

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

T.J. Watt

Postgame Press Conference



Pittsburgh - 28, Cleveland - 14

Q. T.J., these last several games here, was this the kind of defense you thought you guys would play collectively all along? What was kind of the coalescing factor here?

T.J. WATT: Yeah, I mean, I think we were starting to play some really good football in all phases. I think on defense we were starting to really get that splash. We were able to stop the run and make teams one-dimensional and able to get after the quarterback.

It was too little too late this year, but a lot to build on. Very proud of the guys in that locker room. Like I said on the field, it would have been very easy to fold it in and start to wonder why this is happening to us and pointing fingers and assigning blame, but none of the guys did that.

Credit to Coach T, the leadership in the locker room, the guys that we have to be able to, when our backs were against the wall in the record and throughout games this year, to be able to fight back and play for each other.

Q. What was it like for you to be injured and see your teammates kind of play less than they could? Will you re-evaluate your play when you're out as well in terms of what you would do when you came back?

T.J. WATT: All I can speak to is when I was out, I wanted to be back.

Q. What was the feeling in the locker room? Satisfaction? Disappointment?

T.J. WATT: Disappointment. It all happens very fast. I mean, it's hard to fully understand that we don't have a game this week. I think it will take a little bit of time to kind of understand and and come to terms with it because I feel like we were just starting to play some really damn good football.

But that's the business. We didn't get it done this year. There's a lot of stuff to build on, and we move on.

Q. Some of the gains that were made, looking ahead to next year, does it underscore all the more the importance of doing some of the things that you did well at the end of this season, carrying it over to the start of next year without having to scramble back like you guys have done so many times in recent years, being better in September and October, so you don't put yourself in a corner late?

T.J. WATT: Yeah, no one wants to start slow. We always want to start fast. We were a young team this year. It will be nice to be able to keep a good core group of guys here. Never know who's going to be back, who's not, but very confident with the guys in this locker room. Like I said, we've been through so many ups and downs throughout the season, and no one gave up.

Q. What's the emotion like for your family? Got to see your brother score, see your other brother play his final game. What's that kind of emotion like today?

T.J. WATT: It's just my life. It's just something that I've grown accustomed to. To see Derek, I've seen him put in the work, and to be able to see him score a touchdown is pretty damn cool. It's something that I'll have that memory for the rest of my life.

To be able to see J.J. today play his last game is very special. I did not want to be hanging out with him next weekend, but we'll be able to celebrate together, which will be pretty cool.

Q. You mentioned all the unknowns in any off-season. Did you talk at all about whether this could be your last game together, just with him getting free agency?

T.J. WATT: Not yet. This is all so fresh. After this, just need to sit down and kind of understand that we don't have a game next week.

Q. You mentioned the youth you have on this roster. What did you see from some of those younger guys this year that gives you confidence the future is

bright?

T.J. WATT: We have a good mix of young guys who want to work and old guys who want to show the way, and I think that's very key to what we want to build here as Pittsburgh Steelers.

I think it's been important all season long Coach T's brought back alumni, just to show what it means to be a Pittsburgh Steeler.

Like I'll keep saying on repeat, I feel very confident in young, old, whoever's in that locker room, players and coaches.

Q. T.J., you mentioned you played some really damn good football. How good was it? Do you think it was playoff caliber?

T.J. WATT: We'll never know. I mean, I felt like, if we got in, we had a good chance to make some headlines, but we'll never know.

Q. Looks like you guys are going to be battling Watson for a long time. What did you make of the first look at him with the Browns?

T.J. WATT: Talented quarterback. Obviously you guys saw he's very tough to get down. We knew the extended plays are going to be a problem, and they were today, but it's all good film to learn from.

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