

Philadelphia Eagles Media Conference

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Michael Clay

Weekday Press Conference



MICHAEL CLAY: Good morning, everyone.

Q. What's a teaching point for Cooper on the play where he fumbled?

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, it was more our fundamentals in terms of ball security. It was a little loose as you probably could see on TV copy. It was kind of below him there. Want to get our wrist would've or elbow there.

Then when we get to the contact point, putting two hands, a clasped hand on it, just to make sure. It was a good hit by 93 there, but if we have two hands on the ball we have an opportunity to at least secure it.

He did a good job getting 11 yards, and at some point, let's just protect the ball right there and not put our defense in a tough situation.

Q. What did it say about him the very next return he comes back and returns 22 yards?

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, shows a lot on who that person is. To be able to put that play away, one, the mental strength he has to come back and have an opportunity to help the team in any way he can. He does a great job on defense obviously.

But going back out there and on that fourth down getting 23 yards, putting ball at the plus-45 and I think we got a touchdown out of it really helps. Just shows his mental strength to come back, kind of flush that bad play away and come back and help the team out.

Q. ... on the 29 yard punt.

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, he miss-hit that ball. It got outside of him and he tried to save it and it just went straight up in the air so it wasn't going to travel very well. We can't put our defense in that two minute situation in a bad spot.

We have to have a better contact point with that punt. It

was just one of those miss-hits that got outside of his frame. He tried to save it and he couldn't.

Again, we can't put our defense or offense regardless of if we're returning or not in a bad spot, especially in the two minute situation where the defense is a balling out right there.

It gave up three points. Even if it's 11 yards with a the 40 yard punt, that was 11 yards. By the end of it probably gets them out of that field goal range, so we got to do better in those situations.

Q. Nick was talking about Kenny Gainwell. Obviously had a big game on offense. Also on special teams did some things. What has he done for your group?

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, I know everyone, coach says that Kenny Gainwell is one of his favorite players and Kenny Gainwell is one of my favorite people I've been around since being a coach. You know, it really just started with that first kickoff. If you look at him he's on the right side. He pushed the guy on the ground on a really good, aggressive button press. Then he comes back with two good returns on kickoff return and helped us out at the end of the half.

We maybe trying to get some extra points right there, 35 yard return, and then goes out there in two-minute drill. I can't say enough good things about Kenny Gainwell. Fortunate enough to be around him for four years. I know he was part of the first draft class here with Nick. Just wants to help the team any way he can.

Whether it's to spell Saquon or to go out there on kickoff coverage, kickoff return. When I need him on punt return he's always ready to go. Just kudos to him to be ready whenever his number is called, whether it's special teams or offense. I can't say enough good things about Kenny Gainwell.

Q. Successful night for Jake. What have you seen behind the scenes as he's looked to get on track?

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, same old Jake. Each and every day he comes in and he is so locked in on his process to get better. So, you know, him not changing anything and being that self-belief in himself is always refreshing, and



going through the whole week, just having fun with football. I know I alluded to it last time in this presser. Just don't lose the joy of football.

I think for all of us that sit in this room, as long as we enjoy the process and have fun doing it we're going to take the outcomes as it comes out.

So, again, good for Jake. Good for the whole team getting those points on the board when we need to. That 48 yarder was really good. He struck the ball clean and we got that penalty with them hitting Rick; then to go back out there in the second sequence of plays to hit a 41 yarder, again, going to help out the team any way we can.

Q. Think back last year, Nolan Smith was a core player for you. What impressions did you have of him as a first round pick on special teams?

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, you know, like I always say, it's always nice to see when you come from a special teams core to being a starter. It's awesome to see Nolan. What he does on defense you saw a lot on special teams. That energy, relentlessness out there. It's good presence to show for Jalyx, for example, you know, a guy. To show that presence, how you can make your mark maybe not your first year as a defensive player but as a special teams player, and then you can take that jump right there.

Very proud of Nolan, but also sets a benchmark for the young guys that that first year you're in, all right, may not be playing a lot of offense and defense, but I can make my mark on special teams.

Q. How much does the way the defense has been playing this year increase the margin of error this team has in all facets?

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, I mean, obviously you don't want to have a 29 yard punt in any situation, but from a special teams standpoint I really don't look at it from a margin of error, whether it's an efficient offense or heck of a defense that Vic has right now. We're just trying to make it where it gives that added momentum for offense and defense.

You saw in the Baltimore and Carolina game where we helped out with those long fields right there. It snowballs. You go back two weeks, I think two weeks against Baltimore where you down them inside the five; defense gets a three and out; we get the ball in the plus territory off a punt return.

That's what we're trying to do, win that field position battle on these hidden yardage situation. Again, we want to not put our offense and defense in that bad situation. We want

to help and propel them and get them going. Whether that's on a kickoff, a big hit or something like that. That extra juice, extra energy. They got to go now from the 25 instead of the 30.

From our standpoint we're trying to be the best we can be in special teams and help out the offense and defense with that field position battle.

Q. You talked about Nolan going in a special teams to a defensive starter. The reverse would be a guy like Kelee who played a lot more on defense last year than this year. Some guys might not handle that so well. What have you seen from him as far as his attitude towards special teams when he's not playing on defense like this year?

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, I think I kind of alluded back to when we lost Josh Jobe or whatever. He became the primary gunner in this gunner room obviously with Sidney be down for the first six weeks and everything. Kelee does a great job. He's always asking in game, hey, what can I do here? Where are they going with the ball? How can I do better?

Then Tyler Brown does a great job with them throughout the week with the gunner room and the vice room. I think Kelee has done an unbelievable job taking the reins right there and playing at a high level and understanding how he can affect the game.

You've seen him on the outside as a gunner. He's affected the game, whether that's going down making a tackle for a one yard return or causing a strip fumble, something of that nature, and on kickoff coverage making some plays.

Where he really shines in my opinion is at the vice spot. We put a lot of trust in Kelee that we're going to leave you on an island. You got to take care of their best gunner one-on-one. He stepped up to the plate every time and really delivered for us, and that allows you to get a vice somewhere else or play 8 in the box knowing how good he is on the outside.

So just being able to prep him to, hey, you're going to be a key guy to get us going has been awesome. He answered the bell, and looking forward to the remaining games for him doing the same thing.

Q. You mentioned Tyler Brown and Pannunzio often. What value do they provide to you and your staff?

MICHAEL CLAY: You know, shoot, I could go just as long with the Kenny Gainwell with Joe P. I've known Joe P for a decade now. Tyler being I guess my first ever hire. They

keep me sane during the week, keep it light on game day, and they allow me to have a clear mental thought throughout the process, because we know we put in all the work from Monday all the way up to Sunday.

Tyler does a great job with the specialists and on the outside guys just being able to talk with the specialists the same language they hear, and then switches his brain and getting after that vice. Whatever they can get little tidbits at.

Joe P bridges everything. He's been around football a long time and goes under the radar. He bridges everything. He's able to help me get to some of the guys, connect with some of the guys. I kind of bounce ideas off them or get their opinion.

I know they're going to shoot it to me straight. After every meeting I ask them, what did I miss or what can you do better here. So those two guys, I owe a lot to them. They're doing a heck of a job. Especially Tyler coming from the college ranks to now. He's just improved every day and he is always joy to be around.

We share an office together. It is always nice. When you do share an office with a guy for 12 hours a day it could be monotonous, but he keeps it lively in there with some sort of joke or watching a Premier League game. I have nothing but respect and admiration for Joe P and Tyler.

Q. What was the Raiders game like for Tyler?

MICHAEL CLAY: Shoot, I really didn't ask him too much. I know him and Randy, but I think it was a little, you know, bittersweet I guess, being around those specialists so much with Randy, but being with us, wanting to get that win.

Luckily on the right side of win there. I'm sure Randy likes him a little bit more this week since we helped him out with beating the Steelers.

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