

Houston Texans Media Conference

Sunday, January 1, 2023

Houston, Texas, USA

Head Coach Doug Pederson

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Jacksonville Jaguars-31, Houston Texans-3

Q. What do you think this week in the manner and the business-like and methodical way (inaudible) says about the culture you are trying to build here? (Inaudible)

DOUG PEDERSON: Look, it's something that we've started. It's something that we're still trying to continue to learn and grow from. Obviously it was a unique situation, right, in a game that, yeah, sure, it may not have meant a whole lot, but I don't know if I've been in a situation where you had a game like this heading into a game for everything.

But, I'll tell you, it's a credit to the guys in the locker room, the coaches, just to stay focused. That was our sort of our -- what am I thinking of here? It was our mantra for the week was to stay locked in and stay focused and ready to go.

You know, the guys, that's what I told them after the locker room, the way they handled this week, very proud of them for that. It's all part of our winning culture, you know.

There's a time and a place obviously to rest guys. I just didn't think this was the time or the place to do that.

Q. Obviously one of the biggest regular season games in history coming up here on Sunday. How do you view it, and do you feel like the guys will handle the pressure that's going to come with this?

DOUG PEDERSON: This is what you play for. This is what you coach for, you know? This is what you want for your football team. You want to be in the conversation, and you want to be playing for -- for us the AFC South, and we're playing a good football team.

And, listen, we haven't done anything yet. They're still the champs until something happens. I felt like and really feel like our guys are, again, in a good place. They're in a good place mentally, physically.

I don't really have to worry too much about them getting excited for this one. It's more about just locking in on your job and focusing in on your task this week, you know, starting tomorrow.

Q. Does it matter when you play? Do you have strong feelings about Saturday where you would have shorter rest versus --

DOUG PEDERSON: I would love to play Sunday, obviously, to have these next couple of days, but we'll play when they ask us or tell us to play, and our guys will be ready to go. If I could pick, I would pick Sunday.

Q. How does Etienne play today, and what did you see on his pick, 62-yard touchdown run.

DOUG PEDERSON: On that run I saw great blocking. Not only by the line by Christian and Zay I believe. They did an outstanding job today in the run game and obviously gave him the ability to spring free and get in the end zone.

But that's what Travis can do. We can get him in space and on the perimeter or between the tackle some. You know, he is capable of doing that, and that was good to see. It's been a while since we've got him going like that.

Q. How big was the first series getting ahead in this game and not having pressure on the scoreboard?

DOUG PEDERSON: I mean, it's big. Defense did a great job. Turnover on downs and then the offense responding. We went a little tempo there to start the game and did a nice job getting in the end zone. That's exactly how we wanted to start the football game.

And it does. Any game is great when you can obviously get the lead early, and then our guys did a nice job keeping it and doing some good things.

Q. I know turnovers help every defense, obviously. Seems like there's a really marked difference between this group when they don't get one and then when they are able to get one.



DOUG PEDERSON: Those are proven stats, right? Take-aways and give-aways, things like that. You know, any time you can be in the plus category, your chances of winning go up. It just means more possession for your offense.

Defensively did a nice job today. Of course, we turned the ball over too, so we've got to look at that. Trevor and CJ both had picks today. We just have to take a look at that.

But the defense, when you can score on defense too, you know, like they did, just helps the cause. I thought the defense did an outstanding job today really just holding them to the three points, but played well.

Q. Can you describe the season that Christian Kirk has had? He went over 1,000 yards today, and just describe what he has meant to you guys.

DOUG PEDERSON: He has meant a lot. He is a veteran player who obviously you guys know we targeted in free agency, and he has been nothing but a professional here in Jacksonville.

He works extremely hard every single day out there, and there's a reason why he has the numbers that he does, and it's because of his work ethic.

He has been great for the room and great for our team. I'm happy for him and obviously his family for this milestone.

Q. It seemed like today the medical tent never went up at all. Have you ever been involved in a game -- it didn't seem like. Maybe we missed something, but was there any even remote injury today that got your attention?

DOUG PEDERSON: No, not really. We had a couple of bumps and bruises in the game. We were fortunate, you know, and then in the third quarter we were able to pull some guys and get them out of the football game.

Again, it's just a credit to the players. But, no, I don't think I've ever been in a game where the tent -- knock on wood. We don't want it to go up much, but when it doesn't go up, that's a good thing.

Q. How do you think Trevor played? Maybe a couple of missed throws, but overall it seemed --

DOUG PEDERSON: Overall he did some good things. You know, led the football team. Obviously the one pick, him and Zay kind of missed on that, and it's something we'll take a look at and fix, but I thought he did some good

things.

He was high with some throws early, but settled in. I thought the run game was good, but overall -- again, listen, it's a tough week. I understand it from the standpoint of being mentally prepared and everything, just the way the nature of the game is. But I thought he really handled himself well and led the team well.

Q. How much does it help you game-planning, execution-wise when you have a guy like Evan Engram at tight end that really is a massive factor in the pass game ?

DOUG PEDERSON: It's good. It's good for your offense, and, you know, it's just another weapon that you can scheme for.

You know, I think he set a record himself I think today for tight ends and has just been a blessing to our team and a great leader. He is another one. He is a hard worker.

I mean, the guy -- those guys... Evan, Christian, those guys are what you want and how you can build a team, but having a guy like Evan really gives you some flexibility on offense with your game-planning.

Q. You guys have snapped so many streaks this season. How rewarding is it --

DOUG PEDERSON: Can't keep count of them.

Q. -- to snap another one where the Texans had won nine straight.

DOUG PEDERSON: Back-to-back road games and all kinds of stuff. It's crazy. Just check them off.

It's great for the organization. It's great for the team. Obviously you set out each season and hopefully you win more than you lose, but this is a credit to the staff. It's a credit to the players.

Even Mr. Khan giving me the opportunity to coach this team and just the direction that we're headed. Obviously we still have a game left, but, yeah, we've conquered a few firsts in a while. It's a credit to those guys.

Q. How excited are you to see the home environment whether it's Saturday or Sunday and see the support you're going to get from the fans?

DOUG PEDERSON: You know, it should be electric. We're playing for the AFC South, and we need all our fans that can get there to get there. It's going to be a great



atmosphere. Our guys will feed off of that energy, and it will be fun. It will be a fun one to coach and play in.

Thanks, guys.

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