

Houston Texans Media Conference

Saturday, January 13, 2024

Houston, Texas, USA

Coach Kevin Stefanski

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Texans 45, Browns 14

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Players, coaches, offense, defense, special teams, just not good enough, but I do want to make sure that I credit DeMeco and his football team. They did a nice job. I appreciate how our team fights. I appreciate how they fought today and throughout this entire season. They always came back and fought like crazy, so disappointed from that perspective.

I appreciate our fans, a bunch of fans down here today. They stuck with us this entire season, and we don't like how it ended. None of us do. But we'll have to learn from it. That's just the game of football, really. With that, I'll take any questions.

Q. What happened to the defense today?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Without looking at it closely, I give them credit really. They did a nice job, gave up some big plays, but it's just disappointing. But again, we win as a team, we lose as a team.

Q. How shocked are you by not only the loss but the score?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, again, that's football. It got away from us very quickly there in the third quarter, which was disappointing, but that's football.

Q. Six minutes left in the third quarter, two pick sixes, those turnovers which have been your achilles heel --

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, and again, not getting into particulars, but we just didn't play well enough in any phase. We didn't play well enough, we didn't coach well enough.

Q. The run-backs on the interceptions, they were long, in traffic --

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, I'd have to look at it. Obviously that's killer, giving up points like that.

Q. Was there any reason the running game -- I think you had like 25 yards at halftime or something like that. What was going on there?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, again, we'll look at it like we always do, but we just didn't do a good enough job, and I give them credit.

Q. From a defensive standpoint, JOK was all over the place, but it seemed like you needed some other guys to step up.

KEVIN STEFANSKI: It's hard to say. I think we certainly didn't play well enough to win, so we're all going to share in that.

Q. You talked so much about the adjustments that you made between Christmas Eve and today. Did they do anything that surprised you? Looked like a lot of misdirection.

KEVIN STEFANSKI: That's part of their system. They did a nice job of that. That's kind of what they do. Again, they did a nice job.

Q. Joe had played so well for you guys. Interceptions have been the problem, though. Can you weigh in on what happened there in the third quarter because it looked like the game was over after that.

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, just didn't do a good enough job. I need to put him in better position. There's things that I can do better. He's trying to make a play.

Q. His eight interceptions in five games didn't seem to matter. Were you guys as coaches concerned about that going into this game?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Well, I think you always look at every turnover and you look at what caused it and things that you can do better. Obviously we know we've got to take care of the football. That's the formula for winning in this league. We know that. But I'm not going to boil this game down to one or two plays.



Q. Can you talk about C.J. Stroud and how solid he is for a rookie?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, obviously we talked about him all week. He's a very good football player. He operated really well today, made plays throughout the game.

Q. Myles Garrett, there's a history with Tunsil; is that what happened today --

KEVIN STEFANSKI: That's hard to say without looking at it, but we all share in this one.

Q. It's so abrupt when you lose in a playoff game. What did you say to the team?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: It's hard. It is hard. We all want this thing to keep going, so that's very disappointing, obviously, but you don't always -- it doesn't always turn out how you wanted it to, not for a lack of effort, not for a lack of working their tails off all season long, not for a lack of fighting their butts off all season long. It didn't work out. That's the tough part of sports. Football you can have days like this. It was a bad day for us.

Q. Despite those two pick sixes, Joe Flacco got you guys to the dance. What can you say about his contribution?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, again, hard to reflect on all of it right this minute. I appreciate how he battled today.

Q. The Texans seemed to attack Greg Newsome from the beginning of the game. Did you guys anticipate them finding a weak spot?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Again, I'm not going to get into particulars other than to say we did not do a good enough job, all of us.

Q. What was the thought process at the end of the first half when you decided to let the clock expire?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Just with the down and distance where we were, felt we were best taking it to the half.

Q. You guys have not gotten blown out all year except for that Ravens game at home. What do you make of that happening today in this moment?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, it's disappointing, but I'm going to give credit to the Texans. They did a nice job. We just didn't play well enough. We didn't coach well enough.

Q. Was protecting Joe a big concern coming in, and do you feel that played a big role in this?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, they did a nice job pressuring. We and I, we need to do a better job putting those guys in position.

Q. You guys knew it was going to be a completely different game with C.J., their two pass rushers, their defense. Was it vastly even --

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Well, obviously the result, but I really want to make sure -- they did a nice job. I give credit to them. We share in these. We share in the wins, we share in the losses.

Q. How did they take Cooper out of the game?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: Yeah, again, they did a nice job in their coverage.

Q. Was Amari okay? He got up slowly at one point and he came to the sidelines for a second. Was he okay?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: He was okay. He was battling.

Q. What's the identity of this team with all the injuries this season? We talked to some fans who said, the fact that we made the playoffs is a lot. What's the identity of this team?

KEVIN STEFANSKI: I think we'll worry about next year soon. Not right this minute. I appreciate the question, but I think the main thing I want to say to you guys is as disappointed as I am, and trust me, I am, I really do appreciate this football team. I appreciate all the hard work that they've put in this entire season. I appreciate how they've battled throughout and they've stuck together. No one likes the result today, no one. That's a some better locker room because you work so hard. You work so hard.

For it to end this way, it's really, really tough.

Having said that, we're going to own it. We're going to accept the blame, and we're going to give credit to them.

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