

Tennessee Titans Media Conference

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Coach Mike Vrabel Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 27, Titans 24

Q. Mike, the magic just run out or just cannot fall behind by 20 to a team that good?

MIKE VRABEL: Probably a little bit of both. You know, you certainly can't fall behind -- I appreciate the way we fight, but I expected that. We've got to coach and we've got to play better.

Q. The 3rd down troubles again today, I know you got some stops late in the second half, but what are you seeing out there and why particularly today was it such a struggle?

MIKE VRABEL: Because it hasn't gotten any better. Didn't improve. You know, we'll evaluate what we're doing, who we're doing it with and see how we improve.

Q. This is a team that has started fast in recent weeks. When you look at the game, how do you explain maybe the slow start today?

MIKE VRABEL: 16 plays on the first series, not being able to get off the field on 3rd down, playing some good defense, and then 3rd and longs, again, over and over again. Three-and-out, and then another long drive. You can't fall behind against a good football team. Give Pittsburgh a lot of credit; this was clearly the best team we've played to this point, and if we didn't play our best, we were going to lose.

Q. Despite the struggles in the first half with the defense, it seemed like you guys really played much better in the second half. I know the outcome notwithstanding, but what did you see from the defense in the second half of that game?

MIKE VRABEL: Played better, got some stops, got some turnovers, tipped a couple passes and caught them.

Q. Offensively it seemed like at least early in the game

they were getting to Ryan a lot and disrupting his timing and his rhythm. Did you have to go make some adjustments with quicker throws and more max protect there as the game went on?

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, I think that that's always something you're conscious of is the ability to protect the quarterback, and I think that's good defense and we have to continue to try to find ways to protect Ryan and get the ball off, not throw it into traffic or feel like he's under duress every single time.

Q. Frustrating, I guess, the lack of ability to get to the quarterback, I'm sure, plays a huge role in those 3rd downs, too. How difficult is that to kind of watch week after week?

MIKE VRABEL: Losing is difficult to watch. When we win a football we'll coach them and when we lose we've got to fix things, and that's what happened today. We weren't very good in all three phases, special teams, too many mistakes, uncharacteristic of our team in all three phases.

Q. It sure seemed like you ran an awful lot on 1st down. What was the thinking there, and doesn't it become predictable after a certain amount of time?

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, well, there's a lot of times that we like the call and that's kind of the thought process is seeing what we can do and try to take advantage of the game and slow the game down a little bit, be able to get back into it with the run. We had some positive plays and then some ones that we certainly would like to have back and be more efficient.

Q. It seemed like there was an awful lot of pressure throughout this game on Tannehill. I know you complimented him on his toughness, but what was happening up front to allow all that pressure?

MIKE VRABEL: Either we didn't block them good enough or long enough or we didn't get open quick enough. We'll take a look at the film and be able to kind of tell you, but our guys fought. I'm proud of their effort. In the end it just wasn't enough.

Q. You've overcome some missed kicks earlier this year; how confident are you in Gostkowski right now

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after that last one?

MIKE VRABEL: Confident that he'll make the next one. It's unfortunate. I fully expected him to make it, he expected to make it, and it didn't turn out that way. We all have a lot to improve on, starting with me, and then going all the way down to the coaching staff and the players.

Q. What was the grounding penalty from your perspective, and what has to happen there?

MIKE VRABEL: What has to happen? I would say that that's probably the -- that's the one call that they tell us there's a lot of leeway. Sometimes it gets called and sometimes it doesn't. Officials thought that the quarterback was either under duress, still inside the pocket and there wasn't a receiver in the area. That's why they threw it.

Q. On that same play, the grounding, any chance did you see a potential of a late hit on Tannehill there?

MIKE VRABEL: Late? I mean, late? I don't know what late is anymore. I think I was looking at full body weight, and it looked like the player slid off to the side from the quick replay I got.

Q. What happened I guess on the punt with the low snap; what happened there in your eyes?

MIKE VRABEL: Looked like a low snap and the punter threw the ball down the field in my eyes.

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