

Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Miami Dolphins
Heinz Field • Sunday, January 8



Dolphins Head Coach Adam Gase

Did you feel that your bigger struggle today was on offense or defense?

It was both phases. After we go back and watch it, we can probably pinpoint a couple things in particular. They were able to run the ball. We couldn't. It was opposite of what we wanted to do. We turned the ball over, and we knew we couldn't do that. Those were the two really critical factors that we had to make sure that we wanted. We didn't do it.

Why couldn't you stop the Steelers offense?

It was a tough offense. We knew what we were getting into. We came in and knew what we had to do, and didn't do it. Bell is a tough guy to slow down. Once he gets rolling and starts feeling like he knows where he can hit it, he does such a good job of being patient. When we got our hands on him, we couldn't bring him down. It just wasn't a good day for us.

What did you see or not see from your offense today?

We might have had a couple opportunities occasionally and we just didn't take advantage of them. They played very well on their side of the ball. They hit us with a couple pressures that we picked up in practice, but we didn't fit it up as well as we wanted to. They had too much penetration where we couldn't get anything going in the running game.

Re: Turnovers contributing heavily to the loss:

It looked like we were at least going to have a shot there near the half. Then we turned it over, which hurt us. But I felt that we could maybe get going there in the third quarter. We just couldn't put enough together to get points.

What did you say to your team in the locker room after the game?

I told them to remember this feeling because you're going to want it again. It's going to start all over again at some point. What you do the year before is not going to matter. You're going to be 0-0 again. Don't forget this feeling. You want to get back to this spot and try to make some noise.

What were you not able to do to run the ball today that you were able to do last time you played the Steelers?

It's probably something we're going to have to look at when we watch this film and try to figure out where we went sideways. The first thing I can say is that they had a little more penetration. We didn't execute as well as I'm sure all of us wanted to. We'll look at it schematically to see if there was anything we weren't doing quite right compared to what they were doing. That's going to take a minute to go back and look at everything.



Do you think bring Matt Moore back in after he got hit had an effect on him and the turnovers created after it?

The fumble he saw the guy when he busted the protection. He said he should have just taken the sack. On the interception, the guy made a great play. He was on the line of scrimmage and we were running an 18-yard crossing route. The guy was flying back and makes a pick. He made a great play. When they told me he was coming back in, I started talking to him and he was good. He went through the league and our trainers.

Were you surprised after seeing the hit on Moore that he came back into the game as quickly as he did?

I didn't really see the actual hit. I was looking down the field. In my head, I was trying to figure out what to do with TJ. When they come to me, I just play off of that. I didn't know what was really going on with that. I didn't see the exact injury when he got hit.

DL Ndamukong Suh

A frustrating game out there for you guys. What was Le'Veon Bell able to do and have success running the ball?

Honestly, just thinking back to the game, they started off passing the ball pretty well. Antonio Brown made a lot of plays, which obviously allowed our focus to move to the passing game. That was our focus and it switched to Le'Veon Bell, and he made plays. We weren't filling gaps like we should have. That's where it is.

Re: Pressure on Ben Roethlisberger and offense:

It was a good scheme. I think most of the passes, if I remember correctly, came in play action. So, obviously, you have the transition from running the pass, and our particular scheme and the way we attack, we want to be able to get through those things and get pressure. We weren't doing that.

Re: Take away any of the success from this season:

No, I don't think it takes anything away. I think we have been playing good game. Especially, on defense and not to give away too many points. No matter what kind of situation that we are in. We just have to get back to the drawing table. Understand that things will be different as every single season is different every year is different. Get prepared and get focused on what we have and get back to work.

QB Matt Moore

Re: Experience of the day:

It was tough. We had a difficult time running the ball. Again, it kind of took us a little bit to get going early on. We eventually found some ways to move the passing game, which is good. But it was difficult for most of the day.

Tell us about the hit and how you were able to come back into the game

I just got popped. I just needed a second there. I got checked out. I felt fine. It was more of my jaw than anything else. I felt good. I came back in and I was fine. He got me pretty good.

Re: Scoring points before halftime

It's hard to win when you turn the ball over. In the playoffs, you can't have those mistakes and that's on me. I have to hold on to the ball. Two fumbles and a pick, that's not the recipe for success. It hurts. Especially the one before halftime. We are going down and getting a big play,



DeVante Parker makes a big play. To have that happen, took the wind out of us a little bit. You just can't do that against a good football team and in a big game.

Can you give us a little snap shot of how this season was and has turned around for the franchise?

Obviously, the frustrations are there from today, no doubt. How we started and what we did after the first five, I'm proud of these guys and proud to be on this team. I'm proud of Coach Gase and what he did. Holding it together and moving forward. With that said, we aren't satisfied but proud to be a part of something like this with this team.

DE Cameron Wake

What do you think was the problem on defense with stopping Pittsburgh? Tackling, poor run fits in the run game, what do you think it was?

It sounds like a little bit of both. Obviously at this time of year, this level of football, the stakes will get magnified. So whether it is one guy, either gap or missed tackle missed communication or whatever it may be that can turn into a big play miss.

The two long touchdown passes to Antonio Brown, were you guy's matter of fact about that because you did come back a little bit. How did you take that?

Matter of fact isn't a phrase I use. You can't come out and start slow. There is no pass on the back for fixing the problem after it already happened. You have to go out there and know this is the play you have to go and fix before it happens. Prevention is better than cure. That's the way it works in this league and this time of year. I'm sure we changed some things and fixed some things but the bleeding had already started.

C Mike Pouncey

Re: Stephen Ross says he likes direction of the team despite the loss:

No question. He sees the difference. He's around all the time. He sees the direction this team is headed in and it's headed in the right direction.

How tough was it to watch today instead of play?

I said before it was going to be tough to watch. I was excited to be out there. The atmosphere was unbelievable. I just wish these guys could have pulled it out. It was a tough loss for our football team.

Do you expect to be back here next year?

We will see. I don't want to make any expectations at this time. Obviously we feel good about our football team.

What would make this team continue to be a playoff team?

We just need to keep doing what we did this year. We stuck together. We had a lot of team chemistry and we had guys play well that we did not expect to play well. That's what happens when you are a team that turns the corner, guys step up and make plays.

RB Jay Ajayi

Re: Feeling in this locker room right now:

It's tough. We put in all that work. It's really the fact that this team won't be together and it won't be the same. We won't be able to reach that goal that we wanted to achieve. That's tough. I do



not know anyone that is just content with being in the playoffs. We wanted to win the whole thing. I know I did. It hurts.

Why was the running game not able to get going today?

The run game was tough. They stacked the box and we did not execute how we should have. It's as simple as that.

What was the weather like?

It was cold. They had to play in the same weather as well. It does not matter.

After the time passes will you be able to consider this season a success?

From a team standpoint, it is not a success. Individually, maybe later on. As a team we did not achieve what we wanted to do.

Does this team understand what it takes to get here?

Yeah, we will be able to understand what this feeling is one of not moving on to the next round. A matter of taking this feeling and use it as motivation to never have this feeling again

G Jermon Bushrod

Was this a successful season?

No. Our goal was to be the last team standing, and we were not the last team standing. Where we came from earlier this season you have to be proud. I'm proud of everybody in this organization from the coaches down to the players. Things were not looking great for us. We were banged up. We were losing games but we found a way to look inside of ourselves and come out of a tough situation. This could have been a really tough season but like I said I'm proud. No, this is not where we wanted to be. We wanted to get into this dance and you never know what could happen. It is just unfortunate.

What was it like to play in that cold?

I still cannot feel my fingers. Like I said earlier in the week when it comes to the cold you either do it or have someone else do it. I do not care if it feels like negative five or zero. You have to do whatever you have to do to keep yourself warm. At the end of the day you have to do what you have to do.

Steelers Head Coach Mike Tomlin

Opening Statement: It's great to get the win. We don't take it for granted. This time of year the road gets increasingly narrow and it's good to still be on it. A lot of significant contributions from all parties involved. The real summary of the game is we had the big three rolling on offense and we stopped the run on defense. We do those things, we have a chance to win games regardless of circumstance, situation or opponent. We did that today. We weren't perfect. But we haven't been perfect all year, let's just be honest. It was enough for the victory. We appreciate it. We have a big week ahead of us this week in preparation for our next opportunity. We're excited about continuing with that. Bumps and bruises associated with it. Nothing of extreme significance. I think Sean Davis went down with a shoulder in-game, but was able to go back in the game. But I would imagine there could be some ramifications with that. Other than that, normal bumps and bruises associated with the pursuit of victory. So we're excited.



Re: On what it was like having Ben Roethlisberger, Le'Veon Bell and Antonio Brown health for a playoff game:

You saw it. It was good to have those guys in a stadium at that time of year. That's why we took the approach we took last week with those guys. It was a fun time today.

Re: On the difference between now and Week Six:

We've continued to evolve. To get the result of game, I give these guys credit, they come in everyday with the intentions of getting better. I think you see it in the results when you look at an example like you showed. But just in general, I think our guys come in with a good spirit that's geared toward getting better on a daily basis.

Re: On the nature of rematches:

We don't care about the nameless gray faces we're playing right now. This is man versus himself. We're trying to do what's required to win. We're not trying to settle vendettas and things of that nature. They beat us fair and square in Week Six. You tip your cap to them for that performance. Today was today. And it's going to be the same going forward. What happened during the regular season is of little importance. What is important is that you do enough to get out of these stadiums and advance. And that's what we were able to do today.

Re: On strengthening the run game the last couple months:

Just like we said in other areas. I think the guys continually have gotten better. We've cohesion along with the presence of people, Le'Veon, we missed a pocket of time there with [Marcus] Gilbert and some others that missed some time. I just think more than anything it's gaining that cohesion that continuity provides you over the course of the season. Provided you come to work every day with a mindset geared toward getting better. And they do.

Re: On what's unique about Bell:

He's a man for all situations or circumstances. Whether it's inside run, whether it's perimeter run, whether it's the passing game, he's just good, has a good skillset. He does a lot of things well. And so, he adds value to us in that way.

QB Ben Roethlisberger

How much different is it confidence level going into a postseason game with all of the elements of this offense on the field?

It feels good to have the run game and the pass game. I told them before the game, to me, the biggest guy out there is Pouncey. Having Pouncey out there is huge. For me as a comfort blanket and for the rest of the line. We are only as good as they are.

You mentioned the lack of detail today. The yardage totals were gaudy. The margin of victory was immense. But is there a feeling that you could play a lot better moving forward?

Well, I think we can be better. I think it is a little bit of a false positive if you will because you start out so well. We went down and scored the first three series, I think and we were kind of doing whatever we wanted to. And that is a really good defense, especially their front seven. I don't know what it was, but it will be addressed this week. I wouldn't say addressed because that sounds so harsh, but we will talk about it. I know the line has some things they want to say to the guys. It's just the little things. I mentioned before this game, the 'my bads' are usually not good. You can't usually correct 'my bads.' You can't have them. It's just the way it is in the postseason and I think in the second half we had a little bit too much of that.

What led to the success throwing against the blitz in the first half?



Guys getting open. The line picking up the blitz just enough to get the ball out and quick throws. That has kind of been a thing that we have been able to do and have success against by getting the ball out quick and then just making those quick underneath throws.

What do you appreciate most about Le'Veon Bell's running style? And in the years that he has been here, how have you seen that style evolve?

Well, I think he brings a little bit of everything to the table. There are times when he is patient. Like I am standing back there and I am watching and I am like, 'Uh, are you going to go any time here?' But he is so patient and then when he needs to put his head down and run someone over, he does that. He is a powerful back. If he gets one-on-one with a guy in the hole or just beyond, I get the best view in the house. I'll never forget when Charlie Batch was here, he used to always tell me about how he would hand off and just watch Barry Sanders. I am not trying to put Le'Veon with Barry Sanders yet, you know that is an awesome honor. But, it is fun to sit and watch and just see what he is going to do because he is incredibly talented.

When you, Antonio Brown and Le'Veon Bell are playing well, do you think it is tough for other teams to decide which part of the game to stop?

The second half of the season, Le'Veon has been on such a tear because people are really trying to make us one-dimensional, whether that is the run or the pass. They are trying to take away the big play. From what we see on film and stuff, teams try and bleed slow, you know, and give us the run. Not trying to give up the big pass play and so we have been able to utilize Le'Veon so much and today I think the first two series we came out throwing it and really kind of backed them off, and then that opens up Le'Veon and the guys in the run game.

You guys set the tone early and then how much did you feed off of your defense the rest of the way?

Well, it is awesome to watch them. Turnovers, sacks, we all feed off of each other. They are telling us, they love when we help give them that lead and give them a little comfort and things like that. And then we feed off the turnovers and sacks and three-and-outs. So, that is what football is about. That is why it is the ultimate team sport.

RB Le'Veon Bell

Re: Your performance today:

I think the offensive line did an incredible job of controlling the line of scrimmage for the most part today. They made my job easy. The receivers on the edge getting on their DB's and their safeties and Ben putting us in the right situation, making the right calls at the line of scrimmage. The coaches put a lot of faith in me continuing to run the ball. It was definitely a total team effort today. Obviously I can't do everything by myself. I always try to run hard and when I get an opening just try to hit it and get what I could.

Re: Breaking the Steelers single game playoff rushing record:

They announced it. I think at the end of the third quarter they announced it. That's when I saw it. It kind of blew me away. It's really humbling. It's a great achievement. It just goes to show you how good this team has been. The offensive line has gotten better over the course of the year. We're getting there and it's really showing.



Re: Running with a sense of purpose today:

Yes. I was definitely excited with it being the first playoff game that I've played in and it being a rematch with those guys. They got after it the first time we played them. We wanted to go out there and make a statement. They ran the ball really well in the last game, so we wanted to run the ball on those guys as well and stop the run. Our defense did a great job stopping the run today. They made it tough for their run game to get going. As an offense, we did our thing running the ball, moving the chains and making those guys respect the run.

Does the game earlier in the season against Miami still linger?

I think we came in with the mindset that those guys beat us earlier in the year, but I feel like we're in the playoffs now and we can't let them beat us again. I think Kansas City is going to come in with that same mindset. We have to understand that. We have to understand that the same passion and dedication that we put in this week to beat Miami, that's how Kansas City is going to try to beat us. We have to put that much more time in to our detail. We have to do all the little things right because they're going to try to take the things away that we did well last game and make us beat them a different way. Also, Kansas City got better over the course of the year. It's going to be a very good game. We're playing in a hostile environment. It's going to be very loud there.

What did you notice about their defensive front that you thought you could exploit?

I think in the first game, we ran the ball well. We just didn't run it a lot. In the first game, they were more penetrating guys. They're not a two-gap read you type. They just shoot a gap and they're not really worried where the ball is at. Coming into this game, I made sure and understood that those guys weren't really looking for me. They were just trying to shoot the gap and get after the pass, hoping guys pass the ball. They have great pass rushers and they depend on Suh and Jason Jones to stop the run. I feel like I had to be a little more patient. I feel like if I read those guys well and helped the o-line, it might set up the linebackers and thing like that. There were a lot of little things that went into it, but obviously the play calls were a little different than they were last time. I think overall we got more carries. That was the biggest thing – me getting more carries and getting familiar with those guys over the course of the game.

Is this officially a run first offense right now?

We come into a game plan with a different mindset each and every game. It depends on the team's personnel. I remember when we were going in to Ravens game, we understood that they felt like they stopped us the first game when we ran the ball, so we came in thinking they thought they were going to be able to stop the run again. So we came in run heavy. This game, we opened them up with the pass early. We ran quick passes. Antonino Brown took two long ones. That's what really got them backed up a little bit because we can't just be letting Brown run up and down the field on us. So that opened things up for us. We're a team that's really balanced. We can spread guys out, throw the ball all over the place, line up big, run the ball out of shotgun or run or pass out of four-wide. I think we're really balanced, and we can attack in different ways.

Was the series where you carried the ball 10 times in a row planned?

It just kind of happened. I think the first two series we hit them with the passes and Brown struck them really quickly. In that third series we ran the ball, came up and got another run. We're thinking I'm just watching them and the safeties are deep the whole time. I'm just thinking Brown is going to scare them. I'm looking at the sideline telling them just keep coming. I don't feel fatigued. The offensive line wants to run the ball so we went down there and ran the ball in the end zone. That's a lot of credit to other guys like Brown making plays and getting those guys nervous.



S Sean Davis

Is that what you thought it would be?

We had a play and we executed. January football is something totally new for me to experience. I want to keep riding this wave.

How great an emphasis was stopping [Jay] Ajayi?

That was our No. 1 goal. We knew what he did to us last game. We had to totally shut him down and we did that.

And what got that done?

Just everybody doing assignments. We played physical [and] played tough. We just did our job.

When the offense gives you a lead like that, does it help you play more free and more aggressive?

Most definitely. We stick to our game plan, but when we're up like that [and] we're stopping the run, the pressure is on them. We just took advantage of that. I think we played hard and came out on top.

