



## BENGALS POSTGAME QUOTES

NOV. 5, 2023

BUFFALO AT CINCINNATI

### ZAC TAYLOR

#### Head coach

##### What was the difference in this game down the stretch?

"I thought the way their defense was playing; we needed to keep that two-score lead. Kicking that field goal, you felt it would put us in a big position. They're an explosive offense, and I was happy our offense was able to go and finish it out. That was a big run by Joe Mixon in the last play of the game. We have to pride ourselves in finishing with the ball, and we did that today."

##### Was the plan all along to have the tight ends be as involved as they were?

"That's where the ball went. Buffalo did a great job; they don't make it easy on you. Their defense played really well and made things difficult, we had to earn everything. I thought our tight ends responded the right way. That's why we gave the game ball to James Casey. He gets those guys ready; they know every single detail of this offense. They're always prepared. We make a lot of in-game adjustments with the tight ends that they have to be able to handle. There are a lot of things they did — not even when the ball came their way — to help us be successful."

##### Irv Smith Jr responding was important ...

"Not surprising at all, the way Irv prepares. He puts himself in positions to be successful. Days like today aren't surprising for that. Drew Sample does all the nasty things for us. For him to make that play for a touchdown was special. Tanner Hudson came in and made the plays that came his way the way we were expecting him to. Mitch Wilcox has a role too, always. You can't say enough about that room, can't say enough about (tight ends coach) James Casey, who sets the right attitude for that room. They respond the right way and make plays when their number is called."

##### Was Drew Sample's touchdown by design? Was there any element of improvisation to it?

"It's great awareness. That's Joe Burrow trusting him and having an understanding. It's a loose check down they got on the same page on. Drew feels it as Joe feels it, and there's something to be said about that type of connection. And for him to finish it off was awesome."

##### The defense has been forcing more and more turnovers lately, it seems ...

"We preach it nonstop. Our guys that have been here know that's how you win these close games. Germaine Pratt is a big driving force in that, and he forced the fumble there. No surprise there. That's just one of the many things he does well for this team."

##### How pleased were you to see Tee Higgins bounce back?

"Again, another guy I'm not surprised about. He's a victim of circumstances the way his season has gone with injuries. He stepped up big time, won a lot of one-on-ones, made big plays. That slant route he won that got us into the red zone before the field goal, was big by Tee."

##### What's made this team so good at rising up in prime time moments like these?

"The character of the team, these are the stages they want to be on. They don't shy away from it. That confidence is earned, it's not anything phony. They've worked for this and they trust their teammates to be next to them making those winning plays. The team was ready, the fans were ready for the environment. It was the second biggest crowd in Bengals history. We could feel them — when Buffalo had the ball, they were loud and created some issues for them. That energy certainly fueled us today. I like the stripe sections too, that was pretty cool."

##### With all these drives that ended in plus territory, did you get more aggressive with the play calling after that?

"As the game goes, you have to evolve. You're on field goal fringe a couple of times, and we went for it on the fourth and five. That's one we'll talk through to make sure I made the right decision. Our defense is playing well, so if you punt, you pin them deep. I think it was a 55-yard field goal, so there were a lot of decisions to be made there. That's one we'll talk through and see how we land on it, or if we do something different."

##### So you were originally more conservative but became more aggressive because of that?

"There were some times earlier where we were going to be aggressive and the next play didn't happen that way. We didn't have to make that decision then. There were some we either converted or didn't gain enough. We were ready to be attacking in a game like that."

##### Were you going to go for it if you didn't convert on third down at the end of the game?

"We were in field goal range at that point. That would have been a field goal there to ice it for us."

##### Do you feel the team is a championship contender again?

"We don't need to worry about that right now. We have a team we trust and believe in. We have a huge game next week against the Houston Texans, and that's all we're worried about. We're not even at the midway point of the season yet. The only thing we can focus on is getting ready for Houston, and I know our guys will do that."

##### How important is it to win a game like this in prime time?

"We have to prove it every single week. It doesn't matter who we play. There are a lot of great teams on our schedule that are coming at us, the Houston Texans being one of them. We focus on whoever's in front of us. We have to put in six great days of work and put our best effort out there."

**You've had three straight games with opening drive touchdowns ...**

"It's proven if we can start fast and get a lead, our defense pins their ears back and gets after the quarterback, and creates turnovers. It's easier to call the game with a lead as well. Our guys responded the right way to that."

**Was that more important tonight, when you took the ball on the won toss?**

"It's a great way to start; put pressure on the team in a road environment. I trusted our offense to go down and score."

**What was the experience like with Damar Hamlin in the stadium?**

"It's great the way it all played out. A lot of good has come from it. It brought two communities close together that maybe otherwise wouldn't have a reason for that. It's great to see that he's doing well."

**Any thoughts on Cam Taylor-Britt?**

"He creates turnovers, that are what it's about. He has great ball skills. Every time the ball is in his hands, he's going to find a way to make that pick."

**JOE BURROW**

**Quarterback**

**During this winning streak, you guys have been starting fast, and you started fast again tonight. How important has that been to you?**

"It's critical for us. It allows our defensive line to really pin their ears back in the pass game. When we jump out on teams, we always feel good about our chances."

**Is there something you personally do to start as fast as you have?**

"Zac (Taylor) and our coaches come up with a great script early on to really tackle what we're trying to see. We just always feel good coming into the game. So, we just have to keep that going."

**You guys had not gotten a lot of productivity from tight ends over the first seven games. What did it mean for those guys to do what they did tonight?**

"Those guys were awesome today. They really stepped up. Tanner (Hudson), Irv (Smith Jr.), Drew (Sample), Mitchell (Wilcox) — they all made big plays for us, so we're going to need more of it."

**What were you dealing with regarding your finger?**

"It was just a little cut. Nothing bad."

**Zac Taylor always talks about how November football is different for you guys. Now that we're into November, how do you feel like you guys are coming along offensively?**

"We're coming along. We've played well the last couple of weeks; we just have to keep it going. We're going to keep getting better every day in practice, keep talking through routes, keep talking through what we're trying to accomplish and go from there."

**On fourth-and-one, you showed a lot of confidence in Tanner Hudson. What was your thought process on that?**

"I can't quite recall that play, but Tanner (Hudson), I have a lot of faith in. He makes plays on scout team every week, so when he was up, I felt really confident about his ability to get open and make plays for us."

**As much as you guys take pride in starting fast the last several games, closing out games is probably even more important. What does it say about this offense that you can execute under those situations?**

"The last two weeks we were able to put together drives to close out games. That's what we need out of our offense."

**What happened on the play where your finger was hurt? Do you know when you got hurt?**

"No, you don't really know what happens. It just started bleeding."

**Did your finger injury have any effect on how you threw the ball?**

"No, no."

**The last finishing drive, were you expecting them to push up and tried to throw over the top? Was that something in the moment you saw when you looked at it?**

"In those situations, they have to be more aggressive because if we run the ball well, we could just run the clock out. So, I expected a little man. TB (Tyler Boyd) made a great play for us, ran a great route. We were able to connect on it."

**What about the pass you threw to Tee Higgins to set up the field goal? What did you see on that play?**

"I told Tee coming into the game — he was feeling good — so I was going to feed him the ball today, and he came up big for us. He stepped up big for us. He's going to continue to do that; he always does. I have a lot of faith in that guy."

**Specific to this game, what did you feel like you guys did well enough on offense to come away with the win?**

"We made plays. They do a good job on defense disguising coverages, giving us different looks, bringing pressures and disguising those. So, you have to be ready to adjust and adapt on the fly. I thought we did that really well today."

**What does it say about this team to run off four straight wins and to rebound after the start that you guys had?**

"We're 1-0 this week, that's all that matters. We have to be 1-0 next week, too. So, we're just taking it a day at a time. We'll come in and watch the tape tomorrow, go through our routine, and we'll go from there."

**Is the matter-of-fact response just kind of your mentality about the long way to go?**

"Yes, this was only Game 8. We still have nine games left. We're 5-3 right now. We're in a great spot. We just have to continue to get better."

**What's the most encouraging thing that you've seen out of this team the last couple of weeks given the quality of opponents you've faced?**

"We're really happy with how we've played the last couple of weeks. We have to keep it going. We're 1-0 this week. We have to be 1-0 next week, too. This week means nothing. We'll come in tomorrow, watch the tape, lift, go about our business and we'll go from

there.”

**You mentioned that Tee Higgins said that he was feeling good today. Did you know before the game that this was going to be a game where you were going to be actively looking for him more than other players?**

“Not specifically, but I knew that I liked the matchup with him today in one-on-one situations. We were able to get some. When they were playing man, they were shading the safety over to Ja’Marr (Chase), so Tee had to step up, and he did.”

**What’s it like as a quarterback to see Zac Taylor be aggressive on fourth down in certain situations?**

“I always have faith in our ability to get the job done in those situations. We did and we didn’t in certain situations. So, we have some improvement to do there.”

**What did you think about the offensive line tonight?**

“They played really well. We’ll watch the tape, and we’ll go from there, but I thought I had time to do what I needed to do today.”

**How much input do you have, if any, in winning the coin toss and taking the ball first versus deferring?**

“None. I always prefer to take the ball. I guess depending on the opponent and how they play, but I was feeling good about that today.”

**Did you see taking the ball first tonight as a message?**

“Maybe. It’s tough to say.”

**How well do you think Cam Taylor-Britt is playing at cornerback right now?**

“He continues to make plays for us. On offense, you don’t watch their tape and you don’t see every play, but you see the big plays that he’s always making, and the tackles that he makes and the passion that he plays with. So, he’s a great guy to have on our team — a great locker room guy, great guy to build the culture we’re trying to build.”

**After Joe Mixon’s touchdown, you pointed over at Zac Taylor, and it looked like you were happy about the play call. Am I reading into that correctly?**

“Yes, it was a great call. It was third-and-three from the three (-yard line), something like that. Usually, we pass the ball in those situations, so I don’t think they were quite expecting a run. I thought it was a great call.”

**Do you think they were expecting a run on the last play that picked up a first down and basically sealed the game?**

“Yes, for sure. That was well blocked, well executed. Joe (Mixon) made a big play.”

**I know you played the Bills in the postseason since Monday Night Football last year, but with this being the first time Damar Hamlin was back in Cincinnati, what were you feeling seeing him on the other sideline before the game?**

“It’s always nice to see his face when you go through something like that, and you see that up close. I’m happy that he’s feeling better. I’m happy that he’s back on the field, but I think that everybody wants to put that behind us and move on.”

**You handed a ball to a young fan while walking off the field. Was there anything behind that or was it spur of the moment?**

“No, I don’t need any more of those balls, so I thought I’d make somebody’s day.”

## **TEE HIGGINS**

### **Wide receiver**

**It seems like you guys like to go for the kill shot when it makes sense to run with Joe Burrow throwing deep to Tyler Boyd.**

**What does it take to make a throw like that?**

“It takes a lot of poise. On that play we were thinking they were going to play a little off coverage. He saw the right thing and put a perfect ball to T.B.”

**After eight games, how would you grade how you’ve done as a team?**

“There’s a lot more out there for us. I feel like we still haven’t gotten to our peak yet.”

**How would you describe the mood in the room after the game?**

“Nothing but smiles.”

**You scored on your first two drives in the last four games. How big is that in just setting the tone in these games?**

“That’s huge, especially when the defense can go out there and get a stop. That’s huge, man, and that’s what we’re looking forward to do in each and every game.”

**You’ve won four in a row but the last two against two of the better teams in the NFL. Do you feel like these last two weeks have re-established where the Bengals are in the pecking order of things?**

“I mean, yeah, but we’ve still got a lot more work to do, so we’re going to come in here tomorrow and go over the film, go over the stuff that we did wrong and correct those things at practice this week, and get ready for Houston.”

## **IRV SMITH JR.**

### **Tight end**

**Talk about the play of the tight ends ...**

“It’s great. The depth that we have, the talent that we have in the room, everybody’s a viable threat.”

**Talk about Tanner Hudson and how he’s fitting into the room ...**

“I feel like Tanner’s done a great job. He balled during training game, the preseason and when he’s had an opportunity so far this year. We’re just going to keep building on that.”

**Who gave you your best piece of advice last week after you had a rough week to lift you up?**

“My teammates, my coaches, and my family. I played a lot of football and it’s something I pride myself on. I put a lot into this game. It (fumble against the 49ers) is (something) I never want to do, but you know, it happened.”

**What did your dad say?**

“He just told me to hold onto that football like it’s a baby. That’s what my mom says, to hold on like it’s a baby.”

**A lot of fans we’re talking about the tight end group going into this game. Did you catch wind of that?**

“No. I don’t pay attention to that stuff. We take one week at a time. Every day at practice we put the work in. I’m confident in my abilities and the coaches are. As a tight end group, we’re confident.”

**How does it feel to have this kind of performance based on the magnitude and for every one of the tight ends to be able to contribute in this win?**

“It felt great.”

**CAM TAYLOR-BRITT**

**Cornerback**

**You have four straight wins including two straight wins back-to-back against two of the best teams in the NFL in the 49ers and Bills. How do you feel about the state of the Bengals right now?**

“It’s pretty lit right now, but we’ve got a lot of football to play though. You’re lit for right now but Monday we’re back at it.”

**What did you think of the atmosphere tonight with the striping and the whole deal?**

“Like I said, it was lit. No, it was crazy, man. Some of the guys, we were talking about how color coordinated it was. They really took their time to do that, and it showed. I think it was an intimidation thing, you know.”

**You’ve had an interception in three of your last four games. What’s been the deal with you lately?**

“When we go to practice, we practice very hard and watch film and everything. In the games, I use my God-given ability to go get the ball.”

**On that play, Josh Allen pumped but you didn’t bite. You were ready for it ...**

“Yeah, it’s a little thing I do.”

**Are you in his head?**

“Most definitely. I just gave him two little steps and saw the ‘out,’ and he threw the ‘out.’ I thought, ‘Track it, and go get the ball.’”

**Do you think the Bengals are the best team in the AFC right now?**

“Damn right. Yeah. Just like that, I’m going to say it every time. We’ve got more games to come and we get to prove ourselves every time.”

**DREW SAMPLE**

**Tight end**

**On your touchdown, what did you see out there?**

“They were showing a little bit of pressure, and then I was able to get out and there was a lot of space underneath. Our receivers, you know, they’re dangerous, so they (Bills) had to sneak into coverage and there was space. I made a guy miss and got in for the touchdown.”

**When you went out on the field and looked around the stadium, what did you think about the stripes?**

“I loved it. It was awesome. Just to see our fans come together and it be loud, we just want to make it a hard place to play, and I think it was.”

**This was your fourth straight win. How does that feel?**

“That’s kind of crazy to think about, but it’s good. It’s awesome. We had to start winning these games, so it’s a good first step for us.”

**Do you feel you’re the best team in the AFC right now?**

“I think so. I think we always believed that. Obviously, early in the season, we went through some bumps, but I think we’re starting to hit our stride. There are a lot of games left and everything is pretty much in front of us. We need to keep stacking week-by-week.”

**JOE MIXON**

**Running back**

**A big part of your game tonight seemed like it was the blitz pick-up ...**

“I thought that me and Tray (Trayveon Williams) did a hell of a job. I wish I could go back on one technique-wise and clean some things up. But for the most part, I definitely feel like we honed in, handled business, got a few pancakes and pretty much was holding up firm in the pocket. Joe is delivering dimes, and everything is coming together. We just have to keep building on that and keep going and getting better.”

**The running game was a big factor tonight. The offense seemed to balance itself out ...**

“At first, I thought we came out strong with the run game. I definitely think that, as a running back like me, I feel like we all have things that we could clean up, myself included. But we’re just one away from the big run. We just have to keep on coming out here, executing, keep building everybody else, and hone in on the game plan, and all the great things left will come. So, we have to keep handling business.”

**The Bengals are on a four-game winning streak and the team is scoring not only on the first drives of games, but on the second drives. Your first two drives in all four wins, the team scored touchdowns. What does it mean to get off to a fast start like that?**

“Pretty much over here, that’s what we preach. ‘Start fast and finish faster’ when it comes down to it. I thought the guys did a hell of a job honing in on the game plan. The crowd played a great part of it with the momentum. Well, when it comes down to it, we just have to keep building and keep capitalizing on what teams give us. Like I said, I feel like the potential that we have in this here locker room is great. We have the potential to be the best in literally every stat in football. From offense to defense. And when it comes down to it, we just have to keep on getting better, honing in on the game plans and doing what we have to do. Keep stacking these (wins), every single one of them getting bigger and bigger. We control our own destiny, and we just have to come out here and finish. One week at a time, and hopefully you’ll see us down the road.”

**Finally, many said the Bengals tight ends were struggling, but the tight ends played very well tonight. The tight end position stepped up, running backs, receivers — a bunch of receivers made plays; not just Ja'Marr, who made plays himself as well, but that pass to Tyler Boyd on on your final drive ... how big was that?**

"I thought TB, (Tyler Boyd) came up huge on that. Hell of a play. That was a hell of a play call by Zac (Taylor). We pretty much executed all the way around, all 11 of us. And when it comes down to it, when you execute, great things are going to happen, and that's just what it is. But I'm excited about this big dub ('W'). We're going to celebrate today and tonight. And come tomorrow, we'll get the kinks out and go back to the drawing boards and get ready for Houston."

## **GERMAINE PRATT**

### **Linebacker**

**What happened on the fumble that you forced?**

"Obviously, I gave up the inside. He did an inside move on me, which I have to stay inside. Then Nick (Nick Scott) came down and helped me. He made a big play. He went low, then I saw the ball. He's most vulnerable falling so I punched the ball out. I know we needed the turnover, because they were trying to score."

**You've been on a roll with your turnovers this year. Do you feel like you're really hitting your stride at this point in the season right now personally?**

"Yeah, I feel like each week I'm trying to improve on getting better. November football is getting closer to the playoffs, so you want to peak at the right moments in the right situation. So, you want to put yourself in situations during practice where you have to make the play."

**What do you feel like will be the key for you guys to stay consistent? It feels like since that Seattle game, you guys have been a different unit. What do you think is the key for you guys to consistently play at the level you are?**

"It's everybody doing their job. We're finally playing complimentary football. That's all it is. We're just doing our job. Every phase is doing their job and feeding off each other. That's all it is."

**How pleased are you to see the way that Cam (Cam Taylor-Britt) in his second year is taking the ball away?**

"I'm happy for him. Me and Cam (Cam Taylor-Britt) are getting tighter and tighter every day. We're playing the game now more and I'm talking about picks and stuff and then he is doing a great job. He is following the number one guy around and then they are trying him so obviously there's more chances for the ball and taking it away."

**On the field—how loud would you say this crowd was compared to all the games that you've been a part of here at Paycor?**

"It was up there. It was loud. It was up there. I feel like they can be a little bit louder. So, let's. Come on, Let's go."

## **TANNER HUDSON**

### **Tight end**

**It's kind of scary where this offense could go this season?**

"I think it's just looking at the tape and then getting better every week. We always think we can do better. Once you get in there, watch some film you'll say to yourself, I want to get that block better. I want to run that route better. It's just getting in every week and trying to get better during practice and taking coaching."

**What's the feeling like for you right now? Because you get signed to the active roster this week. Zac Taylor says you've earned the opportunity and then you come out here and you have the game that you did tonight ...**

"It means a lot. I come out every day, practice, game, whatever it is, to try to get better. And I'd like to think that shows and for Zac (Coach Zac Taylor) and Joe (Joe Burrow) and Callahan (Brian Callahan) and all of them to have faith in me, to put me in those situations. I just want to go out there and make the play for them."

**Obviously, the tight end room has been talked about at the trade deadline. People have said the Bengals have to upgrade and they have to go make a trade. What do you think it says about you guys as a group that you kind of responded this way tonight when you called upon?**

"We're just trying not to listen to the noise. We know we're trying to get better each and every week and go out there and perform to best of our abilities and I think I got all the faith in the world in me, Mitch (Mitchell Wilcox), Drew (Drew Sample) or Irv (Irv Smith Jr.) all of us can go out there and make plays each and every game and we just have to keep building that trust with Joe (Joe Burrow) that he knows he can come to us."



## BILLS POSTGAME QUOTES

NOV. 5, 2023

BUFFALO AT CINCINNATI

### SEAN McDERMOTT

#### Head coach

##### Initial comments ...

"Came up short tonight against a good football team. It was just too inconsistent overall. Not enough complementary football, turned the ball over twice. Defense got off to a slow start in the first drive and particularly in the second drive, they scored as well. That really came down to two plays, the roughing the passer penalty on Tim (Settle) and then a critical third-down conversion there. Then I thought we settled in defensively and had a couple of short fields before half there that I thought we did well with until that third-and-10, where we had a man covered and he got a little greedy and ran past. I thought the second half they settled in but needed to get a stop at the end right there. So overall, just too many inconsistencies in the kicking game, as well as the offense overall. Some good plays, but not enough."

##### From your perspective, what did you see from the offense in that first drive where it seemed like everything was working to the lull that it kind of had the rest of the half?

"That's kind of what I meant. I thought we got off to a really good start in a rhythm. Then after that, it was tough sledding. That can't happen against a good football team that scores points and has a good quarterback. You've got to be able to score points."

##### It seems like it worked for you going up-tempo last game. It seemed to take you a while to get there this game. Why do you think it took so long to push the pace as you did a little bit later in the game?

"I don't have a good answer for you right now. I've got to look into that. But I know what you mean, I saw that at the end as well."

##### What explanation did you get on the grounding call there at the end of the first half?

"We get a chance to get points and then we give up that on third-and-10. We turned the ball over, we get off the field, we come back, we get sacked, we punt it out to around the logo where we had third-and-10 and a chance to win that series. But we got just a little bit greedy with our man coverage and we ran past our coverage and he dumped it. We have to be a little more disciplined, but that hurt. They made the call, I understand what they saw but I also understand what happens. We go with what they call."

##### Now at 5-4, it seems like every game now it's a different issue. Is your frustration level rising that there is just going to be too many holes in the boat?

"No, we've got to continue to coach and continue to play hard and find ways to win. That's what you do in this league, you have to find ways to win. It starts up front on both sides of the ball and establishing a line of scrimmage. I don't think we did enough of that tonight. At times it was there, but not enough. Right now, it's too inconsistent."

##### Defense hasn't had an interception since the Dolphins game. How much of a concern is that?

"It's making plays on the ball. When you're talking about the defense, are we putting enough pressure on the quarterback? Usually turnovers happen either by a poor decision by a quarterback, but more times than not, it's when you can affect the quarterback. Tonight, I didn't feel like we were able to affect him enough, especially on early downs."

##### Did working in Rasul Douglas go as you thought it would?

"Yeah, he was in there and then we had some injuries and I thought he did some great things."

##### Can Rasul Douglas add to this role as he works more in these next nine days?

"I would expect so. I applaud him for when he came in. Rasul did a good job of trying to learn on a short week, and to go out there and play an NFL game with two days of practice was impressive."

##### What needs to change offensively?

"I don't have an answer for you, but let's just start with consistency. We need to be more consistent establishing the line of scrimmage. I thought last week we spread the ball around, but tonight not as much. There were times when Josh (Allen) had time back there and maybe nobody was open, but we have to wonder why no one is open when he has time."

##### Why has there been a lack of productivity from guys that are not Stefon Diggs in the last couple of weeks?

"You've got to have more than two. Obviously, Stefon and Dalton (Kincaid) are heavy hitters for us and they get their targets. Just too inconsistent today."

##### By saying establishing line of scrimmage, are you insinuating getting more effective running the ball?

"I think we ran the ball eight times with the running backs, and Josh had some scrambles in one or two designed runs in there. You've got to do that in order to move the chains and keep a good offense off the field. I think that's all part of being a good offense."

##### Do you worry about the confidence of your team?

"No, these guys do a great job. They're invested in it. It's tough to win in the NFL. If you go against a good football team, you have to do things right. We didn't do enough things right tonight in order to win."

##### The Bengals had nine pass plays for 15 or more yards. Did they do something that you didn't think?

"It was nothing we didn't think that they would do. The first drive, I thought we weren't settled in. Then after that, I thought we settled in. We had the penalty and then we had the critical third down. We're continuing to work on our rush and coverage working together and I didn't think overall that we made enough of an impact on the quarterback tonight."

##### What progress has Von Miller made in his recovery since the beginning of the season?

"He's working as hard as he possibly can. Like I've said before, Von is Von and he is going to continue to work hard. He has that resume for a reason. He's coming off an ACL. Hopefully he continues to improve every week."

##### You mentioned injuries, is that why Christian Benford got pulled out?

"Christian tweaked his hamstring, so he got pulled out and then Dane (Jackson) at the end of the game there as well was injured."

### JOSH ALLEN

#### Quarterback

##### What did you see on the interception by Bengals CB Cam Taylor-Britt?

"It was a drop two look, I threw a bad ball. The guy made a play."

**What is going to take to shake the doldrums on offense?**

"(We've) just (got to) find a way to get into a rhythm. Come out on the opening drive, have some success moving the ball. Obviously, there was a lull there and (we) didn't really score until late in fourth. We had opportunities. We didn't score before half. Didn't get six (points) on the first drive of the second half. That's not complementary football. You've got to double dip and we needed the points there and give yourself a chance. It's the old cliché, in order to win you have to stop yourself from losing and we didn't do that tonight."

**What were your thoughts on the intentional grounding penalty?**

"I've never seen that call in my life. It's an option route. Gabe (Davis) can sit down or go. I wasn't pressured. They decided to make that call and unfortunately it didn't allow us to get points there. I wouldn't do anything different. I'm expecting him to run a go (route). He made the read to stop and that's what it is."

**That play may or may not have had an impact on the outcome of the game, but you always talk about scoring before halftime and coming out of it. How much of a swing could that have been right there?**

"That's a huge swing. Again, whether it's three or six coming out of the half, scoring on back-to-back drives and giving yourself some momentum — that's huge in a game, especially against a good team like we just played. It stings. Losing is never fun. Losing sucks. It's one thing, though — we're not going to let this divide us. We're going to come together. We're going to figure it out. I've got a lot of faith in the men in this locker room and the coaching staff and the guys around me. We're going to figure it out."

**TE Dalton Kincaid had a great game and had a tough fumble. Did you talk to him about it on the sideline or will you after the game?**

"Yeah. It's unfortunate, obviously, turning the ball over. We're going to have those and you've got to limit those as much as we can. He was trying to make a play. It's unfortunate."

**You're at four losses now and you only had three all of last season. Do you feel confident this will get turned around pretty quickly?**

"Absolutely. Absolutely."

**What gives you that confidence?**

"The guys in this locker room. We have a lot of guys who are unselfish players, guys that will do anything they can to help this team win football games. The second half of the season, realistically if you want to look at it from a real view, you need 10, maybe 11 wins to get into the playoff picture in the AFC. We've got eight games left, we've got five wins. The math there, it's not pretty, it's not going to be easy, but again, if there's a locker room that can handle this, it's this locker room."

**Do you take anything away from the 2021 season where you guys had a similar path?**

"Yeah. It's, it's nothing that we haven't seen before. Again, we've just got to find a way to put it together and win, whether it starts in practice throughout the week. It comes down to executing on game day. It's as simple as that and playing complementary football."

**What is it about the Bengals' defense that seems to give you so much trouble?**

"They've got some good players on that side of the ball. They do some different things with their linebackers and D-line. (They've got) guys that aren't going to cost them a game. They don't take many chances. They're smart football players over there and they've got a good game plan."

**Last week, you got the ball to Gabe Davis a lot and it seemed to open things up a lot. Tonight was it scheme or where you were looking that made that not as effective of an option?**

"I couldn't tell you, honestly, until I watch the film. I just try to run the play that's called and execute it to the best of our ability."

**Things looked so easy on that first drive. I know you have to watch the tape as it just happened, but can you pinpoint over the next couple of drives what went wrong?**

"Again, just lack of execution and not getting into a rhythm."

**It seemed like you pushed the pace immediately against Tampa Bay; this game it took a while to go up-tempo. Why do you think it took so long to make that switch?**

"Just the game plan we had going into (the game)."

**VON MILLER****Linebacker****What's the message to the team sitting at 5-4?**

"We played a good Bengals team. We've just got to stay focused. Started off a tiny bit too slow in all three phases, but I still feel comfortable where we're at. We've still got a long stretch of good teams coming up. We've just got to keep going, get back in the lab, see what we did good, see what we did wrong, and just keep pushing."

**What happened on the last play there with Joe Mixon?**

"I had to be a little bit wider, and I lunged out at him. I had contain on that play — just got to make that tackle."

**How frustrating is that when you're in that position and it could have been a really impactful play?**

"You know I've been there. I've been there before. Just got to get back in the lab. I'm still working. This is the best that I've felt. I let the coaches know during the game that I feel real good today. Physically I'm right where I want to be, making strides to be the type of player I want to be. That last play, there were other plays in the game where I thought I could've done better too, but that last play, I've definitely got to make that one."

**Did you feel like you were able to about to make a play after the offense went down and scored at the end?**

"Yeah, we felt good all the way up until that last play. We had a great week of practice, the game plan just started a tad bit slow. We'll be good though — wipe this one off and keep going."

**Where's the frustration level with the injuries on defense?**

Yeah, that happens. You've just got to keep working, keep grinding. We have a solid group of guys in the locker room. We've got depth in all three phases of defense — defensive line, linebacker and secondary. We'll get some guys back. It wasn't too serious today. We've just got to keep pushing."

**With all the ups and downs, how do you let everyone know ...**

"We've got a good team. We've got a really good team. We've just got to keep grinding. We've got a great quarterback, offense is great, defense is great. We just lost to a great team today. That's going to happen. We've lost four games this season, still got a long stretch of games in the second half of the season coming up. We've just got to keep grinding to be where we want to be."

**DANE JACKSON****Cornerback****Can you take me through your pass breakups?**

"Just in position. Coach made the right call, I was in position, and I was able to make the play."

**How frustrating have all the injuries been on defense? It seems like every single time you guys come out you're dealing with major**

changes ...

"It's a part of the game. Injuries, they're terrible, they suck. It's a part of the game, and we've got enough people on the team that can come in and make those exact plays."

**You came back in, but you got hurt at one point. How are you feeling?**

"Oh, I'm feeling great. I was just a little dizzy. They told me to go down, but yeah, I'm feeling good."

**Can you take any positives away from today?**

"We always take pride in competing. I think that's the main thing. We always compete, no matter what's going on defense or on offense. Next play, next play — that's our mentality. We just take pride in competing, but we've got to be better."

**What do you take away from the adjustments in the second half after allowing only three points?**

"It's making more contested plays, being tighter in coverage. Like I said, making those opportunities when they come to me."

## **DALTON KINCAID**

### **Tight end**

**How does this offense find a rhythm?**

"I feel like when we were going a little bit more up-tempo, we were moving the ball a little better. That might be something, but just get everyone together, get some high energy, and just move the ball."

**Why does it seem like it takes so long to get into that up-tempo?**

"I'm not sure. If we knew then we'd be doing it the whole time. Just something we've got to watch the tape and figure out."

**It feels like you and Josh Allen are a lot more on the same page now. He targeted you early in the game, just talk about your chemistry with him and how that's grown...**

"It's growing. I think it's just trust. Obviously, what happened at the end of the game loses some trust. That just can't happen on my part. I've got to be better in a one-score game. Just got to be better in that situation."

**How's the ankle? You were limping a little bit but didn't come out of the game...**

"Football is a (physical) sport, you've got to battle through some stuff. Everyone's out there getting hit and hitting each other."

**How do you bounce back from a game like this?**

"Just rely on backbone, and what got you here. Just leaning on that through the good and the bad."

## **MITCH MORSE**

### **Center**

**At 5-4 with a tough road ahead of you, this can't be a great position that you put yourselves in ...**

"Whenever you lose a game, it's not a good position to put yourself in. Nothing's changed in regard to the sense of urgency. It's at an all-time high, I think for us it's not letting frustration compound into how we approach our work, what works, and how to do it. We'll just be working on the little things and the little nuances. It's very frustrating. Things have happened in an untimely manner. We all shot ourselves in the foot. We each had a play or two, and when you compound all of that, you're just going to put yourself in the negative. For right now, we've got to look at ourselves in the mirror, and understand we do have a tough stretch ahead, but that's the NFL, as is life, we put ourselves in position to play very good teams. We'll look at the film. We're not panicking, but the sense of urgency has never been higher."

**Is there a sense that team just kind of has your number a little bit?**

"I don't know how to answer that question. I think just we didn't execute, and they did. To have a team's number — it's the NFL — they just out-executed us, and that's happened a few times. We didn't feel like we were out of that game. We just put ourselves in an untimely position."

**Why do you feel like this offense is searching and battling for consistency?**

"It's something we're going to have to look at. Like I said, everybody had a turn, a play or two here, and when you compound those on offense — each guy has a play or two and that's 22 plays, and that's half the game. We'll look at it, and understand that every game is a big one, but we want to accomplish our goals, which is winning one game at a time, and compounding that and see what happens. We have to look at ourselves hard in the mirror and figure something out."

**It appears the up-tempo stuff is still working. It wasn't as good as last Thursday, but it still seems like you guys are real comfortable in that setup...**

"Yeah, it's a good question. We'll see. We're better when we put 17 (Josh Allen) in a position where he feels comfortable, and every game dictates something different, and we'll do what we're told and roll."