

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Arthur Smith

Weekday Press Conference



ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, that was definitely our mindset like I said at times. We tried to and that's why you just put your head down and keep working.

Q. What's the expectation for success on the down the field shots? Were you happy with half of them?

ARTHUR SMITH: I mean, a lot of it I know -- you know, some people talk about 50/50 balls or whatever. I mean, obviously the expectation is to make the play. Certainly matchups you're not going to make every one of them, and just because it doesn't work, to me that shouldn't discourage you from trying it and keep working through it, and that's kind of what we been doing.

Q. I know that MVS and Thielen didn't have a lot of catches or targets. What kind of difference did you see in the offense having them on the field?

ARTHUR SMITH: Both those guys have played a lot of significant snaps in the league. Adam got here last week and I thought he did a good job. He's a great veteran and I know the term gets thrown around a lot, but a real pro. Certainly Adam is.

I think those guys, especially in a game like that, you know, really helped. Just some of the stuff -- sometimes I look at it more about just because you don't -- ball doesn't find you doesn't mean you weren't targeted, and a lot of times you evaluate the impact people have without the ball in their hands.

Both those guys did a good job spacing, just their knowledge. I mean, that was a huge game for us. Those guys did a nice job.

Q. What would you have liked to have done better in the fourth quarter to stay on the field longer so to narrow the margin of the snap counts between the two offenses?

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, I think in anything there is ebbs

and flows. Some of them they made a play. I mean, we didn't convert, so obviously we stayed aggressive. That was the risk. The one that got tipped back to Aaron, which put him in I think the third oldest player to catch a pass in the NFL behind George Blanda and Jerry Rice. Could be broken by Philip Rivers.

No, I mean, that one, we stayed aggressive. That's the risk/reward. We had a shot; liked the look; they, made a play they tipped the ball. Thankfully, you know, we got it back. That put us behind the sticks. They made a couple plays.

There is obviously things we got to clean up and do better. I mean, that's the way the games go. You like to play four quarters clean and be in four-minute football, up three possessions, but that wasn't the reality of that game. There is always stuff we got to work on. We got to be good in four-minute.

Q. ...for example, aggressive when he took the shot with Calvin on the third down in the third quarter. Is that something that still be willing to do...

ARTHUR SMITH: We tried it all the time. Just depends on the coverage. They played more mature and aggressive and they came up and pressed them. I know he had the matchup and he won it, and obviously Aaron saw it and made the throw.

Lot of times you may call things like that, goes back to the question on the first play of the game. You better have answers if they go into cover two or try to cover you or try to double you any kind of bracket.

Obviously they can certainly pressure you, try to make the ball come out quick, which they did on the one we hit Jaylen on that third down.

That's the name of the game. I mean, again, you're just playing percentages. Guys are smart in this league. We change things up, defensive coordinators change things up. Obviously adjustments are made in the game.

You got to have options on the play. When you get the matchups, take advantage of it, the ones that you want, if

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you get the right looks.

That certainly happened on Sunday. Be a different story Monday night. We'll put in things to try to take advantage what was they do. They'll have a plan. But certainly it helps open things up when you can make those explosive plays.

Q. There were players that mentioned the practice last week was better and led to what we saw. What did you see from practice last week?

ARTHUR SMITH: I mean, I think you need to have that urgency every day, but I think maybe sometimes I've said this before, is when you have a little adversity, can bring out best the you if you handle it right.

And that's the thing about life or any business, especially when you're in a high-performance, high-pressure job like the NFL. You need to have that urgency whether you win or lose. That's the consistency you're striving for.

That's true in life or any industry. Certainly I thought obviously huge game for both teams. Still got a quarter of football left to play and we got to flip the script, improve, and put the work in for Miami.

Q. Talking about consistency, there had been some games where you really leaned on the running game; other times it's not really been there. What do you feel like the missing piece is in terms of consistency on the ground?

ARTHUR SMITH: Again, just some of it varies from week to week. Obviously love to be balanced every week. You know, I don't -- I didn't necessarily go in the game -- this isn't an excuse. There are some things we could have done a little bit better in the run game, but that was just the mindset going in. Come hell or high water we were going to try to push them down the field and throw it.

So I didn't call very many runs. We had some situational ones we converted. Having said that, we got to be cleaner. We had a couple runs that were okay. But that's the challenge week to week, how they're playing, how you want to attack them. But I certainly -- I got a little pass happy.

Q. Two games you guys rushed for the fewest yards you won; the two games you rushed for the most you lost.

ARTHUR SMITH: I know.

Q. Doesn't happen very often.

ARTHUR SMITH: No. I don't think I've ever been accused of not running it enough, so maybe you evolve.

Q. At the same time, it's unusual for teams to play former players. Minkah, you know, what kind of challenge -- how do you see them using him and is it challenging? Because that's a guy that's a smart player, knows obviously what you guys do pretty well, too.

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, and we've changed a lot. Minkah was with us in the offseason. I got a lot of respect for Minkah. You know, talk about solid guy that brings it every day and you can tell the impact he's had and things they've asked him to do.

Whether it's playing in the slot on third down, obviously safety stuff, he does a lot of things for them. Smart player. Puts a lot of time in. Studies. You know, that was some of the conversations. Just my time with Minkah and just watching him from afar, he'll be a challenge.

There are a lot of great players every Sunday. That's the beauty of the NFL.

Q. Said something to the effect of come hell or high water, push it. Mike said after the game we woke up an aggressive posture. Especially against that team, that's usually not the mindset against that team. Was it a matchup thing or was it, we've been struggling offensively or down the field to fix that or what was...

ARTHUR SMITH: I think we tried every week. That's the thing. You got to change it up. You don't just print the same game plan out. You need to evolve things that you think are going to be good for us.

Sometimes I mean, you don't want to give them the game they think they're going to get. Did the same thing when we went to Ireland. You try to do that every week. Sometimes it works better than others. But the last thing -- you don't want to be -- die on the same hill and keep repeating the same mistakes.

Some things we been working on this worked at times that we continue to do lean into; there are other things we needed to change up. That would be a week to week thing. Just kind of where we were, what we thought gave us the best chance to come out and get going.

You know, thankfully we hit them early and kind of gave us a little bit of a spark.

Q. How do you think Dylan Cook did, and have you

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ever dealt with going through now four offensive left tackles in the season?

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, absolutely. It happened in 2020 in Tennessee. We played with Dennis Kelly on one leg. Dennis couldn't practice. He would come like the old war horse, come out there on Friday. I don't think he took a live rep from week four.

Lost Conklin to free agency.

LaJuan got hurt early in the season. Ty Sambrailo went down. We played with David Quessenberry. Those guys did a hell of a job. It's just the nature of the business. Everybody deals with something. Those guys always got to be ready.

Dylan did a great job. His first NFL snap was a critical third down and one Calvin caught. Credit to Dylan. Thought he did a nice job. And same thing, Darnell goes out, a lot of logistics. That's why you have a contingency plan. Guys play different roles. Got out of a few things.

You never know what's going to happen on Sunday. That's why you have to have contingency plans and backup and guys -- and work the bottom of the roster.

Q. When Darnell went out, what did that do as of the playcalling. ...when it comes to the tight end position and he's been a big contributor in the run.

ARTHUR SMITH: Sure. There are certain things that those guys have to know multiple roles. Pat and Jonnu, those guys are pros, veterans. You some things around. There is a couple things that you're not going to call that were maybe specific to one player, but that's the logistics of it.

Maybe we spent a play or two and then Jonnu and Pat and you're kind of mixing and matching, but that's why you got to rep guys throughout the week and throughout the season.

Yeah, I mean, Darnell's role has increased as the year has gone on, and that's stuff that happens in the game. Game goes on and those guys have to be ready to go.

Q. The last time you guys were at Acrisure Stadium there were calls for Mike to be fired; the crowd had a lot of unrest. You kind of have the unique position having been a head coach. How did you see Mike respond to that in the last week? How much did you have to compartmentalize that outside noise as a head coach when you go about your day to day?

ARTHUR SMITH: Yeah, I mean, look, I was asked something similar last week. All of us, we're professionals. You just put your head down and work. Absolutely I've always been appreciative of Mike from afar, and Mike is the same guy every day. So I love working for him.

You know, just the biggest key week to week, whatever is going on, whether they are praising because you won a couple in a row -- look at Miami's season. I mean, they're playing with some of the best football right now. It's such a long season. Feels like four lifetimes in a season.

It's rare when you go through the season and you get hot and you're 15-2 or whatever. But there are ebbs and flows and you got to put your head down and work.

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