

# PATRIOTS HEAD COACH BILL BELICHICK

## POSTGAME VIDEO CONFERENCE

January 2, 2022



Patriots 50, Jaguars 10

BB: All right, well, it was obviously a good win for us today. I thought the players really did a good job, came out, a lot of focus. High level of execution. It was an unusual kind of week with guys going out at the beginning of the week and then kind of trickling back as the week went on. I know those guys worked really hard just staying involved in the Zoom calls and stuff like that, but to be able to get these guys back and then go out there and play well, I thought we played well in all three phases of the game. It was good. It's what we needed to do, and hopefully we can build on this and play well next week and going forward.

Good solid team win all the way around. Excited to be back in the playoffs. Big game coming up this week, take care of that. But feel like we made some progress today, but we've still got a long way to go here. Just need to keep grinding it out day by day. Hopefully we'll do that and see where it takes us.

**Q. We just asked a lot of your guys how they felt about making the postseason after clinching after the Miami loss, and we basically heard six or seven different variations of we're on to Miami. What's the state do you think of the team right now buying in and making sure they finish the regular season strong and committing to finishing out this season down the stretch, especially as COVID protocols make things trickier to try to coordinate?**

BB: Yeah, we'll just do what we always do, come in tomorrow and go through the game, go through the corrections, talk about this game and move on and prepare for Miami. Obviously they're a good team. We lost to them the first game. It was a long time ago, but they're a good football team. They won, whatever it was, seven, eight, nine games in a row, I can't remember what it was, but they won a bunch of them. They're a good football team.

Got a lot of respect for them. There's a lot of work to do to get ready for them, but we'll start on that tomorrow night and Tuesday and then whenever the game is, we play them. Have they changed it? I don't know, whenever it is it is. We'll play them when we play them.

**Q. Can you talk about Jakobi Meyers, another big opening to the game? Basically over his career it just seems like among the players that -- a lot of players in and out of the lineup, COVID and whatnot, and then he's here, and maybe as consistent a guy as you have. Kristian Wilkerson says he embraced him from day one; he's a guy I really want to be around. Can you talk about how important Jakobi is to this team?**

BB: Yeah, Jakobi has really done a good job in the room. We have some new players in the room with Nelly and KB coming in this year. Even though they have more experience in the league, Jakobi has got a little more experience in this offense, and he really has had a good work ethic, versatile guy, plays a lot of different positions. His role has changed, and he's adapted over the time he's been here with us.

It's his third year, whether it's blocking, blocking the force, crack blocking, running different types of routes, playing all three positions, the X, the Z and the F spot. He's been -- he's embraced whatever role he's had and has gotten better at some of the things that he needed to work on as he matured and gained experience in the league. It's a great example for all of our guys to look at: Undrafted player that's come in and established a role for himself, and he's created a lot of value because he can do a lot of things, and he's worked hard to do it.

**Q. Some notable contributions from Kristian Wilkerson today. What have you observed from him behind the scenes this year that put him in position to contribute today?**

BB: Yeah, Wilk is a hardworking kid. He normally plays the top or one of the top receivers of our opponents for our defense, so he gets targeted a lot in practice, but he's always ready to go when we've had injuries or guys that needed to step in, didn't practice or that type of thing, he's stepped in and is always well prepared, knew what to do, and has been productive in practice. It was nice to see him get the opportunity today and take advantage of it, cash in and play well.

He also played in the kicking game. He was able to contribute there. Just overall he's helping us in both phases of the game, and the more he can do.

**Q. David Andrews mentioned that you'll need to stay on schedule to have success offensively. Obviously you did that today. How much did good gains on early downs contribute to that success?**

BB: Yeah, we were 1 for 10 last week, and this week we were gaining yards on 1st and 2nd down. Those 3rd downs, if it gets skipped over or you're dealing with a lot better situation where you can have a potential run or throw the ball at any of the five receivers, and Mac scrambled I think one time, too. Yeah, that's a lot easier than when you're in 3rd and long, and you've got a couple guys you can throw it to that can get down there and get the distance that you need.

Yeah, 1st and 2nd down have a lot to do with 3rd down and staying on track with the running game and some good possession passes and some good run after the catch and good ball carrying by our backs, that all helped.

**Q. After the last couple weeks, how nice was it to see a quick start, the defense get the three-and-out and then the offense getting a long touchdown drive there?**

BB: That was great. It was great to play from ahead instead of playing from behind and being down 20-0 and all that. It's brutal. Yeah, it's really good.

**Q. I know you're a student of history; today was the Patriots' 10th win of the season, your 20th 10-win season. You are tied now with Don Shula for the most all time with 10-win seasons. Any thoughts about reaching that plateau with Coach Shula?**

BB: It's flattering, but again, it's really the players. Players win games. Been fortunate to coach a lot of good, a lot of great players during that time. When you have good players, they can go out and win games for you, so it's really -- they're the ones that win them. I've been lucky.

**Q. I'm from Mac's hometown. Can you talk about what he has been able to do this year, only four Hall of Fame quarterbacks have ever in their rookie seasons led their teams to the playoffs and those were all in the pre-free agency era. Can you talk about whether it's his maturity level, his preparation, whatever it is that has enabled him to get your team to this point?**

BB: Yeah, well again, Mac is super consistent. Every day is really the same day for Mac. He's always well prepared. He's in early. He's ready to go. He knows what we're going to be doing, and he's already got a head start on it. He maximizes the information that the coaches give him, maximizes the walk-throughs, the practice reps, and learns from whatever happens in those situations. He's smart.

He's a good learner, but he's got good instincts and good mechanics. He's just worked hard to get better every day. A lot of consistency and great work ethic and really pays attention to details and has just improved in every area throughout the course of the year. Continues to improve on a daily basis. He's just a really great person to coach because he's so responsive to trying to do everything the way that you want to do it.

Josh has done a fantastic job with him, and Mac has really, I think, embraced the wisdom that Josh has transmitted to him, and he played extremely well today.

**Q. After a 2-4 start, you got a big win against the Jets and everything seemed to be back on track. Last two weeks you got back-to-back losses. Did you feel today's win will help you to reset the team going forward?**

BB: Yeah, every week is its own week. I don't think this week will have much to do with the Miami game, just like I don't think the Buffalo game had much to do with today's game. We'll get ready for a new team, a new challenge, and we'll see where we're at on Sunday against a good offensive team.

It's nice to win. It's nice to go out there and have a good week and have that be realized with the score and the way we played the game, but next week is a new week, and we're starting all over again. We emptied the tank out today. We're going to have to spend all week filling it up and be ready to put it out there again on Sunday against Miami.

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