

Head Coach Tom Coughlin

Postgame vs. Houston, September 21, 2014

Coughlin: Nice to win. Nice to win, nice to do a lot of good things in the process. We talked about winning the turnover battle, obviously we're plus-two. Rushed for 193, we had interception turnovers. We blocked a punt, which is really, really good. We won the time of possession and we forced them to play from behind. They hadn't played from behind much this year and that was a strong contributor as well. We left some plays out there, no doubt. We had the bad snap from center, that hurt us on the field goal. We had the turnover of the drive, some of the long drives that we had, but they came out in the second half, made some adjustments and moved the ball but we were able to go down and score, the turnovers in point blank range and put the points on the board. Good win for our team, we needed it. A lot of guys played well, I'm looking forward to looking at this tape. Short week so here we go.

Q: Anything coming into this game that you saw in practice that would explain the running game you had, especially the success Rashad Jennings had?

A: Well we've been, little by little, we've been trying to improve that area. It wasn't so good last week. Obviously it was very good this week. Strong runner, Rashad ran the ball very well, broke some tackles, made some plays when it didn't look like there was anything left to be made. Up front did a good job. They have a good interior there, outstanding football players as well. We knew we were going to run it, to try to run it and we're going to try to stay as balanced as we can and we were able to do that.

Q: Last week you felt like you had left a couple turnovers out there.... What the change was today?

A: Guys caught the ball. They were in the right spot and were that way a week ago but didn't get him. Today we moved better, a little faster, recognition was good. I thought our eyes went where they were supposed to go and as a result, we made some key... any time you intercept the ball and give the offense the ball at that point in the field... Antrel's went down there inside the five, that was outstanding.

Q: Is it possible to explain when a guy like Rashad is working that well, just what it does for the whole offense?

A: There's no question. It picks everybody up at any position and every position. Guys are playing above the Xs and Os, it's a definite picker-upper.

Q: When the offense was struggling in the summer, is that what you envisioned it would eventually look like? That kind of balance and efficiency?

A: Yeah it sure is but I think we've got more to go. Like I said, we have more to go.

Q: One person you didn't mention during that whole beginning was Eli. It just seemed like he was in the flow today.

A: He's been that way for the last couple of weeks. The only thing the week before were the turnovers. We eliminated those today. The quarterback rating I think was 123 today, which was outstanding. Played a very good game, made some outstanding run checks down in the green zone. He made a couple of run checks to put the ball inside for the first down and let the drive stay alive, so he played very, very well. He plays a very, very solid game, a very outstanding mental game and he did that today.

Q: With the successful challenge you had, was it something you saw from the field or was it the call from above...?

A: Oh no, we were on it upstairs. We have that wired so we had the information we needed and I asked point blank if we were going to win it and the word was we were.

Q: The passes, they're coming out quicker and the decisions are coming quicker and the ball is coming out quicker. How much do you feel that...?

A: Well there's no question – as we go, we're getting better at it and the ball is coming out quicker. People are making the right adjustments. The receivers, the quarterback are timing up better. There's still more to be done. It's good to see the progress.

Q: Talk about how you tried...?

A: Well, no question. Larry Donnell has done an outstanding job in the middle. Daniel Fells made plays today and we think Adrien Robinson's going to come along and be the same kind of player. It's a big part of the offense and when we're playing well in there, it does open some things up in the middle of the field.

Q: When a running back plays like Rashad did today, how much does that help Eli specifically?

A: To be able to run the ball and be able to throw play action passes is critical, really, to the success of an offensive team. When that is going and you have that versatility, it's also a safer way to throw the ball.

Q: How were you able to control J.J. Watt today? It seemed like the offensive line played particularly well against him?

A: Well, they had to. He's a heck of a football player. He made his plays but they did okay.

Q: You waited so long for your first win last year. To get it together now, how does that help you moving forward?

A: Well, it's always great to win. I wish we would have won a couple weeks ago and kept it going but we won today, let's just be happy with that for now. We have a short week, we need to get going on that.

Q: Did you feel anyone sagging on the sideline? You had the fumble, you had the bad snap?

A: No. There was no lull. And we talked about that, we talked about being positive the whole day, including me. We got some things that went the way we wanted them but they handled it well.

Q: Because you could hear it in the building, the building seemed to be frustrated by that, right?

A: I didn't... that didn't affect me, not that I know of.

Q: For all of the negative stuff coming out of the league this past week... do you ask the players to focus on the task at hand?

A: We focus, we have to focus because our situation was such where we're 0-2, we've got to get our football right. But we're still human beings, we're aware of things. We obviously want to do the right thing all the time.

Q: Steve Weatherford today, how he punted...?

A: Tough man. Hung in there, even at the end there, high snap, gets the ball down and gets it away. He did an outstanding job today.

QB Eli Manning

Postgame vs. Houston, September 21, 2014

Q: Is that how you want it to look today?

A: That is the way it is supposed to work. I thought it started up front with our offensive line. They did an outstanding job opening up lanes. Rashad [Jennings] ran hard. We didn't get stuck in many third and longs. We didn't have many third downs at all, it felt like. Receivers, we got the ball out quick. The receivers made catches. They had good runs after the catch. It was efficient. We mixed it up and went to no-huddle, then we went with some standard offense and huddled up. I thought we had a good combination and a good mix. Guys were well prepared and we played well, but we still have to fix some things. I thought the second and third possessions were about as good as we could do, but we just didn't finish. We had the fumble and the missed field goal. I think we were close, but we are going to keep working and keep getting better. I thought last week we made some steps to get better and this week was even stronger.

Q: You had 230 yards of total offensive, but still hadn't scored yet... Did you have to say anything to the guys to keep everybody on track and their heads up?

A: We just have to finish. That is all it was. Just said, 'Hey, keep doing it. They haven't stopped us and they are getting tired. Let's just keep going and get some points.' I knew we wanted to get a lead. That is something we have been talking about as a team. I knew we had to score some points, get a lead and put a little pressure on the opposing team to see if we can get them to make some mistakes. Sure enough, that is what happened. We got a lead, put a little pressure and the defense starts making plays. We get an interception and we score more. That is the way it is supposed to go.

Q: Did you say anything to Larry Donnell after the fumble, and then he came out and had a nice catch?

A: No, I didn't say anything. Just on the sideline I gave him a little slap on the shoulder and said, 'let's go. Put it behind you.' Larry is good and he has worked hard and made a great catch for us today and couple big plays. We will keep using him. He has a good head on his shoulders. He bounced back and made some nice plays for us.

Q: After the start of last year, was it a relief to get the first win?

A: Yes, it is always good to get that first win. We didn't want to go through that again. Obviously losing your first two is no fun, but we had a good week of practice. The guys are focused. The coaches and everybody didn't get too uptight being 0-2. We knew it was a big game for us. We wanted to come out and win. I think with coach keeping his cool, bringing some excitement to practice with the music and the punt-off and those things helped the players relax. It said to us, 'We know what to do, let's just go play football. It is Sunday. Let's just go play football. Don't worry about being perfect or doing everything exact. Play the game you love and go play fast.'

Q: Speaking of the music... Did you have any music that was in the selection?

A: I think we just stole it all off Coach Coughlin's iPad and just put it right on there. It seemed like all his music. The early 90's rap that he.... (laughs).

Q: How encouraging was the play of the offensive line today?

A: The offensive line was dominant today. That was good to see. I think the tempo helps. Being able to get the ball snapped and get into good-looking plays. It helps with the run game. It helps with the pass game and the pass protection by getting the ball out quick. I thought we had a good plan. They did a good job. I think we had the one sack early on in the first series, but besides that, I was held up and we were running and getting five, six, seven yards a pop. A couple of ten-yard runs. That is when the line is dominating. They can tell. They were feeling it and excited. When we are running the ball, they just want to keep running, like all offensive lines. Keep running and keep pounding. One point we ran the same play three times in a row. They were rolling. They liked it.

Q: How would you assess the way the running backs are helping in the blitz pick up?

A: I think they did a good job. We had a couple blitz pick-ups. We had a third and long and hit Preston Parker on the right sideline when they came with a blitz. I can't remember whether it was Rashad or Andre [Williams] who picked up the blitz. Had a couple of other times when they were in there and chipping. We knew we were going to have to chip on [J.J.] Watt and get a little extra time. They were doing that. I thought they were keying in on everything and they did a good job.

Q: How much for you does it feel like everything is moving faster in the new offense?

A: I think it is good. We get up to the line of scrimmage faster so if the team has certain looks or tendencies, we can see those things and get into better plays. You talk about always trying to get into the best play, but you just get into a better play. I think we are doing that. I think it helps the offensive line get up there and analyze things and protections. I think we do a good job finding completions. That is something we talk about a lot. Where are our completions? What routes are our completions [on]? And then third downs, you obviously try to get first downs. In the green zone, get your shots and get your touchdowns. I think guys are understanding the timing of the offense and how quick things are going. Sometimes you have to hold it and take your shots down the field, but other times, you get the ball out quick and hit guys in stride. Throw the ball accurately. Hit guys in stride. I hit Victor [Cruz] on a little slant and he goes 60 yards and made a big play. Those are good things.

Q: Do you feel for you that [the ball] is coming out quicker between now and the beginning of the preseason?

A: I think more reps at the plays. Getting the feel for the timing and getting to see live coverages for some of these plays and getting a feel for where the ball is going to go. Throwing it on time and kind of seeing it before it happens. I think the more reps we can get, the better off we will continue to be.

Q: Even though it is early in the season... Was there at all a sense of backs to the wall?

A: We knew it was a big win. The most important thing you can do in that situation is to not let it feel that way, if that makes sense. You know it is a big win, but if you start pressing or stressing or telling everybody we have to win this game, then people will get tense and stressed. They will worry too much. That is why I think it is good that we had lighter mood practices. We had to try to do something to keep guys loose. It is an important game. Every game is important. We are going to prepare hard. We are going to practice hard. Then on Sunday, let's just go have fun and make some plays and try to find a way to win the game.

Q: (Inaudible)

A: He is a good player. They like to bring him in their dime package when we are in three receivers, one tight end and one back and have him in the box. They like to have him man-to-man on the tight end and blitz him from different areas. He is a good player, but I thought we did a good job accounting for him. [Houston] will walk him around and move him around and disguise some of their coverages, but he is a good player. We didn't allow him to make any big plays.

S Antrel Rolle

Postgame vs. Houston, September 21, 2014

Q: One of the first things coach Coughlin did in the Wednesday meeting was putting up the turnovers. The fact that you guys hadn't caused any, you were minus-6. I guess coach [Perry] Fewell did it again

last night. Can you talk a little bit about that emphasis, finally getting off the schneid with that a little bit.

A: Well turnovers are always a point of emphasis on our defense. Unfortunately in the first two games, we weren't able to be successful creating them. And that was our goal this week. To go out there and be aggressive. When we see it, believe our eyes and go attack the ball. And it all starts up front. I think those guys did a phenomenal job of keeping [Quarterback Ryan] Fitzpatrick rattled. Making him throw on the run. Making him uncomfortable in the pocket. I think we did a great job overall as a defense of just being on the same page and communicating. Making the plays when the opportunities presented themselves.

Q: Last week you said that guys were playing a little bit out of position, they were trying to do more than just play their position. Did you see a difference today, that guys started to play where they should be playing?

A: Well I saw a huge difference today. I think it all started in practice. I think we grew closer as a team this week. The coaching staff and Coach Coughlin did a great job of keeping us together doing little things that will get us over the top. So we definitely have to thank him for that. That was our message, that was my message to the team. If coach takes care of you and he throws you a bone, you make sure you go out and you play your butt off for him. Because we are a team. We do this together. It was all-inclusive today. I think the fans were phenomenal. I think we definitely stepped up to the challenge. I challenged everyone. I challenged our defense. Our special teams. Our offense. The coaching staff. The fans. And I think everyone did a great job of just being on the same page. We were all in today.

Q: At the beginning of the game, you guys had some missteps.....How did you stay positive through those missteps?

A: It is about handling adversity. I think a couple of times last season I don't think we did such a great job of that. But we just stayed upbeat, stayed positive. And as a defense, our mindset was just don't let them score any points. Just get them off of the field. Three and out as much as we possibly can. We knew our offense would be in a rhythm. The offensive line did a phenomenal job, helping [Running Back] Rashad [Jennings] with those rushing yards. He did an amazing job rushing the ball today. I think offensively collectively those guys made a huge step forward. I think they were very poised. I think they played together as a team. We did this together, offense, defense, special teams.

Q: You always talk about when you decide to talk to the guys as a whole or individually from the heart. Can you talk about what went into your thoughts this week, talking to the guys on Wednesday and getting that group together?

A: What went into my thoughts was I felt like we weren't playing relaxed. I felt like we were just trying to do too much as a team. And it is understandable. We try to go out and try to be perfect. We try to make plays. We try to limit the mistakes. But at the same time, this is a game you start playing as youngsters. So if you don't go out there and play and you don't have fun while doing so. If you don't play calm while doing so, you are going to end up putting yourself in a worse position than where you started off. This week was just about relaxing. Just taking your mind away from the game a little bit. We know how to do this. We have been doing this for a long time. Just go out there and play relaxed. Play your assignment, play your technique and get the win at all costs. That's basically what it was about.

Q: On the music that was playing Friday at practice, did you have a lot of say into the playlist?

A: No, not too much into the playlist. I think I had one song. But I think it was great. It was something that definitely lifted the team's spirits a little bit. It was something different. Sometimes change is always good. It was good. Hopefully we have some more music on Friday because it seemed to work.

Q: Was the win this week just a matter of complementing your passion with execution?

A: Absolutely. Like I said, we're all talented in this league. Houston is a phenomenal team. We came in here 0-2 but it's not always the most talented team that wins it. I think it's going to be your passion, I think it's going to be your heart that carries you over in this league and today I think we played with resiliency. We played with a whole lot of heart and a whole lot of passion. So, I take my hat off to this team and the fans because we all did this together.

Q: Did the offense look how you had all hoped and expected?

A: Well the tempo was good. I think Eli did a phenomenal job of executing the offense and I think the rest of those guys did the rest of the job being on the same page with Eli. And that's what we're used to seeing. I love seeing him in a rhythm. He looked very poised and his decision-making was great. There were no turnovers offensively, except for the fumble, but for the most part I think we kept the game in control. On defense I think we bounced back and we answered the bell, which is always huge, keep giving the offense more opportunities to put points on the board and put the offense in a position to score. I think we did that several times so that's always good.

Q: How did you help the guys focus amidst the media criticism of the past few weeks?

A: I'm outspoken but at the same time a realist. If we got a lot of negative press, I think it was very well deserved. I don't think anyone out there had two positive things to say about us. But you know, it was only two games. I saw last week a little bit more fight in this team, a little more passion, but unfortunately we came up short. We shot ourselves in the foot a few times with the turnovers and not creating turnovers. This week I think we limited that, we did a phenomenal job, and the passion was there. I think we were all in today: the coaching staff, the fans were phenomenal, the stadium was rocking, and we just need to continue that.

Q: Any comments about the domestic violence situation and the NFL?

A: We're not really about domestic violence, that has nothing to do with this team. We have a great football team, we're not really about any domestic violence.

RB Rashad Jennings

Postgame vs. Houston, September 21, 2014

Q: Given last week with the fumble, it hit you real hard. You said it was... is this what you had in mind?

A: No. I came out, I just followed up hill, watching the film. It's something that's uncharacteristic of myself, the way I play ball, the way I prepare. It hurt our team at a crucial time, 17-yard line, an opportunity to tie the game up and potentially take over and win. I took that to heart. That's something that you've just got to move forward from so you wash it out of your memory and continue to move. I just prepared this week like I do every single week. I understand the defense inside and out. I thought the line did an outstanding job of getting hat on hat. Eli did a tremendous job making sure that we were in the right play at the same time. Receivers made key blocks down the field to give me one-on-one opportunities and to be honest, I was just doing my job. I've said this before and I'm going to continue to do that – when the offense's run game is going well, it's simply the effect of everybody else and it's not because I'm making plays, so hats off to this offensive line, tight ends, quarterback, receivers.

Q: The running game got going this week. Is there anything leading up to this week...?

A: Every single week is an opportunity to move the chains, move the ball, get hidden yards. This defense is a good defense. They didn't do anything glaring, I just thought our offensive line played with attitude. We were just playing physical up front. They gave us an opportunity. Also, we did a pretty good job of holding onto the ball. Our defense played lights out and put us in the position where we could control the clock and run the ball. Our special teams played, linking offense and defense, they did a great job today. As you see with the blocked punt, that changes the dynamic of the play call. This is a team victory.

Q: Did you realize that you've had your two-best career games against the Texans – 150 when you were with the Raiders and now 172 with the Giants?

A: Now I do. I had no idea what the stats were. I wear a pacifier. The reason why I wear a pacifier – I just shut up and work. At the end of the game I see what the results were, regardless of it's a good thing or a bad thing I never shy away from the film because you've got to get ready for next week.

Q: You talked about understanding the defense, is there something about their defense that you saw, you knew that would give you opportunities today?

A: No. Every time you see 11 men on the field, you've got an opportunity. Like I said, this defense is a good defense. I, again, think our offensive line played with a passion. I think it's a difficult match and our defense played and put us in good positions so it wasn't one thing. It definitely was Giants football; we played a complete game. We did leave some hidden yardage out there, I believe, that's what we've got to go to the film room to do. It's a quick week, we've got the Redskins next Thursday so as soon as I leave here I'm going straight to the cold tub.

Q: Were you motivated, yourself? Obviously you fumbled last week. Is that on your mind this week?

A: No. Speaking to my teammates, we pray before every game. In leading the prayer today, I just kind of reminded the guys before we walked out on the field – whatever reason you play this game, play like that. Whether it's a child with cancer that you want to motivate – play that way, to prove somebody wrong -- play that way. If it's to play for this team – play that way, if it's because your grandma's watching – play that way. Today I was just reminded, my father has diabetes and he ended up getting both of his legs amputated. He doesn't have legs so I remembered that I do have them so I played that way. You've got to find a different motivation outside this game to push you. Simply playing football, playing to my best ability is how I say, 'Thank you,' to God for giving me this talent.

Q: Is your dad here today?

A: He was not here but he was watching on TV. I look forward to talking to him.

Q: The offensive line obviously had gotten a lot of criticism. Do you sense a heightened physicality from them today?

A: No doubt. I think that was clear. They were finishing blocks, antsy every single play in the huddle, hyping each other up. We played in sync, smart, strong and poised. We were determined today. Like I said, it was a team win. It wasn't one... but our offensive line was tough today.

Q: Did you talk to your dad this week? Did he know that you were using his experience and you were going into the game with that on your mind today?

A: I did, I told him this morning when I talked to him. He knew so I hope he's smiling. I say that just because every single... I'm more and more interested in pulling the best out of every single person. When you remind somebody why they do what they do, you try not to force the reason why they're doing it... you make them the best them. That's all we need out on this field and that's how you get a team. I was just trying to motivate my guys to play for the reasons why they want to play.

Q: Where is your father watching the game?

A: He's in Richmond, Virginia currently watching the game. My brothers, mom, dad, everybody like they do every single week.

Q: Was he somebody that had played football at any point? Is he somebody that has gotten you through the game in any way?

A: My father, coming out of high school, he had a full scholarship to Nebraska... my oldest brother, my brothers are 10 and 14 years older than me. I'm like the little accident baby. He had to go make money for the family so he denied his scholarship to Nebraska and went to the Air Force. He retired off disability so that's the story of my father. Both of my brothers played ball for a little bit in the NFL, one tight end and one fullback, so I was a little, like I tell everybody, I was a little overweight, chubby kid that had nothing to look up to. I had a .6 GPA average, I had to overcome a lot in my life, I did a complete 180, I started taking responsibility... I'm kind of getting off track but that's just a little bit about my family and how much we stick together.

Q: How did you do a 180?

A: I did a 180 in my life – an overweight, chubby kid with glasses and asthma, I had to figure something out. I was 270 in high school riding the bench saying, 'I want to play in the NFL.' I had to make a commitment in my life to change that around and it's unique because I get to sit back and look and where I'm at today was because of some small decisions and it's humbling.

Q: When did you father have the surgery and just being motivated by him, what is that emotion inside you? What does that feel like?

A: That's... I'm through the bloodline of my father so obviously it does affect me directly. He had diabetes... I started off at Pittsburgh, ended up earning a starting spot as a true freshman. My father had diabetes and that's when he got his first leg amputated. I transferred from Pittsburgh to Liberty University because Liberty University is 10 minutes from home. I figured my family took care of me for 19 years up until that point in my life that I wanted to leave a top university at the time to go to a small one just to be there for them. The world is round, you do what's right and it will come back to you.

Q: What's your father's name?

A: Albert Jennings.

WR Victor Cruz

Postgame vs. Houston, September 21, 2014

Q: What does it feel like to get the first win of the season?

A: Feels good. It feels good to get ourselves motivated again, ready to play, get our fans excited. I mean, that's what it's all about. Coming in there, preparing during the week, and getting a victory.

Q: Could this win jump-start the team?

A: Absolutely. I think the energy level is high on the team. I think we're confident. This week in practice was indicative of that as well. I think we were just flying around, everybody felt good, and we're excited to get things going.

Q: How did you take advantage of their defense playing a lot of one linebacker sets?

A: I think it was just a matter of Eli doing a great job of knowing what they were running, tipping their hand, a lot of hard counts and stuff like that, getting them to jump a bit – so we see what they're doing before the snap – and us just making plays on the outside. Being able to get the football, Eli putting it in perfect places, and just being able to make something happen.

Q: How comfortable is this offense?

A: Very comfortable. We know exactly what's going on, exactly what to do out there. It's just a matter of us going out there and executing.

Q: Is this offense designed to get the ball in your hands quickly?

A: Absolutely. I think that's indicative of what this offense can do, as well as the throw to Rueben Randle that he couldn't come down with, those long passes are there as well. That's definitely what this offense can do, getting the ball to us. We're very athletic on the outside and all the receivers can make something happen with the football. It's just a matter of getting the ball in our hands and us doing what we can do with it.

Q: How did it feel to score today?

A: Oh man. Excited. It's been a long time since I got in that end zone. It felt good to dance again, but my hips hurt from dancing.

Q: When you move the ball like today, do you see what this offense can be?

A: Definitely. You have to credit the offensive line. To give Eli that time and to run the ball the way we did, that's definitely special for those guys. It's definitely a confidence booster to know that they're gelling and that things are going in the right direction for them as well. You have to give credit to those guys, especially with a guy like JJ Watt on the opposite end.

Q: Thoughts on Rashad Jennings rebounding off his performance from last week?

A: He's just tough, man, he's sheer toughness. You can see it in the way he runs. Very smart runner, knows how to pick his holes, knows when to explode through the holes. It's just fun to see him run, it's fun to block for him, and it's fun to see him with the ball in his hands. So I'm excited for him and I think today kind of kick starts what he's doing.

Q: After all the uncertainty this summer, does Eli look locked in to you?

A: Absolutely. I think he's seen a lot of things that are coming before the snap and it's really helpful for us to be comfortable as well, to know exactly what we're doing, and to be on time with him, and I think it's working out so far.

Q: When Eli is locked in like he appears to be now, can it help the team get on a roll?

A: One hundred percent. When he's locked in, when he's getting things going, it translates to the entire team, the entire offense. We kind of follow his lead, we follow that lead, because if he's locked in, we know everybody is held accountable, to know what they're doing, to be on the same page with him. It just brings about good, positive things.

Q: Could you sense Eli hitting his stride in the game?

A: Absolutely. I think, especially this week in practice, he was confident. He was throwing the ball well, he was throwing it exactly where he wanted it to go, and it was good to see. I think now is the time where

we're getting things going and getting moving in the right direction. So I just think it's something to build off of.

Q: How critical was it to find that rhythm on the offensive side, especially considering the short week?

A: It was huge, it was huge for us. Knowing that we had to get this game, get this win under our belts with a short week coming up, not wanting to look ahead and defer our energy, our time. Taking care of this one and getting ready for Washington.

Q: What was it like catching that pass and hearing the crowd get into it?

A: It feels good. Anytime you're at home and you get in the end zone and you're able to dance a little bit, it's always fun. It's fun for the fans, it's fun for myself, and I was excited to get in there today, for sure.

Q: What happened to the new salsa dance?

A: You have to wait on that, man. I have to give you the original for the first one and then when I get in there a couple more times, you might see something else.

Q: Are you seeing the big plays from this offense that you guys wanted to get back?

A: Absolutely. I think that this offense has big-play capability – especially with Rashad on the outside – it's just a matter of getting to those plays, opening things up for us, and we were excited to get to that.

DE Jason Pierre-Paul

Postgame vs. Houston, September 21, 2014

Q: What seemed to click for you guys today?

A: We came out, and we did our assignments. Things went wrong for the offense, we lost the ball or whatever, but we knew we had to contain and do our jobs. As long as we did our jobs, we were going to be okay, and you see we won the game.

Q: It seemed like you guys were in the backfield for most of the game...

A: We were in the backfield, but (Fitzpatrick) got out of the pocket a couple times and made first downs. Those right there, we have to tighten that up and finish the play. We stayed on the field on four third downs, and we should never. We've got to tighten it up, we've got work to do, we've got to keep pressing, and we'll be okay.

Q: How does it feel to come out of here with a win?

A: It feels good. We've just got to keep on taking it one game at a time, and that's what we're going to do. We can't let this win get over our heads. We still have a lot of work to do, and we've got a short week for the Washington Redskins.

Q: Did you do anything to limp off the field at some point?

A: I'm good. Everything's good.

Q: What happened on that play? Did it twist at all?

A: I'm good. No injuries. Injury-free.

Q: Did you think you had a good chance to put a lot of pressure on (Ryan) Fitzpatrick and force those turnovers?

A: We did. We put pressure, but at the end of the day, we're trying to get off the field on third downs. We did a good job, but we can do better.

Q: You talk about winning the physical battle, that's pretty much what you did today, isn't it?

A: Yeah, we won the physical battle. They were physical, too, but it all comes down to that fourth quarter. They were playing from behind, and any time you're playing from behind, you've got to be a more physical team and you can't let things get you down.

LB Jameel McClain

September 21, 2014

A: Obviously the DBs did an amazing job of holding them down so [the defensive line] could get [to the quarterback]. It is just an accumulation of everybody sticking to the plan and doing exactly what they are supposed to do.

Q: Anything specific about the game plan that went especially well?

A: Anything specific about the game plan? The game plan is always good. In my opinion the game plan is always great. What went well and what went exceptional was the fact that everyone stuck to it. Everyone was where they were supposed to be. It made the game plan seem even better. It was 11 guys out there doing their job and sticking to their job. Like I said, I am a firm believer in [Defensive coordinator] Perry [Fewell] and the coaches and everything that they do. We just have to stick to our plan and we will get it done. [We can't] shoot ourselves in the foot.

Q: You look fired up... Was it good having the fans into it?

A: These are some amazing fans. It is our job to make sure that they are in the game, so that they are as in tune with us. The fired-up-ness is just a reaction to them. That is my response and our response of telling them we appreciate them. We appreciate everything that they are doing out there. Trust me, the 12th man is important in football.

Q: Talk about what you guys did on defense to shut down that Texans running game for much of the day?

A: We stuck to the assignments. We stuck to the basics. We just played fundamental football and did exactly what we were supposed to do. That's the only way to stop the run. There is no grand scheme. There is no blitz this or do that. It's just a bunch of people doing exactly what they are told to do and that always stops the run. It always does. With a scheme like that, when you get one person out of position, it hits. Because these running backs are good enough to find it. Blessed for us, fortunate for us, we stayed where we were supposed to stay. Jacquian [Williams] did a great job. The d-line did a great job. Everybody stuck to their basics.

Q: All week you guys talked about having to do some different things in order to get some takeaways. Is exactly what you guys talked about in those meetings what we saw on the field today?

A: We just saw an accumulation of a lot of hard work. We saw an accumulation of a lot of hard work. A lot of people doing exactly [what they were supposed to do]. Like I said, I can keep going back to this because it really is all it is. And great players making great plays. You look at the turnovers that we got. Those are

our great players. Our big players making big plays and that's what they do. So we were just playing team defense.

Q: Do you feel a little bit of weight off a lot of the guys in this locker room? Getting the first win under your belts after starting 0-2.

A: It is great to get a win, but the weight is always on you in the NFL. Whether you are 3-0, 0-3, 1-2, whatever it is, this is the NFL and everybody wants to beat you. Every game is the most important game. So it is great to get a win, but we have a short week. And we have to focus on another good team. That's football.

T Justin Pugh

Postgame vs. Houston, September 21, 2014

Q: What were you able to take advantage of with their defensive sets?

A: I think going into this week they were averaging letting up 5.8 yards per rush, so we definitely knew we had to run the ball and keep the chains moving. I think we saw flashes of how well we were able to run the ball during the preseason, so just keep moving, keep getting first downs, moving the sticks, eating up the clock. It was something that we had success with early on and we just kept going to it. Rashad (Jennings) ran hard. You give him the ball, we get a crease and he's going to take it and get five, seven yards per carry.

Q: How do you open those holes that big?

A: Like I always say, we've got a bunch of fighters in that offensive line room. I know people doubt us, and then that's something that, there's beauty in that. Then you go out there and you're going to work hard and keep doing the things that you know will be successful on Sunday. And they're little things of the week. I think we had a great week of practice, and that carried over into today.

Q: Given how losses can kind of snowball, how critical was it for you guys to get this win today?

A: Oh it was huge. I think the way last week went, in that third quarter, we felt the same exact way, like we had them, we were moving the ball on offense. Then today, our special teams made some plays, our defense came up huge, so we were able to convert and win that fourth quarter, which was something we harped on all week.

Q: Are we finally seeing this offense at that comfort level you want it to be at?

A: We have a lot of work to keep improving, getting better. There's a couple times where we needed to put points on the board, and we came away empty-handed. We could have put 40, 50 points on the board today easily, and I think that's something that we need to strive to do.

Q: Is that what we can expect here from now on, more offensive output like this?

A: Definitely. I think we have the ability to do it, we're just going to keep playing hard. I think all three phases can play in harmony, and that's something we saw today.

Q: You kind of have things going for you the way you'd like and have a quick turnaround. Does that help to maybe jump right back into a game and keep it going?

A: Oh definitely. I'm excited. I don't know the outcome of the Washington game, but hopefully they go to overtime because they've got the short week. But you know, it's good to come back and play that game

after the way last week was a heart-breaker for us. I think coming back and being able to run the ball, control the clock, put up points was definitely beneficial for the offense.

Q: Does it help to have a short week now that the offense is in rhythm?

A: Yeah, definitely. I think it's a benefit for our offense, because we're going to go out there and we're going to play up-tempo, and they're coming off a short week so they don't have as much time to prepare. We've got to go out there and go down to a hostile environment and win a divisional game.

Q: He had a couple of plays, but how were you guys able to control J.J. (Watt)?

A: Every time I was interviewed earlier this week, it was about J.J. Watt, so it was definitely something that was a focal point, you've got to stop 99. That first play I let up a sack against him. Obviously I can't do that. It was a technique error on my part. I shouldn't have done what I did. I jump-set him, and he made a play. But after that, I think we showed some resiliency of our offensive line. Whoever was going up against him was going to fight him, and that's the way the game went.

Q: Were you guys tired of hearing about J.J. Watt?

A: Every time I got an interview last week it was, "What's J.J. Watt going to do?" I was overthinking it the first play I went out there, so obviously I wish I could get that back, but I love the way the guys fought and everyone picked me up, and that's something that's great about this team.

Q: Overall, do you feel you guys proved a little something against them?

A: Yeah, definitely. We rushed for 200 yards and everyone always asks, I remember after Week 1 people were asking if we're the worst offensive line in football, so I think coming out and putting up 200 yards is good, but that's one game. We've got 13 more to go, and we've got to keep that going.

Q: What's the comfort level like between the guys on the offense?

A: We're a close group, and I think this is one of the closest groups I've played on. All those guys in the room, we're going to go out there and we're going to battle. I think that's something that we showed today, and we're going to continue to do that.

Q: What's it like blocking for a guy like Rashad Jennings who can do everything?

A: I think he had a lot to prove coming back from last week. He had that fumble. I know that's something that he said, "You guys will be able to count on me," and that never faltered with us. We knew we could count on 23. We open a hole, he's going to make us look good. He's running guys over. You could see how worn down they were toward the end of the game.