

# Houston Texans Media Conference

Saturday, January 11, 2025

Houston, Texas, USA

## CJ Stroud

### Postgame Press Conference



Texans 32, Chargers 12

#### **Q. What's it means to be able to win another playoff game in your second season?**

CJ STROUD: Yeah, man I'm just so blessed man. Just so thankful for my God who I serve, Jesus Christ. Just having an opportunity to play another wildcard game here in Houston and get a win, you know, our crowd was rocking.

Just an honor and privilege to be able to be in these shoes. I don't take it for granted. I'm so grateful and amazed how the Lord has uplifted this team. You know, hasn't always been easy this year, but this is just another thing that we can use to motivate us even more to get to the divisional round, whoever we play and play well there.

Amazing though. I'm so happy and so blessed.

#### **Q. On that play where there was the fumble on the snap and you were able to get it, can you walk us through that? And how big do you think that was to change the momentum of the game?**

CJ STROUD: Yeah, you know, I was kind of -- even after I made the play I was kind of mad at myself for my eyes. I didn't look at the snap so went straight through my hands.

So I'm looking and trying to see the defense and went through my hands. Luckily bounced right back up to me. I tried to just save the play. Hutch did a good job trusting me and I trust him, so he kept on the move. After we made the completion I looked at the sideline and everybody was turned up, and that turned me up, because I was still kind of mad at myself.

Those are the type of plays that change momentum and a team can rally around plays like that. Shoutout to Hutch for making a great instinctual play.

#### **Q. CJ, you made several plays, even the run, Joe Mixon. (Indiscernible.) What do you feel like allows you to kind of play one of your better performances in**

#### **this environment?**

CJ STROUD: Yeah, I mean, really I would say just all the adversity this year has made me not only a better football player, but better human, better man of God. I don't take it lightly.

People always see our mountaintops, but one thing that people don't understand there are valleys, too, times just going through it. In my life, I'm very grateful for both. I haven't always been that way, but my character is being built as I continue to play this great game.

I'm really blessed to have the teammates I have. As I'm playing more, everybody is coming to me and telling me how much they trust me and they think I'm the best in the league. When you hear that, guys in NFL didn't say that lightly. When the other side of the ball is really good like you say and they're giving you your props and stuff, it's motivational to keep going.

So even when it's not perfect, because life isn't perfect for anybody, we're all going through things, for me to still have my teammates and head coach and Jerrod and Davis, always feeding motivation and positivity into me has really been helpful and helped me a lot not only in between the lines, but off the field use well.

Case Keenum has been a big part of that as well. Really what I did today was a testament to people around me and how the Lord is working on me.

#### **Q. CJ, the offense started off slow. Defense was able to keep you all in the game. How much of that did you all feed off that energy when they were able to start shutting them down, the interceptions, how much did that fuel you on the offensive side of the ball?**

CJ STROUD: Man, it fueled us for real. That's one thing that's not good, when the defense keeps getting stops and we're doing whatever with the ball, not moving it.

And then the time of possession was like ten minutes to one, which was crazy. So it was good for us to have that 99 yard drive. That was huge. That really gave us the



momentum to win the game.

Yeah, I think we played full complementary football today from like offense to defense to special teams. Like, you know, D Lo takes it back. We got the block. I don't know who blocked it, but that is just a testament to the head coach we have. The faith that he puts in us to keep going. The city we represent.

Like everything is really coming together at the right time. I really feel like this is just the start and I'm really just amazed of the environment in there as well. I really believe that we're just getting started, and hopefully we continue to get this momentum rolling.

**Q. There was a moment in pre-game where Stefon and Tank were out there. What did it mean to have them back and did either of them give you a special message?**

CJ STROUD: Yeah, it's always special to have your brothers in there. I've grown really close with Stef over this year. He texted me before the game and just gave me a whole bunch of motivation and said he was praying for me, and I appreciate that for real.

I've been around Tank all the time. Even now. It was good to see him back smiling, around with guys on the sideline, everybody saying what's up to him. I think that was good for him and his spirit. Keep him in ya'll prayers and kept uplifting him, because it's hard time for both of them right now.

I hope they were smiling a little bit as we were playing. I think their careers are long, long from anything to being done. This is just another bump in the road, and they're two of the best receivers I played with for real. Like they remind me of the guys I played with at Ohio State. I'm honored to have friends and brothers like that.

**Q. Nico Collins had a playoff record today for Texans receiving yards-wise. Talk about the chemistry you two have.**

CJ STROUD: Yep.

**Q. And just being able to have him as a weapon going forward.**

CJ STROUD: Yeah, you know, Nico, like I told you, was born out the womb great. Nobody knew it but his pops and his mom. That dude right there, he's really elevated himself as an NFL No. 1 receiver. He shows that week in and week out. I'm just so happy for that guy.

I think this is just the start for him as well. Another 1000 yard season. He's still hungry for more and he's in here every day working on his body. I know he's hungrier than ever.

I'm happy for him. Super blessed to be a part of his journey. He's another brother of mine, so, yeah.

**Q. CJ, the first five possessions, three punts, two turnovers. What were you thinking? What were you telling your teammates before that first touchdown drive you guys had?**

CJ STROUD: Yeah, you know, it's not fun when you have two early turnovers and punting the ball, getting three-and-outs. It's all about chopping wood and carrying water. That's one thing I love about our team, we always, no matter defense is up or offense is up, everybody is always watching and everybody is always into it. I just think that's a recipe for success.

While we were kind of down, I remember Will coming up to me and Azeez uplifting me. That helps. It's not like, dang, man, we keep making stops; what the offense doing? It wasn't that. It was like, man, we trust ya'll. You're going to get it going, but we're going to hold up until ya'll get rolling.

I think that's amazing. Yeah, so it's not how you start it's how you finish. It's cliché, but it's the truth.

**Q. Early in the game or throughout the game the Chargers' defense was able to create pressure on you guys. One adjustment you made was taking what they were giving and started using your legs. How did your mobility continue to sustain drives for the offense? Looked like not only you, but the entire offense started to get their swag back a little bit throughout the game.**

CJ STROUD: Yeah, you know, that's something that I kind of seen on tape, was other than Bo Nix this year they didn't really spy. And Mahomes as well. They did it. They didn't really spy other quarterbacks. I kind of seen it on film and thought one of them I think -- actually the interception I threw to -- I think that was in the second quarter. I kind of looked on the thing and seen like I had a running hole. That next play I didn't like really just have it in my mind I was going to do it.

Once I seen them back up I just took off and trusted my slow speed. But, yeah, I thought I felt my joy coming back after I got up, and just one the best feelings in the world. After you make a play, you're just turned up and your teammates are turned up with you. That's one of the best feelings in the world.

I think that kind of gave our team juice. Yeah, I think just me using my legs definitely going to be helpful this postseason.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

CJ STROUD: No, Will is doing a great job though. Go Bugs, baby. I'm so happy for that guy. So happy for Coach Day. I look at team that Jesus us has his literal hand on that team just with Will and -- excuse me, with Trey and with Will and, G, Jack Sawyer making plays. That dude was a freshmen just coming in wet behind the ears and now he's a big captain.

So happy for that team and rooting them on, but I don't think I got it from him, no.

**Q. You've been talking about most of the season the fact you're having fun. Is that what that was today for you? What it looks like when you're able to get back to having fun?**

CJ STROUD: Yeah, definitely think so. Really it's not easy to have fun when you're not executing. You know, execution breeds energy and brings that excitement to the game. Once we start executing we start playing with that swag. I think it pops out on film or pops off. When we're rolling we're rolling. It's the in between we need to fix.

Still a ton of things we can fix, but I definitely think the joy that we have after executing, we need to keep that rolling.

**Q. You talked in the preseason about pressure is a privilege. I imagine you guys felt that over the last half of the season. How today did you guys put together maybe your best, most complete performance of the last couple months? Where did that come from?**

CJ STROUD: From practicing hard. Like I really believe practice makes perfect. You know, when you're not perfect, you aim small, you miss small. We had a heck of a week of practice. Worked really hard. Our scout team did a good job giving us great looks.

Our coaches had a great game plan. I think the work from the cafe to the redshirt to the janitors to our equipment, strength staff, like, man, the work that the Texans organization puts in week to week, man, it doesn't go unnoticed.

I'm so grateful to be here and grateful for this opportunity to be around such great people. I really think that plays into it. Azeez came up in front of the team and talked about when you order something online from the cafe and you expect it by 7:45, it's their job to get it there by 7:45. That's

the thing, when we're not doing our job on the field, we're taking food off their plate in a sense.

It's something he challenged us with. I think we all answered the bell.

**Q. Can you talk about ya'll had the longest drive of the year in this game, 99 yards. How do you feel just getting (indiscernible - regarding confidence?**

CJ STROUD: Yeah, those things take time. Execution, like I said, breeds that joy, breeds that fire. So that 99 yard drive, having that, the team was ready to roll after that. We get a three and out, get the ball back around, like the 30 I believe, and get a good play, Metchie is out of bounds, and that's when I take off next.

That momentum started to switch. When you do that, execution starts to breed.

**Q. CJ, you touched on this, but those couple plays that (indiscernible.) How much did that kind of energize you and restore some of your confidence?**

CJ STROUD: Yeah.

**Q. Seemed like it went up a level.**

CJ STROUD: Yeah, savor the play and really mad at myself if it went sour. But just when I looked at the sideline and seen all my teammates happy for this play, Joe was turnt, DeMeco was going crazy, man, when you got the leaders and the captains and everybody like rooting you on, there is nothing like it.

Our crowd was on ten today. After that play I heard them go crazy and that gave me juice. Inspired me to keep going. Definitely helped everybody being positive.

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