

# Houston Texans Media Conference

Sunday, November 26, 2023

Houston, Texas, USA

## C.J. Stroud

Postgame Press Conference



Jaguars 24, Texans 21

### **Q. (Indiscernible). Do you feel like you all had missed opportunities before that got to that point?**

C.J. STROUD: First and foremost, I give all the glory and praise to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was a great Jacksonville team. We fought hard.

To answer your question, you can't put the last play of the game, supposedly, or if it is or if it's not, you can't put the whole game on that situation.

We've got to be cleaner and execute better the first half. I feel like we came out the second half and moved the ball pretty well, but we have to play complementary football offense and defense. We have to help each other out.

It's a great one to learn from, but, no, you don't want to lose a close game like that. It's tough to put it all on the kicker's hand and everything.

I think Matt has done a great job, and we have to put him in better situations. Maybe get closer or even go try to score a touchdown and win the game. A lot of different things that could happen and play out a different way.

### **Q. What's it like for you to know that your team has full confidence in you no matter the situation?**

C.J. STROUD: It's amazing. That's all you want as a quarterback and especially being a rookie. There's a lot of veterans on this team, and the way they look at me before we go out there or just any play at practice, however, wherever we're at, they're always giving me the confidence. They show me that they really do trust in me, and I trust in them right back.

It's definitely helpful and gives me a lot of confidence. So I appreciate those guys fighting for me, and I'm fighting right for them.

### **Q. What did the Jags do today differently than they did**

### **from the first time you played them?**

C.J. STROUD: They really didn't do too much. They sent some pressure, but not as much as they did early on.

They got us a couple of times in some weird fronts with some pressure looks. I've got to be better with throwing the ball hot and things like that, but they really didn't do much different.

They're a sound team. They're up front. Josh Allen and Walker set the tone. They did a good job stopping the run today.

We've got to just be better at execution and fight and just be dogs out there. We had glimpses of it. We had a lot of good things, but not good enough to win.

So got to go back to the drawing board and find out what happened and go move on and play a tough Denver team and get a win there.

### **Q. DeMeco was saying in years past a loss at this point in time was kind of another loss for this team. Right now this loss hurts. What does that say about this team going forward that this does hurt at this stage in the season?**

C.J. STROUD: It's a long season, man. I don't think it hurts us like that. Of course, the divisional, you want to win the game. It hurts us pretty significant, man.

It's about the mindset, though. What are we going to do? Not play no more? We're just going to tuck our tail and not play hard? No, I don't really believe in that type of mindset.

I'm going out there every play every game trying to win. So I don't really think that our season is over at all. It's a long year. We have six more games to play, seven more games to play. There's a lot more football left.

You can see the trajectory we're on. We're taking strides, but we've got to play complementary football and play for the offense. We have to help the defense. Defense has to help the offense, and special teams have to do their job



too.

So there's a lot of things we can learn from, but I think we're at where we're at. Sky is the limit still. There's no confidence taken away in this loss. We're going to learn from it and get better and go get a W.

**Q. You had a couple of impressive plays where you're extending the play, escaping the rush. You also had a couple of impressive scrambles. How do you balance that in your mind? Obviously things are probably moving a million miles per hour in the moment, but you've done a pretty good job of determining where to throw the football down the field?**

C.J. STROUD: I appreciate that. I try to do my best to keep my O-line honest, move in the pocket really well, and when it's time to scramble and go get some yards, try to go get some yards.

I feel like I tried to do that as much as possible today. Got a couple of good runs, but sometimes I don't need to scramble, but it's tough.

Towards the end especially they were dropping 8, rushing three, and they were really covering a lot of the zones, taking away some of the short stuff and backing up so we take away the deep stuff.

What my job is is to try to make a play, and I feel like I did that as many times as I could.

Credit to those guys. Jacksonville is great team. They have a great defense from D-line all the way to DBs to the backers. Communicate very well.

I mean, at the end of the day we have to lick our chops, lick our wounds, and understand it is what it is. We have to be better. I've got to go out there and make some more plays on my end, but this isn't the end. We'll be better.

**Q. From an intangibles standpoint, what do you see growth from the beginning of the year to now? DeMeco has described this as a close football team.**

C.J. STROUD: We're brothers, man. It's one of the things that coming from Ohio State, that's our motto is the brotherhood. I didn't know if it would be like that in the NFL, but honestly it is. It's quite the same.

Of course, guys have kids and things like that, but really we're hanging out a lot together. We're always together, of course, in the building. We actually hang out away from the building.

Case and Davis in my room have been amazing to me. A lot of guidance, a lot of confidence-building, a lot of honest and really just a lot of life skill-building from them being older than me and helping me out in certain situations on the field and off.

So this team is really close. That's the thing about losing in this league. I told them in the locker room. There's only two things. You either win or you learn. We have the mindset in there that we are going to learn from this and be better.

**Q. Another stellar performance by you today. (Indiscernible). Philosophically how you go about attacking the defense, right, all the praise goes when you take the deep shots down the field and all that. With what are Bobby Slowik and Jerrod Johnson and DeMeco game planning, are you learning to appreciate check-down and the things like that as much as the glory that comes with pushing the ball down the field?**

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, for sure. I think I've taken steps from OTAs to training camp of you get so excited. You get the play call. Oh, dang, we got a shot. I'm going to do my best to make to make it work. If it's not there, just being smart.

The worst thing you can do in this league is play behind the chains. My job is to even if it's not the best look against a certain play call, my job is to make Bobby always right, make this team always right, and whoever has the ball in their hand, and most of the time it's me, I'm really feeding other people's families. I can either lose them money or make them money.

I just try to be smart with that, but it's a controlled aggression that I have. I feel like today I tried to do my best with that. They took away really all our deep shots. I thought I did a good job of making plays and taking check-downs, and it's playing the game honest, but we have to be better on third down if we're going to live like that.

So a lot of things that we need to work on and things like that, but I'm enjoying the process of the game, and I'm not going to be bored by taking check-downs and stuff like that.

**Q. It felt like there was more scrambling, more running, more escaping from you today. How much of that was built in game plan stuff? How much of it was the pressure? How much of it was just situational?**

C.J. STROUD: Really all three. It's a players' league. I have to go out there and make plays. Sometimes when it's

not there down the field, sometimes they get you. They're in the NFL too. They get paid, and they cover us up pretty well.

It's my job so extend the play. I think we did a good job of scrambling. Towards the back end we were a little tired out there, so we weren't really moving well. I feel like we can definitely be better at scramble drills. We have to work on some things on that.

But the off schedule stuff isn't always coached. It's kind of like just go out there play and make a play. Don't make a bad play worse. Go out there and just have fun. That's how I think about it.

I'm going out there with my guys, my brothers, and we're going to go play ball like we're playing in the backyard when things don't go as planned.

Some of it is planned. Some of it's not. I feel like we took strides in that area today, and that's something you see around the league from Mahomes to Burrow to Josh Allen to really all over the league. Those guys do well in scramble drill, and I think we took a step towards that today.

**Q. (Indiscernible). The first passing yards in the rookie season and again. Throughout the entire year you have made a plethora of plays. What does it mean to week after week you continue to show up and play at a high level and produce for your squad?**

C.J. STROUD: It's a blessing, man. Honestly for me everything always goes back to my faith and my family. They gave me a lot of freedom to really hone in on my job, and this isn't college. This is a job.

Like I was talking to Brady on the podcast, he had a great sense of -- he had a great word of advice for me. Just, man, this is your job. People are depending on you.

I've luckily had I feel like that blessing all my life since I've been young. I feel like it's been a blessing just to work hard every week.

I wake up every day like, man, I'm in the NFL. This is a blessing. I know we lost today, and I'm up here smiling because I am living my dream.

It's not always going to be perfect. God never said it was going to be, but at the end of the day I know that he wouldn't put nothing on me that I can't handle or this team can't handle.

It's been a blessing to come out here and work hard and

really see the City of Houston -- like, me and my mom got for give back for Thanksgiving. There's hope in this city, and I'm not saying it's just the Texans or anything like that, but that means something to these people, and that's what it's really about.

It's not about me and breaking records. That stuff will come if it comes, but it's really about helping people and seeing the hope and inspiring people. Appreciate you all. God bless.

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