

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Frank Ross

Press Conference



FRANK ROSS: Good to see you guys. Hope everybody had a good holiday. It's unique, you get to play with one game in between against Tennessee. We have to find a way to be a difference in the kicking game, in the three phases. We were able to do that last time, but that's last time. This is an entirely different situation in the sense of we're going to get the kitchen sink thrown at us by the Titans, and then there's some familiar faces, but new faces.

If you look at them, their last game, No. 54 is Garret Wallow. We all know Garret well. He is playing in his spots there for them. Then we have to find a way to impact, whether that's the return game, whether that's us tightening coverage.

Saw Kyle Phillips back for them. Maybe is he back there as a returner. Whoever they put back there, those types of things. Chris Moore has been there. Tyjae Spears when he was back there, he was becoming dynamic.

It's going to be a challenge, and we have to find a way to make a play in this football game.

You guys know that this time of the year, we're talking end-of-the-year football where we're going to get everybody's best, and we need to give our best.

Take your questions.

Q. How do you feel (off microphone) the confidence that gives the return team?

FRANK ROSS: It's exciting. Any time -- we have multiple players back there that have had good opportunities. Two weeks back Steve Sims did an outstanding job, but having Dameon back there, man, he was excited. I can tell you that much. He was excited.

A strong runner that is somebody that's used to hitting downhill north and south and attacking that can break arm tackles, and then when it popped through it was one of our best schemed out as we would draw it up on paper, then

executed our best reps that we've had since really I've been here honestly. And everybody finishing in a dominant position.

If you watch it again, Henry To'oTo'o, he actually gets lost leverage, and he flips back around on the top side of it and seals it.

So just the strain that we used on that play to pop through, an exciting play. Got to find a way to make a difference on top of that throughout the rest of the game, though. It's what it's going to come down to this week in a Mike Vrabel-coached Tennessee Titans team.

Q. There have been discussions about how to get Dameon (off microphone) but how did that come to be that he came to your kick return?

FRANK ROSS: Conversations happened throughout, call it quarters of the season, weeks, who is going to be active and who is available on game day to you, whether that's a returner, a gunner, a fifth wide receiver, what is their role in the kicking game, is it a return man?

Myjai Sanders playing some kicking game roles for us as an eighth defensive lineman type of thing. He is playing a little bit more defense last week, so now, hey, what's his role?

The conversation was as simple as my opinion on it was when you are having a bad shooting game, get a stop on the defensive end, get yourself going by getting a fastbreak and a cheap bucket. And hopefully that gives Dameon some confidence. And he ran that way in a kickoff game. I thought did he a nice job handling the ball offensively throughout the game following that. Hopefully that's the case with him and get back to running downhill and attacking.

Q. You mentioned Sims was outstanding, and he did a really good job. So why after that game of all games have --

FRANK ROSS: Dameon is on the roster. Steve is on the practice squad. You get three elevations to bring a player



up from the practice squad. So to get him to the game, we would have to put him onto the roster. So we're going to continue to fight for whoever. As a kicking game coach, you want your guys out there. So whatever that means.

You know today's roster in the NFL is not 53-man. It's 70-some players, and you're training. At any point in time you have to be ready to go, whether that's an elevation or an activation to the roster.

Q. Just as well as Dameon Pierce's run played out, the flip side, it could have also went the opposite way. What is it like for you as a coordinator to try something and then it plays out perfectly?

FRANK ROSS: I just think as we train, whether it's a fundamental or a scheme specific for that week, man, there's nothing more -- as a teacher, there is no other way -- or better way, excuse me, to drive a point home than say, hey, I told you so, that's what works.

That was just kind of the rubber hitting the road there. He hit the return, man, Jake Hansen on a great single block, to turn his man after he was setting square and turned with leverage, it was a really great opportunity there to cut right off the tail of a blocker. And Dameon is used to that as a runner in the hole. So it kind of married up very nicely.

Yeah, that's what we preach, and then when it comes to fruition, there's no better driving point to your players as a teacher. Really excited for those guys. There's nothing better and nothing sweeter than a repeater, so let's try and do it again.

Q. Two players that were involved in that play, and although everybody will look at that, Dameon did score the touchdown. Was that a teaching moment for you to the rest of your players to say, hey, this is what it looks like when we're all working together?

FRANK ROSS: Great question. Basically I'll never have to have a better banked teaching clip of how to double-team and fall off to a safety. Go back and watch Neville Hewitt.

Neville Hewitt gets the front side safety who is going to make the tackle by double-teaming and falling downhill, double-teaming on the frontline player there and falling off to get the safety in coverage and was able to seal him late in the down and it popped free.

Yeah, there was point of attack blocks that are hard to do, but those second-level players that are there to fit on the ball were able to seal off as well, so you never have to have another teaching clip other than that again.

Yeah, that's what we need. We need execution like that every Sunday. In the return game we want to be able to return the ball on punt returns. We need to finish in a dominant position. We were close on a couple.

We need that this Sunday, whoever our punt returner may be.

Q. You went back and watched the film. You saw him score the touchdown, but a lot of people also didn't recognize the fact that he almost had broke through on that first return.

FRANK ROSS: Yeah, we were a step close. We were an inch off. That's the back side. It was a back side block by Henry, and he comes over. Oh, just got to finish on the up field shoulder and run through. That becomes a punt return block once you take in the initial point of attack. Then you have to run up and run your hips through the front side or return side shoulder. He just got nearly tripped up. Otherwise, we're on the second level again.

Great execution across that Sunday. Didn't result in a win. Man, our lives are on the line this Sunday, and that's what it's going to take in the kicking game to get an edge. Let's have that this weekend.

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