

# Chicago Bears Media Conference

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## Coach Lovie Smith

### Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Bears 23, Texans 20

LOVIE SMITH: It's hard winning football games when you can't finish. Just kind of get into the core of it right away. Defensively whenever you give up that many yards rushing, the quarterback -- you've got to be able to control him a lot better than that.

We haven't given up a whole lot of big explosive plays until today, but those runs really did hurt us, starting off with the reverse and starting the second half off, that really hurt us. Whenever a team is able to rush the ball for that many, it's just going to be a tough day.

Took the ball away. Pitre did a good job, big sack, a couple interceptions, which was of course good for him, but -- Hughes I think had a couple sacks, but just up front we didn't play well.

Defensively we could talk the rest of the day about what we didn't do with it except take the ball away a few times. Offensively same thing, can't turn the ball over. You definitely can't have a turnover in the end zone. That really hurt us. Of course the last one did, too. But Dameon Pierce is always going to do some good things that we like, but overall offensively couldn't sustain enough drives. We had our opportunities.

Special teams-wise, Deshaun Watson, that was a big return that really helped us a lot, but overall just not a good day. Didn't look like we were a good football team out there today. We played a lot better than what we played today.

I'll take your questions.

#### **Q. Why do you think Davis Mills is struggling there in the fourth quarter?**

LOVIE SMITH: It's like everybody else, we're just not quite there yet. I wish I could tell you exactly -- if I could tell you exactly why, I would tell you. I would tell him not to do it. But things just didn't go. Got to make better decisions, got to protect the ball. That's something we have done is we

haven't turned it over an awful lot. Today wasn't that day, though.

#### **Q. You were having a lot of success with fullbacks early. After Pierce fumbled twice, after the second time, was there kind of a lack of trust in him the rest of the game?**

LOVIE SMITH: No, we came back to him later on. It doesn't -- whenever you put the ball on the ground, it's not a good thing, but we're not going to stop playing Dameon just based on that. Just got to protect the ball better like everybody else.

#### **Q. On the interception, the second one, what did you see? Is that an older pro Roquan Smith reading the quarterback well?**

LOVIE SMITH: That's what you've got to say right now. I'll have a lot better look at it later on, but that's a critical situation. That's a time when you cannot have a turnover down in that area, and it's pretty much over if you do.

Can't let games come down to one play there. I'm more upset about that interception in the end zone first, but when you get down there, you've got to be able to capitalize with a touchdown.

#### **Q. Just to clarify, Dameon Pierce wasn't taken out because of the fumble?**

LOVIE SMITH: No. I mean, when I say taken out, we have a rotation with Dameon. Dameon is our tailback; he can't fumble the ball in that situation.

#### **Q. What's the level of frustration when you guys have been close enough to win games and you haven't played (indiscernible)?**

LOVIE SMITH: I mean, looking at the glass half full, that's what you would say. But the other way of looking at it is that when you're that close, you've got to be able to finish. The opportunities that we're talking -- we're not talking about outstanding great plays that we have to make. They, of course, protect the football and don't give up some big plays at the end. Going in, starting the second half, get a field goal. Then to let them go right back down and let them take the lead like that. Some of these things we can



clean up. Our tackling just wasn't good enough today, too. Once you don't tackle well and you give up some big plays, it's going to be a tough day.

**Q. How do you reconcile, you were able to put a lot of pressure on Justin but they obviously ran for a lot of yards. The tackling, is that where you see --**

LOVIE SMITH: I think tackling is some of it, but there's discipline that goes along with containing the quarterback when he's passing. There's discipline that goes along with maintaining good gap integrity, and we didn't do that at times.

Normally when you see a big play, there is a bust or somebody just not trusting the defense and assuming that they have to do somebody else's job, too. That's what was happening a little bit today.

**Q. To not capitalize scoring off of Pitre's interceptions, what does that mean to the team and how does the offense respond whenever they know they're getting an extra possession there?**

LOVIE SMITH: Well, I talked about what the defense needs to do, too many missed tackles, can't give up the big explosive plays, all that. Offensively when we do take the ball away, when there is a positive play from the defense, it doesn't do any good to take the ball away if you don't get points off of it. It's about that. Take the ball away, you need to be able to get points off of it.

We had favorable field position a few times with that.

**Q. With the fourth quarter offensively, the last couple of games those have been some struggles. What so far with your conversations with Pep is leading to some of those issues you might have seen today?**

LOVIE SMITH: Well, it's just not one, it's just not the fourth. A lot of times it comes down to the fourth, and we didn't make some plays there at the end, but we're talking about total body of work, where we're in a position where everything is not on the line at the end of it. This is much that as it is just the fourth quarter.

As we look through each play, each series that stalled, there's something major seemed like that we did.

**Q. Was it at all a surprise that you weren't able to contain the Bears' rushing attack today?**

LOVIE SMITH: Is it a surprise we gave up that many yards? Absolutely. That's not how we've played. One thing for a couple of -- the first wave of defense, but the big

chunk plays, one over 50, where they had two plays that were almost 100 yards. You can't do that. We're not set up that way. We don't play zero coverage. We should have a last line of defense, a safety in the middle of the field.

So a lot of things have to happen wrong for them to be able to get some of those plays.

**Q. They have a good backup in Cleo Herbert but for a standout running back like David Montgomery to go out that early and for them still to get that many yards, does that sting a little bit more?**

LOVIE SMITH: I can't say it stings any more. It stings no matter who is carrying it from their side. It stings. Especially on plays where almost uncontested a little bit where we did something wrong. We missed some tackles, but most times with the tackles you're going to get them down for a minimum gain. Those big explosive plays, that's what you just can't win football games if you do that.

**Q. It seemed like Mills had a lot of tight windows. That end zone interception to Cooks was tight there. What did you see about how they played you guys defensively?**

LOVIE SMITH: Oh, there's tight windows sometimes in man coverage, different coverages, but through the course of a game, there's not going to always be tight windows. We had an opportunity. Just got to be able to capitalize on those when it's not a tight window and we have an opportunity to make a play. Got to make better decisions.

**Q. You stressed Davis' turnovers. Overall otherwise did he play well enough today?**

LOVIE SMITH: I can't say that anybody played well enough today. It's just hard initially after the game to say -- when you lose, to say that somebody played well, because if you're playing -- there's normally a play out there that someone could do that could have changed the outcome. Right now as a team we're going to take this loss. Give the Bears credit; they earned it. Got to make more plays than that, though.

**Q. I know it would be better with a win, but is it still fun for you to come back to Chicago and coach NFL football at Soldier Field?**

LOVIE SMITH: It's fun for me to coach football, period. Chicago, I know I have a history here, but I have more fun when we're at home in Houston.

Those days are long gone. Today, we needed to get a



win, and it was about us getting that first win today, and we weren't able to get it. Simple as that.

Thank you.

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