

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

Sam Darnold

Press Conference



Panthers 24, Texans 9

Q. Sam, what does it say about this team that after losing Christian you guys come out and play in the second half the way you did?

SAM DARNOLD: Obviously losing Christian is tough. I mean, he's a great player. So I really thought Chuba and Royce, when they got in there after that, did a really great job.

Yeah, losing Christian is tough, but I thought we did a good job bouncing back. In that second half we were able to put the first half behind us and really do a good job in the second half.

Q. Sam, looked like you had to do more when Christian went out. How did you approach that coming into the second half? Did you say anything to your teammates?

SAM DARNOLD: No. I mean, for us it's just executing the plays that are called. That's really as simple as it is for us. It's just executing whatever is called. If we call a play that's -- if the runningback is the first option on that play, just because Christian is out doesn't mean I'm not going to go to the runningback, you know what I mean?

Like I said, Chuba and Royce did a great job when they got in there.

Q. Sam, what was the mood at halftime after Christian had been in the tent? Did anybody address the team in terms of just like, Hey, we got to go play the second half?

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, no, I mean, we weren't told about Christian's injury. I mean, I assumed just because he wasn't there. But, yeah, it was -- just for us we had to put our head down and play a lot better. I thought we did a better job in the second half creating momentum and having a good tempo about us.

Q. You literally put your head down on that third and inches at the goal line. Can you describe that play and losing your helmet?

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah. It was hectic. There was a lot of things going on on that QB sneak. Yeah, I thought I got a great push back from I don't know who it was, I think Royce, and maybe Gio back there in the backfield. So, yeah, I mean, got in...

Q. How about the helmet itself? Could you feel it going?

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, just kind of slid off. I think that happened after I was already in the end zone.

Q. When was the last time you got two rushing touchdowns?

SAM DARNOLD: I have no idea. You probably know. Probably college.

Q. College or high school.

SAM DARNOLD: Probably high school, yeah.

Q. Take us through the first rushing touchdown. Was that a read play, or...

SAM DARNOLD: No, I mean, it was a good play by our offense to be able to get in there and do our job.

Q. You don't have to get too deep, but can you expand on it?

SAM DARNOLD: No, I can't. Sorry.

Q. Quick turnaround, injuries in the game, but you guys still gutted out the win. What does that say about this team?

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, I mean, we're resilient. We had a lot of guys in the building and with us in the OTAs, which kind of showed the type of team that we wanted to be. Then we went to Spartanburg. We had a great training



camp, a hard training camp down there in the heat.

Yeah, showed what kind of team we were when we practice against Baltimore in Indy. We always knew what kind of team we had. It was just about going out there on game day and executing. We've been doing a good job so far. We just got to take it one week at a time.

Q. How unique a player is Christian?

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, he's a special player. I don't know if there is any way to describe him. He's just someone -- I'm going to try to right now -- but he's someone who you can align anywhere, and I think the greatest way to see how great a player is is by how a defense has to game plan for them.

When Christian is out there you can see when he starts to line up in different ways that defenses have certain checks for him when he's out there. That's a sign of a really good player.

Q. How much was it a factor end of the second quarter where you got sacked three times after he left, and what happened in the second half to kind of stabilize that?

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, you know, it was just -- for me it was holding on to the ball too long. We were trying to push the ball down field a little bit there late in the second half, and just got to play smarter that way.

Got to understand, Hey, like, listen, to my feet. That's how I like to say it. If I start kind of climbing in the pocket too much or I feel like I'm holding onto it, I'll just get rid of it.

Q. What was Christian's mood after the game?

SAM DARNOLD: I mean, you know, he's sad.

Q. What did you say to him?

SAM DARNOLD: Just that I'm thinking of him and to take his time. We'll be all right without him. Obviously we want him back, but I want him to take his time right now and make sure he's good for the end of the season.

Q. Do you think he'll be back this season?

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, hopefully he will be. I'm being optimistic, but, yeah.

Q. Do you anticipate having to do a lot more without him?

SAM DARNOLD: No. I think for us, we're starting to find our identity as an offense, and I think I just got to -- again, whatever play is called, we just got to execute that play. That's my job, is to get us in the right play and make sure that we're kind of hitting on all cylinders and that the offense is moving in the right direction.

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