

# Houston Texans Media Conference

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

Houston, Texas, USA

## CJ Stroud

Press Conference



**Q. Coach talked about when we asked him, talked about leadership. He pointed to you stopping practice. Why was that important for you to really kind of step up your leadership skills this year?**

CJ STROUD: I mean, I don't think I just did it this year. I think like that's just important in general. You know, it's my job to hold guys accountable, along with other guys. You know, it's just a ton of expectations, ton of things that we want to do this year, that we should do this year.

But you have to slow down and learn just how it execute one play at a time. When all the pressure is on, like how do you simplify playing at a high level every single play.

So I think that way, you know, just bringing the guys back, taking us back to square one, what happened happened, it's time to move on, that's going to happen in the season. But I just think if it comes from me it means a lot, and now I'm stepping to the role more and more.

So I'm just accepting that and having fun with it, being myself, and I just want everybody around me to eat off -- I told them like this sport can change your life if you do it the right way. Being accountable, doing the extra stuff away from the facility, that stuff matters at the end of the day.

All the expectations and all the pressure, that really doesn't matter if you do those things.

**Q. What are the expectations for year two in this offense?**

CJ STROUD: Just keep growing. You know, the name of the game is execution. You know, the times where we executed at a high level, the times we won those games.

So that's just the goal, just to execute and be able to be on the same page, build chemistry right now, so when the ball rolls, we're ready to fly around at a high level.

That's the goal and that's -- there is goals on top of that, but that's the foundation right now.

**Q. CJ, I know that it's still pretty early, but how has it been so far getting to work with Diggs and how is he fitting in?**

CJ STROUD: He's fitting in great. Coming in with his head down mentality, just working. Helped me out a lot. He comes from a good system over there when he was with the Bills, and did a lot things with him and really just offense and told me how like Josh played and things like that, things we do different. We've had plenty of conversation.

So he's come in and been a leader which I'm proud of him for. Just really has been unselfish and wanted to see other guys eat. That was his main thing. He wanted to be around other dogs, and he stepped into that role where there is a dog everywhere. He looks right, he looks left, there is going to be a dog. He wanted that and that's what we bring to the table. He's been nothing but amazing so far, and I am very excited to work with him.

**Q. As a friend, as a teammate, as a human being, what's it like to have your friend, Tank, back with you guys? What was it like to go from the gamut of emotions of hearing about it to now when it's over and you're back out there?**

CJ STROUD: It was amazing. One, just a testament to him and the God we serve. And two, just the work he's put in. He came back before he was scheduled, and on top of that, after that freak accident. I think we serve a God that's merciful and purposeful, and he knows that and stepped into -- me and him have those conversations about our faith. And this football stuff, it seems like it's everything, but it's not.

We're people and we go through a lot off the field people don't know. You know, as his brother, I have to be there for him just like he is there for me when I go through what I go through.

I'm just proud of him, man. The word "proud" probably isn't even enough to state the feelings that I have for that guy. He's one of my best friends that I've gotten to know over

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
sports

the years in this world of football.

Past that, I feel like I known Tank since I've been three years old. I think our connection is kind of we grew up together. Just got a lot of love for that guy. I'm very excited for him. He's been snapping at practice and doing really well, and to knock off the rust that quick shows how much work he's put in.

**Q. How much more comfortable are you walking out of OTAs this year?**

CJ STROUD: Yeah, it's night and day, man. Really like I feel like I'm running the show. I've got a lot more responsibilities from Slow, DeMeco, Jarrod, and really our whole offensive staff. I'm the captain of the ship and I got to run it the right way. And I feel like I stepped into the role of not only holding guys accountable, but also holding myself accountable. I don't let anything slide. That's the point of winning and losing.

So I think from last year to this year, I've gotten a lot better with controlling my emotions, controlling my ball placement, knowing what's NFL open, knowing my footwork better. Really every little I've taken a step.

Other side of the ball everything slowed down, seeing coverage. DeMeco does a good job blitzing me and working on their different coverages and different looks. Started too high, go to one, go back to two, motion like it's man, go to cover two. All that stuff to keep me true and honest, and I think I've tried to do my best with the off-season study to be better, and I will feel like I've done that and had a good OTA so far.

Got to finish with vet mini camp, it's been a big transition of more comfortability account from last year to this year.

**Q. In college you always had a talented receiver room. Last year you had a talented receiver room. So you've had the experience of having to feed a lot of the guys. Diggs, Joe Mixon, how much would that experience from college and last year help you being able to make sure that everybody is being fed the way they are so you can have the best possible offense?**

CJ STROUD: Yeah, I mean, I don't think nothing changes. It's like I told -- I tell guys, because I get that question a lot from people just walking around just anywhere. Astros game, wherever.

I'm like, man, it's football. You're open, you get the ball. My thinking is you got to pick your poison playing this. Who you going to double, who you going to cater to. You got five dogs who are able to get the ball in each given

play.

So I think it's fun. I know Slow has done a great job being more creative and has put different personnel packages out there, guys in different positions, going from you inside to outside. I'm very excited to work with Coach Slow again. He's done amazing so far in OTAs and will continue to do such.

Yeah, man, I think that past experience of playing with Marv (phonetic) Jacks, Garrett, Chris, Jamo, Memeka, Julian, like those type of guys, they'll tell you too. I know they'll probably have said it before, but they'll tell you they made me better and I made them better. My job is to make everybody around me better.

I'm excited, man. It's been healthy competition. I know Garrett, seen his interview today. He was talking about Ohio State, how like the receivers like -- if Garrett made a play, Chris is like, Nah, watch this. It's the same thing here, which it's really cool to watch.

As the quarterbacks, we're the same way, too. Healthy competition is the best way to grow and get better. I think that's what it's about. You see how excited Diggs gets for Tank when he makes a play and Metch gets excited when Nico makes a play and Tank gets excited when Rob makes a play.

It's amazing. Got Noah coming back, too. I am excited being there. There is a ton of the guys, a ton of talent. Really everybody has been doing. J Wayne, Johnny, it's been fun.

**Q. Nick went out and got two -- some extra talent on the offensive side the ball. What did you think about the additions on the defensive side of the ball?**

CJ STROUD: It's great. It's been good on good. You know, it's been a lot of smack talk, just good competition. Starts with me and Azeez, you know, him being the leader of the defense, I'm the leader the offense.

Playing him last year, he always showed up on tape when I watched the Titans last year. It's cool to see like the stuff he thinks -- you can see him at my locker, me at his or us before practice, after practice talking about plays.

On, so it starts with us. When you add Danielle, somebody who is a vet, who plays really hard, who is going to help Will, them two dogs. You got Tim in the middle with Autry, just a ton of guys, man, on the back end. Young guys showing up. Calen is doing really well on the back end along with Pitre and Jimmy, along with Kamari. He's showing up, playing well. Man, it's just been dogs on dogs.

The best teams I've ever been on has been the closest teams personally, but also the most competitive teams. So it's been dope.

**Q. CJ, you broke out last year; Nico broke out last year. Nico gets the contract extension. He's here through 2027. What does that do for you knowing you have a familiar target to work with for the next few years?**

CJ STROUD: You know, just something that -- first of all, I'm just proud of that guy. My brother, Nico, he's shown out. You know, when his number is called he always makes a play. He's a generational talent. He's like our age's Andre Johnson in my opinion of just how fast, how he gets in and out of his braces, releases, how strong he is. I think last year was just a preview of what's to come for him.

One thing I'm proud of for him for is just the work what never stopped. He's constantly in here working on his body, his hands, his mobility in the weight room.

So for me, just having a true -- I think we have like five No. 1s, so that's kind of cool to have. I've had that before in college and now I have it again. It's going to be fun. Nico, you know, it's going to -- he loves to see everybody else eat, too.

His love for his brothers hasn't changed. It's a special feeling to see somebody who deserves to get paid and get what they deserve. I'm just really proud of him.

**Q. What does it mean to have another opportunity to work with...**

I don't know if you remember there was a moment going into the playoffs last season where really didn't know if either one of those guys would be here.

CJ STROUD: Yeah, for both to come back was very special. We all you have a better feel of how to work with one another. The talent I am on the field and the play caller that Bobby is, and then the kind of coach Jarrod is, we all work together on that.

You know, Slow, I'm in his offense almost every morning going over stuff and watching film with him, going over things we need to get better. He always has a phrase of working for the end in mind. He holds me accountable when it could be easier to let me slide because I'm out there still making plays.

Nah, you need to be better here, here, and there. Just shows what type of leader he is. Honored to be able to

work him again. Same for me. Like to him, hey, Slow I'm not really feeling this play or I want to add this play to see if we can get better here in this practice. Or I think we can be really good at this type of play.

He's very, very accepting when it comes to that so it's been cool to work with both of them. Very excited to get another year under our belt.

**Q. What was it like teaching football internationally and the reception you got from the people there?**

CJ STROUD: It was amazing. You know, first of all, shout out to the Beijing, Shanghai, and Tokyo, for accepting me and Micah with open arms and just the hospitality and just the culture there is just amazing. They want to learn about football, and it was cool just to see like them already have the foundation but wanting to grow from there.

I think football is a family sport, and like those people are family now. The Olympics coming to where it's going to be international with flag football. I think that's super dope.

To be able to put our feet into those doors already, you know, it's kind of cool. So I'm very grateful of my team, Bernie and David, for setting that up. Even the guys out there who that gave us top notch hospitality.

It was just amazing, man, the whole experience. My first time really out the country and just being able to go to the Great Wall of China and all that stuff and still do what I love to do. Working out with Micah was cool. He has a lot of the crazy techs, but I got love for that guy.

But it was fun, man.

**Q. What is it like having Cade Stover down here with you and what's your relationship been like with him?**

CJ STROUD: Yeah, Cade is my brother, man. I've been through thick and thin with him. He's somebody who I often look at as like -- our moms are the same or our families are super close since college. I think he's like my blood brother from somewhere far down the line. I don't know how it works, but he's always there for me.

He's always -- I don't know, man, Cade is just like that guy. He's a brother that they talk about in the Bible. You know, he's a friend that is like just like a brother.

I don't know. The word "brother" just comes up. He's just always there to hold me up and he sees me and knows my emotions. For him to be able to come on the Texans and already add value is just amazing.

He's a hard worker. Ya'll know his background with the Farm and things like that. I'm very excited for him. He's been doing well in OTAs. Very smart. Great with his hands. Growing his route running and ability to get open and things like that.

So I'm amazed to have another Buckeye on the team.

**Q. You mentioned last time about John Metchie and we saw plays he made out there. What do you think about the work he put in?**

CJ STROUD: Another guy, like the word "proud" doesn't give it enough of how I feel about what he's gone through and what he's been able to do. He's running some of the best routes I've ever seen. His lateral quickness, he's able to stop and start.

You know, he's one other person who has been through a lot as well, you know, fighting cancer and fighting injury that he had in to college, to last year battling playing time and injuries. You know, like as you can see, man, he's making plays, he's showing up and he's showing out.

So just another brother of mine. Just not only am I there for him, but he's also there for me through thick and thin. Just another great guy that we have. I'm just excited to see him just show his value that we all have known, and now he's putting it on the field. He's going to continue to go and he is going to be very pivotal and important to this football team for a lot of games to win, so I'm very excited for that. Blessed to be able to work with a brother.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports