

# Miami Dolphins Media Conference

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## Coach Mike McDaniels

### Postgame Presser



Chargers 29, Dolphins 27

MIKE MCDANIEL: You know, the way you can make it suck more? Like I think I'm not worried about the team staying together. I'm worried about us getting our football right. I think that's the fourth game that we've lost in the final couple minutes this season where we have been -- it's been a one-score game and we haven't come out victorious.

So you got to figure that out. Yeah, there is no doubt that there is guys that are hurting from the game that we let slip away. But, yeah, and? I think the biggest thing is that I think the team, I believe in the human beings, coaches, players, and while we didn't get it done, they did show me why I believe in them. The resolve was real.

I think we had a quarter that was very much less to be desired. Ended up being down ten points in the fourth quarter and got ourselves to a position with the lead with 46 seconds left. We didn't finish the game that we started, so the message is, yeah, you want -- it's hard to get victories in the National Football League, so there is times when you do a lot to do it right, but we had turnovers that we could have managed better.

I believe our special teams has done a good job all year in terms of impacting the game. Thought they did a good job this game.

Then you don't want to see that many return yardage -- or that much return yardage. Have it on 40 and defend from the 40 with one timeout. You know, so these are the things that you have to go through.

But we will collectively get back to work tomorrow because that's what you do, and go face the next opponent while trying to correct the stuff from the tape.

**Q. Tua said shortly ago that some players have not been either going to players' only meetings or being late. Are you aware of that? Is that something you're**

**worried about, fracturing in the locker room, guys not buying in, whatever the case may be?**

DE'VON ACHANE: No. So, yeah, player-led meetings are extra things outside of what I demand. They've been very accountable to me. It sounds like there was something on his mind with regard to the specific meetings with a couple individuals that he was trying to get connected with direct communication.

So, you know, I think that's the only way to lead. As far as where we've been at as a program, I think we've opened the air on all of that. It's very clear how we hold people accountable and what's nonnegotiable with all those things.

So clearly he's sending a message. But from my standpoint, everything that I've asked of the guys, they have delivered on. So I'm sure whomever he's talking to they'll deliver as well as he's a direct communicator with his teammates.

**Q. Mike, how do you see the decisive long pass to McConkey?**

MIKE MCDANIEL: How did I see it? Yeah, I think we had the -- part of winning football games is executing your best technique and fundamentals at the end of the game.

There is not one player or play that dictates the game. It's an accumulation of that. But when you're in a position to win a football game and you have a quarterback in your grasp, you know, I think the last -- or the play previous and that Ladd play, we have a potential sack, a potential sack in that situation is monument all.

Then they have to burn a timeout because then they're behind the sticks and have no timeout, which can affect how you get points. So we were unable to come up with that sack. I think there was a couple people that had ops. He got the ball out, and then it comes back to more fundamentals and technique where you're bringing your feet in space.

We had an overrun tackle, so very controllable. And it's a tough one to experience because it's at the root of the



techniques and fundamentals we been talking endlessly about, how to bring ball carriers down. That was a big play in the game; it didn't decide the game.

However, it could have been the decider for us if we make plays that I think we can -- we have the ability to across the board. So that's something that needs to stand out for the guys. The loss will stand out. You want to attach it to something that that you can learn from it. One of the learning lessons to me will be our technique and fundamentals to close out games, because that's -- I mean, the parity in the National Football League, that's the formula you're trying to solve.

Whatever the stats are on how close the scores are on average, you know, it's a one-possession league or one-possession, score league.

So we have to figure out how to do that, and until we do that, we're going to end up feeling the way we feel. I'm pretty sure guys are way over that, so we need to get back to work.

**Q. Break down what happened after the half. Touchdown, interception, touchdown real quick there.**

MIKE MCDANIEL: Yeah, it was not the way we spent our halftime trying to really attack the game. I think we had a four-point lead, and in football, it's close quarters. You're a little off on a throw and ends up being an interception.

I think that quarter in particular was the least complementary football that we played. I believe our successes came from I think the first take away that we got. I think JB recovered a fumble, and then the next play we scored a touchdown.

I think in the fourth quarter we were down two scores with about 13 left if I remember correctly; then we scored maybe with about seven. Then they had one first down and we forced a punt and then we went back down on a five-minute drive to score.

We are getting the type of football we want when we play complementary football between the three phases, and we're letting it snowball too much. That's been the case in other games. Been trying to nip that in the butt, but it showed up in the third quarter and cost us for sure.

**Q. One-score games, you mentioned this is the fourth one. Tua earlier said that's kind of how football goes. At what point do you say a one-score loss, it's a coin flip versus, no, it's specifically something we've done wrong?**

MIKE MCDANIEL: No, you always have to look at it as there is something you can control. Football games and life don't just happen to you, and so like I think that's the biggest thing that our young players have to learn and everyone has to learn, is that it doesn't -- no one really has time, nor cares about how you feel. Losing is hard and it feels like trash. No one cares.

You have to -- regardless of if they're high fiving you or booing you, you have control over the next result and that's it. You have your choice of how you go about things. You have your choice if things are going to beat you down and be too difficult.

And in that, you find out, you know, really who your teammates are, who people are. So I think the team knows that that's something that I'm very front in, focused on how people -- how you're able in this world and in this league to show everyone who you are by difficult times.

A difficult time is losing a second consecutive game after having a lead in the last, what would you call it, the last third of the fourth quarter. So that's tough. It forces you to go back to work and focus on the details, and you don't know what detail is going to be the winning element.

But it should matter. We have a job to do. Our job is not just to take a bunch of Ls, so we need to go back to work and be tough minded and figure out how we're going to attack the next opponent. That's where you go from there.

It's very, very clear-cut and dry. I trust the team of coaches and players to be strong, strong minded, understand the nature of the business, and attack it full-fold, and we'll start right when the sun rises tomorrow.

**Q. To go off that, I know every game is its own entity. Is there typically a common denominator when teams struggle to close out games late?**

MIKE MCDANIEL: Yeah, generally it's the collective -- it comes down to a lot of things. It can be as easy as who -- people want to point fingers at the end of the game, and I try to find themes for things that are occurring. Each game is unique to its own.

I was looking to make sure that this team didn't fall victim to, all right, man, we want to win, but, oh, shoot, here we go again. Fortunately or unfortunately, I got to find that information out this the third quarter, because there is where the team quits if the losses have beat them down too much.

It wasn't the case. They fought back. I was proud of that. But it's not what we're looking for. It's not -- there is zero



victory that would be considered moral; however I think it's reasonable to have expectation that we have our best performance at the end of games as we continue to work as a team. Otherwise we'll be forced to deal with the same result. I know no one is on board in the locker room for that.

So we will be very focused on finishing football games, particularly ones that we have in our grasp.

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