

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, January 8, 2023
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Kenny Pickett

Postgame Press Conference



Pittsburgh - 28, Cleveland - 14

Q. Kenny, what's the feeling? Some satisfaction, some disappointment?

KENNY PICKETT: A little bit of both. Got the win, but obviously not the result we wanted. At the end of the day here, we wanted a shot at the playoffs but didn't work out that way. So a little bit of mixed feelings.

Q. How would you characterize your defense over the last couple of weeks or maybe the progress or elements?

KENNY PICKETT: Saw a lot of improvement. Really liked the way we were improving and getting things off tape and moving the ball really well. Finished a lot better today than in previous weeks.

There's positives. There's negatives, like there are every game. Wish we had another week to keep improving, but it is what it is.

Q. How much value would you have been able to extract from a playoff berth? How much do you think that could have expedited your learning curve for next year?

KENNY PICKETT: I don't even think it's just about my learning curve, it's about playing for a championship. That's what it's all about. We would have had an opportunity if we had that chance.

When you don't take care of your own business, you don't control your own destiny. So that's just what happened.

Q. How close are you offensively to functioning the way the group aspires to function these last couple games?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, we were close today. I felt like we just couldn't get out of our own way in the first half, and

we started finishing a lot better in the second half. I think it was a little bit of a tale of two halves there. We were definitely trending in the right direction.

Q. T.J. was saying it's a lot to build on. How do you try to build on this and keep that going through the off-season into next year?

KENNY PICKETT: Just continue to stay together, work together in the off-season. We feel at least offensively with the skill guys, we're definitely going to get together and continue to make progress. Guys need to get away a little bit and kind of de-stress, I guess. We'll reconvene and get back to work.

I'm excited for what the future holds. I think we have a lot of great players. So I'm really excited for that.

Q. After you lost to Baltimore, you knew you had to win out. What do you feel you learned about yourselves as a team, sort of backs against the wall, that you were able to do what you need to do on the field?

KENNY PICKETT: We always knew what we were capable of, but it was good to see it come true right in front of our eyes and just find ways to win week in and week out. No one really caring how it gets done, just find a way to get it done. That's what it's all about, just getting wins. It was really good to see.

Q. What do you think you showed your teammates this year?

KENNY PICKETT: That's a good question. I'm not really sure. I think you have to ask them. I just want to be consistent. I want to be a consistent guy, a consistent leader. I want to continue to improve.

I don't think I'm anywhere close to what I can be and what I'm going to be. So I'm excited to attack the off-season and take that leap into year 2.

Q. Kenny, your touchdown toss to George Pickens seemed a lot like your Raiders touchdown toss, hitting the seam, going up the middle. How have you guys

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come together and found more ways to connect as the season's come on?

KENNY PICKETT: I think we've done a good job of moving around a lot more, not keeping him in the same spot. The more we can move 14 and 18 around, obviously with Pat in there as well, it just creates some problems.

So it was something we saw throughout the week watching tape. The Saints ran it, and kind of this is like, hey, I think this has a shot. So we like George inside, had Tae on the outside there, put Pat at number three. So that backside safety, he did exactly what we saw on tape.

It's pretty cool when you put something in like that, you get it called perfectly in the right situation for a touchdown. It's awesome.

Q. How do you feel about the improvements you've made in just preparing for games and things you can see like that going into a matchup?

KENNY PICKETT: It's big. I felt like the offense started to become my own the more I was playing in it, taking real ownership of it instead of just kind of playing catch-up when I got thrown in there a little bit earlier and I was just worried about executing the plays.

Now I felt like I had everything at my disposal when I was coming to the line of scrimmage. I felt like I made a good jump there in the learning curve, and I want to make that leap into year 2 now.

Q. When you say make my own, more of your input or more of the playbook available to you?

KENNY PICKETT: Both. Instead of going out there and just executing plays, knowing where alerts are and certain different things, where I can do so many different things and see different things.

Everyone is running to win. Everyone thinks they can get the football because it can go anywhere at any given time. Just taking real ownership of the offense.

Q. Is that how you ended up picking Connor Heyward on a couple of huge plays?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, that's a good example. They kind of threw a different coverage at us. Connor did a great job of adjusting his route and splitting the safeties, and I just had to put it over the top of the guy covering him. It was a huge play for us.

Q. Have you seen from Connor the second half of the

year he's kind of had some more opportunities and stepped up?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, he'll continue to step up. He can do a lot of different things. We're kind of just figuring out what he can do. You can really move him around everywhere. That's what makes him dangerous.

It's really good for him because he just can do a lot of different things. You can play a lot of different positions. You can stay on the field. There's a lot of different things we can do with him. So I'm excited for his growth in year 2 as well.

Q. T.J. said something to the effect of you guys have a lot of young guys who are hungry to learn and a lot of older guys who are eager to show you the way. What have you guys learned from some of those veterans?

KENNY PICKETT: There's always a lot of guys, when you first get to a new place, you watch -- you can be quiet and watch a couple weeks, you find out real quick who are those guys you should be following.

I think across the board, offensively, defensively, there's guys at every position that can show you the way. I think we're all hungry to go get a championship. We're hungry to win.

So we're looking forward to making that leap, and we've got a lot of work to do.

Q. You mentioned the offense growing. How did your relationship with Matt grow, and how would you describe that relationship?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, we're just getting to know each other. I get to know how he calls games. He gets to know what I like, constant communication. The more I was playing, the more input I was able to have and what I like.

We were always on the same page with Coach Sully as well. So I really appreciate Coach Canada and Coach Sully for the season we had and putting a lot of time in.

I don't think anyone realizes the amount of time the coaches put in, but they're pretty much living at the facility and doing everything they can to get us in a position to win. So it was good from that aspect.

Q. With the offense being so young, how good is it going to be for you all to be together from mini camp into training camp and into preseason next year?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, it's huge. I really didn't get a lot



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of reps with a lot of these guys that I was playing with once I started playing until the Jets week really, or the Jets game. So we were kind of picking up for lost time there as we were going through the season.

Now I'll be able to have those reps throughout spring, throughout summer. We'll link up in the off-season and get some routes in the air for weeks at a time, however we can figure it out. But we'll definitely have a lot more to lean on than we originally started.

Q. These off-season workouts, is that something you look forward to organizing yourself and spear heading now that you're in this?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, we're definitely going to do it. We'll figure out the times and what works for everybody, but I think it's a great opportunity to work out some things before OTAs and mini camp, camp, kind of just get a jump start on it like I've done in previous years at the college level.

That connection and knowing where guys are going to be and where I need them to be on certain plays is huge. So we're going to get a head start on that.

Q. Is there anything that you didn't do this year because you are a rookie or because you were learning as you went, in terms of leading and making it more your team, your offense? Will you grow in that way at all, do you think?

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, of course. I'm not -- year 1 as a rookie, you're not going to be the same leader year 2, year 3. As you keep going, you're going to continue to become a better leader, better quarterback, better player. I feel like throughout my career I've made jumps in off-season, and I take the training and the work part real serious. I'm excited to get back to it and reload for year 2.

Q. What do you feel like you learned about yourself or maybe how your game plays at this level this season?

KENNY PICKETT: That's a good question. I don't think I learned anything new. I always had the belief -- it's just kind of you're coming into the NFL. You just want to go do what you always believed that you could do. I did that, believed in myself that I could always be at this level doing it.

So I guess proving it to yourself, I guess. But the belief is always there. It feels good to live out your dream.

Now that the first year's out of the way, I'm excited to get back with these guys and get ready to work.

