

Tennessee Titans Media Conference

Sunday, December 20, 2020
Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Mike Vrabel

Postgame Press Conference

Titans - 46, Lions - 25

Q. Mike, on a day like today when your offense is clicking like that, how much easier does it make it for everybody all around?

MIKE VRABEL: I think the idea is we get all three phases clicking, and you see there's some evidence of that. We had a few drives that we certainly would like to do better on and be back. I know we took a safety, which was unfortunate. But there were some good things, and I thought we finished the game well.

Q. Mike, Tannehill's first career five-touchdown game, three passes, two runs. What did you see from him? And is the offense clicking as well as it has for you?

MIKE VRABEL: Again, I think he's got great command of the offense. I'd rather him not reach the ball out over the pie line. We talked about that. But he made a heck of a play. I think he understands what we're trying to get done. We have to do a better job of protecting him at times. I thought that there was a lot of good decisive throws and I think we took care of the football for the most part.

Q. Coach, understanding that you would like to have maybe some of those defensive drives back, what can you say about the job that the defense did, creating turnovers in front?

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah. We battled down there in the red zone and inside the two or three-yard line and got a huge turnover. We got one on short yardage. Guys were on to the ball. Good things happened and I'm proud that they played the recovery of the ball, which allowed me to challenge.

Q. Mike, how good was it to get Adoreé finally back out there and be able to do some work today with the defense?

MIKE VRABEL: We'll take a look at it and see how it is on



film and see how we can coach them up and improve them on next week.

Q. Coach, were you able to get Darrynton Evans s out there. He seemed to run with some juice. How much of just a complement to Derrick Henry can he be when you have him out here playing like that?

MIKE VRABEL: Again, it was just exciting really for his first real action. You know what I mean? He hasn't done a whole lot. And I think it was big for his confidence and his mental self. I think it was important for him to show the football team that he was willing to stick it up in there. And he ran it when everybody knew we were going to run it, and I think that that's even more impressive. The way that he helped us finish out that game there in the four-minute, picked up some huge first downs.

Q. And then finishing that game out, obviously Derrick Henry is continuing on his pace and he was effective. But was that kind of on your mind if you guys got up early, you were going to kind of scale back Henry and give McNichols, especially Evan, some carries late?

MIKE VRABEL: I mean I don't really ever think about that. I usually just try to find ways to win the game, and then if the opportunity presents itself, get those guys in there. And, again, it worked out that we could get Darrynton in there late. I thought the screen was really nice and well blocked. He made a good catch. Ryan got him the ball, and I'm glad he didn't run out of bounds. Looked like he tried to gain some extra yards, and it was good to be able to get him a touchdown there at the end.

Q. Do you think it's a testament to the mental strength of a team, or your team in particular when they're able to go against a team like Detroit, and maybe like Jacksonville last week whose record is probably not where they would want to be and still come but with a fast start and intensity and I guess not overlook?

MIKE VRABEL: I mean I think they realize that you can be beat by anybody in this league. We remind them that records don't mean anything. Too many opportunities to show them teams with the worst record beating teams that have the better record. So we're focusing on improving right now and trying to play better football next week.



Q. Mike, how big of a moment was it for you when you give up that first touchdown to tie the game at 7, and you immediately get that one play drive to answer back, the big counterpunch.

MIKE VRABEL: I think that's what you have to do. Each phase has to complement each other. We got an on-side kick recovered, we stopped a fake punt. I think we took advantage of all those opportunities. We didn't take advantage of the turnover down there and back up, we weren't able to do anything, gave up a safety, which then led to not a very good punt, which led to a touchdown. And we had a little lull there in the second quarter. I thought the drive at the end of the first half was critical, that we got that gain to a nine-point lead.

Q. Mike, is there any significance to you? I know there is probably to the fans, to finally lift the curse of 9 and 7 to get I think it would have been five straight years to get over that hump a little bit, and obviously also at the same time inch closer to locking up the playoff?

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah. It just gives you an opportunity to win 11 games. Hopefully we don't spend a whole lot of time talking about 10 wins. That's not what anybody is here for. We'll enjoy this one for a little bit, but it just allows us to have an opportunity to try to win our 11th.

Q. Mike, two things I want to check in. The touchdown fumble early in the second half, how important was it that you guys kept playing and recovered that, and then also how important is it that you guys are consistently finding ways to score in the last halves as you did in the first half today?

MIKE VRABEL: Well, the rules allow you to challenge those, but you have to have clear recovery. And so that's the first thing that you ask the players to do is not be mindful of the whistle, but play to recovery of the football. In those instances the whistle actually doesn't mean anything at all. And Jeff's had a lot of those. Because he hustled to the football, good things happen, so Jeff came out with another one. Asked if we had clear recovery. They said yes and then that allowed us to challenge. We spend a lot of time in those situations throughout the week trying to make sure that we're all on the same page as far as what we're trying to do. And guys came up with some big plays, and we got down in there in the field goal range and were able to call a timeout and allow Stephen to make the kick.

Q. Mike, I know you're going to evaluate the film on Adoreé and all that, but just the importance of him being out there and getting him out there with a little

bit of time in the season to build toward the postseason. What does that mean to this defense of this team?

MIKE VRABEL: That just means we're getting guys back that haven't been with us in a while. That's really all that means to me, is now that we've got healthy bodies and guys that are able to be available to play in a football game. It gives us some choices, gives us some options, some flexibility to continue to work guys in there. And we'll see how he comes out of this one, and I'm sure that there was some anxiety on his part just not having been out there. But that's probably something that you can discuss with him. We're just trying to get everybody back that can try to help us win.

Q. Mike, late third you were only up six. They were primed for three and out there and Firkser found space in that third-11. Was that a big turning point?

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, absolutely. I kind of felt the same way there. We felt a little flat. We were behind the sticks in a couple of those situations, and it was well executed by our offense, our players being able to get out there, get set. We quick countered them. I don't think that they were necessarily ready. And Ryan was decisive with the football. Firk got in there, got to the sticks, and that certainly was a huge conversion. Those third and longs are tough to pick up sometimes: Thank you.

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