

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Coach DeMeco Ryans

Press Conference



Q. Did you have a chance to review last night's game? What are some thoughts that you have from seeing it initially on the field?

DeMECO RYANS: From last night's game, it was pretty much everything I saw. Defensively I thought the guys, they flew around really well. When you talk about the swarm mentality, that's what it looks like. Guys were running, they were hitting. It was physical. It was fun to watch, all 11 guys fly around.

Offensively I thought we did some good things offensively. We have some things we have to clean up and improve. That comes from all three phases. I think just focusing on the consistency and the details of our job, we can all be better there, offensively, defensively, special teams, and I think that's what the preseason is about. I think this was a great starting point for us as a team, but it also is great to get young guys reps, and it's great to get the tape so guys can see where we need to improve, why are these small details so important, why are coaches harping on these things, now you see it in a game and you see why, and I think will guys to continue to improve.

Q. What did you see from Will Anderson?

DeMECO RYANS: I thought Will had a really good start, made a couple plays in there. Good first game for him. But it's also things to improve on with just alignment, technique, those things that he has to improve on, as well.

Q. When you go back and watch the film, is it better just to see and get a better evaluation of the players going up against other players now instead of themselves in training camp?

DeMECO RYANS: It was very beneficial for our guys to go against other players. I think particularly offensively it was good to see them go against a different scheme, and that's something they haven't went against. We were more four-down front, they went against a bare front as we call it, five-down, and there were some different calls and structures that they had to block and a lot more

communication that goes on there, so it was good for our offense to go through the gymnastics of going versus a five-down front and just seeing the different communications, the different techniques that they have to use.

So I think it was very beneficial coverage-wise seeing zero pressures. It was really good for our offense to see multiple looks.

Q. Kurt just made the team last year, seems to be playing a lot. Where have you seen him from the tape you saw last season to where he is now including last night's game?

DeMECO RYANS: Last night for Kurt, I saw a guy attacking. What we want from up front, he attacked, he made plays, he was disruptive. He played on the other side of the line of scrimmage.

It was really fun to see Kurt having fun playing football. He was fired up. He made some plays, and it was fun to see.

He's been battling through, and he's been there, pushing through camp, and he's battled through a lot, so it was great to see him out there having fun.

Q. After two full weeks of camp and the first preseason game, are you guys where you had hoped you'd be at this point headed toward the start of the season?

DeMECO RYANS: I think we're right where we need to be, and the first two weeks of camp, guys are still learning. There are a lot of installs that we put in where guys with learning the schemes on all three phases of the game. They're learning, and now you get a chance to kind of slow that process down. There are no more installs. Now you get to continue to do the same things over and over again and see how guys can separate themselves, who can be consistent in their preparation, who can be consistent on the details of their job and their fundamentals.

Q. Do you feel like you need to see C.J. Stroud in the preseason with your regular starting offensive line?



DeMECO RYANS: Well preseason and with C.J. playing, I think it's important for a young quarterback to get in and get those live reps. I think there's no better teacher than experience, seeing how it truly feels to go against real live action. I think it's good. Whoever is out there with him, we expect everyone around him, of course they have to play better around him, but I think it's good for C.J. to get live action.

Q. One player that has really shown himself in training camp is running back Mike Boone. Were you able to see him use what he's been doing in training camp and translate it over to the field last night?

DeMECO RYANS: Yeah, Boone, he's an explosive runner. He has dynamic speed. He showed a little glimpse of that in the game, and he has continued to move forward. I think he's doing some good things for us. He's done a lot of good things on the practice field, just continued to make that translate into the games.

But I like where Boone is, like where he's headed, and I think he could be an explosive playmaker for us.

Q. How do you evaluate how a player looks in practice versus in games?

DeMECO RYANS: You take it all into account, what a guy does on the practice field, but at the end of the day, we all know you have to go do it when it counts, and it counts in the games.

That's why these games are important in the preseason for especially our younger guys, for them to get these reps. They're valuable reps. To get the real experience.

So now when the regular season starts, they've been through it. You're going to sink to your level of training, and they're being trained the proper way by going through the live action in preseason.

Q. Was having C.J. play those two series more so to make sure he came out of this first preseason game healthy?

DeMECO RYANS: With the reps that C.J. got, it was planned that way to not get him 10 to 12 reps in this game, just to get him some experience, get him his first NFL game, to get him some NFL reps, NFL experience. That's the reps that we decided to go with for C.J.

I thought with C.J., I thought he did some things well. It was good to see him when the play broke down, see him operate outside of the play as it was designed, to see him

move. That was good.

It was also good to see him make a poor decision with the football, and he had to pay for making that poor decision, but it was good to see him learn from that, and it's good to see him -- we talked to him on the sideline after those plays happened to see a young guy who knows exactly what happened when he comes off of the field. Easy to communicate with, and it's easy for him to put that behind him and move on to the next play.

So encouraged with him and his growth process.

Q. How did you respond when he came off the field?

DeMECO RYANS: He knew. When players -- I say this all the time. When a player makes a mistake on the field, they know sooner than -- they know exactly what happened probably sooner than the coaches know what happened because they've been studying. They've gone through the process, and they understand the decision they should make versus the decision that they made, and they can learn and grow from that and be better the next time out.

Q. What was it like for you personally, first game as a head coach, and how was that experience compared to as a player and a coordinator?

DeMECO RYANS: My first experience as a head coach coaching an NFL game, it was, first, just -- as I stepped out on to the field, just a moment to be grateful, just for the opportunity to lead this team, lead the Houston Texans. I'm thankful for this opportunity and the job that I get to do. I love what I do. I have fun doing it.

It was different being the head coach, having to call the team up and break the team down, make decisions on game day a little different, but it all flowed just very natural for me on game day. A lot of good help around me on the offensive, defensive side, special teams, a lot of good coaches helping me out to make my job easier.

Q. When you're going against another team, how much of it is when you break things down, reacting to what that team did to your team versus guys just executing what you hoped they wanted to execute with the plays that were called?

DeMECO RYANS: For the first preseason game, no one really game plans the first preseason game, so you're just asking players to react and rely on the fundamentals, the teachings, the techniques that they've learned all throughout training camp. It is different when you go against a different offensive scheme, different defensive scheme. It's good to see how guys are going to react, how

guys are going to communicate when things aren't the same, and it's cool to see how guys grow just within a game, how you may have had a play in the first quarter, how you react and respond to it differently in the second quarter after you've seen it a couple times, and that's what the NFL is all about. It's about, as you go throughout games, you're going to have to adjust, and you're going to have to make plays when it counts, and you're going to have to close out games.

It was cool to see our guys respond that way yesterday.

Q. Talk about Tank Dell and what you've seen so far. Just talk about what you're seeing from him this early in camp.

DeMECO RYANS: Yeah, what I see from Tank, I see a dynamic player. He's electric, and he's always open. He's been open in training camp a lot. He's precise with his route running. It was fun to see him in the run game, his intent when he was going to block safeties or corners, his intent. It was really fun to see Tank, just to see him in that moment and to see the moment not be too big for him, him just continue to do what he's been doing on the practice field. It was fun to see. It's encouraging to see a young player step up and make plays.

Q. You were talking about not wanting to see the game be too big for your young players. You mentioned last week what you wanted to see from Stroud, and particularly with Stroud you wanted to see him command the huddle, get guys lined up. Based on what you saw last night and through his progression and where you guys want him to be, what are you anticipating wanting to see from Stroud into this next week going into the next preseason game?

DeMECO RYANS: As we move into our next week, what I'm looking for from C.J. is just continue to see improvement, continue to see growth. That's what he's done from OTAs all the way through training camp.

So next week just looking to see him improve on his first game versus the Patriots, how can he improve in the second game. That's just what we're looking at. If you continue to improve over time, he'll be exactly where we want him to be.

Q. The linebackers, Henry and Christian and also to see Denzel play for you guys for the first time, and also do you expect to see Kirksey back in the future?

DeMECO RYANS: I think the linebackers, Henry, Denzel, Christian, all the guys, they made plays yesterday. It was fun to see those guys make plays, but also, again, like with

everyone, they have things they can improve on, but I always start with their intent. They were playing fast. They were playing physical. We can clean up any technique issue, as long as guys continue with that relentless mindset, we'll continue to clean that up.

With Kirko, hopefully we can get him back in a couple weeks.

Q. What are the essentials you're looking for in your players this week, and when you view yourself playing against a team like Miami in practice, is that viewed just as important for getting reps as it does in the preseason game?

DeMECO RYANS: Yeah, what I'm looking for in the joint practices versus Miami, I feel like when you have the opportunity to go enjoy practices, it's a control environment where guys are not hitting the quarterback, there are no side shots, guys are in a controlled environment where you can get quality work, ones versus ones, twos versus -- guys can just get after it, different schemes, different people you're going against, and it breaks up the monotony of camp for me. We've been going against each other for a while now, since OTAs. It's time to see different, our receivers go against different corners, our O-line go against a different defensive front schematically and go against different people, so I think this is a chance for us to sharpen our tool belt as an offense and defense with Miami coming in this week.

Q. Watching film after a game, what are you looking for on both sides of the ball, and what are the differences between watching film maybe in the preseason when you're trying to evaluate players versus more the regular season with your scheme and how guys are responding to that?

DeMECO RYANS: Yeah, how do we go about watching film after the game? Everyone first off, it starts by looking at the film themselves, as coaches, everybody breaks the film down at their position, and they grade their players. Then we come together as a staff. Defensively we'll come together and go through it and just talk through, how are players doing, where are guys stacking up, things we can improve on as a staff to help guys, maybe give guys less, maybe give guys more, just seeing as a whole how did our guys handle what the game plan that we gave them.

Same thing once I finish with the defensive staff, then I pop over to the offensive staff, and we go through the same process. Everybody goes through their players, what did the guys do well, where do we need to improve. Then also special teams.

So we go through each phase. Our coaches are very detailed in their approach of how they break it down, how they're watching their player, and no one cares about these guys more than their position coaches, and I can't thank all of our position coaches enough for the work that they put in, tireless hours that they put in, to make sure that guys have everything that they need to go out and perform to the best of their ability.

Q. As a former defensive player and defensive coordinator, you're used to celebrating turnovers, but when you watch the offense turn the ball over last night, what was that feeling like to you?

DeMECO RYANS: When I saw the offense turn the ball over, it's not a good feeling. It's something that we talked about before the game, offensively we want to make sure that we protect the ball, protect the team. Defensively we want to attack the ball and take it.

We can't have that. We have to clean up the turnovers. We've got to be able to hold on to the football. Guys understand that. They know that. No one feels worse than the guys who gave the turnovers away.

Guys will know. They'll correct it, and we'll move forward, and we have to do a better job of training them, training each other, in practice, hopefully in the joint practices, as well, train each other that you have to protect the ball on the offense.

Q. What did you learn about managing as a head coach on the sideline, working with Matt Burke, defensive calls, managing the game as it is? What did you learn last night?

DeMECO RYANS: What I learned last night from managing the game, I learned something I already knew: That I have really good coaches on my staff. As a collective group, it was just really cool to hear the way our coaching staff communicates with each other. Offensively guys were on it. Defensively guys were on top of all the situations, all the things to anticipate. Like they were working together. I talked about that swarm mentality for our players. It was cool to see that swarm mentality and approach to attacking this game like our coaches did, and I'm proud of the way that they handled themselves.

Q. Were there any surprises that really showed up on film that really impressed you?

DeMECO RYANS: That really impressed me? For me, it's really no surprises. When it comes to the games and what we can say about guys who impressed me, but you talk about a guy like Hassan Ridgeway, a guy who's been

consistent all throughout camp, and to see him and the effort that he played with, the physicality that he played with up front, to see him running out of the stack, making tackles downfield, that's impressive. When our big men are running and they're showing up violently to the ball, that's what impresses me the most. To see the way Kurt Hinish played, it's impressive. To see our guys up front play the way they play, if they continue to progress, we'll be a really good defensive football team.

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