



NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS POSTGAME TRANSCRIPTS & QUOTES

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HEAD COACH MIKE VRABEL

On having eight road wins and what has led to that success...

You know, it was a tough one, the first one, just going all the way back to Miami, and I think that was just a really important game for us, being able to battle and give up a punt return, answer with a kickoff return, you know, I mean, going all the way back and just big kick from Andy (Borregales). And we've talked about all those things that have helped us along the way and talked about just unfinished business on the road and being able to, when we needed to, handle the environment and make critical plays and get off to a good start like we did today. So, really proud of this football team and what they've been able to do. Any time you travel, it's difficult, so.

On what he attributes their precision to on both sides of the ball early on in the game...

I think, hopefully, we can continue to improve as the season goes on. We're pretty far into it, but being able to still practice and focus on details and coach actions and not results and, you know, try to be able to translate the things that we do well in practice that when they show up in the games, or vice versa or, you know, maybe things that we weren't really good at in practice that, you know, maybe we weren't really good at in the game and we can continue to coach those things, but really focused on trying to improve late in the year. I'm just happy that everybody was able to play and we did get a lot of really good efforts early on in the precision and complementary football and all the great things that we need.

On being able to win with having as many injuries as they do...

I mean, I think from the get-go, we've tried to focus on having everybody that's here prepare as a starter, coach them the same, make sure that everybody knows that when you come in there in the meeting room during the week that at any point in time up until Saturday, or before 4 o'clock, that you could be elevated or signed and we didn't really have to do that much during the beginning part of the season and all of a sudden, you know, our depth got tested and so I think it was really important for this week for guys to step up and what Josh (McDaniels) and the offensive staff were able to do with managing guys and different personnel groups and using everybody, you know, was really, really good. What Zak (Kuhr) and the defense has been able to do with some guys out, and then obviously what Jeremy (Springer) and Tom (Quinn) are able to do with all the moving parts on special teams. So, I appreciate every single one of those coaches that help us help our players get ready for the games.

On what traits they look for in players, such as flexibility and toughness, especially in times like now where they have to make adjustments...

Well, I think you have to be all those. You have to be able to adapt and then be able to adjust and the players that can play more than one position, you know, we have to be able to ask them to do that. Preparation, just understanding that some of these guys are practicing the entire year and don't get a chance to play and then you want to be able to reward them when the opportunity presents itself and there'll be some guys that took advantage of their opportunities and hopefully that'll lead to more opportunities for them.

On if he feels like Drake Maye is the MVP of League...

Oh, well, I certainly, they don't give me a vote, but I would, there's nobody else that we want as our quarterback or that I want as our quarterback. And so to be able to do that and as the plays go through to progression, somebody asked me this week about progression and different things, I said, "Just throw to the guy that's open as soon as you work through your progression," and I think he did that. Some really good designs, but also some great execution.

On Drake Maye playing with a depleted offensive line and wide receiver core...

Well, I mean, all those guys have played. I mean, the wide receiver core, I mean Chiz (Efton Chism III) has been catching touchdowns on us on Fridays the entire year, so it was good that he got one in the game, because he's caught plenty of them on Fridays. And Ben (Brown) did a great job, Vedarian (Lowe) did a great job. Those guys have been in there and Vedarian's been in there the last couple weeks and Ben's ready to take advantage of his opportunity as always, so got a great effort from our veteran guys, from Digsy (Stefon Diggs) and certainly the offensive line.

On Hunter Henry and Stefon Diggs being consistent all year...

We say this all the time, that your best players have to play good in order for you to win and I would consider Hunter and Stefon some of our better players and so that's kind of what you get. That's the National Football League, and they know that we need their best efforts each and every week, and that's what we got.

On if his thought process changed after the rushing the passer penalty during the two-minute drive...

Yeah, probably. I mean, just trying to get, you know, being smart with the football and, get the first first down and get into the drive and then, you know, that created good enough field position to keep going and I thought they did a really good job of going down there with the time and the timeouts and the moving parts and once you get into the two-minute and you only have a couple receivers, you kind of get creative and we had two backs in there at times, we had two tight ends in there at times, so I thought that was really good.

On what went into the decision to call a timeout at the end of the first half...

Well, I mean, just trying to think and work the game and, regardless of what the score was, but forcing them to run another play or do something and they don't carry over to the second half. So, defensively, we hadn't had a whole lot of opportunities to play. Those guys want to rush, they want to play defense and so I called it and, you know, really didn't affect the game.

On his conversation with Christian Barmore going into halftime...

Oh, I just reminded everybody to keep their composure. We have an identity that we've shown and that we've put out there on the football field, and made great decisions for the football team and we don't want to give people free yards and that was it, just a reminder and Christian (Barmore), they did a great job. I mean, the referee came over there and told me that both him and Corey Durden and everybody else were doing a good job of trying not to get in anything after the whistle and after the play and I appreciate that. It was just a reminder, Nicole.

On how important it was to get reps for the players that were able to play this game, especially during the second half...

Everybody's going to have to play. We're going to need everybody's best effort and preparation and execution. I think the more that you can get them into the game and whether it's two minutes, some on the ball, guys that really haven't had that, but they practiced all year, they work extremely hard, so I'm excited to see them be able to go out there and make some plays that helped us win and be excited and that's the most important thing, that we're just excited, you know, to get a stop there at the end of the game, the guys that are in there, because they put a lot of time into and they deserve our best.

On how tough it was to see Mack Hollins go on IR and on the other hand, to see WR Efton Chism III perform well...

Mack (Hollins) means a lot to this football team. His personality, his spirit, I've talked about that a bunch and he wanted to travel with us and be here and support and I know that he's happy for Chiz, just because those two have been really close since the time that Chiz got here. I think it's been fun mentorship and we'll need that from Mack. We'll need him to make contributions off the field as we move forward.

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QUARTERBACK DRAKE MAYE

On his mindset coming into the game...

Coach said unfinished business. We want to go 8-0 on the road, that'd be something that we thought would be pretty cool. In this League, it's hard to win on the road and we accomplished that today. Just proud of the guys. We came out here, started fast and didn't stop from there. So, just proud of the guys. That was a good one to get under our belt. And we still have another week, next week, to get back at it.

On what went well for him today...

One thing is the play calling, I mean it's getting guys open. Guys run the right routes with the right at the top of the route, with the right feel for zone. I feel like I was throwing it pretty good and, from there, the guys up front keep on blocking their butts off and give me time to make plays and extend plays and find guys down the field.

On reflecting on making his NFL debut at MetLife Stadium last year...

Yeah, I was thinking that in the fourth quarter. I remember my first action last year. It's pretty funny looking back, the stadium was pumped for that Thursday night game and it's kind of full circle moment just of how far we've come and kind of the flip side of things, this year compared to last and how much fun we're having out there and even had some fun last year when I got my first action, it was still pretty fun. But yeah, I think just try to be myself every day and don't let anything change and from there just trust in the Lord and that's what's gotten us here and try not to change that.

On the performance despite dealing with injuries...

Yeah, that's this League. We talked about it all week and even all year. You only get so many opportunities in this League to make a first impression, to make a, you know, hey, I'm stepping up for this guy this time to make an impression. A lot of guys did that today and keep on coming again. So, proud of the guys and you know, Ben Brown coming in and V-Lowe (Vederian Lowe), they keep on playing great. And Chiz (WR Efton Chism III) getting in the endzone, that was pretty cool. He probably should have got in on the first one if he didn't stumble. But other than that, I think just scout and defense stepping up. Those guys on defense are playing well, man. It's fun to watch them on defense.

On whether there is something about his development that allowed him to play this well this season...

No, I wouldn't say it was quick. Just trying to prepare the same every week and not change that part of it. The guys around me have been the biggest reason and Coach (Josh) McDaniels and just taking coaching and taking coaching from Coach (Mike) Vrabel and everybody that wants the best for me. And whether it's hard coaching or not, just try to do what's best for me and just trusting them and go out there and have some fun.

On reaching 4,000 passing yards this season...

I wouldn't say I'm in conversation with them two. Those are probably the two best in Patriots history, so, it's an honor to do that, but it took everybody. Like we say in the offensive room, it takes everybody, 11 on each and every play. And whether it's me throwing for that many yards or throwing for 20 yards, whatever it takes to win, I think that's the most important thing and thing I care about is our win-loss record. We still have some work left to do and some games ahead that should be fun.

On his reaction to McDaniels' game plan...

Yeah, I go through them on Friday night. You go through the play sheet and I star the ones that we like and I like and I feel like we got a good chance to pick up a first down. I starred a lot of them this week and felt good about the plan. So, he shows up every week and I think his part and what he does for us and getting us in the right spot and expecting a lot out of us and pushing us to practice hard is one of the biggest reasons why we've got to stay improving as the year goes on and helps us in the long run.

On whether the number one seed is on his mind...

Yeah, I think winning the division is what we're focused on. We've still got to win out to win the division. That was our mindset and if that means the one seed's at play, then that's what we're trying to do because we're trying to win the division and win the AFC East.

On whether he knew his touchdown pass to Stefon Diggs helped Diggs reach a contract incentive...

No, no, but I'll make sure to tell him he needs to buy me dinner or something, whatever. We're not looking to hunt up incentives, we're just looking to hunt up wins.

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STEFON DIGGS

On the direction of the team this season...

I feel like it started in training camp and when you build an identity, and you try to figure out what kind of team you have, and what you're good at, and the things you might not be as strong at. But kind of banding together throughout the season and it was tough road. There was a lot of close games, even starting off with Miami. Miami, we had some special teams, we had a lot of complementary football, so I feel like that kind of played a part in the direction we went. Luckily, we won, but it kind of gave us that 'Okay, we can play with anybody, we can close out some tough games, we can find a way to win.' So now that we kind of have fast forwarded to this point, it's just like carrying that identity and kind of standing true to what we believe in, working hard, and finishing. We're on the right track, I'll just say that.

On what it says about the team after overcoming injuries...

Resilient and we got that next man up mindset. I keep saying we got a lot of horses in the stable analogy. We got some guys that weren't playing that got a lot of opportunities and showed you that they can play at a high level too. When I said there were seven dogs and one bone, it was a lot of dogs in the stable too, and you know, it's been a process. I feel like those guys wanted to take advantage of the opportunity and I'm more happy for them than they were happy maybe.

On Head Coach Mike Vrabel...

My favorite thing about Coach Vrabs (Vrabel)? I'd probably say that he holds everybody to the same standard, and that's big for me. Whether you're an "A" player or a "B" player, he holds everybody to the same standard. He wants you to give it everything you got each and every play, and it's always going to come down to effort and finish with your teammates. How good of a teammate are you if you are throwing an extra block here, or you're going an extra mile for your guy, or even coming down to a motion to get somebody open. So, my favorite thing is he holds everybody to the same standard, and he was a player so he can relate to us. He knows when we're banged up, he knows when we got a lot of guys injured, and we were going to go out with the mindset of that he was going to expect the same thing he expected from the previous starter from the backup.

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CHRISTIAN GONZALEZ

On the play of the team that is down starters on both offense and defense...

It was good. We were down a couple of people, but we knew everybody was going to step up. We got out there and executed and were able to get out of here with a win.

On the importance of getting a jump on the Jets and stop the run game...

We knew we had to stop the run game. Breece (Hall) is an amazing back. Everybody knows what he brings to the Jets and what they do. Coming into the game, we knew we had to stop him and get him down early. We were able to do that.

On becoming the third team in franchise history to go 8-0 on the road...

It's huge. We talked about it all week. That's what we wanted to do. Unfinished business was the theme of the week. Coming in here and getting a win and going 8-0 on the road. To be able to go out and win multiple tough games on the road – Tampa, Baltimore – and then come in here and finish the deal, as a young team, that's a really big thing for us. Now, we're onto Miami.

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JAYLIN HAWKINS

On a perfect road record....

We've got this 'road warrior' motto that coach talks about. We're all bought in. We come out here and just execute on Sundays and get the [win]. It's just nice to have a season when we win all the road games. That's pretty hard to do in the NFL. That's super impressive, I've never done that. We got a good thing going.

On watching Drake Maye run the offense...

We want to get the ball in his hands as much as we can. He makes it happen. He's out there just doing what he does, having fun. He's confident, he's playing with swag. With the receivers, everyone is complimenting each other. He's just making throws and doing what he does best. If you want to talk about progression, he's one of the guys out there after practice, getting extra throws in with [Hunter Henry], or extra throws in with the receivers, working on timing, stuff like that. Things that a lot of people don't see, so I tip my hat off to him. As much as we can give the ball to him so he can put points on the board, that's what we want to do.

On the possibility of winning the division either tonight with a Bills loss or a win next week...

Obviously, we're going to see that, we can't ignore it. It'd be nice to win the division. But regardless, we still got one more game to go execute. We want to close it out and play to our standard and get better. We're playing for a lot. We need to take it one week at a time.

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TREVEYON HENDERSON

On the offensive performance despite setbacks from injury....

Coach (Mike) Vrabel always tells everyone to prepare as a starter, so I think having that practice mentality. You never know when your time is going to come up. You have that mindset that you're a starter, when your time comes people take advantage of that.

On watching Drake Maye play every week...

It's great being able to play alongside Drake. I always mention he's such a great leader. I see him each and every day, he works real hard. Even after practice. I feel like it just carries on throughout this whole team.

On partnership with Rhamondre Stevenson in the running back room...

I respect Rhamondre's game a lot. I've learned so much from his game throughout the season, his pass protection, his one-on-one matchups, making guys miss. He's taught me a lot. I think we just feed off each other really well. It just shows, nothing really to say about it.

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RHAMONDRE STEVENSON

On how good he feels after back-to-back standout performances by the team...

Yeah, it feels great. It feels great to, you know, I think we're 8-0 on the road now, so I think that's a great accomplishment for us as a team. Me personally, just putting weeks together. You know, every week's different. Every week is its own challenge, so the next challenge is Miami next week.

On establishing an identity of a tough football team identity...

I mean, my definition of a tough football team is running the ball and controlling the clock. So, I think if we can do that, that's a great recipe for postseason and things like that. So, I'm happy we got that done today.

On what Drake Maye continuing to improve...

Just how he approaches each week. He goes in there with a mindset on Wednesday, our first day of practice in the week, he goes in there with a mindset of, you know, he kind of wants to win a game on Wednesdays and throughout the week before we get to Sunday, and I think that's a big thing for him and just the team. Just putting our best foot forward throughout practice and then reaping the rewards on Sunday.

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