

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Coach Mike Tomlin

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 20, Chargers 10

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, we talked about it all week. We knew we were in for a fight. Styles make fights. They're assembled like we're assembled, we so knew it was going to be a great game. They're playing great defense. We're playing great defense. We had to challenge our defense to out-perform theirs. I thought they did. We had a commitment to the run game. Obviously they came in with the league's leading rusher and the No. 1 offense and our offense had to out-rush theirs, and we did, and that's why the game unfolded the way it did.

I'm just appreciative of the efforts of the guys. It was a fight, though, man. These guys are obviously well-coached and a talented group. It didn't happen instantly. We had to stay in it. But that's life and definitely life in the NFL.

I just like our general demeanor throughout. It wasn't fluid the whole way. But I didn't feel any blink or anybody running away from the challenge. I just felt guys leaning in on the challenge.

Obviously we're going to have to reproduce that as we move forward.

It's good to be 3-0 as we sit here. Obviously we sustained some injuries and so forth prior to the game and in game, but that's ball and life, as well. We spend less time worrying about the unfortunates that got hurt and like to spend our time focusing on those that get the opportunity to elevate and contribute.

Sucks for Alex Highsmith, excited for Herbig, for example. And none of us are surprised with the quality of work that he gave us and a lot of others. Cory Trice had a hamstring, Alex Highsmith had a groin, Jaylen Warren wasn't able to finish there late in the second half. I pulled him from the game. It just didn't look like he was running smoothly. We'll evaluate him.

Van Jefferson was able to go back in in the latter portions of the game. He got poked in the eye. His vision cleared up, he went back to participation.

We got some other bumps and bruises associated with play. We'll analyze that and I'll give you a full report on Tuesday, but just as I sit here today, I'm thankful for the efforts of the men. I'm thankful to be 3-0. It's good to be in a good contest like this, man, good-on-good five-star match-ups, if you will, and come out on the other side. There's growth in it, and we'd better learn the lessons and keep stepping because we've got challenges that await us.

Q. You couldn't run the ball, had a hard time for three or so quarters, but then when you had to at the end, you did. How satisfying was it to just keep at it and keep doing it?

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, they could say the same thing, but as I mentioned, styles make fights, and that's how these two teams and defenses are built. We didn't expect it to be easy sledding at any juncture, but we wanted to continue to pound the rock and hopefully break through, and it felt like we did there in the latter portions of the game.

Q. What was the catalyst for the way the defense played in the second half?

MIKE TOMLIN: They just wanted to be the best defense on the field. They respond to those things and take those challenges very personally, and they played like it.

Q. With the rejuvenated running game, did it encourage you and the defense that they spent less time on the field, there by helping them get through some situations?

MIKE TOMLIN: I don't know that our defense worries about that. They've got no control over when or how they take the field. They've got all the control on how they get off the field. That's the life we live.

I think it was reflected when we turned that ball over, right, when that ball got tipped up in the air and intercepted. You saw the spirit in which our defense took the field, so we're



not looking for comfort. We're not looking to hide on the sideline. We'll get ourselves off the field.

Q. The one turnover on the tipped ball as you mentioned, but overall how has he adjusted to playing the style that complements the way you play?

MIKE TOMLIN: Who are you referring to?

Q. Fields. The one turnover on the tip-off, but how is he adjusting to the style?

MIKE TOMLIN: He's doing a good job doing what we're asking him to do, playing and playing to win, and so that's appreciated.

Q. You only dressed four receivers. Can you speak of the contributions of that group, especially from Austin?

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, Patterson is dual purpose, as well, so he played some wide out and running back today, and that gives us flexibility. It's the same thing that Leal gives us. Leal is capable of playing outside linebacker and D-line. We value position flexibility. It allows us to make decisions to strengthen other areas.

We went with four wide outs. We carried an extra D-lineman today because we knew we were in for a run game fight. Appreciative of the efforts, but I'm not surprised by it. Guys like Scotty Miller are always ready to answer the call. They might not have the big names or resumes, but they've made plays consistently throughout team development, and the guys in the locker room depend on them and expect them to deliver.

Q. The setup wasn't a surprise that Nick stepped up today. How much growth has he shown through training camp and through the first couple games of the regular season?

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, this guy wants to be great, but he's looking at the recipe every day of his life, too. He just does, man. He's sharp enough to follow guys at his position that are doing it at a high level who have been doing it longer than him, and I think that positions him more than anything to produce what it is you're looking at.

Q. Does fields seem to be getting more comfortable with each passing game?

MIKE TOMLIN: I'll let him speak to that, but he does from my perspective.

Q. You called him a "steady Eddie." What have you

seen from him in the way that he's grown throughout these three games?

MIKE TOMLIN: I'd be making something up. Growth through three weeks in a stretch. We're doing what we have to do to win.

Q. You spoke about the fight and even with your defense. Your thoughts on how they responded to Dobbins and Edwards?

MIKE TOMLIN: We'd better respond that way. There's a nakedness in this business at this level. There's nowhere to hide. When you've got a challenge like that walking in your venue, you'd better fight. We're the No. 1 rusher and rushing team coming into our building, and so let's be real clear; they've got to fight. They don't have a choice.

Q. How do you think Broderick Jones responded to getting back in?

MIKE TOMLIN: As I mentioned, at the early portions of the week, I expected him to respond positively and appropriately, and he did.

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