

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Sunday, December 1, 2024
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

QB Baker Mayfield

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Tampa Bay Buccaneers 26, Carolina Panthers 23

BAKER MAYFIELD: That was an interesting one.

Q. The nasty foot injury. I'm sure you felt it and we saw it on replay. Any doubt you'll be able to come back?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Um, honestly, it scared the daylights out of me. I have seen some people pop their Achilles before and they said it feels like you get clefted in the back. Obviously not knowing what exactly happened, that's what I thought it did. It was a little painful, but, yeah, got taped up again and go back out there. Now I'm the idiot that went in on a third and one. Took Kyle Trask out, and threw a pick right to number 25's chest but we found a way to win. It's just being on the right side of things in the end there is good for us. You know --

Q. Just taping it up and getting back out there.

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, but that doesn't affect the read that I made, but for our guys, you know, we're sloppy at first, all over, offensively, too many penalties, mental errors, things like that, but to find a way to push it into overtime and get the win is big-time for us.

Q. You got rolled up on but was it twisted or was it more of just bent into an unnatural position?

BAKER MAYFIELD: I honestly don't know. They just told me on the film I got clefted on the Achilles or stepped on, I'm not sure.

Q. Saw you and Bryce embrace after the game. How impressed were you with what you saw from him today?

BAKER MAYFIELD: I wasn't say impressed, I'm just proud of him. You know, the ups and downs of the league, the things that you go through, speaking from my own personal experience, I'm proud of him. This guy has the potential to do anything he wants to do, and this guy has got to get that

confidence back. I think you can see it growing each and every day and knowing the staff that he's with, I know that's a big part of what they do within the building.

Q. Bake you are, can you talk a little bit about Mike's touchdown grab and just -- (chuckle). He just seems to do these incredible things on a weekly basis.

BAKER MAYFIELD: Mike's a grown-ass man. That's a -- I don't know how he caught that ball, but he palmed it. Little disrespectful, honestly, on my pass, the way he handled it, but just giving that guy opportunities to catch the ball in one-on-one situations. He's proven time and time again for 11 years now that he can do it and consistently does it.

Q. He made it look so routine.

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, he did. That's the sick part about it. I couldn't even look him in the eyes for the next five minutes after that.

Q. Jalen made a pretty big catch late in the game there. Can you talk a little bit about his development and your ability to trust him in big moments like that?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, I mean, Jalen's come a long way from the beginning of the year. He's always got the play-making ability. Now it's putting that ability within the mental aspect of the game, being prepared and not hesitating. Being able to put all that stuff into action, and, yeah, he made a great play. Guys match coverage on him in the backer and he loses him inside and goes back out, so it was a great route by him to get open.

Q. To give up that touchdown to Adam Thielen and then immediately respond back, marching down the field to send this thing into overtime, can you speak to the mental fortitude that that took from everybody on your roster?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, this team's tough. I've said it for two years now. I mean, this team's got the mental makeup, the culture is in the right place. Obviously it's not the ideal situation you want to be in, but three time-outs. Under a minute left to go. Let's get down in field goal

range. With know we got a good kicker. Let's trust him, get down there and make it happen and guys made great plays in that situation, you know. Mike had a catch. Shep had a couple big ones there at the end, just people making plays and that's what it's all about.

Q. Were you holding your breath at all when Lavonte went out there for the coin toss?

BAKER MAYFIELD: No. I think we found the recipe for success in overtime is I don't do the coin toss. (Laughter)

Q. Having a good kicker, Chase McLaughlin, well over 90% since joining the Buccs with you last year. Can you talk a little bit about having that kind of consistency and what it means for your offense?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, it's one of those things you never want to take for granted. Not everybody has that situation that, you know, we have a luxury in Chase being able to knock a lot of those field goals down, so just being able to get near the 40-yard-line. It's just impressive to consistently watch how consistent he is and, yeah, we're lucky to have him.

Q. I know that, like, the pre-snap penalties and stuff didn't help, but what were some of the things they were doing on third down and in the red zone that made that more of a challenge than it typically seems to be for you guys.

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, they just did a good job with some of their pressures, hiding it a little bit. Some of them, we knew it was coming, just didn't execute, but then other times they held it for a while and they did a good job.

Q. Was this kind of the most challenge you've felt maybe in terms of not having those escape lanes that you normally do?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, they did a great job in the rush lanes containing and just not being able to step up and go through. There were probably a few definitely early on, there was one that I threw to Trey Palmer stepping up in the pocket. It was behind him. He was going towards our sideline. I could have probably ran for the first down on a third and long, but other than that, yeah, they did a good job in the rush lanes.

Q. Baker, last year you guys started to catch fire in the middle of the season and right now you're back in tie for first place. Do you feel like this team's trending, starting to pick up some momentum heading forwards?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Trending is something that the outside would probably describe, but we believe in this locker room that we control our own destiny and we're going to take it one game at a time, so this was a big one for us. That's what we got to do, one game at a time. If we don't win, none of it matters.

Q. What happened for you guys in the fourth quarter as a offense? Because it seemed like you just got a jolt. I don't know if it's just you needed to go to the blue tent or maybe just Liam dialing up some screens or what, but it just seemed like your offense really just got the jolt it needed.

BAKER MAYFIELD: To be honest, it's just we weren't shooting ourselves in the foot. It was the first time all night we weren't getting penalties and going backwards. So when we're able to execute, I'm very confident in this offense and that's the mentality we have to have. You do the little things right, you do your job one play at a time. Good things are going to happen.

Q. Speaking of the fourth quarter, it looked like the offensive line started to get a little extra umph winning at the point of attack a little bit more late in the game. Can you talk about their efforts and how it was able to help both the run game and the pass game?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, I'll start out by talking about Tristan Wirfs playing through some toughness. Just a little banged up, but played his tail off and then all those guys did. Obviously, Graham struggled a little bit in the beginning, but it's got four quarters for a reason, and plus overtime, so those guys just imposed their will late in the game. Rachaad's long block. You look at Luke Goedeke pulling around the corner and really make the block that, you know, pushes him to the open field. All those guys. When they're on the same page, they're damn good.

Q. Since many kind of consider you the OG when it comes to flag planting -- (Laughter). What was your reaction to a lot of the flag planting we saw yesterday and I guess some of the pushback to that flag planting yesterday?

Q. There were like four, weren't there?

BAKER MAYFIELD: You know, I'll say this... OU-Texas does it every time they play. It's not anything special. You take your L and you move on. Yeah, I'll leave it at that.

Q. You're not the only one who left the game with an injury and came back in, Bucky Irving as well, and he's already been dealing with like a foot injury. What can you say about the way he gritted this one out?



BAKER MAYFIELD: Bucky's a stud. Obviously getting the ball in his hands is good for our offense and it goes for all of our backs, but the way Bucky played tonight gave us that spark we really needed when we weren't doing so hot.

Q. Baker, would it be a mistake for the NCAA to outlaw that? Flag planting?

BAKER MAYFIELD: College football's meant to have rivalries. That's like the Big 12 banning the horns down signal. Just let the boys play.

MODERATOR: Thank you.

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