

Miami Dolphins Media Conference

Monday, September 29, 2025

Miami, Florida, USA

Coach Mike McDaniel

Postgame Presser



Dolphins 27, Jets 21

MIKE MCDANIEL: All right, shoot.

Q. What do you know about Tyreek's injury?

MIKE MCDANIEL: I know he's at the hospital. I know he's staying overnight. I know it was a dislocation. He was probably in the best spirits of any player that I've ever -- it's such a terrible experience when you go out and see guys when they have issues like that.

But he was -- he immediately had wide eyes and was talking, I'm good, just make sure the guys get this win. You know, he was focused on the team, so that's how much -- that's what I know about it. Outside of that, I'm sure I'll be given more information tomorrow.

Q. That kind of reaction, that kind of attitude from a guy who just suffered an injury like that, what kind of psychological impact do you think it will have on the guys, especially the way you guys responded?

MIKE MCDANIEL: I think it's giant. A good portion of our team, we had offense up at the time obviously so they're already close to the hash, and specifically I saw them make eye contact and rip a joke or two to Waddle and DeVon.

And you know, I think a lot of guys got back into the game provoked by what he said verbally. You know, talked a lot about all the stuff that Tyreek has done this offseason, and a big portion is leading by example and connecting with his teammates.

He kind of utilized that connectivity to make sure that his team was finishing on the right end. So he was inspiring in that situation, and I think his teammates benefitted from that.

Q. When you personally see that and everything goes through your mind, what's your process of locking

back in?

MIKE MCDANIEL: I can just open my eyes and see an entire team and stadium and organization that doesn't have time for my feelings. You know, I've never hesitated to talk about how I invest in players and that's a gigantic piece, but as a leader, head coach, playcaller, you know, I have to be adept at rising to the occasion for the group.

So communicating, and then I let myself be in the moment with him and share. Like every player that goes down with something that necessitates a cart, I'm firmly there with them at that moment.

Then when I walk out of there I have to -- there is a lot of people depending on me, and what choice do you have when the injured player tells you to move on and win this game. I'm not going to double down and not listen to him.

So it's something that's not easy but very important to do in my position.

Q. What will it take for this offense to move forward without Tyreek?

MIKE MCDANIEL: I guess, you know, it'll take what the players were doing after they left. It's football. It's 100% injury rate. Man, great valuable, very important player to us, but every team has the same situation going on, different cadence. Everybody has injuries no one cares about.

So it's the team playing football together, and I think it would be important to, you know -- it would be important for us to continue to be plus three like we were in this game against the New York Jets and a litany of things. We just have to keep getting better.

That's the exact thing that every team has to do regardless of what anyone says. In September moving into October you need to firmly develop your football and continue to get better regardless of results, and see where you lie in the later months.

Q. I know that you guys were waiting until Waller was

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totally ready to go. Could you imagine that he would have a debut like this, two touchdowns?

MIKE MCDANIEL: Yeah. You don't put in plays or have players play with the expectation of anything but their best. I knew he was fully capable. I just didn't want to overcook it. He inspires me and I think inspires his teammates. A guy that has a love for the game of football and does the journey to get back. Everybody kind of, I think empathized, but at the same time, it's tough when you get to a new team and then you're a partial participater and it takes a while.

All he's done is everything that he possibly can do and put his best foot forward, and has been a phenomenal contributor to our team. I think the guys have felt it. He's been doing everything he can to participate, and they were very confident when he was ready to go that he would be what we know him to be.

So I think he is a nice complement to what we previously thought were height restrictions for eligibles. He's much taller than all the guys my size.

You know, I think, but he'll continue to build, and I think he's excited just to play football and to be, you know, involved. And he did a great job. Took a nice warmup to get his first catch. It was nice.

It was a little more acrobatic that I hoped his first catch would be. Did a good job. And the line blocked phenomenally. Coach Embree and Frank Smith make sure his first taste of football, I don't think he had one MA. He's been on it.

So happy and proud for him.

Q. What did it mean for you to see the three forced turnovers, especially in light of Anthony Weaver kind of calling for more violence from your defense?

MIKE MCDANIEL: Yeah, I'm going to call to Anthony Weaver to call for more violence more often. It was awesome.

Particularly I would say that the first takeaway epitomizes what I see our team to be, which I think was an 80-yard drive, that Jack Jones -- no one quit. There is a lot of plays that guys weren't fired up about on that drive. We kept playing and kept fighting. Made them earn each yard.

Down in the red zone you get the takeaway, and then I think there was a 96-yard drive, 15 play, and that complementary football I think that was the biggest turning point in the game.

So the resolve and just staying together. You know, it was a rough start to the season, but having a younger team or young players at a lot of positions and watching them understand their failures and not blink when a lot of people are telling them to blink, you know, I'm very proud of that.

And the takeaways, the first one in particular, were monumental. Being plus three was a nice place to be, yeah.

Q. When you're just going off that, when you are struggling to do something, whether it's you haven't got a win, takeaway in a while, what is that value of simply doing it once?

MIKE MCDANIEL: Man, you know, it's gigantic. It's not like those critical variables in football. Generally it's not they're under emphasized, but you want to make sure that people just don't hear it with a numb ear to like, oh, yeah, takeaways or whatever.

You have to have people inspires, people be very focused. You have to continue to -- when you're not getting the results -- you know, it's interesting. The game of football is kind of like life. You get your best version of yourself if you aren't only responding to positive reinforcement.

The stay-with-itness, whatever, after the game -- some of my phrases aren't the best -- but just I really think that you -- that's kind of like the NFL journey. If you're going to be good at anything, you can't just ride the highs of when you are getting takeaways.

So when you go into a little lull or have a couple games where you don't have any and then guys find a way, just takes one and all of a sudden guys are a little more convicted in their techniques and fundamentals to attack the ball and guys are straining to get around the ball, and even if it looks to appear as though one or two of their teammates might get the tackle.

It's as simple as that. Effort, strain, and focus to get the ball back. When you have that, sometimes they come in bunches and you can get right pretty quick.

Q. The last six quarters, does it feel like this is getting back to quote-unquote normal?

MIKE MCDANIEL: Yeah. I think we've gotten better, and we had to. You always have to. We've had several instances of winning football. Winning football to me is complementary three-phase football where sometimes the momentum starts with a punt.



That's what our team has to understand. Sometimes the momentum starts, you have several explosives given up on the ground, but you stay with it, make them earn every yard, then you get a takeaway.

We've had six quarters of complementary football has existed, and as a result it's been a much tighter game against our opponents and we're finding ways to clean up our game while continuing to improve.

That's just paramount. That's paramount in this league. As soon as you start to feel comfortable you get humbled, and the biggest thing is in moments where it's a one-game loss, two-game losing streak, a three-game losing streak, it can make or break you.

The biggest thing is that you want guys to come together and really thrive when the odds are against you. Generally for a season that helps, that's the formula. But the biggest thing for us is to file that away. They'll get tonight to appreciate the win, one day off for the guys, and we'll back at it Wednesday. You have to go at it again with as much fervor as you had when you had zero wins if you want to have two wins.

So I'm excited to do that. Getting in the win column took longer than we wanted, but it is satisfying, and I was happy for the team to get that feeling. And also, how to approach a work week after a win, which we'll get to tomorrow or next day.

Q. This offense hasn't had to spend a lot of time without Tyreek Hill in the regular season. This offseason, OTAs, mini-camp, good chunk of training camp, what did those periods of time teach you about how this team can play without your starting...

MIKE MCDANIEL: No, it's a great question because it gives credence to that phrase that you guys love: Adversity is an opportunity. You know, I think that that time where we did have to really go at a lot of work without him on the field, you know, I was optimistic about the energy and kind of like the leaders on the offense because they started to develop their own personality. Tyreek brings a lot of juice and energy and competitive spirit to an offense and to our team when he's on the field.

I thought where in years past he would be out for a day or two or something would come up, we didn't have the same competitive spirit. I thought this offseason we were able to develop that practicing joints, doing all that. That's productive. Should be helpful for the guys so they're not going in uncharted territory.

And certainly the team, your team has to continue to

develop and get better at everything they do any time you lose a good player on your team. Regardless if you don't lose anyone, it's the same setup. You have to continue to get better at your football, because if you're not, the other half of the league is, and it's about stacking wins and trying to get in the win column as much as possible as your team does develop.

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