

Chicago Bears Media Conference

Thursday, October 13, 2022

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Coach Matt Eberflus

Postgame Press Conference



Bears 7, Commanders 12

MATT EBERFLUS: Okay, good evening. Obviously disappointed with the loss, and then things that stood out for us in a positive way was the defense. Defense played really well. Really good on third down.

They were 0-6 I think in the first half and end up being 2 of 11 for 18%, which is a positive there. So the defensive staff worked really hard at that this week, and we were certainly pleased with that.

Thought the run defense was good up until that last drive. The drive before we gave up some runs, so thought we were solid there. Pass defense was outstanding. Think we held the opponent to low pass rating and did a nice job of defending the pass. Had some good sacks. Had some third down sacks, which was good.

And then really for offense, offense I thought did a really good job with driving the football. We had a drive of 66 yards and then we had the interception that bounced off the helmet there. Then we end up going for it on the next 66 yard drive and went for it on fourth and inches down there and couldn't plunge it in down there.

And then coming out of halftime scored a touchdown, which was excellent, and then the last two drives there we end up -- went for it on fourth down the didn't get it.

And then our defense did an outstanding job of rising up there when we didn't get that fourth down and forcing a missed field goal. And then we drove it all the way down the length of the field to give ourselves a chance to win it at the end there and then didn't punch it in there.

The storyline will be, hey, we got to -- nice drives for the offense, but you got to be able to punch it in the red zone and those types of things. But I told the guys I was proud of them the way they fought and the way they battled during the course of the day.

Again, it's all about execution. Comes down six or seven

plays, and I told the guys, listen, it's -- we're right there. We're right there. Just got to keep believing and keep believing in what we're doing and how we're doing it. We're right there and we're going to get over that hump.

They got some time to self-reflect and I told them that. Got a mini bye here. Coaches will be in there doing self-scout and they will be looking at their own performances and how they can get better coming back going into our week against New England Patriots.

Questions.

Q. What do you need to do to be better in the red zone?

MATT EBERFLUS: You know, you saw it, right? Comes down to execution. I thought we had some real good plays in there. We just got to hit the guys when they're in the -- when we have the play on, hit the guys in the open, like for Griffin there. I thought that was an excellent play.

We just got to execute as a group. We got to execute as a group there, better down there, and we'll get that done.

Q. When comes to the pass that was bounced off the helmet, was it more a concern for Justin's mechanics possibly?

MATT EBERFLUS: No. Sometimes you arm angle changes because he's trying to fit it in there. You know, there is a lot of big bodies in there, so a lot of times you will change your arm angle based on what window you see in front of you.

So you can't fault him on that. He was trying to fit it in there and that's just what happened. We got to do a good job when the ball goes up, somebody has got to do a good job of knocking it down, someone that's in the vicinity there.

Q. The three red zone trips, I mean, the way they ended were so different on all three. Were you scratching your head a little bit on how that could kind of happen that way?

MATT EBERFLUS: No. I mean, the first one was an interception, right? Second one was on downs, fourth and inches, and the last one was in the corner there; didn't get

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it.

Q. Right. Just like the luck of not being able to convert all three of those.

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah. Yeah, that's the way it goes. We got to do a better job executing. Really when you think about it, do a better job of us on first, second, or third down getting ball in there, so not putting yourself in that fourth down situation.

Q. (No microphone.)

MATT EBERFLUS: I don't think he did. Yeah, I didn't think he did. I thought he was close, but from our vantage point, nothing we could do at that point because it was replay review, so...

Q. I meant in the moment, while you're watching it live.

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, I thought he was short. Yeah.

Q. Had he caught it originally...

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, then I thought he had -- yeah, I thought he would've had a chance to get it for sure.

Q. Second down play, second drive when Griffin was wide open, can you just talk -- what, was Fields zipping the ball too much?

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, I don't know. I don't know. I haven't asked him about that, talked to him. It was a great play. Great, great call.

Q. What kind of things are you telling him to keep them engaged?

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, so first of all, I mean, I told him after, man, he is tough. That guy is tough and he can get out of a lot of things. That one run he had down the side, I mean, some of that stuff is just amazing, the type of player he is and the toughness, the mental toughness that he has.

It's phenomenal. He'll hang in there with the best of them. It's exciting to see the guys rally around him and see that tough position. You'll rally around a guy like that, that mental and physical toughness that he has. I just told him I was really proud of the way he hung in there.

Again, they got some good D-line men, obviously got some good first rounders, and they're going to give a lot of guys fits, as they have.

Yeah, I was just real proud of them.

Q. Will you reassess the offensive line during this break?

MATT EBERFLUS: We're going to reassess everything. Yeah, everything from scheme to players to everything.

We're going to do a good job of that here coming up. And we're going to do a good job of really getting it to the players. If it might be a lineup change or might be technique, fundamentals, all that, scheme, how we're running certain plays, who we're getting ball to, what we're doing well, what we need to improve on.

So that's going to be -- we're going to look at all that for sure.

Q. Are you satisfied with pass rush right now?

MATT EBERFLUS: Well, the answer to that is never satisfied with the pass rush. Always got to be better. I thought we did a good job getting some sacks. Some of those were pressures that we called on third down certainly, but we'll just look at it and evaluate that going forward.

That will be one of the things we evaluate. Sack numbers need to be up a little bit more and the pressure numbers need to be up, too.

Q. You guys seem to put on the more guys in the line of scrimmage. Is that something you talked about during the week, to put for guys at the line of scrimmage more often to get you guys engaged?

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah. Yeah, we were in there together visiting, you know, and we -- in the short week like this, and every week. But it was good. It was a good plan. It was good plan for third down for third down for sure.

Q. With Velus and the fumble at the eight yard line, is this just a matter of he just need more time to be comfortable returning punts considering the muff in New York and now this one?

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, we are going to have to look at that. Number one job of kick returner or punt returner is to any catch the ball, so we are going to have to look at that.

Q. Was wind a factor?

MATT EBERFLUS: The wind wasn't that bad out there I don't think.

Q. We talked last week about especially in the second



half Justin looked like he was growing. What did you see today and do it feel think he took a step back?

MATT EBERFLUS: No, I don't think so. I think he took a step forward. I really do.

Q. Why?

MATT EBERFLUS: Because of the toughness, the ability -- for me, the ability to take the ball and drive it down at the very end to give us a chance to win it. That's to me what was the improvement. Okay?

Was there other moments that we need to clean up and offense needs to clean up? Sure. But we have the drives down there, and if we punch those in the game is a different game. That's 21 points. Right?

So for me, that was really inspiring to watch him doing that at the very end. To take us down to win it at the very end and came up short. Got to do better job next time.

Q. How about the touchdown to Dante, taking advantage of a free play there?

MATT EBERFLUS: Great. That was awesome. Great. We been trying to pull that off these first few games, and we did. Man, what a throw. We all know he's a great deep ball thrower and he threw right in there and Dante had a great catch and execution.

Q. Do you think Justin Fields took a step forward tonight?

MATT EBERFLUS: Well, I'm just saying that -- he asked if it was step forward, step back. I think if you look -- for me, taking that drive to take us down for a chance to win it, okay, that's a step forward. It was during two-minute and it was when it counted, so to me, that's encouraging and that's a step forward in that light.

Q. On fourth and 11, the second to last drive.

MATT EBERFLUS: Yep.

Q. What was the problem?

MATT EBERFLUS: Well, I saw Justin clapping, right? Ball, ball, ball. We thought the ball was going to get snapped. We said, hey, take the timeout, two, three, he's clapping, clapping, clapping, the ball never came.

We just got to do a better job there. Got to snap the ball.

Q. On the throw to Pettis in the end zone at the end,

did you argue for pass interception?

MATT EBERFLUS: Of course.

Q. What did you think -- did you believe you had a strong case for that?

MATT EBERFLUS: Yeah, doesn't matter. When they call it, there is nothing you can do at that point. It's pass interference. But you can argue it if you want to, you know.

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Justin Fields

Postgame Press Conference



Bears 7, Commanders 12

Q. How is your body feeling right now?

JUSTIN FIELDS: I'm hurting. Hurting pretty good. But we got a long weekend, so I will have some extra time to heal up.

Q. You were on the sidelines using the resistance band start of the third quarter. Was that to loosen up your left shoulder? What happened on that?

JUSTIN FIELDS: Yeah, my shoulder, my left shoulder, hurt it a while back so just kind of reaggravated it. I was just trying to keep the muscles activating and just keep it moving.

Q. What do you guys need to do to be better?

JUSTIN FIELDS: Finish. That's it. That's the gist of the whole game, finish. We didn't finish.

Missed a wide open touchdown pass; didn't finish. Fourth and one, handed ball out it D-Mo; couldn't finish it. Last play, couldn't finish it.

There was multiple plays in that game that we could have made to change the whole game. Summary is we didn't finish. You know, doesn't matter if you drive all the way down to the five, one yard line and don't score.

I mean, it's the same thing as a three and out when you punt inside the ten, so it's the same thing.

So just biggest thing is just finishing.

Q. When you Darnell went up, did you think he was going to get over there?

JUSTIN FIELDS: Get over there?

Q. Get over the line.

JUSTIN FIELDS: Yeah. Wasn't he over the line when he caught it?

Q. Yeah. It was kind of bobbling.

JUSTIN FIELDS: Yeah, so I mean, I guess if he didn't bobble it it probably would've been a touchdown for real. That just goes back to finish the catch, finish the throw, finish the run, finish the blocks. As an offense, we got to finish. I got to be better. We all got to be better.

Q. What did you think the throw before that to Pettis? Have you seen the replay?

JUSTIN FIELDS: It was a PI that we didn't get. Simple.

Q. Justin, when you're talking about finishing, executing, it seems like there are pieces or plays there where you all are performing at a high level. Is it a logistic things that's missing? What's the key to actually finishing?

JUSTIN FIELDS: When the play is there, make it. Plain and simple. There is no logistics. It's not complicated. It's when you have that opportunity, finish. It's that simple.

We just didn't do that tonight. You don't have to make it harder than it is, pitch and catch. The one that's making me mad is the one to Griff in the end zone. He probably could have ran a little bit more, but he's wide open. I got to hit that. I'm an NFL quarterback. I got to hit that.

First one to Cole, all out, we got cover zero on the last one -- I mean, the first drive and just tipped the ball, so can't do anything about that.

But we had plenty of opportunities in the game that we just didn't finish. We just got to get better at that.

Q. The function of catching them too many on the field, getting everybody to the line of scrimmage, when did you first recognize you had them in the process of getting everybody up to the ball?

JUSTIN FIELDS: Yeah, I mean, you know, when we play a team we just look at do they substitute a lot. The coach is in the box, you usually see they're substituting, so just got in my ear and we get on the ball and hike a play. If



they're off the field, then we just chill out and get a play dialed up. But they still had extra guys on the field and at that point it's just get open.

So, you know, it's a free play at that point. So Dante did a great job and made a great catch. Linemen did a great job blocking. It was a good play.

Q. How hard is it for you to motivate everybody else when you are feeling what you are after a game like this?

JUSTIN FIELDS: Everybody is feeling this way. Everybody is mad. I mean, nobody is happy about this loss. Just we always get told that we're almost there, we're almost there. Like me personally, I'm tired of being almost there. Tired of being just this close. Feel like I've been hearing it for so long now.

At the end of the day all you can do is get back to work. That's the only reaction you have. Live and you learn, and get back to next week and keep going, keep getting better.

Q. Take us through that final play, the one to Mooney. It looked like Montgomery was leaking out.

JUSTIN FIELDS: Montgomery is the fifth read on that play, he is the last read. In reality, if I'm being real with you, there is a five percent chance you're going to get back to him. He's the last read on that. It's boom, boom, boom, like he's last read on that.

So Mooney was open. Like I said before, just got to finish.

Q. For all the work you've done with Mooney for the last two years, I imagine you'll take your chances throwing the ball to him with the game on the line.

JUSTIN FIELDS: I'm doing it every trip. I mean, if my boy is open, I got full shots on him. Anybody on this team. I don't care if it's practice squad guy, Mooney, anybody. If I'm out there with them, I'm going to put my full shot to them. If they make a mistake, they make a mistake. Move on. It's that simple.

Q. You said last week that you felt (indiscernible) was a little bit better. This week do you feel like it progressed or it was more of a symptom of going against...

JUSTIN FIELDS: I felt like they got back there. Everybody knows that Washington has a great D-line, great D tackle.

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Head Coach Ron Rivera

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Washington Commanders 12, Chicago Bears 7

Q. Always easy, isn't it?

RON RIVERA: No. It's never easy. Never easy. Never easy, especially when you do some silly stuff.

Q. When you go through what, you know, four-game losing streak, tough loss the way you did last week to come out and win this way though at the end, what does that do? What does it mean?

RON RIVERA: Well, it gives you a little confidence that if you stick together and you continue to work at it, you give yourself a chance. I mean, a couple times we tried to hurt ourselves, but Jeez-o-pete, when you get an opportunity, you get a chance to raise your opportunities and you bow your neck, that's what you need to do.

Q. Take us through that last defensive drive.

RON RIVERA: Well, everything was fine until we let the kid scramble for 40 yards. That's the heartbreaker. You've got him contained. You have a chance. You sack him on the first play. You know, they convert on their third down. And, you know, now you've got them a little confused, and he pulls the ball downs and runs. That's undisciplined. That's where you get angry because, again, we had a chance to keep him -- we'd done a pretty good job with a lot of the rush lanes. And for whatever reason, we got a little undisciplined at the end. And it cost us. They got the ball down to the 5 yard line.

Q. 12 men on the field twice --

RON RIVERA: Yeah. That's unacceptable. That's unacceptable. Now, one of them, you know, I tried to get the time out. They substituted late, and I was trying to get that straight. But the second one where they took the shot, that's unacceptable. I mean, that will get corrected. That will be addressed. I'm pissed off about that one.

Q. How does that happen, that second one? What

happened?

RON RIVERA: Well, somebody was cramping up, you know, I mean, trying to get off. And so we tried to substitute. And we got caught.

Q. What was your view on the very last play? I don't know what your view was, if you could see?

RON RIVERA: Oh, I mean, we thought it was incomplete because we thought his left arm went to the ground first. But as he was coming down, you saw the ball was on this side and his back was to the pylon. So thank goodness.

Q. It looked like Carson's fingers got jammed there?

RON RIVERA: Yeah. I believe he bounced it off of somebody's helmet. But he fought through it, kept his hand loose, kept grabbing the -- inside his pouch, he has the heaters, the little heat packets that was helping to keep his fingers loose.

Q. Was there any consideration of a switch there?

RON RIVERA: No, no. He was handling it very well.

Q. This physical game, what did he show you tonight?

RON RIVERA: It was a physical game. One of the things we wanted to do was come out and establish the run, which we were able to do. It was tough sledding at first, but if you stick with it, sometimes you get an opportunity to wear it down a couple times and we did. We had a couple nice runs. We had a nice little change when Antonio came in in the second half and he hit a couple off tackle. And we thought that was really good and that really changed a little of the momentum for us as far as our running game was concerned as well.

Q. Was that the big difference in the second half then because there was a big difference in terms of yards?

RON RIVERA: Yes, yes. You know, we hit a couple off tackle. Antonio turned up a couple really nice ones. I think he had one for almost 20 yards and just really kind of what you hope. That's what you kind of envision. You know, you've got a stout runner that runs inside between the tackles, you've got a guy with Antonio's athleticism can get



off tackle and can really burst.

Q. William Jackson, there was a report that he wanted to be traded.

RON RIVERA: I'm not going to talk about that. I'm not going to talk about that.

Q. Coach, you can hear the excitement outside right now getting his win and getting over that four game losing streak. Talk to me about the energy in that locker room right now.

RON RIVERA: See, that's something that's important because their energy, their excitement is something we can build off. It's something we can talk about that feeling, that sensation of what it means to go out and play well.

It was kind of cool, the guys gave me the ball because it's my first victory as a coach here at Soldier Field. I told them, I said -- you know, we talked today just before pregame meal in the meetings, and we talked about how coming to here was a special thing for me. I thought it was a really cool deal. I heard from some of my teammates that sent me text messages and stuff like that and well wishes. I told the guys it's really special, I said, to be able to do that. But you know what, what we need to do is we need to go home and we need to defend our territory and make it special. We can work off that energy. And that's what I want to do.

Q. Did you see Carson's block down in the goal --

RON RIVERA: Yes, yes, yes. And there's a toughness about him that I don't think a lot of people understand. He's a very resilient young man, and he wants to win in a bad way. And I hope that's an exhibition of his desire, his willingness to go out and just lay it on the line. And I just again hope people understand that's why a young man like that is somebody that people can be drawn to.

Q. Obviously, today was a "newsy" day for you guys with the report that came out. How were you able to get the players to focus on the game?

RON RIVERA: The biggest thing was we were just going to focus on what was important, that was playing the football game today.

Q. Al Michaels on the broadcast mentioned Dan Snyder and said what the league would love is for him to sell the team. He's become a major problem around the league obviously. That was his quote during the broadcast. So I'm wondering -- I know obviously you didn't hear that because you're coaching, but

throughout today, how did you hear that news? Did it affect you?

RON RIVERA: No because the truth of the matter is it's not important to me. Okay. What's important to me are the guys in the room. And that's something that I've been trying to establish. I'm trying to get beyond all this stuff that's on the outside that's noise as far as I'm concerned. What I'm focusing on is the development of this football team. There are a group of young men in there that deserve better, okay, in terms of -- they should be acknowledged for what they've done, what they're doing.

I don't want to get talking about something that I can't control anyways. I have no input. I have nothing to do with that. What I want to do is everything in that room. And that's what I wish we could just stay focused on. And it's difficult, it's hard. But for whatever reason, we're going to stick to what's interesting. That's playing football for our guys.

Q. Ron, you sound more fired up about -- you've given similar answers in the past about this, but you sound more fired up about. Is it just something about the circumstances or --

RON RIVERA: No. What's important is these guys, okay. For the last couple of weeks, honestly -- I'm going to speak my mind for a second. Honestly, it's been hard. It really has. You lose four games in a row and everybody wants to get you -- just get on you. And they've played their asses off. They have. They've played their asses off for everybody. They come out and they show up, they work hard. All right. They don't complain, okay. They hear all the stuff. And they've got to deal with it. I get that, and I respect them for that because they're resilient and they come back.

Everybody keeps wanting to say I didn't want anything to do with Carson. Well, bullshit. I'm the fucking guy that pulled out the sheets of paper that looked at the analytics that watched the tape in the fucking -- when we were at Indianapolis. Okay? And that's what pisses me off because the young man doesn't deserve to have that all the time. I'm sorry. I'm done.

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Carson Wentz

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Washington Commanders 12, Chicago Bears 7

CARSON WENTZ: You know, we'll take a win, especially with the skid that we were on so by any means necessary. And we got it done? And it feels very good, feels much needed.

Q. How is your hand? What happened?

CARSON WENTZ: It's a little sore. But I think I'll be all right. I hit it on a helmet, I don't know what it was, second quarter maybe. And the chilly conditions didn't necessarily help the jammed fingers. But it was all right. I was doing all right.

Q. Will you have an x-ray or something like that?

CARSON WENTZ: I will. I will, naturally. But I think I'll be okay.

Q. Kind of a busy day, a lot of news came out. I don't know how much you were aware of throughout the morning, but do you have any general responses to specifically the report that came out that says Dan Snyder was the one that pushed for trade?

CARSON WENTZ: Yeah. I was just informed that that would be asked in here and I have no idea, quite frankly, what was being reported, discussed, talked about. You guys know me. I don't read, I don't see a lot of that sort of stuff. So I can't really have an opinion on it anyway

Q. Your block on Brian -- first of all, just walk us through that. How did that feel?

CARSON WENTZ: Yeah. I mean, that's back to back weeks now. I don't know, B-Rod must like to bounce it backside. I don't know. It's not planned by any means. Especially when you're down there in the goal line. It was an ugly game. I'm going to do anything I can to help this team get in the end zone. Yeah. That was fun, I guess. I don't know. Hopefully, I'm not making a living doing it though.

Q. You looked down and 58 was on the ground because of you.

CARSON WENTZ: Yeah. He's a pretty good player. So whatever I can do to help. I'm just fired up that we finished that drive in the end zone. That was very needed at the time.

Q. Have you ever dropped a guy like that before that you can remember?

CARSON WENTZ: I think I did last week. But other than that, I don't think so. I don't think so since probably high school football or college maybe.

Q. I know you guys want to get a win obviously, but to see Brian get that touchdown, was there extra special meaning to that?

CARSON WENTZ: Yeah. Absolutely. I've said it since he came back, obviously. The real life side of it was cool to get him back last week and then huge to get him in the end zone this week for his first of hopefully many but especially the point in the game. Critical, crucial point in the ball game that we needed to score, needed to get in. And I think we all knew we were going to give him the rock a couple times down there. And he got it done for us. And I was happy for him, proud of him. And, like I said, hopefully the first of many.

Q. I know blocking is not your forte, not what you get paid to do. But at that point in the game, did you get any sense that that was a bigger play than it may have been earlier in the game or in the second quarter, anything like that?

CARSON WENTZ: Not really. It was just an instinctual thing. Any time I see a guy cut back, if I can get in the way, get in the way. If I need to actually block, I'll block. But like I said, hopefully not making a living doing it. But situationally down there close to the end zone, I'm going to do whatever I can to help this team.

Q. Carson, when your coach was in here, he passionately defended you and really showed how much he wants you. I know you don't pay attention to what happens outside. But considering what you've



been going through the last couple of years, does that feel good to know that the guy will stick his neck out publicly and say -- you don't know what he said, but he was very passionate and fired up about you.

you, guys.

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CARSON WENTZ: Well, yeah. I mean, Coach Rivera, he's awesome. I have a ton of respect for him playing in this league from a afar but getting to play for him is even better. It's definitely special. And he's someone I respect. And he's going to speak his mind. And he's going to be very direct and to the point. And in this business, that means a lot. And I think guys love that about him. And he's going to be straight up and very motivational. Guys respond to him really well. And I have a lot of respect for him. I'm appreciative of him for what he's done for me

Q. Hey, Carson, could you talk about this win -- more so that locker room and the excitement in that locker room today?

CARSON WENTZ: It means a, lot especially going into a mini bye week, a little weekend off. It was huge. We've been on a skid lately. We've been in some tough games, had some tough goes with it. But, yeah, this one was huge. You could just tell the energy. I know the plane will have a lot of energy too. It will be a lot of fun, much needed and this weekend will be much needed a little recovery as well.

Q. I'm sure it's not the first time in your football career you've relied on the defense to get a stop down the stretch, but how nerve wracking was that?

CARSON WENTZ: It's always nerve wracking. You have a ton of confidence in them, but when you're on the sideline, you feel helpless. You feel helpless. And I was fired up to see them get a couple of huge stops, like I said, today. I don't know how many big stops they had, turnovers on downs, turnovers, the muffed punt or whatever happened there. There were some huge plays that were definitely the difference in the ball game and the defense, special teams stepped up, made some plays. Like I said, it was an ugly win, but those plays were the difference.

Q. You mentioned having a longer wait to rest and recover. Where are you at physically?

CARSON WENTZ: I'm excited that we've got a little time, as I know a lot of guys are. We'll just say that.

Q. Did the shoulder bother you at all, the right one that was listed?

CARSON WENTZ: Felt good. Felt good tonight. Thank

