

# Visitors Media Conference

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Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

## Head Coach Kevin

## Stefanski

### Press Conference

Minnesota - 7; Cleveland - 14

KEVIN STEFANSKI: You know, what a great team win. What a great performance by our defense. That's a really good team that we just played today.

I think, as you guys know, an explosive offense. And we settled in there after that first drive and played outstanding on the defensive side of the ball.

We finished the game plus one in the turnover margin. Not giving it away on offense was great. 184 yards on the ground. And then special teams came through for us again. Chase had a 53-yarder and a 48-yarder.

A big sequence at the end there to convert on third and 20 get points at the end of the first half was huge.

You go on the road and play a really good team. It wasn't perfect by any stretch of the imagination. But we got plenty of work to do, we got time to do it. It's game four. We got to continue to get better. With that, I'll take any questions.

#### **Q. Kevin, after four games, how do you feel about the way your defense has played?**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, Jake, I could probably only tell you about this game just because -- you know, not a four-game evaluation right now. And just the way they defended the pass.

Kirk Cousins, who is outstanding, was six for six on that first drive and I think 14 of 32 the rest of the way. And so to be able to defend the pass like the guys did and have the rush and coverage, operate like they were, I think it was outstanding.

#### **Q. Was it more than just a regular season win for you?**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: No.

#### **Q. Why not?**



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KEVIN STEFANSKI: Because these games are hard to come by, Tony. And you're going to play against really tough opponents on the road. You got to find a way to get a victory. And we got to do it next week back on the road.

#### **Q. Coming in here and winning, does that mean anything to you?**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: No, I'm just happy our team went 1-0.

#### **Q. (Question concerning the defensive performance by the Browns.)**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, Mark, I thought Joe and the defensive staff were great. Again, with the quarterback they have, the running back, the guys on the perimeter, that's a tuff out.

And we knew they were going to make a couple plays and they did. But Joe had some adjustments, our defensive staff was great with communication. You know, Greedy Williams goes out and makes a play on the interception. So really just proud of the overall effort.

#### **Q. (Question concerning the first drive.)**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, I think we settled in a little bit. Any time you're on the road against a really good offense, you're going to have to see what their game plan is for that particular day.

They did a nice job. They did a nice job in the run and pass. Keeping us off-balance in the first drive and I think the guys settled in.

#### **Q. I think you guys took the ball in the second quarter with 9:55 left. There was, like, a minute or something left. How important was that drive to eat up all that time?**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, that's right. I mean, you got to possess the ball against a really good offense. Now, I wish, we scored more when we possessed that ball. But to keep that offense on the sideline was a big part of it. That's a good football team.

#### **Q. Any regrets about throwing too much in the last five minutes or did you trust the defense?**

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KEVIN STEFANSKI: I trust the defense. I thought they were playing great. We thought we had some opportunities. But, again, they made some plays.

**Q. You mentioned Greedy Williams. With everything he's gone through, how significant was that?**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: I thought it was great. He's been through a lot. Last year was not easy on the young man and he kept coming back at it, grinding in the training room. And then finally got out there. And I just think you're seeing a kid get better and better.

**Q. Kevin, why didn't you kick the field goal early in the game?**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, any time we get down there that low, Tony, I think we got to come through. We got to do a better job of getting some guys open. We just felt this was going to be a game that we had to score some points.

Now, it didn't go that way, obviously. So you adjust and you play and call the game that is called forward.

**Q. Baker struggled a little bit today. Can you pinpoint the reasons?**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: No, I'd have to look at it. I struggled a bit would be the answer. I got to do a better job of getting guys open.

**Q. (Question concerning a pass interference call and utilizing time-outs.)**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, I think, you know, having the time-outs helps because then we can use them when we need to, see what their offense is doing.

They did a nice job. They were keeping guys in to chip at times. And those two receivers are world class. So we had to mix up what we were doing a little bit.

And then it gets to a moment you know they need to use the sideline. So the guys adjusted. And then situational football, you know, the ball's got to go in the end zone. And even, you know, the rushes, we knew we weren't going to get there with three, but I thought they pressured the quarterback and forced him into a throw he didn't want to make. But a lot of situational ball today.

**Q. I think you got to watch the film to see how good like you think your D-line is.**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, I think they consistently were

applying pressure. Again, that's a great quarterback. They got great players on the outside.

So we had to make him uncomfortable. If you make him comfortable in the pocket, he's going to make all the throws.

**Q. (Question concerning Baker Mayfield's performance and his shoulder.)**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, we didn't make them today. Again, it's game four. We got to get better, I have to get better. And that's just the truth. We just got to get better in some of these areas and I think we will.

**Q. What was it like on the sidelines in the epic moments of this game and the noise? How do you think your team responded?**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, I thought we responded pretty well. The noise -- you know, speaking about the offense now, I thought they did a nice job.

Baker got them in and out of the huddle and that's a big deal. That's not easy to do. So I thought the noise, they handled it well.

**Q. Kevin you said, obviously, you got to be better. But what does it say about the character of this team?**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: You're going to have to win a bunch of different ways in the NFL. And our defense carried us today. That's the truth.

And that's a credit to our defensive players and defensive staff. The offense doesn't turn the ball over, grinds it out on the ground. You're going to have to win in different ways. Including next week.

So I think it speaks to the resiliency, for sure. But also just in this league, you're going to have to go on the road and beat a good team. And, right, next week you're going to have to go on the road and beat a good team.

**Q. (Question concerning the offensive line.)**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, I thought the guys really did a nice job. Coach Callahan did a great job constructing the game plan.

I think we were able to do multiple in how we ran it with different run types. So the guys executed the play really well.

**Q. How much did you enjoy that formula of controlling**

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**the ball like you did with the running game and the defense kind of stopping them?**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, obviously, we want to get to 1-0 however we can. And that was for the game called today. And we got to be ready to win in any which way.

**Q. Was this a better defensive performance against Chicago?**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: That's hard for me, Tony, obviously, to compare the two. I will just tell you, today, was really impressive. And just a great illustration of rushing and coverage.

**Q. You guys punted six times in the second half. What do you think the Vikings' defense did well there following halftime?**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, they did -- that's a really good defense. And it's a great scheme with great players. We had a couple opportunities we didn't make.

I mean, you're not going to convert many third downs against that defense. So we just got to stay on the field and find a way to do that.

**Q. You said you thought there was going to be a lot of points in this game. So how surprised are you that this game was low scoring?**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Obviously, Tony that's the NFL. You go into it thinking it's going to go one way. Listen, I trust our defense. I just looked over there and saw a really good explosive offense just based on the first three games. And our defense played lights out today. That's the truth.

**Q. (Question concerning the coverage of an undisclosed player.)**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, I'd have to look at it. But he seemed to be covering his guy, making plays on the ball. But I'm not surprised by him.

**Q. (Question concerning the performance of an undisclosed player.)**

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, hard -- I got to look at it. It's great for those guys when you don't know how much you're going to play. And very early, Here you go, you're in.

So I thought he was at the right spot most of the time. But I'd have to look at it to give you a better evaluation.