

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

C.J. Stroud

Postgame Press Conference



Texans 26, 49ers 15

Q. You have so many guys that can make plays that you can get the ball to, how much does that help you and the team?

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, I think spreading the ball around is great for everybody. I love seeing my guys make plays. Shout-out to Jared Wayne for taking two catches, his first two catches of his career. He's somebody who I came in with that worked very hard to get where he's at, and I'm just so proud of him, man, his faith in the Lord and just his continued faith in himself. But just this opportunity that he got, man, he took full advantage.

Big shout-out to him. Brax showed up big, J-Noel. We got a bunch of guys, Dalt. I'm probably forgetting somebody, but everybody balled.

Q. How does it feel to have, I don't want to say a complete game, but controlling the clock so much --

C.J. STROUD: You said kind of? Why kind of? (Laughter.) It's hard to win in the league, man. I'm just saying.

Q. But to have a perfect game then, whatever.

C.J. STROUD: I don't want to say perfect, but I would say we had a complete four quarters, and I think that was the goal was to control the line of scrimmage, run the ball, then use play action pass and other things to kind of bounce it off. I thought we did a great job of that. But it really starts up front with the O-line. Cales did a great job, our tight ends did amazing. Those are ways you can possibly have a complete game, but yes, there's always things you can clean up.

Q. You did it without Nico. You talked about right after the game that maybe you wanted a little bit more on your shoulders. What was the process like? What was the mindset like coming into this week knowing you wouldn't have him and everybody else would have

to start up?

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, it's really hard having just a dominant force like him being out, but I thought we practiced really good, and I think that's the key is practicing good and then you give yourself a chance to play good. But yeah, you can't replace Nico Collins. He's a top-5 guy in this league. I think he's one of the best. Even when he comes back, we've got to find new ways to get him the rock. That's my job, to give it to him.

I think when he comes back, his force will be felt, but I thought everybody really stepped up really big, I thought especially in the run game.

Q. Tytus said last week that when you all come out and play fast to start the game, that usually sets and dictates the way you guys are going to play for the rest of the game. What went into it this week as far as picking up the pace?

C.J. STROUD: I just think it's always good to get a little motivation. We didn't have our best outing against Seattle, and I think that was just motivation to do the right thing. I think now we've just got to find motivation every week, regardless if we do good or bad. I think that was kind of one of the keys, and I think every time you simplify it to one play at a time, everybody doing their job, it kind of makes the game a little easier and you don't have to focus on winning instead of just winning every play, then that ultimately gets you the win.

I thought we did that in that first drive and kept that going as we kept going.

Q. How would you summarize how you played today?

C.J. STROUD: I thought I played solid. I thought I distributed the ball well. In pressure situations, getting it out of my hand. I don't think we had any sacks today, so I think me just getting the ball out of my hand on time definitely helped, moving the pocket.

But I would say I played solid. Always things to clean up, but I'm happy with how I played. I'm always going to stay



confident. Even when I lack confidence, like I was telling them on the sideline, I've got God confidence. I'm not always going to be perfect, I'm not always going to be the best, but I will die on that field if I have to. I love playing this game. I respect this game. My preparation, I take it serious every week, and sometimes you just go lay and egg. I'm going to leave the past in the past, but I know what I can do. I know I'm a top guy in this league when I'm rolling. I just got to keep that going.

Q. This week it seemed like the messaging from DeMeco was kind of a challenge to the players of hey, we've got the game plan, trust us, trust what the game plan is. Did you get a sense sometime this week that everybody was locked in on exactly what you guys wanted to do this week?

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, I think we've locked in every week. I thought even against Seattle we were locked in, and I thought we just didn't play good. Then you look at Baltimore, Tennessee, we were locked in, against Tampa Bay we were locked in. You give yourself a chance when you're locked in, practicing great. Now you've got to go -- everybody probably does that in the NFL. But the teams who win are the ones who can execute on Sundays. I think that's the key where at least especially offensively, defensively of course and special teams, we can take it up to another notch of just taking -- I do think we're a focused group. I think we have a crazy amount of effort. You can see how hard we play, everybody.

Now it's just execution from Xs and Os wise and trusting what the coaches are doing and putting us in the positions we're in.

I definitely think that is where we need to take the next step, and we did that today.

Q. C.J., obviously y'all have to block out the outside noise, and you do that group. Every NFL team does. How much confidence does it give you to get over the hump and start putting things together after the solid competitive game you had today and the result?

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, I think we give ourselves a chance each week, we keep winning. This is a long season. It's a marathon; it's not a sprint. If we keep stacking, who knows. We can do whatever we put on the field.

I think today was a step in the right direction. Now I'm going to go home, relax, get a little bit away from the game, and then tomorrow I'm back at it, rolling, and back on my preparation. You've got to be able to enjoy wins, but also take the momentum, take the rhythm and keep rolling with that.

Q. How do you build on this win? What elements from today do you want to carry over or incorporate into next week against Denver?

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, I think practicing, that's key. Got to practice great, and I think we've been doing that for the last couple weeks. Then taking it from the practice and putting it on the field, kind of like I was saying. Just execution. But yeah, I think that's what it starts with, your preparation, film, being on the same page with the coordinators and with your position coaches and having conversation about if this happens, I'm going to do this, if that happens with your teammates. That'll be key for this next game against a good Denver defense.

Q. You have the trade deadline coming up. If there was one thing that you could add on this team to kind of make your job easier down the road, what would it be?

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, that's not my job. My job is just to play, and I'll do that. If my opinion is asked from our front office, then so be it, but I trust Nick, I trust Meco, I trust our front office to do what we need to do to get this job -- I think we are really talented, but whatever that is, I know I trust what they're going to do.

Q. I don't think y'all punted until late in the game. At what point did you know that you were really in a rhythm? Second, do you feel like using your legs more really helps get you going offensively?

C.J. STROUD: Yeah, I feel like I kind of wake up in the morning feeling like it's going to be my day. I don't ever think the opposite. I think because my preparation is at a high level. I think -- I can't tell you really a play. I just think every play I try to individualize it to did I do my job this play, did I do my job this play; in the pre-snap, doing the little things right; post-snap, taking care of my eye discipline, my footwork, my ball placement. Of course I didn't ace that; I missed some areas.

But I think the rhythm thing is like, are you just stacking plays, stacking completions, stacking opportunities to get your playmakers the ball. I think maybe the first drive we did that, maybe the second. I don't really know, I'm kind of just focused on every play.

What was the second part?

Q. Do you feel like using your legs --

C.J. STROUD: Oh, my legs. Yeah, I think if I can do it, I think, cool. I don't know how many yards I ran for today,



but I think I ran for a good amount. Yeah, I think it's fun to me. I like doing it. Learned how to slide this off-season - shout-out Clint - so I thought I had a good slide today. I almost got my head taken off, but I got down clean.

Yeah, I like using my legs. I think it's fun.

Q. What do you think this win says about where the team is headed this season?

C.J. STROUD: I think our destiny is in front of us. Whatever we do week in and week out is going to be what we -- it really is what we can control. If we control what we can control, that's preparation, practice, hard work, dedication, relentless effort, swarming, I think as we continue to do that, we'll be able to get some more W's.

Q. What message do you have for Texas fans tonight?

C.J. STROUD: Appreciate the support, appreciate the love. I just want to be able to give my all every week, and sometimes I do it, sometimes it doesn't look as great, but I appreciate everybody and their love, and I love Houston, I love living in the city. I love just the camaraderie and the community that I'm in.

I'm just so grateful to be here and be in this position. I think our fans, they're showing up and they're doing their thing, and I appreciate that because that really does help. Even in Seattle they were all out there, and then today, I thought we were loud, and that always helps. Shout-out H-town and the Texans.

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