

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Kirk Cousins

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Falcons 38, Panthers 20

KIRK COUSINS: Great to get a win on the road. They are always hard fought and fun to pull away in the last couple minutes but for most of the game it was tight. I thought that A.J.'s interception and then the offense kind of playing complementary football, being able to go down and get a touchdown off of the turnover was a big moment and change in the game.

You know, pleased with the way we ran the football. I thought Zach did a great job of staying with that and committing it to especially in the second half.

He asked me in the second half what I liked. I said like running the football. I just felt like when you get four to six yards a pop it's hard to try other things when you can do that. I thought both Tyler and Bijan ran really hard and a couple runs by Tyler where that second effort was really impressive. They were also going a great job of pass protection and catching the ball in the pass game. They continue to show up for us as complete players and you know I thought we were pretty efficient in the pass game.

I thought we started a little slow with the first two incompletions, and then from there kind of were able to build. Defense for the Panthers did a good job of keeping a roof on everything. Had a hard time getting behind them so we had to find some zones underneath and not beat ourselves and be strong on touchdown. We were better on touchdown. A lot of positives there and now we've got to build on it and keep trying to stack some wins. But take any questions you have.

Q. Can you discuss how Pitts got up on the 52-yarder?

KIRK COUSINS: I think they dropped him. I think it was a busted coverage. I think they were both thinking they had to guard Mooney in the flat and dropped him. I think that's kind of what happened.

Q. Why did you say that you like running the football

in that moment? What were you seeing even in that first half?

KIRK COUSINS: I think just being able to, like the first play of the game we got like six yards and a run and when you're doing that, it's just kind of let's do it until they can stop it. Zach does a good job of staying pretty aggressive. But for me, you know, when you run the football well, let's run the football.

I believe that a lot of times, sometimes, a lot of times, you throw to score and you run to win and to be able to run the football, makes a difference.

Q. Last week, 500 yards passing and this week 200 rushing, the versatility there, what do you like about that?

KIRK COUSINS: It's the same thing as I said last week after the game is that you execute the game that's called. You know, Zach called a game today to not throw for 500 yards, and you play the game that's called. I thought that's what we did today, and that's why the run game was productive. And I think when you get to playoff games, when you get to tough environments on the road, the ability to run the football takes a lot of pressure off your pass game and all that you have to do there. The more we can be versatile as an offense, we can be tough to defensive end.

Q. When Bijan and Tyler have games like they did today, how effective can you guys be on offense?

KIRK COUSINS: Well if you're running the football well, it certainly should help. It should kind of give you third and manageable, third and shorts. It should help your play-action game. It should hopefully get some single high looks. Kind of all starts for everybody there in the NFL. If you can run the football well it opens up a lot of doors for the rest of your team.

Q. Losing weeks one and two, you received a lot of criticism from people and now you've won three straight, top of the division, what do you say though those guys who were doubting you early on in the



season?

KIRK COUSINS: Next week we'll be criticized. That's pro football, right. You're only as good as your last game, and criticism is a part of the business. You know, this is what you sign up for. Coach Belichick always said ignore the noise and go about your business. But you understand that you're only as good as your last game, really is your next game so you have to go out and prove it again.

Q. Talking about Kyle, you've been able to adjust as far as how the game is going and take whatever the team is giving you. Does that speak to your growth?

KIRK COUSINS: I think defense today did a good job of -- Panthers did a good job of preventing explosives. Tried to get behind them and had a hard time doing that. I think the key there is when you're going to check it down or when you're working underneath, you can't beat yourself. You can't have penalties. You can't have these long third downs. You can't have negative plays. So I thought the combination of running the football well but then also avoiding penalties and avoiding negative plays I thought was positive, and you know, we'll just keep finding building as an offense in the right direction and see where it takes us.

Q. You spoke last week about how frustrating it is to you for teams to dwell on past results whether they be good or bad. How impressed are you with the team in terms of getting over the emotional win?

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah, I had a little bit of attention all week long feeling like there were too many pats on the back from Thursday night and then you go on the road in the NFL, and I've seen this happen before, where you just aren't the same.

After the three-and-out, coming off the field to start the game, I was like -- I was gritting my teeth a little bit. Proud of the way we just playing and were able to pull away and get a road win. Because there is that emotional factor that you have to overcome.

Q. I know you're not keeping track of, this first time in a while that Drake, Bijan and Kyle were awe involved. Is that the ideal, that diversity in spreading it out or is it just week-to-week?

KIRK COUSINS: I think it's a little bit of both. I think it's a week-to-week league. It could be one game is off-balance and other games it's balanced. With only 30 attempts and with the way we run the football, you know it was probably going to be hard to really get those guys going in the pass game. I think ideally we would love to see kind of a good

balance across the board. But we're not going to do that and sacrifice being the most explosive offense we can be.

Q. Are you finding your identity as a team?

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah, I think every week, we're starting to learn one another better, starting to understand what Zach wants us to look like and how we can execute it better. I think the rest of the league would say that, too, though.

So you know, I think we are growing, not just as an offense but as a team and even what Coach Raheem wants it to look like.

You know, we'll just kind of keep trying to move in that direction. And we had a good week of practice. We have to keep having great practice habits and have great conversations post practice, Wednesdays are, Thursday, Friday, that's kind of where it all starts to help you win on Sunday.

Q. Your offensive line today, how have you seen them progress to this point in the season so far?

KIRK COUSINS: Yeah, zero sacks today was great. I talked last week about how having so many drop backs, almost 60-drop packs the previous weeks, they handled it really well and I think today again of the same way. Pass rush in the NFL is difficult. It's the real deal. They always have their hands full, and you know, it makes a major difference when they can step up and give us time.

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