

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Baker Mayfield

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Buccaneers 9, Panthers 0

Q. You didn't get in the end zone, but how tough was that out there for your offense and especially for you because on top of the (indiscernible) you hurt the ankle?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, just a tough battle. For starters, I can't say enough about our defense. Once again, Antoine Winfield Jr. showed up when we needed him. He's a stud. We're lucky to have him. A lot of guys stepped up and made a lot of big plays on defense.

Yeah, offensively we ran the ball when we needed to. It wasn't a pretty win by any means, but there's a lot of room for improvement, and now we're in the playoffs. We're division champs. Let's hit the reset button and see who we play and go from there.

Q. For you personally, coming here, fourth team in (indiscernible) what does this accomplishment mean for you personally?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Just handling adversity in the right way. But I can't say enough about everybody that I've been surrounded with in our organization. Just helping me be comfortable in the situation that we're in and improving as we go, learning as we go.

Just been through a lot, but got a lot of help along the way.

Q. Is it some personal redemption? I know you never complained when you were here and we covered you, but some personal redemption to come back here and win a division title here on this field?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah. This room we're standing in right now was kind of where I found out that I wasn't going to be a part of the team anymore, so yeah, there's a lot of things that bring me back here.

That's what happens when you go to a team within the division. You have memories of playing them or playing

with them.

But I keep it about us. Like I said, I can't say enough about this team, the stuff we've been through this year, and to handle it correctly and find a way to win five of six in the end, to get in the playoffs and win the division.

Q. Offense was really on a roll up until last week, kind of struggled this week. Can you talk a little bit about what you feel needs to change in order to get back on that roll?

BAKER MAYFIELD: I've got to be better. They ran a lot of just two-shell safety defense. There was some stuff that was open underneath. I've got to be better in that facet. The last two games were against divisional opponents that know us pretty well that were very physical up front. When it comes down to those rivalry games per se, you've got to do the little details right because you kind of throw that out the window and just try and beat them physically, but it just comes down to executing correctly.

Q. Do you feel like you're close with the one with Mike, that it's right there?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, really close. If it wasn't going that direction on the field, I think he would have been one that dropped it right in. But that on me a little bit. Just a few things that we didn't hit today. I've got to be better. But we're in the playoffs now, so we'll fix it.

Q. How much injury-wise going into next week --

BAKER MAYFIELD: We'll see as it goes, but yeah, be happy to have a week of rest to heal up a little bit and see who we're playing.

Q. Multiple times this year the running game has really come through late in order to help you guys close the game out. Can you talk just a little bit about Rashad and the offensive line and how they were able to kind of take over late in games, also helped you with some fourth quarter comebacks?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, I mean, today specifically, I



think everybody on the field new and in the stadium knew we were going to try and run the ball to try to run the clock out, and our guys executed, and they had so many guys in the box. They blocked when we needed to and Rachaad made the rest of them miss, so it speaks volumes to the execution level in critical moments in the run game, and they did a great job.

Q. You yourself, I think there was a crucial 3rd and 6 late in the game where you scrambled and ended up getting a 1st down. Can you talk a little bit about that play and what was going through your mind?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah. Just kind of a simple play for us, a base play. I'm not sure where the pressure came from, but I was reading, possibly going to put it on Cade Otton in the slot and wound up scrambling for it, and there was just a lane to get through, and just needed it at that point by any means necessary, needed a couple big-time 3rd down conversions late in the game, and between that one and obviously the one with Chris, he's so consistent, so trustworthy, another guy that we're lucky to have.

Q. They counted your team out before you even got here. You've been counted out. Then when you lost the win streak there -- they'll count you out again in the playoffs. What does it say about this team that doesn't let anybody dissuade them?

BAKER MAYFIELD: We have a locker room full of guys that are comfortable being counted out. That's when we're most comfortable. Yeah, just all we wanted was a chance to get in, and now we're here, and we've got to handle it the right way.

Q. Part of your offense is your kicking game. Can you talk a little bit about Chase McLaughlin and what he's meant to this team this year?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Chase is a stud. I had the opportunity to play with him in Cleveland. He was great there, too. We're lucky to have him.

So consistent for us, and obviously knowing that going with the wind a couple times there he was going to have a little bit more leg room to give, but he's just so consistent, and he's even keel at all times. Another guy we're lucky to have.

Q. What bothered you more today, the ribs or the ankle? We saw you breathing over there, trying to take some deep breaths. What was it like to get through this day?

BAKER MAYFIELD: A little bit all over. But I'll handle it

and move on.

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