

# Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

## Head Coach Lovie Smith

### Postgame Press Conference



Cleveland Browns-27, Houston Texans-14

LOVIE SMITH: The amount of attention that it got, but once all that kind of leaves a little bit, it normally comes down to what most games come down to.

You know, one statistic that kind of tells the story of a game is the turnover ratio. You know, whenever you talk about non-offensive touchdowns, you give up three. That's going to be tough to win.

So offensively got to protect the ball better. We had some opportunities down in the red zone. Weren't able to cash in.

Dameon Pierce plays the way he does always, runs hard, you know, gives the offense some life, but we as coaches have to do a better job. And, of course, player-wise, again, offensively we can't win many games playing like that.

Special teams-wise, we played great special teams throughout the year. Today we can't give up a long punt return. We had a lot of missed tackles on that punt return. Of course, we've got to protect the ball better when we have it down there that led to three more points.

So if you play that way offensively and special team-wise, it is going to be tough. But just looking at the entire game defensively I thought the guys put together really six good quarters of defensive football, and today to keep them out of the end zone, of course, was big.

We knew running game-wise one of the best in the league at running the football, but I thought the guys continued to give us a chance until it got out of hand there at the end.

Take your questions.

**Q. Lovie, when you look at Kyle's performance and the mistakes he made, do you assess the quarterback whether he is the starter next week, or are you not in that mode yet?**

LOVIE SMITH: We're definitely not in that mode. I'm just disappointed with how we played offensively right now. We as coaches have to do a better job and just could never get the passing game going. Even if you can't get it going, you can't turn it over, and those situations really hurt us a lot.

**Q. What did you think about the job your defense did on Deshaun and their offense overall?**

LOVIE SMITH: I think the defense played well throughout. Whenever you can keep an NFL offense out of the end zone, that's big, especially with the amount of firepower we thought they had.

So like a lot of the things, we haven't taken the ball those two take-aways we were able to get, of course, helped a lot, but their defense outplayed our defense today.

**Q. Coach, you had great energy to start this game off. What do you think it's going to take for the consistency to continue because your defense I think gave you the energy to get started?**

LOVIE SMITH: Well, eventually, you know, we've got to have some production on the offensive side. We've got to score points.

I mean, you're right. It's good. We were in it, holding them, taking the ball away. On defense that's what we've been stressing a lot. We've got to get our offense more opportunities in favorable situations.

But when we get down in the red zone, we had opportunities today. We've got to be able to convert some kind of way.

**Q. Lovie, you mentioned the defense. Watson has his lowest quarterback rating in his career. What specifically about today did you all enter in with a plan for him, and how do you feel that was today?**

LOVIE SMITH: Well, I think we're healthy right now for one thing defensively. I'm going to go back to the second half of the Miami game. We shut them out the second half, so



defensively we see it coming.

Guys were playing hard start to finish right up until it gave us a chance. So we're doing what the defense says to do. And it says a lot, though, in a game like that giving us a chance to stay in the game, but we've got to have some more on the other side.

**Q. When you look at a guy like Jalen Pitre that finally got an interception after dropping a pass the past few weeks, what does that do for morale especially in the later part of the season after some struggles?**

LOVIE SMITH: It has helped an awful lot. Jalen has been in the starting position pretty much since we drafted him. And he has not played -- a few games he didn't play his best ball.

We've moved him back. Of course, he had been playing free safety the last couple of games, and it seemed like that's the more -- you know, he is more comfortable back there.

But I thought he played the ball well. I thought he tackled well. It's a good game, and just have to let those young guys continue to play. There's a lot of good, of course, that they did.

**Q. With some of these performances, stacking up some of the losses, do you let your mind wonder about perhaps the job security of the guys on your staff or your job security?**

LOVIE SMITH: No, I don't. I kind of have never worried about job security. What I'm worried about is doing the best job I can getting ready for the Cowboys. It's kind of as simple as that.

**Q. Last week it was Kyle's first game, first time playing in almost the whole year, and so he shook out some of the rust. Today you all are 1 for 12 on third downs. What seems to be the issue as far as not being able to sustain drives?**

LOVIE SMITH: Guys, I wish I could give you better answers, but you're right. Last week Kyle hadn't played a lot of ball. We were hoping the play would be a little bit better this week. Our play overall wasn't as good this week.

So as far as what it was, taking a lot of the credit. Just not quite there. We're not a good offense right now.

We're still searching for what we can do well. You know, when we did try to run the football, I thought Dameon

Pierce continues to play the same way, but we've got to find a way, some kind of way, to get our passing game going.

**Q. I know it's a team sport, but when your defense has the type of performance that they had today and you guys still are not able to get the job done, what message do you have to the group of guys -- your defense after a game like that?**

LOVIE SMITH: Well, the defense is continue to play defensively. Did a lot of good things. I mean, it wasn't a perfect game, but we're going to highlight the good things that we did defensively. Things we didn't do well you're going to talk about those too, and we're going to ask them to do it again, and that's how it goes.

Offensively, offense is not good enough. Special teams is not good enough. We need to raise our game. It really is kind of as simple as that and understand what the record is and we lost a game today, but those are some of the things.

Each player has to just look at how they played, what side of the ball, all of that. That's what we're going to do.

**Q. You mentioned in the goal line situation, not getting points there, coming down to the end zone and the fumble there. What was the communication back and forth between you and Pep about those situations and decisions that were made?**

LOVIE SMITH: I mean, you know, first the drive that we had we're trying to score, trying to score. In hindsight right now everything we did didn't work. So you say, hey, maybe we should have done something else.

When we're coming out, it's about ball security. It's just that. We've got to protect the football. You know, defense, that's what they do. They're trying to punch the ball and get the ball out at all times. So it's as simple as that.

As far as conversation, we're having conversations throughout is what we're doing.

**Q. You talked to Jalen. He had 16 tackles plus the pick that led the team. What do you say about all that?**

LOVIE SMITH: I think that's a heck of a job for a rookie that's growing. And I shouldn't say rookie. They've played a lot of football now. That's what we told our young players, our first-year guys.

Jalen Pitre has an opportunity to be a good football player, and he continues to come to work and improve on those

things. And, again, he has played his best ball. Maybe it's on us as coaches. We had him as strong tape position and now he is at the free safety position. Didn't really do a lot of that in college, but it seems like that's the more natural position for him.

**Q. The second interception by Kyle Allen, I don't know if you have seen the video, but what have you seen on that?**

LOVIE SMITH: I'm trying to think. Help me out a little bit. Second one? I'm sorry.

**Q. Across the middle -- (off microphone)**

LOVIE SMITH: Can't throw the ball over the middle. Pretty simple on that. Thanks for that assess.

Most interceptions it's about, you know, decisions you make at the quarterback position. Holding it. Not throwing it. It always kind of comes down to that. Sometimes the best play that you can make as a quarterback, it's just not throw it and press it because most of the game it's not like it was a game that got out of hand right away. We're right in there. We're in striking distance. We're a touchdown away most of the game, so you are just hoping a couple of those passes would go to our guys.

**Q. Do you have an update on Troy Harrison?**

LOVIE SMITH: Well, I know he finished the game, so it's not anything serious. You check out a lot of different things, but shoulder bruise or whatever in the end. But he finished the game, so he should be good to go.

**Q. He is the opponent, but what did you think of Deshaun Watson in general?**

LOVIE SMITH: I'm sure Deshaun is going to play better games than he did today. I don't know what all his stats said, but I thought we for the most part were pretty much in control of -- defensively we were pretty much in control of their offense most of the day.

**Q. When you went for it on fourth down inside red zone Dameon Pierce didn't touch the ball in all three of those runs. Was there a reason behind that?**

LOVIE SMITH: Hindsight right now, I wish we had done something different. That didn't work. Thought we had a good play there.

When you go for it on fourth down like that, you feel like -- I felt like we needed a touchdown in that situation. It's so hard to get down there. We need to be able to convert on

those.

**Q. When you sit down with film later today and tomorrow when you approach looking for improvements on offense, what's left at your disposal?**

LOVIE SMITH: Well, and tonight is when we'll start looking. Again, we're just going to look over everything that happened in the game.

This late in the year, you know, different combinations, personnel changes, we feel like we've let most of the guys that have been around here have an opportunity to show us what they have.

And we just have to look first as coaches on what we're doing to try to get a better game plan and then eventually get a game plan that the players can execute.

Right now we're not there. See the results. Not good enough. Can't win any football games until we get it better.

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