

# Miami Dolphins Media Conference

Sunday, October 8, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

## Coach Mike McDaniel

Postgame Presser



Dolphins 31, Giants 16

MIKE McDANIEL: What you guys got?

**Q. Just talked to Tua a few minutes back, and he was telling us about Tyreek's touchdown.**

MIKE McDANIEL: Yeah, apparently he's stealing my thunder. I wanted to unveil that he's now a play caller, as well.

That's one of the moments that in the story of his journey that is indicative of where he's at. I just know the way that we were able to move the ball a little bit and then those turnovers and the picks, last year it would have been hard to get him out of that, just how mad he would be at himself and all the disciplined work that he's done with mind, body and soul, to be in a moment like that and just take the game into his own hands, that's what you're trying to build.

It was a really cool moment that when you're watching the formation setup, I am not composed because I'm like, what the -- you just don't know. You have no idea. It's hard to visualize what play he actually called because you're just thinking that nine people are messed up.

Then that's the type of stuff that you can't manufacture, to be able to have the wherewithal to say, you know what, let's put it in mine and Tyreek's hands. I'm just very, very proud of him.

Sometimes the messy games are my favorite with regard to that stuff. You turn the ball over, that's hard. But what's -- the best way to separate yourself is to be able to come back from that and progress forward and not let other plays linger, and there's very few guys that could pull it off.

**Q. As you're watching this formation that you did not call for, how close were you to calling time-out and getting guys back to the sideline?**

MIKE McDANIEL: Well, if people -- like typically, I was

processing it at live speed, and since other guys weren't looking around, they were convicted in whatever they were doing. A lot of times that's the most important play that you can have is people that believe in whatever is going on.

To me, the thought crossed my mind immediately when they broke the huddle and people were on the wrong side, and then once I saw people moving with conviction, I was like, hey, let's see what play caller Tua has for us. I would advise him to be very choice with his selections because right now his percentage as a play caller is outstanding.

**Q. He said that he told you he didn't hear the call.**

MIKE McDANIEL: The story is kind of whatever we say it is, huh? I mean, whatever. (Laughter.)

You know, the whole idea is a bunch of people working together, and it's all of the players, coaches, the team. It's all our offense. The players will always be the ones that make it come to life.

You know, shoot, if he thinks he's got a better thought than I do, I would prefer him to do that. Whether he heard or not, he knows for a fact that regardless of what happens, if he's able to execute out there that I'm not going to be mad at it.

I definitely was not upset while I watched Tyreek run down the sidelines.

**Q. Moving forward, will you maybe give him a little bit more latitude as far as doing this again?**

MIKE McDANIEL: I mean, if you guys are worried about the play caller and you guys are asking for a new one, he's probably the best one to do it.

You know, I think everything is about evolution and growing. We do give him liberties within the offense from a progression standpoint. I think he prefers to just kind of go and let it play or let it play out, but if you can -- sure. He can double down as -- he can call all the plays for all I care.

I think that's the type of mindset that everyone has is we're



not really trying to sit here and talk about credit. This is a group that is achieving certain things collectively.

You know, the players in the locker room were talking about how we should get better, and that is kind of the sole focus as we progress. It's not about opponents. It's about what we're doing, where we're at with our game.

It was a tremendous job by our defense to handle a three-turnover output by the offense, as well. There's a lot of good stuff coming from it.

**Q. You guys have now gained more yards through five games than any team in NFL history. The record you broke belonged to the '99 Rams. Certainly that's hallowed ground in the National Football League. When you hear something like that, what is your reaction?**

MIKE McDANIEL: Mission accomplished. We had the whole time, the whole off-season, that was our goal was output after five games. (Laughter.)

I mean, I think it speaks to what the group is capable of, and you're honored to be in the same breath for any statistical reason. But when push comes to shove, I think it speaks to a lot, a lot of deliberate hard work from a lot of human beings, players, coaches, everyone.

But I think all that means is that people are going to give you their best shot, and you'd better continue to work and progress in your game if you're going to be satisfied because you're going to have a bull's-eye on your back, and that's kind of what you want in general because you want people's best shot because you want to be your best and you want to play your best to do that.

It's cool, but it's like literally, whatever, like five weeks. It's not that exciting.

**Q. After Tua's second pick, you caught seven of eight run plays. How intentional was that, and how has the run game been?**

MIKE McDANIEL: I think it was the time in the game. It was definitely intentional. It was the time of the game that I felt like, shame on me if I didn't put it in the ball carrier and the O-line's hands because I felt like they had a nice competitive advantage at that moment.

You know, that's huge for what we're trying to build, to try to be able to win games handing the ball off for the type of respect that a lot of our -- that our pass game really gets.

It's monumental, and that's something I can tell that the

team, really got them going. You're hoping that you can continue that whole process.

But shoot, I'm just happy for the guys that got to execute that stuff because if you guys had it your way, they all would have been ran out of town.

Just kidding, guys. C'mon, too soon? What's going on here?

**Q. Regarding the run game, I walked up on Raheem Mostert in the locker room, but he noted his grandfather passed recently. Did you notice any extra emotion in him this week?**

MIKE McDANIEL: No, I knew exactly what we'd get out of Raheem today. He was a hard guy to tackle because he was playing not just for what he usually plays for but with a heavy heart, as well. So yeah, Raheem is a wonderful human being, inside and out, and I've learned to have expectation. I told him earlier -- I told really the offense on Friday that there's a part of me when Raheem fumbles, I get kind of excited in a weird way. Over time, learning Raheem, yeah, the fumble sucks. But I know what we're going to get next week.

On top of that, when he had a heavy heart, he knows one way to try to at least make the best of football situations, and that's putting forth his best effort, and I thought his -- we didn't have the ball long enough to get him the ball enough, and there was a lot of guys that were getting touches, but he did phenomenal with his reps for sure.

**Q. This game was a bit of a statistical anomaly in that you lost the turnover battle 3-0, 11 minutes less of possession than the Giants, and you won by double digits. Will that be sort of indicative because you score so quickly, time of possession isn't necessarily a stat that reflects your team as it would other teams?**

MIKE McDANIEL: Well, you know, there is a lot -- I think there's a lot that goes into it.

I think it speaks to what the defense was doing. The Giants had a lot of opportunities to make plays, and even if they were converting 1st downs, there was no quit. There was absolutely no quit.

I thought in the later part of the game, too, you're worried about guys being tired, and I thought that specifically the pass rush and then the coverage in terms of what a lot of people call plastering, which is matching your eligibles when the quarterback breaks the pocket, that that's what allowed for that to happen. They didn't let the guys get in the end zone, so we had more points.

It's definitely not the formula you want to really live by because more often than not, that's what it's an anomaly.

But that's why as a team we can't overreact to anything negative that crosses our path. When you have people playing together, you can overcome a lot, like a pick six and a minus-three day.

**Q. I assume you're the play caller on opening drives and you've now scored on all of them but the one where there was a turnover at the 2-yard line. I think Tua is completing 85 percent of his passes on those drives. How much work goes into just that, just the opener in terms of what you script, what you don't script, because obviously that's been very effective this year?**

MIKE McDANIEL: It's a bunch -- it's so much work accumulated by players. Like you have to be able to -- like all the things that are happening, they're executing. They're prepared to do it against multiple looks. That speaks to their preparation and their ownership of when we go through it, go through the openers. They're the ones that are executing it. Sometimes we get what we're practicing against. Like today we saw absolutely positively an extreme version of an antithesis of the defense that we prepared for. They came out in a different personnel package and played coverages they've never played before.

To be able to do that and to have players not even blink means that they're super prepared, on top of the fact that their coaches have taught them the appropriate way to digest the defense so when there is a defense that you haven't prepared for, they're able to still execute their job.

It's a group effort. I can promise you whatever plays that I call, if the players don't really, really invest into what we're doing and execute at a high level, those plays suck.

**Q. How satisfying is it to get a successful challenge off --**

MIKE McDANIEL: I almost went in the locker room. I did.

No, I don't really -- I really don't care about losing challenges in terms of -- like it's all situational. There's sometimes I kind of lend myself -- I'm a little aggressive when I know it's a big play because I don't really worry about the percentages of failure. It's more about, like, is it appropriate for the team.

If my reputation is that I'm a terrible -- I have terrible judgment towards challenging officials' calls, I'm cool with

that. It was good that -- I was pumped about the communication from Danny Crossman, the special teams coach, who was absolutely on it, and on game day when you look another coach in the eye, and you're like, are you sure, because I'm going to throw this and I will be a moron if you're not right, and he didn't blink, which helped me execute that.

I did laugh. There was a couple guys that gave me crap on the sidelines, so people let me know that I'm terrible -- that my ratio is terrible. That's fine.

**Q. You said about Tyreek, if you want to get the best out of Tyreek you have to make it a competition. This week he took offense that De'Von was the fastest player in the NFL. Today he posted his 22 speed. Are you surprised by that?**

MIKE McDANIEL: Absolutely not. Absolutely not. He's different, man. He is different.

When he harnesses a competitive situation, there's not many like it. I know for a fact that he's just a prideful individual, prideful of everything he does, and very glad that we have him on our team because I definitely notice his competitive issues, and I poke and prod them a lot.

The guys know that they're going to get his best effort.

**Q. Of course this was the return of Connor Williams to the offensive line after missing out against Buffalo. Talk about his impact on the O-line, specifically when it comes to protecting Tua.**

MIKE McDANIEL: He did a phenomenal job. He willed himself to play in this game. If you go by standard measurement of injury and timeline, he exceeded that, and I think it was very -- it's very impactful. It was very impactful for our whole group in general because he's really taken a step in his game.

One of the things that he does very well that we're kind of spoiled with is his ability to anchor the pocket. That's huge. I think our interior line has done a really good job with that relative to any season that I've had, and I think that Connor's frustration at not being able to play with his teammates last week, it was so evident. I think it also charged up a lot of his teammates because he was -- I mean, viscerally just angry that we lost a game that he didn't play in. So he was going to make sure that there was no way he was going to stay off the field.

Shoot, that's the type of guy that teammates love.

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