

HEAD COACH SEAN McDERMOTT

POSTGAME VIDEO CONFERENCE

October 22, 2023



Buffalo Bills 25 - New England Patriots 29

S.M.: Just we didn't do enough. We didn't put it in position enough. I didn't put the defense in position enough. And then just overall didn't play complementary football. When you look at the first half, two short fields led to 10 points, first play on offense, interception. Punt return, good field position I think led to 10 points. And then too many yards on first down for their offense and not getting them into enough third down and long situations where we could affect the quarterback more. They did a good job controlling the line of scrimmage early in the game with their running game. And we tried to make some adjustments, which I think paid off. Just red zone wise as well, offensively when we're down there you gotta get 7 and we were shooting ourselves in the foot at times and put in some third and long situations.

And then just overall gotta close the game out when it comes down to it, you gotta close the game out. So just better overall tackling fundamentally. Defensively we gotta do a better job there, and that starts with me. With that I'll open it up to your questions.

Q. Over the last three games you guys have a total of 10 points in the first half. Have you been able to put your finger on anything for the slow start here?

S.M.: I wish I could tell you, Joe. I really do. I wish I could tell you. We talk about it. We talk about being more detailed, getting into a rhythm early, playing complementary football. And all three phases working together. And we haven't been able to get into a good rhythm obviously in the first quarter, let's just start there. So just overall we gotta find the answers there.

Q. Sean, the offense does get you the lead there late under two minutes. Defensively to not be able to hold them in that situation, what's the collective sort of frustration level there with them being able to get down the field in that amount of time?

S.M.: Yeah. I think the first play was a huge play for them. Right? They throw a screen, we're in four under 3D defense. We didn't do enough to leverage the formation and make the tackle where we needed to make it. I think

that was a 32, 34-yard gain, and all of a sudden you take the field and you're saying, hey, they got under two minutes there, and I think they had two timeouts at the time. So they could have run it. They could draw. They could screen early. And they did. And we gotta be better just not allowing it to do what it did to us. 34 yards is unacceptable. I think part of that is leveraging the formation. They got into a four-by-one set, and making the tackle, and then after that they got the ball wherever they had it. I think it was over midfield and still a timeout or two there. So they could run it. They could throw it. It makes it tough right there. But at the end of the day we gotta do a better job.

Q. Sean, despite the struggles in all three areas today, is your confidence level in this locker room still really high that they can really correct things quickly?

S.M.: Yes. Yeah, it is. I'm confident in our players. I'm confident in our coaches. Again, they controlled the game today, and that's the game that they wanted to play in terms of putting us in some third and long situations, getting us off schedule. And then minimizing their third down exposures, and particularly third and longs.

Q. Von is three games back now. He's been held off the stats sheet in all those games. He just said in the room he's only had three padded practices. In your mind is he where you would expect him to be right now or where do you think he is?

S.M.: I think you gotta manage expectations. Right. You're talking about a player, a human being coming off an ACL last Thanksgiving, somewhere thereabouts. And it's going to take some time. I think that's just being realistic about it.

Q. Do you think you're four and three. There's still plenty of season to go. Are you maybe at a cross roads right now? It's like an inflexion point at this point. Do you feel that way?

S.M.: Well, we gotta continue to find answers to some of the reasons why we're stubbing our toe. Whether it's the first half of the game. We're not playing complementary football. We missed a field goal, 42-yard field goal. I mean those are things we've gotta do. And so we're beating ourselves at times, and we're not linking up all three



phases to control a game and put an offense in this case into a true one-dimensional situation. That's the goal of every game where you can get a little bit of a lead and then you can go into it and say, hey, now we can really rush and cover. And that's somewhat of a disappointing thing in the last drive, although that screen kind of got in the way there, right, in terms of a through one-dimensional situation. But we gotta continue to figure it out, continue to make plays when the plays are there to be made and put the players in position to be successful.

Q. You mentioned the kicking game. It started out red hot this season. Has really been struggling the last two weekends. What do you think have been the source of some of those inconsistencies these past two weeks?

S.M.: At the end of the day not good enough. We've missed a couple of kicks the last couple of games and a couple of returns have shown up on us this year as well. So we gotta figure that out.

Q. With the slow starts, this is the second straight week you've said you wanted to get into a rhythm. What does in rhythm look like to you?

S.M.: I think it starts with staying on schedule, winning first down so you can stay on schedule, so you can move the chains. You look at their offense. They did that today. They won first down. They stayed on schedule. They stayed out of third and long for the most part during the day, and then when you do that, you're playing two-dimensionally on offense. And that's where when it gets to be hard to call a game against two-dimensional offense, when you're on schedule, winning first downs or skipping third downs or even putting us into a third down and short to medium at most. Too many off-schedule situations.

Q. Do you need to be more involved on offense? Is that even possible with how much you have to do on the defensive side?

S.M.: Yeah. Listen, I oversee all three phases. So we have communication across all three phases with myself, special teams myself, offense and collectively we've gotta continue to find answers.

Q. Bringing in Tyrel for Dorian late in the second quarter and keeping him in after the half, what went into that decision? Something you weren't seeing from Dorian?

S.M.: Just wanted to try and calm it down a little bit.

Q. Do you think going forward still kind of figuring that out?

S.M.: Right. We've gotta evaluate that and we'll do that. I know it's a short week but we'll do that. Still confident, extremely confident in Dorian.

Q. What did you see out of Dalton Kincaid today?

S.M.: I didn't get the stats. It looked like he had more targets today over the middle of the defense and manning zone, and I was excited to see that. We gotta continue to do that.

Q. You talked often about earning the right to win. What do you need to do differently? Even if it's like maybe during the week to get back to earning the right to win?

S.M.: Well, I would say big picture wise it starts with just getting off the field on defense on third down. And it starts with playing better complementary football, winning first down on offense. I'm going to be repeating myself, but that's how you win in this league. If you're not giving up big plays defensively, you gotta get off the field on third down. And then offensively we've gotta be able to win first down so that we're not in off-schedule situations, whether it be second and long or third and long. And then the kicking game has got to help us with field position. And so that's really a big-picture answer, I know, but that's really holistically how you control a game.

Q. Do you feel like your team was inspired to come out early in this game?

S.M.: I felt like they were ready to go. Obviously when you start the way we did, they get a field goal, our first play on offense is an interception, that's tough to do, in particular on the road. So we had to rebound from it.

Q. Where is your confidence level right now in Ken Dorsey and his ability to turn this thing around?

S.M.: Yeah. I'm confident in Ken.

Q. You've been in this league a long time. You have a lot of captains who have been in this league a long time. How much will you lean on them this week with the quick turnaround to say, hey, how can you help players get through this?

S.M.: Yeah, I think the biggest thing is leadership and energy this week, too, getting our energy back and ready to go at home against a good football team.

Q. Did you get a sense that Josh's shoulder was a factor at all?

S.M.: No. I didn't get that sense. I know he's a little bit sore right now, but nothing in addition to what he was before going into the game.

Q. Earlier this year when we asked about Josh's confidence, I think it was at the Jets game, you said you always keep an eye on where he is. Where would you say his confidence is and is that something you're concerned about at all, in the offense and the production of the offense?

S.M.: Yeah. We talk weekly, Josh and I do. And I always feel like I'm on the pulse or his pulse in this case, and we've got a good rapport. So those communications will continue. And to this point I feel like he's confident.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports