

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Saturday, December 23, 2023
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Coach Mike Tomlin

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 34, Bengals 11

MIKE TOMLIN: Man, really exciting win. Appreciative of the effort and focus of the group. It was total team effort in all three phases. Made the necessary plays, smash plays, played together and hard.

Just happy for the guys in the locker room. Going to have a merry Christmas. Unfortunately we're just snake bit a little bit at inside linebacker. Elandon Roberts went down with a pec injury and wasn't able to return. I'll have more information I'm sure on Tuesday when I get back with you guys.

Questions?

Q. What did you like about what Mason did?

MIKE TOMLIN: He was Mason. We talked about it early in the week. He has a belief in himself. He's aggressive in his play style. Thought he did a really good job not displaying a lot of rust for a guy that hadn't played a lot.

Q. Did you become more aggressive as the game went along because of how he was performing?

MIKE TOMLIN: We came in with that mentality. We talked about scared money not making money all week. That's the mentality as we went into the week.

Q. You weren't going to sit on the lead at the end of the first half. You came out and just kept throwing. Is that part the mentality you wanted to have?

MIKE TOMLIN: Yeah, we had a certain anticipation what they might do. When you're comfortable with that, then you play aggressively. Not anything earth chattering in. It's intimacy in divisional play. I am sure they know as a well.

Q. That scared money don't make money mentality, why was that the emphasis going into the week?

MIKE TOMLIN: It was appropriate.

Q. You said you had an idea what they were going to do. Was part of that the way you were able to pick them apart in the middle? Was Freiermuth last game; didn't go to him this one. Seemed like Pickens right way.

MIKE TOMLIN: They had a lot to do about that. Some of the schematics today was in reaction to some of the things that Muth did last final. Again, it's chess not checkers in divisional play.

Q. It's early yo ask, but sticking with Mason in Seattle?

MIKE TOMLIN: You're right, it is early to ask.

Q. Comment on George's performance today.

MIKE TOMLIN: Man, he made some smash plays that was needed. His pedigree showed no doubt.

Q. Do you like the way he responded after the things that happened during the week?

MIKE TOMLIN: It was appropriate.

Q. Couple weeks ago you said after a loss that we'll be back. Is this the kind of performance you envisioned when you made that statement?

MIKE TOMLIN: We're not painting with a broad brush. Won a game. Thankful for it. Appreciate the efforts of the guys.

Q. Your three main tacklers weren't on the roster a month ago. Can you speak to the perform of from some guys who stepped up?

MIKE TOMLIN: It's necessary and appreciated. It's been a challenge readying those guys, but kudos to them. It's also, you know, a thoughtful acquisition of players, veteran players. The size of the practice squad today, the fact that you can have veteran players on it. We just positioned ourselves for the attrition component of play, and can't say



enough about contributions from those guys, specifically pat Peterson and Eric Rowe stepping in at safety under the circumstances that we have at that position.

Both guys played every down. Did a heck of a job communicating solid throughout the week and provided some slash plays in the form of turnovers.

Q. When you get a splash play like the second play, how much does that energize the offense and what you want to do?

MIKE TOMLIN: Big plays eliminate a lot of execution as we say in this business. You can go 80 plus yards and put 7 points on the board. It helps you in myriad ways.

Q. Thoughts on speaking about splash plays, defense be able to get to Browning and get several sacks.

MIKE TOMLIN: Sometimes that is reflective of game circumstance. We believe we've got a big-play defense, but sometimes we're not in game circumstances that allow that to be revealed. When you get up on people we're not surprised by the splash, to be honest with you.

Q. When you give up the big play to Higgins how important was the response on the next drive?

MIKE TOMLIN: Nice response by the offense, but that's just complementary football. We turn the ball over, we expect the defense to stand up. We give up an easy one on defense, the offense supported them and that's kind of the engineering of the type of day we had.

Q. When you take the ball away three times and convert that into 17 points is that what you're referring to?

MIKE TOMLIN: Yes, absolutely.

Q. Was there a concerted effort to limit the pass game to the running backs?

MIKE TOMLIN: No, we talked about it at the top the week that they had been an emergence of their backs inclusion in the pass game. Joe Mixon had caught 12 balls since the last time we played them, and Brown's evolution in terms of what they were doing, what had been happening, and I think that was one of the reasons Browning was playing so efficiently, completing passes at such a high rate, because very little risk in terms of including those guys in the pass game, particularly the way that he was.

Q. Did Mason get a game ball?

MIKE TOMLIN: I'll leave that business in there amongst us.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports