

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

Sunday, September 7, 2025

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Michael Penix, Jr.

Postgame Press Conference



Buccaneers 23, Falcons 20

Q. (No microphone.)

MICHAEL PENIX JR: Yeah, they did a great job. We knew the defense was going to present a lot of different looks, different personnels out on the field. I feel like everybody was on the same page and we communicated at a high level and we were able to be at our best when it was needed the most.

Q. Mike, what did you make of the rushing attack today? It struggled to really find its footing. Overall thoughts?

MICHAEL PENIX JR: Yeah, I feel like all across the board we all want to be better in that aspect. But at the same time, it's football. It's not always going to be perfect. No matter how hard we strive to be, it's not always going to be perfect.

But man, yeah, like I said, we got to be better in all aspects, not just rushing. Me as well in different situations where I could have gave my guys a better chance at the ball, like early on the third down to Drake on a quick out-route.

Just giving guys chances to be ball to be able to move the sticks and go down and put points on the board.

Q. The offense got stagnant after the first touchdown, but you picked it up in it the second half, especially going into the fourth quarter. What do you attribute that to?

MICHAEL PENIX JR: It's the NFL, man. It's tough. It's tough to score. It's tough to win in this league. Yeah, man, obviously we all put in all the preparation each and every day coming up to game day to go out there and execute in those big time moments and not have that lull throughout the game we got the first touchdown.

But at the same time, on the other side of the field those are NFL players as well, and those guys make plays just how we make plays. Obviously we want to make more and come out on top, but today they got the better of us.

Q. Did you get a chance to speak with Hodge on that last pass for the field goal attempt as far as did he say he didn't see it or say what happened?

MICHAEL PENIX JR: Yeah, I put the ball up a little earlier than I usually would on that play, on that route. He just didn't see it at the time. He got a little bit of contact at the top of the route, and once he cleared the contact the ball was already there. So he didn't see it at that moment.

At the same time, it's like, I'm not mad at him.

Q. What was the key in that 18-play drive there to get the lead late?

MICHAEL PENIX JR: Just sticking through it. Just sticking through it. Everybody continue to do their part and finish plays. Obviously you say 18 plays. You don't really see that too often, so for the O-line and receivers and everybody that's running routes to be able to still continue to come out there and go full speed and play at a high level on play 13, 14, 15, 16, it's great to see.

It just shows -- I shoutout our strength conditioning team making sure that we're ready for those moments when we got to be out on the field a little bit longer than we're used to.

Q. To follow that up, you get the lead; doesn't go well; you're back on the field with a minute, on the 14. What are ya'll saying to go out -- and hit the big play to Ray-Ray to get that drive started.

MICHAEL PENIX JR: Yeah, obviously Coach is telling me be smart with the ball, but we do need a chunk play. In that that situation, the part of the field that we're on, we needed a chunk play to get the drive going to be able to go down there and get points on the board.

Obviously we needed a field goal at the end, so we were

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looking to score. We wanted to score, and if we had to go for a field goal, then that's what it was.

But coming out, soon as we got on the field it was like no matter where we start from, the 14, the 30, or the 40, don't matter where we at. We got to go out there and put points on the board to help us win the game.

Q. Near the end of the game, the two fourth quarter red zone plays that you converted on. You looked totally comfortable in those situations. What is it that causes you to be so like -- you look almost like an NFL veteran in those spots. What's going through your mind in those situations?

MICHAEL PENIX JR: I would say I just tell myself, you know, it's the same game I've been playing all my life. I've been playing since I was five years old. I made a lot of plays throughout my years; made a few bad plays. So it's like I know when I go out there I don't have to be perfect.

I have to do whatever I can to help my team win a football game; that's what I did. So I don't go out there with pressure on my shoulders or thinking oh, I have to do this, I have to do that.

I just let the plays come to me and trust in God and trust in Z-Rob to put us in the right position to be able to go make them plays. He did and we were able to convert on those two plays.

Q. After those plays, are you saying anything in particular to your teammates as far as inspiration to try to get them motivated to go forward from that point?

MICHAEL PENIX JR: Yeah, you know, I feel like it definitely instilled confidence in the guys that at any point we can go put points on the board. In bit time moments like that you don't got to be worried. At the end of the day, as long as we do -- as long as we use our God-given talents and do what the coaches tell us to do based on a play call, we'll go out there and make those plays.

It's not anything where I got to be like ah, this is like -- got to pour confidence into them. This is what we expect. This is the game that we been playing all our lives. We're built for those moments. Just go out there and keep living your dreams.

Q. Mike, what did you think about the energy from the crowd today? They were loud pretty much the whole entire game.

MICHAEL PENIX JR: Oh, yeah, man, that was big time. We need it. We love it, man. Each and every home game

we want it and we know they'll bring it. Obviously whenever we make a big time play the city will be behind us. We appreciate them and look forward to being back home again and having that influence that they brought today.

Q. I know Younghoe had a tough year last year; had to battle for his job in camp; comes out and this happens in the first game. Just I don't know if you got a chance to speak with him after the game. Seemed to depart quickly afterward. Just the team's level of confidence in him with what he's been going through.

MICHAEL PENIX JR: Yeah, man, we got all the confidence in the world in Koo. He shows it day in and day out. He comes in and puts in the work, just like everybody else. We're not perfect. We go out there and strive to be but I'd never look at Koo any type of way because of the missed field goal, because I know that's not him. I know the player he is and how much he cares about the game and how much he cares about his job.

I just tell him just continue to understand and know who you are, man, and don't let this try to define you. At the end of the day, that game didn't only come down to just that last field goal. We had times early on in the game to make big time plays to put us in a position to where we didn't even have to be in that position where we needed to tie with a field goal.

So I just told him like bro, just keep being you, man. Don't let this define you.

Q. Mike, going off that, what is your leadership style when it comes to moments like that? You are captain; this is your first game. I'm sure you did have to have a hard conversation with Koo.

MICHAEL PENIX JR: Yeah, like I said, man, just trying to make sure I continue to help him understand that we still trust in him and still believe in him. Like you said, being a captain or not, you know, at the end of the day we are a brotherhood. This team is a brotherhood. We are close and all together, so it's like everybody is uplifting Koo, not just the captains. It's everybody on that field, because we know the guy that he is. We know what he does day in and day out to go out there and be great.

We are not perfect. We are not perfect. As much as we want to be.

Q. Feel like and you your teammates had some confidence in your scrambling ability. Do you think you surprised the Bucs a little bit with your legs today? You're not really known as that guy.

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MICHAEL PENIX JR: I don't know if I surprised them or not. Maybe towards the end because they were going man, that last drive down in the red zone. Maybe they were just expecting I wasn't going to be a factor in that.

But that's a good team over there. That's a good defensive coordinator over there. We look forward to the next matchup with them.

Q. On ya'll's run game, how much flexibility you have to at the line of scrimmage to change run plays? I know you got a variety of plays you can call. Can you switch between one run to the other?

MICHAEL PENIX JR: Yeah, I can. I can.

Q. Is that something you think with more experience you'll do differently than you did today or...

MICHAEL PENIX JR: I do whatever is in the play call. Whatever Coach tell me to do, that's what I do. I don't go outside of whatever that is. We got a game plan set, and coming into the game we're like, okay, we want to run this play. We get a certain look, we don't like it, go to the next play.

You know, like I feel like I did a good job with that today, making sure I was running in all the right looks we wanted to be in.

Q. Couple times today I think one with Casey and Drake, they stopped the routes a little short. Do you feel like that's just familiarity with your style and -- the ball went a little deeper than they were expecting. You were going that way toward the...

MICHAEL PENIX JR: I don't remember. I don't remember. But back to the thing we're not perfect. You know, obviously I want to give those guys a chance and allow them make big time plays on the ball.

I'm not perfect, man. I try to be.

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