

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

C.J. Stroud

Postgame Press Conference



Texans 23, Bills 20

Q. Can you talk about what was different in the second half? You guys were near perfect in the first half. Did you make any adjustments in? What was the difference in the third quarter for the offense?

C.J. STROUD: First, I want to give all glory and praise to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Just an opportunity to play against a really tough Buffalo Bills team.

But, yeah, the first half went really well. We were moving the ball like we wanted, running the ball. In the second half we honestly weren't not moving the ball. We were just shooting ourselves in the foot again. You know, just taking penalties. I missed a couple of reads on my throws and had the turnover -- the two turnovers.

When you play like that, you give them opportunities to come back. They made some adjustments, started taking away a lot of our passing, but at the same time they weren't taking away everything. I got to be better and just get through my progressions.

All in all, you learn with a W, and that's the most important thing about it.

Q. You and Nico have become tight. You have a brotherhood bond. What did it mean to get the win for him in a game like this?

C.J. STROUD: It was huge. He really didn't say nothing all week, but I know today he was a little emotional. Just wanted to just play well against them being his former team, which everybody was like we played JG a couple of weeks ago.

So it's a lot of emotion that go through that, but he did a good job not letting his emotions affect his play and really just I thought he played really great, was really sound, and I thought he played amazing. Definitely just happy that he is happy with his W.

Q. Not only were you able to Ka'imi come of a 59-yard field goal, but today he became one of the all-time franchise kicker in points scored. Just his impact on the team, and is there a certain trust factor that everyone kind of expects him to drill these 50-yard plus field goals and walk away with an easy win?

C.J. STROUD: We trust him if we are in that position, but we try to put him in the best opportunity possible. I hold myself to a high standard when it comes to that. Intentional grounding, I had no idea why they -- I get it, I guess. That wasn't necessarily abrupt. I don't think it was that aggressive that I didn't throw it, like, to anybody, but at the same time I do understand.

It is what it is. Still got the win. I thought Rob did a great job on the punt returns getting us something, and me and Dare just finding a play to get four or five yards and bang a time-out. I thought that was huge, man.

One thing about me, I don't try to ride the roller coaster. I know everybody was coming up to me trying to juice me up, but honestly I just try to stay calm, know that I made a mistake, but it doesn't make me -- I thought I played really solid other than those two plays.

When you got guys to lean on like we talked about earlier in the week, just playing complementary football, Ka'imi had my back, the defense had my back, my O-line had my back. Everybody had everybody's back. We had the defense's back in the first half.

We all play complementary football, and a lot of good things are happen for this team.

Q. Nico in the second half, this might be the simple question, but what exactly does this offense lose when he exits the game?

C.J. STROUD: I think he is the best receiver in football. When he gets out the game, it definitely is tough on us. A lot of things are predicated towards him and planned for him. I definitely do think we still have a lot of other guys who step up too, so I thought they did a good job doing that. I thought Hutch played solid.



Really you have to find a way to win. We did that today. Definitely hope Nico is okay and we can get him back as soon as possible, but I definitely know that we have a lot of depth in that room.

Q. How does winning games like this today, games where you guys didn't necessarily play your best in the second half, how does that help you guys going forward too?

C.J. STROUD: There's a ton of things to always learn from, and I always say, man, winning in the NFL is not easy. Of course, you're not looking at yourself like, Dang, we were perfect. Clearly we're not, but that's every week. There's always things you can clean up.

Some things are more abrupt, more noticeable than others, but I felt like when you can find a way to find a win, man, that shows you how much of a resilient team you are. You learn with a W, and that's the best thing you can do.

I'm super just proud of my guys to keep fighting and just keep working, keep grinding, keep chopping wood, keep carrying water because it's not easy to play great four quarters of football, but the more we can do that, I think everybody can tell, man, we're going to be a force to reckoned with.

Q. Can you talk about Dare today? He made plays when you guys really needed them, whether it was catching the ball, throwing some blocks, running? Can you talk about him today?

C.J. STROUD: Man, once again, you know, Dare playing great. Me and him have a great connection back there. There are times where he is not even supposed to get the ball, but he just shows up.

I thought it was a very great heads-up play to get the first down, get down, make them burn a time-out. I mean, I don't think they had time-outs at that point, and the clock just kept rolling.

So I thought it was super cool just, like, to get him going once again. I think he's going to be a great addition to this team. He's been great since last year kicking field goals. He's really all-appliance. He does everything you ask him to do and does it with a smile on his face.

He's a brother, somebody I'm really close to. I love him to death. A great guy. He's got a baby on the way. I could go on and on about Dare. I love Dare. He's playing big for us right now.

Q. You talked about having things to learn from this game, and you also talked about having your back. What was the biggest lesson or biggest take-away that you learned from this game, and how important was the performance of Ka'imi Fairbairn to this win?

C.J. STROUD: Looking back, I got to watch the tape, I thought I played really good. Took the completions. Took my shots when they were there. I think you can always go back and be, like, I want these three plays back, these four plays back, but I look at myself in the mirror and know, man, I'm still that guy.

I'm still confident no matter what mistake I make. I'm still humble learning from my mistakes, but even in those moments I'm still trying to just uplift myself.

I would say that's what I kind of learned today was, like, man, no matter what, man, just trust yourself. I feel like I did that. Moving the ball up and down the field against a good defense.

43 minutes, a heck of a play on that. Kind of okey-doke. He played both. He was making plays before he got hurt.

That was a great Bills defense. I thought McDermott changed up the calls in the second half a lot, but then you talk about Ka'imi. He had my back, just like I have his back.

Everybody has each other's back on this team. This is one of the most close-knit teams I've ever been on. I think that definitely has to do with just getting in close Ws and having each other's back when it comes to that.

Q. Dating back to last year, it feels like every time you have the ball last in these type of close games you find a way to get the W. What leads you to always being able to come through in those close moments?

C.J. STROUD: Honestly, I would say just my teammates. Honestly, I can sit up here and be, like, Well, I was seeing this coverage, and I can go through that. That has some truth to it as well, just trying to pick the defense apart.

Honestly just my teammates keep chopping wood, keep carrying water, because it's hard to play four quarters of solid football in the NFL.

You know, when you do, usually blow the other team out, but that's why it's the NFL, and the best players in the world are battling against each other. So when you know you just have a resilient squad -- you know, for me if I get the ball last, I'm really trying to ice the game, like trying to put it to bed.

I thought I got it done and then got the intentional grounding. That killed me. I was so upset. Learn from that. When you learn from a win, that's huge.

Honestly, man, I don't think -- they called me Cool Breeze as a kid for a reason. I try to stay cool, calm, collected. I pray a lot. When the intentional grounding happened and we backed them up, that was a huge punt by Tommy. I'm, like, Man, God, give me another opportunity. Man, he gave me an opportunity, and I tried to do what I could with it.

It's not just me out there. It's my whole team. You know what I mean? Definitely just blessed to be 4-1 at 24 point and got to keep rolling.

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