

# PATRIOTS HEAD COACH

## MIKE VRABEL

### POSTGAME VIDEO CONFERENCE

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Patriots - 32, Browns - 13

#### **Q. (Question re offense)?**

MV: Taking advantage of our opportunities, turning drives into touchdowns, hitting some X plays and not settling for field goals like we did in the first half.

Sometimes it's going to be like that. A lot of times in this league it's going to be like that. We've had other games. You could ask me about starting fast. Again, we'll try to continue to work on it.

I'm mostly proud of the totality of the team. I know there's so much more to improve, but we got stops in the second half, and we scored touchdowns. That's what the difference in the game was, but it was also the way we finished the first half by getting a stop and going down there and making a huge gain. We didn't convert, but we were able to move the ball down there into field goal range, and Andy and that operation was able to take advantage of it and go into halftime with the lead.

**Q. Kind of extending that, just the complementary football, Spillane the interception, touchdown Hawkins, the interception, touchdown, how pleased were you when you saw those kinds of things unfold? And you brought your team to the sideline for the ensuing kickoff. What was the reason for having everyone stand up on the sidelines for that?**

MV: I wish you guys would have noticed that a couple weeks ago. We started doing that a couple weeks ago when we started going on the road. Glad you guys just now noticed, but that hasn't changed in three weeks. That was the focus we had on the road, trying to get up and support the other groups, the ones that were trying to create field position for us on the kickoff return or the kickoff.

So taking advantage of the turnovers is huge. Certainly one on third down there with Spillane and then the long one there that Hawk had. We've got to take care of the ball better and continue to find opportunities. They hadn't turned it over, and then when their gimmick plays ran out, I thought we played pretty good defense.

**Q. Looks like the team was pretty fired up for Stefon Diggs after he scored his first touchdown of the season. Just how would you characterize the impact he's had in the locker room so far?**

MV: Really enjoyed being around him every day, his energy, communication, his willingness to learn and play and figure out what it is that we need from him each and every week. There's been an energy.

He's practiced when we needed him to practice, and we're going to have to start taking care of some these veteran guys, whether that's him or Morgan or Hunter and a lot of these other guys as we move on towards the season, but highly competitive. He's vocal. He cares. He's a great teammate. He's been really good for that position and some of the younger guys' development.

So I'm happy to be able to get him in the end zone. It was long overdue.

**Q. Drake was sacked six times today but still finishes with 280 and three touchdowns. How impressed were you with his resolve as this game went on?**

MV: Everybody's resolve. Again, we'd like to have the sacks, but again, we've got to get the ball out on time and understand who it is that we're dealing with. I don't think that as long as we're keeping them clean and not some vicious hits, we have to be able to be better in that regard.

I think, when we give them time to throw, it's pretty good. It's good to see us hit a couple X plays, but we knew that was going to be a challenge with this front. Then the way that they played and certainly with Myles Garrett, committing two people to him and him still affecting the quarterback is obviously impressive.

**Q. We're going on six weeks now where you guys are among the best defense in the league the last three quarters. What besides the tackling, which we talked about, do you see as driving that?**

MV: I think we settle in. I think we get some stops. I don't think we've given up a ton of X plays in that regard after the first drive, whether there was a missed tackle or they got



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us overaggressive and slipped the guy out of the backfield. But I think they play and they compete for 60 minutes.

This isn't a one or two possession game. It's 10 or 12 possessions at least in a football game. We've got to continue to work on the things and enhance the things that we've done well and improve on the things that haven't been so well, which is the early game, the opening script, getting off the field on third down, which we had them in third and long and weren't able to.

But creating third and long opportunities and then continue to get stops.

**Q. Obviously not word for word, but what did you say to your team at the half? You guys struggled a lot in the first half obviously to move the ball, but then of course to get points, then three straight touchdowns to start the second half.**

MV: We were winning the game. So I just told them keep playing. I don't know how many yards we had. Those are stats. I look at the scoreboard, and we were winning.

**Q. Just curious, your thoughts on Myles Garrett today. I imagine you guys had him emphasized during the week. How hard is this guy to block, I guess?**

MV: Just size, speed, athleticism, and having watched him last year, it's impressive, and it's hard. We're trying to chip him, and he Gumbys around one guy and then speed bursts the other guy. He's just an elite athlete with a tremendous skill set.

I'm glad that we don't play him twice every year unless we're both in the playoffs. He's just a dynamic player, and they do a nice job with him. He certainly impacts a lot of football games.

**Q. What went into the individual player introductions? I know earlier you mentioned players standing up during special teams. What was your thought process into having the players introduced individually before the game?**

MV: Just feel like these guys put a lot into it and would like to recognize him individually. Hopefully our fans can embrace that and get excited for them. It's something that I felt like we wanted to do, create some energy early and get them to recognize the players' efforts, and allow these fans to support us, which they did.

It was getting loud on third down. We've got to continue to play hard for them so that they cheer for us.

**Q. Just curious, Christian Barmore, we didn't really see him in the first quarter. Was there anything that led to him being sidelined? And then to see him come back in the game after?**

MV: I had to make a decision. My job is to protect the team, so when there's actions that I don't feel like are commiserate with what we want to do here, I've got to make a decision, and we move on.

**Q. Run game was effective again for the second straight week. What did you see happening there against a tough Browns defense?**

MV: Tough sledding. I think we stayed committed and mixed some interior runs. We hit some outside plays, some perimeter runs. Then obviously the quarterback stuff helps, those numbers.

When they pressure and they play man coverage and Drake can do that, that has to be part of who we are. We've got to send him to Spring Training and figure out when to slide and continue to talk about that. I'll do my best there.

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