

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Coach DeMeco Ryans

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Texans 30, Steelers 6

DEMECO RYANS: First and foremost from me, just want to give glory and praise to our God. He's been gracious to us, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What a game. What performance by our guys.

Just guys continue to let their light shine through how they're playing. Proud of our team. Proud of the effort in how we finished the game. It wasn't pretty from the start and we had some poor moments in the game, but I'm just proud of our guys for continuing to remain resilient. No matter what happened in this game, no one's faith wavered throughout this game.

Guys played under control, played the right way, and finished it the right way to give us the victory.

Q. Specifically the defense locked in, game-changing plays looked like all over the roster. What did you think of that performance?

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, it was an outstanding defensive performance, one of the best that I've seen versus a really talented offense, talented quarterback who, you know, has played at a high level for a long time. So I'm proud of our defensive performance.

I think this is the best performance we've had in our team history, so I'm proud of our guys for that. To limit the points, to take the football away, not only just take it away, but to go score. You get two defensive touchdowns, that's a big deal. Doesn't happen much.

Proud of our guys. Rankins played an outstanding game. Calen was able to finish with the interception at the ends. Overall, we knew we had to tackle well coming into this game, knew we had to cover one of the better receivers in the league in DK Metcalf. Knew we had to cover him well.

Our corners owned up to that challenge and did a great job.

Q. What did you think of the way Woody Marks played tonight?

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, before I talk about Woody I got to talk about the offensive line. The offensive line did a great job of controlling their front. That was our main key to victory, is how we were going to control their front, one the best front in ball.

Our offensive line did a great job of really controlling that, sustaining their blocks. Then Woody came in and ran the ball well. Also Chubb ran the ball well. All the guys did a really great job rushing it.

I'm really proud of that last drive there in the fourth quarter. How we milked the clock down and ran the ball at will. Just proud of that effort by our guys.

Q. Coach, how do you fix the turnover situation for next week? How do you fix that so that it doesn't happen again on a higher level game?

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, bad plays happen. Turnovers happen in a game. We bounced back and didn't let that affect us the rest of game. Went out and finished.

Q. From CJ, normally (indiscernible) is not an issue. Do you have any thoughts on why?

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, we'll look at the film and see what happened there. Thought CJ stepped up and made some big plays. He found Christian Kirk a couple times for some explosive plays for us. For Christian to have the game he had, over eight catches four over 140 yards, that's great protection, that's the quarterback stepping up, making great throws.

Those guys operated well, made the plays we needed to make.

Q. With Nico, how concerning is that?

DEMECO RYANS: We'll see how the week goes.

Q. Coach, after the Steelers second series, it looked



like -- what was your mindset, because it looked like the defense came off the sideline after the second series and looked like they -- looked like a 180 the way they turned the game around.

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, I think you're saying our defense, right?

Q. Yeah.

DEMECO RYANS: Just making sure. (Laughter.) No, our guys -- they were locked in. That's the thing that I could see. Those guys were locked in. They played with confidence. They tackled really well. That was the key. These guys, Warren, Gainwell, they do an outstanding job of breaking tackles. Those guys don't get enough credit for how good of backs they are.

Great contact balance, great jump cuts, make a lot of guys miss. Our guys tackle well and that was a huge key for us. The way we tackle was really the key, and can't say much about this performance without talking about the third downs.

Like that was the game. Like we got off the field on third downs defensively. I think they only converted two and then for us offensively we converted ten of 16. So that's the game right there.

That allowed us to stay on the field offensively, and defense was able to get off on thirds, which was very vital to our success.

Q. (Indiscernible.) To see themselves get going, and how important is that going to be?

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, we did what we had to do for this game, right? Every game is -- it takes a little something different every game. But the offensive line, they played well. Our backs ran the ball well. They protected the ball really well. That's how you win playoff football.

I feel like you have to run the ball well, play great defense, and that's our blueprint. That's what we did today.

Q. When your offense has... couple turnovers, thoughts about (indiscernible.)

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, I love that. We had some bad plays that happened for CJ, right? And he didn't waver. You can easily go in the tank, but he didn't waver. That's who he is. He's a resilient young man who's able to bounce back. Anybody can go in the tank you drop the ball a few times. You keep battling. Like the game isn't over.

It's a 60-minute football game.

You keep battling until the end. That's what he did, and he made some big throws for us, some huge passes that allowed us to get in striking distance and go score.

Q. How much of that resilience is confidence knowing that defense to have the back of the offense?

DEMECO RYANS: I think the resilience that we have the, the confidence that we have is just comes from within, from our preparation what, we do each and every day.

Q. Winning in a place like this that has had a lot of success and tradition, how much does that speak well for the franchise overall and your chances as you go to another difficult place?

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, every place is difficult in the playoffs. This was a really cool environment. I'm proud of our guys for focusing on what really matters. It's not the environment. It's about executing and playing good football. No matter where you play, no matter when you play, you go out and execute play well, you can win football games.

Q. Talk about the rookies.

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, rookies are doing an outstanding job. Talk about Woody and what he's done running the football as a rookie. Done an outstanding job protecting the football with as many carries as he's gotten.

Higgins stepped up and made some really big first downs for us as well. Jay Noel has done a great job returning the ball for us. It's just we got guys all over the place. We were able to get Jaylen Reed back at a safety tonight and I thought he stepped in. He did a really nice job as well.

When you got young guys like that contributing at all different -- on all different levels of our team, different phases, it's encouraging to have young guys who are helping our team win.

Q. (No microphone.) (Regarding Kamari Lassiter.)

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, they have a really talented receiver room that challenged our corners this week. We knew if we were going to win in game our corners had to play big time. I challenged those guys again last night that they need it step up and play big. They did it. Kamari does what he always does. Sting, same. They do what they do. They're ready for the challenge. They're up to it.

Those guys go out and, man, we put them on an island at

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

times and they don't flinch. Call comes their way, they're able to remain poised at the point of attack, and they go up and make plays on the ball. So very excited to have those two young guys playing corner for us. They really help our defensive success.

Q. Can you comment on Rankins? (No microphone.)

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, Rankins is getting used to getting in the end zone. Second touchdown on the year. He has a knack forgetting in the end zone. I like it. To be able to take the ball away two times and to get -- I mean, two touchdowns, that was awesome.

I think our entire sideline went crazy. It's fun to see the way our guys play. Our defensive line, we had multiple guys getting after the quarterback and Will got the ball out a couple times. Danielle forced the intentional grounding. Those guys did what they been doing all year, playing disruptive, violent up front, and helped us to win the game today.

Q. Along those same lines, (No microphone.) Really dialed in and focused and putting players in the right position and putting themselves in the right position.

DEMECO RYANS: Azeez was locked in and played really well in coverage. Didn't give up a pass in coverage. Henry also. It was a challenge for Henry, we knew he would be on of the back, Gainwell a lot. He made a lot of good plays as well.

So proud of those guys for staying cool and calm in the moment, just playing their assignments doing what they had to do the right way to really be stout in the middle of our defense.

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