

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Head Coach Pete Carroll

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Houston - 13, Seattle - 33

PETE CARROLL: Well, we had a really nice day today. Took us a while to get going. They had a nice opening job. And then our guys settled in and did a really good job on the defensive side of the job.

Again, hold them to 60 yards and 70 last week. And that's really consistent play in a team that's trying to be balanced and stuff like that. So that's a really nice job by the fellas all day long.

Again, we get the shutout in the second half. It must be those halftime adjustments. I'm pleased that we continue to find a way to play good, consistent football on the defensive side of the ball.

It was a big day, a big day on offense. And we converted on third down, we ran the football, no sacks.

Great, great day to see Rashaad Penny come out like that. I'm so happy to see that. We've been waiting and y'all have been waiting, too, if you followed us around.

But you can see he really got loose and you saw the explosion and play making that he's got in him. It was on full display today.

Those of us that watch Tyler Lockett on a regular basis, I mean, this was another masterpiece today of just the body control, getting open, using the sidelines, the balls that Russ threw to him.

And just such a graceful, beautiful athlete. I was thinking of Lance Alworth, a guy back in the day he used to be a guy to look so graceful.

Tyler just looked unbelievable on it today and did a great job. A bunch of yards and a touchdown. Russ threw a great deep ball to get the score before half.

So it's also worth noting in how consistent the offensive line played today. Jake Curhan got his first start and did a

heck of a job hanging in there with the fellas. And I'm really proud of him.

But that whole group did a great job. 193 yards rushing is a big day for us and no sacks.

The last thing I'll say is that the third downs really didn't tell the story of the game. You know, we had a big day on offense, you can see when it happens.

And it's frustrating, but it was great to see them do that today. And the defense did really well on third downs. Again, just a continuation.

No turnovers by the offense, too. Ain't nothing more important than that. And so, it gave us a chance.

Q. With Penny, to see a guy who's been through so many circles, to get a game like that, just how much does the whole team get behind him?

PETE CARROLL: Well, they were jacked. Because he was running so hard. And the big plays, exploding. But he was running tough.

And, you know, we've been waiting for a little juice in the run game. And it was there today in a big way.

And I think -- I'm not sure if this is true, but it seems like he's only had -- that's, like, the first time he's come back-to-back. He's really had only two games in the -- the one before and then this one. But I don't remember when he did.

To see him come back and play again was the accomplishment. And so, now, we got to get him back again this week and get him back out there. And hopefully he'll feel good about it and be able to contribute approximate.

Q. Was the plan going into it to go with him as much as you did or was it the hot hand?

PETE CARROLL: I was hoping it would go that way. Because we just wanted to see what he could do. And it



was really going in even. But just right off the bat, we saw him and we said let's stay with him and see how far we can ride him through it and kind of bust out. You know, and he did. So he's playing well.

Q. Did he make it out okay?

PETE CARROLL: As far as I know, yeah.

Q. (No microphone.)

PETE CARROLL: He's shown us this. He's done this in the past and we've seen the big play ability that he has. It's been such a long time since his injury. It's been almost two seasons now, you know? And he's tried like crazy to get back.

So no validation on the pick, just validation that he's finally back. And we've seen it before. The real test is to see him keep coming back, keep coming out and being a big factor. I mean, obviously, you can see how much the team can benefit from having those kinds of plays.

Q. You mentioned Lance Alworth as a comparison. Has Lockett gotten better in the past few years?

PETE CARROLL: Well, I think -- did he go over a thousand today?

Q. Yeah.

PETE CARROLL: I mean, he's just an amazing player. He's just an amazing player, you know? And because of his connection with Russ and like I've said to you before, those are two marvelous, all-around athletes with great instincts and savvy.

You put those two together with enough time to develop, this is what you see. They're just magic plays.

I mean, how about the two-point play? You guys have seen it. I haven't seen it yet. It was a flash to me. I can't wait to see on there the catch and all that that happened. And Tyler just got it.

So many guys don't make that play right there, you know? But just in awe about how good he continues to be. He continues to show you he's a great player.

Q. Coach, can you talk about Russ controlled the game today?

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, I thought he was comfortable throughout. You know, we started quick, had some nice drives early. He just felt comfortable the whole time. He

was on it. One of those sequences got caught up on a play call, but it was just what happens.

And the whole game I thought he was smooth. He did some nice stuff at the line of scrimmage and dictated, you know, some calls and things like that. He looked great like we counted on him to do. Him and Shane were on it today.

Q. How's Brian?

PETE CARROLL: Brian sprained his knee. Let's just keep it at that right now until we know more.

Q. The same one from last --

PETE CARROLL: No, it was a different one. Yeah, unfortunately. So we'll see what happens on that one. Really, we should make mention of Gavin Heslop, the play on the sidelines. I haven't seen it yet but I was told all about it.

Q. (No microphone.)

PETE CARROLL: He's going to stay in town tonight. And that's as far as we know right now.

Q. Does he need surgery tonight?

PETE CARROLL: I don't know. There's a good chance.

Q. (No microphone.)

PETE CARROLL: You know, we were just trying to feel them out, see what they were capable of doing and find the way with them a little bit.

The first drive shouldn't have happened. It was the first drive that really hurt us. But, you know, we weren't trying to overdo it. We were just trying to get a feel for them. And we've seen these guys.

Q. (No microphone.)

PETE CARROLL: And so, that's just kind of the way that the game went. But you saw, we got stronger as the game went on. We had a good sense of keeping them under control.

Q. What picked you -- obviously, aren't used to going through the type of season you've gone through. It looks like now the ship's rided and you guys can put up a number of wins together here in the year.

PETE CARROLL: Do you want to fly home with us?

Q. (Laughing)

PETE CARROLL: You can have my seat -- as a matter of fact, I don't get to sit up there today.

But we've always finished really well. I mean, you check our numbers, the last four games of the year have been where we always have been to our best.

And I've been talking about it and setting us up to get to the -- (no microphone.)

But you can't get it going when the fourth quarter starts in the 17 game schedule. But we're going to see what we can do with the next four and take it as far as we can.

These guys are excited and they know and they can feel it. There's nothing to keep us from moving ahead. And so, I'm really looking forward to this challenge and see what we do with this last month.

And, really, because we've been so consistent over the years, that this is that time again. And I'd love to see after all the stuff we've had to get through, you know, if it does turn again. I'm happy to see the finish.

Q. Al Woods made a number of plays in the backfield. What did you think?

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, he played really good. And Al is playing terrific football. In the role he's playing in the run stop and that we're calling on him to do, he's doing it.

He had five tackles today. And he's -- but he's impacted way more than just those numbers. It's just his factor in controlling the line of scrimmage.

Q. Was there some different alignments?

PETE CARROLL: How old is Al?

Q. 44. Was there different alignment stuff that you did? I know you talked about last week playing him on one side.

PETE CARROLL: (No microphone.)

Q. Did you see his sack laying on the ground?

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, that was great. He's usually really good on his feet.

Q. What happened to D.J. Reed?

PETE CARROLL: He had a strain in his neck. And he got

hit in the chest. So he -- I don't know the seriousness or anything about that.

Q. Sidney Jones, was he okay?

PETE CARROLL: As far as I know. Yeah, he did fine.

Q. Were you just rotating him at the end of the game?

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, just getting him some work. Getting him going. And sure enough, he was ready to jump in and play.

Q. (No microphone.)

PETE CARROLL: From what I understand, kind of as the game was going, there was a couple plays in there that he didn't control. But overall, he played really well. They ran his way a lot.

And Jake's a good prospect now. He's a good prospect. I was really proud of him. He really pulled it off.

Q. In the locker room after the game, did you remind these guys this is your signature, these December games? The last four games of the season, does this feel familiar?

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, they've been hearing it. There's always been a buildup of the finish. And the mentality that it takes. I was calling it a big week this week.

Because we looked, to me, we fundamentally continued to improve. And we had a ton of big hits and big plays that happened in the last three or four weeks leading into it.

And it's something that we -- sometimes play deteriorates during the season, particularly when you're struggling. But I'm really proud of them. We're still moving and we're going to get challenged like crazy this week. And go all the way through the finish.

Q. You guys had seven tackles for a loss today. Two and a half yards per carry again. You see it week in and week out, you guys are really controlling the run game. But what else are you seeing there?

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, that's a good question. What have you seen and I made mention of it last night, just to the guys watching Friday's practice, again, where we -- it's the last day of the week and we're trying to fit everything in just right and make sure everybody knows what's going on.

We had a beautiful day on Friday of guys just really taking pride and being on the spot for the plays. That's the



discipline it takes to play the running game like that happen.

It's not just you hit him, throw him on the ground and you make the tackle. It's about discipline. And the guys were on it. It was so sharp that -- it was totally expected that we could do that again. And so, we'll see if we can keep it going.

Q. What has L.J. done at practice to keep on cracking the lineup like he has?

PETE CARROLL: He's just been working his tail off all year. Giving really good effort every day, great attitude. I just want to give him a chance and see what he can do with it.

I like that he's really active on his pass rush. And he's got good length, as always. And just seeing if we can get a combination that's going to give us a little bit of a spark. I can't tell you how it went for him. But that's the reason. He just deserves it.

Q. (No microphone.)

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, he's a good player. He's doing it. And what's he got now, he's got six? Yeah, let's keep going.

Q. Have you seen any commenting with some of these PAT misses with Jason?

PETE CARROLL: I don't know what to say about that. He's a great kicker. I don't know, I don't know.

I'm more concerned about the kickoff he kicked off out of bounds. Because he was pissed about the one he missed. He's a great competitor. He knows how to control stuff and get back in it, and he will. I don't know why that's happened.

Q. You get the ball back there, obviously, earlier and hoping to score. I guess kind of the sequence how that was, getting the ball back there -- (no microphone.)

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, everything was just aligned just right. Russ got great protection on the play. He got a second look at it and he just kept running and going. And that happens.

We work on it all the time in practice. Russ loves to go and look for those guys on the scrambles. It was kind of a semi little -- I can't tell you how much he moved. But he moved a little bit to get some space. And those guys just did it

again, you know?

Q. (Question concerning Davis Mills.)

PETE CARROLL: About Davis?

Q. Yeah.

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, I thought he did a nice job. He's composed. He throws the ball real well. He's an accurate thrower. Strong enough.

I mean, he -- this is what we saw on film. He looked like a good player. And so, he did it again. We didn't slow him down much earlier.

But all in all, you know, he got a bunch of yards late in the game and all that. I thought he did pretty well. That's kind of what we saw and we expected it. I'm sure the coaches are seeing it. I'm sure that's why they made the move they made.