

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, December 25, 2022

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Cameron Heyward

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 13, Raiders 10

Q. Just starting with the moment you carried the 32 flag out, what kind of emotions did that elicit, and how much were you playing for Franco tonight?

CAMERON HEYWARD: You know, Coach T, he doesn't like to get into dedicating a game to a certain person because it can go one or two ways.

But, you know, I think for us it was just a tip of a cap to not only just a Steeler legend, but a great man, a person in this the community who you could always count on, a guy that even when he retired, he still wanted to be your teammate.

I can say from my time being here, Franco was welcoming me with open arms. It was -- with everything building up to this and getting the chance to talk to Franco, you know, I think there are so many joyous moments we've had with him, and it hurt so many in this community to lose a guy like that.

But you knew he lived a full life and you knew he was loved by so many people. You know, there are so many outstanding men that love him, Mean Joe, Mel Blunt, countless others, Terry Bradshaw. You know, they talk to Mike T. Myself, Najee Harris. Decades and decades go on, but we still cared for a man that brought so much to us.

You know, to just say that we loved him, we'll continue to love him, and we appreciate all that's done for us.

Q. Were you playing with any more energy or emotion than usual? Looked like you had a pretty strong motive.

CAMERON HEYWARD: Good night of sleep. You know, got a little nap in the middle of the day. Kids weren't jumping too much on me. Got to wrap some presents when I get home.

I think for me it was just we're still in the hunt. We just got

to take it one game at a time. But I like to think we just keep getting better and better as the weeks go on.

Q. You guys have had some ups and downs, some trouble against passing teams, some trouble against running teams. You played a team that does both tonight and they did very little. What's the level of satisfaction regarding the completeness of the defense's game?

CAMERON HEYWARD: One game doesn't define a season. There are different challenges each week, each team provides a different strength, but there is growth that has to happen. You saw that. I know we gave up some yards on that first drive, but I thought we settled in, tackled better, tried to contain some of those offensive explosion players that they have. Waller, Jacobs, Adams, Renfrow. It's a collective unit.

To beat a team like that you got to have guys that can make plays. I thought our DBs did an amazing job getting turnovers. Even when we gave up a turnover on offense, we were able to hit it right back next play, get off the field, provide another chance for our offense. I thought we handled the sudden change of that very well.

And, you know, we can't control how we get on the field, but we can control how we get off the field. I thought we did a great job of seizing that today.

Q. Mike said you guys didn't even feel the cold. Do you agree with that?

CAMERON HEYWARD: Um, I don't know if I felt it. I might just be numb right now, but when I get home I'll probably feel it.

Q. With the fans, obviously the stadium wasn't quite as full as it normally is, probably because of those temperatures. How do you guys feed off them? Seemed to be pretty loud out there.

CAMERON HEYWARD: Very loud. We enjoy playing in front of our fans and appreciate everybody who came out tonight. Night games are special here and there has been a lot of special moments on night games.

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You know, we were able to use that crowd noise to our advantage.

Q. Mike said he thought some of the young offensive players really grew up tonight. Do you kind of see that, too?

CAMERON HEYWARD: Yeah. I thought Pat played a really good game. GP and Diontae caught some really big balls for us. Najee finishing plays. And them just having the poison the last drive. You see an offense really grow in that moment.

There is a lot you can learn from it when you don't shoot yourself in the foot with penalties. We were penalty-free on that drive. What do you know, we get a touchdown.

Q. Cam, during the course of the week Coach Austin said coming out of Carolina, a very run-dominant team, you guys had to cognizant of how much more Vegas could get to if you did do a good job against the run.

CAMERON HEYWARD: Uh-huh.

Q. Were you sensing that, that they were going through their full rolodex, and how do you hold up after that first drive?

CAMERON HEYWARD: You know, I think it came down to settling in. When you can make a team one dimensional you know what's going to happen next. I thought big plays where we were able to get turnovers and then they went back to the run was really big for us, because we were able to get off the field still.

Even Coach having the faith to punt again and put the defense on the field. It's all in the defense to get off the field, and Cam Sutton makes a heck of a play and we're singing his praise tonight.

Q. The drive from Kenny, the second one like that since the Colts game. New experience for you seeing a young quarterback kind of grow and develop. What are your (indiscernible) happening here in real time?

CAMERON HEYWARD: It's funny. I forget who I was talking to about it, but I was saying, we don't want to put it all on the rookie's shoulders, but he did a hell of a job today. We needed 7 at the end, we needed that touchdown, and for him to answer the bell, for that whole offensive group to answer the bell, was pretty special.

Q. You're close to him. In what ways is he growing the most? Kenny.

CAMERON HEYWARD: You know, the game starts to slow down the more you get, and I think he's having the ability to just think on the fly and understand what teams like. There is still growth there, though. That's the cool part. We were talking on the sideline. You see some the big hogmollies coming off the field, you know, veteran quarterback hurries to the ball and gets to the line of scrimmage to run the next play.

And so there is a growth there that the younger quarterback doesn't really understand but a veteran does, and so it's really cool to just see his maturation at such a young age and continue to just keep growing.

Q. This isn't a playoff win or division-clinching win, but can the emotions of this week coming out on top be a springboard for your guys, even if this season doesn't continue past week 18?

CAMERON HEYWARD: We'll just take it one game at a time. That's all we can control. You know, there is more football ahead of us, but I like it that way. You know, we got to just take care of business. That's all we can do.

Q. When they have so many weapons across the field with Waller, Adams, Jacobs, how do you guys lock in on a defensive plan that keeps the game on...

CAMERON HEYWARD: Pass rush has to be huge. We got to take advantage up front, but we got to make a team one dimensional. I thought we did a very good job of that first series of really being stout in the run game. When you can do that, then you can light your hair on fire in the pass rush and really mix it up and provide different looks for the DBs to have some fun with.

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