesome job managing that and allowing us to save some flow there without the third downs that we ran into.

Q. What switched offensively in the first half? Big difference between the first half and second half.

ZAC TAYLOR: Better communication. Better communication. I think was that was the biggest thing.

Q. (No microphone.)

ZAC TAYLOR: I feel like we've had good momentum. This team's in a really good place. And so, again, we feel like we played really good football most of the last several weeks we've had.

And this is the expectation when we go on the road, that we find wins in this division this way. I know the guys are going to be excited to get cranked up and go back to Tennessee next week. It's going to be a hard fought game. And our guys are ready for it.

Q. (Question about the Bengals' offensive line.)

ZAC TAYLOR: Awesome. I really thought they did a tremendous job. And, you know, it gave us time. That's a great front. They brought a lot of pressures. They really did a great job with the protection plan and the communication over the course of the game in a tough environment -- tough, noisy environment.

It's two sacks. And, again, I know one of them was Joe trying to turn it into a draw. And the other one was a really extended third down. I think they did a good job for the most part and he was just trying to make a play and got taken down. And so, I thought those guys did a really nice job upfront.

Q. (No microphone.)

ZAC TAYLOR: Off the top of my head, I couldn't tell you how much. But, you know, we always -- it depends on the concepts sometimes when we're trying to buy a bit more time.

Q. Talking about that sack, how comfortable did Joe Burrow look in the pocket? It seemed like he was really moving around, doing what he wanted from the beginning really up until just that 93-yard drive like you said.

ZAC TAYLOR: He's always comfortable. You know, it's -- the whole world could be falling down around him and that just goes into his preparation and what makes him so great. And, again, he's a special player. We're lucky to have him. Thank you.