

COACH MIKE McCARTHY

POSTGAME VIDEO CONFERENCE

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Cowboys 35, Patriots 29

(in progress.) Thought Dak did a tremendous job with pace of operations, really keeping the whole system and kept charging, kept playing. That's a big part of our success, just his approach, his efficiency.

Can't say enough about Dak Prescott, just the way that ball was being distributed and the calmness and the confidence he had in the pocket. I thought our pass protection was excellent. We knew this was going to be a dog fight, a huge challenge coming in here, and we really do need these kind of wins during the course of the season.

I think this one could definitely pay forward for us.

Q. Brady, through that whole game, to wipe out a touchdown, got the strip sack. (Regarding Trevon touchdown.) You guys get the ball back. Timely defense. What stood out in that respect today?

A. I think you touched on it. The big plays, and I think the energy never dropped off. We had swings of momentum. They made good plays. We knew they were going to be tough, physical, disciplined, going to challenge us schematically, and we saw all that.

Tremendous respect for the whole operation. What they've done the last two decades is unprecedented. That's kind of the way you got to approach any game, but especially coming up here.

Q. You've been around quarterbacks. Obviously Dak, what kind of trait does it take to be that kind of quarterback, late, being clutch, making those throws, third and 25?

A. I just think the biggest thing is he taps into his confidence. Never wavered. His process was the same throughout. We had some substitutions there. Obviously we were on a high total play number. More substitution there at the end and he handled all that with some formation adjustments and things like that, but he's an top of his game right now. I just think he just stayed steady and was strong and confident, very precise.

Q. Mike, you preached all this season about how last season didn't matter. Completely different; moving on.

For you guys to start the way you have now, 5-1, here comes the bye week, how crucial was it for you and for this group and the morale, the confidence, to know that last year was in the rear view mirror, to play as well as you have here the first month and a half?

A. I can't speak for the whole locker room, but I think I would be correct saying we don't even talk about last year. We don't think about last year. Last year was more for the off-season. You look at our roster, we've had tremendous amount of change. So last year was a learning experience. Talked about knowledge and experiences that you encounter throughout this game. Our guys, we've had a very productive start to the season. Most important thing is not wavering. These guys have really prepared the right way, and also handling success. We just took another step with another win and the way we won, and where we won, and we need to handle that.

This is my first time going through with this, and that's really what my focus is and clearly their focus.

Q. What have you thought about Cedrick Wilson's play for Dak to go to him?

A. I think it's a little bit of what I was talking about. We talked all week. Just the few times I've had a chance to go against the Patriots, you know, you have to have more than one or two good players if you think you're going to have a productive day.

We went in here clearly with the mindset of it didn't matter who was at X, F, who was Z. Didn't matter. They challenged us schematically. Try and defeat their leverage and go play. Knowingly, to have success, third, fourth, fifth, those receivers, those guys needed to make plays today. That was a big part of it. And frankly, that's the way we want to play quarterback.

We don't want to worry about where the ball goes. We want to lineup, play to our time clock, play to our rhythm, and I think this is the result of it.

Q. What's the challenge in preparing for this Patriots defense?

A. The challenge, so fundamentally strong. You know, really he really takes you back to the basics. He's going to



really challenge the run plan, so you have to have a multiple run plan. Clearly you got to deal with -- you've got make adjustments throughout the whole game.

Really I think he does an outstanding job recognizing concepts also within a game and trying to tilt the coverage to you. They did a really good job winning the leverage battles is the way I look at it, so it's always a challenge.

Q. 75-yard touchdown. Place is going crazy. Down by three. Do you recall Dak was like on the sideline or going into the huddle?

A. I tell you, our guys didn't blink. We have spent a tremendous amount of time on fast game scenarios. Coming off last year going into the off-season it's been probably top three. We've needed to be better. I was excited to be in this position. Definitely to do it here, because these are great moments you grow from as a football team.

So you can't practice this. We all practice it, but to go out and do it and to do it -- to be clutch in the way our guys did it, these are experiences we definitely grow from.

Q. What's the philosophy on fourth down entering the games? And when you start off the game with a fourth down conversion that didn't work but continue to have those opportunities, how much does it reinforce the decision?

A. Well, I think like anything, you have a general idea based off your game plan of the matchups and all the things that go into the game plan. You have a starting point. But at the end of the day I think it's great confidence in our offense, and rightfully so.

So we have some game planning conversations particularly at the end of the week that we will go ^ threw ^ through particularly when we're thinking we're down territory and when we're not.

Q. Were the early fourth down gambles, whatever you want to call them, was that part of taking an aggressive approach to the game?

A. Definitely. The distance, too. Like I said, I have great confidence in our offense. I know exactly what it was, and Kellen had a clean play. Frankly on review, just felt the ball meet his body part that was down first, so that's football.

Q. As much football as you've coached, and you mentioned your response to the long touchdown, but can you remember a two-play swing like that where the pick six to that long touchdown back to back like that?

A. Obviously I can, I just can't give you an example right now. I think that's the beauty of the NFL. It's unbelievable. You go ^ threw ^ through every week and we cut all the game situations up and show them to the guys on Saturdays or Fridays, and it's just amazing the big plays that occur weekly in this game?

That's why it's the greatest game on earth.

Q. Talking about the Diggs interception and then what you saw what the breakdown was defensively when they came right back?

A. I think we misjudged the ball. I haven't really had time to ask what happened because everything was that going on in the game, but looked like our guys misjudged the ball there.

Q. Do you count on a Trevon interception each week?

A. It's awesome, especially when he puts it in the end zone.

Q. All the hype guys, but it seems as if he's doing this every week. (Indiscernible.)

A. I mean, it's actually what they are. He's playing at an extremely high level and picking the ball off. Make no bones about it. He's done it since he arrived here in Dallas. Yeah, I love the way he plays. He fought through a couple injuries in the last two weeks.

He's doing everything he can to get on the field, and goes out and produces tonight for us. Just like I said, he's an awesome young man and he's got a bright future. He's playing lights out right now.

Q. What does it say about your team that you can have these penalties and facing third and 25, the red zone where you don't get in three times. The resolve they have, where does that come from?

A. I think they believe. I just feel they have such a strong confidence. Like I said, we have -- a number of our veterans that have a lot of individual success, and even with an extremely young group that's just learning and figuring out.

So I just think that the chemistry and the combination of youth and the veterans is excellent. We got a great vibe. They just believe the way we're going about it. We practice these end of game situations, and it's great. It's like anything in this game. It's great to be able to work on certain things, and when you get the opportunity in the

game and get the results, that's gratifying.

This is a big win. This is a confidence win for us. We needed this. This is definitely a nice step in the right direction.

Q. With all the situations you practice, are there rhymes and reasons to it or historical markers behind why you say 24-20, 1:12 to go, you're at the 35.

A. Yeah, like everything, just when you think you've seen it all you get a couple more situations you haven't seen. Frankly we really work on critical situations and in this (indiscernible).

Q. In those situations, the team being able to be undaunted in those situation, is that Dak Prescott?

A. I think it's all of them. Dak, don't get me wrong, is a tremendous leader and the confidence, it just oozes out of his ears.

But he's like that all the time. So just a tremendous leader. But our guys believe in what they're doing, how we're doing it. You can see it the way they practice, and I think the competitive periods we're doing on Wednesdays and Thursdays have been huge in keeping it going.

Because our guys are putting it in in the week and playing free on Sundays, and that's the way it has to be.

Q. Not to focus on how you finished, but the significance of only being down by four points at the half with all of the mistakes you had and everything you did to yourself, only being down four at the half, was that pretty significant?

A. I just want to credit that to our neutral thinking. We weren't getting caught up in the negatives. Just to let you in our mental conditioning program. (Laughter.) But you just keep playing.

In the locker room, like I said, you would've never known it. It was a challenge. That is part of the game. So I thought our guys did a great job. They just kept playing.

Q. (Regarding Randy Gregory.) What do you think it says about him, the way that he was able to change the game so dramatically in the middle and with his rushes and such a variety of ways?

A. Randy is on a roll, too. He's put four games together that are outstanding. You'll be seeing more and more chips and things like that. We worked on it and expected it this week. Did a bunch of it.

I think the guys, Dan, Kellen, everybody has done a great job. This is the way you want to go into a bye week.

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