



Josh.Rupprecht@chargers.nfl.com
Jamaal.LaFrance@chargers.nfl.com

Skip.Powers@chargers.nfl.com
Brock.Anderson@chargers.nfl.com

Jennifer.Rojas@chargers.nfl.com
Lauren.Meyer@chargers.nfl.com

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS vs. PITTSBURGH STEELERS POSTGAME TRANSCRIPTS

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2019 | ROKiT Field at Dignity Health Sports Park | Carson, Calif.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH ANTHONY LYNN

Opening statement:

“Well, we’ve dug ourselves in a hole here. I still believe in this football team. We dug ourselves into this hole and I believe we are digging our way out, but we cannot go out and play a team like that with a defense like that and give them 14 points. I think they moved the ball 30 yards to score 14 points and so we can’t do that. We turned the ball over three times, we only took one. I thought they controlled the ground game both ways. We have to do a better job with running the football and we have to stop the other team from running the football on us. It was disappointing, but like I said, I believe in these young men. I believe we have enough to get it done and I believe we will.”

On offense:

“Well, we’ve got to figure it out because, this offense, I thought we started [the season] out clicking. We put up 30 the first week and I thought we were moving the ball well, I thought we were running the ball well in the first couple of weeks of the season. The last couple of weeks we just haven’t run the ball that well. We haven’t made our blocks. Everybody’s got to be accountable for getting the man in and those runners, they really don’t have a chance, so we’ve got to do a better job up front and not just up front but also at the receiver position.”

On the rushing attack:

“I don’t think it has anything to do with Melvin Gordon. We’ve got to open up more running lanes.”

On being down early in the game:

“It’s hard to win in this league like that. 14-points down, just like that. Like I said, they went 30 yards for 14 points and we just can’t do that. We have to eliminate those type of plays moving forward.”

On QB Philip Rivers:

“I think everybody is pressing a little bit because we are all anxious. We all want to turn this around. Trust me, we’ve got enough to get this done and I believe we will. We’ve got to just go back to our basics and rely on our fundamentals and our technique, and play ball and play with urgency. The way we played in that second half, we’ve got to play all four quarters that way.”

On if he thought about replacing Rivers with QB Tyrod Taylor:

“No, Philip is our quarterback.”

On the crowd:

“No, I can’t say the team is affected by the crowd. The crowd doesn’t play. If anything, I thought that crowd brought a lot of energy to the stadium. It was an exciting night to play football. We just didn’t execute the way we should have.”

On WR Keenan Allen:

“[Teams are taking] Keenan away by coverage and other guys have to step up.”



On urgency:

“Well, I don’t think that’s intentional. I think we come out and I think our guys are ready to play, but the execution is not there. We had two turnovers right off the bat. Now, you’re behind the eight-ball, but then you come out second half and you put all the cards on the table and as coaching staff we called it that way, the second half. We went urgency with no huddle, up-tempo. Well maybe we have to change the tempo up earlier. I don’t know, but we’ve got to figure it out and I believe we will.”

On TE Hunter Henry:

“Hunter Henry played on a limited basis because he’s been out four or five weeks, but I thought the times he was in the game, I thought he was effective.”

On Rivers’ turnover:

“He was under pressure. He was under pressure and he threw it and it was a backwards pass. It was over [RB] Melvin’s [Gordon III] head.”

On C Mike Pouncey’s absence:

“It was huge. We made two position changes on the offensive line with Pouncey being out, but [G Dan] Feeney has played center before and he’s done a good job. [G] Forrest Lamp has an opportunity to step up and solidify his role on this offense. He’s going to get better every single week, but I’ll watch the tape and see how he played.”

On penalties:

“It’s frustrating any time you get penalties. I don’t think we had a lot of penalties this game, but I want to see guys play with some fire. [We don’t want] some of those unnecessary roughness and things like that, but I’m just glad to see us playing with some fire.”

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK PHILIP RIVERS**On Sunday’s game:**

“Not good enough. I mean, we tried to rebound from last week. We’ve had two poor performances in a row, offensively, and slow starts, and it has cost us in both of them. We got going, but it was too late, especially for today. We’ve just got to keep going. We can sit here and over analyze it and talk about what happened, but it’s not going to change it, we’ve just got to keep going.”

On the first-half performance over last two games:

“It’s turnovers in both of them — I mean the one today was obviously for a touchdown. Two of them — one of them gets deflected and there is really nothing you can do, and the first one gets picked up for a touchdown, so it’s that right there. Overall, I just think they played with more urgency early, it felt that way. There is no excuse for that to happen, we’ve got to do a better job of coming out and have a little more urgency.”

On getting hit early on:

“No I didn’t get checked out, I just took a pretty good shot, but I’m good.”

On the character of the team and turning the season around:

“Just keep going, you just keep fighting. We were 0-4 a couple years ago. Again, a lot of guys weren’t on the team that was 0-4, but you just keep going, that’s all you can do. We’re not the only team that has been in this boat, we’re not the only team in the league right now that is in this boat. You just keep going.”

On mental toughness:

“I think it is a mental toughness really that you just come in and are thankful that you have a Wednesday to go to work, or a Monday. Thankfully we have a Thursday to go to work and get ready to prepare for another opponent. You throw out the record, throw out the emotions of how you feel, wishing you made this play or that play — it’s just a toughness and a thankfulness to me that you are there to go to work and try to get better. I’m dang sure [C] Mike Pouncey wishes he was practicing Wednesday. He is one of many who has been hurt. Not only do guys get hurt and it’s over, but it comes to an end. I think thankfully you have an opportunity when you have one and you just keep going.”



On frustration with today's results:

"I was disappointed the game was over. I wasn't frustrated. A guy comes and waves at our sideline, you protect your team. It was really no big deal. I haven't seen him afterwards, but I'd probably shake his hand and tell him sorry I got a little fired up but it wasn't big deal. There was no screaming and yelling, it was just defending your guys."

On TE Hunter Henry:

"Awesome. You saw how it was. His production really was unbelievable in his first game back. He probably played more plays than probably everybody anticipated, but it was the way the game went. He's probably just going to be used more on third downs and a few other things, but when you get behind like we were, we had to roll. [TE Virgil] Virg [Green] came in there and got a big catch as well, but Hunter's impact was felt first snap you saw. First snap, it goes to him for a 20-yard gain or whatever it was. It'll be good to have him healthy moving forward."

On if he will have more urgency earlier in the game:

"Yeah we'll see. I'm sure that's something staff will look at to kind of see. We gotta do something to kick-start and have a little more urgency and go get in the end zone. It's obvious, that's the name of the game is scoring and we're not doing that. When you go back to your earlier question, 'What is the issue?' We're just not scoring. There's turnovers in every game. Yeah, I don't wanna ever throw another interception, we don't wanna fumble, and all that, but we're probably going to. Teams turn it over two times a game and they win. They turn it over and they win. Now, we can't be careless with the ball, but we have to score. If you have two turnovers and we score 28, then we win, we're not even talking about it. We're talking about what a heck of a game, we're talking about Hunter, and all these guys. When you turn it over twice and you get beat, and you only score what we're scoring, you look for lots of things. Ultimately, we have to find a way to get in the end zone more. To me, that's the biggest issue right now that we're having, offensively. The offense's job is to score one more point than the other team and we're not doing that."

On how difficult it is to get out of a three-touchdown deficit:

"Yeah it's pretty tough. I don't that we've done it exactly three touchdowns, but we've had a comeback like this before. It's been a long time ago when we were down 21. We've had some. Cincinnati, but those were a long time ago, way before any of these guys were here that can remember that. It's tough, but I think our guys believed it. I think our guys believed it could happen. That's kind of our thing. Let's make this a big game we talk about for years to come and I think you saw that we gave ourselves a chance. They pin you down in their 99, on the one. 99 yards and no time outs, that's about as rough as it gets. Almost had a chance on the first one to [WR] Mike [Williams], and the second one was a little bit desperate, but getting five and six yards there doesn't help you very much."

On what happened with the lateral throw:

"Yeah, they brought pressure and you had to throw hot. I knew when I let it go it was probably backwards, but obviously I would make a better throw. It was too bad."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS RUNNING BACK AUSTIN EKELER**On passing so much today:**

"The team was going to run the ball the majority of the time because of the quarterback situation. Now they have a lead so you have to stop the run because they are going to be chewing up a lot of clock. Because of that, we might be throwing more than we were running. It was just trying to get down the field and move the ball fast. I think it was the opposite of what we were trying to do and it just put us in a spot where, now, we were trying to play catch-up. It changes it but that doesn't mean it was a bad plan or that we were off. It just means we had to change our plan."

On frustration with season this far:

"This is a new year. Like we said at the beginning of the year, last year is last year. So, we've seen what we are able to do, but we have a new team this year. Now we have to get it rolling with the guys that we have now. We have injuries now that we didn't have last year. We have to get people up to speed with what's going on, make sure everyone is on the same page, and everyone can actually perform."

On the first half offense the last two weeks:

"We are just hurting ourselves so much that it's putting us in a bad situation. Whether it is turnovers, missed assignments, or not winning our one on ones. It's just a lot of things that are coming together where we have to look at every individual and you have to put more time in, you have to do something. Whatever it is to be sure that you can get your job done. We have a lot of new guys and, so, it's a lot of pressure on those guys, but this is the NFL. We have to step up. We have to make plays."



On only having two wins through six games:

"I would have thought through six games we have no losses. You're not going to be predicting that you are probably going to lose here and lose there. You just come into every single week and get ready and take it week by week. That's all you can do. You can't forecast, then you are thinking too much. You just have to focus on what we can actually do to get our offense rolling."

On what going down early does to team mindset:

"The mindset is a kick in the butt. 'Let's go. Let's get some points on the board.' It puts us in a different situation in terms of game plan especially when they are running the ball so much. We might have to throw a little bit more to chunk the ball, to try and save some clock, so we can actually have more possessions to score. It definitely changes the game plan but the mindset never changes."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS RUNNING BACK MELVIN GORDON III**On the offense's struggles:**

"It's disappointing. We lost. The time you come out like that and don't put any points on the board, it's going to be a tough game."

On the offense picking it up in the fourth quarter:

"As long as there's time on the board, we have a chance. We have the players to make it happen. We had a chance at the end, but you never give up until the clock hits zero."

On the mindset for the next two road games:

"You learn from your mistakes and just keep pushing forward. We've said it plenty of times, we can't let this game cause a defeat on the next one because we're thinking about it too much. You just have to move on, watch the film, watch tonight. You have 24 hours to account and analyze and move on to bigger and better things."

On TE Hunter Henry:

"Hunter did his thing tonight. The good thing about that, everybody saw it. Including our next opponents, so maybe they back up a little bit and that opens some things for the run game."

On the run game:

"The run game is tough right now. [RB] Austin [Ekeler] and I can't get things rolling, but right now the passing game looks like it's working, so we're going to have to use the pass to open up the run. In some games, the run opens up the pass, but how it's looking right now, the pass is going to have to open up the run."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS TIGHT END HUNTER HENRY**On recording 100 yards and two touchdowns in his first game back from injury:**

"I felt good. I felt really good. Going into the game, you know, I wasn't planning on playing probably 50-60 snaps. That's kind of how the game rolled. I was feeling really good. I felt really good tonight, so it's just kind of how it went."

On how he feels physically:

"I feel good. I mean obviously sore. It was a long game, very physical. You know, when you're going up and down the field, you're pretty tired so I'll probably sleep good tonight, but I feel good."

On the offense being shut out in the first half for the second-straight week:

"Well, I mean those costly turnovers were huge. That kind of puts a damper on anything. When you turn the ball over two drives in a row like that, give them a short field, it kind of puts them in a perfect position. Then, we just couldn't run the ball. So, we're going to have to really focus on that this week. I think that's the biggest thing, is just running the football, take a little pressure off of everything else."

On what was going through his mind when the team was down 24-0:

"It's pretty frustrating, but you know, we have a lot of guys who want to fight and a lot of grit to us. So, that'll hopefully carry over into these next couple of weeks and get some wins rolling."



On the opposing crowd:

"I mean, yeah, it's frustrating. It was pretty loud in there. We know that kind of going in. We have guys who are used to it and we'll just keep going at it. We know the Steelers, they travel well. We knew that kind of going into the game. So it wasn't that big of a deal."

On facing adversity this season:

"You're going to have to go through adversity in every single year you play football. You're going to go through adversity in every game. You're going to go through adversity injury-wise. You're going to go through adversity, maybe games don't go the way you want them to go. So, I think we have a lot of guys in here who are used to it. I mean two years ago, we were sitting here at 0-4, and then we climbed out of a hole there. So, we have the right pieces. We just have to be consistent and just continue to go to work. When we were 0-4, everyone threw us out then too. So, I think we have a lot of guys who kind of like the underdog mentality. So, I think it'll be good for us."

On if he was sure if he crossed the end zone on his first touchdown:

"I felt like I was in, but I don't know. You never know. I felt like I was in though. But, you never know until you look at it."

PITTSBURGH STEELERS HEAD COACH MIKE TOMLIN**Opening Statement:**

"It was a big win for us on the road, in a very fragile state. It's good to go into the bye [week] on a good note and gather ourselves a little bit. We need it. We have a lot of injuries. We had a few tonight. I'm going to outline those. [DE Stephon] Tuitt has a peck injury, he's being evaluated. [LB T.J.] Watt has an oblique injury, he's being evaluated. [RB] James Conner has a quad injury, being evaluated. [CB] Joe Haden has a groin injury. I think that's kind of the story tonight. Guys kind of stepped up and stepped up in a big way. We live by the creed, 'The Standard is the Standard,' but those are just words. The players, the guys, make that reality. I think we had a lot of quality efforts tonight from a lot of people. [QB] Devlin [Hodges] obviously gets a lot of attention from his effort and what he brought, but a lot of others. [CB] Artie Burns in place of [CB] Steven Nelson, I thought his play was solid and significant. [RB] Benny Snell, as [RB] James [Conner] wasn't able to continue, the plays that he gave us were significant. It's just a good overall team win. We knew we couldn't give 'Duck' [QB Devlin Hodges] a lot of exposure to the defense, so we had to do some things to the other areas. We talked openly about it last night. Scoring on defense is significant, quality special teams play is significant, quality running game to minimize his snap exposure. And not just him, but anybody playing at the quarterback position with a limited amount of experience. I think sometimes the more exposure is not necessarily good. So, we limited that by the things that I outlined. Just a good overall team win. We'll be excited, we have a long flight ahead of us, but I'm sure everybody will enjoy it."

On being productive on third down:

"We were on schedule. We put together a good plan, but those guys executed it. More than anything, we were in manageable third downs and we've been working hard to be in manageable third downs and haven't necessarily done what we did tonight. So, I'm not taking that for granted, but largely that type of success is because you're not behind the chains."

On their running game:

"Man, we didn't have a lot of other options. Sometimes, that's life, when you're backed up against it. We needed that and they delivered."

On QB Devlin Hodges:

"We have a lot of confidence in him. We haven't been bashful about that. He has a lot of confidence in himself. I think that's what makes people gravitate to him. We're not getting overexcited. This is a guy that played good tonight, with very limited experience. We're thankful to get a win and hopefully it will be a good learning experience from him and us, collectively, as we move forward."

On if QB Mason Rudolph will be their starter:

"I'm not getting into that."

On how much the run game helped:

"It was significant, like I mentioned. Too much exposure is not a good thing. It was a significant component of the storyline."

On two huge turnovers by LB Devin Bush in the first quarter:

"He has been opportunistic since day zero. He continues to be, and we need it."



On their defense getting two touchdowns:

“We needed to do something. We needed to provide the short field for the offense. We were able to do that and score. We put them on the short field, they punched it in, just a lot of good things happening in the early stages of the game, based on our given circumstance. They really put us in position to control the floor of the game.”

On the punt that looked like it was covered:

“It got called fair catch. He has to have an opportunity to catch the ball. They didn’t feel like he had a complete opportunity to catch the ball, so they [gave] possession to those guys.”

On Hodges being smart:

“All our quarterbacks are sharp guys. I don’t think anything unique there. That’s one of the things that we value at the position.”

On if Hodges got the game ball:

“I didn’t see what you’re referring to, so I don’t have an answer.”

On if he gave out a game ball:

“I keep that business between us.”

On how they contained Chargers QB Phillip Rivers and the run game:

“He’s an awesome player. We probably cared more this time than we did last time. Felt like we ran out of stuff last time, ran out of people last time. He’s going to throw flames at you all night. A lot of respect for that guy. We didn’t run out. We didn’t run out of people, we didn’t run out of stuff, so we were able to finish it.”

On CB Cameron Sutton:

“Same thing, like I mentioned the other guys. He upheld the standard with the quality of his play. Not only on defense, but the onside kick recovery was a spectacular play.”

On if they can benefit from the off week:

“It’s necessary, for sure.”

PITTSBURGH STEELERS QUARTERBACK DEVLIN HODGES

On if it went as good as he could have expected:

“Yeah, if you take away the interception, then definitely. I’m just so proud of the guys. Got a big win, and it’s nice to get a win on my first start. I couldn’t have done it without the guys in the locker room.”

On his “boss” shirt:

“Honestly, I bought it yesterday. It was for sale at a store for like five dollars, so I snagged it up. It had a duck on it, so I was like, ‘Man I might have to wear this to the stadium.’ I bought it as a joke, but people seem to love it.”

On how surprised he was at the amount of Steelers fans today:

“Honestly, not too surprised. That’s something that we kind of anticipated happening. We travel with fans so well. I mean, just pregame warmups and you could tell this was going to be like a home game.”

On how the early turnovers made his job easier:

“Anytime the defense scores first it takes the pressure off us. It makes us feel more comfortable. The pressure just goes away.”

On what he said in the huddle before the first series:

“I was probably just giving the guys an idea of the play we were going to do. We already knew the play, but I was just kind of reminding them. I think I might have mentioned that this might be a home game all day, so we might have to tell the crowd to settle down a little bit. I don’t know exactly, but I think that’s it.”

On the first deep ball to WR JuJu Smith-Schuster:

“That was underthrown. That was on me. JuJu did a great route, and I was just a little anxious and didn’t give him the best ball.”



On not having any incompletions the rest of the half:

“Honestly, they were dropping out of there, and we were just hitting the check-downs. [RB] James Conner just having a great night. I mean anytime you can check the ball down and get 10 or 15 yards almost every time, that’s huge.”

On who he had at the game:

“I had my mom and dad. I had my college roommate and one of my best friends from college, but I know there was a lot of people back home watching.

On his first career start:

“It was awesome. That’s something that I’ve dreamed about. That’s something that I’ve always believed that could happen and just to kind of live it out it was amazing.”

On if he thinks he did enough to get another start:

“I don’t know. All I care about is the game today. We got the win, and we have a bye week next week, so we’re going to enjoy the bye week.”

On his first career start:

“Honestly speechless. Like I said, since I was five years old, since I threw my first touchdown pass, that’s always something I’ve kind of dreamed about. It’s been a bumpy road, especially the past couple months. It’s been wild to think about. I’ve always had belief in myself. I’ve had other people behind me, and it’s just amazing.”

On his tweet from earlier today:

“A lot of people have asked me about that tweet. I feel like I’m a guy that’s always out in the field calm and cool, and the whole paddle on the water, I think that just talks about all the effort, all the hard work I put in. No matter what, I’m here now, and it’s a blessing.”

On what the Chargers defense showed the first drive after halftime:

“They were pretty much doing the same base defense they had been doing all game. They don’t do a whole lot of mix up, and yeah it was huge. I think we took off seven minutes on that drive, which it was 21, 24-nothing at the time. That’s huge. That’s a big advantage for the defense.”

On what he notices about the NFL game after his first start:

“That’s a tough question. I know this is my first start, but I have played in some preseason games and been on the sideline. I guess the one thing you take away from this game is that Steelers fans travel so well. It’s amazing.”

On what prepared him most for this stage:

“I would have to say practice. Just getting the game plan, practicing the game plan, being in the huddle with the guys that you know you’re going to be in the huddle with on game day. That takes care of it itself.”

On if there was a moment during the game he was appreciating what was going on:

“I mean, I was locked in the whole game. I think at the same time just being locked in at the game. I’m going to appreciate the fact that I’m there playing each play, that’s why on each play I give it my all. I’ll do whatever it takes to win, and we got the job done.”

On how big the defense was the first quarter and the key to converting third downs:

“Anytime the defense scores first — anytime the defense scores when I’m on the bench — that’s big time. That takes a little bit of pressure off. As far as converting the third downs, I mean James Conner. Checking down the ball to him sometimes and a couple other third downs. We just did the game plan we had planned and just executed it.”

On what kept him calm on third and goal:

“Just being a football player. When you have a chance to score, knowing that probably had some time to pick it up and throw it away. I think when it went between the legs, I started running back and kind of peaked around to see if I had time. That’s just being a football player.”

On if he got the game ball:

“Yeah, I think me and [RB] James Conner got one, [CB] Artie Burns got one, there were a couple handed out. Game ball is awesome, but I couldn’t have done it without the guys. The win means a lot more than the game ball.”



On what the most unexpected thing of the day was:

“Probably the fans, traveling this far, making it like a home environment. We never had to go on a silent count, we did our cadence the whole time and that was probably the most surprising thing of the day.”

On if they practice for the noise of an away game during the week:

“Not all week. We did one day. We just kind of wanted to get used to it. We weren’t exactly sure what was going to happen. We were prepared for both.”

On where he got his shirt from:

“I got it yesterday. We get a break, a couple hours, and me and my family walked around Venice Beach. There was a little shop there and I got it.”

PITTSBURGH STEELERS LINEBACKER DEVIN BUSH**On what the defense did for the offense early in the game:**

“What coach talked about this week was engineering a win. Our plan was to set up a short game for [QB] Devlin [Hodges]. Keep things simple for him, not make things erratic for him. Put points up on the board early.”

On picking up Melvin Gordon’s fumble:

“I realized it was behind the line of scrimmage. They didn’t blow it dead. So, I mean until they blow it dead it’s still a live ball.”

On finishing games:

“I feel like we should have done a better job finishing. But we still learned. Everything not going to go your way. Everything is not going to be perfect. We definitely finished today, great win, solid win. But I think there are some things we need to clean up at the end of the game to make sure there is no doubt.”

On the way he is always around the ball:

“well I think I played the whole game. When I’m home always sitting around with the ball in my hands. I think that’s a good thing. Good luck I guess. But I just like to play the whole game, see the whole play.”

On leaving the game in the first half due to injury:

“It was minor. At the time it was just interfering and uncomfortable. Until I got comfortable with it, wrapped it up, and it was fine.”

On everything coming together in the last few weeks:

“I think it has all come together for all of us as a unit. A lot of new faces out there. I think week in and week out. We keep taking our step. We learn a lot about ourselves and how dominate we can be if we are all on the same page.”

On controlling the Charger’s offense:

“We just control the game as much as we could. We had to win first down. Had to win second down. Definitely had to keep them behind sticks and not let them establish the running game.”

On most unexpected thing they have learned this season:

“The most unexpected? Today was the first time I got shrugged off. So, I think that was unexpected and the first time that happened to me in my whole career.”

On how being shrugged off for the first time in his career:

“Yeah, it was bad. I was disappointed in myself. I mean it happens. You play the game long enough it happens.”

On how he is going to deal with being shrugged off:

“Try to hit them hard, hit them harder.”

On the crowd chanting defense for the Steelers:

“It was good. I am just super excited. Steelers Nation and the fans. You know our travel [fans]. They love our team and they bring a lot of spirit to the games, especially winning games and home games. “



On the Chargers running backs:

“Those guys are good in space. We had to close down the distance. There were a couple times there was a lot of distance between the defenders and that’s just something to clean up.”

PITTSBURGH STEELERS RUNNING BACK JAMES CONNER**On the importance of getting an early lead:**

“Well [Head] Coach [Mike Tomlin] made an emphasis, with it being [QB Devlin] Duck’s [Hodges] first start, that we need to get points on defense. We started the game like that, so there was this huge momentum for us going forward.”

On how he prepares for games like Sunday night’s:

“I train hard. I’m not going to go for 100 yards [and] two touchdowns every game, so that’s why you just cancel out the noise. When you’re not having big numbers on the ground, it takes patience. It’s a long season. I feel like I had patience with it — we’ll have these big games.”

On first touchdown drive where he touched the ball every play:

“I just got to play big and be in the right spots for [Devlin] Duck [Hodges]. Our run game will always get going, we have a great [offensive] line. So the run game will always get going as long as we convert on third downs. We had a couple of third down conversions that extended that drive, and then [I] was able to punch one in. As long as we convert — on third downs — going forward, we’ll always have a decent run game.”

On what made QB Devlin Hodges effective:

“He just controlled the game. You know, throwing check downs and throwing to open guys. It was really the [offensive] line. Everything always starts up front with the big guys.”

On how it felt to have success in the run game for the first time this season:

“It just takes patience, you know? We did a good job converting on third down this game. The run game will get going as long as we can get first downs and stuff. It kind of just came together today.”

On how big running games help young players like RB Benny Snell Jr.:

“Oh man, it’s awesome for him to gain experience. That’s his type of football — late in the game, keeping the clock going. [That’s] Benny Snell football.”

PITTSBURGH STEELERS WIDE RECEIVER JUJU SMITH-SCHUSTER**On RB James Conner:**

“He was running the ball well and catching the ball well, pretty much doing everything right. You can see him on the check down making plays and getting open on the one on one matchups and of course, just running strong as always.”

On what today’s win means for the team:

“It was an AFC football game, an away game, and a huge win for us. Going into our bye week we have a couple guys banged up and wounded. We just need to come back healthy for the next game and be prepared for the season ahead. We are super excited with how we played tonight and how much we put on the board.”

On the defense’s role in the win:

“Coach told us exactly that, that our defense needs to make plays, not only by making turnovers happen but also by putting points on the board. We did exactly that and did it early in the game. We did exactly what coached talked about in our team meeting the night before. They came out, executed and allowed for our offense to do our thing.”

On QB Devlin Hodges:

“He did a great job. He made sure the open guy got the ball and made some plays. It was his first start, especially in an away game. I think he did a great job.”

