

Indianapolis Colts Media Conference

Sunday, October 30, 2022

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Head Coach Frank Reich

Postgame Press Conference



Washington Commanders 17, Indianapolis Colts 16

FRANK REICH: Injuries: Tony Brown had a hamstring injury, and Tyquan Lewis had a knee injury.

Tough loss. You know, tough loss. Got to find a way to eliminate critical mistakes. Offensively in the high red zone just had a few too many critical mistakes. Where we meet the ball down in there, we have to find a way to eliminate the turnovers. You know, defensively I thought we hung in there, and then obviously they had the last two drives.

Got to find a way to figure it out. Coming back in tomorrow and be committed to diving into the film with coaches and players and find out ways we can get better and go on the road and play the Patriots and get things back on track.

Q. How would you evaluate Sam today? The two fumbles inside their 25, was that where you lost the game?

FRANK REICH: That was certainly a big part of it. I thought Sam played well. I thought he threw the ball well. I thought he looked poised, made good decisions, gave us a chance. We'll look at the film more closely, but my first impression was that he played well.

Q. Fourth and inches, did you think about it?

FRANK REICH: Yeah, I thought about it. I thought hard about it.

The way our defense was playing, I didn't know we were going to get that good of a punt, but I figured they were going to have to go 80 yards. The way our defense had been playing, I just didn't want to leave them short. We didn't get in on a third and goal, you know, so it just seemed like the percentage play. I think the charts were pretty even.

So it was hard for me not to go for it there. I mean, some of it is we just haven't run quarterback sneaks with Sam.

It's just gaining the confidence in a quarterback sneak with the quarterback that you have and with the game on the line right there. With the way the defense was playing, I was comfortable with that decision.

Q. J.T. left for just a little bit in that game. Obviously he came back in. What was the balance of using him down the stretch, but maybe not pushing him too much?

FRANK REICH: When he came back in, we were just playing ball. We were just playing ball. You know, calling what we thought were the right plays.

Obviously that last drive was tough. When we get more, we came out. We had a run we liked on first down and didn't get the yards we wanted.

On second down thought about throwing it, but we had it and called it. There was an RPO that we really liked that we had talked about on the sideline that we thought we had a good look for where it's either going to be a give to J.T. or Sam is going to keep it around the edge.

The way it drew up on the sideline and the way we felt like that's playing into our strengths, playing into Sam's strengths, you know, handing it to J.T. or he is keeping it on second down. We didn't just quite get as much out of that as we wanted and then we had to scramble on third down. We came up just inches short, but we have to be more productive right there.

Q. On the play with Stephon Gilmore at the end, you just trust and tip your cap (indiscernible)...

FRANK REICH: Yeah, he has been playing great the whole year. He has been playing great the whole year. That's one play. So, you know, he is a great player.

Q. Shaq wasn't in on the last drive. I'm assuming that's the planned rotation. Any thoughts of, Hey, it's the last drive, doesn't matter, let's hit our ...

FRANK REICH: No, that was all part of -- I mean, if Shaq was ready to be the best player on the field, we probably



would have started him. But, like I said, we kind of were working him back in knowing that he is not quite all the way back. So that was just part of the planned rotation.

Q. What did you think of the interception Shaquille Leonard had?

FRANK REICH: That's what he does. I know it just came right into his hands, but how does that happen to him? He just seems to be at the right place at the right time.

Q. You made a huge move to change quarterbacks. Did you see enough today that makes you think, We're on to something?

FRANK REICH: Yeah, I mean, certainly no disrespect to Matt because I thought he had some good moments, and we already talked about that, but I thought Sam looked good. He looked really poised. He threw it well. Yeah, I thought he played well.

Q. It's one thing to see that in practice, and it's one thing to see it in the preseason. But did part of you need to see it on a game like this?

FRANK REICH: Absolutely. I think we were all confident that we were going to see it, but you could feel it.

Even though it was really very frustrating, the starts that we've had and another slow start, but you could just tell that he was seeing it and that he looked poised in the pocket.

So, you know, we weren't panicking on the side. We're, like, we'll get it going. Defense was playing good. You know, that's a credit to Sam.

Q. You mentioned the slow starts again. I know it wears on a team, but isn't it just hard to always be playing catch-up?

FRANK REICH: Yes, but our defense played good early as well. So we actually, if I remember, we took the lead for the first time this year and scored first. Maybe the first time this year. I'm not sure.

But the defense was playing well. So, you know, it gave us a chance to find a rhythm with Sam and creased a couple of runs, had a couple of good things. They changed some things up on defense. We were able to adapt and do a couple of things.

But in the red zone, we get down there, and we had a miscommunication on the snap where the ball came out. It was a miscommunication on the snap. Obviously the two

turnovers down there. You know, those are points on the board. And then we had a run where we were first and ten, and we got a minus-5 run down there.

You get two turnovers, a miscommunication on a snap, a minus-5 yard run all around that 20 yard line where we're moving the ball, we're going to put points on the board, we're going to maybe score touchdowns, and we're coming away too many times with nothing or three points. So we have to find a way to get that corrected.

Q. That was kind of the question I was going to ask. 16 points is not going to do it in this league. What is the level of frustration? You still have the same issues that we kind of talked about on a regular basis offensively?

FRANK REICH: It's very frustrating. I did feel today -- I've got to look at the film, but I know we didn't gain, like, 1,000 yards or anything like that, but I felt today we could find the rhythm with what we have out there.

I felt today that we can put something together and continue to get better. We saw reading the ball better. I thought protection was okay. We had some holding calls. You know, we had some holding calls.

I have to look at the film on those to be honest with you. That's hard. You get on the edge, and even talking to our guys, I just have to look at those on tape.

You know, we talked about it a lot this year. We're getting these negative plays that are stopping drives. We did overcome a couple of them, which is a good sign. There were a couple penalties, a couple of negative plays that we overcame. I think that was a good sign.

Q. What's capacity for taking in information as a young quarterback?

FRANK REICH: Sam?

Q. Yeah.

FRANK REICH: Yeah, really good. It's not too big for him. Very poised. It comes easy to him.

Q. Did you think Michael Pittman Jr. scored in real-time? Have you seen the replay?

FRANK REICH: I did think he scored real-time. I didn't see the replay. Our guys up top didn't seem to be arguing about it, so yeah.

Q. Can you talk about that sequence down in the red

zone before Michael Pittman Jr. almost scored?

FRANK REICH: The run to the left was kind of the quarterback sweep. You know, the quarterback sweep. I think we only got a yard. We only got a yard on it.

Then the third down play at the 1 yard line. You know, it's kind of been our go-to play if we need a yard down there. It's just been our go-to play.

I think somebody got stepped on and tripped inside. I think somebody got stepped on and tripped inside and got negative yards.

Q. Is Sam more comfortable in the shotgun in the red zone because that's what he's done?

FRANK REICH: Yeah, I mean, he is comfortable in both. There's a time to be under center. There's a time to be in shotgun. You know, down there you get that threat sometimes of a quarterback sneak, and that can do something to guys up front and maybe loosen it up for a zone play that we're running.

You know, they're playing quarterback sneak, and maybe we have got a chance. We'll continue to mix that up. You know, we'll continue to mix that up.

Obviously he is going to be in gun a fair amount just because of the threat to run, but sometimes when you are down in there that close, it's trust our guys, trust our running backs, let's just go get a half a yard. I mean, let's go get a half a yard. We have to be able to do that.

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