

# Houston Texans Media Conference

Thursday, September 23, 2021  
Houston, Texas, USA

## Coach Matt Rhule Press Conference



Panthers 24, Texans 9

MATT RHULE: (In progress.) I don't even think most of our guys knew what was going on with Christian. We're so in the moment. Every one is kind of doing their job.

I think the one thing was I thought Davis Mills did a really nice job. If we didn't play man and bring pressure he was finding guys that were open. That's why he was drafted highly.

I thought Phil did a nice job getting away after they went down and kicked the field goal -- scored the touchdown before the half and after they kicked that field goal they started bringing some man pressures again.

We just have to trust our guys that they're going to cover, Rashaan Melvin, Sean Chandler, Donte Jackson with a huge stop on fourth down. Those guys all stepped up in the absence of Jaycee and Juston.

### Q. How are Jaycee and Juston?

MATT RHULE: Juston pulled a muscle. He was still moving on the sideline, but I think he knew he was going to be out. How long it is, I don't know, and sounds like Jaycee broke some bones in his foot.

So the extent of that, again, they'll have to do a full work up, so I don't know how long that will be or what the prognosis will be.

### Q. (Regarding contact with Jaycee.)

MATT RHULE: I don't know that it's that. I don't believe it's that. That's not been said to me. I don't know.

### Q. Multiple bones?

MATT RHULE: Sounds like it could be a couple bones.

### Q. What would you think the timeline...

MATT RHULE: I have no idea. I have no -- I honest to goodness have no idea.

### Q. Would you attribute some of these injuries to the quick turn around?

MATT RHULE: I don't know. I mean, that's a good question. I mean, I think the quick turnaround, but every team does it. We've been pretty healthy so far. A lot of other teams have come into these games and they've been down guys.

When it comes to a broken bone, noncontact, I don't know if that's that, but maybe some of pulls could be.

But it is what it is. We are where we are. We love those guys and we're going to help them get better. I said to Jaycee in there, You'll be back. Don't worry about it. Jaycee Horn is a special, special, special young man, special football player.

So we'll get the other guys ready.

### Q. How unique is Christian on what you do offensively?

MATT RHULE: Well, I mean, Christian just can kind of do everything, and so I think the biggest thing he brings is they have to account for him in every passing rep. They can't just double DJ, they can't just double Robby. They have to account for him.

Sam has done a great job finding other guys, a lot of off schedule plays that happened going to Dan Arnold, hit Tommy Tremble down the right sideline.

I thought Sam played in true progression today, but Christian is amazing at his ability to win one on ones, so people have to zone everything off, and that creates a lot of windows for other people.

### Q. With all the questions about Sam, so see what he did tonight when the chips were down for the offense and defense with the injuries, what does that say about him and what he means to you guys?



MATT RHULE: I think No. 1, if you watch the way we called the game it means we trust him. Even on the last drive we're throwing four verticals with him. I say to myself all the time, These are professional football players. They've been doing this their whole lives. Let them go play. Don't try to over-manage the game.

Sometimes you go for it fourth and half a foot and you don't get it and they make a play, and sometimes we go make a play. I think one thing about Sam, he has some moxie. He stayed in the pocket. Had that long one run called back, but finding Terrace on the third and 12, I mean, there were some huge conversions by Sam. 4.

Again, it's just him playing within the system, but also I think he has a courageousness, but he's not crossing the line going over the top. He's protecting the football and still pushing the ball down there, and look at the play Alex Erickson made. That ball, is it going to be picked, is it not going to be picked. Makes a great play.

So a lot of production from a lot of different places.

**Q. From the outset do you do you think Royce and Chuba played in Christian's stead and what might you be looking for from them?**

MATT RHULE: Yeah, I think they just have to be starting NFL running backs, and Royce has done that before. I told Chuba at halftime, That's why we drafted you, man. I thought Chuba was outstanding. At the end of the half we didn't give him a ton of chances, but I thought he got in there at the end and made some key runs.

When we can line up in four-minute offense and run and get the first down on two plays, especially versus that stout defense, that's a credit to the offensive line, credit to the tight ends and full backs.

I thought those backs hit it, and the minute Royce got in he made that nice run, cut the ball back on a dual play, which that's a veteran run. That's a guy that's played a bunch and saw it.

Those guys stepped up for us.

**Q. After Christian was out Darnold was sacked three times. How much did the protection break down without Christian, and how much do you think Darnold took on his shoulders in the second half?**

MATT RHULE: I don't think any of that was attributed to Christian. I think one of them was a deep shot that we were going to throw, and Tommy came back, and just have

to get on the guy; got knocked back into the quarterback.

The other one was just a nice effort. The guy reached and knocked it out, and the last one was we were pushing the ball down the field in two minutes.

They're good rushers and we knew they were going to be good rushers. Johnny Miller got banged up early in that game, hurt his shoulder and wouldn't come out of the game.

I think once they got to the second half, the offensive line just kind of regrouped a little bit.

Like we said, we practiced a bunch of one thing and saw a lot of the other. That's what you expect in the National Football League. That's why we have a system and our coaches adjusted.

I think the rest of guys, they love Christian, having him out there, but they also trust everyone else. I thought they played to the system. And I told our guys, This game will be won in the last five minutes.

I know Coach Culley. I know Lovie Smith. These guys are good coaches, and I know these players, they got winners over there. So I thought they hung in there and we just made a couple plays at the end.

**Q. You guys said you drafted Jaycee Horn with the hopes of being able to play more aggressive man coverage. With him out, do you have to change that approach or do you feel like they have been prepared enough to play more of that man to man versus zone coverage?**

MATT RHULE: Yeah, we trust those guys to play. Sean Melvin played the whole game. We're going to kind of stick with what we do, play our system. At the end of the day, we play a lot of zone, play a lot of man, playing some two-man at the end of the day.

I thought Phil dialed it up when he needed to to get the win, so we'll continue to do those things. Like I said, every one of these guys is a true pro. They're here for a reason. Opportunity comes, they get it, and they found a way to capitalize tonight, and hopefully they can do it after this little mini bye we have.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports