

Houston Texans Media Conference

Sunday, December 31, 2023

Houston, Texas, USA

Head Coach Mike Vrabel

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Texans-26, Titans-3

MIKE VRABEL: We'll see how it is. I don't think it's anything too, too serious. Couldn't finish the game. We'll see where things are going on tomorrow.

Q. Is he dealing with a different injury?

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, something different here.

Q. Is it kind of like Cleveland where it was just tough for you guys to get anything going, get the drive?

MIKE VRABEL: I think when we did, we didn't finish. There were some mistakes. I would have liked to have had the early shot and then we have a penalty that on a conversion.

We knew when we practiced about moving Hop around on third down. Disappointing that we aren't set and then being able to move one of our better players around to help us get a conversion.

So it's a penalty there. We're not set. Then we have the touchdown, fumble return, can't protect the quarterback. Then just not scoring down there inside the red zone.

There were obviously some things that weren't very good. There will probably be some better plays once we have a chance to look at it. Then it's just not complementary enough. The penalty... we get a stop and then a penalty and give them the ball back. It's hard to play any game when you are not complementing each other, and there's mistakes.

Q. You talk about the little things that get you beat and the dumb shit that hurts the team. At this stage in the season are you disappointed you are still getting stuff like 12 men on the field, running into the kicker...

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, always disappointed. We've become our own version of Friday tape. With guys down or things are going and changing in a hurry, we have to all

be tuned in. Some of those things that you can overcome, and we're not where we need to be to be able to overcome those things.

I know Caleb was really trying to take that role of special teams. He had driven the wing into the punter last week, and that's legal, but if you are obviously not driving the wing back into the punter, you can't run into them.

Just like Caleb had some really cool snaps last week, some good snaps on kickoff coverage, talked about his violence, but then you just have to know now you're on a different unit. I guess trying to finish can't override the decision-making.

It's a young player that, again, we've been searching for outside linebackers to help us in the special teams game, and Caleb is starting to do that. Just one of those penalties that you have to be able to avoid.

Q. How many mistakes do you generally show them in Friday tape?

MIKE VRABEL: Well, there's good. There's bad. There's all types of things. Those are the ones that we've seen, and those are the ones that we're doing ourselves.

Q. I know it takes all 11 to make things work on offense, but when you have a position that's so consistently been struggling like left tackle, how do you feel like you guys have done to help those guys out, and how limiting is it when you have to...

MIKE VRABEL: I think it's pretty limiting, and not every play is like that, but we'll have to find ways to protect the quarterback and whether we're chipping, leaving guys in. It's hard when you leave a lot of guys in against zone coverage. There's a lot of guys covering just a couple.

So I think that there's always a balance, and we've talked about some of the things that we need to be able to do when you can run the football and then run some play passes that have different blocking schemes, different angles.



That's where you can kind of leave guys in because you get himself from the underneath coverage and then you are able to hit some things behind it or take a shot.

You have to be able to do some of those things to keep players in. Third down, probably got to chip once in a while, but also have to try to get some guys out to help the quarterback.

Q. -- sacked 13 times in the course of two games over three weeks. Is that super limiting in terms of what you are able to do on offense overall?

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, we have to be able to protect our quarterback. The numbers are the numbers. So you have to be able to protect the quarterback if you want to be able to throw the football in this league.

Q. Maybe what you are missing is a spark, a play like Burks made early, just bringing energy early. Not making plays like that, how much does the spark you might have gotten out of that, how much does that hurt you?

MIKE VRABEL: I don't know. We didn't make the play, so I don't know what the reaction would have been. I think that's a hypothetical question, but you have to go out there and be able to make some of those plays and make some guys miss and break some tackles, complete some contested catches. Same thing on defense.

We have to be able to knock the ball out of somebody's hand. We have to be able to hit it off the quarterback, tip it up in the air. It's pro football.

Q. To be winless so far in the division is difficult, I imagine.

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah.

Q. What do you think could have been done differently on that second play sequence inside the 10 where you were trying to score there on the third?

MIKE VRABEL: Just being able to run it in. Being able to protect the quarterback. Just didn't happen. Give them credit, but we weren't able to score. It's a huge play.

Q. How can you continue to go (indiscernible)?

MIKE VRABEL: I'm not sure. I really am not. I don't have any answers for knee injuries on gunner play. I know that's something that the league has looked at that's a long play with guys tugging on you. So that was one of the injuries that occurred today.

We'll go by case-by-case basis later on. Just when the quarterback gets hit, nothing good is going to happen from it.

Q. Was it a healthy scratch for Tre, or is he feeling something?

MIKE VRABEL: He was probably questionable. He was less than 100%.

Q. Will got himself in position to play. I guess that's fortunate.

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, everybody is trying I think to get themselves in a position to play... K'Von, SMB, Will. Will wants to play for us. He does. We've got to do a better job and protect whoever is back there throwing the football and get open quicker and execute our offense.

Being able to run and marry some things up off that and then keep it in third and manageable.

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