

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

Coach Mike Vrabel

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Titans 17, Texans 10

Q. (Indiscernible.)

MIKE VRABEL: Well, just trying to separate ourselves right now with the opportunities that we have playing division opponents and being able to put some separation between us and some the guys in the division.

It's not going to get easier, but certainly proud of the fact that we been able -- we told the guys, like we won one game in a row five times. That's all we've done. It's going to be a new challenge, a bigger challenge coming in this week, or going on road.

Q. What can you say about Jefferson?

MIKE VRABEL: Just some of these guys, again, whether it's Jeffrey or Ben or the ability for Derrick to continue to show up week in and week out and prepare in the off-season, there is a lot of guys. Certainly Jeff's performance, attitude, leadership, he's a large part of our team. I appreciate who he is as a person, as a father, and as a teammate.

Q. ...strength in a lot of ways in terms of not being able to ask a lot of Malik and let Derrick and the defense roll?

MIKE VRABEL: Malik, first NFL start on the road, crowd noise, all these things. We tried what we felt like gave us the best chance to win the football game.

That is going to change each and every week.

Q. Without your starting quarterback, is it a day where you challenge everybody to go more?

MIKE VRABEL: Well, I think instead of doing more, maybe do our jobs a little better and make the plays we're supposed to make; not think that we have to somehow win the game by ourselves.

I think that hopefully we didn't try to do that and try to do somebody else's job. Just need to do our job a little bit better.

Q. You guys pride yourself so much on (indiscernible) and defense. The idea that you shut them down the way you did in the second half..

MIKE VRABEL: I think that we continue to figure out who we are. I think we have. That's going to have to change and modify.

But I think the guys that have embraced it, there are a lot of examples that will be easy for me to coach from, whether that be penalties, operation, you know, not getting enough turnovers, not taking care the football on the punt return and the interception there.

So there will be a lot of things to coach. My job is to continue to coach them and demand a lot them and get better and find ways to improve.

Q. You say figure out who we are. Your identity has seemed to stay the same now for a number of years. Do you feel like you're getting back to what you expect?

MIKE VRABEL: I mean, when you give up 200 yards rushing in the first week of the season, and I know that's a long time ago, we still believe that we know how to stop the run. We feel like we know how to run it. They were coming in, running the football.

We gave up a few that I think we probably shouldn't have, but we stood up to the challenge of stopping the run and making them earn it.

It could have been really, really special performance had we been able to get a stop there at the end. You got to do it each and every week, and we'll have to go on the road and do it in primetime on the road in a hostile environment.

Q. First half, two turnovers, but they went back yards, 13 yards. How big was that?



MIKE VRABEL: I mean, huge. I think they're starting to get some confidence and get better. Kristian Fulton is out there challenging and tackling. When you have corners that can match really good receivers in this league, but also willing to tackle, now you're starting to look at a pretty quality player.

We demand a lot, try to push Kristian. I know Coach Midget does the same and Shane, and just to try not to be a guy that just covers. You see him showing up. Andrew Adams is getting better. Got some performances from some guys inside, and it's good to have Zach back and David Long, all of them.

I think they're starting to build some confidence in what we are going. Be a huge challenge next week.

Q. How do you think Malik handled the week?

MIKE VRABEL: I thought it got better. I mean, today there were some good things and some things that if he's quarterback for us next week, if he's our quarterback, that we'll have to be better at.

But they'll be about the same for everybody.

Q. The blocking for Derrick today, offensive line...

MIKE VRABEL: I think that's another group starting to build some confidence, and how we finished the game against the Colts may have a lot to do with that. We saw a lot of pressure in the second half and a lot of moving parts.

For the most part, they stood up and got Derrick going, got him into the second level and great to see those guys doing that.

Q. What can you say about Derrick's performance overall today?

MIKE VRABEL: I think we've come to expect that from him. He puts so much on himself. We all have to find ways, something good, bad, or ugly happens to get back to center, get back to work. Derrick, he expects more of himself than anybody on this football team or any coaching member would, so I'm glad we have him.

Q. ...most touchdowns in a career by a Titan. As a coach, do you get excited about an accomplishment like that from one of your players?

MIKE VRABEL: Sure. I mean, I come to work every day with Derrick and Valentina and Adriana were at the kids' Christmas party. Of course I do. You get to know these guys, spend a lot time with them. This is our fifth year

being together, good times, bad times, frustrations, kids being born.

There is a lot things that go on over the course of five years that I've had the luxury of making connections with these guys that have been here since I got here.

Q. Mike, this team overcame obviously a lot of adversity last season. (Indiscernible.) Do you think this is totally different or something to build off?

MIKE VRABEL: I think it's every situation is different. You have to see what the situation is, who is available, who you're playing, try to come up with a plan that you can communicate and teach to the players.

So it'll be no different this week. Todd will say who is available and who's not and we'll go from there. We'll try to make sure everybody coming to work is believing in the same things we believe in around here and understand that they practice and prepare as a starter.

If they're not, then they go on to the next week and sometimes they are and they get called up. Whether that's Chris Conley, or Murch, any of these guys. Logan was prepared to go in there if he had to.

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