

Miami Dolphins Media Conference

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Miami, Florida, USA

Coach Mike McDaniel

Postgame Presser



Falcons 19, Dolphins 3

MIKE McDANIEL: Did you guys enjoy that clinic?
(Laughter).

Yeah, I hope it doesn't get lost; it was a really cool defensive effort from a lot of guys that haven't been here very long. Proud of the players and coaches for that.

Yeah, you're going to lose football games when you're 0 for 3 in the red zone and you give up a pick six and punt return, touchdown. But overall, I'm fired up to be here, guys. How you guys doing?

Q. What disappointed or surprised you most in regard to the offensive execution?

MIKE McDANIEL: I thought it was a pretty good job in the first half, henceforth we were in the low red three times and then gave -- seeing 4th downs in preseason games as an opportunity to see certain people at the point of attack.

Second half, I didn't like the operation at all. The compounding variables of guys being more tired than they're used to, getting back to the huddle late, those types of things, I did not like at all.

I think that there was some real good stuff on the line of scrimmage from the offensive line, particularly in the first half, and there's just a lot of things to build upon.

Preseason is all about process over results, but you learn -- you use the results as a teaching tool.

I think that you have to -- you can really learn the hard way and utilize preseason to see how precious those opportunities you get in the red zone and how you have to come up with points or you can waste a pretty good effort by the defense holding that team to six points and really come together.

There's some good stuff to learn from, and I thought there

was certain players that are in heavy competition, did some good things that will help them stand out. So it was the tale of two halves really offensively.

Q. What do you assess from this backup quarterback battle?

MIKE McDANIEL: Well, what's important to keep in mind is there's a lot of things that go in -- you don't just look at it like okay, Mike did better than Skylar. It's much more complicated than that in terms of the opportunities both had. Skylar needs an opportunity to play with the same guys that Mike played with, which he'll probably get next week.

I think it's about how people learn, react, and especially with quarterbacks, you have to be very coachable. There's going to be a point where Tua is going to be taking all the reps, and you'd better be learning from the things that you did in the preseason and the things that Tua is learning from.

Quite critical in the whole evaluation process is how guys move forward from here.

Q. Have you seen enough -- I guess enough is not the right word, but you have full confidence that the group you have is the group you're going to go forward with in the regular season?

MIKE McDANIEL: I mean, I think the competition has been awesome in camp. It's been back and forth. Very happy with the room overall.

I think a lot of people would be cutting out the league if you overreacted to one game situation.

Again, I'll find out watching the tape tomorrow how much other players knew what they were doing when Skylar was in, when Mike was in. That takes a toll as well as the quarterback when you're trying to do your job and having to tell other people what to do.

I've been very happy with the group overall. They've done some productive things at the NFL level on numerous

occasions.

Preseason 1 is not going to get me to overreact to anything. Happy with the group.

Q. This is the first time we've talked to you since Jaylen Waddle left practice on Thursday. How is he doing?

MIKE McDANIEL: He's doing good. It was a midsection injury. Sometimes you have guys that end up coming up with an injury after -- in the middle of camp after having a tremendous off-season. That's kind of what Jaylen has had, from OTAs, the onset, he's come to work and done some really good things.

You never want to see anyone ever get injured, but he's banked enough quality reps that I'm really not worried about his participation within the offense. Fortunate that it's not something that will be a long-term deal.

But he's steadily rehabbing and working with the trainers, which fires me up.

Q. We saw Cam Smith leave the game early, as well. Is there any sort of update on him?

MIKE McDANIEL: We'll get more information tomorrow. It seems like it's a shoulder injury. To what extent and the length is kind of unknown right now. He did get dinged a little bit.

Q. I don't think Chosen was on the list of guys who were not expected to play. Why didn't he take the field?

MIKE McDANIEL: You know, Chosen wanted to play, and we wanted him to play. He put his best foot forward, but ultimately he'd been pressing through with some nagging issues, and from a health perspective it didn't make any sense to push him out there. He was in warmups. He was trying to go. But between him and the head trainer, they decided that it wasn't the best thing for the football team for him to play.

Q. Going back to Cam Smith, what did you think of what you saw from him before the injury? It looked like he was making a couple plays.

MIKE McDANIEL: I saw Cam as you'd want to see him, which is letting it go and trying to make some plays on the ball. I saw him get involved a couple times. His energy was good. Before looking at the tape, it felt like he was the competitor we were looking for from him. I was happy with what he was doing out there.

Again, we've got to dive into that tape, which will be fun stuff tomorrow.

Q. What did you think of your backs that played tonight, Gaskin, Achane, and what is going to determine who gets those opportunities when you have obviously Wilson and Mostert also?

MIKE McDANIEL: Well, you're trying to spread out those opportunities with the individual lines and making sure that the competition at the running back position is settled on the field. I was happy with Myles, De'Von, Chris, SA got in a couple 3rd downs.

But it's so important in preseason for backs to take advantage of the opportunities given because you do have to -- if you're trying to settle it fairly, you have to distribute opportunities amongst the three games.

You only get three opportunities to get tackled with the ball in your hand, to the ground, and so these are vital, and I thought the guys that got opportunities tonight took advantage of them.

Q. Last year special teams was a struggle, obviously, like you said, gave up a punt return tonight. What's been your assessment of where that unit is after OTAs and training camp?

MIKE McDANIEL: Well, I've been happy where the unit has been in terms of progressing. Hopefully our special teams won't entirely be comprised of the people it was comprised of in the fourth quarter, so for me to judge special teams on a fourth quarter punt return -- and I'm not really going to do that.

That particular play, there's guys that will be held responsible for that, but ultimately the biggest thing is learn from it, and what I want to see from the special teams is really the whole crew knows the standard that that's not acceptable, and all the players on special teams understand why and what happened in that punt return situation that gave up points that was critical to the outcome of the game.

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