

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Aaron Rodgers

Postgame Press Conference



Texans 30, Steelers 6

Q. Did you feel like the momentum changed after that D.K. drop there?

AARON RODGERS: I don't feel like we ever got the momentum on our side, honestly. We had a lot of chances. Defense played really good in the first half. They've got a good defense. But we had a lot of opportunities. A lot of opportunities. Didn't make the most out of hardly any of them.

Q. What made 3rd down such a challenge?

AARON RODGERS: Well, we had a lot of 3rd and 10 pluses to start. Those are low-percentage conversions. I think 1st and 2nd down wasn't very good. That's why 3rd down was difficult.

Q. I think it was the last drive of the third quarter, Anderson and Hunter combined for like two tackles. What changed from that point on? Was it just a matter of becoming one-dimensional, or what was it that allowed them to get to that point?

AARON RODGERS: I'm going to have to look at the tape, but they're good players. At some point they're going to get a chance when you're in a lot of one-dimensional passing. I felt like we had slide and chipped to at least one of them throughout most of the game, but they're both All-Pro caliber players.

Q. You mentioned those missed opportunities and not feeling like you got in a rhythm. Did it feel like those snowballed there in the second half and kept you from finding your footing?

AARON RODGERS: Not about that. I feel like every play is unique to itself. We had some opportunities, and either drops or pressure or just total MAs or not the right throw. We had a lot of chances. We had plays set up with missed assignments. We had opportunities to take shots with not

enough time. We just didn't make the most of any of the little opportunities.

Against a good defense like this, you're not going to get many opportunities, and when you get them, you've got to make the most of them.

Q. With how good they are defensively and how they played versus what you're saying about the plays that were there to be made --

AARON RODGERS: There were a lot of plays there to be made for sure. They've got a good defense, no doubt about it. But we had them on our home field, on our grass and had opportunities, especially in the first half, to put a lot of points on the board and make it easier for our defense that was playing really good.

Q. It was another game where Pat Freiermuth didn't really get targeted until later in the game. Were they doing a lot to take him away, or what's gone into not being able to get him the ball as much when you guys need big plays?

AARON RODGERS: Yeah, I don't know. I don't have a good answer for that.

Q. Mason Rudolph went out there for the last series. Was that a decision you made to come out of the game? What went into that?

AARON RODGERS: It was 30-6.

Q. Does that game affect your decision for what to do next year in any way?

AARON RODGERS: No. I mean, I'm not going to make any emotional decisions. I'm disappointed. Obviously it was such a fun year. A lot of adversity but a lot of fun. Been a great year overall in my life the last year, and this is a really good part of that, coming here and being part of this team, so it's disappointing to be sitting here with the season over.

Q. If you play again, do you want it to be here?



AARON RODGERS: I'm not going to talk about that.

Q. How do you approach what you decide to do next?

AARON RODGERS: You just get away and then have the right conversations.

Q. Did you enter tonight thinking it could be your final game?

AARON RODGERS: I've answered this before: Every game could be my final game.

Q. Your team has talked about how much they've appreciated playing with you and the impact you've had on the city in just one year. What does that mean to you to just in one year make such a positive impact for an organization that has as much history and tradition as the Steelers?

AARON RODGERS: I was fortunate to play in an incredible football city for 18 years, and I never took it for granted. I enjoyed that time there. This has been a really beautiful back end to that first 18, to be able to be here for a year. This is a special place. You've got tradition, got excellence, got all-time greats. You just look around the stadium tonight, just to see the fans. There wasn't a big splattering of Texans fans, and there's a lot to be said for that. There's only a few really places in the league that have the tradition and the town and the organization, and I'm thankful that I played for two of them.

Q. Throughout the season when practices were on and weren't on, what did you feel about you guys' preparation for this game, just day in and day out getting ready for this defense?

AARON RODGERS: Yeah, I thought it was good. I thought the preparation was good. That's why I was so surprised at some of the mental errors that happened tonight.

Q. What do you think will resonate with you most from the season?

AARON RODGERS: Oh, I mean, there's so many fun moments from the year, starting going back to Latrobe and the beauty in that opportunity, to come together as a team. We faced a lot of adversity.

But there's a lot of special moments that I'll think back on. Right now it's just disappointment. But thankful to put the colors on and run out of the tunnel and be a part of this organization.

Q. You've played with a lot of centers in this league, too. Just talk about your rapport with Zach Frazier, what that was like, and especially with him being such a young player in the league, what you've seen out of him this season.

AARON RODGERS: I don't think there's a better center in the league. I watched it every single week. We've obviously got a good D-line, but 54 is as consistent as they come in the league. He's got a bright future. He's a phenomenal player. He's got a real steady way about him. To go the whole season and not have any snap issues, to not have to do a whole lot back there protection-wise when I've done that most of my career, he is an exceptional player. He's got a really bright future in the league. If the team was smart, they'd slap a deal on him pretty quickly because he's going to be 10 plus years in the league and one of the best to do it, in my opinion. That's his trajectory. He's got a great running mate. The right side, that's got to excite Steeler fans when you've got three young guys at center, right guard, right tackle who have played so well all season. That's pretty exciting.

But Zach is a special player, and I'm thankful to play with him.

Q. As you think about your decision, do you think this team is set up for a bright future, has a foundation for a bright future?

AARON RODGERS: I think so. I think you've got a lot of the pieces in place, signing D.K. obviously for five years. Now, there's some moving pieces because there's been some mercenaries. But I think that there's a good combination of young guys who are ascending, and there's some big decisions to be made. Our team MVP was Kenny Gainwell; he's a free agent and severely underpaid for his performance and what he adds to a team.

But you've got a good core. You've got to start with the offensive and defensive lines, and obviously T.J. is under contract for a while, and Herbig came on and K.B. had a nice season for us and YA has got a bright future, I think.

Then the offensive line I already talked about. You've got three center, right guard, right tackle. As long as Isaac wants to play, he plays at a high level. Obviously Broderick got hurt and gave opportunity for Dylan who obviously showed he can play in the NFL.

I think you've got good pieces in place on the O- and D-line, and obviously every year is different. You've got to figure out who's coming back, who's not, but I think this team is always going to be competitive, and there's some pieces in place to have a chance to be competitive for a

long time.

Q. After a 17-game season, how did you feel physically coming into the game?

AARON RODGERS: Yeah, I feel good. I feel good. I think that's the one thing that was the most thankful for other than the wrist that bothered me the last few weeks of the season, the last half, I guess. I felt pretty healthy all season, so I'm thankful for that.

Q. You've praised Mike this season for his coaching job and how he's prepared you guys. When someone points to this guy's ninth straight season without a playoff win, what do you think he does or doesn't do that goes unseen, whether appreciated or otherwise?

AARON RODGERS: I mean, this league has changed a lot in my 21 years. You know, when you hear conversation about the Mike Tomlins of the world, Matt LaFleurs of the world, those are just two that I've played for.

When I first got in the league, there wouldn't be conversation about whether those guys were on the hot seat. But the way that the league is covered now and the way that there's snap decisions and the validity given to the Twitter experts and all the experts on TV now who make it seem like they know what the hell they're talking about, to me that's an absolute joke. For either of those two guys to be on the hot seat is really apropos of where we're at as a society and as a league because obviously Matt has done a lot of great things in Green Bay, and we had a lot of success. Mike T. has had more success than damn near anybody in the league for the last 19, 20 years.

More than that, though, when you have the right guy and the culture is right, you don't think about making a change. But there's a lot of pressure that comes from the outside, and obviously that sways decisions from time to time. But that's not how I would do things and not how the league used to be.

Q. What did you learn from being with Mike for a season about him?

AARON RODGERS: I mean, I've answered that a number of times. I've talked extensively about how I feel about Mike. And I just did in that f---ing answer, so thanks.

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