

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Coach Matt LaFleur

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 23, Packers 19

MATT LaFLEUR: Obviously very disappointed. I thought our guys competed and battled hard, but there are no moral victories in this league. You've got to give Pittsburgh a ton of credit. We were right there at the end of the game and had an opportunity to go win the game twice, and like many times that we've seen on tape, their defense makes a play. They got two picks to kind of close it out.

I thought there was a lot of things that we did well in all three phases, and then there's some things that were just really killer. A couple plays here and there.

Obviously offensively the turnovers in the red zone was a problem today. Defensively stopping the run, we had way too many missed tackles. Then on special teams, any time you get a PAT blocked, it just changes some of the decision making at the end of the game where you're going for touchdowns instead of having the option of kicking a field goal to tie the game up.

But I do think that there was a lot of good that came out of this in terms of just -- we challenged our team to go out there and compete for four quarters, and I felt from the opening kickoff to the final whistle, we did that.

I'm confident if we continue with this that we will end up on the other side of this.

Q. How do you think Jordan handled that last four-minute situation?

MATT LaFLEUR: Yeah, he put us in position to win the game. We had an opportunity there. When we checked the ball down to Aaron Jones, I thought there was an opportunity to get out of bounds right there, and we didn't. That was critical because that wasted a ton of time, and we would have had a couple opportunities at the end of the game. That was like 20 seconds or so. It felt like forever.

He was trying to get us in a position where we were going to have one of the receivers chip the edge. That took too long. Just the whole operation there was not good enough.

But I did think he made a couple plays, a couple throws to put us in position to have a shot, at least take a shot at the end zone.

Q. What were you looking for from 16 on that last play?

MATT LaFLEUR: Well, it's a play that we practice all the time as an end-of-game play. Most good defenses like Pittsburgh has, they're going to defend the goal line. You try to run a corner route to flush a defender out of there, and you hit basically an end cut behind it, and they didn't back up.

Q. Did you get any clarification -- any further clarification on the lateral that they ruled a forward pass? Was there any further discussion after that?

MATT LaFLEUR: I thought it was pretty clear to me, but somebody else felt differently. So I get that's the way it is. I guess I was wrong.

Q. Is there anything you saw from your run defense the last two weeks? Two and a half yards a play and then this week 200 yards. Anything you can gather from the run defense today?

MATT LaFLEUR: Yeah, a lot of missed tackles. We knew they were going to try to run the football, and they did it better than we did. They went out there and executed better than we did. We had a lot of calls designed to stop the run, and they were still gashing us.

It certainly wasn't good enough. Anytime -- I want to say was it five and a half yards a carry roughly? You can't give up almost 200 yards rushing in this league and expect to win football games.

Q. You regained the momentum at one point in the third quarter, I think six or seven times you got off the field on 3rd down. Did you feel like you were gaining momentum in the second half?



MATT LaFLEUR: I thought so, but I thought we kicked too many field goals. When you get in position to score touchdowns, you've got to convert. I've got to go back and look at the tape and see why we got stopped, but yeah, those are missed opportunities in my mind.

Q. Were you happy with the offensive line? They seemed to protect Jordan all game.

MATT LaFLEUR: Yeah, I thought our O-line battled. That's a really good front. Those are two -- everybody knows about Watt as an edge rusher, but Highsmith, I think he's just as dangerous. I know he doesn't have the sack numbers necessarily, but he's gotten a ton of pressure on the quarterback, and then their interior does a really good job with the push.

It is a formidable front, one of the better fronts that we've seen, and I thought considering how many times we dropped back in this game, I thought our O-line did a pretty good job.

Q. Back to that last drive, the play before when Jordan on 4th down checked it down to AJ, is that something you may not have done early in the season? Is that kind of growth, to get you guys closer to the end zone --

MATT LaFLEUR: Yeah, I thought it was a big time play. It was 4th down, so you've just got to have another play in you. I knew they were going to probably play off and soft, and we tried to chip their edges right there just to give them a little bit more time to maybe allow the play to develop, and I thought he did a nice job of getting it to where it needed to go. Our guys got up on the ball in a timely fashion with some urgency.

But I really think the play that really hurt us obviously is just wasting so much time when we checked it down to Aaron Jones.

Q. At the end of the first half with I think it was like 1:20 left or so, what was the thought going into that drive, and did it get affected by that first play --

MATT LaFLEUR: Yeah, absolutely. We wanted to start the play to get us into the two-minute mode with the run. We threw the run solution, and we lose five yards.

2nd and 15, I want to say they had the majority of their time-outs if not all of them. I didn't want to give them the ball back. I thought we were playing hard. It was a one-possession game.

When you're in 2nd and 15, quite frankly I was surprised that they didn't call a time-out, and then they would have kind of forced our hand a little bit.

I thought there was a lot of good things, especially kind of weathering the storm. I think we gave up, what was it, three -- their first three possessions, they got 17 points out of the first three possessions, so being down and being able to claw back and having an opportunity -- I thought one of the big turning points was when we went three-and-out when we had the ball at midfield. That was another missed op I would say when we had an opportunity to go in and take the lead right there before the two-minute drive.

Q. What did you see on the blocked extra point?

MATT LaFLEUR: I didn't see it. I looked up, and that's when I saw it. I know this: Going into the game, we coached -- they were going to try to time up the snap, and I don't know if that's exactly what happened, but we were supposed to use like a dummy snap count in that situation. A lot of times they go off our holder's hand. So we wanted to throw it off a little bit.

I've got to go back and look at it.

Q. On the shot to Watson in the end zone, what did you see on that play, and is that something where he shouldn't be trying that, or what --

MATT LaFLEUR: Yeah, they clouded the coverage. They had a safety over the top. The corner made a good play on it. Really that's not the intent of the play in that situation.

Anytime you see a half field safety, we were running a double move on both the outside and the inside that was designed for single high defense. They played a shell.

I mean, I could go back and look at it, but just thought that the ball needed to go backside.

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