

Indianapolis Colts Media Conference

Sunday, January 8, 2023

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Coach Lovie Smith

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Texans 32, Colts 31

LOVIE SMITH: Whenever you play, it's pretty simple, you play to win the game. It's kind of simple as that. That's all the way down in our organization.

You get down to the last game, of course, and there's a lot of -- I understand the outside things that were out there, but as far as our football team, we practiced hard this week to win, and as you see, it's one thing to give it lip service. It's one thing to see how we fought right up until the end. There's a lot of guys that contributed.

In the end, we needed to score. We needed to score some points. We needed to score eight points to win.

Jordan Akins since he joined the team has just really done some good things. I thought our tight ends, Teagan got involved, but since Brandin Cooks has come back, he's played outstanding football, and that's what you expect from a great player.

I thought the line gave us a chance with their blocking. Didn't get the running game established and going as much as we would like, but that's how it goes sometimes. You kind of lean on what you have to do.

Defensively I was talking to the defense, I think -- I can't remember the last year we've gone without scoring a defensive touchdown. Maybe in the '90s or something like that.

It was good to see. I would have never guessed it would be a defensive lineman that got it, but that's saying an awful lot. Every one of those turnovers that they had, and with us, the takeaways, really helped an awful lot. That's where we are.

We wanted to finish up the right way, and we were able to do that.

Injury-wise, Jalen Pitre was in the concussion protocol. I

think we had a couple other things, bumps and bruises. I'll talk your questions.

Q. This game and the body of work of the season, how do you think it presents a case for your coaching staff and what you've done this well?

LOVIE SMITH: Well, we've talked. Before this game, we understand what our win total is, and that's not enough. That wasn't part of the plan.

But that's how it goes sometimes. Now we came down to this game, one game left to go. We wanted to leave the season with a good taste in our mouth, and to do it that way where you've got to scratch and claw. We've lost a few games at the end, overtime and all of that, so it was good to see the guys kind of finish this one.

Q. There was a report yesterday that -- you've talked to us in general about meeting regularly, that you were meeting with Cal to try to state your case to come back next year. Do you believe you'll be back next year?

LOVIE SMITH: A couple things, and that's all I'm going to say about that. First off, they're reports. I don't know what the reports are.

Yeah, I meet with Cal every Monday. I met with him this past Monday. As far as we talk about what's happening the last game. We understand the totality of the season on what's going on.

Do I expect to be back? Yeah, I expect to be back. Absolutely.

Q. So if you're not back, what would that --

LOVIE SMITH: Hypotheticals. No need for hypotheticals. I can't get into those. Do I expect to? Yes. Today we won. I can go on the exact things that happened right now.

Q. Obviously coaches play to win, and we all understand that, but there's some people that felt that losing the No. 1 overall pick could be a detriment. How do you feel about that?

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LOVIE SMITH: All right, this is the option that I had. So you're saying, hey, guys, playing this last game, all that you've been working for all your life, you play to win, forget that, lose the game on purpose. I think that would be a hard one to get by. They wouldn't expect me to say that. I didn't.

Each week our game plan to be to win the game. It's kind of simple as that. That's what we followed through on today.

Q. How impressive was the Greenard pick six?

LOVIE SMITH: You're talking what Jonathan said or how I saw it? No, I'm just messing with you a little bit.

First off, the defensive lineman, I talk about going through that many years without scoring a touchdown. You would think that it would be from one of the DBs, a linebacker. But Jonathan is capable of those type of plays. That's what he would say. As the defensive line was on the sideline, Jerry Hughes has gotten an interception, too. The D-line got a safety. Normally I don't get that kind of production from them, but they've been playing hard all year.

Q. That last offensive drive you guys, Davis had the completion to Brandin Cooks on 4th down, the touchdown. It looked like a sure-fire reception -- what was that last drive like for you from the sideline?

LOVIE SMITH: Well, it was tough, but I've been on -- a lot of times you assume things are going to happen, it's going to go this way, but you have to play it out. I saw the same play, held my breath until the end. I exhaled there. But that's the way the ball bounces sometimes if you keep fighting. You have to get yourself first in position for that to happen. Davis was able to scramble around and get the ball out, and of course Ake was able to go up and get it that way. We deserved some breaks to go our way, and it happened right at the end.

Q. What are your thoughts on Davis Mills' overall performance this season?

LOVIE SMITH: I think there's time to talk over it all. I think we understand, we haven't played as well and coached as well, all of that, is there. Just basing it on today, it's about how you finish. At the half, it's about finish; how did he finish. He had to make a throw, and it gave him an opportunity, and he came through. That's how we're going to go into the off-season.

Q. With the turnovers with the defense this year, the

explosive plays that happened also part of that coming out of today, what from the season do you feel like you can fix and what needs to be fixed to clamp down on those?

LOVIE SMITH: Well, if you look at the explosives, explosives happen -- it's not like we had a whole lot of balls thrown over our heads, so explosives happen when you have missed tackles, simple as that. Most of the ones that we've had we can pinpoint missed tackle in this situation. In order for this tackle to happen with us, it's not like we play zero coverage. We should have something that's broken down along the line, and of course our last wave of defense has missed it, and that's been an achilles heel for us most of the year.

Q. The effort, the buy-in, is that part of the conversation you have with Cal?

LOVIE SMITH: Have -- as I say, Cal and I, we've been talking quite a bit, Nick and I have been talking quite a bit. This is who we are this year. It's kind of as simple as that. But the buy-in, yeah, you talk to our guys, the guys are bought in.

A lot of times sources say or -- what is the buy-in? Look how they play. Each week -- we've been out of the playoffs for a while, and this is part of growth. You have to go through some hard times like this.

Q. Have the McNairs communicated the decision about your status yet?

LOVIE SMITH: No, I wouldn't go over that anyway. We normally talk on Mondays, and I assume we're going to talk on Monday again. I haven't gone through an end-of-the-year meeting since this is the first time around, but we pretty much stay with what we do. Same way with the players. We have a routine that we go through. Part of our routine will be meet with the team tomorrow, there's exit/medical interviews, and we go from there.

Q. What would you say about Mills' growth and development over the season?

LOVIE SMITH: First of all, it says about what we can't do. That's when we need to play our best ball there. There's a lot of opportunity. We talk about finish; it's about making plays in the fourth quarter. To finish that way, of course, is a sign of growth, and we're headed in the right direction, but those are the things that you have to clean up.

We've been fighting. We've been watching those games. There's not many games where we haven't fought. I saw our division champ was crowned last night, right, but it



went right down until the finish. A couple mistakes there at the end. That's kind of our game.

We kind of realize that and you keep working on that, but those things normally happen early, and you normally clean those kind of things up.

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