

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

Coach DeMeco Ryans

Postgame Press Conference



Texans - 20, Saints - 13

Q. What can you say about the defensive performance this game, the last week, with the (indiscernible) two drives (indiscernible) and the decision (indiscernible)?

COACH RYANS: I'm really proud of the defense, how we stepped up and made a play. When the game was on the line, when we needed it most, guys stepped up. And it's tough to win in this league, but it was awesome to see the way our guys grinded it out. The way they stepped up right there at the end with Nelson making a big-time interception there.

Couldn't be more proud of the defense from the growth from last week to this week. That's what I continue to see in our team is just growth. Being resilient. These guys were in the same situation last week, but to see the growth and see us finish it out, it was awesome.

Q. What does it mean to the team to be 3-3 (indiscernible) wins last week? You've got one more, during the bye week, gonna working on the running game inside the 5-yard line?

COACH RYANS: It's something we talked about all week is just finishing, finishing this week 3-3. We know our team is continuing to improve, continuing to get better, but it was very important for us to finish with a win this week before heading into our bye week.

Just go in with a better feeling. You can enjoy your bye week a little bit better off a win.

Definitely still things to clean up and we understand that. On all three phases there are a lot of things we can clean up. But it's a lot easier to clean things up with a win.

Q. How do you feel like your rushing attack did in that first half (inaudible)? What adjustments do you feel the (inaudible)?

COACH RYANS: I felt really good about our run game. I

think this may have been our best run performance of the year. It was good to see us moving the ball, getting some good runs. Good to see Motor, DP, both guys having success in the run game.

And we just have to continue to grind it, continue to work at it. Credit to our offensive line and what they did moving those guys off the line of scrimmage. It's a tough defense to run the ball on. We did a really good job.

They tightened it up in the second half and forced us to throw it a little more than we wanted to. But the way we ran the ball in the first half was what we look forward to do and who we want to be. But we still want to do more. We still want to just run it as much as we can throughout the entire game.

Q. Talk about the way C.J. played today, in particular (indiscernible) interception (indiscernible).

COACH RYANS: With C.J., it's the same. It's resiliency. Even though he throws his first interception of his career -- and I mean can't say enough about Nico first, right, and his effort, his mindset to go and get the ball back in that situation, and the resiliency of our offense just to -- no matter what happened, bad things happen -- but you don't let that affect the next play.

They went down and drove on them and scored right there. I think that was the turning point of the game for us and on offense.

Bad things happen. We responded the correct way. That's what you continue to see from C.J. even though it's a bad play, it doesn't affect the next play. That's growth and that's really great to see from a young quarterback?

Q. [Question about resiliency on the other side of the ball. What did you see of the interception and the play that was made]

COACH RYANS: We had a couple of shots on us. We had our opportunities to make plays. I thought Steven played a really great game. It's all tied together, rush and coverage. We have to rush better. I thought the coverage



was really good. When we needed a play the most Steven stepped up made a big-time play for us. Can you talk about what you saw out of Will Anderson Jr., today? And how much does this game actually represent the impact he's had on the defensive front?

COACH RYANS: I thought Will and that front, they did a decent job of getting after it, putting the pressure on Carr all across the board, guys did a really good job.

Will has been doing really good throughout the season. He continues to grow as a young player, continues to improve his game each and every week as well. It's great to see the growth of Will what he's able to do for us defensively. And everybody is just starting to play well together. We have to keep going.

Q. [Question about receivers doing a great job of routes and Dalton Schultz's performance]

COACH RYANS: Dalton has had two back-to-back big games for us. He put the team on his back last week to give us an opportunity to close that game out, and coming back this week, there's a lot of big catches, a lot of explosives.

Seeing Dalton in the passing game it's been what we anticipated we would get from him and it's showing up big time. Proud of Dalton for him showing up, making big-time plays.

Q. Before the Saints' final drive, (indiscernible) midfield, negative play on first down, decide to throw a couple times. What went into the decision to throw versus maybe run the ball and force the clock?

COACH RYANS: We wanted to get yards there. Second-and-12, still wanted to get yards. We thought we had an opportunity there to throw it and make a play. And, again, we trust our guys in that situation to make that play.

Q. [Question about the kicking team. You guys were dominant in that area today. The two missed kicks, Cam Johnson was excellent. (Indiscernible) covering kicks. Just your overall evaluation on the kicking game?]

COACH RYANS: With the kicking game, I thought they did a really good job of forcing missed kicks. Excellent job by our field goal block unit. And also by Cam, he impacted the game big time for us, to get a backed-up opportunity which turned into points for us on offense.

Can't say enough about how we play complementary football, how important the kicking game is. Kind of goes

hidden, but that's a huge part of the game, huge part of why we win games is because we're playing well in the kicking game.

Q. On the last fourth down, when they go (indiscernible) out of the backfield, before that sequence, what was kind of going through your mind defensively? And how were you guys going to respond to that?

COACH RYANS: Yeah, defensively it was just about us, getting pressure on the quarterback, forcing him to make some tough decisions. And as much as we can to just try to get pressure on him. And guys did a great job tackling there.

Jimmy made a nice tackle on Kamara to give us an opportunity to stand up. But guys executed. When it's critical situation, situations where we haven't been really good defensively in the red zone, I think our guys stood up today and shut them out in the red zone. And that was the difference in the game.

Q. You talked about the linebackers and how (indiscernible) they were out of position a little bit. But today it looked like the Saints were trying to attack them, but it seemed like you all, through film study, learned more. Could you talk about that?

COACH RYANS: The linebacker guys are doing a really great job. I don't think necessarily they were attacking them. I think defensively everybody did what they were supposed to do; everybody was in position and everybody did their job. And that was the outcome.

Q. [Question about red zone]

COACH RYANS: We won the red zone battle. We scored two times in the red zone, and they didn't. That's the game. Did we want to score more? Of course. But credit to our offense for getting into the end zone when they did. We kicked field goals. And we just played together as a defense.

Of course we want to score every time; but it doesn't happen. You still have to stand up and play great ball. That's what we did -- played together as a team today and that resulted in a win.

Q. Describe Cashman's performance. What does he mean to the defense?

COACH RYANS: Cashman has done a great job for us. He had a lot of tackles today, flying around all over the field. Really great in the passing game. He's done a really

good job showing up, making big-time plays for us when we need it most.

I'm proud of Cash and his development. What he provides is confidence. When we're out there in passing situations we know he plays really well in coverage. He's done a great job tackling and just playing sideline to sideline.

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