

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Tuesday, September 19, 2023
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Coach Mike Tomlin

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers - 26, Browns - 22

COACH TOMLIN: Man, 1-0 in the AFC North, we don't take that for granted. We're appreciative. I'm appreciative of the effort of the men. I'm appreciative of their fight, their no-blink approach. Obviously it wasn't easy tonight. But we didn't expect it to be. It was kind of a signature of AFC North ball and in particular these two teams.

They had momentum. They were coming off a big win. And so we didn't get the type of fluidity we wanted early, but I like the fight. Obviously the big play to the pick-6 was a nice catalyst.

But after that, it took us a while to gain rhythm. We gave up another big run. And so we've got some things, obviously, to work on. It's cool to work on it with the win.

Can't say enough about Nick Chubb. Sending our best to him. Got a lot of respect for that guy.

We had some injuries of our own in game. Gunner is being evaluated for concussion. Minkah is being evaluated at the hospital with a chest injury. Elandon Roberts, I think he was able to get back into the game, a stinger of some description. Bumps and bruises associated with play.

We've got to assess all those things and put together a plan here on a short week to go to Vegas. So we're thankful for the win. But we'll keep pushing. I'll pause and open it up for questions.

Q. Minkah's injuries specifically, do you know?

COACH TOMLIN: I do not. I just know he's being evaluated as we speak. I'm sure I'll have more information for you guys when we talk around noonish tomorrow.

Q. How big was pressure that you're able to get on Watson in this game?

COACH TOMLIN: You know, it's a big component. It is. It

probably always is a major component when these two groups come together. There's familiarity, and kind of our edge guys have done what they did tonight, to be quite honest with you, in the history of this series or in the recent history of this series.

It doesn't mean that we take their efforts for granted, but we need it. We expect it. And they delivered.

Q. Like I asked you last week, in terms of the slow start, Kenny Pickett, seems like it's going to be recurrent. You talk about Matt Canada, but I don't think it's on Coach Canada. I think the slow start of Kenny has to take his own responsibility.

COACH TOMLIN: What's the question?

Q. The question is are you going to do anything to spur them, either one of them to maybe up the ante a little bit?

COACH TOMLIN: Certainly.

Q. (Indiscernible)

COACH TOMLIN: We've got planning next week. It doesn't make sense for me to divulge it in this setting. We have a game coming up in six days. We'll let that do our talking.

Q. You talked about making another big play. Coming off the game you did, is that an okay recipe for you, get a couple of big plays and kind of hang on in between?

COACH TOMLIN: We're not going to apologize for winning.

Q. How did some of your guys do filling in for Minkah, and a couple of big plays by Joey?

COACH TOMLIN: We were short kind of coming into the game. Can't say enough about some of those guys, Calvin Austin and others. That's what teams do. They support one another. They step up.

And I'm appreciative of the efforts of the men that you

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mentioned in relief of some others. But there will be plenty of opportunities to display that over the course of the journey, unfortunately, because it's just a component of our game.

Q. Speaking of guys stepping up, T.J. is always great, but did you notice or see anything additional to him with guys like Minkah not in there?

COACH TOMLIN: Guys made the plays. They did. Can't say enough about Highsmith. He had a pick-6 and a big sack fumble. We got contribution from a lot of areas, just appreciate the areas. Larry Ogunjobi played a lot of snaps, hadn't practiced a lot. Had to absorb a big time responsibility because we weren't playing without Cam. And there's a lot of guys to be congratulated for their efforts and play making.

Q. You guys continue to incorporate Najee and Jaylen into the running game. How do you assess both performances and how they continue to grow?

COACH TOMLIN: Boy, it was tough sledding early. I thought Coach Schwartz did some really good things there in the initial stages of the game. They played five down linemen.

It took us a while to get our footing there, to eliminate some of the negativity from our play. I thought we were able to get some of it going in the second half. And kind of that's the knee-jerk assessment of what transpired from a run game perspective.

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