

HEAD COACH MIKE KAFKA

POSTGAME VIDEO CONFERENCE

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Patriots 33, Giants 15

MK: Guys, how we doing? Go for it. So I think it was Gunner got a concussion, then Tracy with a hip, injury-wise.

Q. On the hit with Jaxson, I know you talked about it, but what can you do to impress upon him the value of his own health?

MK: Listen, Jaxson's an aggressive football player. He's on the sideline, trying to get himself out of bounds. Talks a hit. He bounced up. He's a tough kid.

Q. Do you like the decision to compete for that extra yard or two or whatever or do you prefer to see him step out of bounds?

MK: Yeah, obviously don't want him to take any hits that are unnecessary but he was work his way out of bounds.

Q. How do you think he did overall protecting himself?

MK: Jaxson did a nice job, slid a couple times for us and did everything we asked him to do.

Q. Why was Abdul not out there the first couple of series?

MK: That was a coach's decision. My decision.

Q. Why did you make that decision?

MK: Just based on how we went during the week. Just that was the decision I wanted to make.

Q. Not a disciplinary reason?

MK: No, it was just my decision to not play him.

Q. There was a report that he missed part of or all of a team event. Is that true?

MK: It was just strictly my decision.

Q. How concerning is it now this is the second time if three weeks he's had to be benched in this way?

MK: Yeah, it's unfortunate but that's the way we work with it this week.

Q. Mike, I imagine when you benched him the first time you hoped that the message would get through. The fact that this now, two weeks later, it's the same exact thing again or something similar again.

MK: We have great communication and he's one of my favorite players on the team and that was one thing that we talked about, and it was my decision to not play him this...

Q. Why did it happen again?

MK: Again, this is one of the things that I decide to do.

Q. What do you mean that's one of the things you talked about?

MK: Just like I talk with Abdul, I talk with all our players. I talked with Abdul about this week and decided to not play him for the first two series.

Q. Being on time is still a problem? Has that been a constant problem with...

MK: This was just strictly my decision to not play him this week.

Q. But when you say -- what was that decision based on?

MK: Listen, when he came back in the game you saw the kind of impact he had and the player this guy is. This is a kid that I, again, I back, I support this kid highly and for any young player that we have on the roster, whether it's Abdul or any rookie or young player, we're going to make sure we him under our wing and continue to develop these guys because they're important to us. They're important to me. Abdul is no different, just like Jaxson, just like young players like Tracy and DA. All these guys that are stepping up in big-time, major roles, these are the guys that we're continuing to develop, continuing to grow, continuing to be pros. The standard that we have in our program are sky high and everyone is upheld to him. That was my decision, my decision only. Anything else outside of it is going to be kept in house.



Q. Okay, Mike, but all the players you just named, all the players you're talking to, they're not committing infractions that are leading to them being benched. And you talk about how special he is and how much of a difference he can make. What he's doing is taking him off the field where he didn't play for two series where you guys probably could have needed him.

MK: I just would say this: That was my decision to do that. And, again, those are tough decisions to make, but that was my decision and, again, the kid, nothing with him. Everything that we did was my decision and obviously I'm sure he wasn't happy about it, which I understand, but I thought that was the best thing for the team and it was my decision to move forward with it and that's where we're at.

Q. Do you regret the decision?

MK: I don't regret the decision. I don't.

Q. Is it tough to evaluate Jaxson and develop Jaxson in tough situations like this?

MK: Say that again.

Q. Is it hard to evaluate Jaxson's performance and development in tough situations like this?

MK: Well, I haven't -- you watch the game. I have a feel for kind of what happened. I'll go back and look at the tape and evaluate it fully, but it's never just one person. We're a team, it's all three phases, all 11 guys on the field. We all got to do it together, and we all got to be better.

Q. Mike, your first two games were competitive games, close games down to the wire. This one was not. What did you think of the physicality of your team compared to theirs? Seemed like they were more ready for the fight than your guys were.

MK: I thought our guys competed. I thought our guys competed. There are some plays that we didn't make that we got to continue to look at and evaluate whether from the coaching staff or from the players side of it where we can get better at. The good thing is we have a bye coming up that we can go and evaluate all that stuff and really have a great plan coming back after the bye.

Today wasn't our best effort, wasn't our best game here in a minute, so we'll go back and look at it and get it cleaned up.

Q. Mike, the breakdowns on special teams from the start of the game, missed tackle and the long return

and obviously the return for touchdown. And then I don't know what happened with Koo, if his foot just got stuck. Overall you guys have been solid in special teams in certain areas. What happened tonight?

MK: It just wasn't a great team effort. All three phases, everyone's got to step up. Everyone's got to clean up their part of the game. It's never just one phase. It's never just one player so we all good to do a better job.

Q. What did Koo say happened on the field goal?

MK: I saw it live. I saw it live. The ball kind of slipped a little bit. He wasn't sure if it was going to get set. Jamie tried to reset it and by that time, it was kind of, he was already kind of out of his groove on it. So it was just tough right there.

Q. When you got the ball back down two possessions, there was a little lack of tempo. The huddling, running the ball, was there any consideration given there to true to speed it up to get down the field a little quicker?

MK: We went tempo on it. I was just trying to -- down two scores we felt like we were just right in the game, just wanted to get the drive going. I think we -- I had an eye on the time on where it would get to to where we really need to kind of go super fast but I really felt like if we can just put together a drive and go ahead and get points, that would set us up to be in the game a little bit more.

You're right, you're kind of teetering on that line in terms of going super, super fast and just kind of trying to stay within the game and not get too far away from it, but that's kind of where my mind was at as I was calling it.

Q. You were very aggressive with the fourth and one the first half, why not go for that?

MK: Yeah, where that spot was at, do you want to punt it back, back them up, get a quick three-and-out and get a little bit of field position? It was a tossup for me. I just didn't want to -- I wanted to play some field position game there and give our defense an opportunity.

That's one that I'll go back and look at, if that's where I could rip off at fourth down opportunity, but in the heat of the game, that's where I fell.

Q. What do you think of the way Drake Maye played against you guys?

MK: Well, he was obviously very productive scrambling, throwing the football. He did a nice job with some of the

explosive things. We got to button that stuff up on the back end, tie it in with the front end, and get everything a little bit cleaner.

Q. Understanding that play, that fourth and one you said you have to go back and look over it. Just knowing how much you want to be aggressive, is that something maybe you will look at and say regardless if they score that field goal or not, is that a play maybe you want back because it went against you wanting to be more aggressive?

MK: Yeah, we were like in go for fourth downs. You saw the times we ran it on third down. Those are all pretty much go-fors. We want to be aggressive. We want to stay aggressive and when the opportunity comes up, we'll try to be aggressive. At that time, I didn't feel like that was the spot for it depending. We get it, great. If we don't, now you're basically making it a three-score game where now it's a little bit more difficult. Just trying to play field position and just stay with it.

Q. What was your sense of the operation with Charlie calling the defense?

MK: I thought the operation was clean on the headset. Itches bouncing back and forth a little bit on the headset so I could hear a little bit of it, but he was calling. He was poised. We just all got to do a better job.

Q. Do you think firing Shane Bowen was the wrong decision after watching the defense tonight?

MK: I don't. I standby Charlie. He'll do great. He'll continue to get better. I standby our defense. I standby all our coaches. We have a great coaching staff here. These guys will all step up coaching staff, players, surrounding support staff will all step up for us. That's our goal.

Q. Was there a thought on the last series talking about protecting Jaxson, he took some hits on the last one of not putting him out there again?

MK: Like taking him out of the game? No, I wasn't going to take him out at all.

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