



MIAMI DOLPHINS VS. NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

GILLETTE STADIUM

Nov. 26, 2017 | 1:00 P.M.

POSTGAME QUOTES

Patriots Head Coach Bill Belichick (transcribed by the New England Patriots)

BB: Well, I thought our team did a lot of good things out there today, but at the same time we left a lot of plays out on the field. We had some lapses in our play that we need to eliminate, but it was good to see the production we had in the running game, finish drives in the red area, had a couple of big plays in the kicking game. I thought the fake punt kind of got us going a little bit. I know it was early, but it was a good play that offensively we converted. Defensively, hit the passer, turned the ball over. We gave up 10 points on defense, so usually that's pretty good in this league. We lost the ball on offense, could've tackled better, could've defended a couple of plays in the passing game better defensively. We'll turn the page here. We'll see these guys in a couple of weeks. Turn the page and get on to Buffalo. It sounds like they had a big win today. I know it'll be tough up there, but good to get this one. We'll just move on here and start getting ready for Buffalo.

Q: How much of the fake punt was a matter of Nate Ebner just recognizing that the option was there to potentially convert it? Also, in the fourth quarter what went into the decision to go for it on fourth down as opposed to kicking the field goal? Was the wind a factor or did you just feel like you could gain a yard at that point?

BB: Yeah, I'd say it was more of the latter. I feel like we could get a yard. Obviously, it was a poorly executed play, so not well done. Yeah, I won't get into the specifics on the fakes. It was a good play. It helped us. Joe Judge, like he always does, did a great job of getting our team's special teams prepared. It was a big play for us.

Q: Can you talk about why the pass rush was so successful today, in particular, Eric Lee with his sack at the end of the game there?

BB: Well, you know, I think the score had a lot to do with that. Anytime you can get ahead in the game, most of the second half, probably middle of the third quarter, the last third of the game was a lot of passing, a lot of pass rush with the lead, so it gives you an opportunity to rush the passer better. Guys did a good job. We had contributions from a lot of different players, got some pressure from our linebackers, from our secondary and from our defensive linemen. But yeah, I think being ahead in the game certainly helps the pass rush.

Q: Is it concerning that the team isn't executing as well at home as they do on the road?

BB: Yeah, no, we try to execute well every week.

Q: Is there something about playing on the road that sharpens the team's focus?

BB: I don't know.

Q: Elandon Roberts had a couple of nice plays today. Do you see the linebacker group and the defense as a whole starting to turn the corner or is there still more work to do?

BB: Yeah, well, we'll see. It'll be a big challenge this week against Buffalo, and Tyrod Taylor, and [LeSean] McCoy and those guys. We'll see. Yeah, this week was – we gave up 10 points today but, again, there are some things that we certainly could have done better and could have made it easy on ourselves. We'll keep working on those. But overall, those guys compete hard. Again, we got production from all three units, but these guys have very good skill players, as good as anybody in the league – receivers, tight ends, backs and quarterback, two good





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quarterbacks. It was challenging. This was a challenging group. I thought our coverage guys, especially, really met the challenge this week. We were able to get ahead and create some pass rush and turn the ball over. Those are all positives. Can we do it again? I mean, I don't know. It'll be a challenge every week.

Q: How big of a play was Stephon Gilmore's interception at the end of the first half, and how important was it for your team to keep its collective composure despite some of the after-the-whistle stuff that was going on?

BB: Yeah, really important. We saw quite a bit of that in these games last year. There were some personal fouls in that game at the end of the game in the first game here. What was it – Week 2? Same thing – we had some after-the-play type things that occurred in this game. Look, it's two competitive teams. All our guys are playing hard. You've got to be able to control your emotions, to play with poise and play with aggressiveness but do it legally and within the rules and before the whistle blows and all of those kinds of things. I thought a number of our players did a good job of trying to keep their poise, stay focused on football and not get caught up in some of the after-the-play stuff. Sometimes that's hard to do, but we've got to try and do the best that we can at it. I thought that they tried to do that.

Q: And how big was Stephon Gilmore's interception?

BB: Yeah, I didn't really get a good look at it. It was a huge play – no question – a big momentum play. Again, it was across the field. I didn't really get a good look at it, so I'm not sure exactly. I'm not sure exactly what happened on that one.

Q: How big was it to complete the drive that had the fake punt and convert that into a touchdown?

BB: Yeah, I thought it was big. They came in, got a three-and-out. We took the ball to start the game, got a three-and-out but instead of giving them the ball back, we were able to convert on fourth down and, as you said, hit the over route to [Phillip] Dorsett and ended up scoring on that drive. It's always good to play from in front and get ahead, so it was big. A good job offensively of taking advantage of that opportunity that we got off the fake punt. One of our problems with running the fake punt, usually, is that even though you get the first down, you've still got another let's call it 50, 60 yards to go. It's not like a fake field goal where you're already in scoring range and if you convert that, then it's usually a touchdown or you're very close to scoring. We've still got a long way to go, but offensively that was a big drive and a big conversion for us.

Q: How does the coaching staff adjust to injuries on the fly to make sure you have the right players on the field and don't have any miscommunication?

BB: Yeah, that's challenging. We obviously practice our backups to each position, but as you said, when multiple players are injured and particularly when it's on one play then it creates a little bit of a scramble. A bigger problem – I'm not saying that's not a big problem – but even a bigger problem is in the kicking game because you have six units on special teams. You have kickoff, kickoff return, punt and punt return, field goal, field goal block, so when you lose a player there, like when Nate [Ebner] went down, you lose a guy that's on five of those six teams and it's not always the same guy replacing him. So it could be this guy on this team, that guy on another team and so forth and then you add a couple of guys in, so that's challenging. For the coaches and the players, that's part of football, unfortunately. We have to practice those situations and everybody needs to know





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who's behind who. Sometimes it knocks you out of a certain grouping or a certain unit that you have out there, but you know that if you get knocked out of that then you back it up with something else, whatever your alternative group is. That's just something as a coach that you have to be ready to do in all three phases of the game. If you have a guy that's a key guy in one particular group, or unit or personnel grouping, and then he's not available, then you have to maybe go to a different grouping. You have to make that adjustment. Sometimes you put another guy in for him and stay the same. Depending on which one of those it is, that's the challenge.

Q: How important was it to establish the running game given some of the shots that Tom Brady was taking?

BB: It's always good to run the ball. It's good to throw it. It's good to score points. Whatever we feel like we can do, whatever Josh [McDaniels] and the offensive coaches do a great job of game planning and trying to set up things that we think will get us an advantage. Sometimes those play out, sometimes the defense takes those away and we have to go to other options. However we can move the ball, score points and gain yards, then that's what we're going to try and do.

Q: Did you have any thoughts about taking Tom Brady out of the game late with the score out of hand?

BB: What – on the kneel downs? What difference does it make?

Q: What about before that?

BB: No. I mean it's easy for you to sit there and say the game is out of hand. I mean, if you watch games in the National Football League, a lot can change in a hurry. The only time I think the game is in hand is when they're not going to have enough possessions to get the number of points that they need. Sorry, we just see that one totally differently.

Q: What did you see at the end of the game between Duron Harmon and Stephon Gilmore battling for an interception together?

BB: Yeah, it was kind of a seam route and on the seam you try to split that zone between the corner and the safety. Both Stephon and Duron got a good break on the ball, and both got there at the same time and both went up and high pointed the ball like they're supposed to do, so it was really well played by both guys. Usually when that happens, defensively you knock it away from each other and it becomes an incomplete pass, but Duron made a great play to just hang on to it in that situation. I thought both guys really looked like they got a good break on the ball. It was thrown into that seam, maybe hung up a little bit, but they got there. It's good deep field zone play by both of those players.

Q: You went five for five in the red zone today. What can you attribute that success to? Is it just better execution and better play calling?

BB: Yeah, well it's always good playing and good execution by the players. That's what everything is about. That's why you win games, is because players go out there and play well.





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Q: Greg Schiano is rumored to be the new head coach the University of Tennessee. What are your thoughts on Coach Schiano?

BB: Yeah, I think Greg's a tremendous coach. I've learned an awful lot from him and had an opportunity to spend a lot of time with him when he was at Rutgers and Stephen [Belichick] was at Rutgers and I'd go down there. The lacrosse and the football programs are in the same building. Then at Tampa and the couple of years after Tampa was really even better for, I would say, my relationship with him because he had those last two years in the NFL and I've learned an awful lot from him. He's given me a lot of – we talk about things that they did in their program, that he did in Tampa, that really had a lot of relevance to what we do. So did Rutgers, but it's a little bit different in the NFL. He's done a great job at Ohio State. He's one of the very best coaches I think in our profession. I have a tremendous amount of respect for Greg and the way he runs his program and the job that he does. I would say the most impressive thing for me is the way that our players, which we've had a lot of Rutgers players come through here, the loyalty and the I would say love of the program, the college program that they were in at Rutgers when he was there, how they maintained that for years and years after they had left. Not taking anything away from any other school, but I would just say that it's extremely strong. I think the relationship that he has with his kids, with his players and how well prepared his players are to come into this league is exceptional. I didn't know that, but it's good for him. He's a great coach. I'm sure he'll be a great head coach. Again, he's done an awful lot. He's helped me in a lot of different ways and I have a lot of respect for him.

