

Jacksonville Jaguars Media Conference

Saturday, August 20, 2022

Jacksonville, Florida, USA

Coach Doug Pederson

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 16, Jaguars 15

Q. How did you feel about your starting defense tonight and their play?

DOUG PEDERSON: Other than the two-minute drive at the end of the half, I thought they played well. I don't have the stat book in front of me, but I think someone told me it was maybe 1.2 yards for per attempt in the running game. I really felt like they got after them early and often. Two-minute drive, though, something that we've got to get better at.

Q. You guys had a lot of really good looks on 3rd down offensively. Trevor missed a couple throws early on, but you still were four of your first six. How did you feel like it went for you on 3rd down?

DOUG PEDERSON: Yeah, that was something we talked about this week and wanted to do better in is the 3rd down scenarios, and I felt like the first unit was able to do that tonight.

We still missed. We still missed some opportunities, which again, we've got a little time here to learn from and correct, and as we finish up camp here in a week or so.

Q. Those are obviously long kicks but how do you evaluate Santoso tonight?

DOUG PEDERSON: Yeah, obviously not good enough. We had a chance to win the game, had a chance to start the game 3-0, and it's disappointing. But I know he'll battle back this week and try to correct it.

Q. Is everything all right with Shaq Griffin?

DOUG PEDERSON: Yeah, he just had a little -- I think some back tightness this morning when he woke up, so we tried to get him loose, and again, the nature of where we are in camp and stuff, you just don't want to push guys like that and risk further injury.

Q. For a second consecutive week, your starters come out with a lead. How hard is it to separate that from the reserves and a lot of guys who aren't going to make the team but you end up losing, considering where this club was a year ago? You talked so much about healing, I imagine winning a game would have meant something even though it was the preseason.

DOUG PEDERSON: Yeah, and that's a fine line, obviously. There's still a lot of -- I think there's a lot of good, positive takeaways from tonight with the starters and feel good there. The young guys are going to learn. There were some good things that they did. But obviously sort of the obvious things are we can't turn the ball over in the red zone. We got points there again potentially. We've got to tackle better.

Things of that nature in the second half, but I think if you look at where we are as starters, I think we're right on track to where we need to be and where we want to be, and that gives us a lot of hope as we head into the regular season.

Q. Certainly you need to look at the film, but could you get an idea of Ben Bartch tonight at left guard, and was there any separation for either one of the two right tackles?

DOUG PEDERSON: I think it's going to be early until we watch the film and really chop it up in the morning and really see. But I thought overall pretty good. It was a good test, too. T.J. is out there, T.J. Watt is out there playing the first couple series, and it was good for our tackles to play against him and get some work in that way. We'll evaluate the film in the morning and probably have a better determination on that.

Q. You didn't finish with touchdowns offensively, but drove in the first half with the starting unit. How do you assess that?

DOUG PEDERSON: Yeah, not good enough. We've got to finish drives with scores. That's something we talk about and work on quite a bit with the red zone, and we've just got to keep working. The offense understands that one,

we've got to run the football in the red zone, number one, and we tried to do that tonight, and that wasn't good enough. We've just got to keep plugging away and look at it and get better and make sure we get the right guys in there and get ready here in a couple weeks.

Q. Chad Muma starting the night almost making that interception on the sideline and then not being able to make the tackle on the touchdown pass, how do you evaluate your inside line backing room especially with Devin missing most of training camp? Are you comfortable with Shaq Quarterman and Chad Muma in that kind of interior rotating role?

DOUG PEDERSON: Right now obviously with Devin not being out there, it definitely kind of weakens the core because both Chad and Shaq are also special teams players and they're getting a lot of double work out there, and it can play a little bit into the fatigue factor, especially in the second half of football games. These guys have done well. They've played well.

The more time they get on the field, the better they're going to become. These are valuable reps for them, even in Devin's absence right now. But at some point we've got to get Devin back on the field, too, and really help that room out.

Q. Coach, this month is the league's play initiative and a lot of prep athletes were able to come to games through the first two preseason games. Obviously you guys are at Episcopal. What does it mean to be able to see some of those younger guys see you guys up close and have that experience?

DOUG PEDERSON: Yeah, our hats off to Episcopal for allowing us to come out there for camp and be a part of their school for the last four weeks or so. And then to have -- their team came out to practice one day, and to see all the youth that are involved, I just think it's encouraging to see at the youth level, and really for them to be a part of our guys and for us to kind of rub shoulders with them and see what it's all about. Some of these young kids have hopes and dreams to one day be on this stage, and to see our guys do it and what they go through I think can be motivating to them to work hard at it.

Q. What are you seeing out of Dawuane Smoot and Arden Key?

DOUG PEDERSON: Really good things, honestly. Two players that are I think dynamic pass rushers. Smoot is a little different. He's more of a bull type guy. He's physical and strong. Arden is quick and slithery and can bend. I think both of them have unique skills that obviously we can

exploit defensively for us, and I think they're both having a really good camp right now.

Q. Could you just talk a little bit about not being able to finish some of those first-half scoring drives, 1st and 10 at the 12, Trevor had a couple 3rd down throws to Christian where it was there, just in one instance the ball was too high?

DOUG PEDERSON: Yeah, I made a conscious effort as a play caller when we did get to the red zone tonight that we were going to focus a little bit on the run game. We kind of pride ourselves on that, being able to run the football in the red zone. We've got to do a little bit better there. In Trevor's case, we've just got to get him to calm down early in the football game and settle in. There were some throws that were missed that I know he would want back, and we've seen him make those throws in practice, so we know he's capable of doing it. It's just a matter of just kind of taking a deep breath as he starts the game and settle in.

But those are all things that we continue to work on. We've got a couple weeks left here in camp, and we'll try to get better.

Q. In terms of the play calling in the red zone, was it a little more, I guess, less vanilla than it was last week against Cleveland, or was it more just a lack of execution this week from your guys?

DOUG PEDERSON: It's a little of both. Again, when you're in preseason mode, you don't necessarily scheme your opponent because they're playing some guys and we're playing some guys. You just want to see execution.

Where we missed was on that part of it, just execution. Give credit to Pittsburgh. They made some plays down there and got some stops that led to one field goal for us. Obviously should have had the second one or the first one, I guess, but those are all areas that we're going to take a look at this tape and make the corrections.

Q. Foley went down early in the game. Is there any update on him?

DOUG PEDERSON: Not at this time. I'm going to wait until the guys come in in the morning, get a full medical, and we'll see where he's at. Last word I got was he was okay. He wanted to go back in the football game, but we just said pump the brakes and we'll get him healthy. I'll have a better answer for you either tomorrow or the next day.

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