

Tennessee Titans Media Conference

Sunday, December 6, 2020
Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Coach Mike Vrabel Postgame Press Conference



Titans, 35 - Browns, 41

Q. What happened early there to cause you all to be down 38-7 at halftime?

MIKE VRABEL: Poor coaching, poor playing. You know, just couldn't get stops early.

You know, weren't able to sustain any kind of drives. That's just -- went for it; didn't get it. Held them to a field goal early. Move the ball, didn't get it, and then just hung the defense out. I mean, just didn't give them opportunity, and they weren't coming up -- defensively we weren't coming up with stops.

Couldn't run the ball offensively, getting anything substantial. Then the turnover and then things kind of snowball.

Q. How much after this game do you end up kicking yourselves for the mistakes you made, especially turning the ball over?

MIKE VRABEL: Sure, I mean, it's everything. It's the 15-yard penalties; very uncharacteristic. That's just -- didn't play well enough early on to give ourselves any kind of chance. Certainly never going to be a moral victory, but I think our charge is going to be finding a way to recreate what we did in the second half, you know, as we move forward.

Q. On the third and one play where you threw to Aaron Brewer and the ball was dropped there, looking back, do you feel like maybe you were a little too tricky there? Should've gone straight ahead and tried to get the one yard more conventionally?

MIKE VRABEL: No. We tried that on fourth down and that didn't work. Those are decisions that we make, and you get a call in there, and you rep something all week. You know, was there they made a play. Guy hit the ball out of Brewer's hands.

We felt great about the call. We did. We wouldn't have called it if we didn't feel good about it. Didn't work out. Then weren't able to pick it up on fourth down.

Q. Coach, the situation with third down is continuing to rare its ugly head, 10 out of 16 today. I know you said you have to coach better, but what really can be done --

MIKE VRABEL: Got to coach better, rush better, and cover better, TD. You are smart and you study and you like watching defense, and that's what third down is. It's finding ways to rush and cover. That's what it comes down to.

We have to look at who we have and we got to try to put them in the best positions to do that, whether that's playing man or zone or simulating, pressuring, all those different things that go into it.

You know, that's the challenge. That's going to stay the same each and every week.

Q. With Clowney done, how disappointing is it, I guess, to get as little as you got out of him this season, and do you feel like you have enough on this roster to rush the passer moving forward without having the blitz and do special things?

MIKE VRABEL: That's going back a long time, man. I think maybe we could reflect on that and the players that are injured after the season, but I literally come in every single day and try to find out who we have available, who is here, who's on the active roster, who is on the practice squad, and then coach them and make a game plan.

So he hasn't been out there for a few weeks, so really, you know, that's just kind of how it goes when guys are hurt or they go on injured reserve. You just are moving past that.

Q. Just to clarify, can you confirm he's done for the season?

MIKE VRABEL: He's on injured reserve. We could bring him back. I just don't know where his health is right now in the short-term, so I couldn't honestly answer that just from a standpoint that until he's seen our doctors and they give



us idea.

But I'm not standing here today expecting to have J.D. back.

Q. What, if anything, does it mean that the final score looked a hell of a lot more respectable than the halftime score did?

MIKE VRABEL: I do think that we're going to fight and we're going to compete. There are no moral victories. The charge is just to try to recreate leaving the locker room and how we played in the second half as opposed to how we approached and played the start of that game.

Q. I wondering if you were starting to think that at some point that deficit, there is a chance at making up that deficit, and I guess how big was the interception, the one that bounced off Adam there?

MIKE VRABEL: That one was going to make it hard. We got the challenge. Bat had a nice catch there on the sidelines. Just started running out of time, and I think that everybody -- as we got stops on defense and we were able to move the ball and score, unfortunately that one there, the interception kind of put a halt to the momentum that we had building there in the second half and really just cost us just the time and the not being able to score.

Everything has got to be perfect. Everything would've had to have been right. It rarely ever is in football and in life.

Q. Doesn't that lessen the meaning of the second half, the fact that everything has to be perfect and the Browns know if they just roll out there and get a couple first downs and don't make giant mistakes that they're going to be just fine?

MIKE VRABEL: In the second half, Paul? I don't know if I understood your question.

Q. You're saying you just want to carry over what happened in the second half. They weren't too concerned with what you were doing in the second half because the first half put the game pretty much out of reach.

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, I don't know how you want me to answer that. I'm just trying to say that I felt like you have two choices. Having been in the National Football League playing and coaching, I've seen teams fight, seen coaches fight players fight, players fight players, offensive players fight defensive players, and guys really just pack up and go home and bitch and complain and love to point fingers.

My point is I never saw that. We lost. We didn't coach well enough, play well enough, but when I evaluate what we were able to do in the second half and playing complementary and feeding off each other, that's all I was trying to allude.

Q. This performance is obviously coming on the heels of two straight wins against good teams. Do you like what you see from the locker room in terms of handling success and responding to wins and continuing to prepare and improve?

MIKE VRABEL: Not today for the first half, Luke. But it's not about the locker room, it's about how you play on Sunday. Felt like we prepared well. You know, you have to -- each and every week you have to be able to be ready to go and prepare for a new opponent and the challenges behind that.

If you don't play well, you know, you're going to lose.

Q. 12 games into this thing with Beasley and Clowney gone now and Adoree sort of stuck in neutral. These aren't pieces you thought you would have. How much can you improve a defense this deep into the year with the parts available?

MIKE VRABEL: I don't -- I don't spend time thinking about people that aren't there or not available. I tried to allude to that earlier, just to say that after this I'll talk to Todd and John and we'll see who may be available for the game. That'll change based on the week of treatment and how they feel.

We evaluate who's available, make decisions to bring guys up or not to bring guys up. That is all I can tell you, man. I just look at who we have and what we're trying to do with those pieces and try to get a game plan together and help the team prepare for each opponent.

Q. They were a low volume pass team headed into the season. How surprising was that they came out so aggressively throwing the ball?

MIKE VRABEL: I mean, I guess that was the plan that they had, and that's how they want to try to approach it. You know, that was what they decided to do, and we weren't able to respond or affect the quarterback, which is one the keys, tipping balls and being able to break up passes or cover guys and keep our eyes on or man, all those types of things.

Q. When AJ had that second fumble, obviously after the first one at the end of the first half, what do you tell a guy like that who obviously had a lot of expectations

on him, someone who you're able to depend on in the passing game and we saw that last week. What do you tell a guy like that who is still learning and still trying to make sure that he from game to game he's at his top best?

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, we all have high expectations for everybody. We got to take care of the football and understand when we're vulnerable on the sidelines and going to the ground. Thought it was a good play, one that will show our defenses -- he was going down and kind of using AJ's momentum against him.

I told him if he feels like that we have to try to roll back into him so that he's not using our momentum going to the ground to rake it out of there.

Pruitt's effort to go down there on the second one, to be able to score.

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