

PATRIOTS HEAD COACH BILL BELICHICK

POSTGAME VIDEO CONFERENCE

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Patriots 28, Jets 14

BB: Well, start by saying how proud I was of our team today, not only today but all year, certainly this week. We had a disappointing couple of weeks here, but these guys came back, really bounced back. Had a good week of practice, a good week of focus. They played competitively today.

It's always good to see some of the plays that we execute in practice be executed well in game situations. We had some of those today. Obviously the turnovers were a big part of the game, not turning the ball over, and getting two turnovers. That was good.

We played pretty good situational football, scored in the red area, had a red area stop. We converted better on third down. Those are helpful. Ultimately, a good field position day for us in the kicking game with the returns and the punting, kickoff coverage. Overall felt like we had a little advantage there.

Again, just proud of the way that the team, the players, competed this week. We had several guys that didn't play, David and Shaq, Terez, Jennings, a bunch of linebackers on defense. Chase came back in after he hurt his hand, had it clubbed up, finished the game. Things like that.

Go right down the roster, right down the line, a lot of examples of toughness, competitiveness, guys that love playing football. I just have a lot of respect for coaches and the players, members of this team. Obviously our results this year weren't what we had hoped for, but doesn't change my appreciation for their efforts, what they tried to do.

Players like Cody Davis, Ja'Whaun Bentley, LG, Lawrence Guy, were banged up. Had some guys playing on the offensive line. Korey played most of the second half at tackle. Hadn't played much this year. Some guys got an opportunity to play. Not that that was the goal; they were forced into it. In a way, all their hard work paid off, at least gave them an opportunity to do that.

It was good to end a disappointing season on a positive note. Still not necessarily where we wanted to be here at

the end of the year. Today was today. All we could do was control today.

Again, I appreciate all the players, the way the team performed. Cam has given us a lot of leadership, certainly gave it to us today, first run, getting the ball in the end zone. Again, just part of the leadership he's given us all year, especially with Andrews out, being a little shorthanded there offensively.

I don't really have anything to say about next year. We just got finished with the game. We put what we had into the game. I'm not going to talk about anything beyond today because I'm not prepared to talk about it.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open up with questions.

Q. How happy were you to see a guy like Cam rewarded with the three touchdown passes, even a touchdown reception, after the work he put in coming into a new system, dealing with COVID? You talked about how hard he worked this year.

BB: Look, I'm happy to see anybody have a good day. That's what we work for. These guys work hard. They put in a lot of physical effort, a lot of mental effort, a lot of group effort. It's always rewarding to see positive results, whether it be Cam or Sony or our offensive line, Jon Jones, Adam Butler, anybody. I'm happy for all of them.

It was just good to see the team respond in all three phases. I thought we played competitively. It wasn't certainly perfect. There were things we could have done better, for sure. But I thought they competed well and played competitively in all three phases. I'm proud of the team for that.

Q. When you usually lose in the playoffs, there's a brutal finality to it, you never know when it's coming. In this situation, are you at peace where things are because you knew going into this game this was your last game so you can be proud of the performance today but look back and still have disappointment on what transpired over the 16 games?

BB: Yeah, I think that pretty much sums it up. Yeah, that pretty much sums up the feelings.



Q. There was a report on ESPN today there's an understanding between you and Cam Newton that you'll be going in different directions this off-season. Is there an understanding this was Cam's final game?

BB: Is that another one of your anonymous reports?

Q. That was from Adam Schefter this morning.

BB: I don't think that's what Adam said. You should talk to Adam about that then. Great question, thank you.

Q. We know Jakobi Meyers' history at quarterback. When did the team develop trust in him to throw the ball in games?

BB: I don't know. I'm not sure. I mean, he's always been able to throw the ball. Julian has been able to throw it. Guys that have played quarterback previously in their career, they throw a ball back to the ball boy at the line of scrimmage after they catch a pass, you sort of notice it, so...

An opportunity to use some of those players.

Q. Sony had a big day in the passing game. How much have you seen him develop that aspect of his game this season?

BB: I think Sony really probably developed more of it after his rookie year. He works hard at the passing game. Fortunately we were able to get the ball out to him in space a couple times. Sometimes that's a lot easier than having to block a lot of guys, get through the line of scrimmage.

Passes that give the backs the ball with an opportunity to run with it, those are good opportunities. I know backs love those so they can see fewer defenders and see more space. Yeah, it was good.

Q. Chase Winovich today, he seemed like he brought a lot of energy.

BB: Yeah, he did. I thought Chase played hard, like he always does. Brought some good pressure, some inside pressure on the quarterback. With Josh Uche, Chase stepped up, Rashod Berry stepped up, played some for us, too.

Overall we had decent pressure on the quarterback, forced him out of the pocket a couple times, at least knocked him down a couple times there, created some longer yardage situations. Yeah, those are positives.

Chase plays hard all the time. Usually plays all four

phases of the kicking game. Sometimes we pull him off one, but usually at least three phases, a lot of times four. He's a kid that has a lot of versatility for us. Certainly the pass-rush, that was good for us today from him and, like I said, Adam, Deatrich, Rashod.

Q. Devin Asiasi got into the end zone today, a couple grabs. How much have you seen him grow? Sort of a stop-start kind of year for him. Knowing it's just one game, is it possible for a young player like that to build momentum having a pretty good game?

BB: Yeah, I mean, I think it's a stretch for me to think that a career is going to be defined by one play or one game. Is there a positive or a negative impact that could happen? Yeah, sure.

Really all of our rookie players are going to need to have that same opportunity to have a big year of growth from year one to year two now that they understand more about what we're doing, now they understand more about what our opponents do, now that they understand what an NFL season is like, the demand, mental and physical grind that an NFL season entails.

If they do a good job of approaching it the right way, have the right work ethic, take advantage of the opportunity that they have to boost their career, then good things will happen for them. If they don't, then there will probably be other players that pass them by.

That's what every year brings with those second- and third-year players, how far have they grow, how much have they improved, is it enough to establish or pass other players that they're competing with. We'll see how all that turns out.

But, you know, again, we got an opportunity over the course of the year, at times not what we were looking for, but at times a lot of opportunities for players to get game experience and play a decent amount of football. Again, sometimes they were the beneficiary of injuries or circumstances that allowed them greater playing time than what you would have normally expected it.

Those opportunities will hopefully be good learning experiences for them but also be a real reality check that this is how hard it is and how hard it's going to be, how much they have to do in order to be successful against the kind of competition that they've seen this year in regular season games.

Yeah, we'll see how all that plays out. I mean, I hope it does. That will be up to Devin or any other player going from year one to year two to put in the time, the work, the

investment and the sweat in order to get the results.

Q. On Jakobi, do you go back to the Arabia Mountain High School tape there when you're thinking about dialing up the passing plays? What are your thoughts about him as a passer?

BB: We didn't go back that far. Probably not doing enough homework there.

Like I said really, you see a lot of it on the practice field. When receivers run routes and catch the ball, then they turn around and throw it back to the line of scrimmage to the ballboys that are setting up the drills for the next guys to run, so forth, doesn't take too long to see if the guy can throw the ball 20, 30 yards accurately.

Through game planning, like Josh as usual, does a great job of finding opportunities to attack defenses and putting players in position to execute those plays. Of course, another thing that Josh does a great job of is the timing and setting things up and making those calls at the right time and against the right defense that give us the best opportunity to succeed.

That play was well-executed, well-designed, and Jakobi made a good throw, Cam finished it, got in the end zone. That was a big play for us, gave us a big boost, got us back in the game.

I know everybody wants to talk about tryouts, all the highlight tape from passing and so forth. That would be a good story. I can't honestly say that's the way it happened, though. I appreciate the background.

Q. The question about Adam, he had reached out as a colleague, and he wanted to make sure what he had said was represented accurately, that it wasn't a report, it was part of an overall discussion. Just getting away from that, overall, how would you sort of describe what you learned from Cam this year being with him every day, what that was like?

BB: I think I've covered that quite a few times. Nothing's changed. He had a great week this week. Came in with a lot of energy, did a great job in practice with executing the game plan, getting things right. We made some adjustments. We made some in-game adjustments. Overall we did a pretty good job of it.

I wish from a team standpoint that we could have performed better collectively as a team, not just offensively, but defensively and in the kicking game, we could have collectively performed better over the course of the season.

As mentioned earlier, coming into today, it was what it was. We were 6-9. The only thing we could do today was be 7-9. That's what we tried to do. That doesn't erase the other games that were played this year.

Nothing but respect for Cam and the way he's approached every day that he's been here.

Q. As you spoke about players going from year one to year two, learning what it takes, what was the value in Cam's model of example in that regard this year, the work he put in to learning a new system? Do you think in a very specific way, does that have an impact on young players in particular?

BB: I'm not sure I understand the question. Are you saying his example, the way he approached it, would that affect other players?

Q. Because he came in with a strong résumé, a great player, yet it seemed from what you've told us first guy in, last guy out. Some of those young players, they might not have been around other quarterbacks. Maybe them seeing what Cam did, if that's part of the leadership that you keep telling us you see in him?

BB: Yeah, absolutely, definitely. I mean, honestly, I can probably say that about 20 players on this team. Devin McCourty, Jason McCourty, Lawrence Guy, Joe Thuney, David Andrews, James White, Matt Slater, right down the line. Some have been here for over a decade. They approach every meeting and every installation and every walk-through like they're rookies, like they're undrafted rookie players. Attentive, trying to get it right. If something happens, they ask a coach a question. After 13 years or 10 years, however many years it's been, five years, it doesn't matter, that they have just as much of a thirst to get through situations right so they'll be prepared so if they come up in the game, they'll do the right thing as a rookie would, a first-year player would, who doesn't know.

Some of the questions are more advanced and so forth. We have so many players on our team that approach the game that way. I mean, I couldn't just single out one person. Again, obviously our captains. There's a whole 'nother group of players that aren't captains that have that same work ethic, same day-to-day consistency to excel.

Part of excelling is improving. But they want to do everything right. They want to physically be prepared, mentally be prepared, study film, work with their teammates so that the communication is done properly and efficiently on the field when we have to make a change or an adjustment, all those things.

Yeah, I mean, honestly it's an inspiration to all of us, coaches as well. Any player who hasn't been around that, who hasn't experienced that, doesn't have those kind of work habits, again, urge to get it right, commitment to winning, what you have to do to win in this league, yeah, of course they all can learn from that. We can all learn from it.

That's what real good professional NFL players do, is they make that kind of commitment on a daily basis throughout the entire season. They don't take days off. They don't miss opportunities to prepare and study and be ready to step out on the field and do their very best. They don't have those up-and-down type of periods.

So absolutely. Anybody that watches those players in their room or on their side of the ball, just in general, absolutely, those are great leadership examples. They don't even have to say anything. Leadership comes from doing your job and putting the team first when you do it. That's what leadership's really about. It's not about always standing up and giving a team speech. Just going in there and doing your job is leadership. Your commitment to doing it for the team is leadership. That's kind of how I measure it.

We have a lot of that. We have a lot of great leadership on this team. I mean, I don't have any issue there.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, coach.

BB: Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow. Appreciate everyone.

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