

Houston Texans Media Conference

Sunday, December 24, 2023

Houston, Texas, USA

Coach DeMeco Ryans

Postgame Press Conference



Browns - 36, Texans - 22

Q. After a loss like this, what do you tell your team?

COACH RYANS: We've got to play better, and it starts with me. I've got to coach better. That's the first thing I told my guys. For me, it wasn't good enough today. And it all starts with me. That's what I told our guys. I have to do better, and we have to play better, of course.

Q. Did you consider playing Davis Mills earlier and why the decision to keep Case in for as long --

COACH RYANS: We had both guys rolling there. That was our plan going into the game, to have both guys rolling. That's what we did. We couldn't get moving on offense. No matter what happened, who was at quarterback, we couldn't get moving.

When we had positive plays, we ended up having a negative play. It seemed like we just couldn't get out of our own way. And when you continue to hurt yourself -- the self-inflicting penalties, negative yardage, sacks -- those plays just keeps you behind the chains and it's hard to keep up versus a very good defense.

Q. You know what it's like going through adversity coming into the week, when you know you're dealing with injuries. How do you deal with it in real time -- you lost three starters in the first quarter on defense?

COACH RYANS: We lost guys in this game. And injuries suck for everybody. It happens. But at the end of the day there's a game to be played. The game isn't going to stop just because we have injuries.

So for us, in my mindset of how we attack it, is whoever steps in, just do your job. Be where you're supposed to be. Everybody's being where they're supposed to be and doing what they're supposed to do, we still have a shot there. No matter what injury happens, we still expect guys to go out and play their best.

Q. You mentioned earlier that you feel like you could have done better. If so, what ways do you think you could have done better?

COACH RYANS: Just anytime your team goes out and performs like that to start, it just wasn't good enough. You try to figure out why it wasn't good enough. Felt like we had a good week of preparation. We were on. We knew what we had to do to win the game. And that was eliminate the explosive passes and to come out.

And for the first play, for that to happen, it's not good enough. And that's the way this offense, the team got going is because we gave up the explosive plays knowing going into the game that's where they thrive, throwing the deep passes. We didn't do a great job of covering it at all today.

Q. You've seen Flacco for a long time now, age 38, describe what you saw from him, preparing for him what he delivered today?

COACH RYANS: When you don't get pressure on the quarterback, no matter who is out there, it's going to be a long day. For Flacco he had a really good day versus us. We didn't pressure him at all. He stood back in the pocket. He had all day to throw the football. And we weren't where we were supposed to be in coverage.

Q. Was there any consideration to -- a lot of Amari Cooper's damage was away from (indiscernible) and Nelson, the majority was over the middle -- not over the middle, but (indiscernible) outside cornerback. Was there any consideration of having your outside cornerbacks follow Amari Cooper?

COACH RYANS: No, that's not what we do. When we talk about following guys, it's not a matter of following him, it's a matter of guy playing their coverage well. We have a guy double-teamed and he still catches the ball. That's the problem. We've got to play ball better.

Q. Could you talk about the decision to put Damion Pierce on kickoff return and what you saw from him?

COACH RYANS: Dameon gave us the spark we needed. He gave us the spark to get us back into the game. Putting him back there at the kickoff return is something we explored throughout the week, and he did a really good job practicing it.

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And he showed up. He showed up and made a big-time play for us to spark our entire team. Proud of Dameon and what he was able to do for us today.

Q. What went into the decision to have Jalen Pitre on the sidelines?

COACH RYANS: It's a decision where it comes of just everybody being -- we rotated a lot of guys there. We had Amos, we had DAC back there, rotating a lot of guys. We lost Jimmie. A lot of guys in and out in the back end.

Q. Do you worry about someone and how --

COACH RYANS: He was there to move the ball. Eventually there at the end, he was able to move the ball, drive down, get us a couple scores.

Q. Are you able to process this game, flush it out, get ready for the next?

COACH RYANS: You have to. It sucks. You lose. Had a good opportunity here but we didn't accomplish the job. We didn't get the job done today. So it's back to it. Next week, it's back to it; how are we going to show up next week ready to go? And that's all that matters. Can't do anything about this game now.

Q. As much as this one hurts, the Colts did lose today, you look at tape, you guys went out here, looks like you guys could be in. I know you don't look two weeks down the road, but with that in mind, you guys are still very much in the playoffs?

COACH RYANS: For us, we've got to play better football. Before we have an opportunity to talk about a playoff or get in, like we've got to play better. You have to earn those spots to get into the playoffs. So if we go and play better and earn a spot, then we can talk about possibly the playoff race and what does that look like; but until then, we gotta do a much better job collectively.

Q. If C.J. misses next week, is there any chance that you'll switch starting quarterbacks knowing that Davis kind of gave you a spark in the fourth quarter?

COACH RYANS: We'll worry about the quarterback next week. We'll see where C.J. is. Not making a decision right now on quarterbacks.