

Las Vegas Raiders

Media Conference

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Sean Payton

Press Conference



Broncos 29, Raiders 19

SEAN PAYTON: Look, gritty, good team win. Tough. Defensively, man, we battled, especially with some short fields. We met Tuesday as a staff. It wasn't a matter of if, it was when they were going to run a fake punt. When you're struggling as a team like this, we had it on the keys to victory, so credit them, they executed it.

Our defense defended I'd say a lot of minus situations. They handled it well. Offensively we struggled in the first half. We got a lot of cover zero, blitz, pressure, a lot more than we expected, which made it hard to run the ball obviously with some of those looks.

The second half, though, we battled back. I think we were one of something third down in the first half. Then the second half we just had to beat the pressure. A year ago we don't win that game.

It wasn't our best, but it was good enough. We're on to the next one. We'll have a lot to clean up. It was good to handle these guys for a second time.

Any questions?

Q. It wasn't an easy game today. Is it almost as satisfying, your guys were tested on both sides of the ball? SEAN PAYTON: I said this to them. The elite teams in 17 regular-season games will be really ready-ready for 13 or 14 of those games. The ones that are not, they still find a way to win. They may lose a few, but they find a way still.

I said to them today, our team a year ago doesn't win this game. But this team did. You build some grit. We won the turnover battle again. We were the better team today. We didn't always play like it, but we'll get those things cleaned up.

Q. Why last year does this team not win but this year it does?

SEAN PAYTON: I'm just talking about this team. I'm not talking about last year. This team's entirely different.

Q. Why are you confident in this team winning this thing?

SEAN PAYTON: I'm just talking about what I see with the mental toughness, the grit, the fortitude, how they work. This is an entirely different team from a year ago.

That's no discredit to last year's team. It just is what it is.

Q. What were some of the keys in getting the pass rush going the second half? Zero sacks and five in the second half.

SEAN PAYTON: Look, Gardner is tough when he gets out of the pocket. Every time he got out of the pocket, I'm screaming at Vance, every defensive coach. We want to cage rush him. When we can keep him there...

But turnovers came. These really proved to be the difference. They will in most games.

I thought we handled the run game. They give you some eye candy motion stuff. We missed a few with coverage assignments. 89, 98, 19, those are really good players. We didn't hear from 'em a lot.

Q. Bo last week talked about finding answers. I guess, when they were getting to you with the pressure early, what does it say about his growth and your growth collectively as a team to find answers?

SEAN PAYTON: The problem with the pressure early for me as a play-caller is not necessarily the pass, it's what it's doing to our ability to run. I call it an RPO. It's a PO, it's a pass. In other words, yeah, we've got to be better with our plan. I don't like when they can dictate relative to what we do.

I probably should have gotten in some heavier personnel groupings. We really felt we had some matchup advantages. We took advantage of 'em. Courtland played



tremendous. We had other opportunities.

Credit Vegas. They came out and had some fire about 'em. But they lost.

Q. You talked early in training camp about the size you liked among your receivers. When you're getting those zero looks and you have guys like Devaughn and Courtland, who you mentioned have the ability to go up and fill that, how key is that to what you're doing?

SEAN PAYTON: They're healthier, longer. They're built for this game. That doesn't mean we're opposed to a smaller receiver. The smaller receivers have to walk on water, though. Then we're excited about them.

All of those guys weren't in on the action today. Look, we'll look at the film and clean up some things.

Q. When we talked about this team, did you know going into this that, hey, when we face adversity this is the type of team that can respond, or do you learn something about them?

SEAN PAYTON: Every week we play, you learn a little bit more. Fair question. How are we going to respond?

Coming here, I thought we had a good week of practice. I thought Friday got a little... Yeah, you learn a little bit more.

Q. You touched on Bowers, kind of a quiet day. What was the key to keeping him --

SEAN PAYTON: Shoot, you've got a number of different matchups. Pat had 'em. You have to disrupt them at the line if you can. They do such a good job of moving 'em, it's hard to say he's always going to be here. He's a true joker tight end.

Listen, when you have 'em, there's nothing better because it involves interior people sometimes, not exterior people.

Q. You mentioned Courtland's day. As Bo keeps stacking going things moving forward, how big is Court to him developing and that relationship?

SEAN PAYTON: The consistency with Courtland and these other players, how they're going to get there, what he's seeing and feeling, that's important.

Q. Can you offer health updates on Zach Allen and Riley Moss? Neither one? Okay.

SEAN PAYTON: No, no. I'm not going to offer...

Q. Since the end of the Kansas City game, Wil is 13-13 in kicks, 6-6 in field goals. Can you talk about the adjustment you made there and just Will keeping his confidence?

SEAN PAYTON: Listen, he's been kicking well. His Kansas City kick got blocked, but it was a good kick. That was on us as coaches. That wasn't on any individual player.

Wil is doing well. Shoot, he's got a live leg. He was solid today. Yeah, his body of work has been really good.

Q. You swept the team in the division. How important is -- you've talked about the importance of being over .500 in the division. How important is it to the team?

SEAN PAYTON: Listen, when you go someplace and people talk about in a while they haven't done... Even though a lot of these players weren't here, you exorcize these demons. Hadn't beaten the Raiders in how long? I don't know. It doesn't matter. We beat them twice this year. We're focused on the next game.

Obviously the division games matter. Listen, the appreciation for beating the Raiders. Listen, at a young age, I was fortunate to interview with Al Davis three weekends for the head coaching job. Bought a black suit and a silver tie. But if Jerry Jones is the last person you see, you're probably staying. I ended up staying in 2003.

Paul Kelley, who was with us, picked me up at the airport in Oakland. It's a storied franchise, just like we are. That is what makes this division unique. I'm getting to appreciate that.

Q. With Bo, where in the growth process is it that he can, now he's starting to take a game where maybe you're getting dictated early and be able to turn that on its head?

SEAN PAYTON: You can only do so much in the simulator, then all of a sudden this is what happened today. Both of us, All right, man, we needed to be better relative to this.

They had a couple corners out. We go from expecting maybe a lot of zone coverage to here comes zero pressure. We made some plays in the second half with it. We made enough plays.

Q. How long do you wait as a play caller before you decide, okay, this is what they're doing today or it's

just --

SEAN PAYTON: The first play of the game was zero. Three was zero. I thought, All right. I've worked with Rob Ryan. After about the sixth snap of zero in the game, your head drops down to all the stuff that can handle that and attack it.

Like the big play I thought was Mims' third down in the backfield. He was in the pistol, a quick count, we got pressure. He dumped it to Mims. There was no one on him. That was a really big play in the game. I think it was third and eight, third and seven. That later led to Sutton's touchdown.

It's not a game where you're going to throw for 72%. You just got to hit some big plays. We made enough of 'em.

Q. When Riley left the game, did that influence anything you did on Bowers, or did you just stick with --

SEAN PAYTON: Well, look, anytime you lose one of your top corners, it changes things. We still had our Bowers plan, that involved Pat and some doubles. Look, Levi came in. It was the next man up.

Fortunately it wasn't really serious with Riley. It's an MCL. I'm not going to give anything. We'll see how next week is. There was some thought he could go back in. We'll see where it's at.

Q. For Pat on Bowers, it looked like you picked certain situations --

SEAN PAYTON: Yeah, that's right. It's hard if you're a corner. The first thing is, if Pat ends up right inside, it's a (indiscernible). There were calls. Credit Vance and his staff for doing a good job of that. These guys had a lot of catches. I don't know how many he had today.

Q. Four.

SEAN PAYTON: But there weren't a lot of yards. Shoot, the first catch he had against us in Denver... That was good.

Thank you.

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