

# Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

## Anthony Weaver

### Press Conference



**Q. What are some of the things you're saying to your guys, not only as their coach but as a former player going into a bye week where you are 1-6 and things have been rough?**

ANTHONY WEAVER: Yeah, I'm just preaching to these guys about not letting the negativity destroy their resolve. What happens in these situations, having been on both sides of this coin now, is as players, you're embarrassed obviously to be here. You go out and you're hearing all your coaches stink.

On the coaches' side, you hear your players stink, all these things. I tell the players we can't buy into that. We can't complain. We can't play the blame game, can't get defensive. Because the second we do, we're making each and every one of those people right. It become as self-fulfilling prophecy.

I tell them all to stay onboard, to fight for one another, stay together, because we're all we got. I think as long as I can continue to convey that to them and preach that to them we'll get just that. Those guys will fight and stay together.

**Q. What has J.J. meant to this city and franchise?**

ANTHONY WEAVER: Oh, man. One of my biggest -- when you look at my résumé, it's going to say he coached J.J. Watt. That wouldn't mean a whole lot unless he's done all the things that he's done for this organization, in the way that he plays; for the city; and all the things he's done as a philanthropist. I mean, he is a tremendous leader for this organization.

Obviously I wish we were having a better year because there's nothing that would bring me more joy than to send him out with a Super Bowl ring. I don't think you can put into words just exactly what he means to this organization and this city.

**Q. If you have to play for a while without Roby, like you did last year, what does that change about the way you go about covering?**

ANTHONY WEAVER: Yeah, it's difficult. Obviously Roby has a tremendous skill set, particularly in man-to-man coverage. Coming into this year we lost Gareon Conley, who was the corner we expected a lot of time to be across from him.

It certainly presents obstacles. But it provides opportunities for those other guys that need to step up, whether it's Vernon Hargreaves, Phillip Gaines, Keion Crossen. Those guys will be given opportunities. And you probably have to adjust schematically some of the things that you're going to do. But there's always answers. And it's my job and the rest of the coaches on this defensive staff to try to find.

**Q. The last time you guys were this bad at this point of the season, they brought you in next season as one of the reinforcements. How do you turn around an attitude of losing? Is more of it mental or physical?**

ANTHONY WEAVER: Oh, man. It's probably a little bit of both. This season, there's been so many obstacles obviously. Then when you make all the sacrifices that these guys have made, all the sacrifices that the coaches have made both in their time and just their work ethic, what they're trying to do. When you don't see the results, there's obviously frustration involved.

But this group of men was brought together because we were smart, tough and dependable. I told these guys we can't be tough when things are going right. We have to be tough, particularly mentally tough, in this situation right here.

I get it. It's a dire situation. We all realize that. I still have faith and believe in the character and the work ethic of the men in the room. If there was a group of men that could right the ship, have the ability to turn it around, it's these guys we're with right now.

**Q. We've talked a lot about the run defense, the difficulties you have had, gap integrity. You are coaching it, the guys listen to you. They try to carry that out on the field. At any point can you switch up personnel? You used to have a lot more four-man defensive lines. Do you see any change, any step in the right direction with some of the changes? What do**



**you think it will take to get it done and be a better run-stopping team?**

ANTHONY WEAVER: I think two of the last three games we showed an ability to stop the run. The Tennessee game, I mean, that was unfortunate. Derrick Henry, he runs on a lot of people. I do think there's strides and steps being made in the right direction.

We've made some changes. We've played J.J. at a lot of outside backer just to insert a bigger body. There was nothing that Brennan Scarlett or Whitney Mercilus was or wasn't doing. It's a sheer mass and force and size that we're just trying to get a harder edge there to try to limit some of the lateral run space.

But I think it's just a matter of consistency, guys consistently doing their jobs, setting great edges, guys fitting in the wall, whether it's guys at the line of scrimmage or on the second level at linebacker. These guys want to be able to stop the run. We're preaching it constantly. We know that when you sit where we're at in the league, that's usually a result of a lot of X-play runs. That's what we can't give up, and we were fortunate enough not to do that the last game.

**Q. When Roby goes down this past game, you tried a lot of different guys on Davante Adams. Was there any thoughts having Lonnie Johnson going back to corner? Maybe you don't want to do too much flipping back and forth, but was there any thought to having him do that, and maybe having him play more corner going forward? Do you feel like he's a safety and that's it at this point?**

ANTHONY WEAVER: I'd be lying to you if I said we didn't explore those options and have those conversations. I truly believe that we'd be doing the kid a little bit of a disservice if we continued to bounce him around from position to position.

So, I think right now, Lonnie is a safety. We have corners on the roster that have played the position day in and day out at practice. And they'll need to step up if we're forced to play without Roby for an extended period of time.

**Q. You have talked about trying to control the edges a lot and consistency. What do you do, other than the move with J.J., trying to get some mass around that side, what do you do to make a difference there? How do you get to the consistency?**

ANTHONY WEAVER: Yeah, I get what you're saying. For me, I think repetition is the mother of skill. If it's up to me, it's about practicing and playing the game more.

In this day and age, it's difficult. You miss an entire spring. We listen to all these different player loads so you don't get guys hurt. I understand that. I don't know how you get better at something if you don't practice and rep it more.

That, to me, is my answer. We try to do that on the practice field and try to maximize all the reps that we get. But just my opinion, I think you got to do more if you want to get better at something.

**Q. What is the likelihood we will see Gareon Conley during the second half of the season? How much has his absence been affecting the secondary so far?**

ANTHONY WEAVER: I wish I could tell you. That's definitely a better question for the trainers. I know in my talks with Gareon, he is frustrated. He is working. But really that's up to God at this point; it's in God's hands.

He's doing everything he can on his end. I know the trainers are, too. Everybody is frustrated. And obviously it has affected our defense.

He's a guy we counted on coming into the season to be one of our core players in the secondary. I think we saw what he was capable of doing last year. And we expected a jump in play coming into this year, just now having knowledge of the system. Any time you lose a starting-caliber corner before the season even starts, it's obviously difficult.

**Q. You've talked about the lack of reps or the missed reps and trying to catch up and some of the challenges that practice presents. Can you give us maybe an update compared to a few weeks ago when you talked about where Ross Blacklock and John Greenard are in sort of coming along as NFL players and what they need to do in the rest of the season to maybe see more opportunities to help you guys on defense?**

ANTHONY WEAVER: Yeah, I think those guys will be given opportunities just because of the work ethic they have and the effort they put forth on the practice field. Ross has earned more reps, and he's out there getting that game experience, which is obviously priceless for him, in the growth and maturation that has to occur in his career. There's definitely things we're still working through now.

And the same is the case for John. John got a few reps out there this week. As he grows more comfortable and gains more confidence and becomes more consistent in his technique and fundamentals, then he'll get more reps, too.

There's definitely a bright future for both of those guys for this organization.

**Q. I'm not trying to get you to give away trade secrets here, but given your situation at cornerback, is this something where you have to look more at playing zone? I guess to that point, you said earlier Lonnie is a safety, but do you view Lonnie as a player who would be better off as a zone cornerback, as if that could help you guys in your situation given the injuries?**

ANTHONY WEAVER: Yeah, in terms of the coverage that we're just playing as a defense, I think you always got to try to be multiple. You don't want to be too much, obviously. You want to major in something. But having an injury, maybe it does skew you to be more zone as opposed to man.

As it relates to Lonnie, I think Lonnie can play zone, he can play man. It's all about matchups in this league. But he has the physical skill set to be able to have success in both. He's very smart. He wants to do it. That's why you want to limit bouncing him back and forth because he has made strides at the safety position, you see him growing in the safety position.

I think you're doing him an injustice if you're constantly moving him around and don't let him get comfortable, locked in, excel at least at one position.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Anthony.

ANTHONY WEAVER: Thank you.

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