

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Mike Zimmer

Press Conference



Minnesota Vikings 23, Houston Texans 23

MIKE ZIMMER: Nice to get a win today. Our guys overcame a lot of things during the week as far as all the different things that the league had us do. We even had a couple things happen before the game that we had to overcome, but I was proud of the resiliency of the team today. You know, we got a big turnover on the special teams, on the punt and defensively I thought we played really good in the first half, and offensively in the second half we did a great job of coming back after some big -- after they scored a couple times.

I thought Justin Jefferson made some outstanding catches. Kirk made some really good throws today. Obviously Dalvin is a really, really good football player, running the offensive line lane, protected well. Anyway, it was good to get a win.

Q. What did you have to overcome before the game that you had mentioned?

MIKE ZIMMER: We had -- well, during the week, we had to take two tests every day, and so one of the tests came back of one of our starting players was a false positive. He had to take two more tests when we got to the stadium and then we had three other guys that had inconclusive tests and so they had to go retake tests again. So it just -- you know, we actually got the inactives in about ten minutes late because of that.

Q. Did that false positive show this morning?

MIKE ZIMMER: From the point of contact test, yes.

Q. Your defense at the end -- they got the stop when they needed it. What can you say about your defensive effort?

MIKE ZIMMER: I thought we played really, really well early in the ballgame. We got a bunch of three-and-outs. The time of possession was really good in our favor. I thought we were good on third downs today. We were good in the

red zone. You know, we didn't give up as many big plays as we had in the past. Gladney got beat on the one long one and then we got misaligned on the other one late in the ballgame.

You know, they battled and there's a couple fourth downs and we had to compete and it was nice to see them compete and fight a bunch of young guys, and you know, linebackers in there less than two week, three of the five linebackers didn't start training camp with us, I think is what I was told, you know, so playing with a lot of young guys. It's just the way it is.

Q. Obviously your emotions on the sideline when Harrison was ejected told the tale but what are your thoughts now, it was a penalty obviously but the decision to actually eject them.

MIKE ZIMMER: I love Harrison Smith like he's my son, first after you will, and you know, my issue has always been the quarterbacks can throw the ball in the middle of the field and there's no repercussions whatsoever. Harrison is not a dirty player. He's never been a dirty player. I feel like he tried to get his shoulder in there. They told me that the league office ejected him and you know, give -- they want to give us a penalty, fine, but don't eject guys. This guy is one of the best players in the NFL and one of the best people in the NFL. He's not a dirty player, so that's kind what have irritated me, I guess.

Q. Right after that, they had first and goal three times, Harrison is not on the field, second quarter, third quarter, fourth quarter, first and goal at ten, first and goal at eight, first and goal at four.

MIKE ZIMMER: We spent a lot of time inside the 12-yard line and we've been decent at it for the most part, I think our guys understand how to play in that area. Quite honestly, I can't remember the calls if they were blitzes or we're playing zone or playing man-to-man. I can't really recall, but yeah, you've got to know how to play down there. If you don't -- there's two areas there. You have to defend the down and distance plus you've got to defend the goal line and so we try to teach our guys that all the time.

Q. And how did George do? There were times where he looked a little bit lost but overall made some --



MIKE ZIMMER: Yeah, you know, it's hard for me to tell. You know me, I see mistakes. I did see a couple there, but he was actually our backup nickel today in case something happened to Gladney, and so he was preparing most of the week at nickel, so I actually asked him on the sideline if he knows what he's doing at safety.

Q. When you look at the number of broken tackles and yards after contact for Dalvin, what is that? Is that strength? Balance, what allows him to gain positives yards when it looked like it could be negative?

MIKE ZIMMER: I think it's both of those things plus hard. Dalvin has got great toughness and great toughness and physicality. He's a hard runner and he's got really good balance. I thought offensive line did a nice job blocking for him today and he scooted through there on some big-time plays.

Q. After that 55-yard missed field goal, I think it was 148 yards and 14 plays in those two touchdowns. What did you like from Kirk and just the way that he was giving Jefferson, giving Rudolph, those guys covered, still throwing to them and showing trust and one resulted in a touchdown?

MIKE ZIMMER: Let me say this, first. I told Kubs during the game, go ahead and be aggressive here. Don't worry about throwing the football. They were trying to load up on us to stop the run and I said don't be afraid to throw the ball. I thought Kirk made some great throws and he got some help from Jefferson and Thielen was wide open on a couple of them. Jefferson made a couple tough catches and I think Rudolph -- I didn't see the catch that Rudolph made but I know this was a lot of guys around him.

Q. You are sort of encouraging Kirk to make throws like that that are more contested?

MIKE ZIMMER: Yeah, it's just a feeling that you have. I think the more confidence he gets in understand that he can make those, the more that he will do them. At the same time, we have to be smart with the ball. I don't believe we turned the ball over today, did we? So that -- that's big, too. Taking care of the football, time of possession, I think our offense, we talked about trying to control the game offensively by their time of possession and by getting first downs and I thought we did that.

Q. What were your emotions as they were coming back there in the last drive and what did you observe on that play that was overturned?

MIKE ZIMMER: I couldn't see. I couldn't see the play. It

was on the far corner from where I was. They told me upstairs that the ball hit the ground and so I was glad of that. My emotions are figure out a way to stop them.

Q. Obviously last week, the run was working well, Dalvin had some big yards but it didn't quite open up the passing game like it did today. What was the difference today?

MIKE ZIMMER: I think we did a good job protecting and I think that helps a lot. You know, it's hard to remember back who even played last week to be honest with you. I thought we protected well today and that helps for guys to get open.

Q. Offensively over the past two weeks you've used a lot more pre-snap motion than you did during the first two weeks. Is this something you've been able to install late or why the change?

MIKE ZIMMER: We did a lot during training camp, and you know, it's just -- it depends on the defense that you're playing, really, if you want to get -- like for instance, they had a corner following guy today, so pre-snap motion, if he goes in motion, it's man-to-man. If he stays there, it's zone. Simple stuff like that.

Q. To follow up on Harrison Smith, any concern there could be a suspension?

MIKE ZIMMER: I don't know. I'm not -- that's not my call.

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