

# Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

## C.J. Stroud

### Postgame Press Conference



Texans 39, Buccaneers 37

**Q. Can you talk about the last series when you got the ball and what you were thinking each play and how you were able to pull off the way you did?**

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, first I want to give all glory and praise to my Lord and savior Jesus Christ. On the field we were going through a lot, and I just remember -- we were actually in our chapel, and our pastor was talking about like worship when you're away, so basically worship when things aren't the greatest, and that's the true testament to faith.

For me, that's what I rely on. I couldn't be up here, I couldn't do anything on that field without my Lord and savior. He's given me a sense of peace even when everything around me is going crazy.

Just got to say that and give y'all a little nugget of the Word.

But from the first play we ran out there, I had complete confidence. I knew we needed a touchdown. We had two time-outs, which was huge.

Really when you start a two-minute situation, which we only had 46 seconds, you just want to get it started.

Dalton did a great job by being greedy and taking a lot of yardage on that little shallow route that we started and we called time-out. The next one I think I checked it down maybe to him again and we were inbounds, called a time-out again.

Then Noah, I kind of gave him a little nugget because we were going a little deeper, and I wanted him just to get the ball and just get YAC. So I told him, hey, go short a little bit on this, and he did a great job. Great body language, threw it to Noah.

Next play, run the out route to Tank. Great catch. I honestly don't even know where I put it because I got hit

and I just looked up and everybody was cheering, so I thought, all right, we completed it.

Then the next play, we just had put that in on the sideline, so Bobby did a great job of feeling the tempo of the game and feeling what we probably needed and had a play we ain't worked on since training camp, and literally I know that Tank was -- Tank's route was nasty. I didn't get to watch it. I just threw it.

I just had to take care of the safety. They were in quarters. Once the safety was by the inside route, I throw the outside route, and his job was to beat the corner, and the Texans win.

That drive, man, it was special. That's something in this league I'm learning, man. You've got to be great two-minute, and for me, I just want the ball. Just give me the ball, call the play, and I'm going to go make a play. I'm happy with the win.

**Q. Did you say the last play was drawn up on the sideline?**

C.J. STROUD: Yep, Bobby drew that up on the sideline.

**Q. CJ, you set the NFL record for most yards passing ever by a rookie. Wondering what you think about that, and to be able to do it in a win like this, what does it mean to you?**

C.J. STROUD: Man, it's a blessing. Just humbled me. Like it's now -- I'm going to try to celebrate it tonight.

After that, I'm on to Cincinnati.

But it's a blessing. I put in a lot of work throughout the week and the guys know that. They see it. My family, they see the work I put in.

Honestly, that's what I've been battling be is just like trying to still be a family man, still help out and still be a full-out player and do my job.

It's been tough, man, and for me to have a goal every



Sunday to play well and to do great things, you have to have a great support staff. I have that in my family. I have that in this building, with my teammates. I have that with my best friends back home.

Actually I have that with my dad. I got to talk to my dad a little bit this week, and I'm praying to God that something can happen that he can get out and come to one of these games. I've been praying for him a lot, and I didn't want to make this public, man, but our criminal justice system isn't right, and it's something that I need to probably be a little more vocal about because what he's going through is not right.

He called me this week, and we got to talk, and I just -- I'm praying for the situation and a reform and the people with reform are helping me a little bit. But I think just letting it be known that it's not just my dad's situation but the whole criminal justice system is corrupt. I've been watching videos in Mississippi. Some of the prisons there have rats and roaches and things like that.

Don't get me wrong; criminals, they should do their time and everything should be like that, but they're still humans; know what I mean? I just want to shine a light on that really quick. But I'm really blessed to break the record, and I'm really blessed to get the win.

**Q. What did you all say during halftime to make you come out -- the first half was kind of slow, but you all came out firing on all cylinders. After your first game against the Baltimore Ravens when you came to the press conference, Jonathan Greenard told you keep your head up because we're going to need you later on. Are these the moments he was talking about?**

C.J. STROUD: Most definitely. What was the first question again?

**Q. What adjustments --**

C.J. STROUD: I got you. Honestly I thought the first half went okay. The first drive, of course I threw the ball too low to Tank, and then 3rd down tried to make a play and we got off the field.

They had punched it out, and Dalton -- I told Dalton right after that, you're going to be big in this game. You're going to have to make a play. Don't put your head down for one second; let's go.

He did it. He kept going. You see he came up huge on that 3rd down red zone touchdown. He ran a great route.

But man, we just came in the locker room and we told

ourselves, like there's nothing they're doing that's stopping us. Let's stop shooting ourselves in the foot and let's be aggressive. Let's go out there and let's really just depend on each other and make plays.

Bobby did a great job by calling it, and we bought it. That's just the relationship right there.

You can see the work that we've put in throughout the week. We had a great week of practice. DeMeco challenged us and so did Bobby on let's have 10 clean practices going into each game. You can only do three in a week, so next week we've got to do another three.

For us, practicing is going to -- is what shows up in the game.

Then Jonathan, JG -- my bad, I need to call him Jonathan. But JG, man, they had scored -- there were 46 seconds left and he was walking off the field, and every time I walk on the field and I'm not feeling the best, I know the look, and he had that look. I was like, all right, bro, I made him stop and I made him look at me in my eyes, and I said, hey, bro, I've got you. They've done that to me, when my head was down they went and got a stop and gave us the ball back, and we either did something with it or we didn't. This time I just wanted to let him know, just like you're here for me, I'm here for you.

I love JG. He had a great game. Great player, man, and I'm blessed to be on a team not only with him but just dogs, man, people who want to play football.

**Q. Big picture-wise, games can be more than just (indiscernible) what do you think this game could mean for you as a team and for you as a quarterback?**

C.J. STROUD: I think it's something that can get us rolling. Like momentum is everything in this league and in the game of football. We've got to rise the momentum and work really hard on practice this week.

We weren't perfect out there, though. We're never going to be perfect, but we've got to clean up some things, got to run the ball a little better, as well.

But I think as you can see, I don't think we can be stopped when we're on our "A" game.

It's a big-time win for us, and as you see like November and December is when you want to be playing your best ball. So now we just want to upscale, up-trend and trail blaze into the playoffs and hopefully get a chance to win the division and everything like that. We've got a lot of work to put in, though.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

**Q. Some of these games that you guys have played have come down close late and haven't gone your way. Can you talk about just the growth that you've had and the team has had to be able to make it a win and not go the other direction?**

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, two-minute is big in this league. A lot of games come down to one scores, and this week we had a meeting and Jimmie Ward made a good point of hey, let's do more two-minute walk-throughs, so we did an extra two-minute walk-through after I think on Thursday. We usually do them Wednesday, we did it Thursday, too. That right there was the game.

Like shout-out to Jimmie, man, for being a vet, being really smart, and that just shows you how many people they put not only around myself, around this team to be smart and be vets and to throw things out to the coaches and see if it works for us, and it worked.

You've got to be able to win the two-minute in tight games and things like that. We put a lot of work to it all the way going back to OTAs, ozone layer, things like that, not being able to complete the ball before the end zone outside, outside the end zone or deaden the ball. That was that play play, but luckily we scored. But Bobby did a great job telling me the situation we were in. Just a lot of work put in to make those plays.

**Q. At what point did you feel like you might be (indiscernible)?**

C.J. STROUD: I would say Thursday at practice. We practiced really hard. That was a day like we were connecting a little bit, and honestly, we hit on a drive where I missed two throws to Tank and he burned the dude and then he was wide open and I missed two throws, and I remember like on Wednesday, I missed two throws at practice, I think two, and I remember everybody was coming up to me, and they did the same thing this game, like you got this, bro, you're one of the best quarterbacks in this league, you're going to figure it out.

That just right there helped me a lot. But like I'll say right when we came out the half and Noah had that long touchdown, for me that wasn't the special moment. Throwing it, him running, I think Tank's block shows you like the love that we have for each other and the love for the next guy to make the play, and him not being the biggest guy, he's going to go shoot his gun, though, and try to get a block.

Man, shout-out to his -- at the time I don't think he had a whole bunch of catches or anything, and then that next

drive he eats. So our offense, it's structured for everybody to eat, so you can't just double Nico, you can't double Noah, you can't double Tank because somebody is going to eat. Dogs are going to eat, or Beck or anybody, Hutch. Somebody is going to come in, and it's next man up.

One thing I want to shine a light to is Mike Deiter. Mike came in and did a great job against I would say a top-5 defensive nose guard and defensive tackle on No. 50. He's a great player, and my guy Deiter stepped in and did a great job, so I'm proud of that guy, too.

**Q. Before the 46 seconds of that last drive, Tytus said earlier you came to the offensive linemen and said, take your time, we've got plenty of time. Walk us through that, when you're about to go for that last drive. What's going through your mind, and what are you telling your teammates that reflects that leadership that's required?**

C.J. STROUD: Honestly, I was just trying to stay cool, calm and collected, one play at a time. I told them boys up front, man, God give me just a little time, I'm going to make them pay.

I know they didn't just give me a little time, they gave me a lot of time, so that helped a lot. I mean, that's the heartbeat of our team. We told them, I challenged them guys at the beginning of the week, man, y'all are the heartbeat of this team. We move how our O-line moves. Simple and plain as that.

We have I think the best left tackle in the league, especially when it comes to pass blocking, and then everybody else, like Tytus has fit into a new role, Deiter steps in, Shaq has been solid all year, George has been solid all year. Those guys up front are very special, and I told them boys we're going to go as far as they'll take us.

Of course I've got to make the plays and throw the ball where it's going to go, but I can't do none of that without y'all. They had a great game. I think I only got sacked twice, and I appreciate those guys for just battling and fighting.

I just told them, man, we're going to go win this game. I don't know if y'all believe it or not, but I know I believe it, and I know if you look at me in my eyes, y'all can tell.

We went out there and we did it, man, and by the glory of God, now we're 4-4.

**Q. Your relationship with Tank, can you just talk about that relationship, where you and Dalton and you and Noah have grown. What is that relationship like?**

C.J. STROUD: It looks like how I did today. I think we had multiple guys over 100 yards, and I think, like I said before, you can't really like play everything. You've kind of got to give and take.

Todd Bowles did a great job. Tampa Bay was a great defense, one of the best teams we've played so far. Those two backers, they make it really hard. They fly around. Vita Vea is a great player, Whitfield in the backfield -- I mean, in the secondary, he's great. Davis is a great player, as well.

It wasn't going to be easy. We knew that. We challenged our receivers, man, like we didn't come in with a lot in this game plan, but we're going to just lean on y'all to make plays, and they did that.

Noah and Dalton, I go all the way back to going to LA with those guys. Not only were they great on the field and getting extra work, but off the field we really got to vibe with each other and feel each other out.

I think that has to do a lot with the success we're having throwing the ball. It's just that personal connection you have with somebody, just to know -- like honestly, it might sound funny, but you can know when somebody is going to break and when they're not, when they're going to do something and they're not. It's kind of cool that this game of football kind of relates to life.

Man, those guys are two of the smartest players I've been around. Noah is a Buckeye, so we had to hit the O-h, so it's super cool to play with those guys, and I think we have a lot more to grow, but I think we're on the right track.

**Q. In previous games the passing attack (indiscernible) what do you think was the biggest difference from the previous three games to today when you guys finally came back to what you guys were doing at the beginning of the season?**

C.J. STROUD: I think just the confidence that we put into this week. I think like everything kind of goes back to practice, and it's about like what you -- you want to have the coaches' trust. I think this is the biggest week. Like Bobby was looking for us to answer the bell after we know we should have did way better against the Panthers, and he did a great job. He told me, man, this game, you've got to go make plays. Be special. You're a special player. Go be special.

He put the ball in my hand, and I appreciate that because it's not always the most comfortable thing to do with a rookie quarterback.

Honestly, they haven't been treating me like a rookie quarterback. They've been putting a lot on my plate, and I feel like I'm trying to handle it as best I can and work really hard to get the looks down, get the cans, alerts, everything. I really appreciate Bobby trusting us and going out there and making plays.

Man, shout-out to Bobby, called a great game. Jerrod, my quarterback coach, helped me a lot on the sideline along with Case and Davis. Without those guys, man, I don't know where I would be. Those guys help me out week to week, conversations, like talking about little things. Sometimes I just sit back and let them just negotiate for me and let them do their thing and I just sit there and go over my little notes while they're doing it, and then, oh, CJ, we've got this. Cool. Shout-out to Case and Davis. But yeah, it's been a blessing working with those guys.

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