

Indianapolis Colts Media Conference

Sunday, October 8, 2023

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Coach Shane Steichen

Postgame Press Conference



Colts 23, Titans 16

SHANE STEICHEN: First off, just Anthony, as you guys know, he's got a shoulder. I'll get more as I get with the doctors and stuff later on, and then Mo Alie-Cox got a concussion. That's the injuries for the game.

With that, questions?

Q. First quarter obviously is over, but with Anthony only finishing one game out of the five, are you changing anything or just --

SHANE STEICHEN: Yeah, we'll go back and look at the tape. I think when you have a dynamic player like him, obviously one with his skill set, runner makes him really good, the designed runs -- the designed run that he got hurt on, we ran something similar to that last week where he popped it for a big one, and then obviously this week he got the shoulder on that play.

That's stuff that you've got to look at, be smart with, and it's part of the game, and you don't want it to happen for sure.

Q. I realize it just happened and you probably haven't talked to him, but do you have any sense of whether it's a serious injury?

SHANE STEICHEN: I don't. All I know it it's a shoulder.

Q. What did you learn about Zack Moss here the first five weeks?

SHANE STEICHEN: What did he have today, 165? I mean, he ran hard. He had good vision. He popped a few, obviously that 3rd and 1 there, kind of a zero plug look and he popped it for 50 plus, and then obviously that 3rd down backed up.

Great job by the defense getting that stop on 4th down. That was huge. And then to get that 15-play drive to that 3rd down and get caught on the backfield, go down the

sideline to get some momentum there was huge. But just resilient, running tough, taking care of the football, making big plays for us.

Q. The patience and trust that he has in that offensive line right now, can you just tell us what you observed in that line particularly?

SHANE STEICHEN: The line is playing together. Credit to those guys up front, putting in the work every week, and Tony, our line coach, what he's done with those guys week in and week out, they're doing a heck of a job right now battling like crazy.

Q. J.T. made his season debut today. What did you think of his performance today?

SHANE STEICHEN: He played well. Obviously he had a few runs and he had the big screen down the sidelines. That was huge. But it's great to have him back. Like I said, the home run ability that he brings to us as we keep going and next week obviously practicing and getting him going a little more, it'll be good.

Q. What does his presence do for you in the locker room, just him being back there?

SHANE STEICHEN: Yeah, anytime you get a big-time player like that back in your locker room, obviously it helps everything. It helps the energy of the room and all that stuff, and that's what he brings. He brings big play ability to this offense, and we're excited to have him.

Q. When you think about complementary football, the stops he had fourth quarter end of a long drive --

SHANE STEICHEN: That was huge, and I told the guys, I said at some point, someone is going to have to make a big-time play in this game. It's going to be four quarters, going to be a four-quarter battle, and that's what that game was; it came down to four quarters right there at the end and we got the big stop, had the 15-play drive there. Would have loved to finish it obviously offensively getting the 1st down right there, but then Julian Blackmon finishing the game off with the interception, it was big time.



Q. How important has this defensive front seven been to the way you guys have started? The 4th down is one play, but Henry only had 3.3 yards a carry.

SHANE STEICHEN: There's no doubt. They're playing together as one, that whole group. Obviously the defensive line, the linebackers and the DBs are all playing together, but it just keeps showing up. A guy like Henry, what they did was huge. He is a big man. When you see him up close in person, he's the real deal. But credit to our defense, credit to our defensive coaches for getting it done.

Q. From an offensive line standpoint, Tennessee came in averaging less than -- giving up less than three yards per carry, holes all day long. How do you feel about the way the offensive line played?

SHANE STEICHEN: Like I said earlier, they're playing together. They're doing a heck of a job right now, they're all on the same page. Their communication has been really good, and then obviously the runner Zack hitting the holes and seeing it well, it's impressive to see right now.

Q. First home win in a long time, division opponent, close game. How big is that for this locker room?

SHANE STEICHEN: It's huge. Division games, all games are big, but you want to win championships, you've got to win division games. To get the division win at home against Tennessee was huge, and we've got to keep it going. Obviously we've got Jacksonville next week, and get ready for that.

Q. You guys have been through a lot this year. Anthony getting hurt, overtime games, all that. What have you learned from those trials?

SHANE STEICHEN: I think it builds character of your football team. You find out who you are, the resiliency. We talked about that in Baltimore. Even last week against the Rams being down 23, coming back, then finding a way to finish these games, which is huge.

Again, I go back to someone has got to make a play, and we get that 4th down stop and go on a 15-play drive to bleed all that clock out and leave, whatever, a minute left with no time-outs, it says a lot about this football team.

Q. I know Jonathan Taylor was on a pitch count, but we saw some of the greatness of Zack Moss over the past few weeks and we know what J.T. can do. What do you think with these two guys --

SHANE STEICHEN: It's going to be great. Obviously it's a

great one-two punch with both those guys. Zack is seeing it well, getting J.T. back in the fold, his explosive play ability, to have those guys back in the backfield is going to be huge moving forward.

Q. Seems like Josh catches almost everything going his way. What's allowed him to play so well so far?

SHANE STEICHEN: I think with any rookie that has success early, I think part of it is they have a natural feel on how to play the game. A lot of those guys that you see make big plays, they made them in college and then it translates sometimes to the NFL quickly, but I've said this before about him. He's got a natural feel playing that position, catches everything, runs good routes. He's explosive, and obviously the quarterbacks, both Anthony and Gardner, got a good feel for the way he runs his routes and they just find completions going.

Q. He's had to go through some ups and downs throughout as a rookie. From an emotional standpoint, how do you help him through this part of it where obviously he wants to be on the field and wants to play?

SHANE STEICHEN: Yeah, no doubt. I think when something like that happens, obviously he hurt his shoulder today, you've got to fight through those things, and that's part of this league. You've got to have the conversations that will build you stronger. Sometimes in life with any type of deal, you get nicked up, like why does this happen to me. You've got to think about the positive and think that obviously something good is going to come out of it.

Q. Is Gardner the best backup quarterback in the league right now?

SHANE STEICHEN: Yeah. To me he is. And I've been around him, and obviously I'm biased, but I've been around him and I've been around other guys, but the way he's playing when he comes in, he makes plays for sure.

Q. What makes him so -- why is he so good in this kind of situation?

SHANE STEICHEN: I think he's an elite processor of the game, and when you've got a guy that can process the game quickly and make quick decisions, he's really good, he's accurate, he knows where to go with the football at the right time and the right place, and he's been awesome for us.

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