



# HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



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## POSTGAME QUOTES

<a href="#">Head Coach Lovie Smith</a> <a href="#">WR Brandin Cooks</a> <a href="#">QB Davis Mills</a>	<a href="#">Head Coach Brandon Staley</a> <a href="#">QB Justin Herbert</a>
<p><b>HOUSTON TEXANS MEDIA WEBSITE</b>  Postgame quotes, notes and more available on the <a href="#">Houston Texans Media Website</a>  <b>Username:</b> Your Email (Custom access) or 'HoustonTexans' (Generic access)  <b>Password:</b> TexansMedia</p>	

## HOUSTON TEXANS

### HEAD COACH LOVIE SMITH

#### Opening Statement

"I thought we were in a good frame of mind to start fast and play our better ball that first half. Just tough when you are playing against a good football team and you don't, and you get in a hole like we did. I like the way the team fought back, gave ourselves a chance to win at the end, but we didn't finish. You also need to finish the game, and we didn't finish the game the way we need to. Along the way some good things happened. Of course, Dameon Pierce ran well throughout, so he gave us a spark throughout. But, some of the other things that cause you to lose games, too many pre-snap penalties again. I'm going to talk about those. Passing game-wise, I thought we had a few big plays, but the consistency wasn't there. On the defensive side, the first half, again, we didn't start well. Of course, that was definitely the case. We like to move it up. Big plays in the passing game really hurt us. But, saying all of that, we got ourselves in a position there late. It didn't help missing the field goal early, the fourth down at the end of the half, not converting on it. With all that being said, we had an opportunity late where we were down one score, and we needed to get a stop defensively, and the two big pass plays doomed us. Injury-wise, we had a few guys who went out. Blake Cashman went out, and I don't normally talk about guys who didn't come back in. He is in the concussion protocol."

#### **What have you been seeing from QB Davis Mills and what do you think he needs to do to allow you guys to finish games?**

You're right. All eyes are on the quarterback, but there was a lot more. Our offense got us into position, we're one score down. We need to score. We're down three-plus scores, and we came back. In order for that to happen, our quarterback had to hit some passes. He did. Just like the rest of the group, there was a period of time in there when – what does he need to do? We need to protect better. As far as pushing the ball down the football field, I thought at times we did do that, but we're not where we need to be in our passing game, just like we aren't in anything else. That's what I'm going to say about your question."

#### **What have you seen from RB Dameon Pierce in terms of breakaway runs?**



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“There's a reason why we're starting a rookie running back. Of course, he can run in between the tackles. He can make you miss in open field, but that's the part of his game that we haven't seen. Not many running backs going, what was it, 75 yards or so? In the NFL, that's hard to do. He is just kind of showing you all of the things that he can do. I don't know exactly how many carries he was able to get today, but he is a guy that we need to continue to feature.”

**Your thoughts on the fourth-and-1 at their 24-yard line in the second quarter that QB Davis Mills got sacked on?**

“We need to convert there is my thoughts on it. We could have easily kicked a field goal, but we needed points in that situation. We just didn't execute the right way. Good call by them. The right blitz at the right time, of sacking us, but there was an opportunity for us that we let get away.”

**What do you take away as a head coach, when you are a few plays away, but you are winless right now?**

“One time in you say, ‘Hey, we'll get it right.’ After four games, we can't talk about being close anymore. But if you watch the game, we talk about a lot of opportunities. It seems like we've done that each game. Not there yet. You know, we're not a good football team yet. Good football teams find a way to win at the end, and we haven't been able to get over that hurdle. But looking at the positive, it was a terrible first half, and we got ourselves in position there late. Other games on how they've seemed like we had to hold on, we're in different position. To come back there, we're able to see an awful lot, but still things that we need to improve upon.”

**You mentioned after Week 1 that you wanted RB Dameon Pierce to get more touches. Why was he on the sideline in the fourth-and-1 situation?**

“Because we had a pass call on that, and the guy we had out there, we thought gave us our best option. There was a pass, and that's probably the reason why. Dameon has done some good things, but we're not going to have him out there each play. That's what we had called. Good play on their part. Not so good for us.”

**Was there miscommunication on the defense on the catches that Chargers RB Austin Ekeler had?**

“Yes, it was. Whenever you see a guy wide open like that, there's a breakdown in communication. On two of those plays and that long run, it's really disappointing that happened. I felt like we were in a position where that shouldn't happen, but it did. Yes, miscommunication on those plays.”

**I know you make the calls about whether you want to go or not on fourth down, but as far as who you want in the game, is that your call or Offensive Coordinator Pep Hamilton's?**

“That's our offensive staff, and everything goes through me. Fourth-and-1 is a big play. We thought they gave us our best chance to be successful on that play. Like every offensive play that we have, that's how the communication goes.”

**Do you have an injury update on DB Derek Stingley Jr., seeing how he was favoring his arm?**

“Yes. He was down for a while. Bruise on his arm. He was able to finish, so he should be okay.”

**When you are unable to get to the back field and cause pressure on sacks, how frustrating is that?**

“It's hard. It's hard. I thought they did a good job with that. You have to change your approach a little bit, but again, when you can convert on third downs the way they were able to, that's tough. In an ideal world, we would like to be able to get pressure with our four-man rush. We weren't able to do that for the majority of the day.”

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**WR BRANDIN COOKS**



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## **What's the start of the season been like for you guys?**

"Frustrating. Close ones, as we all know, pretty much this league comes down to close games. There's hardly ever any blow-outs, and the great teams find a way to be able to finish. We haven't been able to do that. Today we just simply as an offense didn't start fast. The past four weeks has absolutely been frustrating as a competitor, no question."

## **What was the difference offensively in the first and second half?**

"I think at the end of the day that sense of urgency was there because of, obviously, what the score was. We have to have that mindset from the get-go. Like I said earlier, being able to start fast, but I think it's just all about a sense of urgency. That's why we were able to do some good things in that second half."

## **What do you feel like the team needs to do from here?**

"I wouldn't necessarily say change anything. It's just getting back to work and in those situations being able to be situational masters and being able to actually focus and hang in there and stop biting ourselves in the foot, whether it be penalties, whether it be turnovers. I'm just speaking from an offensive standpoint because that's the side of the ball that I play on. The things that's biting us in the foot is going to continue to hold us back from winning games as long as we continue to do that."

## **It seemed like after RB Dameon Pierce scored that touchdown, both offense and defense got going a little bit.**

### **What did you think about RB Dameon Pierce's run?**

"It was crazy. As we talked about, it takes one play to be able to get the team going, and that run, to be able to make a guy miss like that and be able to strike down the sideline, got the whole team amped up. From there on it gave us some juice. I think that was a defining play to be able to keep us going and moving the ball in the right direction."

## **How do you describe the passing offense outside those two successful drives there?**

"I think, like I said earlier, just being able to have that sense of urgency early on. I feel like once we had that, we got going getting the ball to the play makers. I think we've got to have that mindset to start the game off just because we talk about start fast and finish faster. We can't just choose one."

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## **QB DAVIS MILLS**

### **You had two successful drives. What was the differences between those?**

"Just have to find ways to continue executing our jobs. I mean, I just overheard Brandin (Cooks) a little bit. We can't turn it on and turn it off when we want to. When we need to go down and score like we did at the start of the second half, we have to do that the whole game. Continue to find ways to get the ball to the guys out in space and let them make plays."

### **When the passing game was going well in the second half, how much of a boost does that give you? How much does that help you with confidence?**

"That's what we expect. We expect to go out there and perform and do our jobs at a high level. I don't think it's surprising or does anything to my confidence. I always play out there confident like I can make every play and can make every throw. I think it's a result of everyone doing their jobs and executing at a high level, and that's what we're trying to do for a full game."



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### **What's your perspective on playing four close games and being 0-3-1? Where the team is at right now?**

"First, four games are close. Good teams have to find a way to win late in the game, and we haven't done that yet. Just have to keep fighting for it. We still have a long season ahead of us. All it takes is one. I said it last week or the week before. All it takes is one. Just have to get that one win and start building some momentum, and it will carry on through the rest of the season."

### **How does 'ground and pound' open up the passing game and kind of fall in line with what y'all are trying to do as an offense?**

"I mean, if you think the identity of somebody's offense is a ground and pound team, you expect them to run the play. We were trying to catch them often guard and make a play on the edge. It will be good to see what happened on that. I think the end came unblocked when we should have had him accounted for. Just have to go correct the mistakes and execute at a higher-level next week."

### **What was working for you this week particularly on the deep passes to WR Nico Collins and TE Jordan Akins?**

"Just trusting those guys to make plays. Had really good protection on both of those drives and really throughout the game. It was great that my offensive line was giving me time to throw, and those guys were making plays. It's funny because we've repped that play to Nico (Collins) so many times in practice, and I think we've only really thrown it one or two times, so it's awesome to come out and see him make a huge play, and we know what he is capable of. Same thing with (Jordan) Akins. They brought cover zero. I think that was a fringe play for us. Brought cover zero. We actually called that play three times on that same drive, and that was the only look where we had where I didn't have to kill out of it and get to something else. He ended up making a play and putting us in good position to score."

### **Obviously, through the first four weeks the game has come down to plays in the fourth quarter. How much of a mental battle is it for you guys to get over that hump?**

"I think it's just part of our jobs. Everybody has to put their head down and get to work and know if we do what we're supposed to do, the results will come. We just have to find a way. Like I said, all it takes is one."

### **You mentioned about those drives and being able to get the ball down field and cover zero there. Did they change at all towards the end once they got that chance there near the end zone and have teams kind of played you all differently when you're not you were able to push down towards the end of the game?**

"They were doing a really good job on defense just mixing up what they were showing throughout whole game. They did a lot. I mean, we just have to find ways in those situations to execute at our jobs. One little slip-up can end a drive, so we just have to make sure all 11 people out there on the field are doing their jobs every play."

### **What in your mind do you have to do differently maybe in order to be able to close out?**

"Biggest thing is start fast and then finish faster."

### **What's it like hearing the fans booing in the stadium and what's your message? Do you understand the frustration of where they're coming from?**

"Yeah. I mean, as all fans are, you want to love your team as much as possible when they're doing well, and then it's tough for you to like them when they're not doing well. Just urge them to come in here and keep this place rocking. I mean, when the energy was -- when everyone was loud and we had energy I think late in the game, the players feed off that. That's helping us play well, and we have to use that every ounce of it when we're at home."

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**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS**



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## HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

### **Your overall thoughts on getting a win here and getting back to 2-2?**

“Yeah. I really felt like we had to fight hard to get it in the fourth quarter. I loved the way we started this football game. At halftime, outside of a drive, I really loved the way we played in all three phases of the game. In that third quarter, it got tight. Didn't play well enough in the third quarter. But then in the fourth quarter, I thought the way we finished that game, you can't ask for anything more as the head coach, you know, respond after the turnover on the kickoff, and then force a field goal on defense. On offense, you go on a big drive, convert two third downs, a fourth down, and you're able to close it out on defense and with a takeaway. I thought our guys showed a lot of fight today and I'm really proud of them.”

### **What did you feel like happened there in the third quarter when they were able to get back into it, aside from the special teams fumble?**

“Yeah. I thought that a couple third downs there offensively we had a drop, and we moved it a couple, two out of those three drives, but just weren't able to convert a couple of those third downs. And then on defense, just gave up a couple big plays in the passing game. Just kind of got, I think we got off schedule a little bit, got out of rhythm, and had a few communications issues. But in the fourth quarter, I felt like we tightened up. It felt like we got back into rhythm and then finished the game playing our best.”

### **WR Josh Palmer was sort of in and out. Was he dealing with something?**

“Yeah. He was dealing with a foot. Got it taped, came back in. He's okay. Just got it taped up.”

### **Did WR Josh Palmer's injury happened during the game?**

“It did.”

### **We saw DL Sebastian Joseph-Day, at the end there, something happened?**

“Yeah. It's his thumb, just kind of banged himself, finger. He's okay.”

### **How did you feel about the run game today?**

“At the end, I thought, I loved our commitment to it. I thought that that allowed our line to really get into rhythm, which I think helped our passing game. We didn't get any big splitters today, but I thought we had a lot of productive runs, kind of stayed out of the negative runs, and it felt like we ran the ball really well when we needed to. On that last drive, I thought we had a couple of really productive runs. We had a second-and-10 run that really gave us a chance on that third down and two that Mike (Williams) caught the slant on. I thought that was a big run on that drive. It was just a rugged football game, but I liked the way our offensive line was coming off the football. We drew a couple holding penalties too on their defensive line, so you've got to factor that in as well.”

### **How encouraging is it to get RB Austin Ekeler rolling the way you guys did, particularly in the red zone?**

“You make a great point. In the last season he had 20 touchdowns and he's the top red-area producer in the NFL. So to get him going today was big. I felt like he played like a captain today. Beyond Austin's performance on the field, I felt like he really led our football team on offense, just played with the energy that he's known for and just a complete performance by Austin.”

### **Why did you guys go away from WR Josh Palmer there and maybe lean towards RB Sony Michel there in the second half?**

“Just a couple of those personnel grouping-oriented running schemes. Nothing more than that. I really felt like all three guys did a nice job. Sony had a really nice third and two run where there was nothing there and he was able to get vertical and he kind of shows his value. He's got that feel in short yardage. And I think all three of 'em are



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doing well for us and, like you said, Josh had a good performance today too. So we're going to try and keep all those three guys rolling and really try to put the pressure on the defense to defend all three."

**With G Jamaree Salyer at left tackle, it looked like he played a pretty good game out there. What did you see from him?**

"Your eyes are telling you the right thing. He didn't give up a sack today. It just felt like anytime you can have 4-14 on the road and deal with the crowd noise and, you know, like I said, he's a stud, calm, poised, strong. His teammates did a great job for [Jamaree] too. I'm really proud of [Jamaree]. He can build off it. He's really hard on himself. He's going to look at the tape and realize he can play better, but now that's been out there, you know, Jerry Hughes is a really quality rusher. I've got a lot of respect for [Jamaree]. He's an outstanding player. To be able to go out there and hold his own, good start for him."

**We all know how much T Rashawn Slater means to you guys and what type of player he is. To have G Jamaree Salyer go in there and play the way that he did, what does that mean for you over the rest of the season?**

"Number one, it says everything about [Rashawn], that he was here today. Tough news for him, but then he's here helping his teammates out. You can't minimize that from an intangible standpoint, you know, one of your best players being there for his teammates. So just love the fact that we drafted Rashawn Slater and he's on our football team. But I think it says a lot about our coaching staff, you know, Brendan Nugent, Joe Lombardi, Shaun Sarrett, putting a plan together that Jamaree can go digest and go play. And then his teammates, Corey Linsley, Mat Feiler making sure that he's ready to play, helping him throughout that football game. Justin Herbert. But he played how we expected him to and, like I said, he's got one game now that he can look at and now he's got the rest of the NFL to deal with. So this is just one game and he's got to keep getting better."

**QB Justin Herbert didn't take many hits today. What did you do different to make sure that didn't happen?**

"Good question. I think commitment to the run game. I think we were really committed to coming off the football and that helps you. I thought that the fact that we were able to get 27 runs off today, I think that really helps your passing attack. And then I felt like different types of passes, keepers, RPOs, quick gain, we were really good in play action today, which was very well-protected. And then I thought in the drop back game, I thought our protection really held up. Justin played with really good timing within the pocket, and then when it got tight, he was able to find an outlet or throw it away. I just felt like we really managed the game from a balance standpoint."

**You have to have chunk plays to get there. You had 10 explosive plays, run and pass. How big was that to get those chunk plays moving?**

"Great observation. You got to have them in the NFL. That's where it's at. I felt like we were able to really access Mike in the deep part of the field today, Gerald in the seams. We were able to hit Bandy, Palmer. We had a couple keepers that went a long ways. That's what you got to be able to do to throw for 340 on the road. So it was a team effort and a very good performance for our guys."

**How would you assess just where your team's at overall?**

"I think for like a game and three quarters we were playing really at a high level. Really high level. And then in the very end of that second game to the beginning of this game it was not our best stuff. Then today was more of a gritty, tough win for a football team. But a really good response to a really tough loss last week. We had some pieces as you know that were different this week. We had to make some adjustments. And I think that that's what the beginning part of the NFL is. I think the fact that we're 2-2, certainly not satisfied with that record, but definitely proud of our response today as a team. Now we got to keep improving."

**What did you think of CB Michael Davis's couple catches?**

"Yeah, Mike has been ready. He's stayed ready. Very confident there in the two-minute drill at the end of the half. Able to locate him. He does what he always does. He's assignment-sound. He's a reliable target. He's got really



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good feel. Again, you got to show the depth of your team when some guys go out and I thought that him and Jason Moore stepped up and did a really good job for us today.”

**The fourth down rollout by QB Justin Herbert there, how tempting was it to just call for a sneak. You only needed like maybe six, ten inches?**

“We didn't see it that way. We thought it was a lot longer. One yard. That's why I took the timeout. It was more than one. So we kind of wanted to make sure that we had the right play called there. But we wanted to be aggressive in that area. We wanted to try and win this game. We felt like we had the play to do it and [Justin] and [Austin] executed it very well.”

**Was the fourth and one and the touchdown the same play? It looked similar.**

“Similar. Similar play call. Yeah. Organized differently.”

**Any injuries?**

“Josh Palmer came back in the game. He had his foot wrapped. Sebastian (Joseph-Day) was fine at the end. He just kind of had an owie there. In the finger. He's good. Good spirits.”

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## QB JUSTIN HERBERT

**On the fourth-and-one bootleg, what was the mindset after they called a timeout? You called timeout, and then they called a timeout?**

“We just knew that we had to get a yard and a half, and we think really highly of our guys on the perimeter. DeAndre Carter set a great pick for Austin Ekeler, which sprung it open, and he made a great catch on the ball, got up field and got the first down.”

**What were you seeing today that just made it seem kind of like you were playing catch out there with your wide receivers all day?**

“I think it starts with Joe Lombardi, our offensive coordinator. He made a great plan this week and, unfortunately, we fell last week to the Jaguars, but we bounced back, we reacted well during practice, we had a great week of preparation and the receivers were locked in for four quarters.”

**How did it feel for you guys to come out there and bounce back after last week?**

“It was huge for us. It's never fun losing in the NFL. I thought the team, especially our offense and defense, they showed up during practice. They had a great week of preparation. It starts up front with our offensive line as well. They did a great job blocking all day, protecting, giving me enough time to get the ball off, and guys on outside making plays.”

**What about seeing S Nasir Adderley come up with that interception that provided a spark to begin with?**

“It was huge. It's always huge when your defense gets some turnovers, especially when they're playing as well as they are. It helps us a ton on offense. And anytime that we're able to get some turnovers and get good field position, you got to take advantage of that.”

**What needs to happen in the second half of games for you guys to kind of keep your foot on the gas?**

“We just need to keep executing. We had our shots. Unfortunately, we missed a couple here and there. But we're thankful for the defense coming up with some big-time stops, and when we needed a drive late in the end, we ran right behind our offensive line, threw to our guys and got the first downs.”



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### **How important is getting that running game going?**

"It's huge. It all starts with those guys up front, and to have the backs like we do, you got to take advantage of that. We think really highly of our offensive linemen, especially our running backs, so it was good to see today."

### **How would you assess through four games really where you guys are at, not just as offense but as an entire team?**

"I think we've dealt with a lot of adversity, and I thought we handled that pretty well. It's a long season. To lose a couple guys here and there and be able to replace them and have some guys that maybe weren't expecting to play a ton make some huge plays in some big-time games, that's great to see and we'll keep doing that. We're going to keep getting those guys ready, whoever's out there we're going to go play."

### **Do you have anything to say to your left tackle today for OL Jamaree Salyer in his first start?**

"Just that (Jamaree Salyer) did an outstanding job. He stepped in there and I felt the time that I had back in the pocket. For a guy to be able to step up, first NFL game, first time playing, I thought he did an incredible job."

### **For your second game playing with your rib injury, how are you feeling?**

"I feel better. Thank you. Yeah, it's getting better. Thankful for the offensive line for keeping me upright."

### **How much has that helped when you have a game like today where you have minimal hits and really aren't taken to the ground?**

"Big time. It's super helpful. It helps in the recovery process. But just having time, we'll get ice on it, we'll do everything we can to prepare and get back to next week. So, we'll enjoy this time off and get ready for the next opponent."

### **With WR Keenan Allen out, how big was WR Mike Williams today?**

"Mike (Williams) has done an incredible job. He's certainly worth everything that we're paying for him. To have a guy like that, who just goes and competes and wants to be the greatest, you know, it's awesome to have a guy like that, being able to throw to him."

### **Last week around the facility it felt a little bit heavy coming off that loss with multiple injuries. What do you think it says about this team that you guys came out here and got a bad start and were able to correct course?**

"I wouldn't necessarily say it felt heavy. I think all the guys in our team and our locker room are professionals, and they know that it's a 17-game season, it's a long season. You never want to lose games like that, but they bounced back, they had a great week of preparation, and that's something that we're going to have to do. We'll watch the film tonight or tomorrow and get ready for our next opponent."

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