

ATLANTA FALCONS

Atlanta Falcons vs. Washington Football Team
Week 4
October 3, 2021

ATLANTA FALCONS

[Head Coach Arthur Smith](#)

[QB Matt Ryan](#)

[RB Cordarrelle Patterson](#)

[RB Mike Davis](#)

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WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM

[Head Coach Ron Rivera](#)

[QB Taylor Heinicke](#)

ATLANTA FALCONS

Head Coach Arthur Smith

On the offense stalling late in the game:

“Obviously frustrating when you don't finish games. We had multiple opportunities to win that game. We didn't. The drive, the second to last offensive drive, right, that was the one that we moved the ball a little bit and then we had the third down call. Right? The one they picked up? Yeah. They picked that up. We punted and we just have to do a better job. We had plenty of chances to go pick the ball. We didn't. You have give Washington credit. They made plays when they had to. Quarterback extended plays. He threw them up there and their guys came down.”

On RB Cordarrelle Patterson not being in the game for the final play:

“It's more of a protection thing. We believe in the guys that are out there. There's a couple of things we have, multiple packages. It's not one play. It's situational. And we feel pretty good about Kyle going up, playing big-boy ball with Hayden [Hurst] and [Calvin] Rid[ley]. And those things get packaged, and there's something there that we wanted for O.Z. and Mike, if we had gotten the look; we didn't. So that was a thought. “

On utilizing RB Mike Davis late in the game:

“You trust him. A lot of it is about ball security. CP does a lot of good things for us, and it's Mike or Gallman. Those are guys you trust there in four-minute. Again, we didn't get off the blocks, and so they back us up, and you have evaluate whether or not – and obviously hindsight is 20/20. Sure, you pick it up; screen, whatever. So, yeah, I'll go back and look at it. What should I have done different? It's all fair. But

we trust Mike Davis. That's why he's in there. It's about ball security, making the right decisions, making the right reads. That one is pretty obvious.”

On RB Cordarrelle Patterson's overall performance:

“Patterson had a good game. He was very effective in multiple roles for us, and CP is a good football player. But it's hard to say right now. You lose a game like that. Define the bright spots. There's always bright spots. Tomorrow you go through the film, things we gotta work on, and we gotta get a lot of things fixed in a hurry. “

On his message to guys about finishing the game:

“We gotta make the plays. They throw you the ball, you gotta come down with them. The history of the NFL. You drop, for sure, interceptions, sadly, you've seen a lot of their outcome. We get them down there. Credit to Washington. They extended the plays, like the one he found the running back late. It was a play extension. Guy leaked out. We don't make the play; they do. They get the touchdown to go ahead. Same with the one to McLaurin. I think he was throwing into the windows there and ball came down and they came up with the play. That was the difference late.”

On missed tackles on defense:

“I don't know if it's missed tackles. I mean maybe it's missed opportunities to really affect the quarterback. We gave them probably too much time.”

On the split of carries among the running backs:

“We dressed Gallman. We wanted to see Wayne get it. We had multiple packages for CP. So we took an extra running back in the game. Tried to get some more carries out of it. Again, I'd have to evaluate tomorrow, but it's part of the -- as we look at our roster week to week, what do we think the matchups are. You don't want to overuse guys in certain spots when they can help you somewhere else. So it all goes into it.”

On the difference between the two halves:

“Gotta give them credit. They made the plays. I don't think it was anything great schematically. Their biggest plays came a lot of times on play extensions. So we gotta go look at the film, see where the breakdowns were. The quarterback gets out. We knew he went to run and he could extend it. You gotta give credit to them, but we gotta do a better job with our rush plans. I just have to go back and look at the film. But you gotta give them credit. They made the plays. They extended them. That's probably right now snap judgment the biggest difference.”

On late touchdown to Washington WR Terry McLaurin:

“There are certain packages of rotations. T.J. is a big guy. Obviously they made the play; we didn't.”

On CB Isaiah Oliver's injury:

“I don't right now. Obviously he didn't come back in the game. Tomorrow we'll get him and Eric evaluated and give you more there.”

On whether that's the same with P Cam Nizialek's injury:

“Yeah. We just have to look.”

On the defense late in the game:

“There's multiple things. I'm not going to get into schematically. A lot of times you gotta adjust. As much different formations they give you, you can package certain things. Again, I'll have to go back and look at the film.”

Quarterback Matt Ryan

On the final play of the game:

“Getting into the end zone. Those plays are kind of a flip of the coin. You try and put it in a spot where your guys can make a play on it. Thought our guys got down there. They did a great job of getting in position. That's just part of the game. Sometimes it doesn't bounce your way. But there's a lot of other things throughout that game that could have put us in position to not be there.”

On the second-to-last drive of the game and not being able to chew up clock:

“If we want to be the kind of football team we want to be and the type of offense we'd like to be, I think, you know, you get in those situations, you want to be able to move the football, burn clock and get some first downs, and in that football game we didn't do it. That part is disappointing and we've gotta improve there.”

On where the team goes from here and how to move forward against the Jets next week:

“That's part of being a professional. You've gotta get back to work tomorrow, have the mindset to improve, make the corrections from today's game, and you know, apply those towards getting better next week in practice and finding a way to go to London and get the job done. It's a long haul. There's no doubt about that. But the improvement needs to happen. We have to have the right mindset. I think for the most part that's been good all year. Sometimes in these type of games it can be difficult to get in there with the right energy and those kind of things. That's on us as players to make sure we go in tomorrow with the right frame of mind.”

On whether he thinks they were too conservative at the end of the game:

“I think we gotta make plays. When your number is called, whether it be in the run or pass game, we've gotta execute. And we gotta go out there and get the job done as players. And so I think there's opportunities to do that. And we've gotta do better as players.”

On his thoughts of Washington QB Taylor Heinicke:

“I thought he did a good job. I thought he did a good job today.”

On the roughing the passer penalty and whether he got hit in the head:

“The one on me? I'll take it. (Laughs). It's a jumbled mess out there when you're playing. Right? And you get hit hard. It felt like I did.”

On the challenge when mistakes begin to mount in games:

“For sure. I really think it's -- you're exactly right. It's the small things that add up over time that end up costing you. And so and that's kind of what I alluded to earlier to one of the previous questions is you

gotta realize, 'Ok, there are plays to be made out there. We can all do a better job.' And you can't start pointing the fingers in other directions. When we watch this film tomorrow, you gotta take an honest evaluation of yourself, what you can do better within the scheme and try and improve and make sure that we're doing everything Wednesday, Thursday, Friday to correct those things. And doing it with the right energy and attitude. And I do think it's difficult sometimes after losses. The easy thing to do is say, 'Awe, man, I just feel bad.' Well, the really good pros that I've been around are the ones that take a look at it and are honest with themselves. And I think we need to all be that way tomorrow."

On whether he thought WR Calvin Ridley had a few drops today:

"I have to see it, you know. It's hard to explain. I don't see a lot of those things when we're playing. There's a lot of traffic and stuff flying in front of your face. So you have to watch the film and take a look at it. I know he makes a lot of plays, too, and does some great things for us. So I'll have to take a look at it on the film. But I don't really see those things on the field. So I can't really answer it."

On RB Cordarrelle Patterson:

"He's been great for us the first four weeks. I think he's played extremely well. Made plays for us in the run game, made plays for us in the pass game. In the return game he's done a great job. So I think he impacts the game in so many different ways. I'm really glad that we have him. I love playing with him. He's a bit of a throwback in terms of football players. He's tough. He does a lot of different things and goes out there and competes very well. I've certainly been impressed with him. I've always admired him from afar, but now playing with him and seeing what he does every day and how he works, I think he does a great job."

On whether he's concerned about the group's mindset:

"I'm not concerned. I just think that having been around long enough, you want to get in front of things. And you want to be proactive as opposed to being reactive. And I think from a leadership position and a veteran guy in the locker room, that's what I want to be, proactive, you know, and let those guys know tomorrow we gotta get to work. We gotta fix the things that we can fix and be better next week. We got 13 games to go. So a lot can happen during that time. I think the effort's been great. I think the attention to detail is something we can improve at."

On how he plans to refocus tomorrow to get ready for next week:

"For me it's always making a list of as we go through the game things we did well, things I did well and taking a look at things I didn't do well and putting a plan together for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of maybe I need to get my drops in better position, my hips at better positions at the top of drops. Maybe I need to be a little bit more patient in my progressions, right? Not move on too fast. I try and make notes like that every week and then go to the practice field and work on it. And I really don't know any other way to do it other than that."

On whether he knows exactly where a player is on the field when that player is having a good game:

"Not really. As a quarterback you trust the calls coming in, and you try and take a look at what the defense is doing and trust the guys we have out on the field that are going to go make plays and win their matchups. In a couple of situations today they gave us the looks and he had chances to make the explosive plays. But I don't. I really -- I try and play the game, play the calls that are coming in and go where the coverage dictates."

On whether he was surprised RB Cordarrelle Patterson wasn't in the game for the final two drives:

"I mean you don't think of those things. You get the call that's coming in. You trust the guys that are on the field. We got a lot of good players. He's not the only good player we have. We have a lot of good players. We got a lot of good backs, too. I think Mike Davis does a great job for us. I love our guys and I trust all of our guys when they're in there that when their number is called, they're going to make plays, and for the most part guys did today. We just gotta clean some things up and do things a little bit better."

On whether it's frustrating thinking a few more first downs could be the difference in winning a game:

"Yeah. Yeah. I think that's one of those things you talk about, you know, whether it's on the third-to-last drive or the second-to-last drive or any of those, you know, where you come away with it a little bit different when the result isn't what you want. You know, you play that back in your head. But you gotta be able to move on. You gotta be able to flush it out of your system. And I think the best teams, and certainly the best teams I've been on are the ones that, good or bad, you know, are able to do that. And so that's kind of what I've been talking about with some of our young guys. You gotta have that mindset to be able to honestly evaluate it and then move on. Certainly tonight all of us feel that way. We would like to have made a play or two that would have change the outcome."

RB Cordarrelle Patterson

On how he expects to move forward after this loss:

"Honestly it sucks. Losing sucks but we are all grown men and we gotta keep our head high. It's a long season and we just gotta keep playing football."

On whether he's worried about the mindset of the locker room:

"We are not worried at all, like I said, we are grown men in that locker room. We've been doing this our whole life and nobody is going blame nobody. Nobody is going to cry about it. We are going to get here tomorrow, watch the film, and put it behind us and go to London."

On his first career game with three touchdowns, and what was working so well for him:

"Coaches calling the players on the mat. Like I said earlier in the week, whenever they call you, you just have to go out there and make a play and they did a good job in calling my number. All I do is play for my team."

On what the other team did to slow them down:

"Honestly man, they just caught the win. They were just a better team today. They beat us up you know, they got to win and that's all that matters."

On what they will do differently as they head towards London:

"We are just going to go out there and play together you know, and just do whatever it takes to get a win. No matter how we get it, hopefully next week it will be two and three."

On how he will remember this game:

"I'm putting this in the past. I'll take all that back to get a win you know. It's not about what I did, it's about the team. We didn't win and that's all that matters."

RB Mike Davis

On trying to seal the game late:

"In that moment, going through our head was get the first down. I don't know how else to explain it. We've just got to get the first down."

On how the team moves on after this loss:

"It hurts. It does, it really hurts. We've got a short week. We fly to London. We got to put this one behind us and make sure we keep it rolling."

On his third-down run late in the game:

"I think it was read perfectly, I haven't seen the film yet but give them their credit, they won the game."

On whether this game will be the toughest loss to put behind the team:

"Anytime you lose a game like that, it hurts. It really stings. I felt like our defense came to play, our offense came to play, and I feel like this team has made great strides from the first game. I mean at the end of the day, we lost, but I think we're just getting started."

On whether he felt the game fell apart at the end:

"I don't think it fell apart. It was just a four-minute situation and we just didn't get it done."

On Coach Arthur Smith's message about finishing games:

"We had self-inflicted wounds. We've got to get better on handling the penalties, hurting ourselves. That's the main thing and just give them credit, they won the game."

On his role in the last play of the game:

"It was a Hail Mary. My role? I'm just trying to get in the endzone."

ILB Foye Oluokun

On mood in the locker room, reaction to this loss:

"It's a tough loss for sure. A lot of things on my mind. First of all, I want to shout out my boy Isaiah (Oliver). You always play for a why and you know, him going down like that, we worked hard together all off-season so definitely another thing I'm playing for for the rest of the year. It's been tough to see him go down, but as far as the loss, there are definitely things that we've got to clean up and improve for next week, and we'll definitely get on that."

On whether he has checked in with Isaiah Oliver to see if he's doing alright:

“Yeah, I dapped him up after the game. I mean, it’s tough. I know how much work he puts in and how much work we put in together. That’s my boy, as I said earlier, so it’s another thing I’m going to think about before every game -- attitude and my reason why.”

On what QB Taylor Heinicke was doing so well to drive Washington’s offense:

“Creating plays, buying extra time. We’ve got to stay in our rush lanes, stay plastered on receivers and just play longer.”

On what he felt like the Falcons’ defense was doing to allow Heinicke to make plays:

“He wants to buy time, you run backwards, you see what space you’ve got and then you go and find the space, run to it and throw the ball. So we’ve got to stay in our rush lanes, as I said earlier, and be more disciplined within the play.”

On what stands out from Washington’s final drive for the go-ahead touchdown:

“Play longer. Again, the last play, he flushed out to his left. He’s better at flushing out to his right, but he flushed out to his left and we’ve just got to stay on our people and then make the tackles. And really as I said, stay disciplined, keep him in the pocket and do everything we’re supposed to do.”

On near-miss plays, being fingertips away from making big plays:

“I mean, when I look back on it, we dropped some picks and that fumble, things could have gone our way, but at the end of the day, we’ve got to finish. That’s all it is.”

On how to keep this loss in the past moving forward:

“Every week is a new week and every game, we’re trying to win the game. So as soon as we get that new game plan in, as I said earlier in a different interview, we’re going to attack it and try to win games. That’s the name of it. That’s all we’re trying to do here.”

On if he agrees with Matt Ryan saying the little things added up to contribute to loss:

“We could have played a cleaner game for sure. Any time you start dragging out a little mistake here and there, it’s going to lead to a long drive and then you’re tired. So as long as you play a cleaner football game, I think we’ll get the outcome we want. But, we’ve got to work on that -- playing cleaner for sure.”

On how he’d describe the mood of the locker room:

“Somber. That means sad, right? Somber. Disdain. Disappointed. It was a close game and we always want to win close games and you know, it didn’t turn out the way we wanted. They do what they do, but point the finger at us and clean up what we need to clean up in order to end up on the winning side.”

On what the strategy was defensively the last two drives:

“They were in a one-score game and we had the whole playbook open – two-minute drives. You know, I’m not in Dean’s (Pees) head, but I’m thinking we’re playing normal football. They played normal football. They ran plays and they basically ran the whole game. Maybe if they needed chucks, they ran that deep

dagger and stuff and bought some time. At the end of the day, we just have to play our plays better than they play theirs."

On if he was impressed with RB Cordarrelle Patterson's play:

"I love that boy. He played with heart, Mike Davis played with heart. I think our whole team, we've got a chip on our shoulder, so we played with heart. So we've just got to play cleaner. On the defensive end, we've got to play cleaner."

WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM

Head Coach Ron Rivera

On the status of injuries to players today:

"The only thing I really know about Logan [Thomas] is it's the hamstring. I don't really know about Brandon [Scherff], we'll find out more when we get back to Ashburn."

On QB Taylor Heinicke and how he delivers in the clutch:

"He's got a tremendous ability to deliver and hats off to him. He's a courageous dude that plays all out, and his teammates, they feed off his energy. Especially the offensive guys really kind of get him and understand that no play is dead. You see the way they keep working, great illustration is J.D. McKissic. Taylor is working and working, he's off to the far left, he sees J.D. to the right and throws it out there. That's who he is."

On Taylor Heinicke's performance in late situations:

"I honestly couldn't tell you that, I really couldn't. I do know that it kind of reminds me a bit of last season. For whatever reason, that second half we tend to do things a little bit better. Still a lot of things we've got to work on, a lot things we've got to get better at."

On Taylor Heinicke's performance when the team is trailing:

"Well, I think one of the things is, we never really got down. And that gave us the opportunity to continue to compete and give Taylor, a fair chance. And that's all he really needed just to have is a fair chance."

On Taylor Heinicke managing game:

"Well, I thought he managed it well obviously. The big thing is, and we talked about it, make a play when you have to, and he made several. We appreciate that, that's for sure. Taylor is just one of those dynamic players that knows how to make plays and as I said, nothing is ever done with him. He's just going to continue to work."

On Taylor Heinicke scrambling:

"Well, I love the way when he did scramble he did protect himself. I don't understand why he took the very first hit. I guess he likes that. But it does serve as a check down, for the most part. Especially if teams want to play man against us. With Curtis [Samuel] back now and with Terry [McLaurin] out there, you got to honor those guys and I think that also helps. It's going to make things more difficult on paper."

On the defensive performance:

“Well, I think we weren't consistent with some of the stuff that we need to be better at in terms of coverage. Our guys are competing and trying some things but, we dropped a couple of coverages when we shouldn't have. Again, as I said, we'll go back we'll look at it, and we'll really evaluate once we get a chance to see exactly how those things happen.”

On whether this game served as a measuring stick the team:

“Well, the biggest thing, I'm pleased at the fact that we bounced back. We fought to the end. Sometimes you lose the game like we did in Buffalo, you struggled to find your footing. I think we did find a little bit. I'd love to see us take this momentum we have right now and carry it in the next week. We have a very good New Orleans team coming in. Coached by really one of the really good coaches in this league too. We'll see.”

On evaluating the defense and looking back at play calls:

“I look at it balanced. Could we have made a different call, we could have. But when the plays called, we've got to do the best we can and we've got to execute the way we need to execute it. As you evaluate it if you executed as well as you can and they still beat us and that's on us. That's the thing that we'll do, we'll take it.”

On RB Cordarrelle Patterson's 42-yard touchdown catch:

“There was a dig that came across the middle and we were a little shallow. We should have been a little bit deeper, and we just saw Patterson going deep.”

On how they respond to injuries:

“It's kind of the next-man-up mentality, and that's kind of what has to happen. Wes Schweitzer is a guy that he could be a starter in this league he's got that kind of ability in my opinion. Some of the stuff that we've had in terms of the injuries in the secondary. I thought some of those guys stepped up when they got opportunities. Linebacker position, Jamin [Davis] had to play a lot more than we anticipated, and it was good to see him get an opportunity to run around and make some plays. That was huge. Cole Holcomb did some really good things today too. Getting it out the way he did. But it's good to see the next-man-up mentality kind of step up when you get in that situation.”

On his reaction to the two last touchdown passes by Taylor Heinicke:

“The Terry [McLaurin] one, there was a penalty. Him being able to just throw it up there, it helps us. The last one, that's really just him, the one thing we told him is you can't have a negative play on that because we were in field goal range. For him to see J.D. [McKissic] on the other side was pretty impressive.”

On whether he is pleased with the win and how will he look at the film:

“I'm more pleased with the win, but at the same time, I told the guys let's be realistic and be honest about the things that we've done correct. You're always happy about a win and you really are. You should be at least, I believe you should, but you also have to be realistic, there are some things that we have to correct, things we'll go back, and we'll work on because they need to be worked on to be very honest, they really do. And we have to be honest with ourselves because if not, we'll run into a wall very quickly.”

On the team's response to winning two close games:

“Well, first it says, we got to play better across the board to give ourselves a chance so we don't have to come down to the last play. But it does speak to resilience that these guys are getting it they're learning they're working hard. They don't quit. They don't give up. And that's important. And I think that's really important that our guys understand that we're never out of the game. And I think offensively the guys look at it with a guy like Taylor we aren't. We always have a chance to win.”

On rough in the passer penalty on DL Chase Young:

“I can't comment on the refereeing, in terms of that type of stuff. I mean you know just because I disagree with it but I can't say that.”

On defense being better on third down:

“There are certain moments that happen that you have to have something happen. It does, but again we still got to be better on third down, there's a resourceful spot right now that really just contributes to it. It truly is what's going on in third-down we have to find an answer for that. And sometimes it's really just one guy. Sometimes it's one guy making a play and we'll see what happens.”

QB Taylor Heinicke

On how emotional the win was:

“It was pretty emotional there for a little bit at the end it was, it was even more so, again, for my sister and my brother-in-law to be there to experience that type of ending with all the stuff I kind of put them through living with him for a while. It means a lot to me and I know they were excited to be there.”

On late touchdowns to WR Terry McLaurin and RB J.D. McKissic:

“He kind of has like a triple move on that one. It looked good all week through practice, unfortunately Dante Fowler got through – I think it was him – and got me pretty good but luckily, I escaped from him and I saw Terry in the back of the endzone wide open. When you have a guy like Terry, you want to give him a shot to make a play. He makes plays days in day out so I kind of threw it up to him, you know, let him do his thing and, fortunately, he came down with it.

Then that last one the J.D. one, we had a flood concept, but we had four guys going to left and they did a good job covering it, and J.D. kind of slipped through the line and went to the right and there's no one there. So, initially I thought, ‘Hey this is great. It's going to give us better field position.’ He broke that first tackle and then he kind of superman-ed into the end zone which was huge for us if you kind of look at it. That made the Falcons have to go score a touchdown. So, little things like that, those guys are making big plays. So, I'm very fortunate to have those guys in there.”

On whether he can sense he's frustrating a defense by extending plays with his legs:

“No, not really. I'm just kind of still focused on my job. But again, I think it's a good part of my game that I can do. Just like last week, it's good to have that. Being able to keep making good decisions while you're doing it and I feel like today I did that.”

On whether he practices cross body throws:

“Not really, again, he was my fifth read. So, it was one of those things where no one's open, and we have to make a play and I knew he was going to be out there late and again he just made a great play.”

On throwing passes into tight coverage:

“There's a couple throws out there I kind of wish I had that they had a chance to make a play on. But again, it was one of those things I talked about throughout the week just taking what's there. So, there's a lot of check downs today and when we don't turn the ball over, we move the ball pretty well so I really hung on that this week and I think we executed that pretty well.”

On friends and family attending the game:

“So only got 10 tickets for close family and friends, but I want to say, estimate probably like 60-70 guys, here, that I knew. The Falcons had a little promo with the high school. So, I think a lot of high school kids I actually trained, when I wasn't playing was here so it's (a) cool experience. I think that was cool for those kids to see it, hopefully gives them a little inspiration to know that they can one day do this too so overall today has been pretty special.”

On seeing his sister:

“I'm going to go see my sister right now, after this so I'll be good to see her.”

On defying the clock in his head:

“You want to get the ball out quickly, obviously. Offensive line has been doing a great job these last four games. I want to keep saying that because they don't get enough credit so the offensive line, they did a great job. (Wes) Schweitzer came in and did his thing, but again when you have more time, and you kind of let those guys that we have at receiver, do their thing, awesome special things can happen. So again, like I said earlier, just got to be smart with it. I think today we did that today”

On whether a play he made shocked him:

“No, I mean throughout the years, high school and college, there's been some bizarre plays so, you know, things like that happen, it's a lot of fun, it's really cool, but I feel like I've kind of been doing that, those type of plays throughout my life and I think that's kind of the player I am. Again, I grew up watching Brett Favre, so I saw a lot of crazy stuff from him so it's a good part of my game.”

On a bizarre play that shocked him:

“I don't know, maybe throw the ball over my head. Again, there's been a lot of a lot of crazy plays throughout the years so that one to J.D. (McKissic) and that one to Terry (McLaurin) were up there.”