

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA



T.J. Watt

Postgame Press Conference

Texans 30, Steelers 6

Q. T.J., from a run game point of view, what were you expecting coming in, and what, if anything, took you by surprise in their scheme or execution?

T.J. WATT: I think it was just execution. A lot of kickass, man. You've got to give them a lot of credit. They played good ball tonight. They were able to move the ball. We weren't able to stop them in critical downs where it was crucial. Same story.

I mean, you guys saw what happened.

Q. They had a lot of 3rd down success, but it was also a lot of 3rd and shorts. Do you say, oh, we have to get off the field, but how do you do better to keep them out of 3rd and 1?

T.J. WATT: We talked all week about not letting them stay on schedule. Obviously that wasn't accomplished tonight. Yeah, not being able to get them one-dimensional like we talk about each and every week, that's kind of the story of the season is not being able to stop the run in critical moments in big-time games.

We talk about playoff football, especially in cold weather, it's going to be all about the run game and establishing the run. When you can't do that, it's a butt-kicking.

Q. T.J., how much did missed opportunities kind of weigh as this game went on for you guys?

T.J. WATT: I mean, a lot of -- I mean, this is still fresh, man. It's extremely frustrating. Extremely frustrating.

Q. You guys held them to 10 points going into the first part of the fourth quarter, forced three turnovers. What's going through your minds as the offense hasn't been able to play complementary football?

T.J. WATT: Just try to keep doing our part, try to find ways

to swipe at the football, trying to stop them. That 3rd and 11 hurt, 3rd and 15, whatever it was, hurt bad. Felt like we were playing hard football.

I was really proud of the way that we were playing. We were playing hard football, and we just couldn't get off the field when we needed to, and that's why it hurts.

Q. You're the elder statesman on this defense. A lot of younger first-year guys made big plays tonight. How rewarding was it for you to see some of the younger guys stepping up in a big playoff game and making big plays for your defense?

T.J. WATT: It's huge. Really excited for those guys and their development. There's a lot of hard work that goes into it behind the scenes before those big plays are made, and really proud of those guys and how they've continued to grow throughout the year, and excited for them next year.

Q. What needs to change about this team to have success in the postseason?

T.J. WATT: I haven't had the answer for a long time, so don't ask me.

Q. From a personal standpoint, you had some -- battling through the injury late in the season, then you come back, you're part of a turnover tonight, you were on the field when you won the division. What has this season in a nutshell been like for you, overcoming that adversity?

T.J. WATT: Man, I don't care about the adversity that I went through, man. This is sitting up here again, same story.

Q. T.J., what are your thoughts on the Mike Tomlin noise as far as there's a certain segment of the fan base that would prefer to see him out?

T.J. WATT: I haven't heard much of it, honestly.

Q. Did you feel 100 percent back?



T.J. WATT: I felt good.

Q. T.J., Aaron said he felt like practices were strong coming into this game. How did you feel about the practice and the energy that you guys were having coming into this game and the things you were preparing for?

T.J. WATT: I felt great. Confidence was great. Execution in practice was great. Meetings were great. Camaraderie was great. Thought it was going to be a different story.

Q. Next year will be year 10 for you. Do you still do the same -- as your off-season evolved up to this point in your career, will you do anything different in terms of how you train or how you prepare?

T.J. WATT: Yeah, it's always evolving. Going to have to take a hard look in the mirror, continue to evolve and do things differently. But going to take this one in, man. This sucks.

Q. T.J., nine straight years for you, Mike and Cam not winning a playoff game. Is there a common link that you can draw to right now, or is that something that you have to wait for --

T.J. WATT: No clue.

Q. Do you feel like you guys are trending upward with the young players, maybe add a few more pieces and you guys can make the next step?

T.J. WATT: Not enough right now.

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