

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Saturday, August 17, 2024
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Coach Mike Tomlin

Postgame Press Conference



Bills 9, Steelers 3

MIKE TOMLIN: Still not what we're looking for. It was better in some areas, but still, JV and too many others. An area of improvement I thought was net punting, the field position component. A play got flipped this time around. We were much better in this game than we were in the last one. Still not winning enough possession downs on offense, particularly early, in an effort to establish rhythm in game plays and develop personality and so forth when you're not winning possession downs in the early portions of the game. All of those things really get stymied. Included in that but also separate from that, I thought we didn't do a good enough job of protecting the quarterback. We've got to do a better job in pass protection than we did not only in possession downs but just in general. I was really up front with the group about it in that regard. That can't be a problem for us. We've got to be better than we were tonight in that area.

On defense, particularly in the second half, I thought our young people wore down some. They were able to control the game and minimize our opportunities because they were running the football some.

Our secondary people in the crack replays gaps and so forth, you don't have a chance to have really good run defense unless your secondary people are really on it.

I thought we had a lot of area for improvement, particularly in the second half, in terms of some of those things, and that's why their run total was what it was and really limited some of our possession opportunities in the second half.

But we'll meet tomorrow. We'll comb through it in great detail. That's just a knee-jerk assessment of some things. From a health standpoint, Jaylen Warren had a hamstring in game. I don't know the extent of it. He'll be evaluated. I'll have more information for you obviously over the next couple of days.

Peyton Wilson was being treated for a concussion.

Anthony Averett had a hamstring, as well. Some other bumps and bruises, but I think in most instances, those guys returned to play. But again, I'll have more detail for you next time we come together around the health of some people.

Questions.

Q. I know it's kind of limited opportunities and it's the preseason, but would you like to see your first team offense produce some points?

MIKE TOMLIN: Absolutely. You know, in order to do that, you've got to win possession downs, and we're just not winning enough of those right now. That problem lingers.

Q. How do you feel Russ did aside from the issues affecting him?

MIKE TOMLIN: Again, it's somewhat of an incomplete study because you just don't get a chance to see him operate or us operate or us establish rhythm and personality when you're not winning possession downs, and we weren't. The first three or so series of the game, it was three-and-out, and you're not going to get an opportunity to establish rhythm or play the way that you would like as an individual or a collective.

Q. Do you feel that the group did have some adequate progress in terms of what you were looking for?

MIKE TOMLIN: Certainly, but I'm not looking for the feel-good. I'm looking for the things that we need to set our focus on in an effort to improve, but I acknowledge there were some things that were better today, certainly.

Q. What did you make of Justin Fields' second performance and obviously specifically last week (indiscernible)?

MIKE TOMLIN: I thought he got better in some areas. I thought he did a nice job utilizing his legs, whether it was impromptu or otherwise, to keep some situations alive.

But again, I just thought performance was stymied by our lack of protection and our lack of execution on possession



downplay.

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We're going to be thoughtfully aggressive in possession down ball. We had another fourth down in the red area that we lost again this week, as we work to score touchdowns. We're just not going to be compromising in that regard. We put too much effort into our prep in that area not to be thoughtfully aggressive in that area. But that's two weeks in a row where we lost a 4th down play in the tight red zone, for example, and that just shows you the weight and the impact of possession downplay.

Q. What did you think of Zach Frazier? Is there any note on the status of Nate Herbig right now?

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, Nate has got an injury that's being continually evaluated. I think he's getting a second opinion. I want to wait on that. I'll give you guys some information probably the next time we come together. But I was largely satisfied with the work that I saw from Zach.

Q. Do you have an update on Beanie Bishop?

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, Beanie was a little bit limited on our last workday here on Thursday against Buffalo, and so we didn't want a small problem to become a big problem. Obviously the sand is going through the hourglass and he's got a big week ahead of him, but we didn't want to jeopardize or compromise that, and so we did what we thought was prudent tonight and didn't allow him to participate.

Q. What did you think of the front on defense, just the way you guys were aggressive early, attacking the quarterback, putting pressure on them and creating a takeaway?

MIKE TOMLIN: Yeah, I liked some of the things that we saw, particularly given some of the people that we didn't play up front on defense. Some of those guys that you could characterize as second teamers, if you will, have had a really good preseason thus far, guys like Herbig and Mont Adams and Leal have done an awesome job, and I think you just kind of felt that. But we were interested in that. That's why we didn't play Cam and T.J. and Alex and some of those guys. Those guys are deserving of some varsity on varsity reps to show what their capabilities are, and I just thought that that was a positive tonight, their play.

Q. How is Highsmith progressing from his groin?

MIKE TOMLIN: Should be fine. Had a couple good days of work. We'll be pushing forward this week.

