

Tampa Bay Buccaneers Media Conference

Tuesday, January 16, 2024
Tampa, Florida, USA

Head Coach Todd Bowles

Postgame Press Conference



Tampa Bay Buccaneers 32, Philadelphia Eagles 9

TODD BOWLES: Hey, guys.

Q. Congratulations, coach. If I'm not mistaken, is that your first playoff win as a head coach?

TODD BOWLES: Yes, it is.

Q. How does it feel?

TODD BOWLES: It's enjoyable. Very enjoyable. Good to see the guys playing hard.

Q. Todd, you were masterful on third down. 0 of 9, the Eagles had, and also 0 of 2 on fourth down. What was the key on stopping the third down and even the fourth downplays?

TODD BOWLES: Not getting them in third and short, number one. Had a package where we created just to get some pressure on them to kind of confuse them up front a little bit, and the guys were playing hard.

Q. Speaking of packages, you went to a six-man defensive line to help negate the Eagles' running game. Can you speak to that creativity and going through that approach, which has been a bit unconventional for you to use that much?

TODD BOWLES: Those are some big guys up front. As you know, the last time we played them, they got over 200 yards rushing. We were bound to not let that happen again, so we make sure we put some calls in to try to scheme up some things and get them out of it a little bit.

Q. Baker could have had an even bigger day. There were about six dropped passes out there, I think, on the first half. For what he has done to come in here, throw three touchdowns, beat a defending champion, what can you say?

TODD BOWLES: He was sharp. I mean, the whole game he was sharp. Like he said, they dropped some balls but he kept coming back, he kept going to them. He was putting the ball only a place where they could catch it. He didn't turn it over. They kept making play after play after play. He did a hell of a job.

Q. It seemed like on the bench he was encouraging his guys, kept coming to you, he was very positive. I know he's always like that, but was he particularly upbeat keeping those guys up today?

TODD BOWLES: I thought all those guys were upbeat. I thought Tristan was upbeat. Everybody on the sideline was upbeat. Offense, defense, special teams, everybody was into it. Everybody was helping each other out. It's a good team win.

Q. Coach, it seemed like every time that Philadelphia might try to get some momentum your team came up with a big play. What does that say about how prepared they were today?

TODD BOWLES: They were ready to play, you know. We're not going to go in there trying to play for a tie. We were going for the win. We know we're underdogs. We'll be underdogs next week, too. We understand that. We embrace it. We like it. Them guys come up play after play. We'll enjoy tonight, and we'll get going tomorrow on Detroit.

Q. Cody Naughton, Trey Palmer, David Moore all made huge plays, not your top two guys in terms of Godwin and Evans. Can you talk to how those guys impacted the game and how they have been all season?

TODD BOWLES: Credit to those guys working to get open. Credit to Mike and Chris drawing guys away from them and Baker finding them. They did a hell of a job finishing plays, especially the run after catches with Moore and Palmer and turning them into touchdowns, so that was outstanding.

Q. Can you speak to the importance of that sequence at the end of the third quarter with Anthony Nelson



getting the safety and then the touchdown to Trey Palmer on the two plays later?

TODD BOWLES: That was huge because at that point I think it was a one-score game. I think it was 16-9. We had them backed up. Relentless pass rush kept going and going for Nelson. He just comes up with play after play after play at the right time, and then we get a score after that. That kind of opened it up a little bit and gave us a little bit of cushion. And, you know, that was outstanding.

Q. You stopped the tush push. That's an example of physicality, though, right?

TODD BOWLES: It is. I'm glad we didn't get into it too many times. I think the first game they had about four or five third and ones and I think we were, like, one for four, so we were one for one, I'll take it. Don't want to go against it again, though.

Q. Todd, you were uber aggressive defensively with the blitz packages on third down and offensively. Was that just the message all week long, not only in the game plan but for the players to play that way?

TODD BOWLES: We thought we'd have trouble rushing 4. We thought we can get back there, but he's so athletic and he can move around. He can hurt you with his feet. We were trying not to let him hurt us with his feet.

Q. (Inaudible) too, right?

TODD BOWLES: Yes, yes.

Q. Todd, there were two guys that played a lot tonight that like Zyon McCollum played a lot of safety tonight. Can you speak to that and also K.J. Britt getting a majority of the snaps at linebacker.

TODD BOWLES: K.J. was in the six-man package, so that helped out a lot in that package. That kept them in it. They hadn't been doing that much 12 person but they did, so that package played a big part, and Zyon, we knew we had to cover him if we were going to go after him, so we needed a better cover guy and Zyon, along with the other two guys, those are our best cover guys and he's earned his playing time. Like I said, we can use him anywhere we want.

Q. These do-over games, when you're the team that comes out on the losing side, I've heard recently that it can be actually advantageous because you realize that, okay, the method you used the first time wasn't successful so you have to try something different. Do you see it that way? How do you approach these

games against teams that have beat you previously?

TODD BOWLES: No, you change some things. It doesn't mean they're going to work. I've been against teams that beat me and came back and beat me again, you know. The guys were ready to play. They were prepared. They wanted it. We played hard. We played hard and we fought for it.

Q. Are you going to celebrate tonight, and how are you going to celebrate, Todd?

TODD BOWLES: If I can get eight hours of sleep, that will be a celebration. (Laughter)

Q. What can you say about this group to be able to have a victory like this in the playoffs with the way they had to come back at the end of the season winning five out of six games? Just that tenacity and their resilience?

TODD BOWLES: I mean, it's big. It says a lot. It says a lot about the growth of our team from where we were in the beginning to the middle toward the end and now, playing with confidence, playing team football, everybody's playing fundamentally sound, technique sound. We got relatively healthy at the end. That helped out, too, and those guys, they want it. They see it and they're going to compete every week.

Q. What about the coaching staff, too? Because in order to get out of a hole like that, you have to dig deep yourselves.

TODD BOWLES: Coaching staff has been outstanding. Those are the same guys every day, you know? The same guys that we've been going to the playoffs the last four years with, and some new offensive guys that came in and jelled right away. Credit to them. The work that they put in every day, the teaching they constantly do over and over and over and staying with it and seeing the results of it, that's big. I'm proud of them.

MODERATOR: Last question.

Q. Coach what do you say about Baker and his toughness the last few weeks to play he did today?

TODD BOWLES: He got it out. I mean, you know. If you looked at him during the week, he was limping around, he wasn't practicing. He was getting a little better each day. Hopefully they didn't hit him too much. I know they got some shots on him. They got, what? Four sacks. So, he came back from that. He stayed with the plan. He never flinched. He made play after play after play and that says



a whole lot about him.

MODERATOR: Okay, thank you. Baker is on his way in.

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