

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Coach Mike Vrabel

Press Conference



Titans, 41 - Texans, 38

Q. Mike, just how you drew it up there to end up with a finish like that, to win the division title for first time in 12 years.

MIKE VRABEL: Just really proud of our guys the way they fight, and a lot of credit to the Texans.

But at the end of the day of day we had some timeouts and felt like left -- tell Ryan, Hey, at the end of the day, just maybe launch one up to AJ. Got a favorable look and that's what happens. Guys go out and make plays in this league and that's why you win.

Q. I guess Sam Sloman came through in the clutch for you. Heck of a development there. Hadn't kicked all season and ends up kicking the game winner to with the AFC South.

MIKE VRABEL: I think that's just a testament to what we been doing in trying to get the guy in there that could help us. He worked with team this week and had a great week of practice. Just proud of Sam to step up and take advantage of this opportunity to help the team.

Q. Now that you got the win, looking back at what Derrick Henry has been able to do in the regular season, how remarkable is it?

MIKE VRABEL: Incredibly durable, incredibly productive. He's disappointed putting the ball on the ground, but we understand the type of player he is and the impact that he has on this team, on the field and off it.

I'm proud to coach him and this entire football team.

Q. I know it's a team effort, but what can you say about the efforts of the offense just in total to be able to put you guys in position to win this one?

MIKE VRABEL: I mean, I thought we played really good defensively in the first half in some tough spots. We just

didn't make enough plays defensively in the second half, and give them credit, they did.

And I'll leave it at that. I think everybody had some plays that they really thought were good and some we would like to have back.

In the end, we had some time and we executed. Ryan and AJ hooked up. There is a lot to fix and correct, but we're in the going to apologize for winning 11 games in the National Football League.

Q. AJ brown came up clutch many times, even before 54-yard bomb he caught there. Talk about the focus that he had out there today. Seemed like he was really on pointe.

MIKE VRABEL: I mean, that's what this league is, guys. I mean, your best players have to play great for you to win. That's been the same before I came into the league as a player and it'll be the same when I leave as a coach. The best players got to play good each week for you to win, and AJ did, as did others.

Q. I know you guys have been pointing towards the division and also getting a home playoff game. What does it mean to have hit those accomplishments here? What's that mean to the team?

MIKE VRABEL: I just -- I mean, it's never easy in this league, and I hope that everybody appreciates that. We don't take winning more granted. Proud of our guys, our coaches, for the work they put in, and the entire organization.

Excited for our owner, for Amy and her family, to be able to do this. To be able to clinch this in Houston where she grew up, where our team was founded, I think there is a lot of reasons.

So just incredibly gracious to be the coach of this team and try to continue to improve.

Q. Earlier in the fourth at the 37, was that go all the way, was that Sam Sloman not quite having the distance there, and were you trying to hard count them and ran out of time or what happened on that play exactly?

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MIKE VRABEL: I'll have to go back. We didn't execute. It was just out of -- yeah, that actual, the wind, the roof being open was noticeably different with the wind. Didn't think that was in our kicker's range. We'll have to do a better job executing in those situations.

Q. Tannehill's runs today seemed easy. With people paying so much attention to Derrick, he's had an easy time of it. What kind of weapon has that become for you?

MIKE VRABEL: I think you have to be willing to do that, have to be willing to do some of that when they have the advantage.

And again, we want to be smart with it. Ryan gives us great opportunity to be able to execute those plays. Got a lot of confidence in his ability to read and execute those plays, and for the most part take care of himself.

Q. Couldn't understand Joe's question. When you said that you were talking about the wind, were you talking about that fourth and 11?

MIKE VRABEL: I just tried to answer Joe's question the best I could.

Q. I'll ask that and if you've answered it, then you can move to the next person. What lead you going for it on that fourth and 11 mid-field?

MIKE VRABEL: I didn't think we could -- I thought we were out of field goal range, and wanted to try to get a first down.

Q. You talked about liking some of the things the defense did, the way they played to the first half. What happened in the second half? What kind of -- you saw on the field that kind of allowed Houston to get momentum in the second half on defense for you guys?

MIKE VRABEL: Just they made some plays and we handed them some plays. Probably a combination of both.

Q. I know Corey Davis, few drops out there today, and there was a point that he went to the sideline. You talked to him a little bit. What did you say to him to keep his head in the game, keep his confidence?

MIKE VRABEL: Got a lot of confidence and trust in Corey and told him just to relax. We're going to need to come back and make a play for us, and he did. And sometimes those -- you have those types of days. I know that Corey

will come back and work to fix those things, and it's a long game. Never know when you're going to have to come back and make a play for the team.

Q. Obviously AJ has had a huge year, pretty much all along the way. Few notable drops of late. What does that say to you with everything on the line he catches I think ten out of eleven targets. Obviously the huge one at the end, but also two or three must-have plays there on the drive before that as well.

MIKE VRABEL: That the catch is strong and he battles, he competes. He's got such a great play strength and demeanor. You know, I just love coaching him. He tries to improve every day.

Q. Your team had a chance to collapse in this one. You gave up the lead. Had a touchdown taken off the board. Talk about the makeup of those guys to keep the head moving forwards?

MIKE VRABEL: I told them I'm fortunate and proud to be their coach, and they don't quit, they don't give in. I know that there are times where you could, and I think that what happens -- I think unfortunately that happens sometimes in this league.

They didn't. They battled back, and whatever time we needed to make a play there down the stretch, you know, get a stop for us to make a 51-yarder, and that's -- we've gone in there and scored touchdowns countless times.

Defense gave up a play and came back and forced to make a huge kick, and we were able to execute there at the end offensively.

Q. Do you anticipate Gostkowski being available for the playoff opener? If not, did Sloman show you that he's a reasonable option there?

MIKE VRABEL: I would say he's more than a reasonable option, and we won't know about Steven until we get back. We will put the injury report out on Tuesday or Wednesday.

Q. The Texans pulled off the fake punt. Do you come into this game expecting anything is possible from a team that is out of the race, and does that make giving up those plays a little more disappointing?

MIKE VRABEL: The coaches cleaned their offices out on Saturday morning, so I think we're well aware that they would do anything that they possibly could, and they had nothing to lose.

We have to be better. You know what I mean? We have

to be better in those situations. We have to get those guys covered. We have to be able to understand that flee flickers and keeping our eyes on our guy, all those different types of plays, reverse on the kickoff and on ask on and on.

Q. A lot of talk obviously about the season AJ had from a production standpoint. Today he went down with an injury, came back, played well. That's happened a lot this season where he's gone down and comes back. What is his level of toughness like, his toughness of playing through these injuries?

MIKE VRABEL: He's either really tough or he just likes us all to go out there and pick him up off the ground and dust him off and send him back in there. I haven't figured out which one it is.

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