

TENNESSEE TITANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS
WEEK 2 POSTGAME QUOTES
Sunday, September 17, 2023

HEAD COACH MIKE VRABEL

How big was Harold Landry III getting his first sack of the season to make sure you got a stand there defensively?

Well, it was critical. A lot of plays in the game, comes down to a few. Certainly, that was a big one. We talked about the key all week was getting the drive stopped. Sometimes we got it stopped sooner, sometimes we got it stopped later and in that case it was one of those that got stopped later. But in the end it got stopped.

How important is it to stay in the fight and have a chance to win it in the end?

Well, that's what it's about. These games are tight every week. They played in a close one last week. We played in a close one. You got to just stay in there. You got to keep fighting, take care of the football, execute a few couple critical plays. I thought there at the end, just being able to roll out and find Hop (DeAndre Hopkins) to give us the yardage that we needed with the rain coming.

How good was it to be able to do it without turnovers today?

Well, we didn't turn them over, I don't think, on the other side. So that made it nice. We got to keep going for the ball. We got to get it out the quarterback's hand. Had a couple of opportunities in the secondary and we have to take advantage of those opportunities.

What do you think of the way Ryan (Tannehill) responded to last week?

That's what Ryan's (Tannehill) done. One of the tougher players on our team. I know we got a bunch of tough guys, but he stood in there and got the (crap) knocked out of him a couple times late and I respect the heck out of it and kept battling. Hit some shots, which was great to see, down the field.

Did you have any doubt at all that he (Nick Folk) would make it?

He'd been really good. That's what he's done and that's what you need in this league, is a guy that's reliable in critical situations.

What's going through your head as the rain came down before the final kick?

Is it going to stop? Is it going to slow down? We got a couple of downs to play with. How much harder is it going to rain? Is this one of those that stops in a minute? Do we need to run another play or is it just like, 'Let's put a foot on this thing.'

How was it for Dillon Radunz to come in and give you as many snaps as he did filling in at left guard?

Well, it was certainly a quick turnaround from when he was hurt. And again, all the credit goes to Dillon (Radunz) to be able to do that and get back. Having worked at tackle and guard, just felt like early on

we'll put him in there. Was able to stay alive and I'm sure that there was going to be some mistakes. But it's great to see him back out there. It's a phenomenal turnaround.

Was Xavier (Newman) just having trouble with the games and blitzes?

Just wanted to see what it looked like with Dillon (Radunz). We had two guys there that hadn't been working in there. Give Dillon a shot and go from there.

How did you like the secondary play in the first overtime series?

We were playing some zone and they hit a couple of seams on us. Liked what Shane (Bowen) did and changed up some things and got on body and guys responded. It was just good to see us stay tight in coverage and challenge. Early on it's like some of the calls and they're throwing it in front of us. Just making sure that we're not getting the ball thrown over our head. Then it was great to be able to challenge there in overtime. Three fantastic plays, executed well by the defense. Jeff(ery Simmons) had good pressure. He slipped or that ball probably would have been out. But it was good to see really tight coverage.

How good was it to score in the redzone? A lot better than last week.

Well, every week is different. You guys hear me say that all the time. Every week is different. We were able to get stops on defense this week. We were able to double them up at halftime with the field goal and then scoring a touchdown and putting a drive together. You can just see the difference in our efficiency when it's, instead of third-and-10, we're able to function at a better down and distance. There were times that we had gained five yards and ahead of schedule. Silly penalty, second-and-10, third-and-10. So you guys can see it as well as we can, when we get into drives and we're able to let those plays complement each other, that's when we can be effective and then get down in a red zone. Had a shot, everybody went on the ball from the five and was able to score two plays later.

What did the (Treyton) Burks play do for energy on the sideline, energy in the stadium?

Yes, it was critical. We need that from Treyton (Burks), being able to run through the catch there was fantastic. Got over the top, protection held up. Ryan (Tannehill) gave him a fantastic ball. But, I'm with you. We were leaking oil and we needed somebody to step up and make a play. And that was a huge play.

Derrick (Henry) seemed like he did a heck of a job in pass protection today?

Well, we expect a lot out of him. We throw him the football. We try to get it to him different ways. Sometimes, again, with the team that came in blitzing as much as they did and figuring that they were going to blitz, backs are going to have to be good in protection.

Were those deep plays to Treyton (Burks) and Chris (Moore) things you thought would be there?

Yeah, those are things that we always try to get and a lot of that is dictated on whether we can hold up. They plays some post safety and they get on you. Chris (Moore) had a great week of practice. Treyton (Burks) continued to get better throughout the week with some of the details and so those are really cool to see when it translates into the football game.

How good is it getting the winning feeling back?

Well, it's important. It's important to get off to a good start. Again, tight games at home. We needed it. We all needed it. But we can be able to learn from it and see when we do the things that we talk about in practice and the execution, what it looks like.

The (Derrick) Henry/ (Tyjae) Spears combination seemed to work out nicely, is that how it can be?

We'll have to continue to try to find ways to get both those guys the ball. Tyjae (Spears) does good stuff and Derrick's (Henry) always done good stuff. We just have to continue to work and be creative and know that they both can help us in different ways.

QUARTERBACK RYAN TANNEHILL

How do you feel after your big win today?

Yeah, it's great to get things going a little bit for us. Obviously, we wanted to come back and play well today after last week. So, excited to be able to do that, get back on the field, felt great to be back out there and were able to pull the win out at the end. So, made it a lot of fun.

What was the feeling when you guys got the ball back after a defensive stop? And how that last drive went to put (Titans kicker) Nick (Folk) in position?

Yeah, it was huge. We had a lot of momentum there. The defense came up. The crowd was into it and that's what you want when you're playing at home. Defense comes up huge with the three-and-out, get a decent punt return there, I think we got an extra 10 yards or so on the punt return. So, we had a lot of momentum there and we were able to string some plays together and get down in field goal range. It started raining there for a second and then right when we were about to snap it, it calmed down a little bit and Nick (Folks) hammered it through. So, I'm proud of our guys, the way we battled, stuck together throughout the game, through the ups and downs. That's the way football games are. It's never going to be perfect. You're going to have ups and downs and if you stick together, face that adversity, and then make big plays when it comes down to it, you're going to find a way to win. And that's what we did today.

What does it do for you when you're able to complete those long plays?

Well, it's huge. It gets us going a little bit. When you're able to hit a chunk like that, you're not going to have a 15-play drive to score. You're able to shorten the amount of plays it's going to take you to get into the end zone and build some momentum. Hit a play like that, it opens up some underneath stuff, as well. It does a lot of things for you. I'm proud of our guys. The way we practiced, we were able to hit some in practice and then those same guys are able to show up on Sunday and make the same play.

From a confidence perspective, how much does that help you get into the flow and just feel good about the game?

Well, it helps, right? Anytime you're having efficient plays and moving the ball down field, finishing drives with touchdowns, you're building confidence as a unit and those big plays definitely help do that.

How good does it feel with the first win since last November? And how good does it feel in the locker room?

It felt great. We're not thinking about last year or anything like that, but great to bounce back from the start we had last week and find a way to get to 1-1. And it feels good to celebrate a win in the locker

room. Those are the memories that, I think back over the course of my career, is celebrating tough, hard-fought games like today in the locker room with your teammates. Guys that you go to battle with. So, definitely added another great memory.

After those tough first three drives, did something specifically start clicking that you guys started sustaining it a bit more or was it confidence?

I don't remember exactly how the drive shook out, but I think we moved it. The first time we had it, got a few first downs, so it wasn't like we were just going out there and running back off the field. So, we're doing some good stuff to sustain drives and be able to finish and put points on the board. We were able to hit the big play downfield, which helped and got things rolling after that.

Did you feel a little bit more comfortable when Dillon (Radunz) came into that left guard spot?

I'm proud of those guys and the way they battled. X (Xavier Newman) came in on short notice and battled. Dillon (Radunz) stepped in and kind of thrown into the fire. Thought we were going to ease him back in a little bit after coming off the rehab and got thrown into the fire. Proud of him and the way he battled for us and came up big.

Did you feel anything differently today? Or do anything differently?

No, I felt great coming into today. I was able to flush what happened last week by Wednesday, after I talked to you guys, and then have a great week of practice and get prepared and ready to roll tonight/today.

What was it like last week, trying to get to today?

Obviously, watching the tape, it sucks. You're looking at the negative things and the things you want to correct and you're excited to get back out here. But once I was able to make those corrections with my teammates, with the coaches, I was able to put it behind me and get going for the next week. You have a long season. You can't harbor good things or bad things. We came up with a big win today. We'll celebrate tonight, enjoy it tonight. And then tomorrow, we'll start get ready for the next one.

How much did the big play with (Titans WR) Treylon (Burks) exhilarate the whole sideline and pump everybody up to have some confidence?

It's huge. It gets the crowd back into it. It gets the sideline back into it. That sparked the touchdown, and we were able to kind of pound it in there after that play by Treylon (Burks). So, that was huge for us getting some momentum and getting things rolling the right way.

How long have you been petitioning to run the triple option play?

We ran it a little bit during camp. I wasn't sure when it was going to show up, but it was a great play call. And then it's nice having Derrick (Henry) run out there and the safety just runs to him, so it made it a little bit easier for me. I definitely took a hit there on the goal line.

How important was it for DeAndre (Hopkins) to make that catch in critical situations when he's not getting high volume targets?

He came up big in some critical situations. He came up big on a third down. I was able to get him on a slant-backside and at the end getting us deep into field goal range there. He came up huge, right? He got

leverage on the play and was able to get the guy running and in and win at the top. So, any time a guy can show up for you big like that in critical situations, it really helps.

Harold Landry leaned on you a lot during his recovery, having been through what he went through, seeing your teammate come up with that big of a play to force that game to OT, how cool is that for you to see that moment for him?

Yeah, it's so fun. I was just talking to him in the locker room. I'm proud of the way he battled through. It feels like – I can't speak for what he feels like; you can ask him – but it was a lot of fun to see him make a play there at the end in a critical situation. It doesn't get any bigger than that, where our backs are against the wall there on defense needed a stop in order to force it into overtime, Harold (Landry) comes up huge and makes a big play. So, after everything he's went through, all the ups and downs of rehabbing and how hard that is, to see him go out there and make a play in that critical situation, is a lot of fun for me and I know we appreciate him as a team.

What went through your mind when you saw the (Nick) Folk field goal went through?

Yeah, I was standing up on the sideline there. Nick's (Folk) been so good since he came here, in practice, in games. So, there was never a doubt that thing wasn't going to get hammered through there and didn't even look close to me. So, I don't know where it was, but I know it went through and that's all that matters.

We were talking to Jeff Simmons across the hall just now, and he was talking about how great it was to get a win. And he said, I told Ryan this week, he's my quarterback and I stand with him. What's it like to know that Jeff Simmons and your teammates have your back, no matter what?

It means a lot. I knew last week wasn't who I am as a player. I knew I was going to bounce back this week but it's nice to feel that support from your teammates throughout the week. It wasn't one big conversation or anything like that because they see how I prepare and how I play. So, I don't think there was ever a doubt that we were going to be able to bounce back. But that support, no doubt, it definitely helps build that confidence.

LINEBACKER AZEEZ AL-SHAIR

How much pressure was there for the Titans' defense to hold the Chargers in overtime, to allow the offense to kick the field goal for the win?

It was a huge. Harold (Landry) coming up with the sack. Me and Harold had been talking really, since I got here, but the last couple of weeks, trying to find a rhythm. This is obviously his first time playing football in over a year, so just for him to make that play was huge for everybody. The whole day our front seven, our back end just playing complementary football with the offense and special teams. Just like I said, I'm proud of everybody.

You mentioned it seems like whenever the defense needed to make a play, guys were ready to make a play, and same for the offense, when they needed to make a play, they were able to do it. That's wasn't really the case last week what changed?

Each week is going to present new challenges and you've got to learn from whatever happened the week before, and flush it down the drain, and keep going. And that's exactly what we all did as a group. Offense, defense, special teams. And you've seen that happen today. Obviously now, it's going to be

great, because everybody's gonna be like, 'Oh, the Titans look good now.' And everything that everybody wrote trash, is going to be good. Either way, I can't rely on what you say about me to dictate how we feel. We've got to keep staying true to who we are, and staying true to what we talk about in our fundamentals as a team, and keep going.

How important is it to build up that winning feeling here at the beginning of the season?

Man, it feels good. Obviously, you want to win every single game. And it's one week at a time, and this week we got the W. However you get it, it doesn't matter. You get a win in the National Football League, it's always a big deal. Enjoy it for 24 hours, and then you have to learn from it, the good and the bad, and on to the next. Be ready for the next opponent. It's going to present its own challenges next week that aren't going to be the same as this week.

WIDE RECEIVER TREYLON BURKS

What was it like to just see (Ryan) Tannehill back out there doing his thing today, like it didn't faze him at happened last week?

That's really important for the whole team to have him comfortable, able to go out and just play his game and have fun doing it. And he showed that today, and I'm extremely proud of him.

How big is it week to week, last week you obviously weren't super involved, this week you make a play to get things going, kind of a team-wide thing where some guys get more opportunities?

I wouldn't say all that. I will just say, when your name is called, you go make the play. And when it's not, you still just out there and play your game.

How important was it just to get a win after losing seven in a row coming into today?

It's real important because everybody wants to win. And we were able to do that today and we just want to keep building off of it.

KICKER NICK FOLK

You been through this situation a million times, what's goes though your mind when you are lining up for the kick?

I try to treat every kick the same, that's what I kind of do. So, you know had a good day going with a few extra point and a field goal already. So felt like I was in a pretty good rhythm.

How has your past experiences prepared you for moments like this?

There's a lot you can lean on and learn from every kick. So every kick I've learned something good or bad. So just try to take the good and move on and learn from the bad.

How did it feel to get that game winner for the team?

I thought it was good to get a win. I think defense held in overtime and the offense had a great drive going, moved the ball when they needed to and it was a total team effort. It wasn't just me. I just got to put the cherry on top. The team did a great job today. Everyone, coaches, players, hats off to the entire locker room.

You have had some big kicks in your first two games?

Yeah, anytime you can help the team stay in games and win games is a good start. Hopefully we can keep it going. You know, talking to Morgan (Cox) after we enjoy the game winner but at the same time we like the blowouts too so we can have a good time and get the win. I think the most important thing is just getting the win; however, you have to do it. And today was a full team effort to do it.

RUNNING BACK DERRICK HENRY

Was there a relief feeling for the team to finally get a win today?

We feel very excited. Finally get one in the win column. The guys played hard and fought hard, we got the win at the end of the day.

How do you think Treyton's (Burks) completion got you guys up and running?

Definitely got us up and running. Big momentum shift, we were a bit stalemated to that point. He made a big play for us, when we really needed it and got us going. It was a big play for him, we were able to make a bit play and get it in the endzone.

How did you feel about going into over time and that game winning kick?

Defense did a great job. Especially in overtime, getting us the ball back and us being able to go down and put three points in to end the game. Nick (Folk) did a great job getting it in there. I feel IT was great job overall with execution on both sides of the ball and it was a team effort.

The usage you and Tyjae (Spears) seemed to work pretty well. Do you think that's going to be a difficult thing for teams to handle?

Yeah, we hope so. Be a one-two punch, a great tandem. Being able to make plays and move the ball down the field. I feel we did a great job as well.

At what point during the option play, did you realize Ryan (Tannehill) was going to keep it going in?

I figured Derwin (James) would go with me, and Ryan (Tannehill) would be able to fake it and get north and south. I feel like he did a great job leading us today.

You get a lot of accolades for running the ball, but you had a lot of big blocks in pass protection today. How much pride do you take in that as part of your game?

I just try to do my job, when the ball's not in my hands, to help in anyway possible to help us get a play going and execution just help anyway possible, pass blocking on play pass, just doing my job.

How do you important do you think performance was for Ryan (Tannehill)?

I knew Ryan (Tannehill) was going to come out and a respond well like he did today. No worry from me. He was high energy and just ready to go to work.

When you see him standing there and take that beating and still deliver how does that affect your respect for him?

I've always had respect for Ryan (Tannehill). Ever since he got here and been our starting quarterback, like I already said, this is how he plays and he's been doing well and he does everything he can to help us win.

When you say he was high energy this week, was that any different than normal?

In high energy I mean just positive, not down at all, ready to go to work, ready to put the work in and go out there and let it showcase on Sunday. He worked hard all week, and I knew it would pay off.

It's been a while since you guys scored as many points as you did today, was this a confident building game for the offense?

Yeah, definitely. It felt good to get in the endzone, get in there multiple times. Different guys getting in there and putting plays together to lead to points. Like you said it's been a while, so definitely a lot of good things to build off of. We came correct. At the end of the day, it's a positive getting the dub and getting in the endzone and making some plays.

Seeing Dillon (Radunz) go through all his rehab in the last year, and he came out today in a big game when you guys really needed him in that spot. How do you feel for him?

It's incredible for a guy like him to have that injury and work as hard as he had to get back to us. The credit goes all to him and his determination to get back. The work he put in and his work ethic, glad to have it back out there. He did a great job getting out there.

We've been looking forward to seeing your pregame outfit. What do you call that kind of top?

The Mariachi. So, its Hispanic Heritage Month. My daughter's half-Mexican, my girl's Mexican and I'm really close to her and her family. I had been thinking about doing it for a while now, it was a good time to do it right now. It's going on the (Sept) 15th to October 15th, so I just wanted to recognize the Hispanic culture.

Did your daughter love the outfit?

Yes, she was happy. Anything she sees me wear, she loves. She's always energized in the morning. I feel like everybody, they liked it, and it was a good response.

What was going through your mind when it was sunny the whole game and it started raining with your kicker running out there. What was the conversation like on the sideline?

We were in the drive once it started raining. All I was thinking was 'Just get this thing in the endzone or get three points so we can get out of here before it gets crazy.' So we were able to get the win before it really started lightning and pouring down.

Was there any doubt he would make the kick?

No doubt at all. We'd seen him last week and knew we were going to win.

LINEBACKER HAROLD LANDRY III

How about the complimentary football you guys were able to play today? It seemed like whenever you guys needed to make a play, you did, and the offense did, as well.

Oh yeah. I mean I just felt like, you know, this is a Tennessee Titan win. I just felt like we would just battle, and battle, and that's kind of how we like it. That gritty type of win.

What would you say about the character of this team? You snapped that 8-game losing streak and obviously, you don't want to start 0-2, you get to 1-1.

Yeah. I mean, I just feel like with the culture we have here, we're going to be in every single game. And then it's just up to us to rise to the moment. So in that fourth quarter or overtime, to take it home.

Does it feel like you guys always play those types of games against the Chargers?

I just feel like we're a good team, regardless of who we're playing, when it comes down to the wire. I just feel like we're built for gritty games like that. We don't overreact to any certain situations, and I just feel like we rise to the occasion.

How good does it feel to make a play that obviously kind of set things in motion to win it?

I mean, it's so great. I felt like it was honestly, a relief because I was just trying to get that first sack under my belt. Now I just got to get back to work and keep preparing and play better. It's a relief to get that first one under your belt. And now I just got to continue to focus on my preparation, and practice and just improving.

How big was the complimentary football today, just for both sides to kind of do their part.

I just feel like that's when we're at our best. We're playing complementary football, and we're just helping each other out, and I feel like we're a great team when it comes to the gritty games that come down to the wire. I feel like we rise to the occasion. Yeah, I mean, that's just Tennessee football.

WIDE RECEIVER CHRIS MOORE

You guys made some big plays when you needed to. And what was really remarkable about it is each and every one, you did, everybody made a big play today?

Yeah, I mean we had to have it, we got great players. The o-line did a great job protecting and Ryan (Tannehill) got the ball out and we got rolling.

What does it say about the character of this team? Obviously, you weren't here for it, but, eight straight losses this is coming into this game. Not necessarily a must win in week two, but you didn't want to start 0-2 and you get the win.

Yeah, I've definitely since I've been here, I can tell this is a deep organization. There's a lot of character here and a lot of great guys. We're out there fighting, we don't stop.

On to Cleveland....

We're going to be back in work, be in here working tomorrow. We will put this game behind us and make corrections to continue to get better.

TIGHT END CHIG OKONKWO

Offensively, how did you feel today, with the Titans' offense mixing it up with runs and play action passing, and throwing long balls?

That's what we do. That's when we are at our best, is when we are able to run and we're able to pass, when we aren't being one dimensional. So we were able to do that today and that's why we had success.

After the bitter taste of losing the eighth straight game last week, how did it feel to come into the home opener and get a win?

A victory is always awesome. A win is a win. Loved it. Come back next week, on the road, and do it again.

OFFENSIVE LINEMAN DILLON RADUNZ

There are so many new faces on the line, does it feel like you are the veteran of the group?

I have (Aaron) Brewer and Corey Levin, were the guys who were here when I was a rookie, and everybody else has been 100% turnover. So, yeah, it's just kind of been interesting to move along and just being, I guess a vet, compared to the other guys as a Titan. So yeah, just trying to step into that role and do the best I can in that role.

How do you feel just coming in and how long do you feel to get comfortable?

We do the practice reps all the time, so I felt pretty comfortable in practice and I knew going in the game if I had to play, I feel comfortable. So, the knee overall physically felt great. I mean, obviously butterflies, any time you go out there and compete in front of that many people and stuff like that. So, I think it was just more nerves settling in and was able to do that and played a good game and we won. So, it's good.

What was the conversation about what was happening with while Xavier was in?

Always, we always have those pictures on the sideline. We always knew what was happening, what people were struggling with, what people aren't struggling with, what games they're throwing at us and stuff. So, we got those pictures on the sideline and we were able to just figure that out. So then when I went in, I was fully prepared.

DEFENSIVE TACKLE JEFFERY SIMMONS

How big was it when Harold (Landry III) made that sack towards the end of the game? You have to be happy for the team, when that happens.

Hey, my message to Harold this whole time, has been 'let it come to you'. Right before we did that call out for the defense, pregame, I said 'let it come to you'. And he was like, 'I got you'. And prime example right there, man. Everyone is on the same page, and doing their job and right there, he had a huge effort to make a play. And that was a huge play, that helped, honestly, win the game right there. So, you know, that's a hell of a job, with him just staying focused and letting it come to him.

What can you say about this team battling back and forth throughout the game, and ultimately coming back?

Everything showed today, our culture, the way we're built around here in Tennessee. We're willing to fight for each other. No matter what, the defense is going on the field, to get a turnover. You know, we went for it early in the game. We went out on the field. We made them kick the field goal in that situation. So, we just call it 'sudden change'. That's our goal each and every game. You've got to work together, special teams, offense and defense. Today showed that we played as one. It wasn't pretty. But at the end of the day, we played as one, and got a win.

You said earlier in the week that, ‘Hey, it's time to win a game’. How good does it feel?

It feels wonderful, man. We haven't won since the Packers. We've got to go back to winning, man. Today it's just amazing, man. Like I said, a hell of a job, to the offense. And then the granddaddy on the team, Nick (Folk) going down to make the field goal. I told Tanny (Ryan Tannehill) ‘Man, you're our quarterback. I believe in you. We've got your back.’ That's a hell of a job to go down, on a drive, and get a field goal at the end.

CHARGERS

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

What happened offensively last time when you got the ball?

We had a tough time protecting the passer today. We just didn't do well enough in that phase to give us a chance in overtime.

How do you think your defense played today?

I thought we had a lot of good stretches in the game. I thought the two big passes were a big story in the game. And then those two third down penalties I thought were a big story in the game. But I thought we did a good job on the back. I thought we pressured the quarterback and I thought we were connected in pass coverage outside of those two big passes.

Why do you feel like your guys are continuing to give up explosive plays in the passing game?

Yeah, our guys just have to respect the deep part of the field. We're moving the hard downs around, but our guys got a winning pass coverage and they got to respect the deep part of the field and they got to know who on the other team can get there.

That's a message you've been giving to this team since the day you arrived. Why is that message not getting through?

Well, it's going to get there. It's there every single day. And our secondary, we got full belief in and those guys, everybody that plays for us in the back seven. It's early in the season and we're going to keep getting better.

Was the unnecessary roughness just a play that should not have been made?

It's just a bang-bang play. It's a slant, he's coming, he read it beautifully. Those bang-bang plays where he's making a break and then the receiver lowers, you got a low target. Those are, those are tough plays on these players in the NFL. No harm for Derwin (James) on that.

Were the two roughing the passer penalties, one on Bash (Sebastian Joseph-Day) and on one Kenneth (Murray Jr) just bad decisions?

Yeah, they were costly plays for us. Bash (Sebastian Joseph-Day), in that sequence we had gave up two third-down penalties on that drive, which turned into points. If those don't happen, then we're off the field and we feel a lot different about our day.

Two for 14 on third down offensively. Do you attribute that to what you're saying earlier about pass protection or are there more issues there?

Yeah, it really started with their front. Their front is really good, tough to block and we just didn't do a good enough job for that.

How did you feel about the way Joey (Bosa) played?

Two sacks, I thought he played aggressively. I'm glad he was out there. It says a lot about him, that he wanted to be out there, and we definitely have to build that off that. I thought we rushed the passer well today and I thought he was a big reason why.

Do attribute the struggles running the ball to Tennessee?

Yeah, they've got a very good front, a good front seven. We tried to stay patient with the run, but we just weren't able to get any of the splitters today.

You're aware of the percentages when you start 0-2 or at least lose back-to-back games. What's your message to the team as far as what's left ahead of you?

Yeah, we have 15 games ahead of us. We lost two really tough games right there at the end, an overtime game and one that may as well have been an overtime game. So, we're doing a lot of good things out there. The mistakes that we made out there, we can correct all of them. We've got a really good group in all three phases, and we just have to connect and really put together a complete performance.

How did you get this team to believe in what you're trying to do?

We've got guys who are finishers. We've got a quarterback who's as good as anybody in the NFL. A guy who's brought us back time and time again since I've been here and throughout his entire football playing career. I think defensively we've got a lot of closers. We just got to do it together as a team and we've had the tough side of it here. But this group is capable of that. It's a group that is connected and we're going to find our way and this group is going to show what it's made of.

Do you think the Jacksonville loss carried over?

I'm not worried about the Jacksonville loss. The Jacksonville loss hasn't carried onto the season whatsoever. If you've seen our training camp, or you've seen the way we've played in the first two games, it hasn't had an impact on our team whatsoever. Our team is connected. Our team has played our hearts out two games and we've lost two tough games. That has nothing to do with the Jacksonville game. And if you ask anyone in our locker room, it has nothing to do with the Jacksonville game and that's just the truth. It's a convenient storyline for you and for everybody else, but it's not the truth. We've lost two tough games, but the guys in that locker room, the men in that locker room, they are finishers, and they have what it takes, and we're excited to prove ourselves.

What is the mood of the locker room right now?

We just lost a game in overtime, so how do you think the mood is? How do you think the mood is? How do you think it is? It's tough. It's tough. It's a tough, tough group and there's a lot of pride in that room.

We put a lot into this, and we got a good football team. And so, we've lost two tough games. We got to bounce back, learn from our mistakes and be ready for Minnesota.

QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

Two for 14 on third down today. What did you see as some of the issues for you guys on third down?

Just have to capitalize on third down, it's up to us as an offense to execute better. So, we are going to have to watch film and do better at that.

Can you pinpoint anything specifically on those third downs? Brandon (Staley) mentioned that there could have been some pass protection issues, but anything from your perspective?

I would have to check the film on that. Obviously, it's not what we were hoping for, we are aiming to be higher and better than that. So that's our responsibility as an offense to be better than that. That's something we will have to focus on this week at practice.

How much of a challenge was their front? Obviously, we talked about that coming into the game. Brandon mentioned especially Jeffrey Simmons up there, but just how much of a challenge was it dealing with that?

They're very good. They're a good defense. They have a good front seven. It was up to us to have a good plan and we didn't execute. So that's on us as an offense and we have to be better because of it.

As one of the leaders on the team, what would you say after two losses by 5 points.

It's part of the NFL. Obviously, you never want to be in this position, but I know that we got the right guys in that locker room, we are going to stay together and stay tough and really get this thing going because it's a long season. There's a lot of football left. We're not where we want to be right now, but that doesn't mean that we can't get there in a couple of weeks.

The three-and-out in overtime. Anything specifically that you felt went wrong there for you guys?

Probably the three incompletions.

Any reason for the incompletions?

Just didn't execute so it's on us as an offense to be able to complete the ball. That's on me as a quarterback to be able to complete the ball.

DEFENSIVE LINEMAN JOEY BOSA

Can you break down what happened on defense and what could have gone differently?

I don't think there's some magical answer that people keep asking about. I think it's the little things that every single one of us needs to do a little better. A few plays here—which I mean, I've said this probably a bunch of times after a loss but—a few plays here, a few plays there, being a little smarter on some penalties or whatever it is, and I think we come away with a victory. But yeah, it sucks any time.

A lot of high expectations going into this season. What do you think is missing?

Like I just said, there's no magical answer, I think, piece that's missing. It's all of us doing our job a little bit better. Whether it's winning a one-on-one, whether it's not fouling, whether it's playing the run a little better, whatever it is. I think we have all the right pieces and the right guys, it's just about, like I said, the little things.

What do you think of the third-down pressure today? Seems like you guys got to (Ryan) Tannehill quite a bit.

Yeah, I think we had a good rush plan, mixing up the games inside and trying to rush a little better, fuller as one. I wish we could have got them down a couple more times. I think that would have turned the tide completely. They have a hell of a defense, obviously. It was a battle of defenses for a while, but they figured things out after those three third-down stops, and kind of got rolling a little bit on offense. So, it's tough. I mean, we'll obviously get to watch the film and really dissect it a little bit more. But like I said, I think it's just a few things here and there, whether it's winning a one-on-one, taking advantage of our opportunities when we have them.

Physically, you're fine?

I feel fine. It was a little strain last week. But to be able to recover and get back out there and at least help my team a little bit meant a lot to me. But yeah, just wanted to be smart. The rotation was a little weird, a couple of times I should have been out there probably on third-down, but Coach (Brandon Staley) rightfully so, was just being smart about it. I feel bad that I was down at all today, but I think it was smart, watching the plays. I should be able to come back strong next week.

So you came out of there fine?

Yeah, totally fine.

RUNNING BACK JOSH KELLEY

How would you describe the way this loss feels compared to last week.

It's tough because losing, no matter how you lose, whether it was last week or this week, they all feel the same. It's like we came up short and it sucks right now. But we just got to look positive and be like, all right, bounce back next week because it's a long season. We still got a lot of games left.

I walked into the locker room and seemed like half the players were still in their chairs, almost like you guys were stunned. Is that the feeling you guys have?

Yeah, you know. I felt like we could have won this game, same way last week. We probably felt like we could have won that game as well. But, this is how the NFL works. If you're not dialed in and locked in the whole game, that's the difference between 0-2 and 2-0. So, it's unfortunate but we just can't get that feeling in our heads where we're like 'dang.' We've just got to bounce back.

What do you think went into the third down struggles on offense today.

I haven't really watched the film yet to see. I know they brought a lot of pressures. I know they're getting a lot of penetration, but it's tough. We've got to protect the quarterback. He's a great player, so when we give him chances, you saw what he did in the two-minute drill. So, we just got to make sure he's protected.