

Jacksonville Jaguars Media Conference

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Jacksonville, Florida, USA

Head Coach Doug Pederson

Postgame Press Conference

Jaguars-20, Titans-16

DOUG PEDERSON: It's like I told the guys a second ago, that this game tonight kind of symbolizes our season. There were some struggles. There were some highs, some lows, but in the end we had the victory.

I'm so proud of the guys for the way they have just all season long just hung together and, you know, through the face of adversity at times and even through some of the high moments, you know, we just stayed the same. Just stayed the same. We just kept trusting in each other, kept building on what we do. Guys just improved every single week. It showed.

I mean, it's not going to be easy. These games are never easy, and I don't care what the score is. I just want more points than the opponent. That's a great football team. My hats off to Mike. He had his guys ready to go. It's always a physical game with them.

But just so happy and proud. Happy for Mr. Khan obviously. It's been a while that he has had nine wins. Just so happy that we were able to do that for him today as well.

Q. Can you describe Rayshawn's strip sack and Josh Allen's touchdown, how that play developed for you guys?

DOUG PEDERSON: As a coach, I mean, you're excited, but as a coach, you go, okay, it's going to go to replay. Then when it was confirmed, it's just -- it's the break we needed. I mean, again, it's just how the defense -- I think defense and special teams won this football game for us, and that's okay. It's okay.

We found a way. That was a great play. We needed it. We needed to find a way. The guys did it. Hats off to the defense and our special team. Agnew and the guys did a



heck of a job.

Q. Coach, how far has this team come this season to be able to play and win a game like this one?

DOUG PEDERSON: We've come so far. You know, I mean, just think about back in April and May when we first got together, you know, you're trying to teach a winning culture. You're trying to flip a script, so to speak it. You just are not sure until you start playing games just how that's going to look.

You know, listen, these guys, they trust in me. I trust in them. They never wavered. And to get a game like this down the stretch, I mean, it's just are pretty incredible. You know, to win nine games in our first year together is pretty impressive for the guys in the locker room.

Q. What did you think about the environment and the fans here at The Bank tonight? It?

DOUG PEDERSON: It was electric. It was what we were hoping for, and the crowd delivered. It was loud. They stayed until the end. I'm very proud of our fans. We're going to need them again in a week or so. Just a great way to cap off the regular season.

As we head into the postseason, we're going to need them again, so let's gear up and get ready. It was awesome, though.

Q. Obviously, the Dallas game showed what a home field advantage with your 12th man and, boy, did it come up big today the louder it became. When you took this job, you know, this is a town waiting to erupt here with some success, and we saw that with the 12th man. Seattle is known for it, but boy, Jacksonville is waiting to erupt here. Does that really make you feel pretty enthusiastic about what lies ahead?

DOUG PEDERSON: Yeah, that's just it. Listen, we understand too that we've got to do our jobs, and we've got to win football games. And in order to get crowds like that, you have to win on the field, and that's what our guys have done. Here the second half of the season they've put



themselves in this position. We've talked about playing meaningful games in the month of December and January, so here we are.

The more success we have, the fans will show up, and they did that. So I'm very proud of our fans are. Again, it was a great atmosphere. Just electric and loud. Everything we expected.

Q. You mentioned kind of building that culture. What was needed when you first got into that, and when did you realize you had it?

DOUG PEDERSON: I think what was needed was trust. I think trust was broken with this team, you know, when I took the job, so I had to regain their trust as a coach. You know, it's not an overnight. I said this way back then. It's not an overnight fix. It's going to take a process. It's going to take a journey.

I think they saw right away that they can trust in me, I can trust in them. You know, one of the things I'm always going to do is shoot them straight and be honest with them. The transparency is key. The communication is key. I think we just built over time that trust factor, and it began to show throughout the course of the year.

I think that's why we hung together, you know, in the middle part of our year, that month of October. You have five straight losses. It could go sideways in a hurry, and it didn't. We just had to, you know, dig a little deeper.

It's not about coaching harder or playing harder or practicing harder. It's none of that. It's you just have to tighten a few things up and play a little bit better, you know, and eliminate the mistakes. We did that, and here we are.

Q. Obviously, you're in the postseason. That's the goal. For this team in particular from where they were a year ago, this moment -- I know you weren't here a year ago, but this moment tonight what it means for these guys that have been here for a couple of years, can you put that into context?

DOUG PEDERSON: I mean, I think it means everything for these guys that have been here. You know, they were at an ultimate low coming off of last season obviously, and right now they're at an ultimate high with more football to play. That's really the roller coaster of emotion that is a football season can bring.

But, you know, the guys that have been here, you can see it in their faces just how excited and proud and -- it's not relief, but it's enthusiasm, and it means everything to them. They take it to heart.

It's something that we can continue to build upon. We're not where we need to be or want to be, but at the same time, you know, we're building it, and we're building it one -- kind of one piece, one player, one game at a team, and this was a really good start for us this year.

Q. You talked about the Josh Allen touchdown, but just how important was that early Tyson Campbell interception, and how much has he grown over the course of the year?

DOUG PEDERSON: Tyson has improved so much through the course of the year, and he is a tough player to throw at and against. He is so long and athletic. And to make plays like that, I mean, that's what great corners in this league do. He is such a humble kid and just wants to learn and get better and the way he practices every day. Just a great play, and it really helped us to at least get three points on the board at that time.

Q. You're obviously a Super Bowl winning champion. You know what it takes to win at the highest level in this sport. At what point this season did you start to see your team take that turn or take that proverbial leap, and what in particular did you see that allowed you to know that those changes were happening and you were starting to really make that step forward?

DOUG PEDERSON: You know, it was somewhere in the middle part of the year. It could have been somewhere in that Denver, Vegas sort of Kansas City sort of stretch of three games. Middle part of our season where that's where things could have really gotten out of hand for us.

Listen, we just continued to stay disciplined in what we did and what we were doing. We continued to just build. Listen, we knew that it was going to be about what we did, you know. When we turned the ball over, that's us. When we don't make tackles, that's us. When we miss field goals, that's us, right? It's about us, and it's always going to be about us.

I think that's when we realized that, hey, we've got a pretty good football team, if we could just eliminate those mistakes. We got into the bye. Obviously you think -- go back to the Raider game. You're down 17 points in that game, and there was no flinch.

Really at that moment I think is when we realized that this football team is a special team. We can make a run at the end of the year and see what happens.

Q. Is it more rewarding to win this considering the hole you guys dug yourself in? Is it more special for



you and the players to claw out of that hole to win it like this?

DOUG PEDERSON: You know, it's hard to win in the league, period. It takes a lot going your way, and you cherish every moment you have because you never know. We saw it this past week. You never know when it could be your last coaching day, playing day. It's been a tough week for our team and the rest of the league for what we have seen, what we've witnessed, and obviously the blessing that we're getting every single day with Damar.

So every win is special. It doesn't take away from what our team did this year. I'm just proud of these guys. Obviously to be in this position, to be in the AFC South Champion and just to know the journey that it took us to get here, you know.

The guys stay humble. And, look, it's just a step in the direction that we want to go. You know, I want it to be sustainable. I just don't want to be like, okay, you were the 2022 champs and not in '23. You want to be competing for this division every year.

But it makes it special just because of the way these guys battled and kind of what they've been through in the last two years.

Q. As a play caller, as the game progressed into the second quarter, did you feel, all right, this is going to be a low-scoring game? Did you kind of change -- did you get more conservative as a play caller as the game went along?

DOUG PEDERSON: No, not necessarily conservative as much as just trying to find things that would work (laughing). They did a great job with their front. They changed some things up from Week 14, and they pressured us a little more off the edge.

We didn't handle it very well as an offense, quite frankly. It's something we've got to clean up, and we're going to see it. We still tried to take shots down the field. Just some leakage in protection, whatever it might be.

An overthrow in the end zone to Zay. I mean, there's all kind of things, and the offense just wasn't on point tonight, but sometimes that's okay, right? As a play caller, you know, you're just trusting in your guys that somewhere somebody is going to make a play. For us, fortunately, it was on the defensive side tonight, right, making a play, special teams. Logan kicked his tail off as a punter.

But, no, we just tried to stay aggressive as we could, trying to find things that worked.

Q. Derrick Henry is Derrick Henry. Do you coach the defense to say just to hang in there and you'll get a play at the end of the day. You coached a kind of defensive game plan that kind of went out today and they had him most of the game, and then just finishing the game.

DOUG PEDERSON: Derrick is a great back. He is big. He is powerful. He is fast. We knew this was going to be one of those games where you have to bring your big boy pads as we call it and you're going to have to bow up because he is going to get five, six, seven yards every time.

Credit to the defense. I mean, kept him I think to 3.5 or 3.6 or so yards. Just have to commit 11 guys against a good back like that, and our guys did a nice job. We had an extra D-lineman in there in our game plan this week. You know you're always going to be fighting it to the end because that run game that they have can keep you in a lot of ball games.

Q. Doug, you get an opportunity now to exhale a little bit, and you had one day short. Now tomorrow you can turn that into an extra day. I'm sorry. I apologize. I don't remember if it in Philly you had a Saturday-Sunday playoff type of situation, but you knew who your opponent would be. When you wake up in the morning, you still don't know who it's going to be. What's that going to be like to kind of monitor the 1:00, 4:00 games, trying to figure out what it's going to be like for you?

DOUG PEDERSON: Yeah, when I was in Philly, we always played for the division on Sunday, so we kind of knew at the end of that day what was going to happen. This is a little unique because it's on Saturday.

We have a good idea of who it might be, but really until tomorrow is finished, you know, we really won't know, but I think history says that the AFC South winner usually plays on Saturday.

So we should have at least seven days to prepare, which I think is a good thing. So we'll treat tomorrow like a Monday. Let the guys come in and sleep in. If they want to go to church, they can go to church. And then come in here tomorrow afternoon and get ready for a potential Saturday game.

Thanks, guys.

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