

NFL International Series

Vikings vs Browns

Sunday, 5 October 2025

London, England, UK

Tottenham Hotspur Stadium

Minnesota Vikings

Head Coach Kevin O'Connell

Postgame Press Conference

Vikings-21, Browns-17

KEVIN O'CONNELL: We knew this was going to be a very hard-fought football game. That's one of the best defenses in the NFL, and they do a lot of challenging things running the football and just keeping you off balance defensively, so I knew we would have to battle, we would have to play well in the kicking game, and try to win the turnover battle and do some of the little things right.

We weren't able to do that, but our guys are just, you know, as connected of a team as I've been around as far as a trip like this, ten days. You know, just relentless in their pursuit of trying to win a football game today.

Proud of a lot of guys, proud of our team, proud of our coaches for just battling. We had a little bit more adversity, some caused by ourselves. We found a way to win a football game.

Really appreciate all the folks that made this trip possible, starting with the people in-house with our team. We've got the best ops, the best trainers, the best strength coaches, the best nutritionists. I could not do my job without a lot of folks that put a lot of work into a trip that had not been done before and to see our team come to life and finish the way they did is a credit to a lot of them, as well as the hosts here in London and obviously in Dublin, our first game.

It seems like we've been gone a while, and we're very much excited to get back home and try to start getting healthy. A lot is still in front of this team, but it's good to have gotten this victory here today.

Just an injury update, Carson Wentz did have a left shoulder. Was able to come back in the game after halftime. Then Jordan Mason had a quad contusion and also finished the game. Christian Darrisaw was part of a plan. We knew at some point Christian, based upon the



high snap count last week, we wanted to be smart with C.D. and didn't make it any easier as far as having to navigate the end of the game there without one of the best left tackles in football, but want to compliment C.D., his willingness to continue to ramp up and continue to be such a critical factor for our team. Proud of him and once again just proud of our guys.

I'll open it up to you guys.

Q. What gave you the confidence to go to Jordan in that final touchdown?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: Well, you know, a lot of those calls were really centered around -- you know, you're going fast, trying to navigate having a few young bucks in there up front against one of the best fronts in football, so a lot of it is just trying to kind of navigate through that first and then, you know, try to get some one-on-one opportunities for some guys.

We were able to kind of move the ball against some single high, and they were kind of disguising a little bit of some split safety looks out of those single-high looks, and Carson did a nice job seeing it. When we got single high, we were able to get the ball down the field.

Justin made a great play on the one-on-one inside, and we kind of got down there. It was either going to be a world where they were going to try to pressure us to see if they can move us back out of field goal range, if they could, so we were trying to make sure we had a plan for that. At the same time, you got to have somewhere to go with it if they do try to play cloud, and Carson was ready for that.

It was kind of a coaching point we gave early on in the game that showed up in a gotcha-have-it-type situation.

Q. Can you tell us why Jordan wasn't on the field in the first quarter?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: We're always going to keep a lot of details in-house. I do think I want to share with you guys, he missed a walk-through this week, and those types of things aren't in alignment with our standards and wanted to make sure he was held accountable for that. At the same time, he knows that.

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I thought he handled it professionally. He spoke with the team to let them know that whenever I gave him the opportunity to go in the game, they could count on him, and he makes the game-winning catch.

I love Jordan Addison. I think he's a guy that I care about tremendously, and he knows that every guy in that locker room has his back. He knows that I will never waiver in my confidence and belief in him, but at the same time, we've got standards. Personal responsibility and accountable are huge if you want to talk about culture. So that's what happened there.

Q. It felt like there were a lot more moving pockets, like boots and stuff like that in this game plan than there have been in the past couple of years for you. Was that a product of the defensive line-offensive line matchup, or am I reading that wrong?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: Yeah, we wanted to make sure we had a game plan to try to win the game today.

Q. Those defensive plays at the end of the second quarter to hold out the Browns --

KEVIN O'CONNELL: That was huge.

Q. You held them to only a field goal. Did that give you massive boosts going in at halftime because you came out to start the third quarter with a real energy, a real drive to being able to hold them.

KEVIN O'CONNELL: First and foremost, you're able to get the stop when you defer to start the game, and that kind of opens that door to a possible chance at doubling up, you know, to end the quarter and start the second half. We didn't do that, but I did feel like that stop even after giving up the drive we did to keep them out and hold them to three, was a boost. Then it was the offense's turn to go out there and stack some plays.

I do believe we had some critical penalties that eliminated an explosive run and an explosive pass today, two fumbles that just cannot happen. So we've got a lot to clean up.

It is early in the season, and I'm going to continue to challenge and push every coach, every player to maximize what we can become as a football team by growing individually and collectively. It always starts with me, and I've got to do that as well.

Yes, there was moments in the game where I thought, like I said, the connectedness and just the team that's been bonded together through some unique circumstances over the last ten days, but long before that as well, it showed itself.

There was no flinch. There was no -- defense gets a stop, we get an incredibly short field, and we fumble the ball on the first. You know, darn near in field goal range, and we fumble the ball and have an error up front and allow immediate penetration. Those things can't happen consistently if you want to win games.

I'm excited we were able to battle and go finish the way we needed to, but there's still a ton of improvement that has to happen for our football team. Like I said, it starts with me.

Q. As a former quarterback yourself, on the final drive, what do you say to Carson Wentz? The Browns' defense got three sacks in the game, causing problems throughout the whole fourth quarter. What were you saying to Wentz prior to that drive as you went on to throw to Addison to win the game?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: It can be in the back of a guy's mind when he knows he has some young guys in there against a front like that. I just told him to trust me. You know, I just told him let me worry about as best I can, what's happening up front and help where I can. I just want you to play fast and see it and throw it, and I thought he had some incredible throws to move us down the field in that sequence and score.

Q. Going into this game with a firm amount of snaps for Christian Darrisaw or just working with him in terms of how he is feeling, or what was the plan?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: Coming out of the high snap count, which he really went from the first half against Cincy, and then we had nearly 80 plays against Pittsburgh, and it's just that direct dialogue, Kevin, between Christian and myself and our training staff. Just as he worked through the week, we tried to give him as much time to turn over, but that's a pretty aggressive jump for his snap count.

I gave him so much credit for staying in there and battling to the very end in Dublin, and then we just wanted to make sure this guy has had an unbelievable journey back where he deserves so much credit for what he means to our team and his individual journey that I think the right thing to do is always to have that open dialogue and try to create a plan that the player can feel good about, regardless of it necessarily is what I want in the moment. That does not matter. It's what's best for our players.

Q. Adversity is a word you used to describe this team and the trip you had. Like you said, a longer trip than most teams have played. Key injuries on the offensive line and defensive. J.J. not being able to play. The guys stepped in. Is that a testament to the character and strength of this team, and how proud are you of the guys that have stepped up and



had to start effectively?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: I'm not sure anybody's had a trip like this, but it's definitely on the podium for the longest, I would believe. I'm sure that there's something I don't know, but what I would tell you is this: There's moments throughout a season that might not always be in alignment with the reactionary world of our game being the most popular game on the planet, and I understand. Our team understands certain aspects of things that get discussed and talked about and the narratives that get formed, but our locker room is cleansed of that. Our locker room is just about the right stuff.

It's hard to explain. We call it the "invisible presence," and it's something that needs to be built and carved and shaved to each individual team every single year, but it's important. It's something that matters, and I'm sure there's going to be people that listen to that and think that's the strangest thing they've ever heard, but so be it. It matters to the Minnesota Vikings.

Q. Coach, Carson Wentz two wins out of three now. Is this beginning to look like potentially it's his job to lose? How are you evaluating the quarterback situation going forward?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: Yeah, I'm just excited we got the win today, and we're going to move forward in this bye and get as healthy as we can at all positions and attack this thing through the next few games.

Q. Speaking of the bye week, last year obviously you went into it 5-0 and then lost the two coming out. Now you're 3-2. How can you ensure that you're going to be sharper coming off the bye this time, especially when you are playing the Eagles and Chargers?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: Yeah, so I think it's really important, first and foremost that, we exhaust our opportunities to get healthy. We've been pretty banged up at some critical spots. If you are just looking at the original intent of your starting 22 guys, 25 guys or so, that you hope to really lean on, so we've got to get healthy.

I think we've got to use the time as a coaching staff to figure out what is the identity of this year's team, and it's been hard to really figure out exactly what that looks like just as it's been such a game-to-game really in many ways day-to-day approach and just trying to maximize our preparation, just trying to improve and continue to elevate the floor of our team, because that floor has been called upon.

We're 3-2. We're going to be able to go home after what's been a trip that has required some things out of a lot of people, and we got one win on this trip. We would have loved to come away with two, but we were

relentless today in our pursuit of just finding a way to win a football game against a good team.

Q. How would you describe what Justin gave you today?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: Yeah, he is a guy that I'm so proud of the way he's led our football team through training camp, and I mean, I'm old enough to remember when he had an injury that knocked him out of nearly all of training camp, and he was still one of our most dynamic leaders on the field.

You guys, you were there every day. You felt him. It's his ability to rise to the moment, and I thought the catch down the middle was a pretty critical one, even though we didn't end up getting points I believe on that drive. Then he makes the play down the right sideline. Our team feeds off of 18 in so many ways.

We have so many explosive players on the outside. T.J., Josh. T.J. Hockenson is another guy that we're asking a lot of him right now that doesn't necessarily coincide with him being one of the best route running tight ends in the NFL. There's some sacrifice going on all across our football team to do whatever is required to win one game, and that mentality can be a powerful thing as we inevitably start to get some guys back.

I told our team the other day, the good news is a lot of our guys that we have done right now, they will return, and we can start to really figure out exactly what we are as a team, but I still think the growth and the identity you're forming through these opportunities, you only get 17 of them, and there are none to take for granted.

We need to be razor sharp in preparing to win however we need to win and metrics and all the -- we did a lot of things to lose the game today, but you never know it just watching our guys compete and just continuing to play the next snap. That is a unique characteristic of teams that will find a way to navigate the journey ahead.

Q. Just on the final drive, after you went through a rut in the third and fourth quarter just after the opening series in the second half, how do you go about implementing this flow for that final drive? How do you go up finding that again when you've got a must-have situation?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: Yeah, first and foremost, my brain hurts right now, if I'm being honest with you, navigating that at the end, and just trying to make sure that our team maintained their poise, specifically on offense, knowing that we had to travel a good bit there to try to get seven to win the game.

But what I would say is you go back to the rut, we have the type of drive where we're very -- you know, we're



able to stack plays to start the second half and we go down and score. I made a bad play call. We had been running some quick game on a first and ten, and we thought we had kind of helped prepared, and we ended up getting an inside move on a first and ten and taking a double move to Jordan Addison had been set up and might have a chance for it, but that's the risk-reward proposition that you battle as a play caller on game day.

It's hard defense to drive the ball over and over, 12, 13, 14 plays. You're going to need some explosives mixed in against that group, because their goal is to try to make you snap it one more time and one more time and one more time, and then force the negative. We gave it up too easily.

I thought when we didn't move the ball, it was either a turnover, they punched one out, we obviously fumbled that, a critical, critical play fumble in the second one, and then just there were some penalties that forced you into those long-yardage situations that they are foaming at the mouth for those plays, and you try to avoid them and navigate that while also picking your spots to see if you can take a chunk or two to try to get into that area where we feel pretty confident in our red zone plans. When we can get down there, we feel comfortable and confident that we're going to find a way to punch it in.

Q. I know you're still in this trip, I guess, but just taking a broader look at it. Did it play out like you had hoped it would? Win-loss maybe aside, but just in terms of the overall anticipation of it and how it kind of executed.

KEVIN O'CONNELL: Yeah, I think one thing for sure is my confidence level to take on the endeavor that it was one that was very strong because of the people that I get a chance to work with, players included, coaches.

This was a tough week on coaches. We try to maximize our time with the players, but at the same time, coaches are not exactly on that players schedule, and I've asked these guys to just empty the clip -- or empty the tank, I should say, and just give everything they probably have, and whatever it takes from a game planning standpoint, maybe having conversations about what would it look like if C.D. hit his snap count or he told us it was time, how would we play that game?

We really tried to do everything we could to uncover every stone and make sure that we were prepared, but my confidence because of the people that help us do these things, guys like Paul Martin who our fans won't know Paul Martin, but they should, because he's a heck of a travel agent if you need one.

People like Tyler Williams, people like Ben Hawkins, Chuck Peterson, there's these names of hit my mind of why I was confident in it. Kevin, with all that being said, it

was a unique thing for everybody to navigate. I told our players the other day, if you are looking for excuses, you'll find them, so don't look.

We just wanted to go 1-0 today, and we were able to do that.

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