

Houston Texans Media Conference

Sunday, October 2, 2022

Houston, Texas, USA

Head Coach Lovie Smith

Postgame Press Conference



Chargers 34, Texans 24

LOVIE SMITH: I thought we were in a good frame of mind to start fast and play our better ball that first half. Just tough when you are playing against a good football team and you don't and you get in a hole like we did.

I like the way the team fought back, gave ourselves a chance to win at the end, but we didn't finish. We also need to finish the game, and we didn't finish the game the way we need to.

Along the way some good things happened. Of course, Dameon Pierce ran well throughout, so he gave us a spark throughout.

But, some of the other things that caused you to lose games, too many pre-snap penalties, again. I'm going to talk about those. Passing game-wise, I thought we had a few big plays, but the consistency, of course, wasn't there.

On the defensive side, I mean, the first half, again, we didn't start well. Of course, that was definitely the case. We like to move it up. Big plays in the passing game really hurt us.

But, saying all of that, we got ourselves in a position there late. It didn't help missing the field goal early. The fourth down before at the end of the half, not converting on it, but with all that being said, we had an opportunity late where we were down one score, and we needed to get a stop defensively and the two big pass plays, of course, doomed us.

Injury-wise, we had a few guys that went out. Blake Cashman went out, and I don't normally talk about guys that didn't come back in. He is in the concussion protocol.

Take your questions.

Q. Lovie, what have you been seeing from Davis, and what do you think he needs to do to take the next step to allow you guys to finish games? I know it's not just

him, but obviously all eyes are on the quarterback.

LOVIE SMITH: You are right. All eyes are on the quarterback, but there was a lot more. We're one score we're down. We need to score. We're down three-plus scores, and we came back.

So in order for that to happen, our quarterback had to hit some passes. He did, just like the rest of the group. There was a period of time in there when what does he need to do? We need to protect better.

As far as pushing the ball down the football field, again, I thought at times we did do that, but we're not where we need to be in our passing game just like we aren't in anything else. That's what I'm going to say about your question.

Q. Dameon Pierce, the touchdown, what have you seen from him in terms of breaking away -- (Off microphone)

LOVIE SMITH: There's a reason why we're starting a rookie running back. Of course, he can run in between the tackles. He can make you miss in open field, but that's the part of his game that we haven't seen.

Running backs going, what was it, 75 yards or so. In the NFL that's hard to do. He is just kind of showing you all of the things that he can do. I don't know exactly how many carries he was able to get today, but he is a guy that we need to continue to feature.

Q. Lovie, your thoughts on the fourth and one at their 24 in the second quarter that Davis got sacked on?

LOVIE SMITH: We need to convert there is my thoughts on it. We could have easily have kicked a field goal, but we needed in that situation.

We just didn't execute the right way. Good call by them. The right blitz at the right time of sacking us, but there was an opportunity for us that we let get away.

Q. You guys have been close in all four games. All

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four games were winnable. Obviously, the NFL is defined by winning in the end every Sunday. How do you read that? What do you take as a head coach, when you are close you are in it, you are a few plays away, but you are also winless right now?

LOVIE SMITH: One time you say, hey, we'll get it right. After four games we can't talk about being close anymore, but if you watch the game, we talk about a lot of opportunities. It seems like we've done that each game. Not there yet. You know, we're not a good football team yet. Good football teams find a way to win at the end, and we haven't been able to get over that hurdle.

But looking at the positive, it was a terrible first half, and we got ourselves in position there late. Other games on how they've seemed like we had to hold on, we're in different position. To come back there we're able to see an awful lot, but still things that we need to improve upon.

Q. Lovie, you mentioned after Week 1 that you are wanting Dameon Pierce to get more touches. The fourth and one situation with him on the sideline, why was he there?

LOVIE SMITH: Because we had a pass call on that, and the guy that we had out there we thought that gave us our best option. There was a pass, and that's probably the reason why.

Dameon has done some good things, but we're not going to have him out there each play. That's what we had called. Good play on their part. Not so good for us.

Q. The catches that Ekeler had, was there just some miscommunication on the defense's part?

LOVIE SMITH: Yes, it was. Whenever you see a guy wide open like that, there's a breakdown in communication on two of those plays and that long run. It's really disappointing that that happened.

I felt like we were in a position where that shouldn't happen, but it did. Yes, miscommunication on those plays.

Q. I'll ask a question a follow-up. How do you all go about -- I know you make the calls on whether you want to go on fourth down, but as far as who you want in the game, is that you or a Pep call?

LOVIE SMITH: That's our offensive staff, and everything goes through me. You know, fourth and one is a big play. We thought they gave us our best chance to be successful on that play. Like every offensive play that we have, that's how the communication goes.

Q. Do you have an injury update on Derek Stingley Jr., seeing how he was favoring his arm?

LOVIE SMITH: Yes. He was down for a while. Bruise on his arm. He was able to finish, so he should be okay.

Q. The defense wasn't able to hold Los Angeles -- they converted on 50% of the plays on third down, and part of that was due to the inability to get to the quarterback. When you are unable to get to the back field and cause pressure on sacks, how frustrating is that to --

LOVIE SMITH: It's hard. It's hard. I thought they did a good job with that. You have to change your approach a little bit, but again, when you can convert on third downs the way they were able to, that's tough.

In an ideal world we would like to be able to get pressure with our four-man rush. We weren't able to do that for the majority of the day.

Thank you.

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