



NFL Mexico Game Media Conference: Patriots vs Raiders

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Estadio Azteca, Mexico City

Devin McCourty

New England Patriots

Patriots - 33, Raiders - 8

DEVIN McCOURTY: It's big. We talked about it, when we took off to go to Denver, about a long trip but making it worthwhile. So like we talked about during the week, being away from home meant preparing, doing a good job of preparing, and being together, executing our game plan. I think, both sides of the ball, we did that today.

We played at a high level. They made some plays, but I thought we executed our game plan and did exactly what we wanted to do today.

DEVIN McCOURTY: Yeah, I mean, this atmosphere was awesome. To be out here. When we came out in pregame with just shorts and T-shirts on, the crowd was going crazy. We knew, when it came game time, they'd be into it. They gave it for four quarters. So we definitely appreciated the fans coming out today, just all the support to the NFL. And it's always better to get a win, though.

DEVIN McCOURTY: We heard. We heard that it was crazy here. We heard the fans were going to get loud. Even coming in yesterday, we just saw it, and it seemed like a great buzz going through the city, just driving us in and everything. It was just a great atmosphere, and I think we kind of played up to that, getting momentum and getting energy from the crowd.

DEVIN McCOURTY: Jonathan Jones is in on all of them. He's been a big X factor every time he got in, defensively and obviously in the kicking game. It's something we talk about every week. Obviously, playing solid defense, executing the game plan, but changing the game with turnovers.

Even Duron's interception was a third down play, so it was kind of like a punt. But the energy it brings.

When the offense takes the field after we get a turnover, that's huge. With them driving, getting in the red area, before the half, that's what we talked about. Getting the stop and then Cooks on the deep ball to open the third quarter, that really changes the game.

DEVIN McCOURTY: Yeah, the Mexican fans did a great job today. We appreciate that. As Patriot players, we knew. When Oakland played here last year, they probably created some type of fan base. We definitely felt the New England support out there.

It was great. I thought, obviously, being at Air Force in that atmosphere, it gave me a great perspective. Air Force kind of rolled out the red carpet for us, showing us different things, took very good care of us. I thought that brought us together to see them, from a team aspect, and one goal preparation, going out there and executing at a high level.

Even the jumpers coming in on the practice field, they kind of did that for us. For that to be successful, everything has to be right. So I thought that was great for us to see that, and the time together bonding to get better as a team, and it showed today.

DEVIN McCOURTY: We're just playing together. We're executing. Like I always said, every year, you've got to kind of learn who you are. You guys ask this early in the season all the time, what's the team's identity? I think we kind of figure that out. We're understanding how we need to prepare, how we need to practice.

Whether it's a hard, full pad practice, whether it's a walk-through, we know what we need to do on each of those days. And when we do that, we give ourselves a chance. You see it paying off Sundays when we're going out there, everyone running around, everyone knows their job. It's all about execution.

DEVIN McCOURTY: Like always, in New England, we always get prepared. Everyone told us it was a good distance, but I think when guys did it, it wasn't as bad as we heard. We heard it was going to be even longer and more uphill. I think as guys did it to go warm up, it wasn't bad at all.

It was kind of cool walking in through the crowd right there and just feeling their energy and excitement.

DEVIN McCOURTY: Yeah, we just got to keep getting better. Obviously, you come out here and get a big win, but nothing is ever perfect. It's always great to break down the film and do it in a win, but you've got to learn from it. There's some plays we left out here that we know we could play better on the defense. I'm sure it's going to be the same in offense and the kicking game. You always want to improve those things because you never know when it's going to come up in a big game. So we're going to need to do that, and I think we have a good understanding of coming in there on Mondays or whether it be Tuesday, whenever we get in there, saying this is what we did wrong. Let's fix it and move forward. We'll continue to do that throughout the season.

DEVIN McCOURTY: I think we're a blue-collar team. We've got to go out there and work hard. Come out here after a late night in Denver, come out Wednesday, new atmosphere in Air Force, full pads, work on the run game, on playing aggressive, playing fast. I think guys know that. There's no complaining. There's no guys, like, man, we could be doing that. I think guys know that.

Last time at Air Force, we spent a lot of time in the meeting room with the coaches. Some long days. When I first went there, we went 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. I think we know we need that as a team. We've got to be in there watching film together, being together, studying. When we do those things, we're able to play well.

DEVIN McCOURTY: It was great. I thought the stadium, the locker room was A-plus when we came in. Everything you guys have in there was awesome. I think we took advantage of that, being in a new place but getting treated very well, and then being in this stadium with all the energy. I think there was 77,000 fans yelling and screaming. Awesome atmosphere.

DEVIN McCOURTY: Well, if we come again, I'm going to tell them that we plan on winning. Everybody else, I just tell them to be ready. It's a little hard to breathe out there and catch your breath, but I tell them it's an awesome atmosphere. The fans are really into it. Seemed like they want to party all night.

DEVIN McCOURTY: Same way you guys stay focused when you come in here and hear Bill Belichick doing a press conference. He reminded us all the time. I don't think anyone had more in front with him with all of the things they showed us. He's bringing it right back to why we were out here, the business trip part of it. As fun as everything was, the best part of this trip is coming out here and getting a win.

Those wins are always important because we've got to take the long flight back. It's no fun after a loss. It will be good to get on the flight with all the guys yelling and screaming for about two hours, and then everybody will be knocked out.

DEVIN McCOURTY: It was huge. Whenever we win the coin toss, we talk about getting the halftime swing of whenever we're out there defensively. I think this time we took the field, it might have been like five minutes or four minutes of trying to get off and get our offense back on. But most importantly, not giving up points knowing our offense is coming out in the second half.

I felt to that point that was their best drive of the first half. They were moving the ball. It was something we talked about during the week. Whenever guys got down the field, if the ball was loose, guys just having awareness. Jonathan Jones wrapping them up and then seeing the ball out and punching it. That was huge. Like I said, getting the ball out and getting off the field was big for us.

DEVIN McCOURTY: Yeah, it was great. I saw Steve kick one from deep at Air Force. I forget if it was yesterday or this morning, and Bill talked about the field goal range, and he was like, yeah, we saw Steve kick a 70-yarder the other day. We know, if we get close, he can make it.

So I think what Bill's saying, when we came up to kick the field goal, he said everybody move up on the sideline. That gets the whole team going, you kick a field goal from that deep. And then to carry that momentum into the second half, and Cooks had that deep touchdown. That really turns the game. You get three points before the half and seven coming out, that's ten points before Oakland can touch the ball again. That's huge for us.

Tom Brady

New England Patriots

Patriots - 33, Raiders - 8

TOM BRADY: How are you guys doing?

TOM BRADY: That was a great experience for us to come out and win. It was a great reception. It was a great stay. To win and to be here and to have two tough games back to back and kind of handle the situation, and training in Colorado and coming here, it was just a great experience. So happy we won.

TOM BRADY: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, that was -- to be here, like I said, and to play in a different country and to have everyone cheer for our team, cheer for me and cheer for my teammates is incredible. Hopefully, there's many more games here.

TOM BRADY: You know, I think the guys made a lot of great plays. I was just trying to deliver it to them. Our defense played great. Special teams played really well. Had some real critical swings there with the turnovers. But it was a good game by us. Happy we came on the road and beat another good team.

TOM BRADY: They did a great job. To step in like that, and David, obviously, wished he could have played but just couldn't make it. L.A.'s done a great job. He was battling out there, going against some really good players. So it was a great team win, great by the offensive line. They've really done a great job with the penalty situation and really moving the line of scrimmage and so forth. So great protection. We just have to keep it going.

TOM BRADY: You know, I think these trips come down to whether you win or lose. You remember it when you win, but if you lose, you want to forget it as fast as you can. We've been to London and coming here, been to other neutral sites. You really have to focus in on what you have to do, and you've got to try to keep your routine as best you can so that, when you come out there and play, you're ready to go.

We got off to a good start today. There was a good lead. We played from ahead, which is kind of the way we wanted to, didn't turn it over. So that's a good formula for winning.

TOM BRADY: Yeah, it was -- you know, this team does quite a few things with their front and the coverage. We talked all week about just being prepared for how they were going to play the game, and the tempo helped us out early. I think it settled some things in. We got down the field and scored on the first drive, which was good.

They play hard. They've got a good rush. I thought we found some spots in the zones. Cookie got by them a few times deep. Any time you make big plays, you can skip ten plays and hit one big one. That's really important. He's done a great job of doing that all year. He had a huge day for us.

TOM BRADY: Yeah. Josh made a great call, and it's a play we've run before. Cookie had a tight split, and then he fakes the out and runs out, go. The guy jumped it, and he was pretty wide open. I was just trying not to blow it. If I'd have missed that one, that would have sucked. He caught it in stride. It's tough to catch him from behind when he gets behind the defense.

TOM BRADY: You know, it's week to week. Again, it's -- we're trying to do it every week. We were trying to do it the first four weeks too and just didn't play as well as we were capable. Been playing well lately. If you play good in all three phases for us, it's tough to beat.

But, again, this week coming up is going to be a totally different plan, a totally different situation. You've got to really fill up the tank again and be ready to go.

TOM BRADY: I don't -- yeah. I don't know. I don't know. I mean, I -- yeah.

TOM BRADY: Yeah, it's important when you get the ball down into the scoring area that you score touchdowns. Too many field goals. And we have the best field goal kicker in the league. He knocks them in anyway, but it would be nice to always score touchdowns when you get down there.

We've been really close a few times, just didn't quite get them in. But that's going to be really important here down the next six games.

TOM BRADY: Well, it's a great experience. I've never been to Mexico City, but I'm definitely coming back. We stayed in a beautiful hotel, and I'm not even quite sure where we were, but I had a beautiful view in my room. Just a very historic stadium. I know there's been some really important sporting events here. It's really a privilege for us to be here to play in front of all of the fans of Mexico and all the people watching on TV. I'm sure there's a lot of people back at home watching. So, it's a great experience.

TOM BRADY: Yeah, it's high. I mean, you can really get them out there. So it helps with the kicking game too. We played last week in Denver. Obviously, the thinner air, the ball travels farther. So, you just try to put as much air on it as you can and let the receiver run underneath it. But it's a great place to play.

TOM BRADY: That was pretty cool. That was pretty cool. I've been around for a long time. So, if you're a fan of the NFL, then you've probably seen me at some point. But it's still an incredible experience to come here and play football in a different country and see the reception. Hopefully, there's more games here and the game continues to grow and other people get to see it in person and experience it because it's a game that I love. So do a lot of other people around the world.

TOM BRADY: Yeah, that was very much a surprise, especially since they were here for last year's game, they were very pro-Raider. We had a lot of Patriots fans here too. So that was great to see. Thank you guys very much.

TOM BRADY: My jersey's safe? I wasn't worried about it last time, believe me. Thank you guys. Take care.

Rob Gronkowski

New England Patriots

Patriots - 33, Raiders - 8

ROB GRONKOWSKI: It should be, yes.

ROB GRONKOWSKI: It was basically a business trip. We really didn't get to do that much, explore around or anything. We got to interact with the fans running out of the tunnel, coming out of the tunnel. That was a cool experience seeing all the fans go wild and everything, giving them high fives. So that was super neat.

ROB GRONKOWSKI: Actually, not. I wasn't sure what to expect. Never played down here, and it was a great experience. The way the fans were interacting was actually unbelievable. I mean, they were super loud. They sounded proud. And it was just a great experience overall coming here, and having that type of experience definitely makes it worthwhile and awesome.

ROB GRONKOWSKI: Oh, I mean, they were on top of their game, the Mexican fans down here. We had a lot of Patriot fans, too. Our fans always travel well, even down here to Mexico City. So just overall, it was a great experience. The crowd was super loud, super into it, and just made it an awesome night.

ROB GRONKOWSKI: My opinion on Mexican fans? They were awesome. Like I said, they were loud. They were into the game. They made it a pleasure coming down here and playing.

ROB GRONKOWSKI: Yes, it was. It actually exceeded expectations. So we did a great job as a team. Everyone played well in all areas of the game, especially special teams. Stephen with the 62-yard field goal, which was unbelievable at halftime. So it was just a fiesta all over the field, man.

ROB GRONKOWSKI: It's a week-to-week season. Every single week is different. Sometimes you start slow. Sometimes you start fast. We're in the thick of the season now, in the middle of it. We've just got to keep working hard, do what we do and just focus on what we have that week and don't look behind us.

ROB GRONKOWSKI: I would say so. We have a lot of guys that love the game of football, want to come in and work hard and get better every day, definitely.

ROB GRONKOWSKI: Oh, man, it's a whole different season, whole different team, whole different players. We just got to keep working hard. We take one week at a time. I mean, we just try to be the best team we can be every week and every year.

ROB GRONKOWSKI: It's kind of a similar trip. Kind of the same difference. Pretty decent flight, but the experience to London was first class and the experience to here in Mexico City was first class. So both games, I believe, we won by a good margin. Both of them went super well. Thank you guys.

Bill Belichick

New England Patriots

Patriots - 33, Raiders - 8

BILL BELICHICK: First of all, I'll always be a Navy man. Want to give a big shout out to General Silveria and his great staff at the United States Air Force Academy for the hospitality and the week that we had there.

This has been a three-leg trip for us -- Denver, Colorado Springs, and Mexico City. Asked a lot of our players, asked a lot of our organization, and they all delivered. We had a great, whatever, nine days. I think we really got better as a football team. We met all the challenges that we needed to meet head on and tried to work through them.

I thought, again, our players gave a great effort tonight. They came out and performed well early throughout the game and played really good situational football.

I thought the execution there at the end of the half, when we were able to get the field goal, obviously, it's a great kick by Steve to put ourselves in that position, but it's very much the way we talked about and really kind of practiced it this week that showed up at our Friday practice in Colorado Springs.

So credit really to the team and the entire organization. Again, all our support people did such a great job planning this trip and making all the accommodations, doing all the work so that the players and the coaches could devote their time and energy to trying to beat Oakland. That's a good Raider football team that we saw. Really appreciate everything they did, and good to be going home with two wins on this trip.

BILL BELICHICK: Yeah, look, we came a long way to win a football game, but that's what we did. We came down here, and our job was to win the game. That's what we did. It's a great crowd tonight, a lot of energy, great stadium, great environment. It was exciting to play here and coach here. Our job is to prepare to win, and that's what these guys did, and that's what they did tonight. That's what really matters.

BILL BELICHICK: Yeah, they did a good job in L.A. We're missing two guys on the offensive line. Obviously, some receivers in other positions, but those guys stepped in and played well.

Ted always works hard. Nobody spends more time at the facility than he does training and preparing. He had an opportunity, and I think he stepped up and did the most with it. That's what we needed, and that's why we have a good team. We have a lot of guys that do that.

BILL BELICHICK: Well, it's a long trip, and it takes a lot out of your football team. It's taxing, make no mistake about that. I give all the credit to our players and the assistant coaches and our staff for how hard they work to split the quality and performance on the field. We've done that before, but it was tough tonight against a good football team and a tough football team, but they stepped up and did it. So give them all the credit in the world.

BILL BELICHICK: Yeah, that was a big three points. Again, I think it really put an exclamation point on the situational football we talked about this week, and that's playing particular, how field goal range would be greater in Mexico City than what it was, than it normally is, and maybe even a little bit more than what it is in Denver. So that's the way it played out.

Tom did a great job, and Josh -- and Tom did a great job of getting the ball to about the 45 yard line, 44, somewhere in there, which was more than enough for what Steve needed. Steve hit a great ball. It was, obviously, a very well executed play, but that drive was well executed. Really, really proud of the way Steve handled it.

BILL BELICHICK: I don't really have any control over that. I just coach the team. I don't have anything to do with all the other stuff that you're asking about. We got in. We went to the hotel. We had our meetings last night. We came over here and played the game, and that was pretty much it for us.

We got a chance to see the city driving around a little bit, going back and forth between the airport and the hotel and the hotel and the stadium. Beautiful place, but we were here on business. We got done what we needed to get done. That's what's really important.

BILL BELICHICK: Well, yeah, really that's a credit to our players. Players win games. They're the ones that go out there and make the blocks, the tackles, the runs, the throws, the catches, the kicks. I think what it means is, number one, I've been doing it for a long time. Number two, I've coached a lot of great players. So I've been very fortunate to have a great coaching staff, great assistant coaches, and great players, and had a great opportunity to direct those people.

The credit goes to the players. They're the ones who go out and win. They won the game tonight, and they deserved to win because they played better. That's the way it's been on those other 270 games or whatever it is. Been very fortunate to have a lot of great players.

BILL BELICHICK: Well, every week is its own week. Hope to go back to work this week and get ready for Miami. We have great respect for them and their division games we have coming up, plus Pittsburgh. So just take it one week at a time. This is a big week for us. Come back off this trip to get re-acclimated dealing with Thanksgiving and so forth. There are a lot of things going on this week.

But we'll turn our attention to Miami as quickly as possible and try to get ready to go on that. It's just one week at a time at this point.

BILL BELICHICK: Brandin's been a great player for us all year. He does whatever he's asked to do. He's always ready to go. He's got great endurance, stamina, speed. Whether he's at the block, runs short routes, run deep routes, clear out, catch-and-run plays. He's willing to do whatever he needs to do. He works very hard to do it well and create the good timing with the quarterback and the other receivers in the passing game. Nobody works harder than Brandin. He's very unselfish. He's a great teammate, and we're fortunate to have him on our team.

BILL BELICHICK: That was a great kick. That was a great kick. It was a timely point in the game, both from the standpoint of going into the half, but also with the execution to take the ball over with 28 seconds or something like that and be able to get three points with the field position we had was a good credit to our overall team. Steve certainly did his job.

The offense did their job to put the ball in position for the kick. We got good protection and good operation from Joe Cardona and Ryan Allen and Steve's kick.

Joe Judge, Ventrone, our special teams coaches, we work very hard on plays like that, and we came up and were able to execute it. Thank you very much.

Jack Del Rio

Oakland Raiders

New England - 33, Oakland - 8

JACK DEL RIO: We had a rough day, couldn't get them slowed down enough and couldn't get ourselves going, couldn't score enough ourselves. So tough loss, but no injuries to report. Questions?

JACK DEL RIO: I think you said something about running the ball early? I thought we were able to run the ball early. We got 15 attempts in the first half. Running it was a part of moving it, and if it wasn't for that turnover right before the half, I think we were competitive, we're in the game. So that was a major turn of events right there to not get that and then let them run it out of the end zone when they hadn't had much going on. They popped one for about 20. So, allowed them to get a field goal, a long field goal up, which with this altitude you can make and he nailed it. So that was a 10-point swing right there. That was a tough one to swallow.

But I thought we did well early. I would like to have ended up with 30-plus rush attempts in the ball game, but you got to stay within reasonable amount of the score in order to stick with the run.

JACK DEL RIO: You're talking about the time that we played or --

JACK DEL RIO: No, I really don't. I don't think that was a factor.

JACK DEL RIO: Did we feel like the home team tonight? I think that the crowd down here is pretty excited for the Raiders, so we appreciate that. But when you travel four and a half hours, four hours, you're not at home. So we appreciate the hospitality, a lot of good people came out and supported us and it's a great atmosphere, but it's hard to call it a home game, really.

JACK DEL RIO: Tom's a great player. He's played great for a long time in this league, and we just couldn't do enough to slow him down today.

JACK DEL RIO: To me, I don't give any credence to those kind of questions. I mean, no offense, but I - to me it's a, we're professionals and to me, so long as you have hope, you keep your hope, you keep hope alive. So, we'll continue to scratch and claw and fight for everything we can.

JACK DEL RIO: Well, the biggest thing you have to do when you're playing a prolific offense, which they obviously are, is you have to be able to get off on third down. So, in the first half I believe we allowed five out of six on the stat sheet, but there were two other conversions allowed by penalty. So, at the end of the day you're allowing them to complete or convert seven out of eight on third down, and that's not going to get it done. To get them into third down, you got to be able to get off the field. And they're good at possessing it, that's what they do. They did a nice job of it and we didn't do a good enough job. But to me that's the biggest thing, between that and generating turnovers. And we're having a hard time generating turnovers. That's the biggest area.

JACK DEL RIO: Yeah, a little bit. We need more production. We're willing to try just about anything and we talked about being lean there and needing more production from that spot. And he's a talented kid and it was probably asking a little too much, but we are going to roll those guys, we rolled our guys in the secondary tonight, and we're going to do that. We have got to do that until somebody starts playing well

enough to stay in their full-time. We're not playing really well on the back end and we have to find a way. And we're going to make it competitive and let guys challenge for it and challenge for time and the guys that play the best are going to play the most.

JACK DEL RIO: He just got -- he had his eyes in the back field and let the guy run by him.

JACK DEL RIO: Well, there are would have, could have, should have that keep coaches up at night. So, yeah, it's a different ball game if a lot of things happen differently, but you can't play that game. I mean you get a chance, you get an opportunity, that chapter's written now.

So, certainly catching the ball, we had three drops early, hanging onto the ball near the goal line there, getting off on the third down, those are all areas where you have an opportunity. And what happens is the team that executes the best is going to go home happy. They executed way better than we did tonight.

JACK DEL RIO: I heard that. I think Will mentioned that before I came up. They have done a nice job for us the last couple of years. If this was a road game I would enjoy it. We just stop making them our home games, we'll be fine. All right. Appreciate it.

Derek Carr

Oakland Raiders

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DEREK CARR: Yeah. That's something that we talk about all the time. In Miami we did a good job of going down and scoring before the half. We talked about how important that was. So any time you turn the ball over and then they can get the ball right before the half and go score, then get the ball back again in the second half, it's a good thing for that team.

DEREK CARR: Yeah. I got to throw the ball better, the drops -- it's got to be something to do with me, I got to throw it better, I got to put it on them, better timing, it's on me. It's on me to get that fixed and I'm going to work to do that.

DEREK CARR: Yeah. They do a great job of -- they don't do anything special, they just do everything right. You sit there and in the first half they don't have any turnovers, they don't -- I don't think they had a penalty. And they do the little things right and it starts in the off-season. It starts how their culture in their building and all those kind of things. It's something that we're building, it's something that we're striving for, that efficiency and those kind of things. But, obviously, we have a long way to go.

DEREK CARR: Yeah. The thing -- hard thing for us is we actually felt like we moved the ball well as a unit. We just didn't score. Whether it was a turnover, we had the matchup long to Johnny that we wanted and then things happened. There's little things in there that we felt like we were seeing it right, we had a good plan moving the ball, those kind of things, but then especially the first half, that one killed us. Going down there and then we're not trying to do wrong, we turned it over.

DEREK CARR: Very impressive. He's a walking Hall of Famer, everyone knows that. He's definitely one of the best to ever play the game.

DEREK CARR: I learned a lot from him when I was in college, just watching him prepare and those kind of things. But when you become competitors, and you learn about the game, you more want to beat them than take things that he's doing and try and emulate it. But he definitely does a lot of things that you want to emulate, for any quarterback, and he deserves all the credit and everything that he's going to get. First ballot Hall of Famer, fantastic player. But when you're playing him, you just want to beat him.

DEREK CARR: For us, even if that wasn't the case, there's no doubt in my mind, I stood in that huddle down 30 with my guys, everyone hurting, everyone mad. And we looked at each other during one of those timeouts and nothing changes for us. We are who we are, we're not going to turn on each other, we're not going to turn on anything about what we do. Obviously, we know that our culture and everything that we do works, because we have seen it work. So there's little things that coach is going to hit on and we'll let him do that. But I mean me hitting on them and those kind of things, that will never happen, as long as I'm here.

DEREK CARR: You know what, traveling down here, I think it was like four hours or something like that, and getting here, I think that hospitality was great, but it really wasn't, it wasn't the coliseum. That feel. Now, we loved playing here, we loved coming down here and playing, but it felt more neutral.

DEREK CARR: We definitely know how to travel, we definitely know how to do that part of it. I don't

think guys felt out of shape or anything like that or, you know, when you eat, staying on your schedule of eating, when you're in a different time zone and all those things, I don't think that that hurt us. I think that we do that really well.

DEREK CARR: Oh, yeah, it's awesome. I definitely love it. I think it's great for the NFL and I think it's great for the fans.

DEREK CARR: Yeah. We definitely ran the ball well, definitely efficiently. I don't know how it ended up statistically and those kind of things, but when it was a game, we were able to run it efficiently and we had a great plan, great plan for these guys, and in both the pass and run game. But like you said, when you're down, you just got to go to throwing it.