



# HOUSTON TEXANS vs. TENNESSEE TITANS



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## POSTGAME QUOTES FROM HOUSTON TEXANS

Founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Robert C. McNair  
Head Coach Bill O'Brien  
DE Jadeveon Clowney  
ILB Brian Cushing  
TE C.J. Fiedorowicz  
WR Will Fuller V  
WR DeAndre Hopkins  
CB Johnathan Joseph  
OLB Whitney Mercilus  
K Nick Novak  
QB Brock Osweiler  
DE Antonio Smith  
NT Vince Wilfork

### FOUNDER, CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER ROBERT C. MCNAIR (Transcribed by Allie LeClair)

#### **What did you think about what WR Will Fuller V did today?**

"Well, he just had a great game. He's a talented guy and you are just seeing that talent come out. We are just blessed to have him."

#### **What did you think about WR Will Fuller V's speed on the punt return for a touchdown?**

"It's that quickness that really we still say 'wow' when we see it. He's special."

#### **What do you think about the team getting a win after the loss to New England last week?**

"Well, we needed that. It was nice to win it the way we did. I thought the team hung in there even after losing J.J. (Watt), which you know is a downer, but I thought the team stepped in and played well. I was quite proud of them."

#### **What did you think of Head Coach Bill O'Brien's play calling?**

"Well, I thought it was pretty effective. We moved the ball and they ran the ball on us, but they've got a good rush offense and they have some good runners and they've got a good offensive line. So, it's tough to really stop them. I thought we held them pretty well."

#### **What are your thoughts on losing DE J.J. Watt for the year?**

"Well it's a big disappointment, not just for the team but for him. We want him to take all the time he needs and get well. Maybe the bad news is he might be out for the rest of the year. The good news is maybe he extended his career an extra year or two. We will keep up with him and help him in every way we can. We miss him, but others will step up. I think it will give them an opportunity to play. I'm looking forward to it."

### HEAD COACH BILL O'BREIN (Transcribed by Katie Karsh)

#### **What worked so well the first two offensive drives of the game?**

"I think we were in a pretty good tempo. The key is to try to do a better job from this point forward of sustaining that throughout the game. I thought we had, whether it was a bad play call by me or a penalty that started a drive or something – the key to those drives is starting off on a good note. Six yard gain gets you into a pretty good tempo. I thought our players were really focused and got into a good rhythm and good tempo."

#### **Can you talk about the performance of WR Will Fuller V?**

"He's a good player. He's a great kid. He studies hard. He wants to do well. He doesn't have a big head. He's just a good, good kid. He works very hard. He's been led very well by Hop (DeAndre Hopkins). Hop does a great job mentoring him. He had a good day for us today."



## HOUSTON TEXANS vs. TENNESSEE TITANS



### **Are you surprised WR DeAndre Hopkins didn't have a catch until the fourth quarter but the offense was still operating well?**

"I think they did some things to obviously take Hop away. Credit to them. We've got to do a better job of getting Hop the ball. That's me. I'm sure he's thrilled with the win, but maybe not really happy with only having that catch in the fourth quarter. We'll work on that and keep trying to get him the ball. But a win is good for this team. To finish the first quarter of the season at 3-1 is a good thing."

### **How would you evaluate QB Brock Osweiler in this game and so far this season?**

"I think he's played pretty well. Obviously we can all coach better and play better. No doubt about that. I think that maybe a couple, I have to really watch those interceptions. One of them was batted in the air. The other one he was trying to make a play to (DeAndre) Hopkins I think, which is not a bad thing. Maybe it's the timing of the game when you try to do that. Maybe you got to look at that. I think the guy's playing well. I really enjoy coaching this guy. He's very bright. He works very hard. Going over the call sheet with him and things like that. He doesn't even need a call sheet to look at. He's got it all in his mind. How it's going to play out and I thought he made a big scramble at the end of the game there. Even though we didn't sustain that drive. I thought overall, with the exception of the turnovers, I thought the guy played a good football game today."

### **Did you think about challenging WR Jaelen Strong's catch on the sideline that was close to a first down?**

"Yeah, I screwed that up. That's my fault. I should have challenged that. I rushed to the line of scrimmage because that was my plan to do that to try to run the play that we ran and it didn't work out. That's my fault. My mistake. I should have challenged that play."

### **Did QB Brock Osweiler being under center help the running game?**

"I think having the personnel with the tight ends. I thought Kendall Lamm did a good job today. With the quarterback under center and the back at home, I think if you can sustain your play action game and run the football, it's probably a pretty good way to play this team. That may change from week to week, but that was what we thought was good against this team. Coach (Dick) LeBeau did a great job with adjusting and started sending a bunch of zone blitzes and we had trouble picking that up with our play action, so he really adjusted well. After we started off pretty well, we didn't do as much after that and I give him a lot of credit on that."

### **What happened on the sequence when you called the timeout and then the delay of game happened?**

"Here's what happened. It was a close play and I was told that they were going to measure it. I went to call timeout, did not call the timeout. They said this will be an official's timeout, so we'll measure it. Then they said that I was charged with a timeout, so I don't know what to tell you on that. I guess I'll get blamed for that, but that's exactly what happened."

### **Can you talk about the blocked punt that got erased due to the picked up penalty flag?**

"I don't know. I don't really know. I think that, I don't know. Sorry. I'd love to give you a better answer than 'I don't know.'"

### **What happened on the 4<sup>th</sup> and short run where FB Jay Prosch was stopped?**

"My mistake, bad play. Either challenge that play because I thought we had a first down, so I had a first down call in my mind. Then when I was told they didn't give us a first down, that it was fourth and one, I still wanted to go for it. I should have either called a timeout or challenged the spot. That's all on me. That has nothing to do with the players. That's my fault. I need to fix that mistake."

### **You're 3-1 with a two-game lead in the AFC South. Can you talk about your record?**

"It's a long season. Like I've always said to you guys. My wife is mad at me this week because I haven't been very nice I guess standing up here. It's not anything. It's just my personality. I feel like I'm very nice, very welcoming but she doesn't. I got to change that. I think at the end of the day, it's a long season. I'm not saying that every game is going to be a bed of roses. Every game is a battle, a dog fight. The New England game, they did a great job. We didn't. This group of guys that sit in this room every day, they really regroup. There's great leadership in here. They're resilient. I'm not a genie. I don't know which way the season is going to go, but we're going to really come in here and work hard. We got a really tough opponent in Minnesota. Very tough opponent with a great head coach in Mike Zimmer. Every game is going to be tough and we're going to try and do the best we can."

### **Regarding WR Will Fuller V's punt return, is that something you plan on doing more?**



# HOUSTON TEXANS vs. TENNESSEE TITANS



“One of the things that you have to take into account is when those guys are back there, they do take some shots. You have to be aware that this is one of your better offensive players and how much do you want to do that, but obviously he’s a dynamic punt returner. We’ve seen that since the day he showed up here in OTAs. So we’ll have to kind of look at that based on the game plan every week, but that was a big, obviously the game-winning play and gave us a real shot in the arm.”

## **DE JADEVEON CLOWNEY** (Transcribed by Amy Palcic)

### **How big was the defensive stand before WR Will Fuller V’s punt return?**

“It was very big. We got off the field and that’s what we want to do to give the ball back to our offense. That’s what we try to do every drive – get off the field – three and out. It was big.”

### **What is it like to improve to 3-1 and rise up and win without DE J.J. Watt?**

“We have to keep pushing forward. He’s (J.J. Watt) a big part of our team, but we can’t let one guy keep us from pushing forward and trying to win games. Today, we came out here and got the win and that is what we wanted to do.”

### **This is one of the longest stretches you’ve been able to play without being injured?**

“I’m taking care of my body. I’m doing a better job of that this year. Usually, I just run up out of here. Lately, I just try to stay in and get a little treatment on anything that is bothering me if there is anything and just keep trying to get better each week.”

### **How good is it to be able to be consistent?**

“It’s great. That was one thing I wanted to do this year is be there for my team and keep playing in games and I’m doing that so far. We’ve got a long season. One quarter down, we’ve got three more quarters to go. It was a win for the first quarter and we’ve got to keep going. The second quarter is coming up.”

## **ILB BRIAN CUSHING** (Transcribed by Adam Rauch)

### **What do you think about how the defense played today?**

“Good. I mean, obviously there’s some stuff here and there we need to fix and patch up. Being 3-1 after the first quarter of the season, it’s a lot better than where we were last year at this time. (We’re) only going to go up from here. We understand that and we’re excited for the next couple of games.”

### **How special was it to come back from your injury as soon as you did?**

“It was (special). I kind of didn’t want to believe the initial diagnosis, didn’t want to be out that long and really cut the time down big time. I was just really excited to be back out there playing football again.”

### **What do you guys think when you see WR Will Fuller V doing his thing out there?**

“He’s fast. He can obviously help the team a lot, whether it’s on special teams or it’s at receiver. He’s a special football player and he showed some real bright spots so far this year and we’re happy about, obviously, picking him.”

### **How important was it for this team to bounce back after last week’s loss at New England?**

“Very (important.) But, like we said, the Monday after that game we were done with it, pretty much Friday after the game we were done with it, next day. Obviously, we didn’t play the way we wanted to play but we got over it quick, got a huge win right here, in conference. (We’re) on the right path, we’ve got to build from here.”

### **How are you feeling physically?**

“Good. Really good. I feel good and, like I said, I’m just happy to come out healthy and with the win.”

### **Titans RB DeMarco Murray had nearly 100 yards rushing but the defense was able to limit him in the second half.**

“Very good running back. Very good running back, very fast, elusive but can also run for power. A guy like that you just try to limit him as much as you can. You’re not going to shut him down, but you have to limit the big plays



# HOUSTON TEXANS vs. TENNESSEE TITANS



and don't let him break as many tackles as he usually does and, like I said, just try to limit him as best as we possibly can."

## **TE C.J. FIEDOROWICZ** (Transcribed by Crystin Pactor)

### **What was it like to have more of an equal part of the offense here today?**

"It definitely feels good. Coach (Bill) O'Brien came up to me before the game and a little bit this week saying we need to play big this week. When he comes up to you, that means a lot. When your numbers called, you have to make the plays and I'll tell you I'm happy to get the ball."

### **How did it feel to get in there?**

"You almost black out, to be honest. All the big guys coming over there and smacking you in the head. There's no better feeling than that."

### **What's it like watching WR Will Fuller V?**

"That guy makes plays. He's fast. He's got good hands. He comes in and goes to work every day."

### **Did the tight end use change because Head Coach Bill O'Brien was calling the plays this week?**

"You know he's used a lot of tight ends in the past. All week we had a lot of tight end stuff in. He talked to me before the game saying I had to make plays today."

## **WR WILL FULLER V** (Transcribed by Alison Chastain)

### **Can you talk about the punt return?**

"The blockers set it up perfectly. All I had to do was run. It was wide open and (Alfred) Blue just led me into the end zone."

### **Coming into the game were you prepared for a punt return?**

"We were practicing that all week with two returners. I am happy they kicked it my way this time."

### **What do you think about being the first Texans player in team history to have a touchdown and punt return in the same game?**

"It's pretty cool. I can't do that if Coach (Bill O'Brien) doesn't put me out there. They put me in the right situations and I am just taking advantage of it."

### **The offense seems to be really clicking. What's different?**

"Nothing, we practiced real hard this week. The execution has been there. We knew we were close and we can keep being better."

### **What did you think of your one handed catch?**

"I don't think about that. Whenever they throw me the ball, I will just do whatever I can to catch it. I got hit pretty hard, but I brought it down."

### **When did you realize during the punt return you had chance to score?**

"Once you break the first couple of outside gunners, it has a chance. It was wide open so I knew something good was going to happen."

### **How do you feel to know you won the game?**

"I feel great. It's hard to win in the NFL, so every time you get a win it's awesome."

## **WR DEANDRE HOPKINS** (Transcribed by Adam Rauch)

### **Can you talk about your performance?**

"We won, that's all that matters. We knew they were going to fight us hard today. We came out with the victory."



# HOUSTON TEXANS vs. TENNESSEE TITANS



## **What are your thoughts on WR Will Fuller V's performance?**

"I'm proud of him. I'm proud of him every game. He's out there making plays wherever the team needs him, punt return—he's getting the job done."

## **What do you and QB Brock Osweiler need to work on?**

"Just got to go practice. Do it at practice, make some plays and relay it over to the game."

## **What was working so well early on in the game for the whole offense?**

"We just came out and played our game. We knew that they were a tough defense and we did some things that we felt like could work. Everything clicked in the first half."

## **Where did the confidence come from where you knew those plays would work?**

"We've always had confidence. This is a confident offense and a confident team."

## **Was there any difference with Head Coach Bill O'Brien calling plays today?**

"No difference. We came out and got the victory and stuck to the game plan."

## **What does it mean to be 3-1 after the first quarter of the season?**

"It's good. (We) play 16 seasons by quarters, and we're 3-1 this quarter, so that's big."

## **CB JOHNATHAN JOSEPH** (Transcribed by Adam Rauch)

### **Can you talk about the last play you made on Titans WR Andre Johnson?**

"It's third and short, just playing the sticks, you know it's going to be something quick. Obviously, they wanted to keep the chains moving so they could get into scoring position, so it was just one of those tough, competitive plays and I came out on top."

### **What's it like watching WR Will Fuller V do his thing out on the field?**

"It's a good feeling because I saw the work that he put in from day one when he came in here as a rookie. He's continued to do that each day in practice and it's showing for him in the game film."

### **Is it a good feeling knowing that you guys can make plays when you have to even without DE J.J. Watt?**

"Of course. Obviously, he's a big talent and he's a big part of this defense. He's missed out there. I think, overall, we have other guys talent-wise on this defense that can step up and make plays when plays need to be made."

## **OLB WHITNEY MERCILUS** (Transcribed by Julien Demers)

### **Big defensive effort the first game after DE J.J. Watt's injury, tough division win. Just talk about that for us with the defense coming up big.**

"Yeah, it's unfortunate that J.J. (Watt) is down, but that's defense. We still have to play ball. We went out there and did that. At times we gave up too many points, which we can't do. But we have to get some things corrected. It wasn't pretty, but we toughed it out."

### **You toughened up after the half. It seemed that RB DeMarco Murray, you would not let him get outside. You were holding the edge on him.**

"Yeah, we saw on film that he would circle up defenses and things like that. That's one of the biggest things, if you don't have the edge, then we have no chance. If we let it go out to the corner, then the corner has to make a tackle, and we don't want that. Got to turn the ball inside, and let the guys make the tackle for a yard or two gain."

### **It was one of those games that could've gone either way. How big was it for you guys to step up and make the plays when you needed to defensively?**

"Yeah it was huge, especially in a tie game like that for most of the second and third quarters. We needed a big defensive stop, so when we got back on the field, that's exactly what we did."

### **QB Marcus Mariota was limited to just 13 completions. What do you think was the cause of that?**

"Good pressure by the guys up front and understanding where his first reads were and just making him panic."



# HOUSTON TEXANS vs. TENNESSEE TITANS



## **How do you think DE Jadeveon Clowney did?**

"I think he did wonderful. He was disruptive and being JD (Jadeveon Clowney) out there."

**K NICK NOVAK** (Transcribed by Adam Rauch)

## **Can you talk about tying your career long with a 53-yard field goal today?**

"Very happy. Over the course of the season, like I told you last week, I told somebody I was going to make the next 50-plus yarder. That's something I've really worked on. I take it one kick at a time and I'm just ready for that next kick against the Vikings. I celebrated quite a bit on that one and I've got to try and stay even-keel and move on to the next kick."

## **It's hard to practice chaos compared to when there's actual chaos in the game.**

"I tend to be calm when there's chaos. I didn't feel like it was anything bigger than we could've handled. It was an opportunity to work a situation so we're better for it. We made the kick going into halftime and got some momentum. It was a good situation."

**QB BROCK OSWEILER** (Transcribed by Christiana Johns)

## **What was your view of WR Will Fuller V's punt return, and what do you think about the job he did for the team today?**

"I had a phenomenal view. I was his biggest cheerleader as he was running down the sideline. It was a tremendous play, not only by Will but the entire punt return team. It's a credit to Coach (Larry) Izzo. I know he works extremely hard every single week on every phase of special teams. It's just great to see those guys come up with a big play like that. The special teams have been working hard for us all year. It felt like every single week we'd get closer and closer to breaking one of those big ones, and we finally did today. All 11 guys who were on the field during that play did a hell of a job."

## **What worked so well on those first two drives, and how were you able to be in rhythm with Head Coach Bill O'Brien's play calling?**

"Every game is different. When you look at the first two series of this game, I think the biggest thing that jumps out to you is that we were playing in a no-huddle mode. We weren't going extremely fast, but we had a good tempo. That was something that coach talked about all week long. He really wanted to play with tempo. You really want to put some pressure on Tennessee's defense to get lined up fast, have to make calls and have to make coverage adjustments. Every single week, it's not like we're trying to get the tight ends involved, or we're trying to get Hop (DeAndre Hopkins) involved, or Jaelen (Strong). There's just progressions on every single play. I think C.J. (Fiedorowicz) having a big day, Griff (Ryan Griffin) having a big day and some of those other guys, it's just a credit to their work ethic, hitting their landmarks where they're supposed to be in the passing game and making great catches."

## **In the previous games, the team struggled in the red zone, but today you got two quick scores. What was different?**

"It goes back to every game is different. I'm very confident in this football team and what we're capable of doing. In those previous three games, there was disappointment with how we performed in the red area, and today we performed how I expected us to perform, so nothing really took me by surprise. Once again, we played with a little tempo in the red area. We also called a few plays that we hadn't called yet this season in that specific area of the field. You could call that an un-scouted look, but also at the end of the day it came down to some players making plays. C.J. (Fiedorowicz) had a tremendous catch, Will (Fuller V) did a great sell job along with the offensive line on the little pop pass. We were 2-for-2 – that's a good improvement, but now I would just like more trips into the red zone, and that's what we'll focus on this coming week."

## **What is it like to watch WR Will Fuller V's speed on that punt return?**

"It's great. It's like watching a cheetah just chase something down. It's fantastic. We've known it all along; he's a tremendous football player, he's a tremendous teammate, he's a great person, he works extremely hard. Just to see Will get the opportunity to truly utilize his speed in the open field – we were able to see it a couple of times today. Not only on the punt return but there was a little screen pass where he made a tremendous catch. I had to



## HOUSTON TEXANS vs. TENNESSEE TITANS



kind of negotiate the throw around (Brian) Orakpo. To be honest, I thought the ball was going to be incomplete, and Will did a tremendous job of going all the way down to the ground, scooping up the ball, getting vertical and finding a little crease in there. He's a heck of a player, and we've known that."

### **Can you give us some thoughts on your enthusiasm on the field with the other players and what kind of leader you are?**

"That's something I've done every single game. There's nothing new with that, welcoming those guys on the field. When you look at the grand scheme of things – when things are going good, when things are going bad – we're all so fortunate to be able to play this game. It really is a dream come true for all of us. I'm right there at the tunnel just trying to get guys fired up, just enjoying the day and trying to make the most of the moment."

### **What do you think is happening when you are picked off?**

"I come up here and every single week when I get to work in practice – Wednesday, Thursday, Friday – I really feel like I'm going to play a clean football game. I feel like I'm going to be able to stand up here in front of you guys, and say 'Told you so, I told you I could play a clean game.' And then I go out there and do something like that again today. Bottom line, it's not eye manipulation, it's not really poor reads, I think it's just poor decisions. It's poor decisions. The second interception was one of those deals where Tennessee's defense had a great scheme, give them credit. They gave us a look and a blitz where I had to get the ball out. I made a poor decision to try to force that ball down the field. If you look at the first interception: play-action pass, I lose my feet in the pocket, I know better. I know I need to throw that ball away and live to fight another day – or another down. I think it just boils down to decision making, and that's something I know I need to be better at. This team did a tremendous job – offense, defense, special teams – of really having my back today and helping me through that. I put the team in some very poor positions, and I know that. It's not fair to those guys because they played their hearts out today. The decisions will be cleaned up. I will make better decisions. I know I've said that before, but I promise you guys that I'm going to clean these interceptions up because that football team is working too hard, and they deserve better."

### **In the fourth quarter, it was 4th and 1 and it looked like you were at about the 35 yard line and there was chaos. Did you need to call a timeout there, or how did you read that situation?**

"I think that's really Coach (Bill) O'Brien and myself having a conversation either tonight or tomorrow about how we want to handle that in the future. My eyes were on the play clock the whole time. I know the substitution kind of came in a little bit late, so the play call gets in late, so we get to the line late. The offense line is not really able to see the front, I'm not able to make a great MIKE (linebacker) point, and my eyes are on the play clock the whole time, and I understand it's 4th and 1 and we can't take a delay of game, and so I think it just comes down to having a conversation with Coach. 'Are you comfortable with me taking the timeout in the moment? I'm seeing where we are on the play clock or do you just want me to leave that to you to be the head coach?' So I think that's just Coach and I having a conversation to see how we want to move forward because you could really look at that football play and say maybe that's the most critical play in the game: 4th and 1, late in the game, we get a first down, maybe we get some points on that drive, make it a two-score lead late in the fourth. So Coach and I will have a conversation and we'll get that worked out."

### **What did you see on that first touchdown to TE C.J. Fiedorowicz?**

"It was just a look that we talked about on Friday. It was a play that we put in a little bit later in the week. It's funny how things happen sometimes. Sometimes you get the practice rep of exactly what happens in the game, and sometimes you get the practice rep of what definitely doesn't happen in the game. That was one of those ones that we kind of had anticipated. Coach (Bill O'Brien) made a tremendous call, C.J. ran a great route, and he made a heck of a catch."

### **DE ANTONIO SMITH** (Transcribed by Julien Demers)

### **How do you guys feel like you did? Obviously, questions without DE J.J. Watt. People are in a lot of packages. People really worked together to make something happen defensively.**

"Team. It was a team effort with coaching and everything. We went into halftime and made some adjustments in the run. When we went back out, we were getting them in some good third and longs and able to get them off the field. Total team win."

### **Can you talk about LDE Jadeveon Clowney's performance today?**



# HOUSTON TEXANS vs. TENNESSEE TITANS



“He was kind of frustrated in there. Just watching him, take that frustration and stick it in his back pocket and get back out there and go out there and make plays. That’s maturity. That’s one of the best pass rushers to come through here.”

**NT VINCE WILFORK** (Transcribed by Hector Castellort)

**I guess first quarter of the season done, how do you feel about the 3 wins?**

“Great. 3-1 in the first quarter, you can’t be mad at that. Just got to keep moving forward, that is one of the things and it’s a long season, long season. It’s not how you start, it’s how you finish. Starting well always puts you in a good spot toward the end, so we understand that. Being 3-1 right now, we just have to continue to do the work.”

## **POSTGAME QUOTES FROM TENNESSEE TITANS**

**Head Coach Mike Mularkey**

**WR Andre Johnson**

**T Taylor Lewan**

**QB Marcus Mariota**

**CB Jason McCourty**

**HEAD COACH MIKE MULARKEY** (Transcribed by Allison Chastin)

**Opening Statement:**

“I’ll open up with the injuries and then you guys can fire away. Al Woods pulled his calf muscle. He will be out probably four weeks at least. Jack Conklin had a little bit of a stinger. He returned. Other than that, I think we came out of it pretty healthy.”

**How frustrating was it to lose after coming back from behind?**

“They executed very well. Other than him throwing away one pass, I don’t think he threw an incompleteness. I think they only had one third down in the first drive. They were making first and second downs. They were pretty effective in getting the ball out and guys making plays for them. I thought we settled down and took care of... I thought they did a good job against (DeAndre) Hopkins. It all came down to trying to take their best player out of the game. I thought they did that. We did. We had to settle down after getting down 14 nothing and I thought we did that. I saw nobody on that sideline get down on the team at all. We’ve been in a lot of these games and we have to find a way to win these games. We have to find a way to quite making some of these mistakes we are making.”

**Like the punt return for touchdown, was it just a matter of not enough hang time?**

“It didn’t help. If you remember back to Jacksonville when we hit a low drive ball and they returned it down to win the game against us on Thursday night. It was similar. Your cover team doesn’t have a real chance to get into any lanes, because the returners basically already got the ball and they had two returners down there. Not to make excuses, but we have to punt it better and we have to cover better.”

**What’s happening with the change on special teams?**

“We had a couple of good returns today. I thought Marc (Mariani) did a good job making decisions. We had some special teams players that were inactive. We had to do some things because of injuries. We had guys that were out there for the first time doing some of the covering and some of the teams work. Once again, it’s not an excuse. If they are called up, they have to do their job, but there were some fresh faces out there. One of your best players (Daimion) Stafford is not on special teams, because now he is playing a lot on defense.”

**Does it seem like everything you do well in this game gets offset by something you don’t do well?**

“It feels that way. That’s any game of disappointment. You think what could have been different. The end result is not that and the feeling we have in the locker room is not that. Again, I think it’s a handful of plays.”

**Do you see QB Marcus Mariota growing and learning?**



## HOUSTON TEXANS vs. TENNESSEE TITANS



"I'm not going to say he is trying to do too much, because he did a lot of things out of the pocket. He made some plays and he made some throws out of the pocket with guys late. I am not going to take that away from him. That is what's special about the guy. I don't know what happened on the interception. I think he thought Delanie (Walker) was going to continue with him. He was just trying to make a play and keep the drive going. Obviously, you can say bad decision now after the fact, but I am not going to hand tie him. He has too much threat with his ability to run, throw the ball and move."

### **Talk about the penalties on special teams.**

"That is not good. Special teams are not playing well right now. We have to fix that. I will address that."

### **Was the last play going to WR Andre Johnson or was that just QB Marcus Mariota read on the play?**

"Based on the coverage that was going to Andre (Johnson)."

### **Did he have a chance to catch the ball?**

"He was actually going down. From where I was standing it looked like he was losing his balance as he went in there."

### **What did the Texans take away in the second half to stop the success of RB DeMarco Murray?**

"I think third downs played a factor the whole game. I thought we were not good to start. I know we were similar last week. I thought we were a little bit stronger with it. They were playing a lot of guys up there. They had eight guys up there stopping it. They countered with some things at halftime and they did a good job with that. The yards weren't there first and second half."

### **What is the message to your team as you get set to moving on?**

"The good news is we are capable of winning these games, but we are finding ways to lose them with just a handful of plays. I am talking a handful of games, like three to four plays. Without that, we would be in a different spot than we are. I like a lot of things that our team did, like coming back in this environment against a team that is the division winner. Everybody, including in this room, picked us to lose. They never doubted they had a chance to win. There is a lot to be said about this football team. They have a lot of heart. I don't think anybody really knows who this team is. This is a good football team."

### **You said you need to find ways to win, how do you turn it around?**

"Make a play. Make a play here, make a play there. Punt the ball like you are capable of punting it."

### **After Texans WR Will Fuller V made it 14-0, how was your team communication?**

"It was more inside because they ran a hard action. They bit on the run action and there were some guys underneath. He was looking for some more help inside. He was looking for more action from everybody and a well designed play. Good action for those guys. Good, well designed play."

### **What was the plan against WR DeAndre Hopkins today and how did your corners do?**

"I thought pretty well. He is a game wrecker. The guy can change the game in a matter of plays and I thought Coach (Dick) LeBeau and the defense did a good job trying to take him away. (Will) Fuller made plays. He is a good addition to that team. That is hard. You can take one away, but you can't take two away."

### **OLB Whitney Mercilus had hurt you in the past as well.**

"I thought Taylor (Lewan) played well. I know in earlier games Taylor has had some trouble. Once again, I am just basing this on the game I will have to watch more of the film, but I thought Taylor played well."

### **So you shut down two players on the Texans who are among their best, does that count as progress?**

"Yes that is absolutely progress. What else is it? It's progress and progress is positive."

### **Did they seize momentum after the sack?**

"Yes that was disappointing. Everybody wants a long ball and we did too. And we were trying to take a shot and we got sacked on. The momentum changed quickly after the sack and then a penalty right after. It took the momentum right away from our football team."

### **What would you like to see more of from WR Tajae Sharpe?**



## HOUSTON TEXANS vs. TENNESSEE TITANS



"I like that post we ran for him. I would like to see him make that play. He is a capable of making that play. One on one for a touchdown."

### **Is QB Marcus Mariota capable of making the long throws?**

"He hit one earlier to Delanie (Walker) on a throw down the sideline. He is a capable of it. I thought it was a nice touch because Rashad (Johnson) had to run underneath that thing. I thought it was a good touch on the ball. It was a double move. So you know the receiver has to stop his momentum for a little bit and then start up again so you have to give him a chance to run underneath it."

### **WR ANDRE JOHNSON** (Transcribed by Stefan Nolet)

#### **What was it like playing in Houston against the Texans?**

"It was cool, it was fun. Like I said earlier this week, it was fun to come back and play in front of the fans, play against the guys. I've got a relationship with a lot of the guys on the team, so it was fun just to get out there and play. It just wasn't the outcome we wanted."

#### **What happened on the fourth down play that was incomplete?**

"We just didn't make the play. That's it – we just didn't make the play."

#### **Is that the story of this team so far, in a lot of close games but not making enough plays?**

"We just have to be more consistent. I think at times we show that we can be, and then we get consistent for a little bit. Then we go back to having penalties and things like that, so we just have to eliminate those."

#### **Is this outcome more frustrating considering your history here?**

"I play to win no matter where I'm at, so it's no different because I'm here in Houston. That doesn't really matter."

#### **How are you feeling physically?**

"I feel fine."

#### **Head Coach Mike Mularkey called this progress. Is it progress even without winning?**

"I can't speak on that. I wasn't here last year, so I don't know. I can't tell you what went on. I just got here the day before camp started this year. I'm just trying to do what I can do to help the team."

#### **How incredible is it that Texans CB Johnathan Joseph is still playing like a top corner?**

"I mean, he's good at what he does. He's very competitive, a great player. I enjoyed to practice against him when I played here. He's still able to go out there and make plays."

#### **What did you think when you heard about the injury to Texans DE J.J. Watt?**

"You feel bad for anybody that has to go through that. Just wish him the best and hope he can get back on the field and play."

### **T TAYLOR LEWAN** (Transcribed by Stefan Nolet)

#### **Do you feel like this game is progress?**

"Losing is losing. Of course, there's horseshoes and hand grenades, and that's it. But we need to do the little things. As a team, as a whole, we are better. Our record does not show that. We need to do the little things consistently."

#### **What's been the difference in morale on this team compared to years past?**

"If you play this game, and you go down 1-3 at the beginning of the season, and your morale is down, you should quit football: you should stop playing football. This game is a game everyone grew up either watching or playing. At the end of the day, you get down to the smallest thing, we're kids playing a dream sport. I said this before, I'm never going to stop playing hard, regardless of what the score is or what our record is. This offensive line is never going to stop playing hard. We just have to shore up the little things. I can't get penalties. It's been a consistent theme: can't get penalties. We can't give up 10 points on special teams. Offense has to convert third downs. We have to get points in the red zone: we can't get threes, we have to get sixes. It's frustrating, there's no question about it, and I know the fans are frustrated, the coaches are frustrated and the team is frustrated, but no one's



# HOUSTON TEXANS vs. TENNESSEE TITANS



ever going to quit, and if you do, don't play here. Don't play on any team. That's not what this sport's about. This sport brings out the best in everybody."

**QB MARCUS MARIOTA** (Transcribed by Stephanie Weaver)

**Does it feel that with every step forward, this team takes two steps back?**

"You know, we're close. We've got to continue to believe that it's a process, continue to believe in each other, stay together, and just go back to work."

**Why weren't you able to seize momentum after the interception by**

"You know, it just starts with the fact that there's penalties, there's some little things that kind of disrupt drives. Unfortunately it put us behind the eight ball a little bit. But you know at the end of the day we were able to convert some of those and move the ball pretty decently. But unfortunately we weren't able to do it at that time."

**How much strain did it put on you to catch up after the 14-0 start?**

"That's part of the game. You know, you can't blink an eye. You've got to continue to fight. I'm proud of the guys in the locker room for doing that. That's what this team is about. It doesn't matter what the score is we're going to continue to fight. Eventually we'll get it. We'll see what changes around. We'll get on top of it."

**Thoughts on the protection today from the offensive line.**

"I thought they did a great job. All day they did a great job of holding their own. Pushing the line of scrimmage. I thought we ran the ball well. Again sometimes it's efficiency, and unfortunately we put ourselves behind a little bit and weren't able to move the chains."

**It seemed that after the first half there was a struggle to finish drives. What changed in the second half?**

"You said it best. We just weren't able to finish. You know, we would get a first down here, a first down there. Unfortunately whether it's a penalty, whether it's a miscommunication, or just not executing, we just weren't able to do our jobs."

**What happened on the interception?**

"It was a miscommunication on my part. Delanie (Walker) did a great job of just kind of sitting in the hole. You know, just bad throw. I should have just put it on him a little more. But the defense was able to make a big play and give us the ball back. I'm glad we were able to go down and score."

**In previous weeks when you've had turnovers, you have said sometimes you feel like you are trying to do too much. Do you feel like that was the case again today?**

"A little bit. I could have probably just run out of bounds. Moved on. Made it second down and manageable. But again that's a part of my learning process. Sometimes it's trying to do too much. Trying to fit the ball in a place where it probably shouldn't have gone. But again, it's me learning, and I'll be better."

**What is the mindset of the team at 1-3 and how do you think the team responds?**

"Mindset does not change. We'll continue to work, go back tomorrow, correct our mistakes and get ready for Miami."

**What did you see on the 4<sup>th</sup> down play to WR Andre Johnson?**

"I thought we were going to have an opportunity. They came out in the coverage that we kind of expected. Unfortunately, I'm not sure what happened. Either he tripped or something, but I could have put the ball on him a little more. Given him a chance to get a first down. But at the same time, you know that's how the ball bounces sometimes. Unfortunately came out on the wrong end of that one."

**How much could this team benefit from starting up 14-0 rather than coming back from 14-0?**

"Yeah absolutely. I think it's easier at any point in time in this league if you're up 14 points. But you know we're going to continue to grind it out. We'll learn. Eventually we'll be able to be one of those team where we are up. But right now, we're going to continue to stick to our process, continue to learn from our mistakes, and get ready for next week."

**After coming back from the deficit, did you think it was a new ball game or did you just expend too much energy to come back?**



## HOUSTON TEXANS vs. TENNESSEE TITANS



“Not at all. There was a point in time in the game where we thought we could go ahead and take it and win. We fought our way back. We were able to give us an opportunity to go up. Just sometimes we weren’t able to execute and just fell on the short side today.”

### **How was it having WR Kendall Wright back?**

“It was big. He had a couple big plays. You know the third down on that last drive that continued to keep the chains moving. Again, he’s a playmaker for us. The more I give him the ball, the better he gets.”

### **CB JASON MCCOURTY** (Transcribed by Stefan Nolet)

### **Can you talk about the defensive against Texans WR DeAndre Hopkins?**

“We were able to make a few plays on the ball, and I think our front seven did a great job of really not allowing the quarterback enough time to get him the ball. There were times he was probably open, but the quarterback had to get the ball out. He’s a hell of a player, so I think for me and Perrish (Cox), we just went out there and wanted to compete against him, attack the ball when it was in the air and try to make our plays when we had opportunities.”

### **How tough are the Texans with Will Fuller V on the other side?**

“Really tough, and that’s the thing, in our League, you don’t get breaks. Like you just said, (DeAndre) Hopkins is one hell of a player, and then (Will) Fuller with his speed and his abilities just makes them that more potent on offense.”

### **How tough is the loss today when you had a chance to make some plays and don’t?**

“Every loss is tough. A division opponent makes it a little bit tougher. An opportunity at hand, but we just weren’t able to do enough today to get the win. It sucks – there’s no other way to explain it. Having to get on this plane and fly home with a sick feeling in your stomach, and the only thing you can with that feeling is put it to work. We’ll come in tomorrow, we’ll watch the film, we’ll be hard on ourselves – critical – and when we get back on the practice field Wednesday, you have to be ready to go.”

### **How difficult is it that’s a familiar feeling that a few missed plays make the difference in the game?**

“When you lose, you lose. You can point out a few plays here, or point out a few plays there and try to find the good and the bad, but at the end of the day, when you don’t score as many points as the other team, it doesn’t really matter. You want to win games. That’s what we’re in the business of is producing and winning, and we’ve got to get the job done.”

### **Head Coach Mike Mularkey said this is progress. Do you feel like it’s progress?**

“We want to win. Obviously, we’re getting better as a team. I think everybody can tell we’re not the same team that’s won – whatever it is – five games over the past two years. We’re definitely improving. I think that we have an identity now. We know who and what we want to be, we just have to find a way to win these tough games.”

### **What did you see from Texans QB Brock Osweiler today and his two interceptions?**

“We just made a few plays on the ball. I think we did a good job of putting pressure in his face, trying to force him to make some throws under stress, in stressful situations. He’s a good quarterback. They have a good offense. They were able to do enough today to be able to win the game.”

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