

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, December 25, 2022
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Kenny Pickett

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 13, Raiders 10

Q. Kenny, where did you find things were the biggest struggle in the first three quarters, and what turned and clicked on that final drive?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, I mean, we were moving the ball well and then we stalled in the red zone. I thought we got behind the chains, had some penalty issues. I want to watch the tape and see assignment-wise how we were, but we were moving it well and then we got down there and just kind of stalled out.

It came together at the end and all that matter is we got the W, but there is definitely things we need to improve on.

Q. How would you describe the emotion of the night?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, you try to keep your emotion together, right? You got to stay even keel, but you know the kind of magnitude of the game with all the outside reasons, Franco, and we wanted to go out there and get the win for him.

Everyone kind of kept it together, and after the game incredibly special moment in the locker room, and safe to say I'm going to keep this jersey and probably give it to my parents, have it hanging up. It was a really special night.

Q. What did you see -- obviously George got open for the touchdown, but what did you see? Can you break that play down for us?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, he had a middle read route, so George did an incredible job of reading that. The backside safety was hanging over to Pat's side. I just wanted to hold him long enough with my eyes to make the throw to George down the seam.

It worked out really well. Had that look in practice a few times, so it's great when you work on something, you work real hard at it, and it shows up in a game in the biggest

moments and you win a game like this.

Q. You ever go up to the defense and say, hey, just be patient, we're getting things together here, or is that not in a rookie quarterbacks's...

KENNY PICKETT: I've never seen any other quarterback do that. We're focused on -- obviously we are doing everything we can. I'm not going to go reassure the defense. They know what we're doing and we are working hard and trying everything we can to put points on the board. It as dirty, sloppy game like that, and that's how was it.

We had opportunities that we didn't take advantage of, and we need to do that as an offense. I'm pretty the boys opt defensive side know that we're doing everything we can to put it in the end zone.

Q. Seemed to come from all different directions, but at the final drive you guys brought it together as a team. What does that say about you guys to come together in such a big moment?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, I mean, like I've been saying, all that matters is we got the W. It wasn't pretty. It wasn't what we wanted. The conditions were what they were. I feel like everyone was locked in on what we had to do. We didn't let that affect us. We came together, executed at a high level for the final two-minute drive, and got in the end zone and won the game, so that's all that matters.

Q. How hard was that to kind of block that out with how cold it was out there?

KENNY PICKETT: It wasn't too bad. I think our support staff, shout out to them. Doing the great job. The jackets were on deck. The boys had some hang warmers, so they were hooking it up on the sideline. I appreciate the equipment staff and the trainers. They got us ready to go.

Q. Seemed like looking Najee and Pat's way a lot. What sort of comfortability do they add?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, everyone goes like, are you looking for somebody? I don't look for anybody. The

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defense tells me what to do and I throw to that guy. Pat was in that position. Tae was in that position earlier, then they started doubling Tae, so the ball got moved around. That's how the flow of the game goes and how it is.

I let the defense tell me what to do. We had Pat in those zones. They played a lot more two-high zone than we expected, and that's where Pat is going to step up for us.

Q. Sounded like on the TV broadcast in the fourth down there was like a Franco, Franco cadence.

KENNY PICKETT: There was. It was a dummy count until I said Franco and it was going to be live, so it was huge play in the game. We had that in. It was special to convert. We had it twice. We didn't do it a second time because obviously heard it the first time, so I didn't want to do it twice. Yeah, it was cool to have that in for him this week.

Q. Kenny, it seemed like they rotated off their safeties a lot to try to trick in different things, you but you seemed to be composed and stick to your reads. What goes into the study to figure out what they're trying to disguise?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, everyone is going to do a lot of different things pre-snap, but post-snap all that stops. They have to get to the landmarks. They have to get to wherever they're going to be, and those two guys tell me where the other nine are going to be. I have a pretty good feel with the tape study with how they like to disguise, what they like to do.

I wasn't perfect. They definitely got me a few times, but I just tried to be as disciplined as I can post-snap.

Q. Looking back, is it fitting on Immaculate Reception weekend that you guys win at the last second?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah. I feel like you can't make it up really, how the game went, the kind of conditions it was, how we won. It was incredibly special, so I don't think you could write it any better.

Q. Can you speak to the physicality of Najee, especially on that last drive, that 19-yard play where he kind of went through three or four Raiders?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, I mean, week in and week out you can count on 22 showing up and bringing that physicality. Him, Jaylen, all the backs. I have a lot of the comfort in checking the ball down to them and letting them go do the work like that after the catch, so if I feel like I can get them in space, it's just as good as if I could throw it

down the field.

My job is to distribute to those guys, get them in space, and they do the rest.

Q. Pickens told us you were just basically calling the plays in the huddle on the last drive. I think he said it wasn't like a movie, nothing dramatic. Is that your style in those situations, be calm and work the craft as opposed to try to come up with something?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, I mean, there is no rah, rah speech that's going to put the ball in the end zone. It's very simple: Everyone has to lock in, do their job. I am going to call the plays. We are going to get it relayed in. I told them they're going to execute. I'll execute and we're going to win the game. That's pretty much it.

So when you're in the locker room after and you guys are hugging after a win, that's the best feeling in the world, so I had no doubt that we were going to get it done.

Q. Is his route (indiscernible) a little bit more diversified? Used him over the middle a couple times. A touchdown; I think there was another third down conversion, wasn't there, where you found him?

KENNY PICKETT: Absolutely. Yeah, I mean, George is growing as a receiver every week. It's something we talked you about earlier in the season, just about how he wants to be able to do all these different things. He's going to continue to work on his craft, we're going to move him around, and I'll find him with the football.

Q. That straightforward approach in the huddle, that's two game-winning drives now for you. Do you feel yourself winning guys over in those moments? Is that part of that process for you as a competitor with a new team?

KENNY PICKETT: I don't really think too much about winning guys over. I think my preparation throughout the week, how hard I play, I hope their opinions are on the brighter side based off that. We all have a really good relationship. We all believe in each other. We have no doubt we're going to win the game when we get out there.

I think how the tight knit we are, that definitely bodes well for us.

Q. This might be a little bit cliché, but knowing all the ups and downs you guys have gone through throughout the season, what does it mean to be right now be playing meaningful football?

KENNY PICKETT: It's a long season. It's a long season. We were finding ourselves earlier on in the season -- felt like we started hitting our stride off after the bye week, finding our identity a little bit, believing in each other, believing in the plan, and going out there and executing at a high level and finding ways to come out with wins.

That's all that matters at the end of the day, so I feel like we continue to do that. Whatever happens happens, but we just got to take it a week at time.

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