



NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Postgame Transcript
September 18, 2016



**PATRIOTS WR MATTHEW SLATER
POSTGAME PRESS CONFERENCE
September 18, 2016**

Q: Can you give us a feel for what the mood is across the team after this victory?

MS: Anytime you can win a game in the division, you're really excited about it. We knew that this team was going to play us tough for 60 minutes. Obviously, we jumped out to a lead, but they played hard and fought themselves back into the game. We're just happy to come away with the 'W' and our focus has to shift quickly to Thursday night's game against Houston.

Q: How do you think the guys responded to Jimmy Garoppolo going out with an injury and Jacoby Brissett stepping in?

MS: Obviously, it was a tough situation, but I think Jacoby [Brissett] handled the moment well. I think he's done a great job of preparing himself, and he got in there, he was able to make some plays with his legs, he was able to move the chains, and I think that the front played well. Marty [Martellus Bennett], the [offensive] line, James Develin, Clay [Harbor] – they all blocked well and we were able to run the ball there at the end and run some time off the clock. LeGarrette [Blount] played well, carried the ball well, so I think it was a good team effort across the board. You hate to see Jimmy [Garoppolo] sustain an injury, obviously, but we had to do what we had to do.

Q: How good is this receiver group as a whole in regards to run blocking?

MS: I think it's something that Chad O'Shea, our receivers coach, has done a great job of instilling in our games. We're going to go out there and compete in the run game, and every guy that we have in that room is willing to go out there and get dirty and block hard because we know it's best for the football team. Whoever it is that's out there, you're going to give max effort, you're going to stick your nose in there and try to do what's best for the team, and I think we did a good job of that today across the board.

Q: What have you seen from Jacoby Brissett during your time with him as a leader and as a player?

MS: I think Jacoby [Brissett] has a great deal of maturity for a young player. Maybe it's the position, those guys tend to be a little bit more on top of things when they first get in the building, but I think he's done a great job of learning. Coach [Bill] Belichick has said from the start, we understood the situation with Tom [Brady], and he said Jimmy [Garoppolo] and Jacoby [Brissett] both have to be ready. Obviously, we didn't foresee it happening like that, but he was ready to go when his number was called, and as I said earlier, I don't think the moment was too big for him, and I think that's a tribute to the way that he's prepared himself from the time he stepped in this building. He's spent a lot of time with our coaches, and they've done a good job getting him ready.

Q: Can you play quarterback and how does the team get ready in four days with one quarterback?

MS: I absolutely cannot play quarterback, so we'll get that clear, even though I was 1-for-1 in high school. But that's something that Coach [Bill Belichick] is going to have to handle. That's his role, as far as what our plan is

moving forward. We just have to get ready with the guys that are in there. Obviously, Jacoby [Brissett] has to be ready to go. We're praying for the best with Jimmy [Garoppolo] hoping that he can bounce back, but our coaching staff has done a great job of preparing this team over the years. I've seen it time and time again, so hopefully we can rise to the occasion and be ready to go on Thursday.

Q: Can you talk about the reps you've been getting at wide receiver despite predominantly being a special teams player?

MS: I really appreciate the faith that Coach [Bill] Belichick and Coach [Josh] McDaniels and Chad O'Shea, and all the offensive position coaches have placed in me over my time here. Obviously, it's not mystery what my role is on this team and that's obviously my number one priority, but as I've said over the years that I've been here as a professional, you have to be ready to go. I sit in that receiver room and my role is limited over there, but when they call my number, I have to try to be ready to go. I've always prided myself on knowing the offense and going out there and practicing hard when I get the opportunity. As I said, I'm thankful that Coach Belichick and Coach McDaniels have enough faith in me to put me out there.

Q: What kind of emotion do you see in a situation like Jimmy Garoppolo's when he sustained an injury after stepping in for Tom Brady and playing as well as he did?

MS: It's very tough. I know Jimmy [Garoppolo] has worked so hard to get himself ready to go and he's put himself in a great position to seize his moment, so to speak, and it's tough to see that, so you really feel for the guy. I think any time you're on a team and have a personal relationship with a guy and you know the work that he's put in, and to see a guy sustain an injury, it's tough. It's tough. I think that's something, as you said, you kind of take for granted; injuries, injury reports. But that's a guy that's dealing with a situation he's got to deal with day in and day out any time you sustain an injury, and there are a lot of emotions that play into that. We're praying for Jimmy, hoping for the best, and he definitely has our support.