

Houston Texans Media Conference

Saturday, August 19, 2023

Houston, Texas, USA

C.J. Stroud

Postgame Press Conference



Miami - 28, Houston - 3

Q. C.J., just overall how do you think your performance was? Where did you notice some positives that you thought developed from last week to this week?

C.J. STROUD: First of all, I want to give all glory and praise to my Lord and savior Jesus Christ. I have the opportunity to play football in the game I love.

Feel like I took a step. Definitely got to clean up some things, but overall I felt like I got in a good rhythm, and I started playing football like I'm used to.

Felt good. Great protection up front. Ran the ball pretty decently, just off a few things here and there. Got to clean those up, man, but it's a blessing that we're able to get it done now in preseason so we can take that next step going into joint practice with New Orleans.

Q. Last week in that first game, one of the things that was impressive was there wasn't any penalties. A lot of emotions in this offense today. Where do you feel those things were different managing that in this game?

C.J. STROUD: I think it starts at practice. Got to just be better in the huddle personally. Got to get guys lined up and just being more aware of what's going on.

Other than that, I think the negatives are always flashed upon, but I feel like we did a lot of positive things. Got up to the ball when it was time to get up on the ball and snapped it and got off the ball really well.

It's both sides, just the negatives shine a little brighter. We've got to fix that because those are drive killers. Those little negative plays, if we can eliminate those, then I feel like we have a really good day as the Houston Texans, but we didn't. So it wasn't the result we wanted.

Q. C.J., Bobby's talked about sometimes how you

need to make the right throw over the proper throw, just put a short tip to hit the reset button. Do you feel like on the second down you made an adjustment to where you were getting back to the line a little bit quicker? That's just more knowledge of the offense to understand what Bobby's looking for?

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, I think I'm taking steps every week. I'm starting to see the game. It's starting to slow down for me, and I'm seeing things a lot more clean. In situations like that, the quicker I can get up there and diagnose the coverage, the blitz look or whatever it is, the more dynamic this offense will be.

Once you put pressure on defenses, that's when you put them in a rock and a hard place and just keep that pressure on them. For us, that's what we want to be. We want to be a high explosive offense. We want to make plays. So I think we're taking those steps, but definitely going to keep growing and have to get a lot better.

Q. C.J., what did you feel like over the course of the practices you feel like you learned about yourself?

C.J. STROUD: That's a good question. I think I learned that just me is okay. God has blessed me with this talent and putting the work in. This week I had flashes, and I think I made a lot of good plays. Still made some mistakes, but I think I made more plays than I made mistakes, and I think that's a step from New England and a step from training camp from there where things could have been else where.

For me personally, I just want to keep growing. I have really good vets on the offensive side of the ball that help me out a lot. For me, just telling myself that just me is okay, accept my nerves, accept my negative plays or accept everything that comes with the game because it's going to just entitle me to get better and better. It's something I'm definitely looking forward to.

Q. C.J., what was the plan with Bobby or Jerrod that they want to see from you in the first half, and how frustrating was it to get to the 1 and not score?



C.J. STROUD: The plan was just for me to play. It wasn't anything that they said that was like a game plan or whatever. They just wanted me to play. Go out there and try to diagnose the defense like we did in practice. Miami is a great team. We got some really good looks from them.

I definitely think we took steps as an offense. It's frustrating when you don't score on the 1, but it was learning. I think any L that you take that you don't learn from, then it's a real loss. When you're down there, you've got to score and take advantage.

Yeah, it is what it is. Got to move on from it now and just learn from it. Not going to let it affect us and how we play football, but just learn from that and keep growing.

Q. It had been a long time since you played football. Last week you were barely able to play in New England. This week you got to play a very long time. At one point when you made those consecutive passes, were you starting to feel like you were playing football again? The second question is how good do you feel knowing that Coach put that much confidence in you in that fourth down play on fourth and goal?

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, I definitely think when we started rolling as an offense, that it just felt good overall from all the way from the O-line to the tight ends to running backs to the receivers. I think everybody got to touch the ball on that drive, which was special.

I think it shows what we can do, but we've got to finish. We've got to just finish. I think that was the main thing from what I had, and I thought we just didn't finish. We didn't do well enough on third down. We had too many penalties, shooting ourselves in the foot, and too many blank plays.

I think that drive just showed us that we can be explosive and we can move the ball down the field the way we want. I definitely think that that was a step towards where we want to go. We've just got to keep going.

It meant a lot, definitely wish that it went better than that. But at the end of the day, you learn from it. Thank God it's preseason and you can learn from it, but I don't ever want to think like that. Personally, I don't think it's good enough for us as a team. It's on me. I've got to get guys lined up and get them set and snap the ball and try to execute as best I can.

Q. The coaches mentioned how week to week you always improve. How much did today exemplify that statement that you can grow as a group?

C.J. STROUD: I definitely think it showed a little bit on the field. I definitely think I got a good groove, got a rhythm. After that, we started clicking, started getting some good completions and spreading the ball around the field. I definitely think -- it's just a little lighter than what's been going on in practice.

I felt like I was definitely making a lot of plays in practice, stepping up as a leader. Just doing anything that I feel like being a quarterback for the Houston Texans calls for. The responsibility it pertains.

For me, it's just making everybody around me better. I feel like I'm taking steps every week. I'm really excited for the future, and I actually appreciate the mistakes and the lessons learned because you don't really get them anywhere else. You've got to learn, and you've got to have scars.

So for me, I thank God for them. Even though they might not look good on TV or look good to other people or whatever the case may be, at the end of the day, it's about what God's plan is for my life and this team. I think those learning lessons are definitely valuable.

Q. C.J., you're saying multiple times right now about lessons learned, you're very fortunate. You said it was a blessing you get to go up against Belichick and that defense last week. Fangio for two practices and in the game today. Schematically, Xs and Os wise, what have they thrown at you these last two weeks that you're like got it, Moving forward I'll be able to put that in the catalog?

C.J. STROUD: Great point, great question. I definitely think that going against two great DCs and defensive minded coaches that are that smart was very, very good for me because you just pick up on tails, you pick up on alignments. You pick on it's third down here, I might get this pressure, I can do this. You're just thinking about the play more than just reacting. If you can meet that halfway with your natural talents meet with knowledge of the game, I definitely think that's when you can do a lot better.

I definitely tried to do that this week. Those two practices definitely helped. Talking to a lot of vets that I know in the league, that's what the biggest difference of the league is just getting those reps, those learning reps because everybody has that period where they make mistakes. For me, coming from like a place where I came from, not making very many mistakes and the ones that you did make meant everything.

So it's all feeling natural again for me. I definitely think going against those two DCs definitely helped.

Q. C.J., along those same lines, next week you'll be going up against another solid defensive coach with the New Orleans Saints. What are some things you want to work on in order to improve heading into the regular season?

C.J. STROUD: I think the main thing for me is just being consistent, just consistent in everything, my approach, the way it spins out of my hand, the way I call plays. I definitely think that's my -- I have a lot of things I want to hit, but that's probably the main focus is being consistent.

I definitely know that I can be a really good player in this league. I think I've showed flashes of that. It doesn't matter until you do things consistently. Everybody can do it one time. It's about the ones that separate are the ones that do it every day and every week and every game and every play.

Even taking those mistakes and still trying to be better. So for me, it's just being consistent.

Q. DeMeco said that he could tell you were having fun tonight. Do you have a different demeanor this week than you did last week?

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, most definitely. I definitely think I -- I maybe put -- I don't want to say too much pressure, but I put a lot of pressure on myself to go out there and play perfect. I was talking to my guy Wallow, our linebacker, and he's like, you can't put that pressure on yourself. It's not possible. Those guys get paid too.

That's what happened, and at the end of the day, I appreciated my teammate saying it to me. I don't know if he knows it, but it meant a lot because I put a lot of pressure on myself. I think it's a good thing. I want to be perfect. I want to be the best I can be, but if it doesn't happen, it's all about the next play.

Coach Ryans always talks about it, like the next play, the next drive. It is what it is. What are you going to do, soak on it and be mad? I could have been mad about the first drive. I messed up two times. Should have been better. Should have been better here, better here. I let it go. God put me here for a reason. I'm going to go out here and do the best I can for the next couple of drives. I feel like I did that.

Happy that I kind of got a good groove, but definitely want to play better and definitely want to be better.

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