

# Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

## Michael Thomas

### Press Conference



Packers - 35, Texans - 20

#### **Q. Could you talk about what it's like to be playing for a team that has been as bad as you guys are?**

MICHAEL THOMAS: That was truth right there in that question, but it's very real, John. It's one of those things that's disappointing because we had such high expectations with this team. Clearly you look at it, the talent is there, but we have to go out there and execute as team. As players first, we gotta look at ourselves in the mirror, what can we do better as players, how can we execute the game plan better, how can we make suggestions to the coaches of, hey, for whatever reason, guys aren't understanding this point of the game plan or these plays aren't necessarily successful. Can we make suggestions to suit the players that we do have right now so that we can go out there and be in better positions to make plays and help this team win and just mesh together.

So I think as frustrating as it's been at 1 and 5, that's the reality. We are a 1 and 5 team right now, and going into this bye week, each man, player, coach, gotta look at themselves in the mirror first and hold themselves accountable and then hold their teammates accountable and coaches accountable, like what can we do better moving forward.

#### **Q. Michael, along those lines you all had some critical penalties that hurt are you.**

MICHAEL THOMAS: Absolutely.

#### **Q. You had a blocked punt. You recovered an onside kick. There were some moments there. How do you build on this and try to turn it around?**

MICHAEL THOMAS: Right. I mean, that's the thing, Mark. Every team in the NFL has firepower, but we have the capability to make those plays. We just have to be disciplined so that we can be consistent. The first drive, we get off the field. It's about to be a three and out. We make the play. We execute the defense as we were supposed to, and it's supposed to be getting off the field,

three and out. And we commit illegal contact, you know, and it extends the drive, and they go down and score a touchdown. Right? Couple times on offense, we make a big play, get down in the red zone, oh, but there's a holding penalty, so it backs up and now we have to punt. Special teams gets a nice punt return. D.C. gets a nice punt return. Oh, but there was an illegal block in the back or holding call and it negates. As a matter of fact, it backs our offense up. So we have to be way more consistent. We have the ability to make those big plays. We have the players on paper, again, we had such high expectations going into the season, but we just haven't been consistent enough. I think we need to continue to look at ourselves in the mirror and say what can we do better; and it's at that point say, hey, Coach, regardless of what's going on and where we're at, maybe some of the things we're doing ain't part of the game plan. The guys we have this year are not comfortable doing, but hey, let's make these suggestions and maybe this will help us win. And I think that's where we're at right now.

#### **Q. As one of the leaders of the team, what do you tell some of the younger guys and also older players when you're in this situation, you're not contending, you're not winning games, but you still have a lot of football left to play.**

MICHAEL THOMAS: Absolutely. Absolutely, Aaron. And, unfortunately, in my career, I've been in this situation far more than I've been on the contending for conference championships and divisional championships. And what you tell yourself, what you tell those younger players, what you tell the rest of the team and the vets is, man, this is a what have you done for me lately league, and they are going to be evaluating every single thing about this team moving forward for the rest of the season, about every single player. And so for a young guy, especially a rookie who's never been through this before, understand this now. This is not, ah, the season is over with, let me take it in. No. Understand this, they are evaluating how do you react now. What type of player are you when you're 1 and 5? Are you going to go out there and just dog it or are you going to go out there and try to get better every single week? Are you going to go out there and compete, regardless of what your records is, regardless of what your situation is, your standing is. I think a lot of vets know that. Even though the Texans haven't had a lot of success here lately, I think a lot of vets know that. But the young guys



especially just letting them know and understanding, nah, this isn't the time to tank it in, or pack it in. This is the time to actually focus on your technique, get better.

**Q. Considering how things have gone for you guys, do you still get the sense that the defense is still playing with confidence at all? How important is it for a defense to play with confidence.**

MICHAEL THOMAS: Absolutely, Brandin. That's a great question. I definitely think so, because, one, you know, obviously I mean everybody has pride within themselves as players. Nobody is ever going to just tank and dog it. Then pride within the defense. I think we were ranked 32nd in run defense, but guys had a chip on their shoulder going out there today, especially after the Packers put it out there that they were going to try to run the ball today. And I actually loved the way our front seven -- our secondary stepped up, too, helping with tackling in the run game. I liked how guys responded to that. And we had it on our mind today that we were going to stop the run game. For the most part we did. We let a couple out toward the end. But I think guys were playing with confidence. We lost Roby today early, I think after that first third down when we were supposed to get a stop and there was a penalty and the drive continued. So we had to make some adjustments. We had to make a some adjustments. And we needed to make a couple more a little faster than we did and that ended up getting us in the hole a little bit in this game, but at the same time we went out there and we competed. Guys who were out, they were like, hey, we're not going to just keep letting them do this, so let's make some changes, and we did it, and we made a couple stops. And they made some changes and they exploited some things. And then we just kept fighting, kept battling, man. So I think guys are playing with confidence. I think we're going to continue to play with confidence, continue to try to change the narrative about us as a defense.

**Q. Along those lines, how much did the absence of Bradley Roby actually affect the secondary from your perspective?**

MICHAEL THOMAS: When you lose -- what's up, Coty? Great question. When you lose your starting corner like that, I mean, it's going to affect. You had a guy who may have been playing, and part of our game plan was to saddle Davante Adams the whole game, and then other guys are practicing to gore some other guys. But then he goes down in the very first series, and now we gotta make mad shifts, mad adjustments. And then as any player or I guess anybody in their job, anytime you have to make adjustments, if you're not prepared and you don't have the right mindset, then you're probably not going to get the right results you want. So I mean we had guys that went

out there and they battled; they competed. And we needed to make a couple of adjustments, make some game plan changes, and we did throughout the course of the game. Maybe we could have done it a little sooner, but you definitely miss a guy like Roby. You plan on having your number one guy go against their number one guy all the time.

**Q. You spoke briefly with Aaron Rodgers after the game. What did you say to him?**

MICHAEL THOMAS: I said that's my guy, man. I mean, we got a mutual appreciation and respect for one another. Love to compete against him all the time. Love the stuff he does off the field. I think he respects me for a lot of things I do off the field as well. Yeah, I mean, that's pretty much what it was. And every time you get a chance to compete against a guy like that, you love it, but when you get a chance to talk to him after the game and that mutual respect is there, it's good, man. Again, somebody who went undrafted like me and I'm coming into the NFL year 9 and I'm getting respect from a guy like Aaron Rodgers, that means a lot to me.

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