

Indianapolis Colts Media Conference

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Antonio Pierce

Visitors Postgame Press Conference

Colts 23, Raiders 20

Q. You talk a lot about situational football. It felt like there were some self-inflicted wounds today. How frustrating is that in what was a winnable game for you guys?

ANTONIO PIERCE: Yes, very difficult when the Raiders play the Raiders. We've been pretty good as far as being focused pre-snap. That didn't happen today on both sides of the ball. Again, that kind of costs you in a game like this where it comes down to three points. We have opportunities on third and fourth and one to keep drives alive.

Q. Did you see anything in practice or did this surprise you?

ANTONIO PIERCE: As far as what?

Q. The mental mistakes.

ANTONIO PIERCE: No, I didn't see it. Same schedule. Same thing we've been doing. You can't point fingers at players. We got to do better jobs as coaches, that's what you're going to hear.

It's just a focus thing, right? False starts, off-sides. That's Raiders beating themselves. For seven games at least we haven't done that. Today it kind of came up and it bit us.

Q. Did you think Jones off-sides...

ANTONIO PIERCE: I didn't see it. They called it, so... It went against us. Obviously something happened for them to make it. It was too close.

Q. Also the pass interference, looked like the ball might have been out-of-bounds. Did you get a chance to talk to the referees about that?

ANTONIO PIERCE: No, I just asked a simple question.



They felt like he interfered while the ball was in the air. Didn't think it was too far out of bounds. I don't want to second-guess the judges -- referees -- excuse me, like I'm going to be second-guessed.

Q. Punts on fourth and one. What were you thinking of the offense...

ANTONIO PIERCE: I don't think they were fourth and one. Think it was a long two. Am I correct?

Both fourth and ones, we were going for it. You have (indiscernible). You have a feel for the game. Field position. For the most part we've been playing really good football when we play field position. Typically our defense has done a good job when they are backed up, keeping teams backed up. That might not have been the case every time today. Giving the offense a short field has been our mindset.

Q. Now that you guys are eliminated from the playoffs, what is the mood of the team?

ANTONIO PIERCE: Guys are disappointed. Why wouldn't you be? We want to win every game. Had a great opportunity there. Right there at the very end.

Moving forward we get paid to play 17 games. I'm being paid to instruct and coach for 17 games. We got one at home that we're excited about. We'll move forward (indiscernible).

We're moving forward. We'll be off of this in 24 hours, getting ready for a divisional opponent at home against the Broncos. We're excited about that. Another opportunity to get better. Season ain't over till it's over. Get to the playoffs, that is all fine and dandy, but we have another game to play and it's at home and we'll be ready to do it.

Q. Throw back from Jakoby to Aidan, in retrospect, do you think that's a play don't get too excited, just get the first down?

ANTONIO PIERCE: Yeah, that's something I'll need to along back at, make some better decisions there. We'll do

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that going forward.

Q. Moving ahead, is it difficult when you don't know if the game is Saturday or Sunday?

ANTONIO PIERCE: No, we haven't been told. We're ready for both. Players are off tomorrow. Coaches will be in tomorrow, getting ready for the Broncos. A divisional foe, which is really good for us, somebody we know well, even though we haven't played since week one. We'll be ready. We've been doing a good job as position coaches getting ahead on the next opponent. Like I said, we'll put this game away and watch it on the plane, move on to the Broncos.

Q. Josh gave it a go before the game. Was it close on that?

ANTONIO PIERCE: Going to keep fighting, man. I'm not ever going to shut down a guy like that. If he wants to go out there and battle, I said that earlier in the week to you guys, if he has an opportunity to go, I'm going to go with it. If it comes up to two and a half hours like it did today, you have to be honest, realistic. I told him he has to be realistic with himself. We don't want to put him in any further damage for the future or what's best for the Raiders.

Q. Is that now where you are in your position, that you can look him in the eye, I'm going to look out for you?

ANTONIO PIERCE: Sometimes you have to protect the player from the player, right? That's really what I try to do with not only him but Kolton Miller and Maxx Crosby, as well. First of all, let's say this: our guys want to play. I get that we lost a game, but our guys want to play, man. Even if we won this game, there wasn't no guarantee we were getting in the playoffs anyway. A lot of things have to go our way. Not sure how that goes.

One thing I'll say, these men in this locker room, these coaches, they love playing, they love being Raiders, proud about being Raiders. I'm proud of coaching these guys. We're going to keep rolling and keep fighting. I promise you this, we'll put the best 11 out there whenever we play next weekend.

Q. Rookie quarterback, there's going to be ups and downs. How do you feel like he's handled things and grown through this process?

ANTONIO PIERCE: Yeah, I mean, I think it's a growing process. Today, at the end of the game, two-minute drive, he looked pretty sharp. He was rolling. He doesn't really blink. He got hit early and often today. He did a decent job as the game went down keeping his eyes up instead of

looking down at the rush.

With any quarterback, the hardest position to play, we're going to sit there and pinpoint everything. When you look at what we're asking him to do, you could say he's gotten better. I think he's gotten better. What happens in the future, that goes for all of us. We have to decide what happens later.

Q. 21 targets, focus in the game play?

ANTONIO PIERCE: Kind of the way it happened. I still love to run the ball 30-plus times. 21 of those with 13 receptions, that's your star player out there. Jimmy and Joe (indiscernible) at this point of the season, you want to see your star player, give him opportunities to make plays.

Showed up in the red zone, big for us, third downs. Really the focus is how to win. As we look through the game plan, as we go through it, Okay, love to run the ball a little bit more. That's just AP. Love to run the ball more. Love to be tough on third-and-one, fourth-and-one. When you can take advantage of players on the other side, you do that. That's what we tried to do today.

Happy New Years.

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