

# PATRIOTS HEAD COACH BILL BELICHICK

## POSTGAME VIDEO CONFERENCE

September 27, 2020



BB: I will, first of all, just on a personal note, just like to express my sincere thanks to everyone for the words and condolences and notes and e-mails and messages and so forth that I've received over the last week. It's very moving, touching, and much appreciated. On behalf of Steve and Brian, Amanda, and Linda and her dad, we've received an outpouring of support from really all different levels, certainly our family, Mr. Kraft, the entire Patriots organization.

I really can't say enough about how much I appreciate how much everybody helped this week and how hard they worked when I wasn't able to fully pull my weight here. So really give the team and the organization a lot of credit.

We still continue to send our thoughts and prayers out to James and his brother, his mother, and the rest of his family. Thinking about him.

All that being said, in terms of the game, I thought it was a real good effort by our football team, really proud of the way they competed all week. It was a tough week, but they really battled through it. The Raiders are a good football team. They're well-coached. They have a lot of good players, a lot of talent. I thought we really stepped up and competed hard today.

We ran the ball well. We got some good blocking in there, but our backs and receivers, especially the backs ran hard. They made a lot of yards on their own. They broke tackles and made a lot of yards with the ball in their hands. We made some big plays in the passing game as well. Scored enough points to win.

Defensively turned the ball over, and I thought that was a great sequence we had there about five minutes ago in the game where we scored, made the tackle, had him back up inside the 10, and strip sacked him. Had a good complementary sequence there with our defense, with our offense and special teams, and then the defensive score.

We had a lot of contributions from everybody. We played a lot of people. The offensive line, after we kind of shuffled that a little bit, they worked well together. Certainly, there's a lot of room for improvement all the way across the board. There's a lot of things that we need to do better and need

to work on, but I thought we made progress every week, and hopefully we continue to do that on a fundamental level in our overall execution.

As the other teams continue to get better as well. As we continue to play good teams, we'll have to improve in order to keep pace or try to catch up them. Look forward to getting ready for the start again this week, but we're definitely going to enjoy this one.

Again, give all the credit to the players and assistant coaches. They did a great job with the game plan. I thought we competed hard and did enough things to deserve to win. So we'll take it.

**Q. So just wanted to start off with Sony Michel had a great day today. I wanted to get your thoughts on his performance in both the running game and the passing game and blocking and all that stuff.**

BB: As I said, I thought the backs ran well. They made a lot of yards. With their running, breaking tackles, or cutting back and avoiding guys in the secondary. We had a couple longer runs there.

Rex and Sony, J.J., Cam had a good run for us there. The receivers ran well, N'Keal after the catch, Julian. Those guys all kind of got what was there, and then they got more on their own with good running skills.

The offensive line, like I said, we had some moving parts in there. Shuffled things around a little bit this week, but generally speaking, we got a hat on a hat. We didn't have a lot of negative plays. We didn't go backwards. Then when we had a chance to break a tackle or get into space, then the backs created some extra yardage on their own.

Josh did a great job of mixing it up between running inside, running outside, some zone scheme, some gap scheme, some misdirection. But it was pretty well executed for the most part, and the players really performed well.

We're in good condition. We're able to have a few no hole sequences there and seemed like we were able to press that for a little bit of an advantage at times as well. So it's definitely something for us to build off of.

**Q. Just kind of to follow that up a little bit, your**

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**thoughts on that offensive line and how difficult it is maybe to see Joe Thuney shift to center, and then Onwenu follow him in going to the guard's spot and even Herron contributed a little bit today. Just the maneuverability of the offensive line and the coaching of Popovich and Bricillo that they did along with Josh, and you guys seemed to get better as the game went on, running the football especially.**

BB: Yeah, I agree with that. As I said, there were some moving parts there, and as the game went along -- I would say, as the week went along in practice, there were things that, through repetition and seeing things a second time and even having to make adjustments to handle certain blocking schemes. We had a couple blitzes there that the Raiders ran on us. But for the most part, we, as I said, got a hat on a hat, got everybody blocked, and we were able to make some positive yards. When we were able to get through the line of scrimmage, the backs added some yards there on their own.

But Cole and Carmen, Nick Caley and the tight ends, Ivan and the backs, of course Josh did a great job, and Cam did an excellent job of managing the running game. There were a couple plays that he got us out of or got us into that were -- gave us an advantage on the play. It was a good complementary group effort there, and a lot of credit goes to everybody.

When you run the ball out 250 yards, it's not all one guy. You have a lot of people doing things well, and they did. The receivers blocked well. We have more blocking downfield, and we got some extra yards on that too by keeping the corners and safeties out of some of those plays.

**Q. Chase Winovich with a forced fumble today. How would you assess his performance today in the early going of the season here?**

BB: Again, overall, we'll have to look at the film and see how everything went. We had some -- we hit the quarterback and made a couple -- got a couple turnovers there. We didn't play some of the runs very well in the first half, played it better in the second half. So there's some things to work on. But we got good contributions from all those guys up front: Chase and Shillique, D. Wise, Adam, Lawrence Guy, Byron.

We had a lot of guide plays there from our front. We gave up, obviously, the two two-minute drives, but otherwise, defensively, there wasn't a lot of points scored. They had trouble converting third downs. We did a good job on third down until the very end of the game.

There were some good things there to build on defensively, but still 20 points is 20 points, and we want to try to keep it to a little less than that.

**Q. You had said that Darren Waller is pretty unique, kind of a different guy, a guy you haven't seen for a long time. How did you do to him what you did to him defensively today, four targets and two catches with the first one coming with about four minutes left in the game?**

BB: I thought the players did an excellent job. When we had opportunities to jam and reroute him, we tried to do that, but he's a tough guy to match up on. The Raiders took advantage of that with some plays to Renfrow and spreading the ball around to some other guys as well.

They tried to use the back there early, a couple, two or three angle routes to Jacobs. I don't think it's, for them, all about just throwing to one guy. If one guy's covered, then they use their other receivers, and they've got a good group of them and tight ends. Moreau got us on the touchdown pass. They're tough to cover. They're tough to match up on.

I thought the guys competed against Waller good. A couple of different guys matched up on him depending what the coverage was, and there was some zone coverage in there as well. He's a good player and a tough guy to defend. I'd say part of it, though, we played zone against them, so it wasn't all man-to-man matchups.

**Q. After the Raiders scored that touchdown late in the first half, you guys responded by shutting them down in that scoring. How important was that response?**

BB: That was big. Yeah, that was big. We kind of lost a little momentum there at the half. To give up a touchdown with 30 seconds to go is just not good coaching on my part, start with that, and we just didn't play the situation very well. But the players really responded and came out at halftime and kind of took it as a 0-0 game or as a three-point game. Went out and played their best 30 minutes of football in the second half, which is what we needed from all three units.

So that was big for us, but it was a big response by the defense at halftime to step up after that disappointing drive at the end of the first half. They showed a lot of mental toughness and competitiveness. They didn't get down about it. They just went back out there and responded to it, and that was really important for us.

**Q. Two offensive line questions for you. I'm sorry if these are repeats. The first was Isaiah Wynn jumped**

**out of the game for a series. What went into him missing that series? And the second was Joe Thuney, Pro Bowl guard moving over to center. How did you feel he played at that position?**

BB: We played a lot of people on the offensive line, so we've been doing that. We had a chance to play Justin today, so that was good. Joe's a great teammate. He'll do whatever he can to help the team win. Filling in for Dave, that's a big job. We just felt like that was the best combination we had for this particular game.

We'll see how that goes going forward. We'll just take it week by week here. Collectively, the offensive line certainly held their own and did a good job here today. I'll have to look at the film and take a look at each play and so forth.

Any time you gain 250 yards rushing and give the backs the opportunity they gave them to make explosive plays, which the backs took advantage of a lot of those, then a lot of credit there to the line, the tight ends, the fullback, the play calling, and Cam's ability to direct the running game at the line of scrimmage.

**Q. Bill, with 12 minutes and 16 seconds, you called a time out in the third quarter, and then after that, they only had six plays, which really got them nothing, plus a missed field goal. How impressed were you with that, just that after that 12:16 to open up the game?**

BB: Look, any time you can slow the Raiders down and keep them off the board -- I mean, they're averaging 34 points a game in the first two games against a couple of pretty good defensive teams. So we were just trying to keep them from getting big plays, stop the run, get off the field on third down.

It's tough. They're very well coached. They have a good team. They have a lot of explosive players. You've just got to get in there and battle with them. They made some plays, but fortunately, we were able to control the scoreboard for a majority of the game and get enough points to win.

They're tough to stop, but we hung in there and just, like I said, gave up a bad touchdown there at the end of the first half, but played competitively the rest of the way.

Just sign off by saying good luck to Brad and the Celtics tonight. We'll be pulling for them.

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