

Tampa Bay Buccaneers Media Conference

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Tampa, Florida, USA

Coach Todd Bowles

Postgame Press Conference



Washington 23, Tampa Bay 20

Q. Todd, your defense struggled to get off the field after fourth down. Just talk about that tonight. 55% conversions allowed.

TODD BOWLES: Like you said, defensively that's where it was. He was making some plays with his feet. We would be in position; he out-athleted us and they did a good job on third down and keeping it in third and short and him making plays.

Q. Some of the (indiscernible) routes seemed to be a little bit of a problem tonight on defense. Why do you think that was?

TODD BOWLES: Some of them were scrambles and we were losing our guys and we had position; either we didn't rush the passer the right way and he broke the pocket. On the last one got on third down, we had bad position from the start and should have been in better position that way.

Q. Tell us what happened on the fumble down by the goal, by your own goal line there.

TODD BOWLES: I have to see the tape. I know we were supposed to run the jet sweep. I don't know whether it was the handoff or after the handoff they got discombobulated. Can't give up field position like that and give them that kind of position.

Q. Down there on your own goal line, looked like Graham snapped the ball too soon. Is that what happened?

TODD BOWLES: Yeah, he snapped it and nobody else was ready and we lost yardage there, so that kind of hurt us, too.

Q. With the way the defense was having a hard time getting off the field, guys went to kick that field goal prior to that, there was any thought to going for it?

TODD BOWLES: There was before the play, before we went backwards. Once we went backwards, had to tie the ballgame.

Q. Do you think it was a case today where it was more plays you didn't make or give Washington credit for making plays?

TODD BOWLES: You got to give them credit. They made plays. He's been making them all year. You got to give them credit. They made some plays. We had our chance to make some plays that we didn't make.

But it was a combination of both. They made plays and we didn't when we had the chance.

Q. That is the fewest points I think you scored since San Francisco. Been a couple months. What was not happening for you offensively? Just not having the ball enough or what?

TODD BOWLES: We were shooting ourselves in the foot on first down with a lot of penalties in the first half, whether it was holding or offsides whatever the case may be. Wasn't giving ourselves a chance. We turned it over with the field position that way. Feel like we never got in a good rhythm.

Q. Mike Evans had a really tough matchup this week against Marshon Lattimore. That was billed a lot this week. It seemed like he really performed really well on the heels of his record performance last week. What can you say about the job Mike did tonight?

TODD BOWLES: Two great players going at it. Mike is a great player, Marshon is a great player. Mike made his catches and I'm sure Marshon won a few. Mike's effort and what he continues to do for us is amazing.

Q. Tonight and all season your defense really struggled to get any turnovers at all. As you look at this season now and offensively, you know, Top 5 and the defense couldn't get off the field tonight and couldn't force turnovers. Is that how the season kind

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of played out for you?

TODD BOWLES: It's rare for us to have a season without a lot of turnovers, but we had them and we didn't get them. That's something that we need to be a good defense. Obviously we been doing it in the past. We didn't do it this year. We got to do a better job at that.

Q. Why do you think that was this year?

TODD BOWLES: I mean, it's a lot of things. We got to make plays and go for the ball. Obviously different guy starting back there every week. It can be a myriad of things. Bottom line is we got to get turnovers.

Q. Kind of stunned about how poised Daniels is as a rookie in a game of this magnitude?

TODD BOWLES: No, not really. You seen it all year. He has no conscious. He's a heck of a player. He lives in the moment. He lived in it every game this year. He had a lot of experience and a lot of games under his belt to play like that.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

TODD BOWLES: He's an athlete. He can get away from things. We set the edge and he can get around the edge. He's a very good athlete.

Q. What was your message to the team in there?

TODD BOWLES: Proud of the way we fought. Obviously it's disappointing. We don't want the season to end like this. We don't pint fingers. We had our chances to win this ballgame. Obviously it wasn't good enough.

We think we have a very good football team when everybody is clicking on all cylinders. We got to be clicking on all cylinders. Effort was outstanding. We hung together all year. We been through some things.

We got to eat it on take it on the chin and we got to get better in the future.

Q. How optimistic are you about the core group of young players here going forward?

TODD BOWLES: Great core group going forward. Very optimistic about those guys. Just got to keep people healthy, add to it, and clean up some spots, and I think we'll be fine.

Q. You make the fourth down stop; obviously that was huge. Then the turnover right after. Is that kind of the

game in a nutshell?

TODD BOWLES: Parts of it. Obviously it was situational. There were other things too with the penalty when we had the ball down there as well. There were chances we had to win this ballgame that we didn't make.

There were different chances in both halves, whether it was offensively or defensively to win in ballgame. That was just the latest of a few things we had.

Q. What did you say to Baker after that?

TODD BOWLES: Nothing to say to him. He's your bell cow. Your bell cow takes a shot and something goes wrong, you got to live with that. They're human. We are going to make mistakes. He got us here. We wouldn't even be here without Baker, so really nothing to say to him.

Q. You had Jamel Dean for about a half and he ended up reinjuring that knee. How big was that of a loss?

TODD BOWLES: It was huge from some of the things we try to do and wanted to do. Kind of did a good job getting the fourth down stop in the red zone. Then it came back on fourth down and they got the touchdown there.

Hayes fought hard and he played and we been doing it all year, so there is no excuse there.

Q. Speaking of fighting hard, Lavonte David seemed to do a lot of that tonight. I think he got nicked up as well on the sideline. What can you say about his effort?

TODD BOWLES: He did towards the end. He's been putting in the effort all year. Obviously to play 13 years like that and lead the team and everything that he was doing mentally and physically, I'm sure wear and tear on his body, he never showed it and never said anything about it.

You couldn't have a better -- we couldn't ask for a better year from him.

Q. At the end of the game kind of a haphazard use of timeouts there. Looks like you call timeout, went down to 1:40 I think. Could've called it earlier; and then you didn't call the timeout after the next play. What was the strategy there?

TODD BOWLES: For the next play only needed a yard for the first down, so we had to let it play out and we had to use one there. Before the last play we wanted to call a timeout and see where they were trying to call timeout. We had a personnel problem so we called it later than normal.

Q. What's your confidence level with Winfield to get him back to being the impact player we saw in 2023?

TODD BOWLES: Confidence is great. Just got to get him on the field. He was hurt beginning of the season and toward the end of the season. Hadn't had him out there much. Just having a full off-season, having him healthy going into the season, I think he'll play the way he played a year ago.

Q. What's the key to getting over the hump?

TODD BOWLES: Situational football. Understanding and finishing at the end. Sometimes it's just making plays; sometimes we're in position. Calijah had them on the fourth down play. Lost that one. Just making plays. We got to make plays.

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