

Houston Texans Media Conference

Saturday, January 13, 2024

Houston, Texas, USA

Joe Flacco

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Texans 45, Browns 14

JOE FLACCO: I'll have to go back and watch it, but those guys were flying around today. You've got to give them a lot of credit, just the way they were flying around and playing physical. It seemed like we were keeping up there a little bit, and it was a decent little fight for a quarter and a half.

Really the first half. 24-14, you can't -- not that you're asking for things, but that's playoffs. It's not going to be easy. You're going to be in tough games where you have to battle until the end.

Obviously we just came out in the second half and weren't really able to put it together.

Q. How difficult is it for this kind of fun ride you were on to end the way it did?

JOE FLACCO: It's always difficult, man, when you get to this time of the year. I think a lot of times you can view it as -- you think from the outside, you get to the playoffs and you get to the wildcard round or the divisional round, the AFC Championship game, the Super Bowl, usually the further you go, the more heartbreak there is, just from my experience.

It's a lot of fun along the way, but if you do get beat, it's hard to deal with.

I don't want to let everybody in the locker room, but there is part of me that wishes you could see just how much everybody cares and how much everybody cares about each other and just what kind of team that was.

So yeah, it's definitely a shame the way it went down and hard to deal with at the moment.

Q. The first interception, were you trying to throw it away?

JOE FLACCO: Yeah, I was trying to throw it away. Taking

it back, I could see the guy was getting pressure pretty quickly. I wish I would have just -- I knew where he was going to be, Elijah was going to be, so I knew I had a throwaway there.

Looking back on it, I wish I threw it at like the lower guy's feet. Kind of thought of that earlier, or just took the sack, to be honest with you.

Obviously when you look at things in hindsight --

Q. As you went through your five games, there were interceptions but they didn't seem to affect any game. Were you at all concerned about the rate of interceptions coming into this game?

JOE FLACCO: Listen, you never want to throw those. I do think you have to look at interceptions as a quarterback and as an offense, as a quarterback group when you go back and watch the film. You have to look at them for what they are. Are they bad decisions? Are they bad throws? Are they just happening because it was just something wild happened?

I think you always have to address those. You don't want to turn the ball over. But you do have to see -- like you said, it's just some of the ways some of them have happened, it is what it is.

Today, like I said, you're trying to throw a ball away. You're not trying to make a bad decision. But at the end of the day, you have to be able to live with sacks, and I think in that drive, we had overcome a 2nd and long from a holding, and in the back of your head you're just kind of like, okay, we got over that one, let's not get back in that position, and you almost let your guard down a little bit.

Like I said, I think you have to realize that sometimes sacks aren't bad things.

Q. This was such a magical run. You didn't sign with this team until November. You went the entire off-season, half the season unsigned, get the team into the playoffs, and for it to end the way it did, what's your emotions on the magical run and the way that it



finally ended?

JOE FLACCO: Just like we talked about, I think I was so fortunate to become a part of this team. It's a special group. I know a lot of people can say that. But it really is.

To be given a chance to do this with those guys, I'm super grateful for it.

Listen, this is why we love football. This is why we love NFL playoffs. It's 14 really good football teams, and it's one game.

Unfortunately for us but just fortunately in just the general sense of everything, there's always a winner and a loser, and today, like I said, unfortunately for us, we were the loser.

But that's what we love about this game. There's going to be a winner. There's going to be a loser. You have to learn how to deal with it when you're not the guy.

Like I said, everybody is -- it was a close group, so you can imagine how they're taking it, but they're going to hold their heads high because I know who they are.

Q. Collectively the two pick sixes back to back, even though you were trying to throw the first one away, how much of a back breaker were those?

JOE FLACCO: Well, yeah, obviously. I don't think there's really much that needs to be said about that. When you're driving down and you're trying to get back to a one-score game and all of a sudden it's a three-score game or whatever it ends up being -- I mean, the second one is on 4th down. I thought I'd be able to jam one in there. That's just a calculated risk at that point.

The first one is the one that, like I said, I was talking about.

Q. It looked like a patient drive was in progress, three 1st downs and then that was a -- were you thinking shot play there?

JOE FLACCO: Yeah, we were taking a shot. We were throwing a shot to Elijah. We were running him on a little pump route up the sidelines.

Q. Can you discuss a little bit about the pride that you took in taking Cleveland on this ride and how the city embraced you?

JOE FLACCO: Well, it's disappointing the way it ends. I think when the city embraces you and the team the way they have, you definitely want to -- you want to do big

things, mostly for your teammates because those guys, like I said, have been incredible.

But it's hard not to feel the way the city rallied around the group of guys in that locker room.

That's another reason why we love the NFL. It's the fans. As crazy as they can be, it's what makes the game, and we are in part -- you're not necessarily thinking about it, but that's what it's about. It's about getting these communities excited about their team. That's what we like to do here. We love NFL and we like to get excited about teams.

I can't thank the organization, my teammates, the city enough. Yeah, it stinks the way it ends, but it was a lot of fun, and I'm grateful for the time that we had.

Q. Do you feel like if given the opportunity that you'd like to be back with the Browns and kind of keep this thing going a little bit?

JOE FLACCO: Listen, I love it here. We're dealing with so much right now, just going through the emotions of this game and being so excited to be in this position, and now to come up empty.

I think that's where my head is is just kind of trying to soak it all in and let this digest a little bit.

Q. How much different is Texas' defense from the first time you played them, either schematically what they were able to do --

JOE FLACCO: Listen, I think they did what they do well. I think they played their defense.

I think they seemed a little bit more aggressive. They seemed to be playing a little bit faster. Just basic things.

Whatever you want to say it is, they played with a little bit more confidence, a little bit more speed, a little bit more hunger. They just seemed to have a better day.

Listen, I thought we kind of weathered the storm there for a little bit, and we had two really good drives. If it was one of those tight games, I felt like we could kind of stay out there and do that, and we just -- like I said, the game got away from us, obviously, and we all know why.

Q. Did you get a chance to watch C.J. a little bit, and if so, can you tip your hat to the kind of game that C.J. had?

JOE FLACCO: For sure, for sure. We were close to getting to him a couple times in the first half, but he got the

ball out, and I thought he did a good job on a handful of throws that he had to make in those situations.

Then you've also just got to give a lot of credit to the guys he got the ball to. I thought they ran the ball really well today after they got the catch. But there was a couple plays where I did notice him getting hit in the pocket, and he was able to stand in there and do what he needed to do on those plays, and I think that's the most impressive thing is not dealing with a clean pocket and having to make the three, four, five plays a game that nobody necessarily looks back on, but they kind of extend the drives.

Q. This team had been so great at the end of games, set a franchise record with last-minute game-winning drives. How disappointing is it that you didn't have a chance as a team to get it to the last few minutes where you guys have been so great this year?

JOE FLACCO: Yeah, I don't think you ever want that to be the case, obviously, when you're looking and you're game planning and you're thinking it out in your head.

But yeah, that's what these games come down to, so it is a shame that it wasn't just one of those back-and-forth games and came down to the last possession or the last couple minutes of the fourth quarter. It seemed like that was probably going to be the way we were going to win if we were going to win, and it just never happened.

Q. You took such a prominent leadership role with the team very quickly. Did you have a message for the guys after the game?

JOE FLACCO: Oh, man, we were just -- like I said, it's an emotional group in certain ways, and you just go around -- I think we were all just looking at each other right in the eyes and telling each other how much we appreciate each other and how much we love each other and stuff like that. No direct message.

The only thing I said was at halftime, hey, guys, this is how it's supposed to be in these games. It's supposed to be tough. There's no guarantee of coming in here and things being easy. That's not how it's supposed to be. That's not how you want it. You want to go through tough times, and you want to prevail and hold your head high, and we just weren't able to do that.

DraftScripts by ASAP Sports