

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, September 10, 2023
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

T.J. Watt

Postgame Press Conference



49ers 30, Steelers 7

Q. How much more difficult was to did get rotating in?

T.J. WATT: Never going to make an excuse for that. We always have the next-man-up mentality. It doesn't matter who's in the game. The standard is the standard like we talk about all the time, and today it definitely wasn't enough.

Q. Is there anything you can point to, it looked like they were more ready at the very start of the game. Is there anything you feel like you can --

T.J. WATT: I don't know. I don't know if there's one thing that I can say right now. You guys watched the preseason. We were able to start fast in all three phases of the game, and today was definitely not like that. Even to be able to stop the bleeding coming out at halftime and have them have a two-play 70-plus-yard drive is not acceptable at all.

It's a matter of starting fast, not just in the first half but also coming out in the second half, going as hard as we can to give the offense the ball back, which we weren't able to do.

Q. Did you think McCaffrey was mostly done blocking it up and him being him, or did you feel like you guys were not executing properly against the run?

T.J. WATT: I don't know, it's too early to tell. He's a great back. I don't want to take anything away from a guy like that. He's very shifty, is very elusive, and had a really good football game against us today.

Q. Did you see Purdy doing anything you weren't expecting? Did he pretty much run the offense the way you thought?

T.J. WATT: I thought he did a great job. It's too early for me to start making decisions on how the game went. I mean, I can just go off what I feel right now, but I think he did a good job, and we weren't able to affect him enough to

put him in tough situations.

But he executed better than we did today.

Q. It looked like you had guys on both sides that were slipping on the field. Was there anything different or off about the playing surface?

T.J. WATT: No, I didn't notice any difference.

Q. T.J., what's the impact of not having Cam out there for defense?

T.J. WATT: I mean, he's a captain. He's a captain for a reason. He's been a guy that's been able to make plays and be a spark for our defense for a long time, but like I said earlier, the standard is the standard no matter who was in there. All of us were at training camp together getting repetitions with different groups, so we're all familiar with each other.

If one guy goes down, no matter who it is, a guy like Cam might take more than just one guy to fill that role, but we need to find a way to stop the bleeding as soon as possible, and we weren't able to do that today.

Q. How surprising was it that Purdy was able to reach down and grab that fumble?

T.J. WATT: Yeah, it was strange. The ball didn't really feel loose, and then I felt like I was -- as I was recovering it, someone jumped in and kind of made the ball go back to him. It was just a strange play in general. I don't know.

Q. T.J., you tied Harrison's franchise record for sacks today. What does that kind of an accomplishment mean to you?

T.J. WATT: I mean, really I don't want to diminish what it is, but I'm just super upset about the result of today, not happy with it, not acceptable on many levels, and there's so many more plays to be made out there, myself included. Just looking at a lot of the runs, what we can do better, what I can do better, and we need to improve quickly, and we have a tough opponent coming up this week, so we need to get in the lab.

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Q. Was their offensive performance because you guys were a little bit more fatigued than normal?

T.J. WATT: No, we've just got to get off the field. If we handle our business and do our job, we're not going to be on the field as much as we were today, and it comes down to having manageable 2nd and 3rd down opportunities which leads to a higher conversion percentage for them.

Q. Were there any run concepts that maybe caught you guys off guard or some miscommunications happen up front?

T.J. WATT: No, I don't think we were caught off guard by any of the run concepts. We watched a lot of film. I think they ran that toss a good amount of times. It's just a matter of getting guys in their gaps and tackling. We talked about them being very tough to get down on the ground that we were going to need all hats to the ball today, and we weren't able to do it.

Q. You guys talked about what they were going to do, you talked about what they might do because you were familiar with it. Then they go out and do it. How do they execute it when you know what to expect from them, yet they go out and still do it?

T.J. WATT: That's what we're going to watch the film for. Like you say, you go into a game feeling like you have a great plan, you get punched in the mouth and it's all encompassing. It's not just one person, one play. There's so much more that goes into it that you can either look at this film and make excuses or you can look at it and learn from it, and we damn sure better be learning from it.

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