



NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS AT MIAMI DOLPHINS HARD ROCK STADIUM

Jan. 1, 2017 | 1 P.M.

POSTGAME QUOTES

Miami Dolphins Head Coach Adam Gase (transcribed by Michelle Stone)

(Did you get the feeling that if it had not been for the RB Damien Williams fumble there that you guys were making the plays to come back to mount a comeback victory there?) – “I felt good about where we were heading on that series. We still had some work to do. I think we were going to be on the 6-(yard line) ... the 6- or the 5-(yard line). We were going to go for it. So we had two downs to try to figure out a way to get in. We just can’t turn the ball over down there.”

(What was your diagnosis on the slow start?) – “I know we had some opportunities. We just didn’t quite execute a couple of things quite right. There are probably a couple of calls I’d take back. We just didn’t stay ahead of the stakes, which you can’t do against these guys. You can’t. You can’t leave yourself in third-and-longs and expect to consistently move the ball. We didn’t stop their offense fast enough. We just didn’t really play as well early as we needed to.”

(Defensively, early on, you were down 20-0 and it was tough tackling guys. It seemed like everything they were doing was working, even getting moves on the interior line of scrimmage to pick up yards. What do you have to do going forward next week to try to get that resolved?) – “We have to look at it to see what’s really going on and make corrections and make sure guys are doing their jobs the correct way. It’s hard to really see everything from the angles that we have on the sidelines. Sometimes it takes watching the tape to see where we were loose or if somebody was doing something they shouldn’t have been doing, or if they were just being more physical than us. It’s hard to tell from the sideline.”

(How frustrating is it to be there and watch QB Tom Brady meticulously work the ball down the field and seemingly at will?) – “He’s a Hall of Fame quarterback. It happens. A lot. We have to try to figure out a way to get a negative play or get our hands on a ball and possibly get a turnover or create some kind of fumble. You’re looking for that one play. He’s a tough guy to defend and it’s a tough offense to defend and they have a lot of answers. You have to try to find that one negative play.”





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(What did you do or what did you change when you got the touchdown at the end of the first half? You came out and put a drive together and scored. It seemed like things were headed in your direction at that point.) – “We felt, getting the score there in the end, them missing a field goal, and having an opportunity to start the second half, that was a big thing for us. We talk about it a lot, trying to get points at the end of the half to start the second half out and try to score again, and try to swing the game without their offense trying to touch the ball. We felt good. We felt like we had a chance, that we were right where we wanted to be. We let up the long touchdown but still there was so much time left that we felt like we had the opportunity to at least be in the game in the fourth quarter.”

(You touched on it a little bit before, being on the 6-yard line and getting ready to make it a 27-21 ball game and you get the fumble that takes it all the way back and pretty much was the end of the deal then. How tough is that?) – “Any time you have the opportunity to get back in the game and where we were and [how] guys kept fighting ... It’s frustrating. I know it’s frustrating for those guys; it’s frustrating for the coaching staff – certainly on the sideline when you’re down there and you turn it over. It crushes you, especially with the turn of the field position that we had. We put the defense in a bad spot. That’s tough sledding when you’re trying to mount a comeback.”

(What was your message to your guys in the locker room after the ball game?) – “That we have to learn from this. We have to forget it quickly and understand that we are playing next week and we have to get ourselves ready.”

(I know you haven’t asked the question and you don’t know the answer, but from a protocol standpoint, what is the protocol for finding out if QB Ryan Tannehill can play next week?) – “I’ll have to ask the doctor where he’s at. I don’t even know where he’s at right now. I see him walking around, so I don’t know what that means.”

(Does that question come on Monday?) – “Probably. Like I said before, I’m going to make the call on it. If I don’t feel comfortable with it, then Matt [Moore] will stay the starting quarterback. I need to get a lot of information: I have to see him practice and I have to see him move around and I have to feel really good about it. I’m not going to jeopardize his career by throwing him out there and then extending this thing longer than what it already is. I’m going to make sure that the right decision is made.”





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(How did you feel that QB Matt Moore played?) – “I thought he did well. The turnover ... I know what he saw. Kenny [Stills] snapped his route off and his guy fell off and didn’t come with him, and he had already thrown the ball. He was trying to make a play. In that situation, you’re fighting for every inch and just trying to make sure that we’re possessing the ball. It was bad timing, especially at that moment of the game. I feel like he’s done a great job being in there. He’s protected the football, he’s operated the offense very well, and he’s led those guys. He’s done a good job and we just have to build on what we’ve done the last three and a half games with him and just try to find a way to put him in the right position.”

(Does your victory over Pittsburgh earlier this year give you any confidence or give you guys a better mindset for next week?) – “We’re a different team now. They’re a different team. Both of us have different players. I don’t know how much our rosters really match up. If you look at our roster at that time and our roster now and the same thing for them, that’s what makes this part of the season interesting. We have a lot of different guys playing and really what it comes down to is who’s going to win the turnover margin, who’s going to be the best team in the red zone, and who’s going to convert on third down. Whomever usually wins those sections of the game, those are the teams that win.”

(You got a nice round of cheers from the fans coming off the field, a send-off since you’re going on the road. What are your thoughts about that?) – “I think our fans have done a great job. It’s disappointing that we didn’t do a better job today. They’ve supported us all year. They’ve been great for our defense, how into the game they are and how loud they are, making it hard for the other team’s offense. For us to come out there and put out a performance like this ... We didn’t execute. We just didn’t play well. They outplayed us, they outcoached us, and they did a better job than what we did. It’s unfortunate that we put that kind of product on the field today.”

(With DE Mario Williams not playing today, what went into that decision?) – “I just felt like (Terrence) Fede was playing really well. At some point I have to make a decision with some of the special teams things we have going on and some of the injuries we’ve had, we’re moving a lot of guys around. We had been going in with nine defensive linemen a lot of those times, which we feel like has been good. We feel like that’s been the strength of our defense. I don’t think anybody would disagree. But we’ve had some situations where we need to get special teams guys up in the defensive backfield.”





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Miami Dolphins Running Back Jay Ajayi (transcribed by David Norwood II)

(This is the first time in your career ... The next game is a playoff game. Does it feel different for you?) – “This is my first playoff in my career, so it’s exciting. We didn’t get the result we wanted today, but we get the opportunity to keep playing. Every game after this is elimination. We still have a chance to go get it.”

(It looked like you were going to the exam room after the game. Is everything alright?) – “I’m good.”

(Is it your shoulder?) – “I’m good.”

(How do you shake off what happened today and get ready for Pittsburgh?) – “It is what it is. The regular season is over. We know we still have a lot to play for. We know whoever our opponent is that we’re going to be ready for them. It’s a playoff game; win or go home. Go get it.”

Miami Dolphins DE Andre Branch (transcribed by Jason D. Silver)

(Coupled with the slow start Brady and those guys were able to move the ball rather efficiently. How hard is it to stop those guys?) – “I’ve got to watch the film. See what we did wrong and whatever that is we have to correct it fast and move on to whatever opponent we play.”

(Do you guys kind of just put this one in the rear view mirror or take a lot from what you did today and try to implement it for next week?) – “Today stinks. Now, tomorrow we move on and figure out who we’re playing and go from there and see what’s going on.”

(What makes you believe and feel confident that this defense is playoff ready?) – “We put together a good body of work. I know the talent we have in our locker room on all sides of the ball so for us is, if we do our job the rest will take care of itself. But there’s times when we don’t do our job where it starts to slip.”

(What’s the toughest challenge about playing Tom Brady?) – “He gets the ball out fast. Very efficient. He’s been playing at a high level in this league for a very long time. We knew that going into this so for us we just have to keep the pedal to the metal and keep rushing him. No matter if he’s throwing the ball in .3 seconds just keep rushing and hopefully he’ll hold it.”





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Miami Dolphins G/T Jermon Bushrod (transcribed by Ted Leshinski)

(Going into the playoffs with a loss like this, how do you...?) – “By tomorrow you won’t even say anything about it. It doesn’t matter. The goal is to have a chance in the post season and we have a chance right now.”

(Does it make a big difference heading into the playoffs after a loss, or rather you win?) – “We wanted to win. We fought to win. Every player that could play, played. We just didn’t get it done. Honestly, at the end of the day, tomorrow we have to erase the regular season out of your head. Don’t worry about it, because we’re where we want to be. We wanted one of those six spots - we got one of those six spots. We have to figure out how we are going to be better individually as an offensive line as a unit in this offense and overall as a team. So, yeah, it sucked. They came out and they played well. We didn’t do enough, we didn’t do enough often. Can’t start low, get high, go low, medium ... you can’t do that. You have to fight to be a consistent squad. We’re going to put together a good week of practice, I’m looking forward to it. It’s a good position for us to be in, so we’re just going to keep fighting.”

(Do you look forward of the challenges of being in the playoffs?) – “Football and in your life all you want is an opportunity to get to where you want to go. We know where we want to go. It’s going to be a tough road. Teams have done it before. We played Pittsburgh, obviously, we played them down here in the heat. Now we’ve got to go up there in the cold, wherever it is we got to go.”

Miami Dolphins Wide Receiver Jarvis Landry (transcribed by David Norwood II)

(How do you shake this loss off going forward into the playoffs?) – “We just have to move forward. Go out there, go back and look at the film, see what we need to correct. Obviously we need to start fast on offense. Now it’s a single elimination game from now on.”

(You make any kind of difference going into the playoffs off a loss than a win?) – “No, it doesn’t.”

(How do you feel about the way you stack up against New England now that you’ve faced them twice this year?) – “They’re a great opponent. They’re a great opponent, they’re a great team - so are we. Obviously again we didn’t start off fast enough on offense. That’s the only part of the game I can speak about. We got to go in there at the end, but we got to find a way to score more points.”

Miami Dolphins Quarterback Matt Moore (transcribed by Sara Perez)





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(The prospect of starting a playoff game next week, what does that mean to you personally?) – “It’s a big deal. It’s hard to get there as a player. I’ve been there one time in 2008. I went as part of a team that was there in 2008 and that’s the only time. It’s a big deal. Obviously, put this one to bed and move forward and focus on next week, wherever it is, whoever we’re playing, we just have to be ready to go.”

(What were they doing to make it so difficult offensively for you?) - “Well, they were jumping a lot in coverage. Forcing you to be patient, but at the same time, stopping the run game. So they kind of had the best of both worlds there early on. We kind of got on a little roll there at the end of the first half and got some stuff going, but it took us a little bit to figure it out and get it going. Good players, good scheme. Again, it just took us a little while to get it rolling.”

(When you got it rolling what were you able to do? What was the difference?) – “It was just understanding what they were doing. There was a lot of underneath stuff. Guys catching the ball and making plays underneath. Some short catch and runs. Obviously, just staying on the field, converting third downs. Got down in the red zone and took advantage of some things. They just forced us to be very patient and made it difficult for us.”

(You guys have been a bounce-back team all year, you have a game like this, now you have the biggest game of the year next week in Pittsburgh. How does this team get ready and forget this, and move forward, and be ready to play at the level you need to play?) – “I don’t know if you forget it, there’s a lot to learn from in this game. We’re going, some guys I’m sure will watch it tonight, but we’re going to look at it as soon as we can and correct things and move forward. It’s nice to know that we have a game next week and it is the biggest one and it’s kind of the same motto we’ve had all year ‘It’s the next one.’ I know it’s a playoff game, but I think guys just have to learn and kind of be a pro about this situation today and move forward and bring their best game next week.”

(How do you think this week will be for this football team that hasn’t been in the playoffs in so long? How will preparations be?) – “I’m sure Had Coach (Adam) Gase will keep it pretty similar. Obviously, I think the focus has got to go up and I think that’s natural for any team in this situation. Guys are going to come to work and show up and do their job. Put ourselves in the best situation to execute and I think that’s all you have to do.”

(What happened on the pick?) – “Just didn’t throw it far enough. Scrambled out, I really had two guys. I saw Dion (Sims) wait and tried to get it to him and just didn’t get it there.”





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(After a series of short passes you were able to get the short-passing game going. The middle seemed to open up and you hit Kenny Stills there for a big play there. How did all that take place?) – “I think they... well it was down in the red zone and it was empty, which we hadn’t shown a ton of that up to that point. We had two... We had good guys running on the outside. The safeties just got some width and it put Kenny in a good position against a linebacker. So, we were able to work that out formationally and everybody really executed, guys were running, pulling guys out of zones and it really opened up Kenny. So, it was good.”

Miami Dolphins Defensive Tackle Ndamukong Suh (transcribed by David Norwood II)

(What is it about the Patriots early in the game you just had a tough time stopping them? Next thing you know it’s a 20-0 lead you got a big hole to climb out.) – “Yes, they started fast. I think caught us off guard in a lot of aspects. Made plays, got into the end zone and we couldn’t figure a way to stop them.”

(Tough to get to him (Tom Brady) and get him to pull the ball down, seemed like he was in such timing and rhythm, and there’s really nothing you can do to get him off that early in that football game) – “Yes, a lot of quick short passes. They got their running game going from the standpoint of getting good yards on first and second down to make it where he didn’t have to drop back deep for the most part, and I think some penalties in there as well so we got to eliminate those and get prepared for next week.”

(A lot of talking going at the line of scrimmage seemed to escalate as the game went on. Then at the end it got pretty crazy out there what was going on there?) – “Guys are just children sometimes, but at the end of the day you take care of your business and continue to play as I did.”

(When you say they caught you off guard was there confusion out there among you guys or what specifically are you referring to?) – “I think it’s just we weren’t prepared in certain aspects so just like I said got to get prepared to go against them, simple as that - weren’t tackling or making plays.”

(Not a great day for the defense overall, how do you feel about the defense heading into next week against Pittsburgh?) – “I feel great about the defense. We been through a lot of tough times, a lot of good times and I think we’ve been in every single situation in this particular season so we got to be prepared for whoever we have and get ready to go.”

(What are your thoughts on this football team? It’s been a long time since this football team has been to a playoff game and has a chance to go to a playoff game next week. Is there something





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you can contribute to the guys in here that haven't been to playoff games to get them to understand what's at stake?) – "It's one and done. The elevation of the height and sensitivity of the games will be through the roof. This is my third time in the playoffs and I just know the feeling going into particular games, very, very, intense so as you go and get ready for these games be prepared. The level of play definitely steps up."

Miami Dolphins DE Cameron Wake (transcribed by Ted Leshinski)

(How frustrating was it to get off to that kind of start against this football team knowing that you had to come out and you had to try to beat a football team that got off to a fast start?) – "Starting slow definitely was not part of the plan. Obviously, in this league, playing catch up is not always a good way to go. That's something that we definitely want to make sure doesn't happen again and put this one behind us quick."

(How tough is it for you to try to get to QB Tom Brady, try to disrupt him, try to get anything you can while he's as efficient as he is getting the ball out to his receivers?) – "Their motto (is) they get the ball out fast. As a pass rusher, that's something you have to contend with. You use different blocking schemes, you meet a couple different personnel, but every play you've got to go out there and do whatever you can and trust in the backend guys to do their job as well. Today was another day where there are some things I'm sure we've got to fix, but again, the regular season is over. This one is done, and we've got to move on."

(DT Ndamukong Suh talked about going to the playoffs He played in three playoff games – been in the playoffs three times – and talked about how the intensity raises up. Your intensity is always pretty high. Do you have another level here for next week that you're going to have to get to?) – "I'm a guy who always thinks 100 percent is 100 percent. If you have another level next week, then I'm disappointed that you didn't give it to me this week. I'm going to be the same guy I've been from the preseason games, regular season to playoffs (and) play my butt off every play and let the chips fall where they may."

(What makes you confident that this defense is playoff ready?) – "20 games."

(When does playoff excitement start for you? Do you forget about this game more quickly than you would another regular season game?) – "Yes. It's over. If we weren't in the playoffs, I don't know how many people would be fretting over this game. It'd be over and done with, the season is over, go home. But the reality is we are (in the playoffs). At the same token, you can't be focusing on





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the past. You've got to look forward. Literally, as I walk out of this building, my mind sets on to the next. This game is over and done with. There's nothing you can do about it. Until we line up and play these guys again, I won't be thinking about them. I'm thinking about the next opponent."

(You mentioned that to get to where you guys want to go you will have to beat New England. Your level of confidence after the two games you had against them this year is what?) – "I'm confident whoever steps on the field against us. We have a chance to win, and we've proven that for however many weeks we've done it."

New England Patriots Head Coach Bill Belichick (transcribed by Frank Brill)

(Opening Statement) – "I thought another real good effort by our team today. The guys were really ready to play, got off to a good start. Got contributions from all three phases – a lot of different guys, a lot of guys stepped up. Fourteen wins is a pretty good effort this year. I'm proud of what these guys did. (They) worked hard every week (to) come ready to play, play hard and play tough. Did a good job down here. It wasn't an easy place. We did a good job out in Denver a little earlier in the season, so good win today. It was a good win today. A lot of guys played well."

(What were your thoughts on the contributions of WR Michael Floyd, first the touchdown catch and the effort that he made there?) – "He has gotten better every day, just works hard. Obviously, there's a lot to learn in our offense and things we ask him to do, but he has gotten better every day and certainly helped us today."

(That play plus the block downfield [for] WR Julian Edelman. I don't know what you saw on that, but what were your thoughts on WR Michael Floyd's effort?) – "Good. Strong kid."

(What did you see in WR Michael Floyd to bring him in from Arizona? What did you see that you thought he'd be able to contribute to this football team?) – "He's a talented guy, a big strong kid that we did our work on and we felt comfortable with."

(Were you pleased with the way this team started – the way you got out of the gate real fast – being able to drive right down the field and put points on the board?) – "We did a good job moving the ball consistently. (We) had a couple penalties that stopped us, and we got stopped in the red area there twice in the first half, but we moved the ball. We've just got to do a little better job finishing those drives, but I thought the team was ready to go. We ran it, e threw it, we had good





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balance. A lot of guys – the receivers, the backs, the tight ends – really everybody was productive today.”

(Can you talk about Dolphins Head Coach Adam Gase down here in Miami and what you think about what he has done with this franchise and his year this year?) – “I think he has done a good job. I talked about that during the week. I talked about it pretty extensively.”

(What were some of the things that they did at the end of the second quarter offensively when they came down and scored the touchdown and then at the start of the third quarter that were giving you guys some problems?) – “They went a little up tempo there. That wasn’t anything that we haven’t seen before. They have good players. They did a good job. They just did a better job than we did. We missed a couple tackles, and they made a good run there to get into the end zone. They have a lot of good players, especially their skill players. They have good backs, good receivers.”

(Turnovers have been big for the defense. What were your thoughts on DB Devin McCourty made the second one today and LB Shea McClellin on the scoop?) – “We’ve been after the ball a lot. We had another one that we knocked out that we didn’t get. Those guys have been hawking the ball, and we’ve had more opportunities. We got more guys around the ball. It seems like we’re getting more. Logan (Ryan), good interception. Keep staying after the ball. It’s what we’ve been doing all year, just keep doing it.”

(Does this team exhibit a level of mental and physical toughness this year that you’re happy with?) – “This is a very physically and mentally tough team, no question.”

(Your thoughts moving forward now that the regular season is over with, home-field [advantage] and the postseason coming up?) – “We just keep grinding, keep getting better. There’s a lot of things we can still improve on. We’ll work on some of those this week. We’ll find out who we play, and we’ll start getting ready for whoever that team is. We have a good opportunity to work on some things – to get better at some things that we need to get better at – so we’ll try to use that time productively to do it.”

New England Patriots TE Martellus Bennett (transcribed by Armando Gonzalez)

(What did you think of WR Michael Floyd’s block on the WR Julian Edelman touchdown?) – “I thought it was excellent. It was a great play; guys are making plays in different ways and that’s an extra 50 yards because Julian’s not that fast [laughter] so they were probably going to catch him, so that





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block was a big play for us. We needed something to happen right there. Julian read the blitz and then made a good play and then Michael made an excellent play. Michael is a really strong receiver. We noticed that from the day we got here, I told him to come over here to the tight end spot but he was like 'No.'"

(You finished the season with a little over 700 yards, set a new career high in receiving touchdowns. How much fun is this first season with the Patriots been?) – "It's been cool. I just go out there. I don't get too many of the balls but when I do, I try to catch them all. So that was one of my goals. coming into the game, I was like 'I need to get at least 32 yards,' and I got 33, so I was like 'Alright, you guys can continue to throw the ball wherever you all want to.' (Laughter) You set goals and 650 yards doesn't sound as good. It's like, 'Oh, yeah, 700 (yards). It was a good year so it was cool.' Every ball, every yard counts, especially when you get to the end of the road, so it's cool. I'm in Year 9 and the season is basically over besides playoffs, but I'm going on my 10th year and I'm still being able to make strides in my numbers and different things as a player."

(The touchdown you had across the field on play action, they didn't hit you at the line of scrimmage. When they don't jam you, when they don't chuck you there, do your eyes light up knowing you're going to get on those guys very quickly?) – "Yes, I mean anytime I get free release it's always much better than having a nine-technique right outside of me and then a point. It's always hard to get a release on different routes. If I get free release, I feel like I can just run and do whatever I want to do on my routes and really set them up. When they bang you, it's a lot of respect; but these defensive ends, I know playing the Dolphins that they don't really do that. They just want to get up the field and rush, so they're not really touching you like when we play 3-4 teams or if they're in an 'under double,' their Sam (linebacker) doesn't really chuck the tight end, so for the most part, I knew I was going to get free releases for the game."

New England Patriots Quarterback Tom Brady (transcribed by Alex Onaindia)

(I asked Head Coach Bill Belichick and DB Devin McCourty about mental toughness and blocking out little things, whether it be having to sit on an airplane, the heat coming in like that. Is this team exceptional in its ability to kind of narrow its focus about all the outside stuff?) – "Well, I think we've proven that we can deal with a lot of things over the course of the year. 14-2 is a good place to be. It's pretty sweet to come here and win. It's been a tough place for us to play and that's an excited locker room. To finish eight wins in a row too, with our wins, those are fun flights home and bus rides. It's been good. We've worked pretty hard, like every team does, and it's good to be in this





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position. We'll try to take advantage of this week off and get some good things accomplished. We'll be ready to play our best football no matter who we play."

(You guys had no ambiguity over whether or not you were going to rest a little bit, play a little bit, etc. You just went out and played as if this was any other week. Is there an advantage to doing that aside from just winning the game? Having that clear cut approach.) – "Well I think like I said the last couple weeks, we've talked a lot about last season and the way that ended. I think it's just important to keep that foot on the gas pedal. It was good; we started fast. They got a little momentum there in the second half and then 'Jules' (Julian Edelman) made a huge play, Mike (Floyd) made a huge block, that was sweet. It was great to get contributions from everybody, all the backs, all the tight ends, the linemen are playing great and the receivers are all doing a great job. Hopefully we can get healthy, be at full strength and be ready to go for whoever we play. They'll be a great football team. They'll have earned the right to be there and we'll see if we can get a win."

(In your 17th season here, can you talk about your motivation going into the playoffs? Is it something you have to rediscover every season or is it something that has just stuck with you throughout your career?) – "I think every year just presents different challenges. I think you learn different things over the years. I think you take what you learn and just try to apply it the best you can. Seventeen years is a long time and it's just good to come down here and win. This has always been a challenging place for us, for one reason or another. We just found a way to beat a good football team. They are a playoff team and if they win next week then we'll play them again, so we'll see how it goes."

(WR Michael Floyd, can you talk about Michael and how he's come in during such a short period of time and trying to fit in? I guess you target him today for the first time with the touchdown pass and the big block. Just talk about Michael coming in here and trying to fit into this organization.) – "To come in at this point, like I said, is very tough. There's so much installation that's already been done, we've talked about so many coaching points and there's really not the time to make the mistakes anymore. He's a veteran, he's played for a long time and I think he's played in some meaningful games. Today, that was an unbelievable touchdown and the block was awesome. He got open on the slant. I had him open on another one but the pass got knocked down at the line of scrimmage. He's done a great job. He's put a lot of time and effort in. Jacoby Brissett has done a great job helping him out, you know to take extra time with him and really nail some things down. He went out there and played with a lot of confidence and it's great to have good players. That helps everybody."





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(You've been down this road many times before. What do you like about this team to give you guys a chance to get where you want to go, relative to the other ones you've been on? You know what those teams have had to get you where you wanted to go.) – "All those years have been different so that's the thing about football, you've got to put the work in every week. Just because you win this last weekend doesn't mean anything two weeks from now. We'll be watching next week and some team is going to win and will look really good and you'll go, 'Oh my God, we have to play those guys?' You've just got to go put the work in. You've got to put the same effort in every single day. There is an urgency that really starts with (Head) Coach (Bill) Belichick. He walks in every day and says, 'This is a big day. We've got to accomplish a lot of things today. You know it's boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. These are the keys to win. Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom.' The guys have to embrace those. You've got to understand what your role is. You've got to go out there on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and practice that in whatever conditions are out there on the practice field. Then you go in, you talk about it, you try to correct things and then Friday, at the end of the week, you put together the plan. Saturday, you talk about it and review it. It's just a marathon. I think this team showed a lot of mental toughness that they can do it week-in and week-out at a consistent level. That's what it takes. Any team can go 8-8. You win one, you lose one, you win one. You lose and you're like, 'We've got to get it going.' I think our coaches do such a great job of getting us going when we win. To say forget about last week, we've got to move on. That game's over and we've got to learn from it and we've got to take the things that really helped us win and we've got to build on those things. These are the types of things we did that we're going to lose. We've got to learn from those. It's good to not have to learn from the losses. 14-2 is a tough thing to do. I think it's very cool for this team to accomplish that."

(How much momentum does it give the offense when the defense forces a turnover and gives the offense good field position?) – "It was great. They've been doing that a bunch the last four or five weeks. Getting a lot of turnovers and getting us in great field position. That's got to be the key a few weeks from now. We've done a good job with that this season, protecting the football. We're going to go into a sudden death game where that's what it's going to come down to – possessions, scoring points and taking advantage of our scoring opportunities. We did a good job of that today when we got some turnovers from our defense. We took advantage of it, moved the ball down the field and scored some points. That's going to be really important in a few weeks."

(How disruptive was yesterday? The delay, not getting down here until later and having to scrap some plans?) – "I think it was just an adjustment. We were sitting on the runway for a long time. Usually Saturday night is an important night for our team and for our offense to get together and review everything. We just didn't have a chance to do it since we got in so late, but it was still good to





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win. A lot of people took advantage of the time and got some extra rest on the plane. we watched a lot of film. When you get six hours on the plane as opposed to three, you can double up your film time, so I think that's an advantage. You just take what you get and try to make the most of it."

(The importance of your offensive line this year and the improvement that group has made, particularly today, the heat, the circumstances out there throughout. It's a big difference from a year ago this time in terms of protection.) – "They've done an incredible job. I think they've just, I can't say enough good things about what they have accomplished as individuals, as players, and collectively as a unit. Marcus (Cannon) and Nate (Soldner), and how great they've played and on a consistent basis. Shaq (Mason) and Joe (Thuney) and then Dave (Andrews) was kind of the ring leader. He just brings such great energy and enthusiasm and he's had a great season. They've had a great year. They've had a great ... (Offensive Line Coach) Dante (Scarnecchia) is just the best coach, the best offensive line coach in the NFL. He does a great job with all of them. Ted (Karras) got some action. 'Flems' (Cameron Fleming) did a good job when he got in there. 'L.A.' (LaAdrian Waddle), he's been ready to go, just hadn't gotten the opportunity. It's been great to see all of them contribute. The run game's been great. (We're) throwing the ball well so protecting the ... protection's been great so they've had a great season."

New England Patriots DL Alan Branch (transcribed by Jason D. Silver)

(You're the number one scoring defense in the NFL and on top to that, to really dominate the way you guys have in the past two months...what does that mean to you guys?) – "It means a lot. We work really hard to try to perfect our game and we definitely have some things that we need to fix. But knowing that we're doing pretty well on the defensive side because usually this is an offensive team is pretty special."

(You managed to force 14 turnovers in the last six games collectively as a defense. How much energy can you guys play off of off when you force turnovers at that kind of rate?) – "It's exciting seeing the guys get the ball and being able to put the offense in the short field. We get excited and we go for it. That's a point of emphasis every day during practice, and I guess the practice habits are going to the field in the game."

(What's the message from Bill [Belichick] and just inside this locker room as you guys gear up for a week off and now know that it's one and done football?) – "Honestly I'm not expecting a week off. I'm ready to go practice next week and we don't know who we're going to be playing against but





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we have to go work on ourselves and do a little self-scouting and self...scouting basically just make sure we get all the p's and q's down and make sure we come to this playoffs in the right mindset."

New England Patriots WR Julian Edelman (transcribed by Armando Gonzalez)

(Talk about how important [it is] with you to play in your 16th game. Not only [are you] playing the 16th games, but also you set a new career high in receiving yards. As a whole, what does this season mean to you?) – "When you set goals and you achieve them, it's always great, but once you achieve them, you have to set new goals and now we're on to a new season. It was definitely great to get through 16, and I'm looking forward to this next one."

(How did that WR Michael Floyd block on your touchdown play out for you from what you saw?) – "Unbelievable, Mike came in here – he has been here for like two weeks – and he had a big opportunity this week to come in and help us and he made some plays. He's tough. He's physical. He can be in the room anytime I'm here. I like him."

(Were you able to see the devastating block that WR Michael Floyd gave you?) – "I felt it. I felt some wind go by. Mike is playing well for us. Like I said, he has been here for two weeks and to make an impact like he has just shows that he's a mentally tough guy. He has been through some stuff and to put all that aside to go out and help us win ball games, that's huge. We'll get Malcom (Mitchell) back and, we'll push this next week to try to have a good week of improvement and get ready for the playoffs."

New England Patriots WR Michael Floyd (transcribed by Armando Gonzalez)

(The touchdown catch-and-run just to run through four or five different defenders take us back to that play and what you remember from that.) – "First to start off with a pick play by (Chris Hogan). He set it up very nice where the defender had to go over the top and I just haven't been in there in a while, so I wanted to get in there today for sure."

(Talk to me about the CB Tony Lippett play too, the big play. WR Julian Edelman takes it down the field, you saw Lippett, take me through the big block when you took Lippett out.) – "That's just doing the extra stuff to get the job done for other guys. I thought maybe Lippett might have been able to catch him. So I was just making sure it was a legal hit so I wouldn't get that mail, that little paper in the mail, \$10,000 or something like that, so I think it was a pretty legal hit."





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(With everything you've been through in the last month, is it nice to be able to jump in and contribute really significantly today for the first time? Talk to me about where you have been in the last month and the opportunity that is in front of you right now.) – "I'm in a good place. I'm not looking back at the past. It's all about moving forward and I'm glad that I'm here and the people around me. I feel wanted and that's a good feeling."

New England Patriots LB Shea McClellin (transcribed by Jason D. Silver)

(They (the Dolphins) kind of came back a little bit and then you were able to pull back ahead...give you guys momentum going into the playoffs) – "Definitely. It's great to get a win at I guess the start of a year, 2017, and get some momentum going for sure."

(The Patriots were able to get off to a fast start today. What went into that?) – "The offense did a great job. Driving on those guys and we got a couple three and outs to start the game. So definitely helped out and momentum a little bit."

(That was the longest fumble return in Patriots history. When was the last time you had something like that, the ball in your hands?) – "Probably in college, I'd say. Yeah. Been a while."

(What's going through your mind when you're running down the field?) – "Not to fumble and try to score. Just hold onto the ball, make sure we keep possession of it."

New England Patriots Defensive Back Devin McCourty (transcribed by Sara Perez)

(On the impact of turnovers) – "Defensively, we've been talking about that all year. Sometimes we get in those long drives, the offense is making a couple plays. If we can just get a turnover late in that drive, it changes everything. We really had two opportunities today. The forced fumble Shea (McClellin) up and then Malcolm (Butler) forced a fumble if we could have got on that, that would have been huge for us. They made some plays, but when you get off on a turnover it just changes the game."

(How important is it to be part of a team and to have a team that has a mindset where they're not going to be daunted by little things, whether it be the heat, having to sit on the plane, field conditions, a game that doesn't have a lot of baring on who you are? You guys seem as if you block things out, is that an ability you developed?) – "Yes, I think I hit on that earlier this year when Jamie got traded and different things happened and, as a team, we just talk about if it doesn't end in





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winning, whatever it is, if it's not pushing us closer to our goal of winning that game, we just have to throw it out the window. We have to block it out, focus on what it takes to win and like you said, coming here yesterday and sitting on the plane, everyone was wondering what was going on; but we get here, meetings are cancelled tonight, we're going to meet tomorrow. Alright, we move on. We meet tomorrow, wake up, meet, alright, let's find a way to win this game. Everything in the game is like that. You get out there, you get off to a good start, they make a couple plays, let's see what we have to do to win. This team is very mentally tough and it shows. We just have to keep pushing forward. Now, it's win or go home, so we really have to lock in on our mental toughness and try to play our best football."

(Coming into this game RB Jay Ajayi had a lot of yards after contact, the receivers a lot of yards, big plays after the catch – how important was the tone you set early on, in terms of tackling and not allowing those things to happen?) – "It was huge. 'Matty P' (Defensive Coordinator Matt Patricia) hit on it all week. The X's and O's are important, but the key to this game was going to be tackling. There were going to be plays that were short and we couldn't do anything or Ajayi was going to get a hole and come through. We had to get as many guys to the ball and tackle, and we did that for the most part. The times we didn't do it, they made us pay for it. It's going to be key going forward. Any team we really play, a lot of the teams left in the playoffs, have guys who can create plays on quick throws or running plays. It's been our focus all year. We just have to keep tackling well and trying to get as many guys to the ball."

(What were the field conditions like out there? It seemed like a lot of guys were slipping.) – "Yes, we were slipping a little bit. It was a little moist. It was something Bill (Belichick) talked to us about just from, he watches everything, from seeing some of the college game that was here Friday night and then knowing they were going to re-sod it and do different things. We came and tested it out in pregame and then it just, it was what it was. It was picking the right cleats that you felt most comfortable in and playing with your feet under you. It's not the first time we played on a ground like that. We play in the rain, all those different things. It was just about keeping your feet under you and planning and doing the right things."

(What have you noticed from WR Michael Floyd. I know obviously he plays on the other side of the ball, but what have you noticed from him in his time with the team and contributions today?) – "Focus. Since he came in, he's just trying to learn as much as he can, practicing hard every day and it paid off today. He made some plays, obviously the touchdown was huge; but that block he made on 'Jules' (Julian Edelman) touchdown, everybody on the bench went crazy. He's fitting in well, just doing





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the little things, working hard. Everybody talks about Patriot Way but that's what it is, following the guys that are here and just doing the little things to get better each day."

New England Patriots CB Logan Ryan (transcribed by Jason D. Silver)

(How does it feel knowing that you guys took care of your own business?) – "It feels good. The good thing about this schedule is we got to right a lot of our wrongs that we messed up on last year. I think the difference with this team is when they were driving and they had momentum we were able to get those turnovers. Devin's (McCourtey) play pretty much sealed the game. Last year we weren't able to get that and we kind of let this game slip away which may have cost us in the end. I think this year we finished a little better which was our motto. We stepped up and made those plays. Big players made those plays - to help us seal this game."

(You guys finished at 15.6 points a game, the best NFL scoring defense since 2013. What does that mean to you?) – "It's something we were mindful of for sure. I'm not going to lie to you. We wanted that. We felt like we were constantly slept on all year. Doubtful all year. So for a group that didn't have a lot of great players and gave up too many passing yards and didn't really create enough turnovers, to be the best scoring defense in the last four years I think speaks for itself."

