

Indianapolis Colts Media Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Head Coach Frank Reich Quarterback Matt Ryan

Postgame Press Conference



Indianapolis - 34, Jacksonville - 27

FRANK REICH: You know, Nyheim, obviously had the concussion. He's in the protocol. And Deon Jackson had the quad.

Great team win. We just talked about it in there, is team wins come in all shapes and sizes, right? Sometimes it's 12 to 9, you know, sometimes it's 34 to 27. They're all good wins.

So I feel great, you know, to win two tough games in a row, right, you create a little bit of momentum. But, right, it's a week-to-week league. So we've got to put this one behind us and learn from it and continue to find ways to improve.

You know, defense did a good job today. But obviously, we gave up some rushing yards. Putting good pressure on the passer. Made the stops when we needed. Special teams was great coverage. You know, Chase, obviously, you know, made everything. Kicked again.

And then offensively, the O-line was special. We gave up no sacks. We threw how many times? 58 times. 58 times. And we didn't give up a sack. So hats off to the O-line right there. They've taken a lot of heat. That was an unbelievable performance by the O-line.

And then, obviously, you know, Matt had an incredible day. You know, obviously, the no-huddle offense, we've been talking about it for a couple weeks. About two weeks ago, as a coaching staff, you know, we said, Hey, you knew the Jacksonville game was coming up and we just kind of earmarked this game to give it a shot, try to create some momentum with it. So, glad it worked out well. Matt handled it perfectly. And so, hats off to the team. Great team win.

Q. Did you build your game-plan around Jacksonville's defensive front?

FRANK REICH: Yeah, I mean, we're always -- we always want balance. We, you know, really do. Even when you go no-huddle, we want balance. So my experience with no-huddle is to have some balance.

But we -- Matt was hot, you know. And, you know, we had a few runs here and there. But we just felt like we were getting what we wanted in the passing game. And more importantly, I felt like we were getting the protection. You know, we were getting great protection. I could feel it.

And so, we were just productive in the pass game. So I'd still slip in a run every now and then. But I just didn't want to take it out of Matt's hands.

Q. Tell us about that game winning touchdown. To have the trust to throw it to a rookie in that situation.

FRANK REICH: I mean, that's all Matt and Al. You know, we -- the coaching staff talked about it on the sideline. The coaches, we talked it through. And Matt loves that. I mean, like, as soon as I said, Hey, how are you feeling? Oh, yeah, that's what I wanted.

And I gave him the option. I said, You can take -- if Al gets pressed, you can take him on a go-route or you can take him on, like, a quick slant. There was never any question it was going to be go the whole time.

Q. Was that the play call?

FRANK REICH: No, that was the play call.

Q. So it was based on the coverage?

FRANK REICH: Yeah, it was a conversion route. It was a -- it was a route that if it got pressed, converted. So, I mean, it was a perfect throw. And Al -- just hats off to Al. Like, the release that he had, you know, because it's right in front of our bench, so I'm watching it the whole way.

He has so much poise on the release. What happens is a lot of times, guys just try and rush the release. And he didn't rush the release. That's what he's been doing all

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year.

Q. What did it mean to get Parris Campbell going?

FRANK REICH: I feel like that's been building. You know, he's been -- had some good production the last couple weeks. You know, I made reference to that a couple times that Parris is on the edge here. Parris is on the edge.

He's feeling physically good. Feels in the groove. Feels confident. Matt and him are, you know, just playing with confidence. So he made some good plays today.

Q. How big of a win is this for you and the team?

FRANK REICH: Yeah, obviously, after having a slow start in every way, but particularly in the division, and then a slow start today to start the game, it was big to be able to come back and win this game, right?

I mean, obviously, it's an understatement to say it was important in a lot of ways. But I wasn't worried. I really wasn't worried at the beginning of the game when we weren't scoring and they scored a couple times.

We were talking on the sideline, I could feel we had a rhythm on offense. I felt like the no-huddle, even in those first couple drives, was doing what we wanted it to do. But it was our first time really doing it. I just felt like it was a matter of time before we came on and wear them down and get some points.

Q. Talk about how much different Matt Ryan is in the fourth quarter.

FRANK REICH: I mean, yeah, I say it every week. I mean, I say it every week. He's unflappable. He wants the ball in his hands. He's at his best, makes his best throws, his best decisions. He's done that for 15 years. I mean, there's something -- there's something wired in his DNA that's just different in that way.

Q. What impressed you the most about Parris Campbell today?

FRANK REICH: You know, just the consistency of production he's been building. And he made plays over the middle. Like I was saying, it was the plays -- he keeps makes plays over the middle the field and traffic that are big first downs.

Q. Was getting Dennis Kelly involved always the plan?

FRANK REICH: We knew we were going to alternate him. You know what I'm saying? We were going to alternate

him. And then Strauss, we talked about it late in the week.

And, you know, we said how much are we going to -- we could see Dennis has been getting better. But really felt like we wanted to, you know, make a commitment to Bernard.

But, you know, I mean, you got to prove it. And Bernard's doing fine. But Dennis got in there and he just looked good. And so, I just called Strauss, Hey, it's your call, Strauss. I don't -- I have the position coaches manage that in the game.

You know, if there's anything that we need to talk about I said let's talk about it. But he's watching it. He's watching every play. And I think he just saw Dennis get in a rhythm and felt good about it.

Q. What went into the decision to activate Sam Ehlinger instead of Nick Foles?

FRANK REICH: Yeah, I mean, as I've said, we love our quarterback room. It's nothing against -- you know, it wasn't like Sam beat out Nick in the last five weeks.

It was just more -- Nick's the Super Bowl MVP. You guys know I love Nick Foles. I mean, he's incredible. I mean, he's an incredible player. And he's looked great in practice for the last five, six weeks. This was just a philosophical decision.

Like when we had Phillip and Jacoby, you know, Okay, maybe we'll put some stuff in. And if we need it in certain situations, it provides something different. And when you're struggling to do certain things on offense, it just seemed like a logical conclusion.

And Sam earned that right. And as I said, I love Nick and everything. But Sam also earned everything that he did in preseason and how he's continued to look. I love those guys. I see those guys -- they're both the backups.

Q. Is it a one-day thing or is this the depth going forward?

FRANK REICH: I mean, we'll evaluate it week to week. But I wouldn't anticipate changing it. You know what I mean? It'll be week to week. But we'll see how that goes.

I mean, but probably thinking that we'll just have that -- we'll continue to have a package for Sam. And it -- just like with Jacoby, some weeks we used it, some weeks we didn't use it. And we keep looking for opportunities to put the stress on defense.

Q. Why was no-huddle a good fit for Matt Ryan?

FRANK REICH: It just seems -- you know, he just sees the field with complete control. There's a lot of reasons that I would really love to say. You know what I mean?

Like, philosophically, I just don't want to go into that or competitive stuff. But still going to be a week-to-week decision. I mean, I know as great as that looked today, it's always a week-to-week decision.

That doesn't mean it's always the best thing every week. We'll evaluate it. We've always had it in there every week as a tool. You know, and we'll get ready to use it and we used it late in games.

But this week we game-planned it. This week, we said, Okay, it's not going to be just a tool. We're going to commit to it. And the guys bought in right -- we told the guys at the beginning of the week, This is something -- this isn't something, like, we're saying let's try it. We're all in. We're all in on the no-huddle this week. And so, the guys embraced that and did what they had to do to get ready.

Q. What did you see from Deon Jackson in his two games?

FRANK REICH: Yeah, Deon was great. I mean, what has been really -- not a surprise to us. But great -- Deon's been great in the passing game. He catches every ball. Knows where to be on the checkdowns. It's not always big yards, but sometimes those little plays for three yards, four yards, now it's third and six rather than third and 10. And he's been good in protection.

So both he and Phillip did a good job today. Hats off to him. Hats off to Scotty Montgomery for getting those guys ready. And I just felt that the offensive staff particularly did a good job of preparing the guys.

Marcus Brady was phenomenal this week, you know, in pulling everything together with the no-huddle, so it was a good job.

Q. Talk us through that last play. Specifically the decision to throw to Alec Pierce.

MATT RYAN: That's an accurate -- you know, Frank went into the headset and said, trust -- you can go this or you can little guy. And I just trusted Al. He's so good on those kind of routes.

And I think a lot of times in those situations, throwing the ball past the sticks, being aggressive, taking a shot is huge. You can't play scared in those situations. And I

thought it was, you know, a great call. Great route. And just tried to give him a chance. And a really good play by him.

Q. Was there any thought to taking something safe instead of taking a shot?

MATT RYAN: If he had the look. You know, if you get the look you're looking for, don't hesitate. You know, let it go. Give him -- try to give him a chance to make a play. We had some other options on that play, you know, had coverage been different. But, you know, you got to trust what you see and you got to go for it.

Q. Talk about the overall performance you guys had today. A lot of people made plays today.

MATT RYAN: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, he's -- our receiving core, our tight-ends, you know, our young backs have been playing a lot today. And it -- you know, not really being the run game, you know, trusting them in the passing game.

I'm not sure how many yards Deon had, but he had a lot. He played extremely tough. Was huge for us catching the ball out of the backfield. Parris played well, tight-ends played well. Kalin had a couple big catches for us, which were huge. And Pitt, I think, he had, like, 13 catches or something like that.

Yeah, so I mean, that's huge. And that's the player he is. We trust all those guys. You know, I'm proud of the guys. It's an important win. You know, we had a vision at home. We've got another one next week on the road. We got to continue to build on that.

Q. How much did the impression of how Jacksonville played their coverage influence the decision to throw on third and one?

MATT RYAN: To their credit, they kind of mixed it up, you know, throughout the game. You know, different pressures, you know, different looks on the back-end. Some man-to-man coverage. A lot of zone coverage.

You know, so it was just trust what you see. You know, more so than anything. You couldn't get a variety of different things in that situation. And we had a good play call for some other, you know, other options that we could have gotten. But I thought it was -- you know, good timing for the one we had.

Q. Do you remember the last time you threw 58 times?

MATT RYAN: I don't -- I don't. 2013? That was a long



time ago. (Laughing.) I don't remember stuff -- I honestly don't remember, you know, stuff like that.

Q. What does it mean to pass Dan Marino in passing yards?

MATT RYAN: I'm proud of that. You know, I've gotten to know Dan since, you know, I got into the league back in 2008. And I love him. You know, he's a fun guy to be around. He was like the ultimate guy growing up. He would sling it, you know?

And I remember the first time I met him, he's like, Hey, no matter what happens, man, keep slinging it. And I was, like, 23 at the time. And I was, like, that's one of the coolest things I ever heard.

And, you know, somehow, somehow, here I am 37 and I still remember him saying that to me about 15 years ago. And I'm -- you know, any time you're mentioned in the same breath as Dan, it's pretty cool. And I'm proud of that.

Q. What do you think going no-huddle did for you guys?

MATT RYAN: I thought it was good. It was a good change of pace for us. I thought we played with good tempo. I mean, used the speed when we needed it. But also we were able to checkout some things and get into some looks that we wanted to get into.

I thought Frank did a great job calling it today. I thought we had a good plan coming in. And, you know, we'll see what we can do with it moving forward. But I thought it was effective for us today.

Q. How much credit does Frank Reich get today for building the game plan for today?

MATT RYAN: Yeah, I give Frank -- he's a great coach. You know, I've been around for a long time. And the respect that he has in our locker room, the way he motivates guys, there's a feeling, you know, as a new player coming in how -- it was interesting for me to see how quickly I saw how much the guys respect how Frank goes about day-to-day and what he means to the players and how he treats the guys. Pushing them but showing them a level of respect.

And I think that comes from him being a player himself and playing for an awesome coach in Mark Lever for such a long time. But he's special. And he did a great job with the game plan today.

Our whole offensive staff, you know, Marcus Brady, Parks

Frazier, Scott Milanovich, Strauss upfront, or Scotty Montgomery in the backfield having young guys going. You know, I think our staff deserves a lot of credit.

Q. How does a guy like Alec Pierce earn your trust even though he's only played six NFL games?

MATT RYAN: Well, making the plays helps. You know, that certainly helps when you see guys being productive. But it's the little things. It's -- for a young player, the way he shows up every day, the way he works, you can trust him.

You know, there's just a feeling you get knowing he's well prepared. He's done everything he can to have himself ready for the adjustments that he has to make. But he's also, you know, awesome in practice. He goes after it.

You know, he works really hard in practice. And I think Pitt has done a great job as a leader kind of setting the tone for what those guys are expected to do. And I think Alec as a young player smartly has looked up to that and said, Okay, this is what I need to do.

And for me, in addition to the production, his level of preparation, the way he goes into the building every day earns my respect.

Q. Walk us through the situation to throw it on third-and-1 instead of playing safe.

MATT RYAN: Yeah, go win the game. You know? (Laughing.) When you get that look -- I was saying earlier, too, we had stuff on the other side if we had kind of a different look of, you know, something we might want to work that we still felt could have been productive, maybe given a good chance to get it into a spot where we could, you know, feel better about it.

But we got the look we wanted and I really think in those situations you got to trust your instincts, trust your gut, trust your guys and try, you know, to go win the game. And I'm proud of Alec for making that play.

Q. You've been saying if we can play clean and can execute, we can be good. Is today an example of what you've been saying?

MATT RYAN: Yeah, it's amazing. You know, we weren't perfect by any stretch. Again, I'll say it, there's things we can improve on for sure. But, you know, not putting our team in tough positions with turnovers, you know, playing -- trying to at least play for the most part in front of the six.

There's still some drives I think we could have done better



on that. But we overcame a lot, too. We made a lot of plays on second and long, on third and long to try to keep drives going.

But I thought, you know, for the most part it was cleaner. Our offensive line, it's not easy. I give those guys a lot of credit. It's not easy to drop back and pass the ball that many times and hold up like they did.

And I know, every lineman I've ever played with wants to run the ball, wants to run the ball, we got to. And you just hear it all the time. And those guys today, they just -- they gutted it up, you know, and went out there and fought. And I thought they did a great job.

And I think, like, Dennis Kelly coming in first, he did a great job. That's a veteran guy who's prepared, ready to go. I got to give him a shout-out. He played his ass off.

Q. What kind of impact did Parris Campbell make today?

MATT RYAN: Parris was huge. He was huge. He's got a knack when he's got the ball in his hands of making guys miss, getting extra yards. And you can see his confidence continuing to grow.

You know, I know he's had kind of a tough road here throughout his career overcoming injury and having to battle through that. And he's another guy I see as one of the guys whose confidence you can just feel it when you're around him.

You know, it's continuing to grow and his belief is continuing to grow. And I thought he had a huge impact on the game for us today.