

DOLPHINS' HEAD COACH MIKE MCDANIEL

POSTGAME VIDEO CONFERENCE

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Patriots 23, Dolphins 21

Q. What are your thoughts on today? How disappointed are you going into the final week of the season?

MM: Definitely didn't expect this. This is pretty frustrating. Got a lot of guys laying it on the line, and you want to get the results you feel like the team deserves and should get, and you come up short. That's kind of the nature of football when you make critical mistakes with points scored off turnovers and some -- I think we had a collection of penalties that really cost us, so those types of things will leave you with the type of result we were trying to avoid.

We still have games to play. We have one in particular against the New York Jets that we have to respond to, and what I'll be focused on getting the team channelled towards because you go through tough stretches in seasons, you go through tough stretches in games, and we have to learn how to get ourselves out of that at some point in time.

Q. (On Teddy's injury.)

MM: I don't know the severity. I believe it was on making the tackle on the pick six, but that's something that we'll find out more in the coming days.

Q. After you start you had, how do you get your head around a five-game losing streak, and what do you tell your guys?

MM: Well, you try to identify -- the biggest challenge is that people have to deal with losing for over a month now, and trying to channel all of the desire, the want, the let-down into a productive direction, so you have to critically assess each and every game and say, is it one thing, is it a bunch of things, or what can you correct.

You know, it is definitely disappointing from my perspective, for the team, for the fan base, for everyone really involved, and you have to do something with it. You have to understand how we got to this position and how we make sure that we don't return to a scenario where we can't stop the bleeding, so to speak.

I think guys have had opportunities to play. There's been people that have made some tremendous plays and done very well with their opportunities on the field. There's some guys that I think will feel in hindsight looking back on it that they could have done more. It doesn't matter at this point. It's all about responding it's tough for anybody to really put themselves out there and accept these types of defeats in consecutive order. But we play a tough game, and absolutely nobody will feel sorry for us, as they shouldn't. We have to figure it out as a group collectively how to finish the season the way we started, in the win column and not in the loss column.

Q. Personally how do you gather your thoughts after a game like this?

MM: Oh, it's tough for me. Typically I go into the game believing the people that I work with, believing in the players in the locker room, and this one was absolutely no different. My expectation is to prepare us to win, and so when we don't, it's definitely not fun. In this particular situation, I felt less sad and more angry just at how certain things transpired because I want desperately for everyone involved to get what I feel like they deserve, and when that's short, I struggle not to start with myself. I think that will always be the case.

But I think we'll see on the tape that there's a lot of people that could have done X, Y or Z that much better to win a two-point loss. We knew going into the game that we had to win the turnover battle, and that did not happen in all three phases because it's not only not turning it over but it's getting the ball back and creating turnovers, where we were unable to do that, which we knew in this type of game was going to be critical. We've got to find different ways to get that message put forth and applied on the field, which is kind of coaching 101.

Q. Were X, Armstead or Chubb close to playing, any of those three?

MM: Yeah, they all were working out pregame, and those three, all three weren't really -- between themselves and the medical staff, knew it wasn't the best for the Dolphins to put them out there.

Q. Every team has injuries, but when you're down to the third quarterback, third or fourth left tackle, all five



projected starters in the secondary out, my question would be is this sort of the most depth -- biggest challenge to roster depth that you've been a part of?

MM: I'm sure it's up there. I don't really look at it in that way just because I trust the players that we have in the locker room, and we've won plenty of games with guys rising to the occasion and stepping in for starters that weren't available.

I'm sure that it would be up there. It feels in the moment that we are having to adjust the lineups more frequently than I can remember. Whether that's the case, who knows. I know one thing; there's not anybody in the locker room that is ostracizing this loss because they know deep down that we were plenty capable of getting the job done, and we didn't.

Q. Obviously Tua didn't play today (indiscernible) what led to that today?

MM: That was kind of going into the week, you play certain defenses, and the Patriots, I think, more than anything, have scored a lot of points on defense, and so trying to minimize the amount of time you put yourselves in situations where it plays to a defense's strength. It's something that I think is important in terms of how you approach a specific defense. That was the case this season.

Last time we played Buffalo, we kind of knew it was going to be a similar set of circumstances, that we were going to have to really make sure that we attacked the line of scrimmage and didn't play to one of their strengths, which is late sacks and turnovers, and we were able to do that with solid success at times. Made some plays on 3rd down, so kept giving us some opportunities.

But ultimately, it only takes one, which our guys know, and it's hard to beat that team when they're able to score on offense and defense.

Q. What did you learn about yourself during this five-game stretch?

MM: You learn a lot. I know that from the whole spectrum really, football nuances, how I really want to approach the team. These things are not standard set in stone for me. I try to always think critically of why I do whatever I do.

I also do know that there's a certain degree of problem solving that I enjoy about this profession and this job in particular, and I also know that it does give me confidence in a weird way because I'm motivated by trying to dig people out of tough spots, and I know it's not something

that I -- you never know how these types of things are going to feel. You're not excited about putting yourself in a position to, okay, what's it going to feel to lose five straight. But being involved in it, I know that this is kind of my niche in the world for me to help get a group of guys out of this is totally my speed and something that's very important to me, and I'm definitely up for the challenge.

Q. When you were told that X and Armstead and Chubb weren't going to play, was that sort of a process? Did they come to you all at once --

MM: It depends on the individual week. This one in particular, the workout was timed about the same time because we had juggling of actives that were consequential, depending upon if they were able to go or not, and this one in particular. A lot of times it's the head trainer that comes and speaks with me. This time it was pretty ominous because it was the GM that came and told me that we were 0 for 3 with it.

Those guys obviously would help any team, their contribution, but it wasn't -- their inactivation was not the reason we lost this game. I think we had all the ability to do so, and we didn't.

Q. You talked about problem solving; can you think back to your time in your career that you've had a situation like that that you've pulled out of it? What was that situation like?

MM: There's a countless number of them. The first one that comes to mind is in 2012, 3-6 with Robert Griffin III's rookie season, and then we were able to pull it together and make the playoffs. We played Seattle. Then all the way back to just last season, I think we were behind the 8-ball, and there was some talk about next season, all the way -- I think we were about 3-5.

Then really the two times that I've been to the Super Bowl, at the end of the season there was a loss that you thought was grave because it put you out of whatever scenario you thought was best for your team. Just regardless, there isn't a season that goes by that you don't have late-season turmoil. Typically it doesn't manifest itself in a five-game losing streak, but every year it's different.

But I do know one thing, that you end up finishing the season winning or beating the adversity or overcoming the adversity in one way, shape or form or you succumb to it. That's pretty cut and dried. There's only one team that ends up the season happy. The rest of them are lumped in a wish-I-coulda-woulda. None of that matters for this particular team. It's a one-game season to really take all the lessons learned from this five-game losing streak and

putting together something that the locker room and coaching staff is proud of as the regular season comes to a close.

I'll definitely channel some of those experiences, but I fully expect a hungry and well-intentioned team ready to go play the Jets next week for the regular season finale.

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