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NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Rex Ryan has stuck up for Mark Sanchez from the start. Watching the quarterback literally throw away the Jets' slim playoff hopes with a season-high five turnovers against Tennessee may be the final straw for New York's coach.

Sanchez turned the ball over on the Jets' final three possessions Monday night, the last a fumbled snap at the Tennessee 25 with 43 seconds left, and the Titans held on for a 14-10 victory that knocked New York out of postseason contention.

"Obviously, it's a devastating loss, out of the playoffs, and it hurts beyond belief," Ryan said. "I think the thing that really hurts the most is we've got no one to blame but ourselves."

The Jets (6-8) needed to win out and get some help to reach the playoffs, and they had an easy schedule against three straight losing teams. Instead, the Jets will be sitting at home in January for a second straight season after Sanchez helped New York reach the AFC title game in his first two years.

"Obviously, this isn't what I thought this football team would be," Ryan said. "There's no doubt about that. I thought we'd be in the playoffs, but that's not where we are. We have two games left and I believe my team's going to give everything we have and we're going to try like crazy to win these games. As a competitor, that's all you have left and that's what we're going to do."

Ryan was left cursing to himself as he walked off the field after his defense had given the Jets an improbable chance to win despite an ugly performance. With first-and-10 at the Titans 25, Sanchez lined up in the shotgun but couldn't grab a low snap that running back Bilal Powell inadvertently kicked away.

Titans rookie linebacker Zach Brown covered it up to seal the win.

"We had our chance and fell flat on (our) face," Jets linebacker Calvin Pace said.

Sanchez, the No. 5 pick overall in 2009, now has 24 turnovers this season and 50 total in the past two seasons combined. Sanchez was curt in speaking to reporters after going 13 of 28 for 131 yards and a 32.6 passer rating.

"It doesn't feel good hurting your team like that," Sanchez said. "It's not a winning formula. It never feels good."

Now Ryan has to decide which quarterback to start Sunday when the Jets host San Diego, and he didn't give any hints Monday night. Sanchez said he will prepare as the starter and see what happens.

Backup quarterback Tim Tebow played a full series in a move Sanchez said Ryan planned before the game, picking up a couple of first downs and getting sacked before a punt. Greg McElroy, who came on in relief when Sanchez was benched Dec. 2 and led the Jets to a 7-6 win over Arizona, was inactive with the Jets keeping six receivers on a banged-up unit.

Ryan refused to say if he regretted not activating McElroy.

"I just regret not winning this game," Ryan said. "I think that's the big thing."

The Jets made sure Tennessee didn't score a point off all those turnovers. Chris Johnson ran 94 yards in the second quarter for the longest rushing touchdown in the NFL since 2006, and Jake Locker scored on a 13-yard quarterback sweep at the end of the third quarter for all the points Tennessee (5-9) needed.

The Titans snapped a three-game skid by also getting four sacks and Jason McCourty and Michael Griffin each had two interceptions. The Tennessee defense came in giving up 29.9 points in the NFL, more than all but Oakland coming into this week, and they held the Jets to 254 yards.

That helped Tennessee to its first win since Nov. 11 at Miami.

"The bottom line is we hung in there, something we haven't been able to do the last two, three weeks of hold onto a lead or find a way to win in the fourth quarter, and this time we did," Titans coach Mike Munchak said. "It's good to win again. It's been a while."

Before the game, a moment of silence was held for victims of the shootings Friday in Newtown, Conn. Twenty children and six adults were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School. The gunman also killed his mother in her home before committing suicide.

Johnson had the names of all the victims written on the two shoes he wore for the game. He also had the words "RIP SHES" and a cross written on each shoe, calling it a way to pay tribute to the hurting families. The Jets had an "SHES" decal on their helmets.

The Titans running back ran for 122 yards and got most of it on his franchise-record TD run when he went untouched, taking advantage of a block by Kyle DeVan, who replaced Kevin Matthews at center after he sprained his right ankle in the first quarter.

I just read it and stayed with it and cut back through the offensive line, that's when I saw the daylight," Johnson said.

NOTES: The Jets also had five turnovers in their Thanksgiving night loss to New England. Sanchez had two in that game. ... The Titans' previous record for the longest run in franchise history was 91 yards, a mark shared by Johnson and Sid Blanks. Johnson had a 91-yard run against the Houston Texans in 2009. Blanks also did it against the Jets, on Dec. 13, 1964. ... Chester Taylor had a 95-yard TD in a 31-13 victory over the Seattle Seahawks on Oct. 22, 2006. ... The Jets had won the last two and four of the past five meetings between the teams. ... Braylon Edwards, claimed off waivers last Tuesday by the Jets, caught three passes for 47 yards.

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