

**49ers Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers**

Opening comments:

“Alright, guys, all we had was [CB Akhelo] Witherspoon with a foot. We’ll find out more tomorrow.”

How do you make sense of this one?

“Very happy. I’m exhausted. I thought we played extremely well at some times and played extremely bad at some times. Anytime you have five turnovers in a game, that means you didn’t play that well. But, you take those away, and every aspect of the game decides that. I thought the guys did very well. It reminded me a lot of the Arizona game we had last year, we had a game versus Arizona where it was like 30 first downs to 10, and like 500 yards to 200, but we ended up losing the game because we had all those turnovers. Today was very similar, so it looked like we were going down that same (road), but the defense, they stepped it up big. Just getting the ball, those two turnovers to start. I think they both were in the redzone, or backed up. Pittsburgh was already in the redzone when they got it, held them to two field goals. Offense got going in the second half, but then we got that fumble down there in the redzone to end, for the defense got the ball right back. It was huge.”

What does it say about the team that you’re now in that position where you can lose the turnover battle like that and still come out with a victory?

“These were the biggest ones. Everyone knows how well Cincinnati went, but the game today and the game in Tampa, those are games that we have not been able to win here. And, to have two games like that where things don’t go perfect, says a lot about the character of the guys in there. I think we have been better in how we’re playing, but it also says, our guys are mentally a lot stronger. They were pretty relentless through everything. They didn’t waiver at all. They were excited at halftime. They were excited in the third, and obviously, they were really excited when we got back in.”

Can you break down the touchdown to WR Dante Pettis? How’d that play evolved and what that says about Dante making a contested catch at the goal line.

“It was nice. I didn’t get to see it all clean. I know it didn’t come out right away. We tried to hurry up and snap it really quick. I know we had a guy in the flat and Dante running a stick route right on the goal line. It looked like he beat the guy on the inside and, from what I saw, I think the corner tried to fall back in and Dante just stepping back to it, from what I saw, was huge. Because it’s not like it was a play that got him wide open or anything. He ran a real good route, but they had two guys fall back in and just to have the aggressive hands like that in that situation was, looked like that’s why we scored.”

You guys are 3-0, you guys haven’t been 3-0 since 1998. That team was pretty good back then.

“Yeah, that is good, but that doesn’t mean anything. I’ve been 5-0 and not made the playoffs before, so that doesn’t mean much. Especially, having a week off here. I know bye weeks are not fun after a loss, so to win one that way, we’ll get two good days here in with practice. We’ll get away for a little bit. Bring the guys in. We’ll get a couple extra practices in since we’re going on Monday Night. Give us a chance to heal up, but can’t wait to get right back.”

What do you make of the way QB Jimmy Garoppolo played, particularly since he was getting hit a lot more often today than he had the previous two games?

“I thought Jimmy played well. He was put in some tough situations with all the turnovers. I think he had two picks, but they seemed like pretty good throws. Just went off those guys hands a little bit. But they came after us. It was very similar to Tampa and anytime somebody does that, there’s a lot of feast or famine. So, it’s going to be tight every time. He hung in there, took some big hits, made some big throws and when we did give him the time, he didn’t miss much.”

How much of a hurdle can that be when you miss most of a full season and you come back and you haven't really taken those hits, to be able to deliver a lot of those passes?

"I think it's huge, always for a quarterback and anyone. With him coming off the ACL, it's been longer. You don't hit guys in practice, so you're going to get in the games, and I think sometimes the more Jimmy gets hit, the better he does. He responded to it well and played very tough."

Are you concerned with the number of times he was hit? Do you think there are things you can do schematically to cut down on that or is that just football?

"No, that's just football. Yeah, you'd love to pick up all those blitzes, but I thought we were getting rid of it pretty quick. They were shooting the safeties through a lot of gaps throughout the whole game. A lot of times that dares you to throw the ball, but that's what happens when you see it. What was neat, was we were able to still stick with the run too, there were some tough looks, but it's also feast or famine in the run game. The key to that stuff is doing good on third down, which allows you to do it. I think we were 55% on third down, which makes it a lot easier to be balanced."

Do you have any initial sense of the severity of Witherspoon's injury?

"No, I don't at all."

What happened on that last turnover, the one that went off of WR Richie James Jr.?

"We're trying to timeout the cadence. It was one of those fake jet sweeps to change the structure of the defense. From what I saw, it snapped when he was over the center, and we want to snap it when he is over the tackle."

FB Kyle Juszczyk was a lot more involved today. Was that the game plan going into it or was it something that kind of evolved?

"No, we knew he had a chance at some things. He's a fullback, so he's doing a lot of blocking out there. There were a few times when we thought he could slip through. He had a tough time slipping through there because of all the pressure, but Jimmy had to wait on him a little bit. He finally got passed [LB Mark] Barron and that was one of the most impressive catches I've seen. It took a while to get there, so Jimmy had to let it go, especially with that safety in his face. That was huge."

What's been happening behind the scenes that enabled WR Dante Pettis to get the start tonight?

"He's just gotten better each week. We all know how he finished last year. Had a few bumps in the road throughout training camp, which I think has been well documented and I talked about. But, I've been extremely impressed with how he's responded since the first week of the season. He's taken the challenge. He's been working as hard as anyone on our team. He had a really good week last week and he came back and was even better this week. I see [WR] Deebo [Samuel] in, we were going to start Dante last week based off his practice, but the first two plays we did kind of changed our mind on that because of something we wanted Deebo in for. Dante earned it and helped us out today."

With all that being said, what went through your head when the pass banged off his hands and got intercepted?

"Not much. It was a bang, bang play. The ball was in the middle instead of on the right hash. We were about two yards too wide with our split. It's a very quick throw, where you just plant and throw and it just went off the tip of his fingers. Wish he would have had a little tighter split on it. I think it would have been in his hands. It wasn't like he eased up on the play. I didn't think it was a bad drop. Anytime the ball touches your hands though, he has the ability to catch it. I think that was just football."

This is just about as emotional as I've seen you after a game or as it was finishing up. Is it because of the grind of the game or the emotion or why do you think you let loose like that?

"Because of the grind of the game. The week before, it was more relaxing. Could relax that whole last quarter. This game, it's very intense when you feel like you're doing some things, but you have no points to show for it. The turnovers were very frustrating and then to get back in there with our first two drives of the second half felt good. But then after that turnover it's just intense and we knew how big this game was. They are all big, but especially going into the bye week, we needed to win this and we didn't make it easy on ourselves. It was extremely intense, but it felt very good at the end of that game."

You talked about Jimmy getting hit, but he was able to escape, I think, three sacks on that second to last play. There were three a few series before. The fact that he was able to do that, he trusts his knee that much, how much energy does that give the rest of the offense?

"A lot. There's two feelings with it. Sometimes you're nervous as can be, just throw it away and get rid of it because no one's open. Then sometimes, when he gets out of there, you're glad he did it because then you've got a chance to make the play. I have very mixed emotions whenever I see that. I don't know how I'm going to feel until the end of it."

At 3-0, is it hard to have a bye week now or do you just take it whenever you can take it?

"We'd rather not have it, but it's always good to rest guys up. You can always use this time to get guys healthier, but it is what it is. We know we'll come back. You always have a little time off when you have a Thursday Night game. Hopefully it will allow us to get a couple guys back who haven't been with us this year and then we know those last eight games are going to be a grind."

How do you think OL Justin Skule did out there today?

"The fact that I didn't talk about him much throughout the game, I think he did very well. I've got to watch the tape and see exactly. I didn't talk about him really all day. I know he had those two penalties, which I couldn't really tell what he did on them. Not that I was watching him either. But anytime you go through a whole game like that and you've got a rookie starting for his first time and the play caller isn't bringing up his name left and right, what happened, that means he did a pretty good job."

What went wrong on those two plays when CB Jason Verrett took over for Ahkello?

"Just looked like he got beat. From the first one that I saw, it looked like somehow, not sure exactly what defense we were in, but we got the safety out of the middle field and they threw a post over the top. I thought I was going to be uncatchable and I thought he was on him pretty good, but their feet got tangled up and then you always get the PI call on that. I believe they double moved him on the next time. I'm not sure. I didn't see it. I just saw the end result. He just got beat."

**49ers QB Jimmy Garoppolo
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What were the emotions as you guys were moving the ball and turning it over and moving the ball and turning it over, what were the emotions? Anger, frustration, what was going through your mind?

"Not really frustration. We knew we were moving it, so at halftime we came in, we didn't want to press or anything, we weren't going to get all the points at once, so we just knew to take it one play at a time and just keep executing. I think we had the right mindset for it."

Are turnovers contagious? I mean, it was kind of happening a lot.

"You never want it to. It's just some of them, unfortunate, some of them, bad decisions or whatever it may be. When you have five of them, though, when your defense plays like that, it's incredible to come out with a win."

What were you seeing there on that last play, that last throw to WR Dante Pettis?

"Dante ran a great route, came out of the huddle with some speed. I think they were a little confused with their adjustments and Dante made a great step back to the ball, caught it, got into the end zone. It was awesome."

Is it better to be swallowed up by your own offensive line as opposed to the other guy's defensive line?

"Absolutely. Yeah, always is. Those guys battled up front though. We knew it was going to be a dogfight, they had a good D front and everything and I thought they played phenomenal. [T] Justin [Skule] stepping in the way he did, I couldn't ask for anymore."

You had only taken two hits the previous two games combined before today. How much different was today and does it give you, I don't know, a little bit of confidence given all the time you missed last year to know you still have that in your back pocket?

"You never want to, but yeah, it's part of the game. I think we were getting the ball out on time, the receivers had great run after catch, backs battled their ass off and, like I said before, the O-line played phenomenal."

CB Richard Sherman said that he thinks you like getting hit because it wakes you up a little bit. Would you say that's accurate?

"I've been told that before. I don't know. I'm a football player. It's part of the game. You just take it as you go, I guess."

How are you feeling afterwards? You did take a few hits.

"I'm feeling awesome. We had a win, man. Whenever you get the win, you always feel good."

What do you think it says about this team that you kind of found different ways to win in each of the first three weeks?

"It's a mindset that we have in that locker room. It's a great group of guys, great coaches, and I think it starts from the top down. We know what we have, and we just have to go prove it on the field now."

Is it hard to stop playing and have a bye at 3-0?

"Yeah, it's weird. I've never had a bye this early. It is what it is type thing. Got to go back, have a good week of assessing ourselves and get ready for the Monday night game."

Having two plays where I think you escaped three sacks per, just spinning out, spinning out. How much confidence does that give you if you didn't have it already in your leg given that you were able to break out of those?

"Leg's felt good. I haven't really had any issues with it this whole time. Wasn't like it proved anything to me, but it's a good confidence booster, I guess. I don't know"

Some of the other offensive guys said late in the game they have a different type of confidence in the defense because of some of the new additions. Can you elaborate on that and what that feeling is when the defense is out there?

"I think the crowd felt it, especially on that last, whatever, one-minute drive. Those guys up front that we've got, they're some dogs and they get after the quarterback and they make it hard for them back there. When we got that lead, we felt pretty good about it."

Those guys picked you up a few times, obviously, with the turnovers in the first half. After they gave up the 76-yard touchdown, you guys put together a drive and scored. What was the mindset going into that drive of “hey, it’s our turn to pick them up?”

“That’s what I was kind of saying before, just the mindset of the locker room. It’s complimentary football, especially when we turn the ball over early and they only got six points out of it, and then [CB] K’Waun [Williams] gets the huge interception at the beginning of the second half, we go down and score. All that stuff, it’s how you create a good football team. We’re getting there.”

What’s changed with Dante Pettis over the last few weeks? Obviously limited playing time weeks 1 and 2 and today, he comes out and scores the game winning touchdown. What’s changed with him in your eyes?

“Nothing, honestly. Dante’s phenomenal in practice. I know you guys aren’t seeing all that and everything, but he battles his ass off in practice. Great mindset of when his number’s called, he’s ready. You’ve got to appreciate a guy like that. Having all that competitiveness, you love to see it as a quarterback, because you can trust that then.”

I’m sure you guys don’t necessarily maybe want this kind of attention, but you guys are 3-0. How special is that? This team hasn’t had that success in a very long time.

“It’s a good start. There’s a lot of football left. Three wins isn’t going to get you anything in this league. Like I said, it’s a good start. I think going into this bye week, assess ourselves and what we can do better. Obviously, five turnovers, we’ve got plenty of room for improvement.”

Do you think the Steelers were trying to get to you, almost trying to get in your head with the pressure today?

“I think that’s just kind of their defense, bringing safety blitzes. The edge rushers did a good job and everything. But, I think we held up pretty well.”

When a blitzers coming untouched at you and in a split second you have to decide throw it away, try to get around him, or hit a slightly open receiver, is that just completely instinctual on your part?

“That’s being a quarterback. I don’t know, that’s part of the game I guess. It’s just quick decisions. Things happen quickly and the week of preparation makes those decisions easier for you.”

Has the injury from last year changed that equation at all for you?

“No, I think back in OTAs and everything, it was affecting me. But, now I haven’t had any issues with it.”

What were the tips that Kyle was telling you on the sideline before you went out for the second half touchdown drive and the tone of it?

“It was just little different things here and there. We put in some new plays at halftime. I thought the coaches did a phenomenal job, whatever the Steelers were doing, they complimented it and came up with something new. I thought our guys didn’t flinch on the sideline when we were putting in some new stuff which is always good to see.”

Was that touchdown play a new one?

“The last one?”

To Dante, yeah.

“No, that wasn’t.”

That was old hat?

“Yeah, old faithful.”

Was the receiver supposed to clear you before the snap on that motion or is it supposed to be in front of you?

“That was just a little bit of miscommunication. That’s on me though. I just have to be cleaner as the quarterback.”

Put him into motion earlier maybe?

“Just be cleaner with it overall.”

After that final turnover you were talking about, you were not amused. That could have been, obviously, the game right there. What was going through your mind and how did you reset?

“Like you said, I was upset and everything. But the defense, when they’re playing like that, it gives you such confidence on the sideline. So, it was just more about getting our guys ready for the next series. They make huge plays like that on defense, it sets us up for success.”

You touched on how well the offensive line played today. What did you think of OL Justin Skule in his first career start at left tackle?

“I thought Justin stepped in. He was fearless from the minute I saw him this morning. He just had the right mindset and everything. And then, even [OL] Dan [Brunskill] got in for a snap and blocked his ass off and he was fired up. He almost broke my hand when he high fived me, but it was awesome. For guys those to come in like that, I’ve been a rookie, I know how it is, so it’s impressive.”

**49ers LB Kwon Alexander
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers**

What does it say that you can go out there after five turnovers and still get a win?

“The thing you could say about us is we just play hard, we fight hard to the end. One thing about our team is we’re not going to give up and we’re going to play for each other. And, that’s what I love about the team so much. We fight for each other and we don’t let up.”

What is the mood on the sidelines when the offense gets another turnover and you guys are going out on the field again?

“Did you see us when we were out there on the field? It doesn’t matter. No, that’s our mindset. Wherever we’re at on the field, we’re going to do our thing. It doesn’t matter if we’re on the two-yard line, or if the ball’s put on the two-yard line. It doesn’t matter. We’re going to go out there and just play hard, and finish the game.”

**49ers DL Arik Armstead
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers**

On the defensive line, this front seam, you’re three games in, it seems like more and more plays are being made by you guys.

“Yeah, I think we’re barely scratching the surface too. You know, we’re still finding our groove and getting comfortable with each other, but we have the mindset to stick together and fight through our games. You know, we put it on us to go out there and get the job done.”

Can you take us through the first fumble there at the end?

“Yeah, it was just a run play. I was getting vertical, bounced it and cut back, and was able to get him and you know, get the ball out.”

Were you going for the ball there?

“I was trying to wrap him up and I was able to, my arm hit the ball, so.”

With them winning the turnover battle, did you feel like it was going to get to some point where you guys were going to get one yourselves?

“Yeah, that’s what we’re always striving for is creating turnovers on defense. You know, we figured if we keep fighting, keep fighting, it’s going to happen.”

**DL DeForest Buckner
Press Conference – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers**

CB Richard Sherman was in here saying that you guys embrace being put in tough spots. You guys were in tough spots at different points of the game today. What does that say about your group to be able to overcome that?

“Yeah, everybody, the defense, man, I’m proud of every single one of them. Nobody shied away from the challenge. We love that. It’s more of an opportunity for us as a defense to get better, to show what we can do. It just shows the hard work that we put in on the offseason altogether and it’s coming to fruition.”

You’ve been here obviously through some tough times. To be 3-0, what’s the difference like in terms of having a team that looks like it can do somethings?

“Yeah, like you said, I think the organization hasn’t been 3-0 since like 1998, so that’s a big accomplishment. It’s a great day. Coming in 3-0, the Seahawks lost today, which is also a good thing. But, yeah, it’s a great feeling. A lot of the guys, we’re a young team and we’re still learning to win. We could’ve made that game a lot easier on ourselves. We found every possible way as a team to kind of shoot ourselves in the foot a little bit, make it a little challenging, but the main thing is coming out with a win and that’s what we did.”

You all are learning how to win and with the five turnovers and the defense playing as well as you guys did, what does that do confidence-wise moving past this bye week?

“Yeah, we know as a group we can be so much better. Defensive-wise, obviously, we let a couple slip. We know we can do better on that on all phases. Offensively, obviously, we had five turnovers. It’s just the little things. It’s executing and just taking care of the ball and getting the ball on defense. I felt like we could’ve gotten a couple more today, and we missed those opportunities. We’ve just got to go back, watch film and see what we can get better on.”

**49ers TE Ross Dwelley
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers**

How does it feel to just be a part of this team, 3-0 now?

“It feels amazing. 3-0 is just amazing. What we went through last year, being in games like this and not being able to finish. To finish a game like this, a close game like this, it feels even sweeter.”

What does it take to go from all that adversity that you faced to be here today for the kids that have gone through it and still will?

"It takes a lot of adversity. It takes a lot of handling that adversity. Coming from a small school, you're not going to get that many looks. You just have to put good stuff on film and show everyone what you've got."

**49ers FB Kyle Juszczyk
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers**

How early did you get a sense that the safety was coming over on your catch?

"To be honest, I didn't know where the safety was at. My focus was making the inside linebacker miss and trying to get out to the sideline. It was a kind of a weird angle, I was in that seam area, so I had an idea that he would be there but I didn't actually know where."

What did you learn about this team, in finding ways to win?

"I feel like this team is resilient, there is confidence in ourselves. Even when things are going bad, we know that we can turn things around. I am so impressed with our defense, I think that our defense is so legit and we can play with anybody. On offense we just have to clean up the turnovers. There is two ways to look at this game. You can focus on the negatives and on all of the turnovers but at the same time you can look at the positives like wow we had all of those turnovers and we still won this game. Think about if we clean those up."

**49ers T Mike McGlinchey
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers**

Have you ever played in a game like this at any level?

"Yeah, it felt very similar to Arizona at home last year. Last year, we didn't come out on the right side of that one. I think we had even more yards in that game than we did today, and we still found a way to win. That's what's huge about this team."

When you got the ball back the last time [in the fourth quarter], what was the emotion? Was it just "charge through the huddle?"

"Absolutely. Our defense made a huge play, getting the ball back on our side of the field, that late in the game after we had just gotten down to the 10-yard line and then turned the ball over again. That's what winning football teams do. They make plays in big moments. They gave us one last shot, and [San Francisco 49ers QB Jimmy Garoppolo] did a good job of getting us down the field. I'm so happy for [San Francisco 49ers WR Dante Pettis] to get over that hump and get into the end zone to win us the game."

That final turnover inside the 10-yard line, the others it seemed like, "OK, we can overcome this," whereas this one seemed like a killer. What was your reaction to that?

"As soon as it happened, I looked up to see how much time was left, and I think there were six-ish minutes, so I knew it wasn't over. I knew we still had a chance. Our defense is different, and there are guys over there that are built different. They made a huge play. Like I said earlier, that's what winning football teams do, make huge plays in huge moments. It was a huge moment for us and gave us a last chance to get what we needed to do all day finally done."

49ers WR Dante Pettis
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers

Can you talk about that catch for the last touchdown?

“It was a good win. We fought hard. We obviously didn’t play as well as we wanted to but we came out on top. That is all that really matters. We got the ball back from the fumble recovery, so we knew that we had a really good chance to at least tie it. We got a few good plays going and ended up down at the goal line and they called the play. I was like okay here it goes, this is it.”

What goes through your mind when they call that play and you know it is coming your way?

“Let’s go. This is what we work for. If you don’t want to be in that moment, if you don’t want the ball right there, you shouldn’t be playing sports. That is kind of what you live for.”

You guys are 3-0. Did you imagine that?

“Yes. We all knew what we could do. There is obviously a lot that we need to work on, but we knew that we were a lot better than we were last year. We just have to keep fighting every day.”

49ers CB Richard Sherman
Press Conference – September 22, 2019
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How was this team able to win while turning the ball over five times?

“It’s just resilience. It’s growth. It’s growth from offense, defense, special teams, because it takes three units to win a ball game. That’s what we did tonight. We showed that all three units had trust in one another, all three units picked each other up when the other fell apart, and that’s how we were able to win the game. It was trust and you appreciate games like that. Me as a nine-year veteran, I can appreciate games like this. I’ve been in quite a few of them, and how you respond to these games goes a long way to how your season goes. I think our men responded well.”

Ahead of today’s game, you called for the fans to come out today and be loud. It seems like they did that. How did that energy play into the win today?

“It had a great impact. Niner gang, we appreciate you guys. We went out there and fought for you. It’s not always pretty. It’s not always going to be a blow out and just get to sit comfortably in your seats and drink. Sometimes, we’ve got to keep you on the edge of your seats. Got to keep you involved, got to keep you in the seats, you know. That’s what they told us. But, we appreciate you guys sticking through, being loud, being proud. 3-0 for the first time since ’98.”

What was the energy like on the bench when you, obviously, you went back out again after several turnovers? What was it like on the bench?

“One thing we pride ourselves on is being the same, regardless, good, bad or indifferent. You have to approach the game the same way. It was probably more enthusiastic when we got the turnovers than it was when we didn’t. Like when our offense gave up a turnover and put us in a hard spot, we took it as Murphy’s Law. We took it as Murphy’s Law, and you want to slap Murphy in the face, and we did that today. We took Murphy’s Law- everything that can go wrong, will go wrong. You take it with a smile, and you go out there and preserve, and that’s what we did today as a defense. That’s what our offense did and that’s what our special teams did today. That’s what we did as a full team.”

49ers OL Justin Skule
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
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How do you think you played overall?

“A lot of stuff to fix. Can’t have those penalties, those were costly penalties at pretty bad times. I had a couple of good things, but I am going to learn from it all from the tape and move on.”

How has San Francisco 49ers OL Joe Staley been throughout the week helping you get ready?

“He has been phenomenal. Just giving me pointers, watching film with me, doing all sorts of things, giving me little tricks that he knows, that sort of thing. I couldn’t have asked for a better person to help me.”

What did you think of the blind-side block penalty?

“Obviously I would never try to hurt anyone. I was trying lead with my shoulder. I didn’t want him to hit [San Francisco 49ers QB] Jimmy [Garoppolo]. My job is to protect the quarterback. That is what I was trying to do. I was just trying to make sure he didn’t get to the quarterback. I will look at it and learn from it for sure.”

49ers CB K’Waun Williams
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
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After five turnovers, it was about time the defense provided us with some. Take us through the pick.

“We just played our regular coverage. I just did a kind of disguise and I fell back into the route. I felt something coming behind me so just fell off and picked the ball.”

On the last turnover that led to the game winning drive. If any team needed a break was the 49er’s at the time, right?

“Yes, our defense just kept going. Everybody was focused and locked in. We were just preaching a turnover and we ended up getting it.”

Steelers Head Coach Mike Tomlin
Press Conference – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers

Opening comments:

“You know, we lost the game today and we did, we lost the game on not enough play making. Specifically in the second half I thought significant components of the game, in terms of how it unfolded, is we turned the ball over twice and on both occasions we gave up touchdowns. First of all, we’ve got to do a good job of taking care of the ball. We know that. Particularly, in the state that we’re in from a health standpoint, we didn’t do it. And then subsequently, we have to support the offense and get off at least some of the time, you know? We turned the ball over twice. They scored two touchdowns in the second half and really that’s the difference in the game. In the first half, we were getting turnovers and we were settling for field goals. So, there’s the, you know, that’s the story line of the game, if you will. Such is life in the National Football League. We take responsibility for it. We own it. Not good enough today. We won’t blink. We’ve got AFC ball next week. We’ll be ready for it. [Pittsburgh Steelers TE] Vance McDonald got injured in the game. His shoulder’s being evaluated. He wasn’t able to return. The rest I think is just bumps and bruises associated with play. Questions?”

At the very start of the fourth quarter you all had fourth and very short. What was the calculation of not going for it?

“It was at the very start of the fourth quarter.”

It seemed like you were really making your own breaks today and everything, but why not be able to finish that game off as well as you guys were kind of--?

“Like I outlined, we got turnovers in the first half, we settled for field goals. They got turnovers in the second half and scored touchdowns. So, thus the outcome. When you get them down you’ve got to work in concert as a football team, you know? And, they worked in better concert than we did. When we put their defense on the short field in the first half, they made us settle for three. When our defense was on the short field in the second half, they got touchdowns. And so, it’s all of us collectively, that’s football teams. We didn’t do enough today to win it. We didn’t work in concert to accentuate the positives. We didn’t work in concert well enough to minimize the negative.”

Where do you go from here? How do you keep things together after this start?

“We get ready for next week, you know? It’s as simple as that. That’s life in the National Football League. It’d be the same had we won, you know? We’re not into the keep it together discussions. That’s not how we’re built. We have a game next week. We’ll be ready.”

What do you take away from your quarterback’s performance?

“We lost today, all of us.”

**Steelers QB Mason Rudolph
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers**

What kind of adjustments did you make with Pittsburgh Steelers WR Diontae Johnson? It looked like you missed each other in the first half and connected in the second.

“He’s in the right spot. It’s just a ball placement issue. I have to get better on my end. He was in the right spot. He’s a great player and he made a great play for us there at the end that got us back on the right track.”

Was the plan to run the ball after forcing the fifth 49ers turnover?

“We stay aggressive all the time. We want to play past the sticks, and [Pittsburgh Steelers head coach] Mike Tomlin is big on that. I made mistakes all day. That never happens to [Pittsburgh Steelers RB] James [Connor]. James is an unbelievable player. We were still being aggressive in that situation and mixed the run with the pass.”

You guys have to get more points off of five turnovers.

“That game is on us. We had so many opportunities with turnovers in the first half and the momentum swing with the defense. We have to put more points on the board.”

What took so long to break the game open vertically?

“They have great players. They have an experienced corner in [49ers CB] Richard Sherman and [49ers CB Ahkello] Witherspoon did a great job all day. It was a matter of finding the right time to take the top off the defense. Maybe I have to be more aggressive. We’ll watch the tape and figure that out. I thought we had a good plan going in.”

Do you get more confident or feel you can be more aggressive once you get that first deep completion?

“I think completions at any time help. I can push the ball downfield at any point in the game whether we’re playing great or stalled in a drive. It’s just a matter of the situation, the coverage, the personnel and what guy is running the route.”

How do you assess your first career NFL start?

"I'm going to watch the film. A lot of mistakes. We can't be that slow-starting in the first half. I have to give our team and our defense more of a chance to put some points up early and get ahead with all of the turnovers they created. They played unbelievable. They did everything coach asked them through the week in creating turnovers and flying around. We have to back them up."

As a new leader of the offense and this team, how do you get the team to rally around you?

"They rally around me. They know who I am and they know how I work. They know my love for the game. That's not the issue. It's just a matter of getting back to work and going through a work week. We'll go to Cincinnati and put a good plan in place and get in the win column."

Is it complicating your transition with how critical these games have become at 0-3?

"Every game is critical. We had a little bit of a slow start last year. Every game whether you're 2-0 or 0-2 is critical. Whether it's division or outside of the division, that's how I treat it. We're going to put the pressure on ourselves to go and compete. We're not going to need to hear anything from the coaches. Those guys in the locker room are self-starters. They're going to want to rally together to start tomorrow and get back to work."

Did you say anything to James after the fumble?

"I made plenty of mistakes all day. No one is pointing the finger in this offense. We love each other, and we're going to rally together. We still had a chance. I said, 'Let's stay positive because we have another chance to get the ball back and go score. You're going to run the game-winning touchdown.' We always stay positive and play the next play quickly."

**Steelers LB Mark Barron
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers**

When you look at the overall game, the five turnovers, usually teams win in that position. What do you think happened?

"We have to capitalize on the situations. In the situations where we went back on the field, we have to be able to stand up as a defense. We just didn't get the job done."

Not a lot of people expected this team to be 0-3 to start. How do you feel about where you guys are right now?

"That sucks. To start 0-3 sucks. We still blame ourselves. We have to get it together and figure it out. Like I said, it sucks but we have to keep on moving."

You had a tough call in that situation [holding penalty with 2:08 remaining in the fourth quarter].

"In my opinion, it is. I don't know what it looked like to everyone else, but I know what happened to me. I just felt like the guy ran into me. I just absorbed him. I didn't get my hands off him fast enough and that was the call."

Do you guys feel like the defense spent too much time on the field? They [49ers] had a couple of long drives.

"Yeah, we got to get off the field. Most definitely. We have to win at situational football and we have to get the job done on those extended drives because we couldn't make plays. We have to get off the field."

**Steelers G David DeCastro
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers**

What changed there in the second half when you guys were not able to finish drives and put points on the board?

“It was their guys just making plays throwing and catching. It was simple stuff. Our defense gave us great opportunities and we just threw it by the wayside.”

When you guys weren’t able to keep drives going, how was Steelers QB Mason Rudolph reacting to that?

“He’s fine. He’s a pro. He held his composure and he gave us a chance. The second half was big and better but we were just not starting fast. Especially when the defense is playing that well, getting that many turnovers, we have to capitalize and control the game more.”

It almost looked like you guys could be walking out of here with a win if it weren’t for that fumble at the end. Is it frustrating?

“Yes, obviously but they gave us a chance. Having that many turnovers and not finishing is the hard part. Not just that particular play but we could have put more points up earlier in the game. It’s just a tough way to go all around.”

**Steelers S Minkah Fitzpatrick
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers**

When you get those turnovers what is the mindset, defensively, when the offense cannot put it in the end zone?

“You just have to try to score. We have to find the end zone and keep getting turnovers. You have to keep doing your job even if the offense isn’t putting points on the board. It’s our job to keep points off the board because if they don’t score they don’t win. So we just have to keep doing our job and moving forward.”

Is there any desperation, right now, in the locker room?

“Desperation? No, I wouldn’t say that. People are upset, of course, especially with a loss like this, but we just keep moving forward. We’re going to get a win and start moving in the right direction.”

Are you surprised, at all, that you were able to make a couple of big plays in this game after being thrown into this defense like you were where everything is kind of new?

“I’m not surprised. My coaches prepared me well and my teammates helped me out a whole lot. We went out there and they allowed me to just play my game of football. They kept it simple and we just went out and played.”

**Steelers DT Cameron Heyward
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers**

What happened today in the second half with all of the turnovers?

“We didn’t get off the field. We started off so good, but we needed one more stop. We have to finish the game.”

Are you surprised this team is off to an 0-3 start?

“Yes. We have to finish games. The defense has to make a stop. We didn’t. The last one, we had a third-and-something, but we didn’t get off the field.”

Staying on the field for as long as you did, does that have an effect?

“It has a lasting effect. Good defenses get off the field, but we didn’t in the second half.”

When you were shaken up out there, what happened on the play?

“I don’t know who I tripped on, but a guy gored me in the stomach and I couldn’t breathe.”

**Steelers WR JuJu Smith-Schuster
Postgame Quotes – September 22, 2019
San Francisco 49ers vs. Pittsburgh Steelers**

How does the team get better in situations where you have a chance to close the opponent out?

“We practice scenarios and situations and to actually do it in a game is a lot different than doing it in practice. We just didn’t execute the plays that were called.”

What were your impressions of Steelers QB Mason Rudolph today in terms of how he handled himself?

“For a young guy to come and start his first game in an away game on the West Coast and going against a great team, I think he handled himself well. There were situations where we messed up, didn’t execute or turned the ball over, he stayed positive and kept us going.”

What broke you free on the big play?

“Just man-to-man coming across the middle and us being on the same page.”

You couldn’t make any big plays for about three quarters. All of a sudden, you were making a couple. What changed? Did you guys start to attack something different?

“Not so much. We just have to execute that are called. We hurt ourselves with a couple of penalties. When the defense causes a turnover for us, we have to capitalize. We can’t settle for field goals. It’s a game changer when you put points on the board for touchdowns.”

Are you confident that you’re going to get things turned around?

“Yeah, man. It was Mason’s first start. We have many more games to play. Next week is conference play and I’ll be excited to see what he does and show the world what we’re capable of doing.”