

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

C.J. Stroud

Postgame Press Conference



Houston 30, Pittsburgh 6

Q. Hey, C.J., how would you describe what you have been able to do the first four games of your career?

C.J. STROUD: That's a great question. I think just for me it's been the ability to be in a city like Houston that I felt God put me here for a reason. So, you know, I start all glory to Him. I think it started all the way back from my 30 visit when I came right in this area, and I poured my heart out to the coaches. They poured their hearts out to me, let me know what they wanted from a quarterback or if they were going to take one, and I gave them what I felt I was.

Every day I feel like God has gave me the ability to show up with that mentality and attitude every day. So it's been a blessing. I think it's really cool when you see your work pay off a little bit, but to me it's just the beginning.

I still think I left a lot out on the field today. Could have played better in the red zone. For me, of course, I always want to snip that in the bud and get back to work.

But it feels good. It definitely does feel good to work really hard and see it pay off. To me it's just the beginning, and I'm super blessed.

Q. With the defense the last two weeks with shut-outs in the first half, what does that do for the offensive energy that you feel off some of the plays they're making?

C.J. STROUD: It's everything. Those first two weeks, it was like the offense plays good one game, defense plays good the other. And these last two games we both played well together. When you have a defense flying around like that, we feel it at practice, and when you got those good-on-good periods, you're warming yourself up. Iron sharpens iron for that Sunday.

This week those guys were flying around. We seen them doing it at practice. That gives you the confidence that they're going to do it in the game. It's a blessing to have a

defense like that. DeMeco is calling it well. Henry is playing really well, calling the plays. And guys are flying around. You can feel the energy in the building, and it's really cool to be able to build offense off of that.

We have to help those guys out a little more. We let them hang around a little too much. We were driving the ball really well, but we weren't finishing drives, and that's something that we have to get better at.

Q. The offensive line (indiscernible) two weeks in a row, and do you feel like (indiscernible)?

C.J. STROUD: Two weeks in a row, man. Guys playing solid. Guys stepping up. This is the league, next man up, and my guy Dec stepped in, did a great job. K.G., J-Pat, Shaq, George. I mean, when those guys up front are battling, we're battling outside too to make plays.

So it really starts up front and running the ball. We ran the ball really well. This game started off hot. Then we scored, like, three touchdowns in that first drive. That just shows how relentless this team is being built from DeMeco and Nick and Bobby, and we're buying into it, and we're really trying to be relentless and have that killer mindset like they're preaching every game, every play.

Those guys played amazing. The tight ends helped the tackles out a lot with the chips and trying to control TJ and 56, who are two great players.

That defense is a great defense, but I feel like when we're rolling, we're going to be hard to stop. Especially when we don't turn the ball over and we get two or three back. You know what I mean?

Hats off to everybody.

Q. C.J., you mentioned that you guys scored three touchdowns before you actually had points. Can you talk about what that meant to be able to keep going back to the hole and come away on that first drive with seven?

C.J. STROUD: That's what we were preaching, man, is



going to the red zone and getting 7 on 3. When you are relentless and fighting your tail off, that's what it looks like. And we preach that through our practice every day.

Jake Moreland, our tight end coach, comes up and gives us a presentation about red zone. He tells us, man, in the red zone we wore the battle red uniforms, and we scored in the red zone our first drive three times or something crazy like that. Jake brought that up in our meeting a couple of weeks ago, and for us to see it pay off, and the guys are working really hard at practice, it's a blessing.

We have to keep that up and even be better. We were driving the ball down a couple of times and just took three, when we really should have had seven, on miscues, me missing a throw, things like that. We can all be better all around, but that's what we preach. We want to be great in the red zone.

Q. It feels like you and Bobby have been in a much better rhythm the past couple of weeks. Is it during the week or is it during the game that you feel like, okay, we put together a really good plan for what we want to do and are executing it really well?

C.J. STROUD: I think around Friday, Saturday. Those Wednesdays and Thursdays we're putting in new things, so it's not always going to click right away. For me and Bobby, we have a pretty good idea on what we both like, the offense we want to run. And he is calling it. He is doing a great job. Case Keenum always says he calls it, we ball it.

It's been a blessing to work with somebody like Bobby, who we all trust, not only from him, but the O-line to the tight ends to the running backs to the receivers, and we're starting to buy into the system, and I think it's showing.

Q. When you hear that you throw for the second most passing yards to start in the first four starts, what kind of goes through your head when you hear those type of accolades attached to your name?

C.J. STROUD: For me it's a blessing, but I want to do more. I want to be really great at this game. I want to put in the work every week, and just like I think I was telling you in the locker room, they'll hate you -- they'll love you one week and hate you the next, man.

For me it's a constant grind, constant build-up throughout the week, and I'm getting back to my routine, working really, really hard this week to go play a tough, tough Atlanta team.

It's a blessing to be able to be playing decently, but for me

it's the guys around me. I can't do anything without those guys balling out. You see the yards and the guys straining up front, me getting the ball out, trying to get the ball out on time, the running backs doing their job, the tight ends doing their job. Everybody is doing their job.

Then you add the defense, and then you add our special teams. Everybody is playing together, so we have to keep that going. But it's a blessing, for sure.

Q. I know taking care of the ball is important. It seems like today, though, you had some opportunities where you threw it a little sooner than you maybe wanted to, but you threw it away on purpose so you put it where only your guy could get it. Might have been a tough catch or intentional miss, I guess. Is that part of your growth? Am I right? Did I see more of that today?

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, I think I'm getting smarter when it comes to that. Just not taking hits and throwing the ball away or putting it to where my guy can get it. I feel like I've been doing that for a couple of weeks.

Definitely getting rid of the ball, being smart, not taking sacks or hits and just -- I got to use my legs a little bit today. I think I could've used my legs a little more towards that back end.

But like I said, we want to do anything it takes to win. If that's -- to the world it might look like a negative play, but not taking a sack and being smart with the football and throwing it away is really important. It helps field position. The intentional ground I had was dumb on my part. I have to be better in that area. But definitely trying to grow in that.

Case and Davis has helped me a lot and Jerrod in the QB room of not taking hits and being smart with the football. So we knew that with this team, if you take care of it and you take it away, just like any other game, you can win the game, so yeah.

Q. Understand that you respect your opponents. You made that very clear. When you put in the work with your teammates under this coaching staff, is what we saw today what you expect when you step on the field?

C.J. STROUD: Yeah. I mean, for me at least, we don't have no expectations. We try to do one play, one thing at a time. When you go in the game and trying to do anything that you put already to your mind, it usually doesn't happen that way.

That's how I kind of live my life, just living where my feet

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are at. I've been working really hard to make that one thing happen, doing my job because I trust my brother to do his.

Yeah, when you put in that work during practice, you expect success, but you only give yourself a chance. It's not -- nothing is set in stone in this league. This league is really hard. You only give yourself an opportunity to make the play. It's up to you to go do it.

I definitely feel like, yeah, it's a better feeling when you put it in in practice, but it doesn't guarantee anything.

Q. I'm curious, there weren't a lot of expectations around this team, but it seems like you have exceeded them. I'm curious, what made you confident that this team could be something this year?

C.J. STROUD: It was a lot of things, man. I'm trying to think of the first thing I can probably think of. I think the first thing for me was, when I got drafted and even before the draft, meeting Will. And we didn't know we were coming to the Texans or anything like that. But we talked about being teammates. Then you fast forward, we got drafted to the team, I got over 50, 60, 70 text messages from people from this organization, and mostly players.

For me it wasn't a worry of might be leaving the place I did at Ohio State. When I was at Ohio with my brothers, man, back in college, we were real brotherhood. I would put my head on the block for those guys, and I would die for those guys. I didn't know if the league was like that, but when those guys hit me up, man, it meant a lot.

They had nothing but the utmost faith in me and knew that they didn't draft me for any reason, and they tell me that, and they had confidence in me before I even had confidence in myself in this league.

That was probably around the time I knew we could be special because if you are in the NFL, you are probably a really good football player. But when you have guys buying in to do it for one another, that's when it turns special.

So the energy that we're bringing every day to practice, to pregame, to halftime, to post-game, we're bringing that swag and that juice that DeMeco talks about, that Texan way of football. We're starting to show up.

We don't want nobody to think we're going to be good or bad. We don't really care. We're going to do what we do because we're the man in the arena. We're the ones doing the work. We're the ones getting hit and playing. For us, man, we just want to prove ourselves right more than prove other people wrong.

Q. When you look back at Ohio State and the receivers that you had and how quickly you adapted to it, have you noticed that same chemistry with guys like DeMeco and Dalton so far in the four games?

C.J. STROUD: Yeah. Just like when I was in school, things didn't happen overnight. It took a little process. I think even being here I think I've actually gotten a better chemistry and connection faster than I did back in school.

I think it took a little longer back then, but, man, it's been a blessing to work with those guys. Those guys work their tails off at practice. If you see Tank's numbers on the catapult during the week, you would be like, man, how is he going to play? That dude is running fast and putting a lot of extra mileage in.

Same with Nico. And they're constantly working on their bodies, doing what they have to do to play. Every single one of them wants to see each other -- like it was even a blessing seeing Metch get some love today. I owe him one. I missed him on the little roll-out. I got to hit him in stride.

But to see him make a play on that end breaker, that was a really big thing to see from Metch because that's somebody that we're going to lean on this year. He is going to be big for us. Building chemistry with everybody, though, like from Brev to Dalt to Teagan to Beck -- I owe Beck one too -- all the way to the outside to the backs. Everybody is working together.

So just building chemistry every day in practice has been big for us.

Q. You talk a lot about the brotherhood as far as the players, but what about the fans who look at you to take -- get them back over the hump and get them back into the playoffs? It's been a long time since this team has had a home victory and to win consecutive games. Just to the fans, what would you say to them?

C.J. STROUD: I want to say, man, I've been thinking about this for a long time. Y'all deserve to feel special. Y'all deserve to root the Texans on. Not winning since 2021, I think it was around Christmas, that ain't flying for anybody in this building.

I want them to know we're fighting our tails off every day to make sure y'all walk around with Texans gear pride, y'all walk around with that swag that we walk around with when we get a W.

For me I take that real personal because I don't like being

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bagged on on my teams. When my Lakers lose, I be pissed. I take that stuff real serious, man. It's tough to work every day and put the work in. And like you've seen, those fans came and showed out today in our stadium, and we sent them home, and I think our fans felt the energy, like, man, we ain't playing today from the get-go.

I just want to say, man, we're going to keep fighting every day just so y'all can walk around with that swag. I think that's huge, man, for this team. That's something that we want to keep building on, and it's a blessing to be able to be in Houston, a great town with a lot of stuff to do, great people, Southern hospitality to its finest, and I'm falling in love with the city little by little. It's a blessing.

Q. The team started out 0-2, and you are now back to .500. Where do you feel the team is a quarter of the way through the season?

C.J. STROUD: We're just getting started. Just getting started, man. It's only the beginning. There's a lot of football to be played still. It's early, man. We don't want to get too high, too low. Stay right on 50, man.

I think that's the thing to get us over the hump and get us a win each and every week is just doing that one thing, like tonight getting your rest, those little victories that we talk about every day to get to the big ones.

I think that's how it works. So for us it's staying an even-head, even-keeled, and coming back to work with a relentless mindset, ready to get back to work. But we have to enjoy this one, for sure.

Q. Obviously everybody thought this team was going to have to be rebuilt from the ground up. You are ahead of where just about everybody except your coaching staff and the players thought you would be. Now you're in a four-way tie for first place in the division. Everybody is at 2-2. You have to feel you have as good a chance as anybody in the division to win the division now.

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, man. When I was at Ohio State, we used to say Buckeyes against the world. And now I'm bringing that swag here: Texans against the world. It ain't about what they write about us. It's about what we put on the field on Sundays, the work we put in.

There's a lot of football to be played still, but we're going to walk around with that swag. We know what we can do. And we're getting a lot of guys back from injury, which is going to help a lot.

For us, man, we're going to keep fighting, keep battling

every game, every day, every little one thing, we're going to keep battling. It's just the beginning, and we're just getting started. Excited for the future. Go Texans. God bless y'all.

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