**PATRIOTS QUARTERBACK DRAKE MAYE**

**PRESS CONFERENCE**

**September 24, 2025**

**Q: How was practice?**

DM: It was good. Just a chance to get back out there and kind of re-establish what we're trying to be as a football team. It was one of those games that you just look back and feel like, ‘Man, we hurt ourselves.’ It's one of those things where just get back to focusing on us and a new opponent. We’ve got to know how to not lose the game on ourselves before we go win it.

**Q: Drake, you’re top five in passing yards, top 10 in touchdowns. I'm just curious, do you pay attention to the stats? Does that stuff matter to you at all?**

DM: Winning matters to me. That’s the main goal. It’s why I play this position, why I play this sport. With quarterback, the ultimate stat is wins. So, that's the biggest thing that I focus on. If that's throwing 10 touchdowns in a game or throwing one pass in a game, just trying to win.

**Q: Do you like going up against Christian Gonzalez in practice?**

DM: Yeah, Gonzo [Christian Gonzalez]. I mean, since the day I got here, it's always good to have somebody – him and CD [Carlton Davis III] – on the other side of the ball that make it challenging, that make it challenging to make throws, that don't make it easy. Those are the things where we develop with the guys on my side of the ball to a different level above the next when he's making throws difficult, when he's making this route difficult, back shoulders on go routes and little things like that. He's a great player, and I'm looking forward to seeing him when he gets back.

**Q: How does he look?**

DM: He's got some swag to him. He's always got swag. So, I always try to find time to ask him, ‘Hey, what can I do to up my swag?’ Because I don't have much out there. But no, Gonzo, shoot, every time he – he's smooth. Y’all have seen him play. He’s smooth, he's patient. He's one of the best in the game.

**Q: What does it mean for a chance to play against your hometown team?**

DM: It's different playing up here. Going back to Charlotte would have been different, but going against the team that I grew up watching, grew up cheering for. A lot of great memories in that stadium back at Bank of America. So yeah, it's a little different, but at the same time, it's still just another week. Another week in the NFL, and none of the same players that I grew up rooting for besides the long snapper are still there.

**Q: Is it at all encouraging that the mistakes from last week, the turnovers, do you view those as relatively easy fixes, and are you encouraged by that? ‘Hey, if we can just hold on to the ball, we’ve got something here.’**

DM: Yeah, like I said, not beating ourselves. That's the big thing. Shoot, it's turnovers. Turnovers in this league are such a big deal. It's one of those things that we can clean up. Holding onto the football, me holding on in the pocket and the running backs is something that I do think is fixable. It’s something that you try to overemphasize, and usually when you overemphasize things, you fix it. Something throughout the week is just trying to do the extra little things to protect it, and me in the pocket, ensure there’s two hands on it and just know when the play is over.

**Q: When you look at this team, whether it's in practice or during the games, do you think about how much better this team can be or maybe even should be?**

DM: I wouldn't say that. I just try to push the guys to get to that level. I know what we can do, and I still feel like we haven't played our best football. That's what's promising ahead. I think once we do, we talk about stringing some plays together in a practice or stringing a drive together. You see glimpses of it, but that's the challenging part of this league, and that's what's the fun part about it, of getting to that level and hoping to get to that level when the games matter, really matter, and trying to get a push to the postseason or things like that. So, that's what we're trying to build toward and just keep going at it every week.

**Q: Just curious, when you dive into an opponent's film and you're doing it on your own, what's the difference in year two for you as opposed to last year, if there is one? When you’re studying and you’re trying to get a read early on the Panthers defense?**

DM: First off is just knowing the defensive coordinator in the background. We know more names now, know what tree he's from and know things like that. From there, just trying to watch the players more. Players know that coverage matters, but players and personnel matter just as much. Know what the guys up front need to worry about or the run game and things like that. Or the guys, ‘Hey, playing this coverage, this is what he likes to do, or he's real aggressive when he gets backside and he's in man,’ things like that. So, just trying to study players just as much. Every week trying to play quarterback, you’re trying to see what they're in before they show it.

**Q: What do you think of their corners, specifically Jaycee Horn?**

DM: They're great players. Jaycee Horn, he played at a Carolina school, so I know him. Grew up, and he's a little older than me, but obviously a great player. He's made some plays this year, and he's one of those guys backside that is going to play into the boundary and make it tough. He's physical, he can play, he's patient, he's got good ball skills. So, he's one of those guys that he's going to make it tough. It’s something that you can't eliminate that part of the field, but you’ve got to be careful with him. Then on the other side, No. 2 [Mike Jackson], he's a good player as well.

**Q: Drake, two of Stefon Diggs’ three catches on Sunday resulted in first downs, I believe. You've talked about what a great teammate he is. Where's your level of trust with him, especially situationally on the field?**

DM: We try to put him in circumstances where he's getting the ball and an option to get the ball on big plays. He had a big third down catch. The first third down we had, I probably should have thrown it to him. Little things like that. We had a fourth down against Miami. He's making plays, so he's in positions on key downs to make plays. I've got full trust in him. He just keeps showing it every week. I need to try to give him the ball more. I told him that today.

**Q: When you talk about knowing when the play is over, is that just strictly a feel thing? Because obviously you have the ability to create and extend, but then sometimes, as you’ve found out, it can lead to trouble, too. To find that balance.**

DM: We talk about in the quarterback room, you know when something doesn't feel right, whether in the pocket or with this play, ‘Alright, there’s something I need to do,’ whether it's throw it away or get what I can and get down. That kind of stop clock in your head and that shot clock, you just know, ‘Hey, something doesn't feel right. Alright, now –.’ Some quarterbacks split their feet, sometimes you just feel like, ‘Okay, I’ve got to do something,’ so just knowing that.

**Q: When it comes to the Panthers, what is your favorite all-time memory?**

DM: Favorite all-time memory. That's a good question. I went to the Super Bowl when they lost to Peyton Manning, and that was tough. But yeah, just that season. I think they were 15-1. I was at that NFC Championship game at home, big time win. Just being a fan of Cam [Newton] was probably the biggest memory, him coming out here, doing the airplane and hitting ‘The Cam.’ So, just little things like that, and getting to know him later on and playing him. He coached the 7-on-7 team and playing against him and seeing stuff like that. So, just getting to know some of the players around has been pretty cool.

**Q: It’s Week 4 now. Do you feel like you're getting more comfortable? Did you have to get more comfortable just speaking up during game planning meetings with Coach [Josh] McDaniels and [Mike] Vrabel?**

DM: Yeah, I think they're both great at doing stuff that I'm comfortable with. It just continues to grow more and more as we establish what we are as an offense. Just finding ways throughout the week where I can, ‘Hey, mark this in the call sheet. Hey, I may like this out of this formation, or maybe like this in the gun instead of under center,’ or just little things like that that just help me play more comfortable at the end of the day. Coach McDaniels and Vrabel are all about that. I just continue to communicate, and that's only going to build throughout the year.

**Q: When you're talking about the differences between last year and this season, looking at defenses, studying tape, is your understanding of the defensive coordinator any different? Meaning, do you know his background, why he calls certain things? Is that the level that you're getting to, or are you just saying –**

DM: It’s early. I try to keep the notebooks from last year. I'm a pen and paper guy, so I try to keep a stash of them. Jacoby [Brissett] was big on – he kind of let me know that at a young age, keeping an idea of, ‘Hey, this is his tree, or hey, this is what he liked to do, or he's been here, go back and watch some games there,’ or just little things like that. Just trying to soak up as much as I can from other players, other coaches who have ideas. Coach McDaniels has got a game plan notebook from years ago, so it's pretty cool to look back. It's always a little different because they evolve and stuff like that, so just be ready for that.

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