

# Tennessee Titans Media Conference

Saturday, August 28, 2021  
Nashville, Tennessee, USA

## Todd Downing

### Postgame Press Conference

Chicago Bears - 27, Tennessee Titans - 24

TODD DOWNING: Credit those guys for bouncing back and making so many tight area throws, not being gun shy. I thought they both did some nice things in the second half. We obviously got to protect the ball better than we did tonight and that will give us a chance to win.

#### Q. What was it like with Mike not being here?

TODD DOWNING: He does such an awesome job of setting the culture around here. There's a foundation and expectation. We say it doesn't matter what players are out on the field, it shouldn't matter what coaches are on the field either, there's an expectation around here that he set very clearly and we got to live up to that.

#### Q. How good was it to see, to get Taylor some game action before the regular season, just to get him a couple series to get back out there?

TODD DOWNING: Yeah, obviously Taylor's a big piece for us and it was nice to see him back out there playing with some joy, playing with some energy and hopefully we can pick up where we left off after a couple of his early plays tonight.

#### Q. You guys obviously got Dillon a lot of work in all of these games and at different spots. Where do you see him right now and where do you see right tackle two weeks from the opener?

TODD DOWNING: Yeah, I won't get into any predictions or projections there, I just will credit Dillon for playing multiple positions, for being able to handle the workload we threw at him. He's a resilient guy, a high-character player and he's got a long way to go, but I think he's made of the right stuff.

#### Q. The drop in the end zone concentration lapse there, what did you think when you saw it?



TODD DOWNING: Yeah, you I think I would have to see it replay to see exactly what happened, looked like a pretty good ball, looked like some separation there, so I'm not sure how it wound up on the ground. To be honest with you, I was on to the next call as soon as I heard that it was incomplete. We expect guys to go up and make plays in one-on-one contested situations and that certainly was one of them.

#### Q. How concerning is it to you that you haven't gotten Tannehill, Julio, AJ on the field that much this whole pre-season really?

TODD DOWNING: I prefer to focus on the stuff that we have accomplished instead of worrying about the things that are out of my control and I think that the offense has taken strides each week in finding our identity, doing things our way, and we haven't been consistent enough at this point, but we have laid the foundation of what we expect this thing to look like and regardless of who is in there or how much practice time we get together, that standard's been set. So we'll take advantage of the time that we have between now and the opener and we got a lot of work to do, but I believe we'll accomplish it.

#### Q. What does it say about a guy like Hawkins who can show up two days ago and make some meaningful plays, I guess?

TODD DOWNING: Yeah, he showed some really good things, a lot of bursts, some good lateral quickness, I thought he ran the ball tough, he took care of the football. So those were all really good things to see. He was in a similar system down there with Arthur before he came here, so I think there was some carryover in verbiage there which helped. But he's certainly got some talent and some good physical traits.

#### Q. We like to write off Cam all the time and all he does is come back and make plays again for you again tonight.

TODD DOWNING: I certainly have never written Cam off, I think he's made of the right stuff. He's got that competitive spirit and that grit, that toughness. We have a talented receiver group and there's some depth there, and obviously powers above me have some tough decisions to make, but Cam's going to give you everything he has every



time he lines up and we appreciate that.

**Q. What is it like heading into a period where you got to make tough decisions by Tuesday? What are the conversations like between coaches and maybe everybody making those decisions?**

TODD DOWNING: I feel fortunate to work for people that will take my opinion into account, but that's all I can do is give my opinion, they will do what's best for this team and I think history has shown that they have made some pretty good decisions. It's nice to be in a spot where there's competitive roster battles and there's some tough decisions to make and I think that that's a testament to how hard all these guys have worked.

**Q. How important is it for the backup quarterback to keep the ball, keep possession and so forth. Barkley had the one pick and there was one or two maybe that could have been picked as well, could that hurt him in this competition here?**

TODD DOWNING: I think any time you put the ball in harm's way it certainly is a demerit. I'll have to look at the tape and get a full evaluation of how both of them played and how often we did put the ball in harm's way. But we're going to hold those quarterbacks to a high standard and we expect that ball to be protected at all times, particularly down there in the red zone when we have points on the board. So red zone non-scores are unacceptable around here, let alone turnovers.

**Q. What was the conversation like before you decided to go for it?**

TODD DOWNING: I think Stretch has had so many conversations with Coach Vrabel over the course of the last few years that they think very much alike. The communication was very streamlined and I was given a heads-up that we might be in four down territory. Would like to convert more of those fourth downs as we go there and certainly would like to not get to fourth down, but we'll stay aggressive as we're given the opportunities and try to stay aggressive with the play calls as well.

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