



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. CLEVELAND BROWNS



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POSTGAME QUOTES

HOUSTON TEXANS	CLEVELAND BROWNS
Head Coach Lovie Smith QB Kyle Allen	Head Coach Kevin Stefanski QB Deshaun Watson DE Myles Garrett LB Tony Fields II
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HOUSTON TEXANS

HEAD COACH LOVIE SMITH

Opening Statement

"A game like this, we understand the amount of attention that it got. But once all that kind of leaves a little bit, it normally comes down to what most games come down to. One statistic that tells the story of a game is the turnover ratio. Whenever you talk about non-offensive touchdowns, you give up three, that's going to be tough to win. So, offensively, got to protect the ball better. We had some opportunities down in the red zone, weren't able to cash in. Dameon Pierce plays the way he always does, runs hard, gives the offense some life, but we as coaches have got to do a better job. Player-wise, offensively, we can't win many games playing like that. Special team-wise, we played great special teams throughout the year. Today, we can't give up a long punt return. We had a lot of missed tackles on that punt return. Of course, we've got to protect the ball better when we have it down there – that led to three more points. So, if you play that way offensively and special team-wise, it is going to be tough. But just looking at the entire game defensively, I thought the guys put together really six good quarters of defensive football. Today, to keep them out of the end zone was big. We knew they were one of the best in the league at running the football, but I thought the guys continued to give us a chance until it got out of hand there at the end."

When you look at the mistakes QB Kyle Allen made today, have you started assessing if he is the starter next week or are you not in that mode yet?

"We're definitely not in that mode. I'm just disappointed in how we played offensively right now. We as coaches have to do a better job. Just could never get the passing game going. Even if you can't get it going, you can't turn it over, and those situations really hurt us a lot."

What did you think about the job your defense did on Browns QB Deshaun Watson and their offense overall?

"I think the defense played well throughout. Whenever you can keep an NFL offense out of the end zone, that's big, especially with the amount of firepower we thought they had. Like a lot of the things, we haven't taken the



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. CLEVELAND BROWNS



ball away. Those two take-aways we were able to get helped a lot, but their defense outplayed our defense today.”

The team had great energy to start this game. What do you think it’s going to take for the consistency to continue throughout a game?

“Eventually, we've got to have some production on the offensive side. We've got to score points. You're right. It's good. We were in it, holding them, taking the ball away. On defense that's what we've been stressing a lot. We've got to get our offense more opportunities in favorable situations. But when we get down in the red zone – we had opportunities today. We've got to be able to convert some kind of way.”

What was your plan for QB Deshaun Watson today and how do you feel you all did?

“I think we're healthy right now, for one thing defensively. I'm going to go back to the second half of the Miami game. We shut them out the second half, so defensively, we see it coming. Guys were playing hard, start to finish right up until, gave us a chance. We're doing what the defense says do. It says a lot in a game like that, giving us a chance to stay in the game, but we've got to have some more on the other side.”

When you see DB Jalen Pitre finally get an interception after dropping a few in the past few weeks, what does that do for morale?

“It has to help an awful lot. Jalen (Pitre) has been in the starting position pretty much since we drafted him. In a few games, he didn't play his best ball. We've moved him back. He's been playing free safety the last couple of games, and it seemed like he is more comfortable back there. I thought he played the ball well. I thought he tackled well. It's a good game, and just have to let those young guys continue to play. There's a lot of good that they did.”

With some of these performances and losses stacking up, do you let your mind wonder to job security for your staff or yourself?

“No, I don't. I have never worried about job security. What I'm worried about is doing the best job I can getting ready for the Cowboys. It's kind of as simple as that.”

What seems to be the issue with sustaining drives on offense?

“I wish I could give you better answers, but you're right. Last week, Kyle (Allen) hadn't played a lot of ball. We were hoping the play would be a little bit better this week. Our play overall wasn't as good this week. As far as what it was, give Cleveland a lot of the credit. Just not quite there. We're not a good offense right now. We're still searching for what we can do well. When we did try to run the football, I thought Dameon Pierce continues to play the same way, but we've got to find a way, some kind of way, to get our passing game going.”

When your defense has the type of performance they had today, and the team is still not able to get the job done, what message do you have for your defense?

“What I told the defense is to continue to play defensively. Did a lot of good things. It wasn't a perfect game, but we're going to highlight the good things that we did defensively. Things we didn't do well, you're going to talk about those too, and we're going to ask them to do it again, and that's how it goes. Offense is not good enough. Special teams is not good enough. We need to raise our game. It really is kind of as simple as that. Understand what the record is, and we lost a game today, but those are some of the things. Each player has to just look at how they played, what side of the ball, all of that. That's what we're going to do.”

You mentioned not getting points in the goal line situation. What was the communication back and forth between you and Offensive Coordinator Pep Hamilton about those situations?

“First, the drive that we had, we're trying to score. In hindsight right now, everything we did didn't work. So, you say, ‘Hey, maybe we should have done something else.’ When we're coming out, it's about ball security. It's just that. We've got to protect the football. You know, defense, that's what they do. They're trying to punch the ball



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. CLEVELAND BROWNS



and get the ball out at all times. So, it's as simple as that. As far as conversation, we're having conversations throughout is what we're doing."

What do you have to say about DB Jalen Pitre's performance?

"I think that's a heck of a job for a rookie that's growing, and I shouldn't say rookie. They've played a lot of football now. That's what we told our young players, our first-year guys. Jalen Pitre has an opportunity to be a good football player, and he continues to come to work and improve on those things. Again, he's played his best ball. Maybe, us as coaches, we had him at strong safety position and now he is at the free safety position. Didn't really do a lot of that in college, but it seems like that's the more natural position for him."

What are your thoughts on the second interception for QB Kyle Allen?

"Can't throw the ball over the middle. Pretty simple on that. Most interceptions, it's about decisions you make at the quarterback position. Holding it. Not throwing it. It always kind of comes down to that. Sometimes the best play that you can make as a quarterback is just not throw it and press it, because most of the game, it's not like it was a game that got out of hand right away, we're right in there. We're in striking distance. We're a touchdown away most of the game, so you are just hoping a couple of those passes would go to our guys."

Do you have an update on FB Troy Hairston?

"I know he finished the game, so it's not anything serious. You check out a lot of different things, but shoulder bruise or whatever in the end. But he finished the game, so he should be good to go."

What did you think of QB Deshaun Watson's performance?

"I'm sure Deshaun (Watson) is going to play better games than he did today. I don't know what all his stats said, but I thought we for the most part we were pretty much in control defensively. We were pretty much in control of their offense most of the day."

Was there a reason why RB Dameon Pierce didn't touch the ball on all three runs inside the redzone that?

"Hindsight right now, I wish we had done something different. That didn't work. Thought we had a good play there. When you go for it on fourth down like that, I felt like we needed a touchdown in that situation. It's so hard to get down there. We need to be able to convert on those."

When you sit down with film tomorrow, how do you approach looking for improvements on offense? What is left at your disposal?

"Tonight is when we'll start looking. Again, we're just going to look over everything that happened in the game. This late in the year, different combinations, personnel changes – we feel like we've let most of the guys have an opportunity to show us what they have. We just have to look first to us as coaches on what we're doing to try to get a better game plan, and then eventually get a game plan that the players can execute. Right now, we're not there. See the results. Not good enough. Can't win any football games until we get it better."

[-back to top-](#)

QB KYLE ALLEN

Have you looked at the tape yet?

"I mean, similar to last week with the turnovers. I don't remember how many points the defense actually gave up on their own, but with the pick-six on the tip and then the fumble and the sneak and giving up 14 points, you're just not going to win games like that."

You guys came out with a lot of energy in that first half. What changed the second half? It seemed like the energy was dipped off a lot.



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. CLEVELAND BROWNS



"I don't think our energy changed. I think it's the big mistakes gave them points. We had two defensive touchdowns and then you're just down big."

Kind of walk us through what happened with the fumble.

"On the goal line? Yeah, just the QB sneak. We were just trying to get the ball off the goal line. And it's just one of those things as running backs you work on all the time. You just have to hold it all the way to the ground. I was right next to the ground and went to brace myself for the fall and hit it and punched it out."

Is that about getting some room to operate on the next down?

"Yeah. You're just trying to get it out of there so hopefully you can get some good room to get a good punt."

In the goal line situation, what was the conversation going through the decisions there?

"They subbed in big personnel and stopped the run, so we were throwing passes. First one no one was there and we threw it away. I don't remember. I think we ended up running the ball in third down to get down to the one. And then the play I think fourth down, just the one to Troy Hairston, the ball came out high and got in the window. I tried to get it over him, and it was high, and it hit off his hands. Otherwise, it would have been huge if we could have scored there."

When you are going through the course of a game, you seen the defense keeping it close. How does that feel for the offense? Do you talk about that at all?

"It's awesome. The defense played incredible today. We just wish we could have picked them up more times. With the turnovers they had in the first half to only come out with -- I don't remember if we had five or eight points going into half, but to only have that many points going into the half, we have to be better than that."

What did you think about RB Dameon Pierce and the run game?

"It was great. The first guy is never going to take him down. It's good first down run game. He's getting better on the check-downs and finding those spots and catching the ball and running. He is reliable. He is going to bring it every week."

You are going into your second game. How did you feel about the preparation coming into this, and were there any surprises for you today?

"No, nothing really surprised me that much today. I felt more comfortable this week with another full week of preparation. But, I didn't think much surprised us. Just a couple of big mistakes put us in a bad spot."

For the brief time that FB Troy Hairston was out in the second half, how did y'all approach that coming in the second half?

"Just personnel stuff. You just switch some tight ends around and run some different personnels. Let the coaches handle that, but it wasn't that big of a deal."

[-back to top-](#)

CLEVELAND BROWNS

HEAD COACH KEVIN STEFANSKI

Opening Statement

"Injury front, David Bell injured his thumb early in that game. Anthony Schwartz getting evaluated for a concussion. (Sione) Takitaki and the knee injury that we'll take a look at tomorrow. A great team win. It's



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. CLEVELAND BROWNS



December football, any which way you can get these things. So for our defense to score twice, get a score on special teams, I thought was outstanding. Came down here to go 1-0, got that mission accomplished, and we'll get on the road next week."

Pretty much every time your quarterback was taking a snap, your team was booed for most of this game. What message do you think the fans were sending?

"I have no idea. Those are the type of things we don't control."

What did you think of QB Deshaun Watson?

"First game back, so you're going to work through it. Proud of the guys in getting a team win. Obviously when you come down here, but he's going to learn from every rep."

Were you surprised by the rustiness, to the extent of it?

"I don't know. Obviously you're missing a bunch of time. You've got to get back in it. You've got to get these game reps. You've got to get this first one out of the way and all those types of things, but I know what the kid is capable of."

Did you hope to maybe do a little bit more with QB Deshaun Watson offensively and in the passing game, and then just kind of dialed back when it was apparent he was going to be rusty?

"I just think offensively, we were on the backs of our defense today, on the backs of our special teams, who were outstanding. The run game was going, so we kind of stuck with it there in the second half."

Do you feel like the emotional part of it affected QB Deshaun Watson at all, or just physically having not played for that amount of time?

"Again, I think with him getting his first win out of the way, the jitters that come with the first game back, all those things."

Did you feel there were jitters aside from what you saw on the field?

"He's human. Coming back here where he's played, first game back in a while. His teammates have his back, and I know he'll do better next time."

Did you all feel the need to protect QB Deshaun Watson at all as a play caller, given that he hadn't played in 700 days?

"As a play caller, you're always trying to get your offense going, get in a rhythm. That's what we're always going to try to do."

Does this give you a good sense of what you have to do going back to the drawing board with QB Deshaun Watson, knowing you have to play a team like the Bengals and QB Joe Burrow coming up?

"It's whatever it takes each week. Today was a great indication of a team win. It was a great illustration of our defense playing lights out, scoring on defense, scoring on special teams. Those are great team wins when you get into December to be able to do that. Then we'll look at what we've got to do game plan wise versus Cincinnati and go down there and try to get a win."

As QB Deshaun Watson has gotten more and more involved with the team in recent weeks and the last couple months, can you speak to anything you've noticed different about him?

"We talked about it all week really, those types of things. He had to come down here and do his job and help this team get a win."

Can you share what any of those different things were?

"The focus is on coming down here, do your job, get a win, get back to practice this week."



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. CLEVELAND BROWNS



Could you tell what happened on the interception in the end zone?

"I'd have to look at it. Probably rushed the throw, but looking at it, you're trying to throw the ball in the end zone there versus a specific look. The guy made a good play. We'll look at it."

Do you have reason to believe that QB Deshaun Watson knocked off the rust in his first game back and he will be that much better in his second game for having this one under his belt?

"Again, it's time away, so you've got to get the first one out of the way, and I think he did. He's looked very sharp in practice. I know he's excited for the next one. Again, I think he's understood that this one was going to be different. He came down here in a place that he's played before, but he'll jump back into the process this next week."

Can you talk about how you saw that return play by WR Donovan Peoples-Jones and how he's doing in that role?

"He's been outstanding, which shouldn't surprise you with Donovan (Peoples-Jones). He was close on a few, but I feel he's getting north-south. The whole team did a great job on that return to give him a seam, and on this turf he was moving there. He did a really nice job. He continues to help this team win on offense."

It seemed early on LB Tony Fields II got more playing time. Why was that?

"We were playing more based on what their personnel group is."

Is it safe to assume, even though QB Deshaun Watson struggled so much and you're heading into a huge game, you're committed to him as your starter?

"Yes."

How do you think QB Deshaun Watson handled playing these familiar surroundings and being booed in these surroundings?

"Again, the crowd is not something we can control. We can acknowledge it, but it's not something we control. We focus on doing our job. Again, he was very, very locked in this entire week, into the game plan, made good decisions in our run game. So, get this one out of the way and move on to the next one."

In other words, you feel like QB Deshaun Watson was unaffected by the boos?

"Not for me to say."

Is there some relief to get QB Deshaun Watson's first game out of the way, being here and all the things that come with it?

"I think there's relief in getting a win. For us, you come down here, and you've got to get a win any which way you can."

[-back to top-](#)

QB DESHAUN WATSON

How do you think you did today?

"Overall, the biggest thing is getting in and out of the huddles, calling plays. Didn't have too many miscommunications with Kevin (Stefanski). I heard something walking off the field, I guess it's 700-plus days since I played. Yeah, it's not going to be perfect, especially playing in December football where guys are week 14, week 13, and this is week 1 for me. It was fun, though. It was awesome to be able to get out there with my teammates. The defense played a heck of a game, got some touchdowns for us. Special teams, DPJ (Donovan Peoples-Jones),



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. CLEVELAND BROWNS



the big punt return was big for us to kind of shift the momentum, and that's what we needed at the time. That's why it's a team sport. We just got to keep pushing forward.”

What did you make of the constant booing before every snap?

“They're supposed to boo. I'm a Cleveland Brown now, and we're on the road. So, they're supposed to do that.”

What was just the overall emotion, especially pregame, a lot of fans booing?

“Yeah, it's been a long road. Like I said, just kind of from being traded, like I mentioned before, Houston is still part of me. It's part of my legacy. I've got drafted here. We went through a lot of ups and downs with this organization. Being traded was tough, but it's a business decision, and it had to happen. Being into that and my first game back here in Houston was tough. Walking into the stadium on the opposite side of the stadium and locker room, it was different because I know exactly how those guys get ready for games and how they do the pregame and talk and everything. There was a lot of emotion, a lot of just kind of just trying to keep everything in, knowing a lot of guys that's on that defense and on that offense. It was tough, but at the same time, it was very exciting to be able to just get my feet wet and be able to run around and take some hits and see everything kind of happen full speed.”

Did you ever feel in rhythm in today's game?

“They did a good job of trying to keep me off rhythm, keep me in the pocket. A lot of gains up front, a lot of switching up different coverages. It was a little bit different than what they showed on film as a consistent basis. So Lovie (Smith) did a good job. Talking with some players after the game, that's what they wanted to do is try to mix it up a little bit and see what I can handle and see what they can do. That's what I wanted to do is try to figure out what they're doing each and every snap.”

People in the stands team wearing your No. 4 jersey for the Texans and No. 4 jersey for the Browns, and you're also getting booed every time you touch the ball. Do you think this is how it's going to be moving forward as you come back?

“I'm not sure what it's going to be, and that's not even my main focus. My main focus is doing my job, executing, and trying to play each and every step. Like I said, there's a lot of people showing support, but I didn't really focus on the negative things. I was focusing on trying to execute as much as I can.”

I can't imagine you've ever been booed every time you've taken a snap for an entire half of football, so what did it feel?

“I definitely have, South Carolina in college. A couple games here in Houston we went on the road to Tennessee. Like I said, it is what it is. I can't control the fans, how they approach whenever I step on the field. My job is to go out there and execute and do my best on behalf of the team.”

You've got to think it's not about rivalry this time?

“Like I said, I can't control that.”

How did you remain even or guard against frustration when maybe your balls are hitting in the ground or you're not hitting your targets and finding that rhythm that you want to?

“That's why I have teammates. The offensive line was picking me up, running backs, receivers. Jacoby (Brissett) was a big help on the sideline talking to me. He said that's part of the game. It's knocking the rust off. He said he felt the same way week 1, trying to get into rhythm, new offense, new system, new guys. Like I said before, just trying to continue to improve each and every day. That's my goal. Just try to get in that rhythm as much as possible. We've got a big one next week, and I'm just happy to be 1-0.”

You said this week that you would only answer football questions, but today's game was significant because you are returning from suspension. Are you able to say today that you are remorseful for the conduct that got you suspended?



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. CLEVELAND BROWNS



"Like I said before, that's something that legal and clinical have answered before, and they don't want me to address anything like that. Of course, it's a tough situation. The suspension was tough. But at the same time, my main focus was just trying to be 1-0 as a football player today."

As you returned today, did you feel remorse for the actions that got you suspended?

"Like I said, I was just excited to be back on the field today. I did everything that I was asked and was required to do. I did all that, and I was able to be able to play and be on the field today."

Because of the buildup of this game and possibly the stress coming back and being here with accusers and all those kinds of things happening today, did you knock off enough rust that you feel next week against the Bengals should be significantly better than what people saw out there today?

"Of course. That's the rule of the game, just try and improve each and every week. Next week, I definitely need to be better. I will be better. The team will be better. The goal is to be 1-0. I'm not sure how the outcome of the game is going to be or what is going to take place or what the defense is going to do or the situations of the game. I can't really control that until that play happens. But that's ultimately the goal. We celebrate, get on the plane, get back to Cleveland. Once we get back, we have to turn the page, watch the film, fix the mistakes, and get ready for Cincinnati."

Were you surprised you were that rusty, or did you really deep down expect that?

"I would just say I felt every single one of those 700 days, honestly. However long I've been out, I felt every single one of those days. Getting back in shape and everything is definitely what I needed today."

Were you jittery? If so, what were you jittery about?

"I wouldn't say I was jittery. It was just more so of getting out there and being able to play. Live bullets are coming at you. For the past however long, since I've been back on the practice field, guys are coming towards me, but they're not allowed to hit me. This is the first time I've had action other than the preseason game, which was eight plays, I think, where guys were coming at me full speed and trying to get the ball from me. Like I said, it's just knocking off the rust and getting the timing down with the receivers and the offense and knowing who is blocking for me up front and how they block and where they're going to sit in a situation. So, it was the first time for live action, but it was good to feel it."

[-back to top-](#)

DE MYLES GARRETT

We've talked about you guys trying to get those turnovers, and it's finally a day that comes, and it's a day where you're able to pick up where the offense maybe couldn't get going. What does that mean to be able to find those turnovers today?

"It's a day when we needed it. We weren't clicking all phases. They were running the ball well. Still the first down we get it in the air, but we needed those takeaways to really separate the score for us. They came up big, not only taking the ball away but scoring. And special teams doing their thing, DPJ (Donovan Peoples-Jones) having a big return. I think that that's the kind of complementary football we've been looking for, and that's something to build off of in these two phases of the game."

After watching the Texans on film, did you all as a defense anticipate this might be a big day for you all or potentially could be a big day for you all?

"Yeah, we knew we were going to have some opportunities. We just had to make the most of it, being able to stay tight in coverage. We felt if we got some pressure in his face, we were going to be able to get him off the spot, get him some errant throws and get him to make some plays through the air, and we were able to do that. Especially



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. CLEVELAND BROWNS



them forcing some fumbles as well, that came up big. I know I said something last week and received that response.”

When you get an interception on the first defensive play of the game, what does that do for you as a unit?

“It gives us huge confidence, especially for the offense. They were coming out thinking they were going to score and even though they didn't, we're going out there thinking this is a day we're going to do something special. We ended up having a really great game as far as defense and special teams. We have to be able to keep it going.”

What did you think of QB Deshaun Watson's game?

“Next question.”

Myles, how grateful were you on a day when QB Deshaun Watson was having a rough time kind of getting it going, that he got the support of you guys on the field and I'm sure off the field? How do you guys feel like you rallied around him today?

“I mean, we knew we were going to be going into a hostile environment and knew we were going to have to pick him up and just try to, like I said, play complementary, do our best to pick it up, anything where he falls off or falls a little bit short during some drives. But he still has that confidence about him. He's telling us y'all get a stop and get a takeaway, we're going to score. Don't worry about it. He has our back just like we have his back. It was never a big deal for him. He was still having that presence where any time we could make a special play happen.”

Based on what you've seen in practice, with him every day in training camp and everything, do you feel like now he's sort of got this stressful situation off his back, one game that he needed to get out of the way, do you envision he'll be that much better in his second start?

“Yeah. We're not going to hold him to a crazy standard and expect him to be superman out there. He hasn't played in two years. We know the kind of football player he's been in the past and what he's like. We've seen him on the practice field doing things athletically and through the air that few players can match. We're not going to hold him to that kind of standard. We're going to keep on playing complementary football. We're going to keep on playing as a team. He's going to eventually get his rhythm, get his feet underneath him and be able to play like he has in the past.”

You mentioned the environment was about what you expected for him playing his first game here?

“Yeah. We knew it was going to be a little bit hostile. They were going to have some boos and all that. But at the end of the day, it's nothing he hasn't faced before and we haven't faced before. Just taking it in stride knowing we're going to have some noise on the field, especially when the offense is out there. So just making sure you're loud with your vocalizations, with your calls and checks, and do your best to move forward.”

How does it feel you guys have kept the train going along and you're keeping hope alive as you head into this big game in Cincinnati?

“The goal is still 1-0. I look at the size of the game or the meaning of it, it's just one. I said to the guys, it's not win or go home. There's no option. There's no alternative. It's just win. That's all we can do. We can't leave without it.”

Is it still some good energy having played a couple of hours up the road in college?

“I still love playing in Texas. It doesn't matter whether it's in Dallas or in Houston, I still appreciate coming back. Get some Texas sun on me, it means a lot.”

[-back to top-](#)



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. CLEVELAND BROWNS



What did you think? First pick six, big day for you.

"It was a great game. Blessed to be here and blessed to be part of the Cleveland Brown organization. I'm happy and looking forward to the next game."

Was it nice for you to be able to kind of come up big in a game like this where you guys are almost really in a must-win situation?

"Absolutely. Every game is about playing complementary football. Sometimes another man has to step up, next man up, and today was my day. I took that chance."

Given how much the Texans have struggled this year, did you suspect that you all would have some opportunities in the passing game?

"More so not anticipating anything. We go into every game trying to get take-aways, trying to get three-plus takeaways. That's our defensive philosophy, and we went out there today and got the ball out, take it away."

As a team, how did you feel about the way the crowd treated your quarterback?

"I feel like it was what we expected, but as you guys can see, we kept playing as we should. It's just football. I mean, who would have thought Deshaun (Watson) was going to get applause coming into Houston?"

What did you see on your forced fumble?

"I honestly didn't know nobody picked it up. I just hit the ball out and hoped for the best. (Kyle Allen) was on the 1-yard line. Any time a quarterback dives with the ball out, you got to hit it."

Is there any sense of relief amongst the team just kind of getting past this initial phase of QB Deshaun Watson's first game and being here specifically?

"Ever since Deshaun (Watson) got in the building, he's been a tremendous leader. We're just going to keep on moving, keep moving forward. We've got Cincinnati next week, a division game. We're going to go in and try to get a win."

Did QB Deshaun Watson's first game energize the defense and special teams?

"I guess you could say it's coincidence. Complementary football, as I said before, everybody wants to go out, sometimes the offense is not going to score every drive, on defense sometimes we're not going to stop every drive and on special teams sometimes they may make big plays. But today offense, defense and special teams, we all made big plays when it was time."

How big was it to get three takeaways?

"Like I said, that's our philosophy. I'm sure Coach (Joe) Woods and the whole defense, as you guys know, we're all ecstatic, and we want to keep on moving. Keep this thing rolling."

Do you feel like QB Deshaun Watson probably knocked off the rust in this game and will be better in the second game?

"Deshaun (Watson) is a pro. I feel like regardless every game, every practice, no matter where he goes, he's going to show up. We're not worried about Deshaun."

[-back to top-](#)

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