

Miami Dolphins Media Conference

Sunday, December 28, 2025

Miami, Florida, USA

Mike McDaniel

Postgame Presser



Dolphins - 20, Buccaneers - 17

Q. Is this what you meant when you said that Quinn gives the team the best chance to win?

MIKE McDANIEL: Yeah, there was multiple contributing factors to this win, but yeah, I think he showed some of what -- you have an idea, a feeling that the game isn't too big for a player based on your history and your experience day in and day out with somebody.

I think it's awesome in this profession when you believe in people and they take advantage of the opportunity. I think Quinn played a very good game with what really we asked him to do, was very responsible but aggressive with the football. He's the first touchdown to Theo was not -- that's a reaction to the concept based on the defense, and that's kind of what he exhibits is very good field vision.

Then his quick release and arm angle football is very helpful like backed up. But I thought that you also saw there's an inspired team behind him, and I think we had three phases of complementary football, and I think that's a big part of playing the quarterback position as well is you touch the ball on every time you have -- every play you have possession, but you affect the team regardless being in that spot. So I thought he did a great job. We'll look for him to continue his improvement.

Q. How much did you enjoy that members of this rookie class were making a lot of these plays in all three phases?

MIKE McDANIEL: Yeah, I made a point of it when I was talking to the team. You're talking about we had our first undrafted this year with Theo Wease. You have Quinn, then you have J. Marsh had a ton of plays and a takeaway. Zeek Biggers had a field goal block. I think we've been heavily reliant upon all the rookie class.

It was very calculated, the types of people that we brought in for the reasons of needing to be able to be professional

football players at the NFL level is not always an easy task for someone coming straight out of -- you go out of your college play, you go into training for the draft, and then you go from training for the draft right into NFL football.

I think our group today exhibited why, one of the reasons why we felt good about the entire class right after the draft.

Q. How big was the run defense today? I believe you guys limited to 53 yards or something as the second best performance all year. How big was the run defense?

MIKE McDANIEL: It was gigantic. We thought that we hadn't done ourselves justice the last couple weeks with some controllable things, just playing our technique and fundamentals. I thought that overall our run defense showed out because of our collective team mindset to just play convicted football and focus on your next to do and not focus on whoever -- whatever's happening in the game.

I thought we were much more emotionally disciplined this game, which is -- I'm very proud of our football team because you were going into the week, it's been a long season, and we had two games in a row that we had a terrible taste in our mouth with the second half football.

I was very proud of that effort, and I think it speaks to the type of guys that we have in that front seven who instead of passing the Buck, they took a ton of accountability, and we kind of were hopeful. I saw the signs of a defensive outing like this during the week. So it's not a surprise at all, but just proud. I'm glad they got to put their type of football out there.

Q. Going back to Quinn, we heard Theo say he's a cool guy. He's the same guy in the locker room as he is on the field, calm and poised. Is that just his personality, or is that because of his grasp on the offense that he doesn't seem to panic or rush?

MIKE McDANIEL: I think Quinn's very authentic, and I think in positions of leadership it's very important. You're inherently a leader when you're a quarterback, so to me he's passionate about football -- don't let the Texas twang



in his speech fool you. This dude, he's very, very, very smart, very on it, and he's not -- he's very comfortable when he's playing the position. You can see that.

He sees the field. He's aggressive, and he's not scared. He goes out and competes. I think it's more of who he is that is a big part of who he is. He's a football player. So that personality in the locker room is the same as it is on the field.

Q. What led to this third quarter not being the detriment of the Miami Dolphins?

MIKE McDANIEL: I think we had a mindset of let's -- we've talked about it at length during the season, and I think it's -- it speaks to the group of people, coaches, players responding to points of emphasis. Instead of just hoping and wishing, we did some things different in practice. We did some things different in planning.

It's something I was talking about, the third quarter, in my speech to the team before we went out on the field. It's an area of focus. I thought not all things have to go well for you to be happy with your third quarter play. We got a stop, then had some self-inflicted stuff that led to a quick punt, and no one got rattled. Got another stop, and then drove a good amount of the third quarter to those fourth quarter points that we did at -- I think it was the beginning of the fourth.

I think it's just a focus, and in this time of year you can be thinking and be distracted in a ton of different ways, but when your focus remains on the football that you play and you take pride in that, you have a chance to have some good things happen.

Q. What was key to limiting Mike Evans today?

MIKE McDANIEL: I think it was just the embraced challenge of the entirety of the defense. It's not -- when you have a first -- I would imagine he would be first ballot Hall of Famer, and you have a player like that, you're not -- you don't get rattled when he does have his success. You embrace the challenge, and that's the entire defense because you have to be good at stopping the run. When you're a little light in boxes, you have to be aggressive. And in those man situations, you have to be fearless.

I thought there's a couple of instance in particular where you saw Sieler really embrace the challenge. He's a monster out there, so that's not for the faint of heart, but I thought they really took on the challenge as a collective. They did a good job because they understood that it's not about eliminating, it's about minimizing.

Q. How's Chop doing?

MIKE McDANIEL: He's in concussion protocol, so we'll take the steps through those and just making sure he's okay. But, yeah, he's in the concussion protocol.

Q. One of the questions for the franchise obviously with this quarterback what do you do in the future, you've had a lot of experience with quarterbacks -- when you look for a franchise quarterback, is it, for lack of a better term, a checklist you go through, or is it just working with them, you can see them?

MIKE McDANIEL: I think, first and foremost, when you draft a quarterback, you're thinking in terms of does he have the -- you just want to open -- you don't want a ceiling. You want open-ended, like, okay, does he have the things that you need to be a starting quarterback in the National Football League? And you're hoping that that develops any time you draft any quarterback.

I would say philosophically it's obviously not an easy position, so you're taking into consideration all athletic skill sets as well as if the guy's going to be able to handle the heat because it is a hot -- there's a lot of heat on that position.

Then you're just open minded to me that you realistically you can't have enough quarterbacks. There's a lot of different ways to find a franchise quarterback, and one of the ways is playing football games and seeing what a guy can do, and I think we have another game next week, right?

Then in that next week give another opportunity to Quinn, he'll start, and then you kind of get into the broad scope of evaluating options and looking at every year because, as we've learned, you can't have one quarterback on the roster, not even two, you need a group.

So that's kind of each off-season. It's such an important position that you don't just skirt it. I think all actions are pretty much the same in that way because it's an important position that, if you aren't -- if you don't feel great about that position, the team isn't as well, and all NFL players know what that looks like.

Q. Is it good to see what Bradley Chubb has done this season after his long journey coming back to playing?

MIKE McDANIEL: Yeah, it's as good as it gets with Bradley Chubb. You talk about a leader who's steadfast in his approach, a guy that is -- you know, I think you guys have been on top of he's reached some incentives, and you love that for a guy who bets on himself for the sake of



the team.

I think he's really in this platform. As a captain, he's shown what an elite human being he is on top of his playing ability that we rely on week in and week out.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports