

# Philadelphia Eagles Media Conference

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## Michael Clay

Weekday Press Conference



**Q. (Indiscernible.) Jake missing another extra point, but also kind of getting you guys through couple kicks.**

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, you know, obviously that first extra point we can't have obviously if it was better conditions. But I thought Jake battled through and he actually I thought from both the kickoff standpoint and those three tough field goals, you know, you guys look at the yardage on the last two, what was it, in the 20s and the 30s.

We saw the conditions there. He did an unbelievable job. And not just him, but also the operation starting with Rick. You saw the big guys clearing the spot for him. So with Jake it's always his mentality is never dwelling on him and he's going to go out there and try to perform at the best of his ability.

Going three for three in those conditions on the field goal getting nine points for us was outstanding. Just little things we can clean up just so we don't have those extra points.

But I thought Jake did a really nice job bouncing back after the first one, both of those kickoffs, and with the three extra field goals.

**Q. What are you seeing on those extra points?**

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, the first one he was way too fast with it. You know, for myself, to get these guys put in more game-like situation. Those two that he missed were all sudden change. Big plays, so you don't get that same type of methodic drive where you're going through your same process.

It's more just understanding for them like, you do see number 26 back there. He could take it 80 yards in the blink of an eye. We just got to make sure we stay true to our process and not speed up with the adrenaline of the game. So nothing overbearing that I saw from him. Just got too quick on it. He pulled left.

**Q. The 44-yard kick that he did make, like, you know, into the wind and the snow, I mean, how difficult was that one obviously with everything that was going on?**

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, everyone saw the conditions right there; 44 yards in those conditions is extremely tough. Again, comes back to his mindset. You know, whenever our numbers are called, try to the best of our abilities to put points on the board, and he did.

He had a good ball. Started to leak a little bit to the right but it was a true ball. Any way we can get points on the board, and you saw those three field goals really came down and helped us out in the end of it.

**Q. What did you make of the holds from Braden?**

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, Braden, his hand were fantastic. I know one of them was really good where he spun it as well. I think it was the last field goal that he had the really good hold. You know, as much as it's made that Braden had great holds, the snaps weren't awful either by Rick.

They were pretty good. A lot of times he was just putting them down over the spot. It gets exaggerated when you extend out a little bit, but the laces were good outside of one from Rick.

In those conditions it's not just the kicker with his plant leg and footing, it's also the snapper. That ball is laying on the ground, hands are cold, it's getting with the wet.

I thought Rick good a really good job trying to mitigate any issues. Braden, his hands are fantastic and puts in all the work they do. Behind the scenes people don't really see how much they snap, hold, and get the operation where it needs to be.

**Q. What is it like to have a guy like Gainwell who can come in with Isaiah playing more corner, come in and produce like he did?**

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, Kenny is just a gamer. We've talked about Kenny a lot, whether it's his kickoff coverage or his return ability. You know, even on offense you see he makes people miss. He gets all the yards you don't see.



You know, he sits that corner over there where John is and is always in tune and trying to get better. He always asks, hey, you need me at any point, let me know. I'm ready to go.

You saw it pushing the pile from the 36 yard line to the 44 yard line, gave our offense shorter fields. Especially in those conditions, any way we can make a short field for our offense or a long field for the defense, we're going to try to go out there and flip the field.

Kenny, I can go on for days talking about Kenny Gainwell. He's awesome.

**Q. Given the conditions, how difficult was the kickoff after the safety?**

MICHAEL CLAY: I mean, that's one of the plays that kind of gets lost in translation because I don't think people really understand the ruling is if it's a 25 yard penalty if you don't get it to that landing zone. Jake hit a knuckle ball, got it far enough. It was a good job by the returner catching it, but good job by our coverage getting him down at the 35. If it was a 25 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage and we put the defense at the plus 45, that's a lot of yardage that we could have gave up.

I thought Jake did an unbelievable job in those conditions into the wind, snow. Then our coverage guys going down there. Trot made a heck of a play shedding the blocker to make it, and holding him down to the 35; that was a 25 yard field position swing from the kickoff unit. We were very happy about that.

Something that we most people don't think it's a huge play. In our eyes that was a heck of a play to save the 20 yard field position.

**Q. Were you nervous about that kick at all, that it could get deep enough?**

MICHAEL CLAY: Nervous? I don't think I'm nervous of it. I think it's more of just within those white lines you have so much trust in those guys they're going to get it done. We're just out there to try and make a play. There maybe be nervousness from other people. I still have so much trust in Jake and the kickoff unit, especially as of late covering the ball very well, to get the guys down. We've got a big test against Washington this week.

**Q. Against Washington last time, maybe some of the kickoffs were a little bit of an issue. Just mentioned the improvement there. Do you think that came from that game?**

MICHAEL CLAY: I think we all looked in the mirror ourself, myself as a coach, to allow the players to understand that wasn't good enough in that moment in time. These guys are so prideful and they just want to make -- they want to make their presence felt on special teams to help the offense and defense.

Ever since that game I think we've done a really good job of improving our fundamentals, tackling, and making some plays. Tristin McCollum has done an unbelievable job manning the inside there at the five. He made that first tackle against LA and has done a really good tackling Turpin against Dallas.

It's just us, again to, syncing to our level of detail and fundamentals to make sure our kickoff unit is helping out, and it has the first two games. We can't let that falter because they have a really good kickoff return unit.

**Q. When did you find out you wouldn't have Oren as much as usual last week?**

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, I go through every day trying to mix and match guys just in case. You never know what's going to happen. I got to prep everyone from the 1 to the 2 deep. So not knowing or knowing, really doesn't matter to me in terms of my job is to get these guys prepared. They all come in with the sense that their number can be called at any point, and they come in ready to work starting tomorrow.

So they make my job a lot easier because they're so in tune and locked in it. It's my job to at least give everybody reps they can feel confident going in if their number is called.

**Q. What's top of mind for you heading into this matchup?**

MICHAEL CLAY: I mean, everything on top of mind. From special teams coordinator standpoint we got to make sure, one, we flip the field on kickoff and punt and coverage, and from the punt standpoint we also got to protect.

Washington does a very good job. They got a couple exotic rushes dating even back to the Seattle days when Izzo was a coordinator there. We got to make sure we are getting our counts and we are protecting from the kickoff and punt return.

Obviously it's ball security, whether it's a little bit colder, ball is a little bit slicker. We've done a fairly good job in that regard.

And then playing penalty free, especially in the playoffs.

You know, those penalties are kind of magnified and a lot bigger. For us to play a clean game from not just the core few but field goal and field goal block standpoint.

**Q. A lot of the kicking is mental as well. If Jake struggles, how do you work to keep him from getting frustrated?**

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, I don't think Jake really dwells on it. That's the great thing. Very fortunate to have. He's the kind of guy that almost like a golfer's mindset. He will hit a bad shot here as a golfer, but how do you bounce back from it?

It really showed when he missed that first extra point. He bounced back with some good kickoffs and those three field goals to help us put some points on the board.

His mental is so strong. I'm never too worried about him. He'll flush it after the first one.

**Q. How about for you as a coach, leader? Do you treat the specialists the same way you would a unit that's under-performing or it's not good enough? It's a make-or-miss game, right? So do you have to convey to him that that's not good enough or does he just know?**

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, I think everybody understands the nature of this business. It's always production based. It's not where I have to really harp on it. It's pretty much black and white when you miss or make a kick. I don't think I need to beat a dead horse with Jake.

We always understand that we're graded on our ability to make points as a kicking unit or graded on our ability to cover kicks as punt and kickoff coverage unit.

I think everybody understands that. You know, they've done some good things to get us to this point. It's not like we just fell into it. I'm never too hard on the guys. What's the point of me beating a dead horse if they already know?

For me personally, it's to positive reinforce the guys to get back up and say, hey, next play. We'll be all right. Year going to come back and make a big kick for us, which he did. He even said the second field goal was one the hardest ones because he didn't see the ball. He didn't know if he made it missed it, but he came back and mentally went through his same progression and put nine points on the board with three for three from the field goal.

**Q. The coordination for the guys that came out and cleared the snow for Jake on field goals and stuff, how does that come about during the course of the week?**

**Is that something you tell them, hey, if there is snow I want you guys to clear it?**

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, just watching other games. There was a big snow game against Buffalo and San Francisco and seeing how the weather accumulated. Tyler looks at it from a day-to-day. Like what was the temperature at that game? Obviously the Raiders/Patriot game. We look back and see what happened, how did they clear it.

The rule is that John Ferrari tells us, hey, just a reminder you can't use a towel or any foreign object to move the field. Our field goal unit meeting I let them know, hey, if Jake asks for a spot, you big guys out there help him out, clear it, and get ready to protect.

So there is a lot of behind the scenes things that go into those things that maybe you really don't think of from an outside perspective.

The guys are so locked in. You saw it. Those two field goals it was almost like a pit crew. Cleaned it up, got set, and they were able to protect against a pretty good rush team.

**Q. The approach to coaching and the positive reinforcement you discussed, is that from the way you were coached? Is that how you wanted to be coached? How would you describe the philosophy behind that?**

MICHAEL CLAY: Yeah, that's a really good question. I wasn't expecting that question. For myself, I'm more of a glass half full personality. When I do need to get on somebody I think there is a little bit more effect to it when you're not yelling all the time.

But I think the positive reinforcement is give them confidence they have somebody that is believing in them to do the right thing, help out the team in any way.

There is obviously times where you have to be kind of a stern human being, but for myself it's that positive reinforcement will only help them to know that someone is confident in them that they can get the job done and hopefully they perform at that level.

For me personally it has happened the three years prior with Jake. He set records here and I'm not too worried about him. He's still a hell of a kicker, great kicker, and I would want him on my team in these situations at any point.

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