

Chicago Bears Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Coach Sean McDermott Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Bills 35, Bears 13

SEAN McDERMOTT: All right, good win. Really proud of the guys, the coaches, the staff, the way they persevered. First half wasn't pretty. Penalties, turnovers, field position. I think that really dictated the flow a lot the first half.

Second half, we cleaned some things up, still left some things out there that we've got to continue to work on and clean up. But good to win, really happy for the organization, three AFC East championships in a row, and it's hard to do. It's hard to get one, let alone three in a row. I'm just very grateful for the effort and our fans also that showed up today. Want to wish everyone out there a merry Christmas, and we'll get home as soon as we can here.

Q. What do you think the key was to that third quarter spurt? You come out of the locker room and it's two quick drives. You got some help there, but what keyed that spurt there?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, better complementary football, and it really all started by the offense coming out and getting into a rhythm, executing at a higher level than we were in the first half, and then that takeaway, like you said, I think it was Dane Jackson got the takeaway, and maybe Tim recovered. Good to see that.

Q. Sean, three straight division titles now. Very happy locker room, obviously, after the game. When you started this run, when you guys got here, you were kind of hunting the teams ahead of you. Now the team is being hunted coming into seasons. Is it a little different feeling when you're able to wrap up a title like that?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, I mean, it's a different feeling every time you go on the field because you know, like you said, that everyone's momentum is coming at us that way, as opposed to trying to climb like we were early on.

We won some of those, and then we lost some close ones,

so I know what that feeling is like.

But you've got to keep that feeling a little bit, too, from a humble and hungry approach. Even though you're the one that we're in a different position now, but still, you've got to stay playing with that chip on your shoulder, coaching with that chip on your shoulder, and really putting the work in.

Q. Justin Fields (inaudible) especially as a runner. Can you talk about the defensive job you guys were able to do slowing him down and not letting him --

SEAN McDERMOTT: No, it was a great display of disciplined football. I thought we tackled better today than we did last week, and just fundamentally played better football. Getting the takeaway was big, like we talked about a few minutes ago. But it takes discipline to play good football, and particularly good defensive football.

Q. Just the way they were able to stem the tide also, three turnovers, Bears only allowed three points off of three turnovers. Stemming the tide, killing the momentum that they might have had.

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, the sudden-change defense was big. It was big, and I think we -- one of them was a 4th down, we got off and then we went right back out there. We've got to do a better job with the football on the offensive side of the ball, and I thought some areas of special teams wise, coverage wise, they were -- like at halftime maybe they were close to the 40 in terms of starting field position, and we were where we were. It's hard to win when you're turning the ball over or you're starting field position and it's so uneven like that, and then you're beating yourselves with penalties. We've got to get that cleaned up.

Q. Motor and Cook not only got to the second level, they really stretched out some runs for you in the open field.

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, credit to the offensive line and Motor and James. They did a great job. I know James had the long one there, made a great cut at the end to put it in the end zone, and I think that one-two punch with the run game combined with the pass game, it's just better complementary that way.



Q. Can you discuss the production of the offensive line a bit more. You're without Mitch Morse, you have Bates go in and out of the game, but seemed like they created plenty of massive holes for the running game.

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, like you said, I don't know what else more I could say. You said it well.

Everything starts up front really on both sides of the ball. If you want to play good football, it's got to start up front. You've got to control the line of scrimmage with great pad level and great fundamentals and coming off the ball, and we were able to do that at times. It was good to see.

Q. What was the thought process at the end of the first half you had a couple of time-outs left, 40 seconds, seemed like they were giving base in 3rd and long a little bit, you decided to just --

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, just initially was hey, if we could get a negative play early we'll take the time-out, which we did, and then obviously we forced them to run the ball after that, and I just felt like hey, let's get in the locker room and regroup a little bit here. Didn't know really how much we'd have left on the bone there with the punt, and just felt like overall we were getting the ball after half and felt like just better to go in and regroup.

Q. I know the wind kind of messed up the kicking game today; it was crazy out there, but just the job that Sam did flipping the field a couple of times, hanging some up there despite adverse conditions.

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, the kicking game, I thought they got the better part of it early in the game there, in the first half, and then in the second half our guys really were able to reset and came up with some big plays for us, which is all part of the ebb and flow of a game, so the mental toughness those guys showed in working together, and Coach Smiley, it was good to see right there, and good for us, too.

Q. From your perspective what do you think led to some struggles for Tyler Bass today?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Oh, that's uncharacteristic, so I'm not going to put too much in it. Those were tough conditions. If you guys were down on the field, the kicking game was going to be a challenge today, and it was, but I love how he came back. It's easier to start well, but to start not so good and come back, to show the mental toughness and strength to do that I think is really impressive.

Q. How does this win reflect the resiliency of the team and everything you guys have been through this year

with leaving early, having to stay in places longer, it's just been an up-and-down season for that, so how does this reflect the resiliency?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, I think it personifies that resiliency, and now we've got to stay here tonight, so we're -- the airport is closed in Buffalo. Come back in the locker room, first word is hey, we're staying the night, and I thought we were -- I was hoping or praying they were kidding. No offense to Chicago, love Chicago. What a great town. But it's hard to be away from your family when you've worked so hard and you only have so much time to be around them.

As I told the guys after the game, if I'm not with my family and they're not with theirs, there's no other family I'd rather be with than them, so it's a great time for us as an organization, too, Maddie included, Chris included here, that get to hang out a little bit, and everyone here that's from the Bills. I know everyone -- it's a little bittersweet, but we'll make the most of it get back as soon as we can. Someone is looking out for us and trying to keep us safe.

Q. Can you talk about how resilient your group is, to start off 0-2 in the division?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, you said it, it's a word that's been used a lot with these guys. They've overcome a lot, including today and the conditions out here. That can be a very neutralizing weather situation, right, and it was through the better part of maybe two and a half quarters. So it really wasn't setting up well for us, but the guys found a way and the coaches did the same through great communication and execution.

Q. You always talk about how you've got to run the ball. Talk about what your offense had up front, Singletary and Cook.

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, that was good to see, it really was. To be able to have a two-dimensional approach, especially in December, like you said, and with the weather the way it was, that was much needed, and the offensive line came out and I thought really did a great job playing with pad level and executing.

Q. What did you see that challenged (indiscernible)?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, I got great intel from up top that it was going to be close. I felt like it was a pivotal play in the game potentially obviously with a conversion or lack thereof on 4th down, and Mark Lubick and Dennis Lock do a great job for me up in the booth and they thought it was worth a challenge there.

Q. 11 yards on seven carries. Talk about how you were able to (indiscernible)?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, I thought it was a good plan by Leslie and the defensive staff, and the players executed. You've got to be disciplined against a quarterback like that, a running game like that, and then they came out -- give them credit, they came out with some of the kind of misdirection type plays, the bootlegs early and trying to get Justin on the perimeter of the defense, and I thought just as important was -- and impressive really was how the defense adjusted through the game after that first series or two, really adjusted in game, which is important and necessary.

Yeah, you've got to be disciplined. You've got to have good gap integrity, and really the way we practice, you've got to do your 1/11 because the ball could be anywhere; it could be in the quarterback's hands or the running back's hands. It was a good job by those guys.

Q. Obviously the goals of this team and this organization are much greater at this point, but do you allow yourself to reflect on three straight?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, I think tonight, like I said, I'd rather be with my family, like we all would, but to be able to take a breath, and like you said, reflect a little bit on what it's taken to get here, listen, it's more than one person. It's all the people back home who aren't with us. We're thinking of them and so appreciative of what they bring to our organization and so grateful. It's not just the football side, it's all parts of our organization, right, working together as one. Merry Christmas to those guys, as well.

Q. I know you've mentioned that you guys need to spend the night. Is there still uncertainty of when you'll get back? Do you guys know when you could come back or is it just wait and see?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, we're going to keep looking into it. Right now we have a scheduled flight for tomorrow morning trying to fly into Rochester. Some of the Bills' staff is looking at me like they're off -- that's news to them, right. I apologize for that, guys. We're working on it here.

Yeah, obviously unique situation. Safety first. You only get one chance at this, right, so we want to make sure we're doing the right thing, and I know our ops team led by Brendan Rowe, and Brendan has been involved in it, Ron Raccuia. Like I said, I came into the locker room and I was talking to Chris Clark on the way in, our director of security, and I said, hey, great to get a win, and I said, do you think we can get home, and he first broke the news to me, and I thought he was kidding after -- not that I didn't think it was

possible, but I was hoping he was kidding and then quickly turned around and saw Brendan and Brendan said the same thing. We walked back to my locker room and tried to hash out the schedule for the players over the next couple of days and the schedule for the coaches, trying to give them time with their families here, as well.

Q. Understanding, I guess, the frustration of not being able to get home, given what day it is and where your families are, is there any added satisfaction with all the obstacles this team has had to overcome this year, just knowing that you guys were able to win this third straight AFC East title?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, no doubt, it's a great feeling. Very grateful. The reality of our situation is you don't get that time back with your kids, right. Christmas morning, when you've got little kids or kids at all, family at all.

But there's a silver lining in this somewhere, and we'll find it.

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