



# HOUSTON TEXANS vs. TENNESSEE TITANS



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## POSTGAME QUOTES FROM HOUSTON TEXANS

HEAD COACH BILL O'BRIEN  
RB ALFRED BLUE  
G BRANDON BROOKS  
DE JARED CRICK  
LB BRIAN CUSHING  
WR DEANDRE HOPKINS  
QB BRIAN HOYER  
CB JOHNATHAN JOSEPH  
CB KEVIN JOHNSON  
OLB WHITNEY MERCILUS  
WR NATE WASHINGTON  
DE JJ WATT  
NT VINCE WILFORK

**HEAD COACH BILL O'BRIEN** (Transcribed by Omar Majzoub)

(on the status of T Duane Brown) "Coming out at halftime, just in talking with him a little bit, I felt like the trainers and the doctors needed to check him out, so I don't have an update right now. But, you know, obviously it was a concussion-related deal. Felt like it was in the best interest to keep him out the second half."

(on getting a win) "Whatever it took today. Whatever it took. We had to get the win. It wasn't pretty, but who cares? It's a win. These guys fought hard. They practiced hard this week. We got a good locker room. We got a good bunch of guys. They knew that they had to win this game. It was good to get the win."

(on the defense playing well led by DE J.J. Watt and OLB Whitney Mercilus) "Those guys did a great job. I think they really executed the plan well. I thought we had a good plan going into the game. We did some different things. They worked out pretty well. Defense played a whale of a game."

(on the decision to start Quintin Demps and Andre Hal at safety) "With this game, we felt like that was the best combination of safeties that we brought to the game today. That's what we were doing."

(on the growth of CB Kevin Johnson) "He's a guy that's coming into this league, a very mature guy, very smart guy. He played well today. He made some big plays for us. He's a physical player. I know he doesn't always look that way. Physically, he's a young, young kid but he's going to get better. He's going to get bigger, stronger. He's a very smart player. We're happy he's on our team, that's for sure. He's had a good first half of the year."

(on QB Brian Hoyer) "I think Brian – we asked Brian to come into this game and manage the game. Look, as an offense, there's a lot of things we need to do better, but I thought that he, for the most part, did a good job. I think he took care of the ball. He got us into the right play. He's leadership on the sideline was good. His leadership in the huddle was good. I think he played a solid football game."

(on QB Brian Hoyer not looking over his shoulder and worrying about being replaced anymore) "I don't know. You'd have to ask him. Really, he's our quarterback and those things are in the past and he's come out here the last couple weeks, last week was tough, but he came back here in practice and practiced well. He had a decent game today."

(on if he see's any difference in QB Brian Hoyer) "No."

(on the team struggling to run the ball) "Well, I just think it's what the game – how the game plays out. You've got to adjust to the game. Look, running the ball wasn't easy today. Obviously, it wasn't very good but we won the game. We came up with enough points. Our defense played well and we were able to win the game, so we did what we had to do to win the game."



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(on throwing to WR DeAndre Hopkins) “We did. We started that one drive, we had a couple play-action passes in a row. That was good. He got his catches there. He made a big catch there at the end on third down that really helped keep a drive alive. He got his catches. Nate (Washington) came up with a big touchdown catch there. That was big. When they’re doing things to take DeAndre away, the other guys have to make plays. We got to get better at that, but I think that Hopkins, obviously, has had a great first half of the year. We need to keep figuring out ways to move him around, put him in different places, use him in different ways and that will be a big part of the second half for us, second half of the season.”

(on getting an ugly but important win) “That’s for you guys, that’s up to you guys. I don’t get into all that. I know that anytime you win in the National Football League, it’s not easy. I think that these guys are a resilient bunch of guys in that locker room. We ended the first half of the season on a winning note. Now we have a bye (week). Gives us a chance to get healthy, get some guys back after the bye, get a little work done this week, get them some days off here, and regroup. Start up again two Mondays from now. You guys can dissect the game however you’re going to do it. I’m just telling you that I think that’s a great win for our team. Our team is very happy about it.”

(on OLB Jadeveon Clowney’s long-term ability to stay healthy) “Look, I think that JD has been here for about a year and a half. He’s had some unlucky injuries. There’s no question about that. I don’t think you can determine a career on a year and a half. I think that this guy’s got a lot of football left in him. I think when he has played, I think he’s played very well. I think even today, he was disruptive today before he was injured. Injuries happen. Hopefully, they’re things that have happened in clusters in the beginning of his career and he’ll be able to recover from them and be a great player here for us in Houston, but I don’t think you can determine that on a short body of work like a year and a half.”

(on the special teams play today) “I think the big key there was they have a great punt returner in (Dexter) McCluster, so we had to do a good job of containing him. He got the one punt return where we were backed up and we’re in a tough position there. They did a good job of calling a sideline return. They returned one well on us there. Overall, I thought our punt team did a good job of containing him and I think overall that was good. You know, some of the kicking team, the coverage teams and the return teams, we really have to look at those during the bye week and try to figure out ways to improve them. I think our special teams has gotten better overall.”

(on if he has a priority list for the bye week) “Sure. Definitely. I think number one is we have to get some guys healthy. We got a lot of guys that are banged up. Hopefully, we can get some guys healthy. Offensively, we have to run the football. We’ve got to figure out what we’re doing. We’ve got to figure out how we can run it, maybe it’s scheme, maybe it’s different schemes as far as what we’re running. Maybe it’s getting the players to perform better when we’re running the ball. But we’ve got to run the ball better. I think defensively you saw, for the most part, what we’re looking to do. We’re looking to be creative on third down, we’re looking to stop the run, put people in long yardage and get after the quarterback. I thought you saw that today. I thought our defense played very well today. We have to continue that and then continue the special teams improvement. I think our return game can get better, so I think (Keith) Mumphery’s getting better at returning the ball. Hopefully, we can build on that and get that part of it better.”

(on the possibility of acquiring a running back at the trade deadline) “No, that’s not anything that we’ve talked about right now. Again, that’s something that we’ll discuss internally and see what’s going on.”

(on the way DE J.J. Watt played after missing practices this week) “I think he had two and a half sacks, but he was around the quarterback a lot. So was Whitney (Mercilus). All of them were. They really did a good job. I think you have to give two groups of people credit there. Obviously, number one, the players. I think the players did a really good job. Then I think you have to give our defensive staff, led by Romeo (Crennel), a good part of that credit too because they came up with a good gameplan for what Tennessee was doing. We were able to execute it. The players get all the credit. I thought those guys did a good job today.”

(on OLB Whitney Mercilus playing better and if he saw it coming in practice) “I’ve seen Whitney – Whitney works hard. He works hard at what we ask him to work hard at. He’s improved. He’s pass rushing ability. He proved his knowledge of our scheme. I thought he did a good job today of getting on the edge of guys and not rushing down the middle of guys. I thought he did a really good job of getting on the edge and he got off on the ball. Sometimes he can be a little bit late getting off on the snap. I thought he got off on the ball today. That was good. I thought he had a whale of a game from what I saw from the sideline.”



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(on the defense playing 'Texans football' today) "I think so. I think that the defense, like I said earlier, I think that's the way they need to play. The way they played today is really – that's a blue print. We've got to play better offensively. We really do. We can't come out of that, balls at the 10 yard line there after turnover and we kick a field goal. I mean, we have to do better than that. We have to improve and that's on all of us. That's on the coaches, me first. We got to get the players playing better. I think defensively, I believe that's the way we want to play and we got to continue that. We got to continue that."

(on the defense playing with more energy and excitement) "I've been asked that a lot this week. You know, what I see is even in last week's game, granted it was terrible, like don't get me wrong, but at the beginning of the game we come out and we're charged up, we're ready to go. We stopped them at the beginning of the game and things went well. For whatever reason, they made a few plays and we couldn't stem the tide. Today, we came out, we were energetic, we were enthusiastic. I have never, ever – I watch as much film as anybody on our football team, I've never seen a lack of effort from our defense, from our offense, from our special teams. I've never stood in front of this football team and talked about a lack of effort. I think today you saw guys really play hard today and play enthusiastically and the game was going well. The game was going well and we started out pretty decently. We have to continue to do that, but even if the game's not going well in the beginning of the game. We have to understand that it's a long game and play the whole game. I think our guys understand that. They're going to continue to do that."

(on what QB Brian Hoyer did well today) "Look, we felt like he had to throw the ball well underneath. I thought for the most part he did that. He had a couple balls batted, but overall I thought he completed some important passes for us. We're able to move the chains at times. Not enough, not enough. We have to get better there. Then when we took a shot, he threw a beautiful pass to Nate (Washington). That's what he does well. He can throw the deep ball very, very well. He puts a lot of air underneath it and he allows the receiver to go make a play on it and I think he did that well. I think he threw some nice play-action plays to DeAndre (Hopkins). That's what he has to continue to do. We all have to be more consistent on offense."

**RB ALFRED BLUE** (Transcribed by Edgar Veliz)

(on if the bye week will allow the team to recalibrate the run game) "I think so. I think we are going to get out there and focus on the run and try to clear up a lot of stuff and get everyone on the same page."

(on how his body is doing at this point of the season) "Great. No problems, I feel good right now."

(on the benefit of being healthy at this point in the season) "I have youth. I'm young, I feel great and recover fast. I'm just ready to keep going."

(on the condition of his toe) "No issues. I'm ready to go."

(on playing with an offensive line that is dealing with injuries) "I don't think it affects me that much. Those guys get in there and understand their job and do it to the best of their ability. It is my job to make the o-line right, stay on course and kind of make them right. As long as they take their right landmark I think we will be all right up front."

(on Tennessee's approach to the run game) "I think they came in with the emphasis to stop the run and just make us throw the ball. They did a good job at it, like I said, we got to the run later on in the game and it started working a little bit."

(on if he can adapt to sharing carries with the other running backs) "I think so. I was a part of that at LSU and I had success at it, rotating out. We rotated at least four backs at LSU so I had a lot of success with that. You have to get in there and be patient, just stick to your groove when you're in there."

(on the importance of making the most of each opportunity to carry the ball) "You have to keep the brain right and just focus on what you're doing. Don't try to force it."



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(on if it is frustrating to get one or two yards per carry early on in the game) “As a good runner you have to stay patient and understand that you are going to wear them down eventually. Like towards the end of the game you saw us gash them for five, seven (yards). Eventually you just have to stay calm and just keep on running until they give it to you.”

(on how the offense approaches wearing down the defense) “Yeah, we have to start a lot faster as an offensive unit. I think we are going to work on that this week.”

(on how effective the short passes were against Tennessee) “I think it helps a lot. It shortens the downs, it puts the offensive coordinator in a better position to call the plays and puts the offense in a better situation.”

(on if he is improving as a receiver) “I try to get better at it every day - get extra work after practice, get on the JUGS, just catching the ball and running routes understanding who’s going to be matched on you and just know their weakness when they are covering you out there.”

(on the impact of the defense) “A good lift. The defense came to play and when the defense comes to play everybody just rallies around that energy that the defense brings. I think that’s what got us through tonight.”

### **G BRANDON BROOKS** (Transcribed by Stefan Nolet)

(on going into the bye week with a win) “It means a lot, especially the way we went out there last week, coming back, bouncing back (this week) with a ‘W.’ With a couple of extra days going into Cincinnati, it means a lot.”

(on the play of QB Brian Hoyer) “I’m happy for him. He played well. He went out there, whether it was Nate (Washington) or Hopkins, went out there and played well, so I’m happy for him.”

(on having to rotate players on the offensive line) “This last couple of weeks, it’s been kind of like a hodge-podge of different guys going in here and there, but no matter who goes in it’s always the ‘next man up’ mentality, and that’s how we approach it.”

(on how difficult it makes it to play having different guys playing) “We understand this sport: injuries happen, even concussions or something like that. So, everybody is always ready. You get reps throughout the week, maybe not as much as maybe a first-team guy, but you always know it’s a possibility, so try to be ready.”

### **DE JARED CRICK** (Transcribed by Stefan Nolet)

(on the defense settling down in the first half) “We were stopping the run, that’s the biggest thing for us. If we can do good on first and second down, getting them into third-and-long, that’s where we eat. We were able to do that today. First half of the season, we’ve been so up and down on first and second down, we haven’t really been able to get after the quarterback. Today, guys were winning their one-on-ones when it came to third down, and everybody had a sack, it seemed like. So, it was just a great day for us.”

(on OLB Whitney Mercilus’ performance) “We know he’s going to do that, he just has to rush. He’s a great rusher, and that’s what you expect him to do. He just won his one-on-ones and had a great day.”

### **LB BRIAN CUSHING** (Transcribed by Ellie Pardee)

(on the success of the pass rush today) “Yeah, it was and coverage was great. You’ve got to look at that too. Obviously guys weren’t open for them to keep holding ball. Got after the quarterback, got after all the offense. It was a collective good effort.”

(on being at the midway point of the season and being tied for first in the division if the Colts lose) “I think that gets overlooked. We’re still in it. It’s just one of those years in the division, obviously isn’t the best division, but that’s why you play and that’s how the playoffs are structured. We’ve got to continue to take care of our business and regroup and get better in the bye week and obviously have a big Monday night game coming up.”



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(on if this is the kind of performance they've expected from the defense all year) "Yeah, we expect to play well and we've been kind of up and down and obviously some weeks not playing up to our capabilities, but today we did."

(on what made such a big difference in today's game) "We have a good game plan all week. I think we had some good practice and everyone went out there and executed and played a good game."

(on the emotional component of today's game and wanting to get their pride back) "Yeah we wanted to come out and obviously play a lot better than we did last week. It was nowhere near our capabilities and what we can do so obviously wanted to come out and play a way better game."

### **WR DEANDRE HOPKINS** (Transcribed by Stefan Nolet)

(on what the win does for the mood of the team) "It's great. We put ourselves in a position to be in the lead in this division, and that's something that we wanted. It's the second half of the season coming up, so we have a lot to work on."

(on if targeting the wide receivers so often was part of the game plan) "It's just the way it worked out. We came out and we did what we had to do to win. I guess that was giving the receivers more looks."

(on his touchdown reception) "It was man-to-man coverage, press-man coverage. Brian Hoyer saw that, and we saw that in practice that they go man-to-man, and he gave me a chance to make a play, and that's what I did."

(on what it means for him to make the big play) "I've been doing that since I've been here, I feel like. So hopefully I'm gaining his trust more and more."

(on how it feels going into the bye week) "It feels good going into the break, hopefully being tied No. 1 in the division. Our record isn't what we wanted, but there's the second half of football; a lot of games to be played."

(on watching the defense get pressure on the quarterback) "We enjoy that. We don't like going out there quick sometimes. It's good when those guys are out there making plays, running around. They practice like that, so it didn't surprise me at all."

(on how different the mood of the team is compared to past couple weeks) "The mood is always positive after a win."

(on if this was the type of performance he expected every week) "Oh yeah. Were getting on track. We have a bye week, so hopefully we can work on things that we did wrong in the first half of the season and pick up."

(on if he enjoyed watching WR Nate Washington catch the touchdown pass) "Oh yeah. It was very exciting to see Nate come down with the touchdown. He's been practicing all week like that, so him coming out and scoring a touchdown I'm pretty sure means a lot to him too."

(on what he saw QB Brian Hoyer doing well today) "Making plays, sitting in the pocket. Even though he was getting pressure, he still stayed in the pocket and he stayed composed the whole game."

### **QB BRIAN HOYER** (Transcribed by Christiana Johns)

(on winning the game and the offense's contribution) "I think it was a total team win. I think we really fed off each other. I know offensively, watching our defense attack like that really fired us up. For us, it wasn't always pretty, but like I've said this year, when we get that first first down and we get moving it's tough to stop us."

(on short passes being a part of the run game) "Yeah, I guess so. I think even going back to my time in this offense in New England, I think it's kind of the MO, and then you pick your shots where they are and then just try to take what the defense gives you."

(on if it makes a difference knowing he is definitively the starting quarterback) "I think for me with all of the experiences I have been through, I'm literally taking it one day at a time, one game at a time. Just trying to be where



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my feet are. Don't worry about the next week, don't worry about the next play, worry about the play I'm playing and then move on, and that's really what I've tried to do."

(on if he's thought about not having to look over his shoulder) "I don't really look at it that way because it is a results league. If we go lose, there's always someone that's there to take your job. I think that's just the way this league is, and that's the way my career's been. I'm not going to look at it any differently now."

(on his two touchdowns) "I knew that Nate Washington was going to have a big day playing against his old team, so he was fired up. So to get him that one – it was an incredible catch. To complete a catch to the ground was awesome. And then Hop (WR DeAndre Hopkins) – that's just Hop being Hop. It's one-on-one, throw it up and he has such good ball skills and knows when to jump that I'm never going to pass those up."

(on what the win will do for the team going into the bye week) "Going into the bye week, you want to go in feeling good, and it's even a little bit of a longer bye because our next game is not until Monday night so had we lost, that would have been a long time to just sit there and think negatively about it. So I think to come in positively, go out there this week and get some extra work against Cincinnati, and to get us headed into the right direction for the second half of the season was really a must-win."

(on why it took until the third series to get the offense going) "Just the plays. Some of the plays – I think we talked about it last week – is there really ever an actual answer for that? No. It's just going out and executing. And sometimes, this is the NFL; the other team is pretty good too. You just have to keep going. I think that's really been my mentality all along ever since I've started back playing. I think as an offense we're getting better at that. Where if it doesn't work out, so what? We go back out to the next series, and we give our best and then eventually, like I said, when we get that first first down, we get it going. So, I think it was important for us. Obviously, we talked all week about trying to start fast, I think we did a good job of – it didn't start fast for us but we hung in there and we kept going. We didn't get down. We didn't really ride the wave. We just kind of stayed even and it wasn't always pretty, but we got it done."

(on what he did best and what he could do better) "I think, obviously for me, my No. 1 goal is always to protect the football. So going against a defense like that, some good pass rushers, get the ball out quick. Doing things better, I think I can get us into some better plays. They played a little more zone than we had expected, and that's on me to therefore get us into the right play."

### **CB KEVIN JOHNSON** (Transcribed by Ryan Cantrell)

(on if the defense's pride was stung last week and if this was a reaction to that) "Yeah, we knew what we put on tape against the Dolphins wasn't how we play football and we came out here with some passion and intensity. The coaches put us in great position to make plays all day and we just tried to execute."

(on if he had time to reflect on his first interception) "A little bit. My teammates have been showing me a lot of love and I have been enjoying it. I am happier that we got the win more than then the interception."

(on if his eyes light up with the defense getting pressure on the quarterback like they did today) "When the front seven is doing what they were doing today, you know us in the secondary, we got spit coming out of our mouths like a dog, so we were just out there having fun. It was a good win."

(on if this win gives them hope for the rest of the season) "For sure. We know we control our own destiny so we just have to come out here every day, focus on what we have to do and get better."

(on who has been giving you grief for getting your first pick) "Everybody. Everybody."

(on who is going to get the interception ball) "I am going to keep that thing."

(on the defensive playing more inspired) "I would say so. We were just out there having fun. Once everybody is out there having fun and we are just laughing, having a good time, executing and playing confident, it just makes the game that easier."



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(on if he remembers who the first person to run up to him was) "I don't remember who was the first, but I remember JJo (Johnathan Joseph)."

(on what CB Johnathan Joseph said to him) "He was just congratulating me and we were just laughing."

(on the play of OLB Whitney Mercilus) "He's a great player. He's a guy that can set the edge stop the run and also rush the passer. He is a versatile guy."

### **CB JOHNATHAN JOSEPH** (Transcribed by Stefan Nolet)

(on the defense making a statement) "Obviously, coming off a game like we did last week, where we had missed tackles and giving up big plays like that, we just wanted to go and focus all week in practice about the small things. I think today, we kind of put on a display of that. Guys were doing their assignments, running to the ball, creating turnovers, getting quarterback sacks, interceptions and all those things to help the team win."

(on if he's proud of CB Kevin Johnson getting his first career interception) "No question. I was super excited for him just because he worked hard all week, and all year long. I'm sure that today, it obviously paid off for him. He's been playing great and I think he took another step today in the right direction."

(on what it's like in the secondary when the front seven gets that much pressure) "It works hand in hand – tight coverage to where the quarterback has to go off his first read, that gives those guys the extra half-second or full second to get to the quarterback. Of course, when those guys are rushing the quarterback like that, it gives us confidence to be tight in coverage and expect the ball to come out quick."

(on being in a position to be tied atop the AFC South) "It's a great feeling, but there's a lot of football left to be played. It lets you know that it's a long season and anything can happen, but for us, we have to take it one game at a time and win the games."

(on if this performance is the way he expected the team to play all season) "Absolutely. Come out and be aggressive on defense, create turnovers, pressure the quarterback, be tight in coverage, everybody rallying to the ball, not missing tackles. So I think today was what we should be able to do each and every week."

### **OLB WHITNEY MERCILUS** (Transcribed by Crystin Pactor)

(on his big game) "I just have to contribute it to hard work. Day in day out. Just working on my pass rush. Just trying to be a complete player. Trying to be what the coaches want me to be. That's it."

(on what kind of player the coaches want him to be) "A complete player. Being able to stop the run, set edges and being able to rush the passer and put pressure on the quarterback."

(on how good the defense is when they click) "When the entire defense is on the same page that's what you should expect. Stop the run as a complete defense. Also, just be able to get to the quarterback. J.J. is going to do what J.J. does and we are just going to play off of him."

(on how hard it is to play both sides) "I don't want to say it's difficult. It's pretty much the same thing on both sides. Of course I'm probably a little more comfortable on the right side, which it shows, but I still try and get work on the left side and just try and be as comfortable as I can be."

(on Jadeveon getting injured and having to go in) "It is unfortunate that JD got hurt but the coaches always say next man up. I just went out there and did what the game plan required me to do. Just go out there, understand what the offense is doing and go play."

(on his sacks) "Pretty much just working my moves on Taylor Lewan. Try to get him thinking; pretty much it's just a chess match. Try to get in his mind as much as I could. Try to use my speed, my power and use it in succession. That is exactly what I did on each sack."

(on how gratifying it is to put together a game like this as a unit) "It feels good. We reviewed what happened last week against the Dolphins and all that and we just pretty much went straight to work. View what we did wrong and



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just make sure we had to get this one. This is one that is in our division and it feels good to go in to the bye week with a win.”

(on if Lewan was getting frustrated) “I could see it in his face. He was getting a little frustrated out there and then they started trying to check me. Just trying to give him a little bit of help. You have to account for J.J. on the other side of the rushers and they got to the quarterback.”

(on how rewarding it is to see you are frustrating your opponent) “It feels good. It frees up your game and frees up a lot of your ability to take over and just make plays out there.”

(on if he feels this is his most dominate game since his junior season at Illinois) “I would say so. It’s been better than most obviously with three and a half. It could have been a lot better, I think so. I missed a few plays out there especially in the run game too. All I have to do is continue on this success and keep pushing forward.”

(on if he thought he should have 4.5 sacks) “It should have been but the referee took that away from me.”

(on his thoughts about the sack being taken away) “I feel like he ran in to my hand. I was very cognizant of where my hand placement was and I made sure I moved it as quickly as I could. I mean he got me for one so it’s all good I tried to make it up.”

(on what this does for the defenses confidence going in to the bye week) “It is very encouraging for us as a unit. We were just out there playing ball that was it. Just playing it how we usually play it, especially from last year. We just have to keep continuing that on through our practices and just making sure we are very sound in our game plan.

**WR NATE WASHINGTON** (Transcribed by Edgar Veliz)

(on how the injury impacted his touchdown dance) “Yeah, it kind of messed up my touchdown dance but I’ll take a touchdown all day.”

(on what he saw during his touchdown play) “It is one of our plays that we run, just an awesome job by Brian (Hoyer) trusting the play and staying in the pocket. I watched the replay on the big screen and he took a heck of a shot. So it was really all on him, our offensive line held up up-front and just give me an opportunity on the back end.”

(on if playing against Tennessee was special for him) “After it is all said and done, there was no focus on me beating the Tennessee Titans. This is a team for us, the Texans that have been right there with some games - we had two games that we definitely weren’t in - it was just our turn right now. We wanted to come out and play good football and have each other’s back and is what it was all about.”

(on watching the defense sack Tennessee QB Zach Mettenberger) “I’m glad I’m on this side.”

(on if he switched the ball a few times on his touchdown catch) “Yeah, I was just trying to get it to the point that I could roll over. I think I did, but in those instances you never know what you do. I knew I had the ball, I knew it never touched the ground and that’s all I was worried about.”

(on what happened after he caught the touchdown pass) “It (lower back/hip) just got tight on me. It’s just football at the end of the day. You take a hit like that and those things get stiff. I’m perfectly fine.”

(on the importance of going into the bye week with a victory) “It is awesome. These guys have been busting their humps to come in each week in and week out to put some good things on film throughout practice. Unfortunately, these games haven’t been working out for us in the past, but we are looking towards our future. We are looking to moving forward with our season.”

(on his partnership with DeAndre Hopkins) “It is about being accountable. I think the Texans gave me an opportunity to come into this organization hoping that I could make some plays for them. I’m playing across from one of the most prolific players in the game right now. He’s definitely a playmaker, he makes some amazing plays and DeAndre



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is just one of those guys that is going to create that type of coverage. With that being said, he is going to give some guys on the other side of him some opportunities. It is just for us to answer the door when it is knocked on. I take pride in that. I take pride in being accountable for my brothers, because he's going to bust his hump for me whenever he gets a chance."

**DE J.J. WATT** (Transcribed by Laci Theriot and Christiana Johns)

(on what it was like for defense to win the game) "Yeah, we played a lot better, and it was good. It was a lot more fun, that's for damn sure. We forced turnovers, we got sacks, we stopped the run. We just played better. I think it started early in the game, we started getting some energy and some momentum, and we kept it rolling all game, and our offense obviously put some points on the board. As the game went on, it got better and better, so it was a good all around game, and I think we did a good job."

(on Whitney Mercilus' performance) "It was great, I think he did a great job. He had a phenomenal game obviously. I mean that's what we need. We need guys making plays all around the place. He was flying around. Great day for him. It was awesome- really, really good to see."

(on if it is a relief to put a defense game like today's together) "Right. I don't know if relief is the word, but it is definitely what we expect. That is the type of defense that we expect to be. Obviously, we haven't always been that, and we want to be that, so that's our goal to be that."

(on how many sacks he has had at this point last season) "Not as many as I've had this year, I know that. So maybe, you guys can stop talking how down a year I have been having, that'd be good."

(on how he has been playing this season) "I've been alright. It's been alright. I don't know, I don't really do all that. I base everything on how the team is doing."

(on the biggest difference this week) "Yeah, I think as a team we did some great things in the game. I mean obviously, it comes from how you practice and how you play during the week, but I mean if you take the turnover on the kickoff, the interceptions we got, the sacks we got, offense going down and scoring points, it was really just a good team effort today, and when you do that, you are going to have success. It's just a matter of that confidence and that ability to know what you are going to be able to do. The more confidence you build, the better you play, and the better you play, the more confidence you get, so it's just that cycle you need to continue to build."

(on if the team was playing angry today/if he was angry) "I don't know. You think I was angry? I wasn't angry. Our training staff did a phenomenal job. Our training staff is one of the best in the business. You look at the Jacksonville game, you look at this game. What they did for me to get me out on the field, to help me be able to play, was pretty impressive. Those guys, I owe them a lot and I am very thankful them for all their hard work that they put in with me. This week especially, it was a full team effort."

(on his reaction to CB Kevin Johnson said the team "had spit coming out of our mouths like a dog") "Interesting, Kevin. Kid got his first pick today, and he is a little excited. Tossing out the quotables. That's what it's about. On there on the field, we all feed off each other. The front seven applies pressure and the back end gets a pick, the back end has tight coverage and makes them hold the ball, and we get a sack. It's all tied in together, and if one group is not doing their job, everybody suffers. When we are all doing our jobs, everybody benefits. Today was a day where everybody benefited. So the more we do that and the better we all play together, the better we are going to be. There's spit everywhere, I guess."

(on going into the bye week) "It's good going into the bye week. You never want to go in on a sour note, so obviously going in on a good note, knowing what we need to do the second half of the season. Obviously, everybody knows we are not where we want to be from a record standpoint, but from a situation standpoint of where we are and the reality of our division is, we can go out there in the second half of the season and control a lot of things. We just need to go out, get healthier in the bye week, really take a chance to get your body right and back to being fully healthy, and come out in the second half of the season and play like we did today."

(on getting into one-on-one match-up situations) "Yeah, I enjoy one-on-ones very much. They are a lot more fun. They provide a lot more opportunities, sometimes I am surprised when I get them, and there were a few of them



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today. It is my job to take advantage of them when I get them because I know I don't get them very often. I know that when I do get them, I think I need to make them count. I feel like today we did that, and we've got guys out there making their one-on-ones count, you've got Whitney Mercilus, you've got (Jared) Crick, you've got everybody else out there making their one-on-ones count. When everybody's doing that we have a lot of success. I'll take as many as I can get."

(on why anyone would give him a one-on-one) "I don't know, I do not know, but they did. I told them they shouldn't have."

(on how many on-on-one situations he had) "How many hits did I have?"

(on playing well against the Titans) "I just take advantage of the opportunities that I am given. Like I said, it's the combination of everything. It's offense scoring points, and it's us being in passing situations where the team has to hold the ball and throw the ball down the field. Our defense backs doing a good job in tight coverage, they can't get the ball out quick. It's being fortunate enough to get one-on-ones. It's a combination of everything. When it comes together, it's pretty sweet."

(on playing catch with kids before the game) "It's a chance to connect with the fans. I didn't get to go to many professional sporting games when I was a kid, or even college games. I think I went to two freshman football games growing up and I was way up in the top, top, top. Just to know what it would have been like to catch a ball from the star player on the team or any player on the team really would have meant a lot. So for me, it takes me, what, five, maybe 10 minutes to go around and toss the ball to 20, 30, 40 people? But those 20, 30, 40 people go home with a memory that hopefully puts a smile on their face for a long time to come. For me, it's part of the warm up as well. I'm still getting a sweat going and everything. It doesn't take a lot of effort on my end, but I know how much it means on the other end, and it's pretty cool. For me to see a smile on their face, to know what kind of impact I can have, it's pretty sweet. So, it's just a couple of minutes for me to interact with the fans and to say thank you, appreciate y'all coming out to support me."

### **NT VINCE WILFORK** (Transcribed by Ryan Cantrell)

(on the defense looking fired up today) "We came in with a lot of energy today. We had a good week of practice and it showed today. That was our goal, to come out hot and stay hot for 60 minutes or however long it was going to take. So, we did that and I am excited about it."

(on if that was the defense getting back to what they normally do) "Yeah, one thing we did this week, we said going forward we were going to hold each other accountable and we are going to play good football. We had a good week of practice and I think everything we did in practice showed today. Hopefully guys can understand that when we practiced the way we did this week that the outcome can be like this, so it's good to go into the bye with a win and be able to correct some stuff. We have a long ways to go still, some things we are going to correct from the season. It's a copycat league so we are going to see things that we haven't really fixed, so we have a chance to get it fixed this week so that's what we are going to do and get some rest. It's a long season after this."

(on watching OLB Whitney Mercilus and DE J.J. Watt get to the quarterback) "That's how our defense is built. I mean we know we have rushers. We know we can get guys into third down and long, that when we have rushers we are going to have a good opportunity to create turnovers, create negative plays and tonight they came to play. I think we showed from the first snap that we were ready to go tonight and we just kept the pressure on them. We just got back doing what we need to be doing defensively as a defense and as a team, just going out there and playing as one and we did that tonight."

(on if it goes back to pride) "I mean pride is everything. Look what we having been going through this season, it's been an up and down season for us. With things going well it's easy to do things, pat each other on the back and overlook the small things, but when things go wrong, how are you going to get yourself out of the ditch that you dug yourself and I think we have a bunch of fighters in here. All year we have been fighting. This week, after a loss to Miami, we came back and we fought. It started in practice, we never felt sorry for ourselves, we came to work, ready to work and it showed tonight. You have to have some pride in what you do. We play football for a living. One thing we did do today is we did have fun today and that is one of the things we wanted to get back to doing is having fun and playing football. When you are having fun and playing football it comes naturally and that's what we did tonight. Hopefully, going forward we will continue to do the same thing. That's our goal."



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(on what was different about the pass rush today) “We rushed with vengeance. We didn’t want to be denied, everything we did we wanted to do it at full speed even if it was wrong. That is how football is played. You are never going to be right all the time playing football or in life. You practice to be perfect, but it doesn’t happen like that. If you want full speed, anything can happen when you are going full speed and I think we played that way.”

(on the progression of CB Kevin Johnson) “We all hold each other to a high expectation. He’s a first rounder. He is always going to have that target on his back being a first rounder, but he’s very competitive and you can win with guys like that. He made some plays tonight. He played with an edge, he played with a chip, but we have seen that all week with everybody in practice and in the game. We played with a lot of emotion today, so we are going to continue to do that to be a successful football team.”

## **POSTGAME QUOTES FROM TENNESSEE TITANS**

**HEAD COACH KEN WHISENHUNT**  
**QB ZACH METTENBERGER**  
**OLB BRIAN ORAKPO**  
**CB COTY SENSABAUGH**  
**TE DELANIE WALKER**  
**G CHANCE WARMACK**  
**LB AVERY WILLIAMSON**

**TITANS HEAD COACH KEN WHISENHUNT** (transcribed by Ellie Pardee)

(opening statement) “Ok obviously tough day for us. I thought we started out okay, first drive we went down the field but we only got a field goal out of it which was disappointing. Story of our day was missed opportunities early, especially turnovers on our special teams. In a situation like that on the road, that’s a hard thing to overcome. I thought our defense did a nice job all day, especially on the turnovers of keeping them out of the end zone. If there’s one positive, that’s it, I don’t think there’s much else positive from that standpoint.”

(on issues with the offensive line and when QB Zach Mettenberger needed to get the ball out faster) “Yeah I think they created some one-on-one matchups and they won. We tried a bunch of different things to try to counter that, but we lost matchups. It’s probably a little bit of everything with what you said.”

(on what were some of the things they tried to counter the matchups) “We slid the line and we doubled the guy. We chipped, what you have is a balance of trying to do those things and still get guys out in the pattern because with what they were doing playing coverage wise it made it difficult.”

(on if there’s a time at the end of the game where they run more to protect the quarterback) “Well, I mean you don’t ever want to give up the fight and I understand what you’re saying. Probably you’re right, but that’s a hard thing in competitive guys. They wanted to go. Our players wanted to go. I like that spirit. It’s just hard to ever want to say, ‘I give up.’”

(on what some of the issues were offensively) “Besides third down obviously, that’s a problem. Another bad day for that. We ran the ball okay at times but then they countered us and stopped us a few times. Then whenever we tried to take some shots, make some passes, we had trouble with protection. There’s a lot of things that were not good today with the offensive side of the ball.”

(on if the protection has improved from the beginning of the season) “I’m not trying to fight with you. I don’t really understand what you’re saying.”

(on if there’s been an improvement) “Up and down. It’s hard to say after today. Last week wasn’t an inordinate amount of sacks, but certainly today it wasn’t good enough.”



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(on how much it hurt the team when RB Bishop Sankey fumbled and then got hurt) "It's tough. That's a hard thing. First of all the turnover, especially there where it was, you can't do that on the road. Then to do the same thing again with the mishandling the ball in the end zone and putting us at the 10 yard line I think is where it ended up. Those are hard things to overcome."

(on the drive towards the end of the first half where they started on the 28 yard line and went backwards) "We had a penalty in there didn't we? We got the first down and then we got a penalty that moved us back and then took a negative play. Obviously you can't do that. When you make a play and you've got a roll and you get the first down and then you have a 15 yarder that brings you back, or 10 yarder that brings you back, then you backwards, that hurt. That hurt. We had some momentum. It would have been what you'd want to do, especially getting the ball to start the second half is get points there and you come out and start the second half and it's a different feel."

(on if QB Zach Mettenberger could have gone back in the game at the end) "Yeah, he could have. He got the wind knocked out of him."

(on how tough it was to match up guys against LB Whitney Mercilus and DE JJ Watt) "Well, they had a good day. They won some one-on-one matchups. We obviously didn't play well enough up front in those situations. Got to give them credit."

(on if he expected to win matchups against players of that caliber) "I mean you got to – what do you want us to do? You go in and you try to do different things. You slide the line, you put a guy over there to chip on it, mix those things up, that's what you have to do. At some point in this game it comes down to one-on-one matchups."

(on how he keeps the players motivated after 6 losses in a row) "I mean, it's hard when you lose games. It's hard when you lose one game much less what's happened in the last six. Defense is playing really well. That gives you a chance. We've got to fix that special teams mistakes. We've got to do a better job offensively. You've got to keep working."

(on the status of WR Kendall Wright) "We'll see. He thought he could come back in and play, but they thought it was best that he didn't. So he's got a knee, but I don't know the degree of it."

(on how seriously LB Avery Williamson is injured) "I don't know yet to be honest with you."

(on what they changed going into this game based on the previous weeks) "Yep, we did. We did some different things protection wise, couple things where we tried to get the back out quick and turn the line to try to get some shots, get it out of our hands, and we didn't have the success with it that we wanted."

(on if there are any big changes he can make that can help turn the tide) "Obviously we're not operating the scheme. I don't know what scheme you could have operated today that would have had success when we played the way that we did. I think if you look at what we're doing, we always try to change things up as we approach an opponent to try to attack them. That's what you do in this game. We haven't been effective enough doing it. Obviously our third down situation, we've had opportunities to make some plays and we didn't make them. Whatever mistakes were made, you've got to keep working and try to clean those up."

(on what problems T Jeremiah Poutasi is having) "I mean, to be cliché I'll have to look at it and see, but it was obvious that he was struggling out there today. Tried to work through it, get him through it, but it just was tough."

(on if T/G Jamon Meredith was any better) "Didn't look – once again I'll have to look at it and see. I know we had issues there all day."

(on what he saw on QB Zach Mettenberger's interception) "It was a little like it was a little behind him. That's what it looked like to me. As far as going to the right spot, just got to be a little more outside."

(on if RB Bishop Sankey is benched) "In what area? Kickoff return, yes."



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(on if RB Bishop Sankey is benched on offense as well) "I don't know that he's necessarily benched in that particular area, but Antonio (Andrews) and Dexter (McCluster) are both playing well. You certainly got to continue with those guys."

(on getting RB Antonio Andrews the ball) "We tried to. I think I said that last week. I said he's earned the right to get more carries and I thought, I don't know what he ended up with, but he had some good runs for us."

(on what the problem is for RB Bishop Sankey) "I wish I could tell you. It hasn't shown up. It showed up whatever games ago that was, and that was something that hadn't showed up, then obviously the turnover is the turnover, that happens in the game. The missed catch of a football is something that I don't understand."

(on if there are times when QB Zach Mettenberger needs to get the ball out faster) "Yeah, I'd say that's probably fair. I thought he did a pretty good job of that in the Atlanta game, but I don't know how much time he had, especially up inside the pocket to do that. That's something that we'll certainly have to look at."

### **QB ZACH METTENBERGER** (Transcribed by Rachel Jacob)

(on the pressure he felt throughout the game) "Yeah, that is a strength of their teams, their d-line. They played well today. It is a combination of things. I have to get the ball out of my hand, we have to win our one on ones upfront. We tried to do a lot of things, but obviously just poor execution on that part."

(on operating when you are facing an effective pass rush) "Well I mean it is a hard game to begin with, it definitely makes it a lot harder. We have to find a way to overcome that and deal with that adversity. Just couldn't figure anything out today to get it going."

(on if he took a couple shots to the back) "Yeah."

(if taking hits to the back is the reason why he was down on his knees at the end of the game) "No, I just got the breath knocked out of me on that last play."

(on what he needed to do to get the ball out quicker) "Yeah, the cliché internal clock. You just have to have that especially with a pass rush like the Texans have. At the same time you can't dink and donk a defense like that, you have to be able to push downfield to get plays and move the chains. Obviously we weren't able to execute that fast during the game."

(on not running the ball as much during the 4th quarter) "We were running the ball pretty well the whole game it's just that when you get down it is a tough spot to be. You have to score points quick, especially with the clock against you. We did a pretty good job of trying to stick to the game plans as long as possible but there at the end when you are down two scores you have to get points on the board to make it a game. Wish we could have run the ball a little more in the end but it is just not the scenario we were given."

(on evaluating himself after starting two games) "Offensively we haven't executed at the level we need to execute at, myself included. There are a few plays I would like to have back but at the same time there is a lot of good out there that we can build on it is just that we have to get over the hump and hopefully you guys will see that when we show up to work tomorrow."

(on the current frustration level of the team) "It's tough. It is never fun losing. I don't think we are getting down on ourselves. We're pissed off that we let another one go but we still have a lot of football games left to play this year. It takes one win to turn things around and get things going."

(on if miscommunication about the route led to the pick at the beginning of the 4th quarter) "It was just a bad ball."

(on what made Texans CB Kevin Johnson so effective) "He is a good player there is a reason they drafted him. He obviously can play and he made a few plays today."



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### **OLB BRIAN ORAKPO** (Transcribed by Lance Jaramillo)

(on the frustration of losing again) “I mean, first off, yeah, definitely frustrating. Like I said, say the same thing almost every way. I don’t have anything negative to say because I know the type of team we are. It definitely gets frustrating that we can’t win a game in this point in time. Have to figure out a way, deep inside, everybody has to step their game up and let’s do better.”

(on why it hasn’t gotten better) “No clue. No clue. I really can’t answer that. I mean you guys are there throughout the week, we work hard, we work extremely hard through the week. We focus, we’re attentive, everybody’s trying to achieve one ultimate goal and that’s to win a ball game. Nobody’s taking it for granted, we just can’t perform as well on Sunday as a whole—offense, defense and special teams.”

(on if confidence is a factor) “I have no answer for you man, I don’t know. Its tough man, it’s tough. I don’t know how to answer that because like I said, we work hard, you really can’t just pinpoint nothing because guys are out here working, man and it just doesn’t go our way. We have to figure it out.”

### **CB COTY SENSABAUGH** (Transcribed by Francisco Casillas)

(on the mentality of the team after six loses in a row) “We just got to get back to work. This group has a lot of pride, we are all grown men and I mean it’s tough. No one said it would be easy, it’s not supposed to be easy. It’s the NFL, but at the end of the day we are blessed to be in this position so we just have to get back to work and compete. Try to turn this thing around. We can’t give up.”

(on how frustrating today’s defensive performance was) “It’s frustrating, but as a whole we did some things well, but we did not make enough plays on defense to help this team win this game so we have to get better in those areas and each have to come back out next week.”

(on what happened the play involving Texans T Derek Newton) “Pretty much we were in five zone. I had outside leverage and he kind of ran across the field to always playing catch up from the beginning, but I just got to play through his hands better and try to get the ball out.”

### **TE DELANIE WALKER** (Transcribed by Lance Jaramillo)

(on today’s performance) “The offense couldn’t get it done. We couldn’t put points on the board. Can’t win unless you score, right?”

(on not taking advantage of good field position right before halftime) “You know what it is. We lost. It’s just not good. You get an opportunity like that you’re supposed to take advantage of and we didn’t, That’s basically it.”

(on where the team goes from here) “Keep fighting I guess. We gotta get better. Gotta take advantage of opportunities we get and not lose the opportunities and the turn the ball over.”

(on how different the Texans secondary looked with FS Rahim Moore being a healthy scratch) “Who is that? I can’t tell you...it didn’t look different to me. It looked the same to me.”

(on how frustrating this feels) “Very. Only thing we can. We have to just stick together. It’s almost sad to say, but losing games like this can split a team up. We’ll see where our minds are. We’ll see where our minds are, being strong and staying together and not pointing fingers.”

(on what’s left to play for) “You should play for each other. You should play for each other, for our coaches, for the city of Nashville. That’s basically what we have to do.”

### **G CHANCE WARMACK** (Transcribed by Lance Jaramillo)

(on today’s performance) “Obviously they got seven sacks so it wasn’t a good job. Wasn’t a good job, we gave up seven sacks.”



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(on why the pass protection isn't getting better) "All I can do is my job. All I can do is play guard, right guard for the Tennessee Titans. I don't know how it's going to get better. I don't know anything like that."

**LB AVERY WILLIAMSON** (Transcribed by Francisco Casillas)

(on how long he might be out) "I should be back next week."

(on the state of mind or mood of the team) "It's frustrating to work hard and come up on a losing end, but what can you do? You can't give up. All we can do is keep fighting a try to find a solution."

(on how the defense managed to hold the Texans in check) "I feel like we were doing a good job. That's because of last week but for the most part we held our own and shut them out except that deep ball kind of hurt us. Just got to work it and do what we do every week."