

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Zac Taylor

Press Conference



Q. Coach, talk about the second half performance by Brandon Allen on the offense. He had a career high passing yards, and you guys scored on every single possession in the second half.

ZAC TAYLOR: Tremendous, you know. And that was Brandon. Brandon was throwing with a ton of anticipation. He was doing a great job seeing the coverages, taking his check-downs when he had to. Really impressed with how he played. Really impressed with the guys around him too, the linemen. I can't remember, other than the last play of the game, him taking a hit, when he kept that ball on the keeper.

I just thought a really nice job by the guys up front keeping him clean. The run game wasn't always pretty, but those guys did a good job finding those holes and getting the game going for us.

Q. Zac, for you all to win this type of game, you had to come back there in the fourth quarter with the backup quarterback for the first road win since 2018. What does it say that you all were able to win this type of game?

ZAC TAYLOR: Just tells you everything you have to know about the character and resolve of this football team. Like I told them, we practiced in 10 degree weather on Christmas day to come down and play a game in Houston. Not one guy, I didn't hear one guy complain about it. They all knew we had to get some work done before we had to come play this big game.

Just couldn't be prouder of the work they put here in week 16. We're out of the playoff hunt. It's easy for guys to check out now, and we haven't had a single player do it. Just proud to coach these guys.

Q. Zac, you always mentioned moving in the right direction. Now to see that result twice in one week, how gratifying is that for you in this locker room?

ZAC TAYLOR: Extremely. These guys deserve it for the

work they put in. I see it every day. The world doesn't see it because on Sundays we haven't always had games go the way we want, but I get to see it the six other days of the week. We knew that moments like these were coming, and we've just got to continue to build off of it.

Winning two games in a row is really insignificant in this NFL, but it is significant for us right now, just everybody seeing what we've been through. It means a lot to these guys and something to build off of.

Q. What does it mean that other guys stepped up, like Samaje Perine, Brandon Allen, guys like that stepping up the way they did, what does that mean to you?

ZAC TAYLOR: Yeah, because football is important to them. Helping the team in any way they can is important to them. We have a huge collection of guys like that, and you can count on them to do their job and do it effectively and carry us through games like this.

Q. Zac, how do you think it affected your defense when Will went out? I don't know if it's coincidence or not, but they started to get on a roll when he went out of the game.

ZAC TAYLOR: We sure did. Will's a good corner, and DeShaun Watson is one of the best football players I've ever seen in my lifetime. I knew that going into this game. I knew it was going to be difficult. There was going to be moments on defense where it was going to be tough. He's done it to people over the last several years.

So losing the starting corner at that point was tough because this guy can extend plays and get first downs with his feet, and he can throw it a mile. He's got a great receiver in Brandin Cooks that can go get it. They can put you in a lot of tough spots. I did think it hurt us when Will went down.

Q. Coach, how did you think your tackles played? It sounds like Watt -- we didn't hear his name very much. It looked like you used more tight ends than usual?

ZAC TAYLOR: Not so fast, Jeff, but I thought that our tackles did a great job. I probably had my eyes on Watt about every significant play where we were throwing the ball down the field. Our tight ends also did an excellent job



too. They got matched up with him sometimes.

That was one of our keys to victory was controlling 99, and I thought that our guys really, really did a great job stepping up when their number was called and helping Brandon and the backs have some time back there.

Q. How much did the early screen game maybe help slow that down a little bit? Because you had some success early on.

ZAC TAYLOR: That was the plan, to show them a lot of different things. They had some younger defensive ends over there on the left side that we wanted to see how they were going to play and what their style was. I thought our guys did a real good job executing that stage of the offense.

Q. What does that say about your defense? The offense obviously had a really good day. The defense was struggling a bit, but they responded when they really, really needed it.

ZAC TAYLOR: That's life. You're going to face adversity at different parts of the game. They played pretty good in the first half, and obviously the third quarter, fourth quarter didn't go the way they wanted, but we just needed them to make one stop there. They did a great job. Sam got to the quarterback, and I think Margus recovered that ball. That was a huge moment in the game for us.

Again, things don't always go perfectly. Those guys are on scholarship too on the other team, and our guys stepped up and made the play when they needed it.

Q. Brandon made the three straight deep passes in the third quarter. Was that kind of a flipping of the switch moment for him? What did you, I guess, see from him in that stretch?

ZAC TAYLOR: He did a really nice job. Again, seeing the coverage on the throw to Alex Erickson down the middle. We hit that play Wednesday or Thursday in practice. Same look, same play. Those guys did a great job connecting. I thought A.J. and Tee had a lot of confidence outside going down the field, and we were able to feature them and hit some balls down the field, and those guys did a great job competing for the ball.

Q. What can you say about Tee Higgins? He's now 92 yards away from hitting 1,000 yards in his rookie season with different quarterbacks, no matter who's been out there. What can you say about his play this season?

ZAC TAYLOR: He's not -- being around him, it doesn't feel like you're around a rookie. He feels like he has -- matured is not the right word. He's had the right focus since day one and just really been fun to watch him, the confidence that he has as he gets through the season. He's made plays against everybody in this league. Just he's got an extremely bright future. His approach is tremendous.

Where we got him when we got him in the second round is unbelievable now that you look back on it, but we're lucky to have him.

Q. Coach, I recognize you're going to hopefully have a chance to win a third game in a row. Do you believe in carryover from the end of one season to the beginning of the next? If so, what would you like to see carrying over from this team?

ZAC TAYLOR: It doesn't hurt. Just closing out games, Paul, in these significant moments. We've had plenty of games where things don't go your way, and we need someone to step up and make that play. Really the play that Sam made, we've been in that moment several times over the last two years, and they've driven down and scored a field goal or whatever it was, but that needs to be a turning point for us. Where Sam made that play, and now other guys build off of that.

That's exactly what we're looking for, those key situational moments in the game, our guys stepping up and making the plays. And I do think -- we know we've got our work cut out for us. It's a very strong team. We know what they did to us the first time we played them. Our guys will be ready to play, and it's a great opportunity for us next week.

Q. The formula seems to be you did against Tennessee, when you beat them, no quarterback sacks, no turnovers. I mean, that seems to be play a clean game like that, you're going to score a lot of points.

ZAC TAYLOR: Yeah, it's not rocket science. You protect the ball, and you create turnovers. You win the turnover battle, and you're going to win close games like this. So winning the turnover battle 1-0. Again, the line did a great job, and Brandon did a really good job getting the ball out of his hands and not forcing tough plays. That's a recipe for success.

Q. Did you go with feel with Samaje. I know Gio had the 25 carries on Monday. Was that more of a feel thing with Samaje?

ZAC TAYLOR: Yeah, it's just the rhythm of the game. We have faith in both those guys and Trayveon also.

Sometimes it's just getting the flow of the game. We've got faith in any of those guys carrying the ball. We just rolling them through, and they're productive for us, and we keep it going.

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