**PATRIOTS HEAD COACH BILL BELICHICK**

**PRESS CONFERENCE**

**October 17, 2022**

**Q: Hey Bill. On the goal line yesterday, and we saw it in recent games, you gets went with the split back pro look, which is I guess more of an I formation. What makes you guys go to a throwback look in that situation?**

BB: I don’t think it’s a throwback look. We’re in it because we think it’s the best thing for us to do.

**Q: After games that Bailey’s [Zappe] the starter, who do you expect to be the starter once Mac Jones is healthy?**

BB: We’ll see how that process is. Mac [Jones] still wasn’t able to play yesterday. We’ll continue to evaluate him and see how he’s doing physically.

**Q: Good morning, Bill. I was just curious about that ball that Marcus Jones picked off and was questionable by the sideline. Did you decide not to challenge because you were getting the ball back, punting, in that scenario?**

BB: Right, that was part of it. It was pretty far down the field. It would have been a big field position change. That was part of it. We just weren’t sure on the look, that we didn’t get a good look at it soon enough. We just weren’t sure that we absolutely had the catch anyway. Si it was really, honestly, not much of a decision there.

**Q: Just with respect to the rookies playing in the defensive backfield, is it a situation where they’re basically learning every single game and you have the confidence to put them out there?**

BB: Well, every rookie is learning in every game at this point. This is their sixth NFL game or less. There’s a lot for them to learn every week as they play new players, face new quarterbacks, new offensive coordinators and schemes. We have to build through our defensive system of adjustments and things like that. There’s a ton for them to learn at every position, every day, every week. Those guys have a long, long, learning curve ahead of them, that they’re on and gaining ground on. It’s a marathon and we’re barely in the first mile.

**Q: Are you pleased basically how each rookie has handled the next man up mentality and allowed you to get away with sticking quite a few of them in games?**

BB: I think all of our players have worked hard, tried to prepare well and be ready when they’re called on. That’s sometimes unpredictable on how it’s going to go, but I think that’s what you do as a player and what you do as a team, is you prepare to do your job and then you step in and are ready to go and do the best you can when that opportunity comes. Not knowing when that’s going to be or for how long it’s going to be or anything else. That’s really true for everybody. Doesn’t matter what year they’re in, or what position they’re in, where they play rather. It’s the same for all of us.

**Q: Morning Bill. I know you typically don’t like to give injury updates after the games. I was just wondering, is there one available for Christian Barmore this morning?**

BB: No, not yet. Sorry.

**Q: Sticking on the front, Davon Godchaux, what are you thoughts on his performance this season, both on the field but also seems like he’s become a leader in that group?**

BB: No question. DG [Davon Godchaux] gives us good leadership. Very professional, always prepared, ready to go. Good fundamental player, good techniques, smart player. Recognizes the interior line play blocking schemes. Uses his hands well, plays with good fundamentals, very strong. He’s a good football player. I’m glad we have him.

**Q: Bailey [Zappe] for a second, because there’s been a lot of discussion about whether the offense has been kind of condensed and less complex for him, more run oriented. Do you feel that the offense has been less complex and you’ve taken some steps to make him more comfortable and allow for him to have more success?**

BB: Well, we always try to do what we feel like gives us the best chance to win and gives our team the most success. We’ll always do that. I don’t think that will ever change no matter who’s playing, who we’re playing or anything else. We’ve had to make some in-game adjustments the last several weeks, based on how things have shifted, either during the game or the game plan that our opponents have used against us. That’s also part of it as well. That’s football. It’s not about any one player necessarily. It’s about being able to do what you need to do as a team to competitively play and win on the field.

**Q: I had read last night that you had visited some prisons with Jim Brown. I'm not sure if it was back when you were coaching in Cleveland. But you had taken a real interest in that issue. I was interested in how what Jim Brown had to say weighed on you and informed you on how to deal with players on those topics?**

BB: Right. So my relationship with Jim [Brown] started when I was the coach at Cleveland. I think it was the second year. I had met Jim when I was a kid and went to the Browns training camps and our family was there, and watched practice at Hiram with Coach [Paul] Brown and so forth. But that really didn't have anything to do with it. But yeah, Jim impacted me in my life a lot. Spent a lot of time with Jim and learned a ton from Jim. There's no way I could capture that in this short interview, that would be a much longer one. But Jim's presence, his ability to relate to all people, to guide people, to have leadership and perspective on so many things in life is really incredible. I would kind of put him in a class by himself there. As I think most other people would who know him well. He impacted us a lot at Cleveland and the growth that we had. Obviously that didn't end too well with the team moving in the middle of the '95 season and all that. But he gave us great leadership and perspective even in tough times. Then I maintained a relationship with Jim. Jim and his Amer-I-Can program is a fantastic program. I've seen it work in many different environments. You mentioned prisons and other ones. Not just that. Even just on many other levels including, we've used Jim’s Amer-I-Can program here at the Patriots, very successfully. I think strong results, organizationally and for the specific people they work with. Anyway, Jim's impact for me and for us has been very strong. But what he's done for, really everything he's been involved with is pretty remarkable. He's a very special man. He's trained and taught so many people, who have then gone and taken his work out and just exponentially expanded all the great things that he believes in and stands for. We could go on and on here, but I'll leave it at that. Thanks for the question Chris [Ryan]. Appreciate it.

**Q: I wanted to ask we are so used to seeing you guys have a traditional fullback on the roster and this season maybe you've moved away from that a little bit. I just wanted to know what that process has been like and how you guys have been able to schematically change things here a little bit without a fullback?**

BB: There are certainly plenty of plays in the past where we haven't had a fullback on the field. But there were some where we did. It just really came down to our depth as a football team at the skill positions, at running back, at receiver, at tight end. You only have so much time, you only have so many plays, so you have to make a commitment to something and whatever you make a commitment to lessens your commitment somewhere else. So we decided to make our commitment to the skill players without a fullback and to work around some of the things that position gives. But there are also some things that you lose when you have a fullback in the game. So we feel like, in the long run we're just going to be better doing it the way we are doing it.

**Q: I wanted to ask you about Hunter Henry who obviously had a good day in terms of pass catching but also contributed in the run game. For example with Tyquan's [Thornton] second touchdown. So what did you see from him yesterday and the first few weeks of the season?**

BB: Hunter's [Henry] really done a good job for us honestly since the day he walked into the building. He's very professional. Smart kid. Has worked hard on and off the field. Works hard in the weight room. Gained a lot of strength. Improved all that. As a football player, he's very instinctive. Knows what to do, can recognize problems and identify them quickly on the field and make good decisions to do the right thing. His blocking has really improved this year. He's done a really good job for us in the blocking area and against these teams that are playing the over fronts, so the defensive end at the end of the line. Some tough blocking assignments there. He probably has the toughest match-up on the field on a lot of the running plays. So sometimes teams are a little over aggressive on the running game and that gives us opportunities in the passing game which we got last week in the opening of the Detroit game and then the short yardage touchdown yesterday. So as you said he really helped us on the sweep to Tyquan [Thornton] for the touchdown. Hunter's a good all around football player. Going all the way back to, I've followed him back to his high school days at Pulaski Academy with Coach [Kevin] Kelley and then Arkansas with Coach [Bret] Bielema. Then obviously we didn't get a chance to draft him, but got him as a free agent. Glad we have him. He's been a great addition to our team, to our organization on and off the field. Really just an exceptional player, an exceptional person that does everything we've asked him to do for the year and a half that he's been here. He's a very professional player that is a great addition to our football team.

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