

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

T.J. Watt

Postgame Press Conference

Steelers - 26, Browns - 22

Q. Steelers' record for snaps. What does it mean to you? And to do it by breaking James Harrison's record, somebody that's had a prestigious career in this franchise.

T.J. WATT: I'd be lying to you if I didn't say it was special. Just like anything, it hasn't set in. I don't know if it will until I have time to really sit down and process what just happened tonight.

But there's so many people along the way that have helped me get to where I am. It's no -- I can't stand the individual awards of football because there's just -- Deebo himself helped me so much my rookie year. He didn't have to. No one asked him to but he wanted to help me and I appreciate him for that.

So much teammates, coaches, mentors, my brothers. My wife's support. My parents. There's so many people that go into it that it's not myself out there making the plays. I mean, I can't take all the credit.

Q. How are you guys able to gut through this game and come out with a win?

T.J. WATT: Splash. I mean, I think that's what we talk about is creating splash as a defense. Alex Highsmith played his absolute tail off tonight. Guys inside got incredible pressure. Larry O had a great game.

I just think we really fed off the crowd. And I still think we can do a better job of executing in those moments when the crowd is going absolutely bananas like they were tonight. But it wasn't pretty. But a win is a win.

Q. Breaking the sack record, how does it feel to solidify the legacy in terms of defensive players? And how does that make you feel just personally?

T.J. WATT: I don't know. Like I say, there's so much ball



left to play for me that I'm not going to think about anything like that until I'm done playing. I'm just trying to make as many plays as possible, win as many games and try to be a positive contributor for this team.

Q. Regarding the rush defense, Alex spoke about some undisciplined mistakes that were still occurring there. Where do you find those instances occurring the most often?

T.J. WATT: Are you talking about the running game or pass rush?

Q. Their running game. The opposing team's running games.

T.J. WATT: It's a mix. First and foremost it's tackling. Secondly, it's just not trying to do too much. And I sat up here and talked about it a lot, not trying to be a superhero and play out of your gap and swim out of gaps.

When you do get them in situations, we just have to get them down. And credit to those guys. They were able to fight awesome tackles and get a lot of yard off contact. That's just something that we have to figure out quick.

Q. (Indiscernible) Alex. Can you take us through that scoop and score?

T.J. WATT: Yeah, we both kind of knew it was going to be play/pass. It will be a fun play to watch on film. We both got wide. Alex just had a phenomenal rush. I was coming off a chip, so I had a little bit of room to see the play process.

I just saw the ball come out and thankfully I didn't dive on it and I was able to scoop it and score it, and the place went bananas like it did all night. Steeler Nation was absolutely incredible.

Q. Where does this one rank for you and Alex as a tandem tonight?

T.J. WATT: Hopefully there's many more to come. I'm just so happy to be able to play with a guy that loves the game so much. And that's not taking anything away from any



other guys I played with. Everybody loves the game.

But it's so cool to see his progression and his hunger. And the guy has so many phenomenal pass-rush moves and he can defend the run well, that we just feed well off each other.

We're just happy when the other person makes a play. It's never a slight -- I'm never upset when he makes the sack I try to give him the football for the sack fumble because how I saw it I was just in the right place at the right time and scooped it up.

Alex played phenomenal tonight. I just want to continue to do this with him and this defense.

Q. (Indiscernible) said, when he was asked about replacing Cam, it's like a next generation that needs to step up. How did you see those guys kind of rise to the occasion. Elijah had a big sack. Joey had some nice plays. What did you see of the young guys?

T.J. WATT: I thought they stepped up. It's a huge stage to step up in. It was a crazy environment -- Monday Night Football. The stage doesn't get much bigger.

Those guys have been working their tails off in practice all week, like I said. Those guys were at training camp with us. We trust in them. We believe in every guy in the locker room. It's a matter he have putting it on tape.

It doesn't always matter if it's good or bad; it's just getting tape for those young guys and those guys that don't get a lot of snaps for them to be able to review. And I feel we'll only improve as a unit. And we go as they go.

Q. Your thoughts on just, as Coach Tomlin would say, didn't blink in the final portion of the fourth quarter, holding on to the lead, keeping Cleveland from being able to score. Your thoughts on your unit's resolve?

T.J. WATT: I mean, when your back's against the wall, you have two options. And we just really want to be a team that fights back, especially as a defense. We want to be a defense that determines outcomes of games.

And the only thing we can control is what happens when we get out there on the field. There's going to be so much more we can improve on, but I'm very glad with the splash we had tonight. But there's going to be a lot of stuff to correct as well.

Q. Quarterbacks talk about pressing, feeling they have to make a big play or something, like in a shootout (indiscernible) come back. Does that exist for you

guys, if the offense is struggling? Is there such a thing as pressing, you try too hard to make splash plays?

T.J. WATT: I think that's true to an extent. It doesn't have anything to do with the offense or special teams at all. If it's a game where there's a kind of dink and dunk, and you get bored of the redundancy of just doing your job and getting 2- or 3-yard gains, sometimes you want to make that splash when it's not necessarily the right moment to get out of your gap and make the splash.

Q. Were you aided by what Pressley did for you, making them work in those long --

T.J. WATT: Yeah, he had some really big time punts to pin them back. Anytime you can pin them back in this environment, you get them in the end zones and it's very hard for them to operate.

And I mean there's even a few instances where we can do better when we have them backed up to keep them into a three-and-out.

Q. Can you make this kind of impact every week?

T.J. WATT: I'm going to fuel up and we're going to try, we'll see what we can do in a week. But it's all about, like I said, this defensive performance, it's not always going to be one guy performing at elite level. There's going to be chips one week. There's going to be slides one week. We just all have to do our job, and the plays are there to be made.

Q. What are your impressions of the right tackle, Dawand Jones? This was his first start.

T.J. WATT: I think he's a great player, has a bright future. Definitely very long. I just think it's a tough night anytime you're getting chipped 90 percent of the time.

Q. How much do quality backups you and Alex have, how much does that help you guys, how fresh does it keep you?

T.J. WATT: It's huge. And those guys love football. It is so cool to see them seize every single play they get. And M.G. is a vet, and I respect the heck out of him. He could be fighting for more reps, but he's happy for what he gets and he makes the most of them.

That's why I'm so happy it paid off for him tonight. Phenomenal night.

Herbig, you saw it, incredible training camp and preseason.

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The guy will just continue to get better. And all of us want to eat, and we're doing it together and that's so special.

Q. (Indiscernible) for your position now?

T.J. WATT: Of course. We can't take 100 percent of the snaps.

Q. Obviously guys get here all the time, but you don't always see players from both teams come up and shake hands the way Nick Chubb got when he was on the cart. What did you think of that moment? Was it tough to see that happen?

T.J. WATT: It's tough. I can't watch those replays. I just heard the crowd reaction. Obviously you could see it in his face. Absolutely phenomenal player. I have so much respect for him as a football player.

We've seen him twice a year for the last seven years. And he's called Mr. Chubb for a reason in our building, and I have so much respect for him. I hope he's all right, and I wish him a speedy recovery.

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