

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

Will Anderson Jr.

Postgame Press Conference



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Q. Hey, Will, Coach actually told us you had to play through some pain. First off, how are you feeling? Second, how were you able to knock out the pain and give the performance you did?

WILL ANDERSON JR.: First, I've got to give all glory to God. This week has just been one of them weeks in the league, man. People talk about welcome to the NFL moment, and you've always got your moments on the field.

But I think off the field was one of the biggest challenges I faced this week as an NFL player and just being a pro and learning how to be a pro. Like I said, I've just got to give all glory to God.

I think it's just the type of person I am, the type of person I've been made into, the person God has made me to be, the person my parents raised me to be. All the great coaches I got to play for, Coach Rogers in high school and Coach Saban.

I remember a similar situation in college my sophomore year, I got cut blocked. I didn't know if I was going to be able to play that week. They were talking about surgery and all this other stuff. I remember Coach Saban sat me in his office, and he's just like nobody is 100 percent right now at this time. Everybody is banged up. I know you've got your injury going on.

He was like, it just shows you're a warrior. It shows what type of competitor you are. Those are the type of moments that you never forget, and you go out there and ball out for your brothers and everything like that, and God is taking care of you.

For me, that's all I was thinking about this week was just like how can I be a warrior? How can I be a competitor? Trust in God knowing that he makes no mistakes. Everything happens for a reason. My brothers have got my back, and I've got their back.

That's just where I kind of was going into this week.

Q. Congratulations on the two sacks. What went into that? A lot of the week, you've gotten pressure and a lot of hits, and you haven't always gotten through. This time you were able to finish and get there.

WILL ANDERSON JR.: Man, I've got to give credit to those guys up front. Without them, we don't eat on the edge. We've got Rank, Khalil, Kurt, all those guys did a great job pushing the pocket, and it just helps us and makes our job much easier getting to the quarterback.

So it's just all of us working together and being effective as one and rushing as one. We've been doing a really good job of that lately. I think that's one of the main goals we had as a D-line. Nobody is going to rush selfishly. We're all going to rush together so everybody can eat and everybody can have fun and just go out there and play for each other.

Q. How hard was it for you to sit out these games? And what did you learn while sitting out?

WILL ANDERSON JR.: It was the hardest. I'm like aaah! I'm the type, when I'm watching the ball, especially on this team, I get very anxious. I've got to be out there. It was very hard to turn on the games and I want to be out there. Then again, I'm supporting my bros and everything like that.

Like I said, I think it's all about being a pro and learning how to be a pro. I ain't going to lie, these last few weeks, it was phenomenal. I did a really good job of trying to connect with God, also picked up a lot of stuff on that. And also diving deeper into my tape, looking at things that I can get better, watching other guys, watching the D-line.

It's actually kind of different than when you get a chance to watch the game at home and you see so much more stuff. I think that went into that a lot. These last two weeks have been really good mentally. And of course physically getting my ankle right and resting my body.

But more than anything, it was really good locking in on my

faith and trusting in God and believing in God that he makes no mistakes. But also learning what could I have done better in the past to help me in the future. So it was really great.

Q. Today you set the single season record for sacks for a rookie. What's your reaction to that. And can you describe your process to get to this point?

WILL ANDERSON JR.: Nothing happens without those guys in the D-line room. None of this happens. I give all glory to God for blessing me to be a part of this team, blessing me to be a part of the D-line that we have here, and just the guys that's in the room, my Papaw, he always told me, your gift will make room for you and bring you before great men.

That's all I think about now is how God has made room for my gift and brought a lot of great men in that room, and they've been really supportive of me, helping me along the way. When I'm down, they pick me right back up. They always say you're a leader, man. There's no need. You're having a good year regardless what anybody has to say, any of the haters have to say, they always keep me grounded and make sure I'm staying focused on the right things.

I've got to give a big shout out to those guys because without them, without God placing them in my life, I don't even think I would be here right now where I'm at.

Q. How did you injure yourself?

WILL ANDERSON JR.: My foot just got caught in the turf when I was rushing, and it kind of bent a little bit, and that's how I ended up getting my high ankle sprain. It was like non-contact, the turf up there at MetLife.

Q. What does it mean to be in this position to play for a playoff spot?

WILL ANDERSON JR.: It means everything, man. We have some really great vets, man. It's special. Like I sit in the front row, and we've got both our leaders, Robert Woods and Rank come up and talk to us. Rank hit on we've got eight quarters left to play ball, man. We're not guaranteed anything. We finished four quarters today, and we've got four more next week.

When he broke it down in that perspective, I think everybody saw a different perspective, a different view, and they really hit on a lot of good stuff. To be on a team so special as this with a lot of great vets that's been through a lot, seen a lot of great things.

The promise of this team, the promise we have, the talent that we have, the culture we have, how everything is going, and it's right in front of us, and we've got to keep reaching and going to get it.

For us, it's really on us. We've really got to lock in on the details. How bad do you really want it? I know Robert Woods asked us, how bad do you really want it? Does it mean enough to you to sacrifice whatever you have to sacrifice for us to make this playoff run? I think they hit it right on the head, what they were talking about last night, and the guys explained it really well.

Q. You talk about the veterans. It's a great blend of young guys and veterans. You and C.J. were drafted here by DeMeco to set the tone of what he wanted. Can you take a moment as this calendar year ends tonight -- I know you've got hopefully a lot of football left here. Can you take a moment and just appreciate what you guys have accomplished so far?

WILL ANDERSON JR.: Yeah, of course. I think that's one of the biggest things that we always look at, almost never being satisfied with where you're at. Sometimes we do have to take a step back and be like, dang, you're doing all right. You're doing good.

Then Coach always talks to us about staying on edge, and I think that's what keeps us going. Never being comfortable, never being satisfied with everything, never being good enough to -- oh, I made it. I think everybody has that mindset here. They're like we haven't made it yet. I think that's what keeps us on edge, and I think that's what keeps this team full of grit and hunger.

Coach talking about empty the tank. I think we did a good job in this game of everybody emptying the tank and flying around and having fun. That's what teams need, especially like us. Boy, when you have a bunch of guys all on the same page, same mentality, and can click together like that, it just makes the organization very special.

Q. Two-part question. First, what in-season improvements have you seen in yourself and in your game that made today's performance possible? And what does it mean to you to help this team turn around and have one of the best run defenses in the NFL?

WILL ANDERSON JR.: I'll start with the second question first. That's all we preach is stopping the run. It's literally in our D-line room, like stop the run. Before we talk about anything else, we're going to stop the run. Like it always starts with us up front. Without us up front, out of our gaps or anything like that, the defense is no good, man, because it starts with the big boys up front.

So we really hone in on, look, we've got to stop this run. If we stop this run, then we can get to third down, and we can eat.

For the first question, it's really just going back and self-reflecting and looking in the mirror and saying it's not good enough. People can talk about, oh, double-team, oh, this and that. It doesn't matter. It's not good enough. That's why you have to come and approach every day like how can I get better?

I think the coaches have been doing a really good job. We stay after practice about ten minutes and work the little stuff, work the edges, angles, different moves, stuff like that. People talk about we're going to get this rookie block. How can you get a rookie block when you're so intrigued on learning and intrigued on reaching your goal?

I feel like all the rooks here, I don't feel like none of us reached a rookie block because we're so eager to learn. We see success, and we want to keep going and going to get it. It's a beautiful thing to see from all the young guys and even the vets.

I think that's what keeps this team going is just the hunger just to keep learning ball and keep getting better. So it's just been beautiful.

Q. To kind of follow up on that self-reflection and learning, what have you learned about yourself this season especially while you were out, and just about the NFL?

WILL ANDERSON JR.: What I've learned about myself, honestly, that I'm enough. Regardless of what anybody has to say, you're enough, man. I think that's one thing that I've really been reflecting on. Bro, you've put the work in. You made it here to the NFL, man. What are you going to do with this opportunity?

Don't ever let man try to tell you that you're not enough. During these last two weeks, I had time to reflect and say, look, you're good, Dawg, and my teammates have really had my back.

As far as the team, the guys, man, I have to give all credit to them. You walk in this thing, and there's nobody with their heads down. There's no sad faces. It's like everybody enjoys being around each other. I've been on championship teams, and I've seen the camaraderie around the locker room. I can most definitely say we most definitely have that in the Texas locker room.

A lot of great personalities, a lot of great players, and I've

been blessed and fortunate to be a part of all this history that's going on and taking place here. I can't thank God enough for this opportunity that he's blessed us all with, and I've got to give a big credit to him.

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