

Tennessee Titans Media Conference

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Coach Mike Vrabel Postgame Press Conference



Titans, 42 - Bills, 16

Q. How much was this a game of want, desire, after being sidelined essentially for two weeks?

MIKE VRABEL: I mean, they're all about want and desire. We want to win every game and we have to prepare in any manner that we have to to get the team ready. All the credit goes to the players for sticking together to execute and plan, going from Zoom meetings to driving in the building to leaving the building and going back and forth.

So all the credit goes to the players for sticking together and going out there and executing and playing in a manner this which they did.

Q. Did you even have some question yourself about how the team would perform tonight? How pleasantly surprise are you with the way it turned out?

MIKE VRABEL: I'm never going to question this football team, the effort. You know, I'm never going to go into a game questioning how we're going to do. I expect us to win and play with great effort. There is a lot of stuff we can get better at and improve on, and we're going to have to do it quickly when we bring in here -- when the Texans come in here in a few days.

Q. Coach, interception on the first defensive drive and then ten a touchdown on the first offensive. What did you say to the guys and how important was it for you guys to come out of the gate running like that.

MIKE VRABEL: It's something that Buffalo has really done well in their four victories, was getting off to a fast start. We knew that there were going to be some turnover opportunities. We took care of the football, which is always key. Took care of Roberts on the return game.

You know, we were able to situationally I think that the ability for us to go down there and score before halftime and come out and have the opportunity to score again was

critical. But thought we played a complementary game. Thought the players played extremely hard and we're excited.

Q. How did you shuffle the secondary? I know you were warming them up. Who was dealing with that when you were depleted there coaching-wise?

MIKE VRABEL: Everybody has a role, and Jim helped, Shane helped. I went over there and talked to them and tried to help wherever I could.

Q. Coach, you did a lot of things well tonight. Was the single biggest key the three short fields you guys got when you were able to flip it?

MIKE VRABEL: To get a kickoff return, we talked about that, taking advantage of our opportunity and creating field position.

Couple penalties that we're going to need to clean up, but these guys were excited, ready to play, and our focus now moves on to Houston.

Q. Mike, what was the most challenging thing about this entire preparation?

MIKE VRABEL: You know, I learned a long time ago the definition of a pro is they make the hard look easy. Whatever situation we're presented with, we got to all come together and make the best decision for the team each and every time. Our coaches had our players prepared and the players responded.

Q. Just kind of following up on that, every time we spoke to you during the outbreak you said it was kind of you guys making the best out of a difficult situation. How did you sort of ensure this was a galvanizing thing when it seemed like every single morning you guys were waking up to bad news.

MIKE VRABEL: You don't all of a sudden galvanize when things are bad. That's a testament to these players and what we've tried to build here. You don't say there is a shit storm, we better galvanize. You stay tight throughout, and then you hope that the fundamentals and your cover beliefs and values can take over when things get difficult.

Q. I know it's only four wins, but given all the noise that's been around you guys the past couple weeks, is this vindicating at all to have this victory?

MIKE VRABEL: No. I mean, I think this is -- we expect to win. Four games, you're right, never going to win anything. All it does is continue to put us in a position to play meaningful games. We get a division game on a team that's coming off a great win coming in a few short days with the Texans.

Q. We talked a lot over the first three weeks about winning close games and pulling through at the end. Was it nice to see them in this one kind of control it from start to finish and not need miracles at the end?

MIKE VRABEL: You know, I wouldn't call those miracles, but I appreciate your support there, Luke. It's just the way it went. Turnovers in the short field, being able to score touchdowns in the red zone, all these things contribute. Going to have to get better on third down. You're not going to be able to play much defense when they're 11 of 15 on third down. We played well defensively, but that all got overshadowed on third down.

Q. Mike, what do you attribute the (indiscernible) on offense to with only two days of practice? Very few penalties and very efficient night by Ryan and the offense.

MIKE VRABEL: Again, that goes back to fundamentals, technique, fundamentals, base plan, you know, cover packages, things that the players really know. It's hard to go out there and scheme things. Again, going down there and being able to pick up the first down late in the game there was great, and then be able to score the touchdown.

Q. It's one year to the day since you made the change in Denver to go to Ryan. What is the best thing that he has brought this team that you've noticed over this year-long period?

MIKE VRABEL: I think he's got great command of what we're asking him to do in the system. He's been accurate and has taken care of the football, and he's led. He's been a great leader.

Q. Mike, obviously a lot of attention is going to go to what Ryan did and what Malcolm did. But to pull something off like this under the circumstances you guys are under, I imagine takes a number of smaller, lesser noticed contributions. What are some of those that stand out to you, some of the sort of less noticeable things that guys have done to make this possible?

MIKE VRABEL: You could start with everybody in our building, cafeteria workers, Johnny who helps us clean and Rob who helps us clean the building each and every day; our operation department; equipment managers. Everybody pulled together. Practice squad guys that were depleted that were able to take every single rep for us on what would've been Friday and Saturday -- or excuse me, Saturday and Sunday.

And everybody involved in our organization will get a game ball. I felt like everybody who played tonight -- looked out there and there was a lot of contribution on special teams and offense and defense. Looked like everybody had a role in the game, so we knew that was going to be important. There were going to have to be some guys that get a break and come out, and there may be a little bit of fatigue.

I think everybody really took that to heart and was ready to get in there and execute.

Q. Coach, what do you attribute to no Jeff tonight, but your run defense was absolutely fantastic. Held them to under a hundred yards.

MIKE VRABEL: They came out and it was early it was evident that they wanted to throw the football. They wanted to throw the football, and we need to rush better. But, again, being we took advantage of the opportunities, and when they did run it, it felt like we swarmed there and gave up the big one at the end. That's unfortunate, but I guess meaningless.

Q. What was the plan for Darrington and then for McNichols once Darrington got hurt? Did you maybe come in intending to use Derrick a little bit less?

MIKE VRABEL: I don't necessarily know that. The plan is to play, and everybody is expected to be ready to play the entire game. Unfortunately Darrington went down there and Jeremy stepped in and did some nice things.

Q. Looked like on that touchdown to Brown that it was something that they checked to, I'm not sure, but was it your intention to get him involved quickly and have him be a major factor in this game, or what can you say about him coming off not being active for a couple weeks?

MIKE VRABEL: Sure. He's been working hard to get back. AJ is a critical part of our team, as are a lot of the other guys. He's continued to work and develop, and we're going to need him. We're going to need everybody. We're going to need those guys that weren't with us tonight to get

back and get healthy in a short amount of time.

Going to be a tough game here on Sunday and the recovery is going to be critical.

Q. Mike you brought up third down defense earlier. I guess where do you start or maybe you need to look at the film first, but where do you start going about fixing that?

MIKE VRABEL: I mean, it's about rush and cover. Three times I could tell you whether it was first or second down or on third down where we've got somebody free on the quarterback and we can't make the play against Josh, which we knew was going to be a huge key to the game.

We'll just have to continue to improve on that. It's not going to get any easier this week with DeSean.

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