

Head Coach Ron Rivera
Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Carolina Panthers
Heinz Field • Thursday November 8, 2018



What about their pass rush that was giving you trouble today?

Well, when you get a 14-point lead it's easy to pass rush. We put ourselves in a hole and that's the result of what happens. They did some good things against us, and unfortunately, we made too many mistakes early on to give ourselves an opportunity to win a football game.

Re: Match-up between Cameron Heyward and Christian McCaffrey

No that was trying to count their guys. They moved their guys around, put into situations where that's what happens. Again, when you get in situations, when you get a lead like that, you can do things like that and that's what happened.

What happened?

Well, we gave up plays over the top, something we haven't done in the last few weeks, that's what happened. Again, you get a lead, things change.

Re: The offensive line

Well, again, they did some things that were different, they brought some pressure that beat our protections, and you have to give them credit. Again, I have told you guys before that we have to make sure we are giving these guys an opportunity to win. So, we will go back and look at these things and we have to fix it.

What did you tell them at halftime?

I told them we had every opportunity to win this football game. We had to come out and get a defensive stop, and we didn't, unfortunately. That's just how it broke.

Re: James Bradberry and Donte Jackson

Unfortunately, they double moved us on the first one, and because they double moved us, James jumped on the underneath and the receiver from the inside broke to the sideline to the touchdown. Again, you just have to stay deep and stay in the lead position.

And with Donte Jackson?

He just tripped. He's running with the guy and falls.

What about Eric Reid's ejection?

I don't think that was one, I really don't. I don't think he hit him hard enough to eject him. Again, we're trying to protect the quarterback's and again, if he would have hit him as fast as he was going you know, they are trying to protect the quarterback's, and he was high.

He seemed apologetic.

He was. Again, and you saw Ben Roethlisberger's reaction, as well. So, it led me to believe that he didn't hit Ben as hard as I think they thought he did.

Re: T.J. Watt's hit on Cam Newton

Well, again, it just depends on where he hits him. We'll see. Believe me, there are times where I've seen our guys get hit, that I would like to see it, but I'm not the one making that judgment.

Cam took a lot of hits tonight, what made you decide to keep him in the game down 52-14?

Well, because back then; we were going to do certain things. So, we wanted to keep giving him a little bit rhythm and get him out at the end.

What do you do in these 10 days?

Well, again, get the players away from football for a little bit. We have a nice little stretch going on. Us, as coaches, we are looking and evaluating what happened. Then make some corrections, and get ready for our next game.

Re: Good start

I thought everything was going fine until we gave up 75-yard touchdown pass. At the end of the day, we talk about staying in the lead position and we didn't, unfortunately. They ran a double move, our guy bit up on the double move, and they throw the ball over the top for a touchdown. I can't give you any other explanation than that.

Re: Interception

Right, again, Cam got trapped in the end zone and was just trying to get rid of the ball. He had two guys in line and unfortunately, he threw it over the top of one of them and it led to an interception.

Re: Special teams penalty

Again, it was disappointing and it was unfortunate.

Re: On the road

Again, we go back and look at the turnover, that's probably the biggest thing. You know, you talk about problems with situations, we lose the turnover battle early in the first quarter, and so that's probably the biggest thing right now.

What were you most disappointed in?

Well, the big plays. We haven't given up big plays in the last three weeks. We gave several big plays early on. We hadn't turned the ball over, especially the way we did. So, if we're looking for what happened or a reason, that's probably the biggest thing. We allowed bad plays, and turned the ball over. You just can't do that and expect to win a football game.

You explain the pass rush as hot and cold earlier this week, how do you gain that consistency to get it more on the hot side?

Well, you got to give them credit. Early on, we came on and we were going to run some pressure things, started to whip the ball outside, so we were very ineffective with our pressures. Then when we started to rush forward, they were blocking six people and putting the rest to the out on the route. So, the quarterbacks had a little more time. Again, when teams mix it up that well, it's tough getting pressure on the quarterback. They did very good job at that.

What is your biggest concern with a loss like this?

Just that we bounce back. I mean we are going to take a look back at what happened. But, the truth of the matter is that it's one football game. We are 6-3 right now. So, we have seven more games to find out. Next week, we are going to get ready for Detroit, and that's what I'm going to look at. At the end of the day guys, this shit happens, and I'm going to put it just like that. Okay, let's just be honest about it. It happens. This is my 30th year in the NFL. I have seen games like this; I've been part of games like this, on both sides. At the end of the day, you continue to dwell on it and worry about it; it's going to creep in. If you get over it, and you start preparing on your next game and focusing on your next game, you give yourself the chance to win the next game. That's what we are going to do. There's no magic pill. I told that to the players in the locker-room. At the end of the day, get this one out of your system and move forward. We, as coaches, have to go to work, figure out what happened and get those things corrected, and start preparing for the next team. That's the only thing we can do. I'm not going to go to beat them down they are beat down already. Pittsburgh is a very good football team that came out and did a great job against us. We made too many mistakes expect to beat a good football team. So, we'll correct those

at the end of the day.

Cam left, was he shaken up at all?

No, no they were adjusting his shoulder pads. So, he had taken them off and they were working on them. He came back out, that's what happened.

**QB Cam Newton
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Re: General overview of the game

We played a very skilled and talented Pittsburgh team. We just got whooped man. It happens. You'll have those type of games in the League. It's going to be about how we rebound and get ready for our next opponent.

Re: Impact of Steeler's quick turnaround after the pick-six

It was just a domino effect. It felt like we started off fast. We wanted to start fast, scored on the first drive, and then all of a sudden... They had a plan coming in and it was very clear what their plan was. They had a lot of Rob rushes, wanted to eat up the space, take away the rush lanes and run lanes. They did a great job with that, and I tip my hat off to those guys, and you just have to do better next time.

Re: Continuing to play in the fourth quarter despite the deficit

It doesn't matter. At the end of the day, my job is to be the best football player possible. If I'm still in there, then I am still supposed to be in there. I'm not going to complain or bicker about it. That's just how it played out. I'm not going to be in my feelings about it and it is what it is.

How did a game like this feel after a string of successes?

I'll tell you what, it sure enough was a humbling piece of pie. It was a learning experience for a lot of guys. If we expect us to be as good as we expect us to be, we have to find ways to win games like this in hostile environment. It was extremely loud. We played against a talented team like I said before, and we just have to find ways to win football games. We had a lot of our noses bleeding early on and we just have to stop it. [We] need to find ways to keep things going in our favor – offensively, defensively and special teams. We just got out played today.

Re: Inconsistencies in helmet to helmet hits between him and Ben Roethlisberger

It is what it is. Last week was a perfect example of the same scenario. Quarterbacks get hit, and I'm not here to judge if a flag is getting called, but it is an inconsistency. I do understand that, and I've understood it for a long time. At the end of the day, you still have to learn from it, play through it and keep fighting.

Re: What happened on the pick-six

I was just trying to throw the ball away, and when you're getting slung around, you can't really control the accuracy. I didn't know if I was in the end zone or not. I didn't want to get an intentional grounding, so the first person I saw was Greg [Olsen]. I was just trying to throw it at his feet, but when you're getting slung the ball-accuracy takes off in ways you didn't want it to go. Like I said, I hit the ground, looked up and it was an interception. It was so close to the end zone that... it is what it is. Like I said, I've been playing in

this league long enough to understand that you need to fight through games like this. We can easily be on the other side, and we have. At the end of the day, they got the win. It's alright. We'll be alright.

Were you surprised Eric Reid got ejected for that hit?

I was surprised that he got ejected. Depending on your vantage point or what you seen. I'm not here to say anything or scrutinize the referees for what they've done or whatever. Was it a dirty play? Who knows. My plate is full trying to be the best quarterback I can possibly be. That's what I am going to keep trying to do.

Can you expand on winning games in a hostile environment because it is a game that you will face down the stretch?

Absolutely. We just got to be ready for it. We have a lot of young guys that are making an impact for us that we are going to need and rely on. We just need to be firing on all cylinders. From the pick six, to the early touchdowns, the kind of game planning they had defensively, you combine and add that all up and you still have to find ways to score points, stop them, make due to give us and opportunity that you can kind of show for because you can't mimic this type of environment at practice. It's either you step up and play in it as well as you possibly can and if not, there is a lot of opportunity lost and today we lost that opportunity.

Can you talk about their pass rush was it something you missed on tape or was it just a matter of execution?

No, they just played good. Very physical type of front like I said they had a plan and it's good. It's okay, we'll be fine, and we'll bounce back from this.

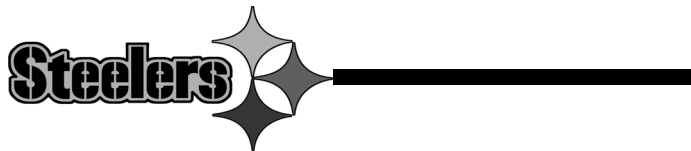
How has Christian McCaffrey turned into a safety net for this offense with all of his touchdowns?

Just the ability to impact any game whenever he wants to shows the performance had today. He not only can be successful or effective in the pass game but also running the ball as well. I look forward to him having that impact and that is just another thing teams have to get prepared for.

How disappointing was it knowing it's Thursday night?

It was a quick week, quick turnaround. We understood that there were some matchups that were favorable in our behalf but when you get put behind the eight ball that kind of deterrers you from the given game plan. You just have to find ways to put up points as quickly as possible, stay in our rhythm, or keep the defense off balance. It happens like this sometimes and we're ok with it. What I am not ok is not learning from this and the guys in that locker room seem to have a grasp on what's at stake. We know what we are capable of being a deep contender playoff team and we just got to find ways.

**Panthers Players
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RCB, Donte Jackson

Re: What was the difference tonight?

They had some good plays. There was nothing different that we did, there was nothing different that they did, there was nothing spectacular that they did, they just made a play.

Re: how did you separate while being neck and neck with Antonio Brown?

He has his little touches that he does at the top of the route, he got me on one. He made a play.

How much can you watch the film and learn from it versus just flush it, throw it away and move on?

We can learn a lot from it. You can learn a lot from any loss. That's what we're going to do. We're going to get back into the lab and move forward. The best thing about this business is that you get another week to go back out there next and get another opportunity and that's what we're going to do. That's what we're looking forward to.

Was this a humbling experience?

Of course, lessons to be learned. It's the NFL, you know what I'm saying. Pro teams in both locker rooms, pro players in both lockers rooms. Today the better team won; it wasn't us unfortunately. We'll be back, we have another chance next week, we have four days off, and going to get ready to go when we get back in there.

WR, Jarius Wright

Re: *Inaudible question*

We don't play Sunday, so we have to look at the highlights and see this for pretty much ten days straight. This is one that's going to sink in for a little while.

Is that good or bad?

It's a good thing, but at the same time you never want to lose. The way we came out and got smacked today, makes you never want to get smacked like that again. At the same time, we're going to take all the positives we can out of it, even though there's not many, but we can't play like this.

Re: Not holding on to the memory of this loss?

You know it's big time in this league and that's one good thing about football. You play bad one week, you get a chance to make up for it the next week. We'll get it together, we'll figure out what we did wrong and do better and we'll come back ready to play.

TE, Greg Olsen

Re: Thoughts on the game

Yeah, we got the ball at the jump, right down the field, scored. Two plays later, we're down 14-7. It kind of came crashing down on us early, we could never regasp the momentum at that point. There's really not a whole lot of positives to take out of a game you lose like that.

Re: Vantage point on the Steelers defensive line moving things around a lot consistently

We'll find out when we watch the tape. We just got beat. I think there will be a lot of this. At the end of the game, we got beat in every facet of football imaginable, every element of the game, all sides of the ball, all phases, all components of those phases. We just got beat. I think we got a little bit and I think we realize now that maybe this isn't so easy, right. I think guys all of a sudden start winning and think things are so easy and everything is hunky dory. This league is hard, this league will humble you real fast. Hopefully that's the lesson we get out of tonight. They still only count for one loss, they don't count how much you lose by, thankfully. We've got a lot of work to do. We found out tonight that we have some work to do to be in that upper echelon right now.

How important to learn from this but also have a short memory and move on?

We've got a long stretch here, we have ten days. You wish this was the week that we have the four-day turn around instead of last week. No one feels sorry for you in this league. It's just the way it goes. You've got to play better in every element, and we'll find out.