

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, September 10, 2023
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Coach Mike Tomlin

Postgame Press Conference

49ers 30, Steelers 7

MIKE TOMLIN: Disappointing day for us. Not how we wanted to perform. While at the same time, you've got to compliment those guys because it unfolded in a manner in which they desired for it to.

Oftentimes in games like this, man, the teams that win are, the game unfolds more to their personality than the opponent, and no question, the game unfolded in the manner in which we talked about the style of play that they like to play, as far back as I talked to you guys on Tuesday.

I thought they did a really good job of staying on schedule on offense and being in manageable 3rd downs that allowed them to win enough of those 3rd downs, it'll reduce you in those circumstances where you can't create splash. On the other side of the ball we didn't win enough possession downs to be competitive. You can't start games 0 and 5 on 3rd down and think you're going to have the type of day that you desire. You've got to win the weighty downs.

It's more than just kind of identifying that component. It was a failure on our part in all areas. We've got to coach better. We've got to play better. We talked about a lot of the things and worked on a lot of the things that unfolded in the ways that we didn't want them to, and so we go back to the drawing board.

We accept responsibility obviously for the outcome. We compliment those guys on the quality of work that they did. We absorb the negativity that comes with how we performed today, and we go back to work.

We've got to prepare them better. They've got to play better. That's just the reality of it.

We got kicked in the teeth today in a lot of ways.

Got to injuries to speak of. Cam has got a groin, Leal has got a triceps or arm injury, being evaluated.



Muth has got a chest injury. Chuks went down late, is probably in the concussion protocol. Don't have a lot of information there. Diontae went down with a hamstring.

We'll assess those things particularly as we plan and move into next week and get ready to answer for this.

Q. On the 3rd downs, what were some of the inconsistencies or what was going on offensively that you couldn't get anything going?

MIKE TOMLIN: It's just that. You don't have enough snaps. You're going three-and-out. You can talk about run game, but run game issues were not enough snaps because we were three-and-out.

We've got to win the weighty downs. Everyone has to win the weighty downs. That's just the lifeblood of ball possession, and we didn't do a good enough job today on either side, but particularly how we started offensively. Not good.

Q. Can you talk about McCaffrey coming in and I guess he lived up to your worst fears, or your defense didn't do very good against him?

MIKE TOMLIN: Yeah, when we're not possessing the ball, man, that's going to happen. We've got to do a better job on those weighty downs to minimize our exposure to him. We've got to do a better job on both sides of the ball on those weighty downs to limit our exposure to him.

We've got to get off on defense, we've got to convert on offense. Man, just look at the time of possession. I think last time I looked up, it was 36 something to 22 something. The day is going to unfold the way you desire it when it's lopsided like that, and it boils down to possession down play.

Q. Do you think schematically you were deficient as well as from a performance perspective?

MIKE TOMLIN: I don't care how you cut it. We all swim in the same waters, meaning us, players and coaches. That's how I started the opening.

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We've all got to do better, and so it is schematic, it is performance. It's all of the above.

Q. Kenny was pretty accurate throughout the preseason and training camp, seemed to have some high throws today and was just off on some of them. What do you attribute that to?

MIKE TOMLIN: It doesn't matter. We've got to perform better. We do. We didn't. Particularly on possession downs.

Q. Did the 49ers do anything you didn't expect or did they attack you the way you thought they would?

MIKE TOMLIN: The game kind of unfolded to their personality, so obviously anytime you step into a stadium there's an element of the unknown, the unexpected, but largely they played to their personality, and they did a better job of it than we did ours.

Q. How would you assess the offensive line play today?

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, it's a tough thing to dissect and isolate because so many other things are going on. If you're not winning possession downplay, you're not going to get a true evaluation of a lot of components of the things that you like to evaluate, and so you could say that about the run game, you can say that about the offensive line. If you're not accumulating additional snaps, you don't have an opportunity to gain rhythm and develop the personality that you desire.

The importance of the weighty downs is probably highlighted in my inability to answer that as I sit here.

Q. You talked many times this training camp about not having the luxury of warming up to things. Would you say the way this game started was a failure in that area?

MIKE TOMLIN: Yeah.

Q. Even though that was a focus, is there anything that you can attribute that to?

MIKE TOMLIN: It's just as I described, the weighty downs.

Q. From a physicality standpoint, what makes San Francisco's offensive line so effective in getting that first push on your defensive line today?

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, it became a time of possession

component of it, as well. The defense that's on the grass is going to die on the vine in early September. They did a lot of things well, but I don't know if anything specifically in areas of what you're talking about. It was an accumulation of things, variables, if you will.

Q. A couple slips in the first quarter; was that just random?

MIKE TOMLIN: Again, we're not looking for comfort. It's all of the above. The end result is the end result, so we own it all. We're not trying to isolate it or blame any component of it.

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