

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

Coach Lovie Smith

Postgame Press Conference



Texans 20, Colts 20

LOVIE SMITH: To start the game off, you want to have a winner, you want to play well. We had our opportunities. We talk a lot about finishing. We didn't finish the way we would like. 20-3 lead at home, you would like to think you could finish that off, but we didn't.

Some good things we did early on to get 20 points. Offensively OJ Howard coming in, making an impact right away the way he did. But never really got the running game going completely, so the passing game, it can help an awful lot.

Passing the ball, though. And I thought the big sack there where we had the turnover -- I think we were plus 2 at the time turnover ratio-wise, that really kind of gave them momentum going the other direction.

They were holding on at the end. Both teams were a little tired there at the end.

So we had control, they had control of course with the field goal, and once they missed it, we had an opportunity.

On the 3rd down play before the 4th down play we had, the plan wasn't to lose, of course, yards on that, and I made a decision on 4th and 3. And there's a lot of football left going into the season. It's kind of as simple as that. I feel like a tie was better than a potential loss.

Defensively we weren't really stopping them an awful lot there at the end.

I'll take your questions.

Q. It was 4th and 3; did you guys think before you decided to punt?

LOVIE SMITH: Yeah, well, we thought about it. I knew if we didn't get it they had time, of course, and at the time it's not like we were playing our best defense then.

We had made it, we were in position. Just felt like there, based on what all had happened in the game, that was the right decision.

Q. First time you all went to Dameon Pierce a lot more, but then started to go to rex Burkhead. Why was that?

LOVIE SMITH: Well, I mean, as we look at the plays now, of course, Rex of course got a chance to carry the ball more, but Rex -- passing plays, passing situations, Rex was our lead back in that situation, so that's kind of what happened.

In an ideal world, of course, when you have a lead, you would like for that not to be the case, but once they came back at the end, that's when the numbers started changing a little bit.

Q. In terms of momentum, the sack and forced fumble, how did you feel like that changed the complexion of the game?

LOVIE SMITH: It changed it completely. We had control. In the end it was about playing field position, us not turning the ball over, especially in a favorable position, which we did.

So those are things you have to clean up from week 1 to 2 that can cost you. If not cost you with a loss, at least force you to tie.

Q. With that sack and with Davis Mills, the fumble there, what did you see with that, and where was the miscommunication?

LOVIE SMITH: You know, I'll have to watch the video a little bit, but when a guy comes clean like that on the backside, you kind of figure out maybe who the culprit was, but I didn't see it. So we'll watch the video and see from there.

No matter what the situation, bad on our part.

Q. Lovie, you said before the 4th down decision to punt that if you had not lost yards, would you have



gone for it then?

LOVIE SMITH: Yeah. I felt like we had two plays, that it was two-down territory as I looked at it then before the loss.

Again, just made the decision based on us losing those yards that's what we should do.

Q. The decision to punt, why not just go for it on 4th down to try to see if you can get in field goal range instead of just punting and settling for the tie?

LOVIE SMITH: Because I felt like a tie was better than a loss in that situation. It's a decision that you make. If you would guarantee that we were going to get it, then it was good. But if you miss it right there and they had stuffed us on the play, they have one play they're in position.

It's not like we were playing our best defense at the time. We were drained. We were gassed a little bit. That's how it goes. In an ideal world, you don't want a loss, you want a win, but if you can't get the win, sometimes you settle for the tie. A lot of football left to go in the season.

Q. Kenyon worked in with the first team offense. Is that because you just wanted to see him work in or was anything going on with Justin?

LOVIE SMITH: Yes, yes, it's been a game plan. Kenyon had an injury in training camp, kind of knocked him back a little bit, but he's going to be our guard. Rookie coming in, we had a plan when to get him in and then play him from there.

Q. At the start of the fourth quarter you guys have roughly something that might be in field goal range. What goes into the decision making on deciding to punt versus giving (indiscernible) an opportunity there?

LOVIE SMITH: Well, it was, like you said, it was roughly. Didn't feel like that was it at the time. Felt like backing them up, playing defense was our best option then.

Q. Once you got the 20-3 lead and the momentum switched the other way, did the Colts do anything different than what you've seen?

LOVIE SMITH: No, of course we talked about the turnover that really hurt us, but besides that, no. The last drive to -- maybe the most disappointing drive defensively was the last drive that they scored running the football, and we just didn't tackle well.

They had to go a long distance for it, and that was our worst ball right there defensively was on that drive.

Q. It's not a secret that the Colts were favored to win this game. Were you encouraged with what you saw from your guys the first three quarters?

LOVIE SMITH: Definitely were encouraged the first three. We were definitely the underdogs. This is a team that's supposed to do great things. Felt like we matched up pretty good. When you play a team like that and you leave without a loss, it's just how it happened as much as anything.

But there's a lot of things for us to build on. When you get a lead like that, some good things have to happen on both sides of the football and special teams, so that's what we'll build on.

Normally the gain, the biggest gain during the season is from week 1 to week 2, and hopefully against the Broncos that will be the case for us.

Q. Obviously you're disappointed with the loss, but talk about the secondary and how they played.

LOVIE SMITH: Well, how they've been playing throughout. Good football players, and everybody has to get your first game, first action under your belt.

But, you know, I think, what, they played about 20 plays is the most that they've had. Today, to be able to play an entire game and it didn't really cost us. Where they were supposed to be most of the time.

Encouraged by the start. Excited by what we're going to see in the future from both of them.

Q. I believe this was Davis Mills' 12th start in the NFL. Still pretty wet behind the ears, but (indiscernible) several passes toward the sideline and also after the fumble. Do you feel like he got a little gun-shy?

LOVIE SMITH: Well, I can't say gun-shy. None of us, I didn't coach my best ball at the end. We didn't finish the way we need to. Davis is a part of that. Looking at it on the other hand, for us to be able to get that lead, Davis had to do some things.

So we're going to build on those good things, going to learn an awful lot from this game, but we'll recover.

Q. Could you tell us about your plan for Driskel and the way you used him and do you think he'll be active for every game now?

LOVIE SMITH: Most people probably didn't have him being active today, and whenever you can put someone like that in at quarterback, it's different than Davis, and the play that we ran, just felt like we could give us -- we have a run-pass option guy when you put him in, and that was a big play he came in for.

We'll have that option available each week. We'll see how it goes next week.

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