



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sunday, December 26, 2021

POSTGAME QUOTES

<p style="text-align: center;">Head Coach David Culley</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RB Rex Burkhead</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WR Chris Conley</p> <p style="text-align: center;">QB Davis Mills</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DB Jonathan Owens</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DB Justin Reid</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Head Coach Brandon Staley</p> <p style="text-align: center;">QB Justin Herbert</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OL Rashawn Slater</p>
<p>HOUSTON TEXANS MEDIA WEBSITE</p> <p>Postgame quotes, notes and more available on the Houston Texans Media Website</p> <p>Username: Your Email (Custom access) or 'HoustonTexans' (Generic access)</p> <p>Password: TexansMedia</p>	

HOUSTON TEXANS

HEAD COACH DAVID CULLEY (Transcribed by ASAP Sports)

Opening Statement

“Coach (Brandon) Staley and that crew, that's a very good football team. That's a playoff-caliber football team. I've got the utmost respect for them for what they do, and I just wanted to give them their props. That's a good football team.”

Can you talk about QB Davis Mills' performance?

“I think it all starts with our offensive line, not just Davis and our receivers. I thought our offensive line and our backs did a great job of protection and making plays when plays were there. When you do that and you protect him, you're able to run the ball, good things happen. Our quarterback was able to execute what we asked him to do, and that's what his job is to do. Protect the ball and get us in the end zone, and our offense did a good job of that today. Again, I've just got to let you know this here before I get started. I thought Tim (Kelly), Lovie (Smith) and Frank (Ross) did a great job on all three phases, the most complete game we've had this year. They put it together. We finally got a score on defense. I knew it was coming eventually. I kind of wish he would have went down, because if he would have went down, the game's over. But when he saw that end zone, he went for it. I just wanted to make sure to give those guys those props because they did a great job of preparation with everything we went through this week.”

How did the receivers step up?

“I'll tell you what, I'm going to go back to the next-man-up mentality. They've been that way all year. Chris Moore, all those guys had to fill in today. Phillip Dorsett, all those guys have done a great job. Again,



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



I go back to Robert (Prince) and Ben (McDaniels), they do a great job with those guys. And truly, truly the next-man-up mentality was in today, and those guys didn't bat an eye."

Can you talk about the offensive line and RB Rex Burkhead?

"The continuity was what was happening with our offensive line. Those guys stepped in there. We knew the situation. We weren't going to change what we were going to do. I thought Tim (Kelly) had a great game plan for being able to mix the run in and (ran) it when we had an opportunity to run it. Off of that, obviously you saw we ended up getting some big plays because of that. But it all started with our offensive line. I think the continuity, I thought Coach (James) Campen and Robert (Kugler) did a great job having those guys prepared, and really no distractions, no disruptions. They just went out and played the game. When you play the game the right way, you get results like this. It doesn't matter who you play."

How big is it that you were able to rely on the run game in a crucial situation?

"That's very important because all day long, we were able to run the ball and get positive yardage. There was only a couple of plays that we had in the run game that were negative yardage plays. Normally, when Rex (Burkhead) has the ball in his hands, it's going to be a plus-yardage play. But again, there was no hesitation at all with Tim (Kelly) and what we felt like we needed to do in that particular situation. And we're probably in a situation, too, where if we got down into a third-and-four, we (would've) run the ball. If we got down to fourth-and-one or fourth-and-two, we were probably going to go for it. That's how much confidence I had in what our offense was doing today. And it was very, very key in us being successful in everything we did today offensively."

What were your thoughts on the defense?

"I'm going to go back, eliminate the big plays. Whoever those guys that are in there playing those spots, they understand when they go in what their responsibilities are. Those guys went in and they did their job. They did what the defense asked them to do, and when you do that, the results come. That's a very, very explosive offensive football team. Our guys kept the ball in front of them for the most part. They broke a couple of runs on us. We got out of our gaps a couple times, but I thought our entire defense played consistently all day. Getting the three turnovers, that's who we are."

On the final scoring drive in the first half, it looked like things weren't going well. You had the penalty, timeout, then another penalty. What did you think of QB Davis Mills' ability to respond through those early struggles to hit those two big throws?

"You just brought up something that's really, very disappointing for our football team today, the penalties. We had way too many penalties today, more so than we've had in probably the last four or five games, which we can't have. We got away with it sometimes, but we kept drives alive for them with penalties. We got ourselves off the field a couple of times because of those penalties. But the point was I thought Tim (Kelly) called a great game from the standpoint of just staying the course. Our run game was working. We used it to get us back some yardage. And Davis (Mills) made some throws to get us nice third down plays. That's a culmination of the entire offense doing their job and allowing him to do his job."

Can you talk about the resolve that your team showed?

"We've got a motto here -- Team, Team, Team. It's been that way from the word go. I had guys playing today that felt like they should have been playing way before they got the time to play because of the



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



COVID. I always said to them, be careful what you wish for. They got it today and those guys came in showed that they were ready to do what we needed to be done. And you talk about the resolve. This team is so resilient. They've never really worried about what happens on the outside. All we've tried to do is just get better and get better. I thought today was one of those days where we probably played our most complete football game."

Do you feel like the way your team was able to run the ball this week after you've been focusing on that all season will be something you'll all be able to build on going forward?

"I hope so. I hope to carry it on. Obviously, when we're able to do that, it makes things much better for us offensively and we're able to control the ball. We knew today going into this game we had to control the ball against this football team because you give the ball back to this team so much, they are very explosive."

What did you think of RB Rex Burkhead's game today?

"He's been Mr. Consistent for us. He's a guy that's going to get north and south. He knows how to play. He just knows how to play the game. Rex could probably play another position. That's just how instinctive he is as a football player. What happened today is we got him on the perimeter and our receivers and tight ends made some blocks for him. Of course, he made some guys miss and he took it in the end zone just like you would expect him to do with the situation he had in front of him."

What did you see from DB Jonathan Owens and DB Tavierre Thomas?

"I was so proud of Jonathan. He stepped in for us last week. He's been getting a bunch of playing time. He's a guy that's getting better and better the more time he's gotten. And I tell you that was a big interception that he got for us at that time. It was a momentum swing change for us. I'm just so proud of him and all those guys that have stepped in and played for us."

What was it like when you walk off the field with the win and nobody outside your locker room gave this team a chance to win today except the guys in your locker room? How does that feel when you think about that?

"Here's the thing, we're only concerned, this football team is only being concerned with what's happening in the locker room. We know there's a lot of noise outside of this locker room. We've tried all year long to stay away from that noise. And some of that noise is good. Some of that noise is bad. Good or bad you've got to stay away from that and understand that the most important thing is to understand that your teammates. This organization has been great from the standpoint of being able to give us what we need to do, what we need to do here. And this entire staff here has done a great job of helping us stay the course, which we've done and because of that this is what happens. And it doesn't matter who the opponent is. It's just the next game. Just like after this one, we're going to enjoy this one, and then I think the next one is San Francisco, we're going to go play it to try to win three in a row. Our goal was to finally get two in a row. We had three opportunities this year to be able to do that and didn't do it. Today we got two. This coming week we want to try to get three."

In so many games this season you guys were close at halftime and the second half the opponent pulled away. Today you kept your foot on the gas the whole time. Have you been talking more about that as a team, staying strong in the second half?

"I think the big thing was today in the first half we were pretty consistent in the first half. Again, I think, I can't remember, I think we scored on the first drive. And that's something we've been doing for a while. We did not do that in the second half. But the thing about it was when we came out in the second half, we just carried over what we started in the first half and the difference is today we were just able to execute better. When we've had our issues in the past, it's been simply because we haven't executed very well. Our guys did a nice job today of just



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



staying the course, understanding what we were doing. When you're running the ball like we were running the ball today, those kinds of things will allow you to be effective in the second half, which we haven't been able to do up and to this point."

How do you explain being able to execute today better than you have any game this year but with so many players out?

"Well, those same players have been watching the guys in front. We've been running those same plays. Again, people say what's different in than before? What's different than before is we're running the plays better. We're executing better. Those guys that have stepped in that haven't got a lot of reps have been watching the video. They see those guys when the mistakes are being made and they know when their time comes. Obviously, those guys get a bunch of mental reps and those mental reps are so important that when your time comes to be able to go execute. And those guys went in and executed today. And that's what we expect of them."

At what one point you had DB Tremon Smith in the backfield. What did that say about your run game and using him in that situation?

"We knew we were going to run some outside stuff on this team and we knew speed was important. Tremon runs very well and he's been asking for that anyway. So, we use him in that situation and obviously he helped us today."

Over what you all have been trying to build all year, what does this game mean in the full context of what you're trying to do here?

"It means that when we go back and look at the video, what's going to happen you're going to see it and you're going to say we probably weren't as good as we thought we were but we're better than we have been. We just got to make sure that we correct those things that wasn't very good today that could have cost us and get better at doing those things and continue to do what we did today."

How are WR Chris Moore and WR Phillip Dorsett doing?

"Chris just had a little, I think it was a cramp. And then Dorsett, I think, had a little ankle injury. I'm not sure how serious the ankle injury was, but it was serious enough that he couldn't come back in and play."

Does it mean a little more to win in this fashion?

"Again, playing the kind of football team we played today. The rest of the year we're going to play playoff-caliber teams. Those are the teams that you're measure by. Just like our team, whoever the next team is up, all you want to do is keep getting better. And you go play. And you know that movie, "Any Given Sunday"? It's so true in this league when you play the game the right way and this football team played the right way today. Our coaching staff had them ready to play and it was great. I tell you what, I wasn't here for practice on Thursday. I don't know, I might miss practice again on Thursday because they did so well without me this week. But I am just kidding; I'm going to be there. I'm just going to try not to do anything that whatever they did last Thursday I'll make sure they do it again this Thursday. I'll shut my mouth in practice."

Can you talk about QB Davis Mills growth and his ability to keep his composure?

"He's very mature. He's a very mature guy. And he's getting better and better the more he plays. He understands what his job is. I think Tim (Kelly) and our offensive staff have done a great job of making sure that we're giving him things that he can make good, quick decisions with, that he's comfortable with and he's growing with time. Today he did a great job of protecting the ball. I thought we had that one throw he threw off Pharaoh (Brown) that went off his hands. It scared me a bit but other than that, he did a great job handling the ball, a great job handling this offense. Again, that's a credit to this entire offense and allowing him, our quarterback, to do what his job is."

[-back to top-](#)



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



RB REX BURKHEAD (Transcribed by ASAP Sports)

Can you talk about how well you all were able to run the ball today and how it helped you guys to the victory?

"Offensive line did a tremendous job from the get go. Really, first run of the game. Controlling the line of scrimmage, being physical. Not only at the first level but the second level as well and made my job easy back there, just running behind those, giving us clear holes and paths, and reading off their blocks. It's a lot of fun when that's happening. It really helped our offense get some momentum there early on."

How would you describe your running style? I know all year you've been running hard and haven't always gotten the pay off, but today you get it done and you get the yards. How would you describe your approach to playing the position and what you were able to do?

"Just trying to do the best I can, whether that's in the run game, the pass game. I guess going to your question there, my running style, I try to be patient. Try to let things develop and hit it when I need to hit it. Try to change it up, of course. You can't just be one dimensional or guys are going to key on you. I try to mix it up. My dad was a running back growing up. He always preached to me about being versatile. And not always just hitting the hole fast, you've got to be patient at times. Today, the offensive line did a great job allowing us to be patient and letting things develop and really getting through their holes when we needed to."

When you came off the sideline at the end of the game, a staffer handed you a ball there that you carried off. What was that? What's the significance behind that?

"I've got to ask Davis (Mills) on that. I guess he said Davis wanted to give that to me. I'm honestly not even sure myself. I've got to go talk to him and figure that out. Appreciate it from Davis, I guess."

QB Davis Mills wanted to get you a game ball?

"I guess, I think that was his thinking behind it. We'll find out here soon."

When the confidence that they have in the run game, there was a crucial drive right there at the end. On third and three you were able to pick up that first down. What was it like in this game with your long runs, the confidence they had in the run game and the belief you would be able to convert the crucial spots for them?

"Like I said, the offensive line did a tremendous job. You can see it in their eyes. They're focused. They had a great week of preparation. When it came down to those critical moments they were locked in. They were moving guys, making it easy for me to get those yards. Not having to stop and start in the backfield, but really to push that pile forward and to get those first downs when we needed to."

You probably haven't given this a single thought but if you could, what does it mean to have a career-best day, 149 yards?

"You know, it's all great. But I'm more happy we got the victory. That's two in a row for us. And we're just trying to get better as a team, better as a unit each and every week. We've got two more opportunities for us left in this season. And it was awesome to see everybody contribute. Tavierre (Thomas) there with the interception for a touchdown at the end. A guy who I have a ton of respect for. He's a hard worker, comes to work every single day ready to get better. Of course Phil (Dorsett) with some great catches. C-Mo (Chris Moore) with an unbelievable catch in traffic. Of course, Davis (Mills) with just great throws all day, taking control of the huddle and leading us down the field."

What about the fact that I know that y'all's motto is to zone out the noise. But you pulled off an upset that nobody on the planet thought you could except the guys in the locker room. Could you give us some thoughts about that?

"Just like you said, blocking out distractions. There's a ton going around not only on our team but across the league, of course with all the COVID stuff. A bunch of guys stepping in, just being ready when their number was called. Whether that was on the offensive line, on defense. We had some guys out there for the first time. Of



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



course my guy, Paul Quessenberry getting out there on special teams. It was fun to see him. Guys just stepping in when their number's called and taking advantage of their opportunities. That's what this league is all about. You never know when your number's going to be called and just being patient and working hard every single day. So, to see some of those young guys and even older guys get those opportunities was special."

What did you think about the way the receivers stepped up without WR Brandin Cooks and QB Davis Mills' progress today? And did the way they threw the ball, did that have an effect on how the Chargers were playing you and help you get more yards?

"Yeah, absolutely, complementary football, like you said. He did a great job, making some big time throws. The touchdown, I forgot to mention, to Chris Conley there. Unbelievable throw and catch. Brevin (Jordan) had some big-time catches. Anytime you can get the pass game going it's going to always help the run game and vice versa. If you're controlling the line of scrimmage it's going to open up the pass game as well. I thought Davis did a great job making good decisions and putting the ball where it needed to go."

You've already talked about the offensive line, but what does it say about them to be sort of an odd mix of guys given what happened the last couple of weeks going for y'all with COVID and everything? What does it say about those guys to maybe not necessarily be the group that always plays together, and still be able to block on the first and second level the way you mentioned?

"It says a lot about them. Not only just from a working hard standpoint or getting after guys, a physicality standpoint but just the mental game as well. We've got guys moving around on the line, playing new positions. And maybe not getting the reps throughout the week because all of a sudden a guy goes down. For them to step in there and block their tails off, know their assignments, getting a hat on a hat is super impressive to me and of course I'm appreciative for it."

Earlier Coach Culley mentioned that you guys are just executing the plays better sort of overall. Why do you think that is?

"Just guys being locked in from the get-go and understanding how the run game's going, making sure they're on their assignments. And if we're executing, executing at a high level, I feel like that's the kind of things that come out of this offense. And when Davis (Mills) controls the line, doesn't panic and keeps things under control, and makes sure he's making the right calls, making the right points for our guys up front, it makes their job easy. They go out there with confidence and as you continue to run the ball that confidence continues to grow."

The stats are what they are. You guys entered today ranked last in rushing offense per carry as well and also in touchdowns. Did you feel like you guys were kind of due for a breakthrough after trying to run and sticking with the run all season and finally getting the results you were hoping for today?

"Yeah, absolutely. We've been working our tails off in the run game, trying to improve that area for sure. And we took that as a challenge. The guys up front took it as a challenge, whether it was the linemen, the tight ends, and the coaches of course, as well. We knew as long as we executed, we could have a day like we did today and fortunately for us we did that, and the guys up front did a tremendous job."

You guys have won two in a row now. What does this do for your team and what's that locker room like whenever you've gone back there the last couple of games now?

"It's huge. Hopefully carry some of that momentum going forward here with the final two weeks, like I said earlier and just building off those things. Of course, we didn't always make the right plays during the game. Had some mistakes. So, correcting those mistakes, moving forward and continuing to grow as a team, not only out on the field, but in the locker room as well."

[-back to top-](#)



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



What did you see from the game that RB Rex Burkhead had today?

"Rex is a phenomenal back. What I saw today is what I've known all season is that Rex still has it. He never lost it. Just needed to get him healthy. Getting that man the ball, he runs with reckless abandonment. He does it every time he touches the rock. It makes it real easy to block for a guy like that who is going to fight and scrap for every yard."

DB Justin Reid just said it's one of his favorite he's been a part of. How important is it in the overview of what you guys are trying to build here?

"I think one of the things that this team has really needed to do is learn what it means to play a 60-minute football game and win. Today we had a lot of young guys up and when you have a lot of young guys up they can go one of two ways. I think one of the things Justin said was that a lot of guys are bought in and today you saw examples of that. Guys going out there, even if there was a drive that wasn't that good, even if there were plays that were messed up, and locking back in and doing what was necessary on the next drive to win."

What did you see from the Chargers defensively that led you guys rip off some of those plays on the final drive in the first half?

"They have, in the secondary, a lot of confidence. Sometimes corners will play at depth and they'll slow back pedal and dare you to throw the ball over their held. That's the way they were playing it. That's how they played a lot of things this year, sitting flat-footed so that they could break up on the ball. But really in that instance Davis (Mills) was able to recognize the coverage and put it up. It's not a play that was scripted to go deep, but he took a chance right there. I think that message like was seen throughout today, a lot of guys just trusting each other to go out there and make plays and it paid off."

Can you give us a play-by-play of your touchdown catch and what you saw from the time you got off the line of scrimmage? How did you think QB Davis Mills played today, especially having this kind of running game?

"The play, we were in our two-minute package, and we were on the ball. Really the concept of that play to the front side is you have a go route on the outside to really clear things out for the tight end on the inside who is running about a ten-yard out. But, like I said, the film study this week, we knew they liked to slow play it on the outside. If we wanted to take a shot, we could take a shot and Davis recognized that. He recognized they were slow playing it and the corner wasn't really getting out and he gave me a shot on a play that wasn't necessarily called that way, we were able to make a big play for six. But on that note, Davis played exceptionally well today. He's been taking coaching really well. He's gone and he's continued to work at things and he's not let setbacks really deter him or change his mind about how he's going to play. He's gone out and played aggressive and that's what we asked him to do is just keep taking coaching and get better and he's been doing that."

Can you put in words what it means to you and your teammates to come away with a victory that nobody outside the locker room thought you guys were even close to being capable of doing?

"Any given Sunday. It's about who goes out there and who plays the best on that day not who is the better team. If you look at it on paper, I'm pretty sure everyone can say there's a bunch of teams that are better than us. But I've been here and a lot of other places in a lot of games where you're counted out, it's about who plays better on Sunday. You really shut out the noise and you just really have to believe in each other. Believe in each other and in the same way that you believe in each other you can inspire others by making plays. You make one play and everyone can just feed off of that and just keep going and roll."

Do you think QB Davis Mills is making a statement now about who he is and what he is as a quarterback?

"I think every time that you step on the field and you put something on tape, you're making a statement and that's the message that we were trying to instill in all of us, and especially having a young team that was out there on the field today. Letting them know that, 'Hey opportunities they don't come often but everything that you do with that opportunity says something about who you are, continue to build on it.'"



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



What do you see from Head Coach David Culley going into the final games of the season?

“Coach has had a consistent message throughout the year that when we play clean football and we play good football we always have a shot to win. Now, it's been a process of getting us to that point, but the consistency was necessary, the energy that Coach Culley brings was necessary and he's really gotten us to a point where a lot of guys who haven't been here that long can come in here and buy in and we can go out and do what we did today. So, kudos to him.”

[-back to top-](#)

QB DAVIS MILLS (Transcribed by ASAP Sports)

Can you talk about what it was like to be able to come in here today with missing so many players and be able to beat a playoff contender like you did today?

“It was fun. I feel like it was a great team win. We were kind of firing on all three cylinders – offense, defense and special teams. We had a lot of guys who just recently got signed or just had the opportunity to get their name called and come in step up and play well. A lot of guys did that. The team showed a lot of fight.”

RB Rex Burkhead was saying whenever he came off the sideline, a staffer came up handed him a ball and said that you wanted it to get to him. What did you say that lead up to that and why give him the ball?

“That was right after the last play of the game. When we took a knee, somebody ran on the field I threw them that game ball and made sure Rex got it because he played extremely well today. Ran hard all day. Two touchdowns, almost 150 yards. Love to see it. I felt kind of goes to show, though, that the offensive line played extremely well today as well, protecting me back there when I was throwing but also protected Rex and the other backs. I felt like we played really well on offense, and Rex especially.”

Has it kind of hit you yet, the kind of game you had personally, and the game your team had collectively that you all were like nearly two touchdown underdogs and you did something that nobody expected you except you guys in the locker room. Has that all hit you? What do you think about that?

“I mean, it's cool. Like you said, it's kind of – in the locker room we don't try to listen to outside noise. I think (Chris) Conley just said it and Coach Culley said it earlier, any given Sunday. We come out here every week with the same mission and the same goal in mind, and that's to win football games.

We have the guys in the locker room to do it. If we play well as a full team, I think I mean we have a chance to win every week.”

Without WR Brandin Cooks was the idea to spread it around going in and how do you think the receivers stepped up without Brandin?

“I mean, the goal every week is to spread it around and really just get the ball in the hands of open playmakers. I felt like a lot of guys stepped up this week. Really when their numbers were called were in the right spots and were winning on their routes. So I felt – I mean, when you can spread the ball around on offense like that, it makes it easier for everybody.”

On that final touchdown throw to WR Nico Collins, was that always the design or did you check into that? Just generally how did you feel about being aggressive on that final drive rather than just focusing on burning clock?

“So we were in four-minute mode there. Two plays previously we called the same play. It was a run play by design with kind of tagged route on the backside where if I see Nico can win on his route, I can trust him and get him the ball. We ended up coming back to that same play on Nico's touchdown. I saw the safety was kind of in the middle of the field. He had some space out there and I don't get yelled at because it wasn't an incomplection, but we were trying to burn some clock on the four-minute there, and I trusted Nico to win on his route and he was able to get his first touchdown. So it was pretty cool.”



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



Did this feel like a step in the right direction, just to win two in a row to beat a team that is a contender like you said, and to do it in the fashion you did with complementary football all three phases?

“Definitely. I think it continues to build the momentum we kind of brought from last week. It's kind of just a stepping stone for guys in the locker room and really shows the guys and proves to ourselves that we're capable of winning big games like this and versus capable opponents. I think it's good for the team as a whole.”

The touchdown pass to WR Chris Conley, could take us through that? Chris was saying you had a couple of options on that play and they kind of gave you a look that made it clear you should take that shot.

“At that point just based on the study during the week, I knew kind of what defenses they were primarily running in that two-minute drill. And when we called that play, it's not fully intended to get the ball out to Chris, but like I've kind of been talking about the past couple of weeks and earlier in the season, we were just trying to find ways organically within the offense to make some big plays. I was able to see that safety into the boundary kind of flat-footed, rolled down, and Chris was able to run by his guy and I was able to throw it up and gave him a chance. And he made a really good play.”

You've talked all year about what a difference the running game being productive would help you, how specifically today did RB Rex Burkhead's performance help you and make it easier for you?

“I mean, tremendously. I think when you're able to balance the play calls and really be effective in both the run and pass game it opens a lot up. It keeps the defense guessing. And it keeps you out of third and longs. I felt like we were fishing on first and second down and able to control the ball a lot better, move the sticks that way. When you have a run game like we did this week, it helps a lot.”

You protected the ball again. Are you beginning to feel more confident about that because you talked to us all season about that was your foremost goal. How do you feel about no turnovers and being able to move the ball as well as you did under dire circumstances because of COVID-19?

“I mean, that's the mission every week, protect the ball, get the ball in the end zone. I felt like we did that today. And just the way I've grown in this offense, I feel like I'm able to make smarter decisions and not force footballs into tight windows and tight coverage. And our guys also – first off – protected me up front so I was able to have time see guys get open, and credit to the receivers for winning their one-on-ones and winning their matchups and getting open and allowing me to deliver the ball to them.”

Going back to a couple of those plays that you were talking about where you made the read at the line and did it based off some of your study earlier in the week. Earlier in the season, when you first started getting your reps, were those the type of decisions and plays you felt confident making or is that just part of your progression and growth since you've had some experience now?

“I'd like to say I was doing some of the same stuff earlier in the season, but I feel like I've progressed a lot with stuff like that. And how we've been playing recently, I'm able to kind of anticipate pre-snap based on what we're getting and based on what we're expecting on certain down and distances situations in the game. So I'm able to go out there and really just take what the defense has given us.”

Just the starts you've had in the last couple of weeks as well, really good in Seattle, Jacksonville, and again today, can you address the starts you've had and what that means to kind of jump start things for the offense and the couple you have out there to start games?

“It's great when we go out there and start fast, scoring touchdowns on the first drive. And really just start the momentum from the start of the game. I think it's big for the team and really just sets the tone on how we want to come out and play football games. We've just got to keep rolling.”

[-back to top-](#)



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



DB JONATHAN OWENS (Transcribed by ASAP Sports)

Can you take us through what you saw in your interception and the feelings with the defense played today?

"So pretty much it was just a tight stack formation and we were in cover 2. Number one on the outside he did something low and the inside piece he kind of just ran over slash post. So I was just kind of following (Justin) Herbert's eyes and I didn't think he was going to throw it. When he did it surprised me undercut it and made the play. I'm glad I could provide that spark for us and we scored a touchdown right after that, right before the half. So just playing complementary football."

Whenever you got in the end zone after DB Tavierre Thomas' pick-6, what was that like and the feeling after that?

"Amazing, man. Just me and Tavierre both come from D-II schools. It's something we always talk about. Just small school guys and playing in the big leagues. And it's just crazy, man. We couldn't have written it any better. So just a great experience."

What is this moment like for you coming from a D-II school and being a practice squad guy? What does it mean to you have a game like this given how much work you put in to get here?

"It's unreal. I can't describe it, honestly. Didn't feel real when it happened on the field. Just because I've been cut multiple times. I tore my ACL my first year in the NFL. And you kind of doubt yourself but you just have to keep working. Keep stacking those days. We want it to happen when we want it. It just takes being patient. And that's all, just stay patient, keep working hard and hard work pays off."

Earlier Head Coach David Culley had mentioned that a lot of the guys that were getting an opportunity to play were guys that felt like they should have been playing anyway, are you one of those guys that feel like you've sort of just been waiting?

"Absolutely. I always felt that. You always feel like you're good enough to be out there, you know what I mean? It's just you have to play a role, whatever your role is on the team. At the time my role was to get the starters better. So I would take that and go hard every day in practice to make sure they know I'm giving you this look and just so I would keep myself ready, keep myself in shape, whatever the coaches asked me to do. Never once complained, just worked hard. Just waited for that opportunity. And I'm glad I could come out here and help us get the W today."

As you said, you've been waiting for a while for this. Is it more satisfying that it's now happening at the end of the year just kind of after a tough year with the record of the team? Is it particularly satisfying just to kind of finish a little bit on a good note?

"I feel like it's satisfying because we're showing that we have fight. Today we beat one of the better teams in the AFC. Great quarterback. So, it's always a good feeling when you go out there and play that well against a top-caliber quarterback. But like I said, man, it's a great feeling."

Role reversal with you and Simone Biles, how special was it for you to have her in the stands cheering for you on your best day as a pro? The TV showed her a couple times, how cool was that?

"It was amazing. They probably didn't see my mom was sitting right there next to her and my mom got to see me in my second start and that I could get those two turnovers, that was just amazing. My mom, she's been with me every step of the way, and just having those two in the stands supporting me, I can't describe the feeling. I never would have thought it would happen like this but I'm glad it did. I'm glad it sparked our team and we got the W at the end of the day."

DB Justin Reid was saying that because you guys added so many people because of COVID and stuff that there were some guys on the team he didn't even know their names today or still trying to learn everybody's names.



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



Did you have a moment in the game or anything like that where you were kind of forgetting who somebody was, who you were playing next to?

"I tried to make it a point to know your name especially like kind of the new guys we have. Because I remember being that new guy in the locker room and not knowing anybody and people just kind of walk past you and everything and I try to introduce myself and you're not going to remember everyone's name because a lot of moving parts and you just try to say what's up to everybody. But I treat everybody the same. We're out there, I'm telling them, I expect the best out of you. Even the guys that we had that were in practice squad got a chance to play for the first time this year. I'm giving them that look like, man, this is what you've been working for. This is what you've been asking for. Like it's time to go. Like I said, I'm just glad everyone who got a chance to play, man, came up and made the most of their opportunities today. It's exciting. I'm excited for them."

You spoke about your challenges that you went through throughout your career but what was it that actually kept you going through those challenging moments to get you to where you are today?

"Just kept faith, man. I just kept faith. I knew I could play, even when I was cut, I was cut for three weeks, I just knew I could play. I kept faith. I kept praying. Just any team that brings me in for a tryout and it just so happened to be the Texans. September the 28th, 2019. I've been here ever since just working. My motto is just always like I didn't want to go back to St. Louis and just kind of be back at the crib. I just never really wanted to go back and then feel like what if, you know what I mean, I kept pushing, whatever role I was in, practice squad, whatever, you're still on the team, keep working, keep your head down, keep playing your role."

[-back to top-](#)

DB JUSTIN REID (Transcribed by ASAP Sports)

With so many starters out defensively, what was the lead-up to this game like and how did everybody play?

"I think guys came through and played tremendously. We had a number of guys that we signed this week that came and played on Sunday, I'm still trying to learn everybody's name. But that's just credit to the guys that came in really buying into the system. Our offensive line, I don't know how many new guys we had there, but to be able to run the ball the way we did and let Rex (Burkhead) take off on them like he did was amazing. Davis Mills had a great game, Brevin Jordan had a great game. Chris Moore, an incredible catch. And then the defense, too, really being stout and coming up and making plays when we really needed to. This is one of my favorite wins to be a part of with how many guys stepped up. We had every excuse in the book with COVID, with the holidays, with where the season's going and all that, and still coming and stepping up and making a big-time win like this. It was one of my favorite games."

Could you take us through your stop on the two-point conversion and what you saw?

"I saw the motion come across. They ended up going into slot, and the receiver, he trailed off to the left. The running back came, tried to follow his fullback, bounced outside. I was already outside leveraging. At that point, he only needs a yard. So, just go and shoot your shot and make a play."

You are officially on a winning streak. What do you think about that?

"Like I said, it's a great feeling, two victory Mondays in a row. But it's good. It's good to see that the systems that our coaching staff has put into place and the game plan we put together, seeing guys really buy into it and seeing the success that we've had with it now that guys have really bought into the system that we're trying to create."

What about the fact that nobody on the planet thought this could happen except for you guys in that locker room?



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



"I know. Trust me, I'm going to go find a tweet later and I'm going to retweet it about people's predictions on what this game was going to look like. But like I said, it's a credit to all the guys, guys' belief in ourselves. We knew that nobody's opinion matters except for the guys in the locker room and what we go out there and do. The game isn't set before the game's played. They've got to play out and go win it, and the guys came out and we played a hell of a game. Played tough, played hard and we came out with a dub."

What was it like for you to watch DB Jonathan Owens and DB Tavierre Thomas have success today?

"Let me start on J.O. (Jonathan Owens). It was amazing seeing J.O. come out and play. This is the second game in a row that he's played a hell of a game. He's turning out to be a great player. I told him, 'You keep being consistent like this, you're going to be one of the great safeties in the league.' He reminds me a lot of Ryan Clark. Came in as an undrafted guy, started on one team, moved to another, got his shot and really took advantage of it. J.O.'s going to be a good player. He's humble, he's a hard worker, he's probably one of the hardest workers during practice, especially when he was on the scout team, running offensive reps, defensive reps. It was beautiful seeing him get his opportunity, then come and make two big-time plays with the two turnovers. And T.T. (Tavierre Thomas), T.T. has been saying he's going to get a pick-six every week this season, so he finally came through and did it. I think that's our first defensive touchdown of the season, not including the safety. Lovie (Smith) has had a streak going for 13 years. We can't break Lovie's streak, we can't break the streak of not getting a defensive touchdown. That's amazing that T.T. got that and that our defense was able to produce like that."

With the way the year's gone, how satisfying is this victory? You said it was one of the ones you'll savor the most even though it hasn't been a winning season. What went into that feeling?

"I think it's because of that. I think it's because of the trajectory of the season that has taken place so far. All the distractions that with COVID, with the holidays, with the season with guys we're signing off the street, coming in on Tuesday and then coming in and making big-time plays for us today on Sunday. Just seeing it all come together like that, it's kind of like an adrenaline rush that it happened like that. So, that feeling that I got coming away with the dub and the team doing what we were able to accomplish today is what's going to make it one of my favorite games to be a part of."

When you look at this game and see some of the guys who stepped up in a big-time role, what does that say about your consistency, and what does it say about the locker room still believing in themselves late into the season?

"Well, part of that is credit to the guys themselves buying into the game plan. Credit to the coaches, too, for remaining consistent and not taking their foot off the pedal and still pushing forward that we're going out here to win this game. We're going to still call our plays and run our schemes, and it's going to be up to us to get it done. The guys really stepped up and took advantage of that opportunity and got it done."

[-back to top-](#)

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY (Transcribed by ASAP Sports)

Can you talk about getting these games on your terms? Seemed like this game, you were just never able to do that.

"Yeah, from the beginning of the game we weren't able to get into a rhythm as a team. I loved the way we moved the ball in the first half. I felt like we moved the ball the entire game. We had to kick some field goals there, but I



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



felt like defensively, we couldn't get into a comfort zone or rhythm in the run game or passing game on third down. We didn't play well in two-minute at the half, didn't play well in four-minute at the end of the game. We just didn't have enough today."

Do you pin the loss on personnel because of the COVID-19 situation? What do you attribute the defensive performance to?

"I just didn't coach well enough today. I didn't coach well enough, I didn't put our guys in good enough positions to be consistent in the game, and that's why we lost."

With LB Kenneth Murray, how do you think he played?

"Kenneth Murray was not the issue in the run game at all. I thought he gave us a good opportunity to be successful. I commend him for being able to jump in and play like he played. I think we'll have to watch more to assess just how well he played, but he gave us a chance out there."

Did you feel like you had the physicality in the run game that you were looking for defensively?

"We didn't play well in any area today on defense. There wasn't an area that we played well in today."

Do you regret holding DB Derwin James out?

"Yeah, he was just there in an emergency only. He was there in case we got cleaned out, which we almost did. But he was only going to go out there if we didn't have anyone else to put out there."

How difficult was it losing a player before the game?

I think all the circumstances of what's happened in the last few weeks is we're just figuring out as we go, and we are just going to try and continue to coach our guys and play well enough when guys go out like that, and our guys competed today. We'll give them a good game plan moving forward."

Do you have any update on LB Drue Tranquill?

"Drue just has a lower leg. We do not know the extent of it right now, but he was not able to return to the game."

The interception that QB Justin Herbert threw late in the first half, what did you see there?

"Just a little bit late. A little bit late, left it a little bit inside. We liked the look. Just a little late and a little bit inside."

CB Michael Davis being held out, was that COVID-19 related?

"It was, yes. He was not feeling well in warmups. He tested positive and he did not play today."

What did you think of Davis Mills?

"I thought he made some throws today. They had a good amount of explosions in the passing game, the two-minute in the end of the half was a really tough circumstance for us because we had them at second-and-16. We had a defensive holding, and then you give up a double move and then you give up a nine for a touchdown. So, that sequence was not good for us, and I think he made enough winning plays for them to win the game."

Did Davis Mills look any better on the field than he did on tape?

"No, I thought he's been a quality player the entire season. I think he's given them a real chance, and that's why they're starting him. They're starting him because they feel like he's their best quarterback and they feel like he has a chance to be the starter for that team moving forward."



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



Moving the guys around in the secondary, is that injury related stuff or are you trying to find a combination that works?

“No, it was just trying to search for the combinations to give us the best chance. We're working hard to figure it out. It's been a fight. It's going to continue to be a fight, and we're just searching for the right combinations that can give us the best chance to be successful.”

How do you think DB Asante Samuel Jr. played today?

“I thought he made some good plays and I think there are some plays that he's going to learn from. The double move in two-minute is a tough one, and then the PI on third down, it's a tough one. But he made a lot of good plays in there, too. I know it's good to have him back, that's for sure. Hopefully he'll be able to stay there for us because he's a quality player.”

What was your message to the team?

“This was a challenging week, and I loved the way that our guys prepared this week. We didn't play well enough today, but that doesn't change the way that I feel about them. This is the tough side of the NFL. It didn't go down today, and that's what I told them. This is the tough side of the NFL. It's been a fight this entire season for us, and it's going to continue to be that way. We still have a lot in front of us we can play for, certainly, and we need to let this one sting, get home and rest, and be ready to go take on Denver because they're really good, and hopefully we'll get some guys back next week and just keep it moving.”

[-back to top-](#)

QB JUSTIN HERBERT (Transcribed by ASAP Sports)

Did you feel you were able to get into a rhythm?

“Yeah, it's one of those tough things that we kind of shot ourselves in the foot. We did move the ball really well and I thought we ran the ball well. It's unfortunate we didn't get to turn those drives into touchdowns.”

You weren't able to get Keenan Allen the ball as much as in the past. Was it something the Texans were doing?

“They just did a good job covering him. We could always get the ball to Keenan more, and that's probably something we're going to have to watch the film and look at, because he's an incredible playmaker and you've got to get him the ball. So, definitely something we'll have to look at.”

What are you going to take away from this game?

“We're going to have to watch the film and look at it. Obviously, a tough game. We would've loved to have put up more points. I thought we moved the ball well. It's all about ending those drives in touchdowns and not field goals and being able to get the defense off the field and go score and go put up points.”

What did you see on your interception in the first half?

“I've just got to throw it farther. I thought Josh (Palmer) ran a good route and had plenty of time, so I've just got to throw it farther.”

[-back to top-](#)

OL RASHAWN SLATER (Transcribed by ASAP Sports)

How tough is this loss?

“It sucks, to be frank, but we've just got to keep pushing forward. Walk it back next week.”



HOUSTON TEXANS VS. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



How difficult was it with both teams missing players?

“There (are) no excuses. Everyone is going through the same thing right now. It just comes down to execution, and we didn't do that well enough today.”

Does it make it more frustrating that a game like this comes after going toe-to-toe with one of the best teams in the league?

“Yeah, we had that mindset like we’ve got to make things right, especially at this point in the season. Every win is so important, so it sucks. No other way to put it. We wanted to come out and dominate and we didn't do that.”

Offensively you seemed to move the ball well, but did the turnovers make the difference?

“Yeah, we just weren't finishing drives. That's what killed us, I feel like.”

What is it like in the locker room right now? Is it pretty quiet?

“Yeah, we’ve got a bunch of pissed off guys. We’ve just got to lock in on next week. That's all we can do. You can dwell on the past for so long, but next week is coming and we’ve got to be ready, because now it's even more important that we finish these last two strong.”

What did you take away from Brandon Staley's message after the game?

“I say the biggest thing is every week in the NFL, there is no such thing as an easy game. Someone is out with injuries, COVID, no matter what, records don't matter in the NFL. Everyone is playing really good football at the end of the day, so you can't take anyone lightly. It's not any different from us losing to the Chiefs last week. I feel like you’ve got to be able to execute no matter who you're lined up against.”

Do you feel like this might have been a lesson that a lot of young guys needed to learn?

“Yeah. I don't think it was a lack of effort by any means, but still, execution is just so important.”

[-back to top-](#)

-END-