

Houston Texans Media Conference

Sunday, November 5, 2023

Houston, Texas, USA

DeMeco Ryans

Postgame Press Conference



Texans 39, Buccaneers 37

Q. You're trying hard not to smile, right?

DeMECO RYANS: Big sigh of relief.

Q. Can you tell us the difference between the first half and the second half with the offense and then describe that last drive.

DeMECO RYANS: I think with our offense and with all of our entire team, just in the first half, it was a lot of misses with our execution. Like we weren't on it.

I think coming out in the second half, our offense was able to execute. We were able to create some explosive plays there in the passing game. I think CJ did an awesome job of making some big plays for his receivers, Dalton, Noah, Tank, all three guys, big game for us. Just the way they executed in the passing game, that's what kept us there. Credit to those guys.

The last drive, again, it starts with the protection. When you have to throw it, they know you're throwing it, it starts with still being able to hold up in protection and still being able to execute and deliver precise throws, and that's what CJ did. Tank, unbelievable explosive play there to their sideline, and then for those two to connect again with the touchdown, that connection and that bond that I think Tank and CJ have, it's real. You see it off the field, on the field. They have a true bond, and it's fun to watch those guys work together.

Q. Given how young CJ is, how would you best describe the performance you just seen from him?

DeMECO RYANS: It's a gutsy performance from him. It wasn't all clean, but he gutted it out. He was tough in the pocket, made some plays, made some big-time throws for us, and the receivers, they were reliable for him. They made those catches, made tough catches, made big plays for us, so it was all those guys working together. But CJ, it was a very gutsy performance by him.

Q. Was this (indiscernible) when you made the decision about letting Ogunbowale kick the field goal?

DeMECO RYANS: With Dare stepping in, he did a really nice job for us. When you lose your kicker, that's tough. What are you going to do? Your whole game plan changes. But Dare, he stepped up big time for us. For him to be able to kick off as many times as he did, create some touchbacks, but also for him to kick the field goal, we were confident he could make it from there, and he proved us right.

Credit to Dare. He's truly the player of the game. For him stepping up the way he did for us, it was outstanding by him.

Q. Obviously a lot of injuries today. Do you think most of them are minor or do you have any clue?

DeMECO RYANS: We'll evaluate our guys throughout the week and see where we are injury-wise. We took a lick today for sure. We lost a lot of guys, a lot of adversity, continue to have trainers coming up telling me this guy is out, this guy is out. But what I love about our team is as that adversity hit, no one wavered. Everyone kept battling until the end, and that's what it takes to be a good team.

Q. What exactly happened with Ka'imi with his injury, and was there a moment throughout practice this year where you started getting Dare accustomed in case --

DeMECO RYANS: Imi had a lower leg injury there that we were concerned about, him being comfortable being able to go out and perform to his standard. So we went with Dare.

Q. That final drive, you used the two time-outs in the first two plays. Was that just a product of what plays happened? Was that the plan going in? Does that sort of change -- how much does that change what you're capable of doing when you don't have the time-outs?

DeMECO RYANS: It's all based on the plays and what happened, where we are. Yeah, we would love to get out



of bounds and stop the clock there, but we were able to keep the ball inbounds. The biggest thing there is getting yards. We were fortunate to have those time-outs to be able to use them, and they helped us in that critical situation.

Q. Can you talk about the performance of Schultz, that connection he had today, and just the adjustments that you guys made at the half?

DeMECO RYANS: Yeah, Dalton played big for us today. One thing I love about Dalton is the hands. He has sure hands. He comes through in clutch moments but also love the way he finished some of those runs today.

It was a really nice performance by him.

Q. Do you feel like based on how this game played out that this was the CJ, this week obviously a big passing game for him. Do you feel like you're sort of establishing an identity or that this might be a way to go about this for you guys in the future?

DeMECO RYANS: As we continue to go each game, it changes. Whatever we have to do for that game.

We're a pretty good passing offense when we do get the opportunity. We are executing. We are connecting when we should be connecting. We're a good passing offense. We have a good young quarterback, good core receivers that helps him be good in that.

We just have to rely on whatever strengths we have for that particular week, wherever we need, whoever we need to step up and make plays. That's what matters.

Q. How hard is it for a rookie quarterback who doesn't have a consistently productive running game, does that make his performance even more impressive?

DeMECO RYANS: It's very impressive the performance CJ had when the run game isn't quite where we wanted it to be. But if it's not there, we still have a guy who can really throw it and make some plays. That's a strength of ours, and we have to play to that, then that's what we'll do. The biggest thing is just about moving the football, and whatever it takes to move the football, that's what we'll do. If we can't run it, if we're not running it and executing it well, then we have a young guy we can rely on to throw the ball, and he showed that today.

Q. There was a lot of talk this week about being more explosive on offense. Obviously that happened a lot today. Can you plan for that to happen, or is that just something that naturally unfolds, assuming the team is

executing?

DeMECO RYANS: We always want our offense to be explosive, always encouraging them to be explosive because we have explosive playmakers in Tank and Nico, Noah. We have explosive playmakers all over the field. It's just a matter of us being able to all 11 play together, protect, give ourselves time to make those plays, and the receivers when their number is called, it's time for them to step up and make the play, and that's what they did. When their number was called today, they made big time plays, whether it's the catch and run aspect of it or being able to complete deep shots down the field.

Q. You talked about Noah Brown having another big-time day. Where have you noticed him take that next step?

DeMECO RYANS: Yeah, Noah has worked his way back in fine. Noah has always been a guy since OTAs that we can rely on. Noah has always been consistent for us. He shows up every single day, and he's consistent, exactly where he's supposed to be, precise with his route running ability, and he's sure with the hands.

Love what Noah brings. He brings consistency to our offense, and love what he's been doing for us.

Q. There's an awful lot of talk about culture. What does it say about this team (indiscernible) team scored late on you, looked like this could have been one of those today, but the guys went back out there and went out and made the plays?

DeMECO RYANS: With the culture, it's about believing in each other. That's one thing I mentioned to our guys pregame before we went out there. Everybody just lean on each other, believe in each other, and when we come back in this locker room, let's make sure we come back with a win, no matter what it takes. That's what I saw today. I saw a team grit it out when things, of course they didn't go our way. We didn't get stops when should have got stops; we lose our kicker. Like everything that could have possibly went wrong for us, it went wrong.

But it didn't matter because of the mindset of our locker room. Guys who are going to fight for each other, guys who believe in each other, and guys who are going to hold each other accountable, and that's what good culture is.

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