

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Brian Callahan

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Tennessee Titans 32 - Houston Texans 27

BRIAN CALLAHAN: Divisional win on the road, those are hard to come by. I thought the coolest part of the whole game was just the way that our team fought. I mean you talk about the things that we try to embody, being resilient, being relentless. Those things showed up in a big way today. Had to overcome a lot in all three phases. It was a back and forth game. That's what these games are on the road in the division. That's a really good football team. And I thought our guys did a good job of not flinching and keeping the blinders on. We've gotten in games like this before and we haven't been able to make the play. And this week we made the play and that was really food to see.

A couple of individual performances. I thought Tony Pollard was fantastic today. As he always is. 119 yards and a touchdown was -- that's good work. I thought up front, you know, that's a really good rush unit, and I thought we held them in decent check for most of the game. The sacks are what they are. We can assign blame later, but it was enough to win up front. It was enough to win for sure and put us in good position.

Defensively, the effort at the end was remarkable. The way those guys chased the quarterback around, getting pressure, followed by a huge point from Stonehouse at the end, had his best punt when we needed most and pinned them back down there. Really, really momentum-swinging play for us to keep them backed up. When we were on the clock.

Really, it was just great to see the way our guys fought, again. And, finally, for us we get a chance to have something to show for it, and that's what I'm most happy about. I'm sure you've seen touchdown on everything, but when you called the Chig play, kind of what are you envisioning there and how perfectly did it go?

BRIAN CALLAHAN: It doesn't get any better than that. I normally wasn't calling a drive starter on a movement play to get 70 yards, but what happened was is they were

essentially doubling Ridley and they took their eyes off him and the action was all front side with all the polars. We run quite a bit and just a complement off the run. And Chig usually pins that defensive end, and he just slipped past him, and all the linebackers went running and as they were doubling Rid there was just no eyes on him and there was nobody left to tackle him. And he did the rest with his feet and Chig's a big, strong, fast dude when he's going full speed.

Q. It's a team win, but for Will he hasn't quarterbacked a team to a win since last December. How big a step was this for him and also to get a divisional win?

BRIAN CALLAHAN: I mean it's a cumulation of the last couple weeks. I thought he played, for the most part, fantastic, particularly in that first half. He had the one interception for a touchdown, but he kept battling. He'd throw interceptions sometimes, and come back and fight. It was great. But I really was happy with the way he played. He put some great balls down the field. He did some really nice things, and he protected the ball well outside the interception. So that's what quarterbacking looks like.

I think he was pretty efficient. I don't know what the final stats were, but pretty dang efficient and threw for a bunch of yards and managed the offense, and at the end of the day and got us in position to score points and we scored more than they did for the first time in a while. So really proud of Will. Proud of the work he's put in. Proud of all the things that he's done to try to get himself back in the right place mentally, physically, all those things and it was a really good performance.

Q. How big for him, though, to overcome what had been a fatal flaw with critical interceptions earlier in the year, be resilient and bring you guys back?

BRIAN CALLAHAN: Huge. Huge. You're going to have bad plays in a game at every position, and particularly the quarterback ones, you throw one for interception and it goes down the other way for points is challenging to overcome. But it was just really good to see that nobody really flinched at all. We just kept going and found ways in



all phases to make the plays to win the game at the end. And Will is deserving of it. He does everything the way that you want a quarterback to do things. He works his butt off to be in position to help our team, and for him to get his first win of the season and for his road win on the division against a team that we gotta play twice a year is awesome.

Q. After that what are you saying to him to make sure that it's not too bad but just understand, hey, we can't have that?

BRIAN CALLAHAN: Just got a lot of football left to play. The game wasn't anywhere close to over. It was a bad play that went the wrong way and we just gotta flush that one and move on to the next. And he did a really good job of doing that and got caught in some tough field positions to climb out of it at the end of the fourth quarter there. But, really, just to not flinch is to me the biggest thing, just, hey, man, you made a bad play. It went the wrong way. Let's come back and get ready to try to win the game.

Q. You've won a couple of games already this season. Was this a different winning late and what was the locker room celebration like?

BRIAN CALLAHAN: They're all pretty much the same celebration wise. Just proud of the way that our guys fought, proud of the way they played in the stretch of the game when a lot of these games early in the year got away from us and to see that sort of performance when we've had to overcome some things, again, in all three phases overcome some stuff and play our best ball when we needed most, I thought that was really, really awesome to see and we didn't do that early in the year and I think that shows a lot of growth in our team and a lot of things that I talked about before I think we got to see today on the field, which was great.

Q. Brian, in terms of investment, buy-in, just trying to build what you want to build here, how important a step do you think this was and how important do you think the rest of the season will be for that?

BRIAN CALLAHAN: Oh, critically important. Again, one of the things I keep trying to have is some validation for what we do and how we do it, and that ultimately the NFL comes in the form of wins and we finally get a chance against a really good team on the road in the division to show what we're made of. This is the team we think we're capable of being. It's the team that I've believed in all year long. The way they go about their business and the foundation and the culture of what we want our team to look like is there. We've just had to make the plays to win the game. It was really great to see that. This is a critical stretch for all of us

just in terms of making sure that what we want our team to be and what the future of our team looks like, which for us is just week to week right now. But it validates a lot of the things that we've done so far.

Q. Why do you think that growth and being able to fight and not flinching has happened at this point? What have you seen that kind of led to that change?

BRIAN CALLAHAN: That's a good question. I would think the most important thing for us is just the way that our guys don't ever react to what's out there. They trust each other. They trust the coaches. They trust the people around them. You got a lot of good people here and people in place. Players, coaches, support staff. And those guys do a great job and we've always believed in each other from the get go. It was never at any point even when things hadn't gone well, that we didn't believe we were a better football team than we showed on the field, and that's a credit to those guys. They got a ton of belief in what's in our locker room, and I feel the same way about them. And I've said the same thing for weeks now, and it's just great to be able to have a victory to show for it against a good football team.

Q. The (indiscernible)-yard return and the punt fumble. You survive both of them. Does Colt just sail through this again and get another six games for his unit?

BRIAN CALLAHAN: Paul, you're just going to ruin my day here, huh? Is that what you're looking for? We can talk about it tomorrow. Those are things that we overcome. They were plays that we can't have, obviously can't fumble the ball and the return that the guys bottled up and he somehow gets out of it, gotta get him on the ground. So the performance there is, sometimes that's enough to lose you a game and today thankfully it wasn't. But those things gotta be better, and we gotta hold on to the football when we're trying to catch it.

Q. When did you know you were going to be without Amani and how did you manage that?

BRIAN CALLAHAN: Knew Amani was going to be questionable when we got to the stadium this morning. He didn't get on the first bus, and he called the docs and said he wasn't feeling very good. He was throwing up and all those things. And they tried everything to get him ready to go. He tried to fight through it but basically every time he stood up he threw up. Tough day to go out there and play when you feel like that. And really I think Daryl Worley stepping up in that after not really practicing much this week -- played a little bit, but to step up in that moment and play an entire game at safety that he wasn't anticipating was pretty remarkable, to be honest. But, yeah, we knew

probably about a couple hours before kickoff that it would be a struggle to get him to go.

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Q. How much of an improvement and how much of a factor was it that you cut the penalties in half today?

BRIAN CALLAHAN: It's huge. The negative plays are a part of it. Again, still, ultimately too many sacks, but we knew we were going to get a few against this crew. They're good. Yeah, the negative plays in key moments is really what has hurt us, and some of those conversions they got on defense, I think we still had one. But, yeah, it was good. Anytime you can cut the penalties in half what they were before that's a good start for us and we gotta continue that trend.

Q. What did you think of the protection on the second half were things just kind of going your way better?

BRIAN CALLAHAN: No. We kept kind of mixing it up. I think we did a good job of mixing in some runs and keeping the rush at bay with the scheme that -- some of the scheme runs we had. Did a good job with some of the movements. We tried not to be in positions to get their full-throttle rush. I thought they did a good job of staying in manageable spots for a lot of the game. It wasn't perfect, but put ourselves in position to not have to face full-throttle rush that they got going when you get in the long-yard spots. And then when we did, you know, you saw what that looked like. They were pretty dang good.

Q. I know you talked earlier in the week just familiar with the rivalry before you got here. Did you see Amy after? How excited was she to win a game in Houston?

BRIAN CALLAHAN: She's thrilled. She was thrilled mainly because we won the game. But, yeah. It's okay to admit that these things sometimes mean more, and I know it does for her and it does for us and we wanted to make sure that we put on a great performance down here, and we had a chance to win the game and we did. And I think that she's more than anything else just proud of our football team and the way they came down here and fought and played.

Q. Earlier in the game, like on the third and 11, Levis got the ball out quickly against the blitz. Then later in the game it wasn't happening. Is it just each has its own story or what's behind that?

A. I'd have to -- my mind is a little bit jumbled when it comes to the progression of things, so I'd have to get back to you tomorrow on that. Be happy to once I watch it. I can't probably answer it accurately enough right now.

