

HEAD COACH DeMECO RYANS

POSTGAME VIDEO CONFERENCE

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Texans 41, Patriots 21

Q. What do you feel like both Joe Mixon and Dameon Pierce's presence really brought to this season and how did it elevate the offense?

DR: Really proud of all of our guys today for this win. Started off hot, excited about how we came out, first quarter, came out third quarter, really nice job all the way across the board with our offense and how they ran the football to run for over 190 yards versus a really stout defense, really impressive, starting with the offensive line, right? Give credit to our backs having Dameon, having Joe back was huge for us, a huge lift for our team, very excited to see those ghouls continue to do more for us, but very pleased with the run game and how they got after it today.

Q. When it comes to those guys, what do they bring to this team that allows them to have success?

DR: Those guys bring play-making ability. Not just getting what the run is blocked for. When your backs are special, they get more than what is blocked for, and that's what you saw today with the explosive runs, the two big explosive runs, one by Dameon and one by Joe, right? When you got backs who can do that extra, that's what they're capable of doing, of giving us the extra and for both guys to get touchdowns today that was big.

Q. Coach, at the end of the first half, there were like four -- (inaudible) gave up a touch down. What did you say at halftime to get them refocused. Came out 27 points in the second half, defense was flying around.

DR: Right, half the time I just felt like we kind of just during that second quarter I felt like we kind of took our foot off the gas and guys kind of relaxed and it was just that we had to flip our mindset and understand this is the NFL. Like, guys aren't laying down they're coming back out, they're making adjustments, they'll be ready to go and we just had to make sure we got back to what we said we were going to do and that's execute and that's the only thing that matters, it's us executing and we kind of fell into a lull there and allowed them to get points.

Q. DeMeco, will had a career-high three sacks. What

did you see the way he was getting off the football and tackling?

DR: Yeah, proud of Will, massive game for him to be able to get off the quarterback the way he did. Three sacks, also forced an interception there by E. Murray. Just really, really productive day by him and he stayed out there. Loved his energy, right? From start to finish. He came out -- I felt his mindset in pre-game warmup so I knew it was going to be a really good day for him. Will is -- he is getting better every week and this is his best game by far.

Q. You only had a little bit of tape on Maye during the regular season. How did he make them different? How did he make them better?

DR: Credit to Maye. One thing he does, right? As a quarterback, his escapability is really good for them and I think it's a positive for him, like being able to pull it down and when things aren't there, being able to make plays on the run. As rushers, you have to be aware that this guy can pull it down and run, take off, and you have to just understand that and be able to get off a block so I thought they did a good job of O-line blocking for them and him being able to find it when it wasn't there and in the passing game, him pulling it down. That sets them apart, makes him a little different.

Q. Calen Bullock, turnover game. He's made a lot of plays this season. He continues to show up --

DR: Yeah, Calen shows up every week around the football and that's the reason we drafted Calen. He showed that in college and it's cool to see, like, that's who Calen is, right? He did it in college and now he's doing it here in the league. The game isn't too big for him and he made a ton of plays again, him intercepting the ball, getting the fumble. Very proud of him.

Q. We've talked a lot about the inability to pull away. You guys pulled away on this one. What's the ease of having multiple possession win for you guys today?

DR: Yeah, I don't know about easy (chuckling). It's never easy and I never take it for granted. That's a really good football team and I never take it for granted that we were able to come here and get this win. It's a big one for us. This is an organization, our first time winning here in New



England, so it's a special game for everyone.

Q. Is it good for you guys to be able to finish a game off and to the have to go down to the last possession?

DR: For me, every time we play (chuckling) it's about winning it doesn't matter how you get it done, if it's a last-second one, if it's a, you know, two touchdown, it doesn't matter to me, finish with a win.

Q. First time we have seen Stroud here. Can you talk about just seems to be under control all the time. Not the flashy bombs, per se. Tell us a little bit about C.J.

DR: Yeah, C.J. was very efficient today. As you mentioned, he was poised, under control, that's who C.J. is. Never gets too high or too low. He understands -- when he does make a mistake, he understands instantly and he's able to fix it in-game, within series, so. Very proud of C.J. and the way he played today leading our offense to get three touchdowns, again, top, really to have defense, for him to get three touchdowns was big and he didn't do it by himself, right? It's our O-line, thought they did a good job of protecting. And also Tank had a really nice game. Tank and Stefon both guys stepped up. We were down not having Nico's who's been a lot to us, but Tank and Stefon stepped up big time and made a lot of plays.

Q. How was his decision-making?

DR: His decision-making was nice. He was efficient with the football, he was going for the right spot with the football, right? They got one on us, DB made a nice play being able to tip the ball there in the endzone but overall, right? From start to finish, C.J. was very decisive. He was efficient, great decision-making all day.

Q. How impressive was it when your defense as a whole to just go out there and keep getting the offense the ball back and keep giving them a chance to get back on the field, short field at that.

DR: Right. One thing we pride ourselves on is taking the football defensively and today to get four takeaways, that was huge for us, the most we've gotten in a game here this year, so to key it come to fruition was really awesome by our defense and to see the energy that it provide our entire time and it's not only getting the takeaways but as you mentioned, it's about the offense being able to capitalize and score points off of takeaways. That's when you really can get ahead on a team. So giving the offense the short field and the offense doing their part of actually putting points on the board after the takeaways, that's where the takeaways mean a lot more, so proud of our team collectively, offense, defense, special teams. I like the way

we were disruptive in the kickoff game, like forcing some kicks, forcing them to return. Our guys did a really great job of covering.

Q. How is Azeez doing? He was in and out -- was that another reason for not pushing him?

DR: Yeah, Azeez is getting evaluated with a knee. He tried to come back. We'll see how he progresses throughout the week.

Q. You know, you mentioned it a little bit, just being without Nico and you mentioned Stef and Tank stepping up. I guess what did it mean to have them perform in that moment considering what Nico brought to this -- has brought to the team?

DR: It wasn't surprising to see Stef and Tank step up and make the plays. I hate to say that they're stepping up. They maximize their opportunities, that's who those guys have been, so to say step up is probably an understatement for those guys. They're play-makers as well and that's what they've been. Tank in his short career has been a play-maker for us and we all know what Diggs has done throughout his career of being a top guy, so not surprising at all.

Q. Coach, Stefon said that locker room is really, really competitive. He said it's real competitive in here. We got a bunch of dogs in here who support each other, very competitive. When you look at what Joe Mixon did today, could you see this game coming for him, especially leading up through the week?

DR: For Joe, you see the energy that he brings, it's just different. (Laughter) He brings a different energy to our entire -- not the offense but just the entire team, right? Joe is -- man, it's probably one of the best competitors that I've been around. His passion for the game, his will to go out and play injured, not all the way 100% but for him to go out, gut it out and still have a really outstanding performance it just shows who Joe is, right? He put the work in this week. He's put a lot of work in, rehab, get himself back and we're just happy to have him and his energy, his presence just uplifts our entire time.

Q. Dameon, we all know Dameon his rookie year was obviously one to remember. The second year was a little up and down. What did it mean to see him, you guys stuck by him through -- what did it mean to see him have kind of like that --

DR: Happy for Dameon. He's just made the most out of his opportunity and Dameon, it's just about not pressing or trying to do something out of the ordinary, it's just playing

the game the right way, letting the game come to you and Dameon made the most of his opportunities and there you go. He has a big explosive run for a touchdown, one of the best runs we've seen him have since we're been here. It's just about plugging away for Dameon, just stay after it, it doesn't matter what the noise is on the outside, just keep working, keep following. The guys keep playing for each other, right? It'll all come to you, so proud of Dameon for what he's done, proud of our entire offense. Thank you, guys.

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