

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Friday, December 8, 2023
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Cameron Heyward

Postgame Press Conference



Patriots 21, Steelers 18

Q. How do you compartmentalize everything that's happened over the last couple games?

CAMERON HEYWARD: I don't know if I compartmentalize it. I just try to stay in the moment of it.

You know, when you lose people try to do the same thing, and so either we learn from our mistakes or they're going to continue to keep biting us in the butt.

Q. How tough is this going to be to recover from?

CAMERON HEYWARD: We'll see. I think you play a game on Sunday, you lose, and then Thursday you lose a game the way we lost, you know, got some time to think about it.

But we got football after that, and hopefully you're past the grieving process after this time off.

Q. You've been with this team through a lot of ups and downs over the years. This feels like a unique position for you guys. Is there a change in anything you have to institute as leaders to stop this?

CAMERON HEYWARD: I think it's the stuff we talk about. I think it's just execution-wise. You look when we were out there on defense early on, man, can't give up 21 points like that, I don't care who it is.

You tip your hat to them. They got the job done today. But, man, there were mistakes out there all around. You know, luckily we were able to keep a lid on it later, but spotting 21 points and having to dig yourself out of that hole is not something you're usually accustomed to in the NFL.

Q. You guys have talked a lot about how it wasn't anything new that you guys hadn't see before, wasn't a surprise. It's been about execution.

CAMERON HEYWARD: Uh-huh.

Q. When that continues to be a problem what has to change to get you over the hump?

CAMERON HEYWARD: Either guys learn or you got to change who's in there. You know, myself included. If I can't execute, then you got to take me out. That's just the way the group rolls.

That's the way we've always done. But I think we have the capable men of doing that. You know, I think in a short week it comes down to those execution type of plays. Thursday games always come down to, you know, who can make the least amount of mistakes. That's usually the team that wins on Thursday night.

Q. Played a lot of guys at inside linebacker, even snap to snap. Was that at all a factor in communication or execution?

CAMERON HEYWARD: I think the inside linebacker, it's a tough position to begin with. It's the hub of communication. I think, you know, Elandon brings so much stability in there. When we had him out at the end of the Sunday game, it was rough.

But going to be good and bad plays. Mykal Walker made a great play getting the interception. Inside linebacker play, it's tough. We're asking guys to get on a moving train and asking them to play at a high level, but we need that.

We can't run away from it. Hopefully we can be better because of it.

Q. How do you keep guys together through this negativity?

CAMERON HEYWARD: I think you keep guys together by being accountable. Not running from the mistakes. You know, we'll have meetings tomorrow, but I'm not someone who is going to shy away from what's going on. I know a lot of our guys are going to think the same way.

When we're out there or in meetings, there is a standard, a



level of play that needs to be accustomed to everybody, and when we fall short, everybody is accountable for it. Nothing more than that.

Q. As a leader, captain, what's your role in fixing it?

CAMERON HEYWARD: Attacking it during practice.

Q. What did Mike say do you guys after the game? Did he say anything different than what you have seen him say?

CAMERON HEYWARD: I don't think -- Mike T doesn't like to -- I think Mike T likes to absorb the film before he really makes a judgment. I think that that's fair.

Obviously players are ticked off, mad about the game. But, you know, it's just about being smart with your words and getting back in the lab and absorbing what's really going on.

Can't put a mask over this. This has been two ugly games that we have to be accountable for.

Q. Wasn't a case of, okay, they're starting Zappe this week. They did something different.

CAMERON HEYWARD: No.

Q. This was you guys just didn't play the way you need to play.

CAMERON HEYWARD: No. You start the game, especially in the turnover department. We got a turnover, didn't get points. They got a turnover and got 7.

You know, when you have that trade-off and sudden change, I don't think we handled it as well. That was something we really needed to adjust from the game before.

So couple times we were on a short field and we had actually a long field where we didn't get a touchdown on the offense in the game before, and so they had a 99-yard drive and we didn't get off.

We talk about absorbing that and getting back. I thought in the second half we will really settled down. You can see we didn't give up any points. Man, you really can't give up 21 points early on and ask your offense to just continue to cheap keep climbing.

They were giving up 10 points the last four games, so as a defense we knew that going in. We didn't answer the call in that regard when it came to providing short fields

enough, and getting off the field and surrendering 3 points instead of 7.

Q. How confident are you that this thing can be turned around?

CAMERON HEYWARD: I'm confident, but the work has to be done. You know, I can sit up here and be mad and have an opinion, but the work and the film work especially has to be looked at. We all got to grow because of it.

Q. Some guys said you guys didn't feel like you took the Cardinals seriously enough. Assuming that was not the problem again, but you had some of the same issues. Do you feel like there is something wrong with the approach or mentality coming into the games?

CAMERON HEYWARD: I think it's execution. There are plays to be made. When we don't make the plays, everybody has to own up to it.

You can call that whatever you want, but to me, when you don't make the play you don't make the play, that's not overlooking somebody. The NFL, I mean, you can play an 0-15 team and that team can dust you if you're not careful.

Everybody has professionals and everybody prepares, but I think the execution, and especially in this game, the execution has to go up. Coming off a short week, so many different things going on, we lost our quarterback for a couple weeks. Defense, offense, you just got pick up the level of execution.

Can't have those mistakes going forward.

Q. Any comment on throwing fourth and two? I know your a defender, but when you see a fourth and two bomb go up with a backup quarterback, what's your reaction?

CAMERON HEYWARD: Go for it. I'm not running from it. You know, he wanted to see his playmaker make a play. Didn't make it; so be it.

As defense I look at like, man, we shouldn't have been in that situation. You know, 18 points is plenty, and 21 is way too much.

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