

# Houston Texans Media Conference

Sunday, October 1, 2023

Houston, Texas, USA

## Coach DeMeco Ryans

### Postgame Press Conference



Houston 30, Pittsburgh 6

**Q. How do you describe the defensive effort throughout this game and the first half and what you were looking for throughout the season?**

DEMECO RYANS: I feel like the defense did a really great job of how we want to play defense. It's swarming, it's attacking the ball, winning the turnover battle, and it's guys flying around having fun and playing for jeep other. I really like the way our D-line played up front. Really resetting the line of scrimmage, allowing guys behind them to make plays.

The most important thing, what I like about the defense is just all the guys, whoever is in there, it doesn't matter, all the guys just playing together, right? That's what winning football looks like. Guys just playing together, playing the defense the right way, and everybody making the play that they're supposed to make.

**Q. You mentioned the red zone defense seemed to improve. What have you seen from that?**

DEMECO RYANS: Really big improvement in the red zone. They got down there a couple of times on us and had a few drives that we allowed them to get down there. What I'm most proud of is the way our guys stood up in the red zone and made them kick field goals, and that was a big-time improvement from where we've been the first couple of weeks. I'm excited about the improvement, excited about young guys in there stepping up and playing good for us.

**Q. (Indiscernible) the Steelers, to be able to establish the run (indiscernible)?**

DEMECO RYANS: The running game on offense, that's exactly what we wanted to do, right? We knew for us to win this game we had to run the ball efficiently, and it starts with the offensive line, the way they blocked up front, tight ends, the way our backs ran.

Especially Dameon. The way he ran his best game this year, it was awesome to see him just continuing to press forward. When he got the ball, he had a "I will not be denied" mentality, and it showed. And it showed from our entire offense. When the running game gets going, it opens up a lot of other things, allowing us to hit some explosive passes, with Nico having a really big game, C.J. continuing to do well. It's all a credit to the run game, and I'm excited for where we are in the run game right now.

**Q. (Indiscernible) what does it mean for the offense today to have the offensive line (indiscernible) against T.J. Watt?**

DEMECO RYANS: We knew we had our hands full. Highsmith and Watt, two of the best edge rushers in the league, so we knew we had our hands full.

Again, I always go back to it doesn't matter who is out there. You protect together. All 11 guys, that's how you protect, starting with the O-line, the tight ends, backs, but also it's the quarterback and receivers getting the ball out, running routes with the proper timing, quarterback getting the ball out on time. All of that goes into play with protecting, and I thought overall collectively as an offensive unit we played really well in stifling their pass rush.

**Q. Could you talk about two things: The importance of Bernard's fourth down sack and also your coaching staff, what they've done the last two weeks to help you win these two games?**

DEMECO RYANS: It was exciting to see J.G. get that sack. He missed one earlier, so he owed us one. So he came up big-time for us on at the right moment. Big-time moment. It was huge for him to get that one. So excited for what he continues to bring as a pass rusher.

For our coaching staff, right? It's credit to all our guys and the work that they put in that no one sees behind the scenes. What I love about our coaching staff is no one complains about who is out there. And we've had a lot of injuries, a lot of things. Nobody complains. Everybody just keeps pressing forward. Everybody just keeps working with the guys who are up.



And it's a relentless mindset from our coaches, and starting offensively, starting with Bobby. I thought he did a really nice job calling the game today. Credit to him and his staff and how he had the guys prepared versus a really tough defense. And to see them go out and have the outing they have today is a credit to Bobby, his staff.

Defensively, Coach Burke and his staff, again, same thing. Doesn't matter who is out there. They had the guys prepared. They had the guys ready to play, and I'm really thankful for the coaches that we have on our staff. They've done an excellent job.

**Q. I know that everything is always team-first. You have been able to give the fans their first home win since 2021. Also the first back-to-back win since 2021. How did that feel to you personally?**

DEMECO RYANS: It feels awesome to get a win. That's what we're here to do. Me coming here taking this job, that's how we want to play football. We want to play winning football, and it starts with the guys in that locker room.

I'm proud of what they've done, the work that they've put in throughout the week, right? We're grinding through some hot days here in Houston. Nobody is complaining. Everybody is working pressing forward doing what they need to do to get results on Sunday, and I'm proud of our guys, proud of our staff, everybody, right?

If we keep playing the way we're playing, the results will come. We're not focused on the results. We're just focused on the process. If we keep that mindset, it will all take care of itself.

**Q. You get the win here at home, and you are 2-2. That's very important. How much more special is this win with (indiscernible) JJ Watt goes (indiscernible)?**

DEMECO RYANS: With JJ Watt, credit to JJ, his career and what he has done. Excited for him. A huge honor for his name to go up in the rafters of the stadium. It's got to be an inspiration to a lot of people when they look up and see his name. It's well-deserved. JJ, great man, great player. Just an inspiration to many. Congratulations to JJ. He definitely deserves it, and it was great seeing all the former guys here today rooting us on.

**Q. How important was it for you guys to actually score on that first drive, getting down there, having a few setbacks? How is it to come away with that? How important is that?**

DEMECO RYANS: I think really that first drive, it really helped us offensively. We've been having a few slow starts coming out, so that really helped us even with the penalties and being able to move back a couple of times there.

We were hurting ourselves, but we've been in those positions before. We've not scored, right? It turned into a field goal or we just hurt ourselves so many times, but to see us get better in that position, we needed to score in the red zone.

For us to score multiple times and get called back I think it was really momentum shift for our offense, right? They knew they could put the ball in the end zone, and when you see that multiple times, we just gained more confidence.

I think that's what helped them a lot throughout the game. They knew they had confidence to put the ball in the end and move the ball are, and that spurred a lot of movement throughout the game.

We controlled it there at the end. I love the fourth quarter drive there. We held it and ran the ball when we needed to run the ball and burn the clock, so it was really awesome to see our offense work the way they did today.

**Q. Earlier you talked about the improvements you saw in your defense. What type of improvements did you see with the linebackers, especially the pairing of Henry T. and Christian Harris?**

DEMECO RYANS: With Henry and Christian, they're continuing to get better every week in practice. Just watching them work together, watching them lean on each other.

Very similar to how they played at Alabama. Both guys leaned on each other it, and they're young players. There are going to be some bumps in the road, but I'm encouraged with their progress. Not only in the game, but just seeing them progress through the week on things we've been trying to teach them. They're getting better, and that's all I can ask for, and I'm proud of both of those guys the way they're continuing to step up and improve each week.

**Q. The last two games you had multiple score leads at halftime and scored in the last two games. What is contributing to that? What is it in terms of getting started early? Also, what is the conversation like at halftime when you have that?**

DEMECO RYANS: These past two games we've had leads, but it all goes to execution. When our guys execute,



that's when you score points. It's all just about execution. There's nothing glamorous or special about it. Everybody just going out and executing doing their job, and that's doing their part. That's what it is. That's what turns into points, and that's what I'm pleased with.

**Q. Just a follow-up on the question about your coaching staff. I noticed a lot on the fourth down calls you don't necessarily jump into the -- when the offense comes. You stay away and let that offensive staff. Is that the type of confidence that you expected without you getting involved on some of the fourth down calls?**

DEMECO RYANS: I have full confidence in Bobby. We go for it on fourth down, I'm confident in our offense. I believe that they can get it. Sometimes we convert. Sometimes we won't, but that doesn't stop my belief in our unit and what they're capable of doing.

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