



## BENGALS POSTGAME QUOTES

JAN. 15, 2023

BALTIMORE AT CINCINNATI / WILD CARD PLAYOFF

### ZAC TAYLOR

#### Head coach

##### What do you make of Sam Hubbard's 98-yard touchdown run that gave you the go-ahead score?

"That's why you never give up on a drive, even when it's down there inside the two-yard line. It's what our defense — the whole red zone, the last couple years, it's been awesome from our defense and today is no different. For Logan (Wilson) to knock that ball out and Sam to finish (the play) off 98 yards later, it really changed the momentum of the game because you're looking at a 14-point swing right there, going down seven (points) and then being up seven. It was a challenge on offense, certainly. It's one of the better defenses we face all year. We knew that going in. Our defense really carried us in the fourth quarter. We really needed that."

##### With the injury to Jonah Williams today, how would you assess the state of the offensive line right now?

"Fighting. I'd assess them as, they're fighting and giving us a chance."

##### I know you often mention it's a "next man up" mentality, but when you lose three starters on the offensive line, how much does that take away from your playbook?

"That's the most challenging part to get reps in there because a guy like Jackson (Carman) has got to represent both sides. That's the going forward — we'll see who's available and do our best to rep them and get them going."

##### What is it about this defense that makes them so special as a group, not only Hubbard's touchdown but all the stops?

"Just the second half in general this entire year, that's really been the story line for our defense, is rising up and really just not allowing the (opposing) offense to have anything. For our offense to go and get into a rhythm and be able to score points, but our defense in the second half, which has been fantastic — today was no different. It's good to see that they brought that type of defense into the playoffs."

##### Have you ever seen a Ravens defense play the way they did today with not allowing anything except underneath?

"They did a good job. They've got a lot of help with guys up front, the (line)backers are rotating through there and they're good at every level of defense. They make you earn it. You're not going to get off any explosive (plays). That's the biggest thing — that's why our drives were so long with so many plays because all three times we played them, all of our drives have been over 10-play drives. It was a strange game. You get three possessions in the first half. We got our third possession with four minutes left in the half and it felt like that's just the way it is. Every possession is so critical because those two turnovers we got on defense — you win the turnover battle two-to-one and you win the game in a game like that. There's no secret sauce there."

##### It seemed like one of the critical sequences in the game was when Jonah Williams went down, then you hold the Ravens to a field goal right before the half for them to have a one-point lead. Then in the third quarter, they get the ball and you stop them and then you go down and score a touchdown. Can you talk about with everything swirling around the team, how critical that stretch was to the overall victory?

"That's a critical stretch right there because they stole those points before halftime, and they were going to get the ball first (in the third quarter). It was so big for our defense to come out with a stop and then for our offense to immediately respond with a touchdown drive. Really, that's what allowed us to regain the momentum — we had lost that momentum before that last turnover there that Sam (Hubbard) recovered. But that was big to have that momentum going in the second half to know that we would have only 10 possessions."

##### Was the team deflated at all at halftime?

"No. I mean, it was three possessions (for) each (team at that point). It may seem strange, but it's not because that's how it was the first time we played them, but I think everyone at halftime knew that's not an unexpected way for that game to be at 10-9 at halftime."

##### What did you see on Akeem Davis-Gaither's interception? It seems like he's always around the ball.

"He was in great position there. He just secured the ball. I didn't see how he finished (the play because) they ruled him down so far back, but when they throw it to you, you've got to catch it and I thought he did a great job there."

##### The defense led the way, but you would have liked to close this out on offense with three opportunities to do so. Any concern or frustration that you weren't able to put them away the way you wanted?

"You want to be able to help the defense out more and even if it's not putting points on the board like you want, you want to put them in better field position and not have them be able to return a kick and with a penalty be beyond the 50 (yard line). There were different reasons some of those drives stalled out. One of them was a holding penalty that put us way back on the 10 (yard line). Other ones, we were close and just didn't quite get it done. But again, all that matters at this point is winning. We'll fix it this week and move forward."

##### Do you remember what you said to Sam Hubbard after his touchdown return?

"I couldn't find him. I think Sam was the last one I found. I just congratulated everybody."

##### The TV cameras caught a great shot of you yelling during Sam Hubbard's return. What was going through your mind at that moment?

"(I was) yelling at all those people to just block somebody. It looked like Mark Andrews was going to run him down and we had a whole caravan of people. That's what was going through my mind — 'Run faster.' It's tough; you consider what Sam went through in that drive and now you're down there in a goal-line situation and that's why you do all the summer conditioning he probably did at Ohio State and at Moeller (High School). All those reps, that's why you do them, for moments like that to be able to finish strong like he did. That was awesome for the hometown kid to finish it that way."

##### You started a new tradition of taking game balls around the city after wins last year. Will that continue this year and if so, do you have any spots in mind already?

"I know I'm continuing that tradition. That tradition is never going to die. That includes tonight. You guys keep holding me up — I don't know what time the bars close here, but we'll find one. We've got a good thing going and I'm not going to reveal that right now, but we will include as many people as possible."

##### Thoughts on Joe Burrow's performance given the offensive line situation?

"Some of the plays that people aren't going to (recognize the importance of include) the third-and-one play on when we were on the 30 (yard line), we got zone coverage and the play was just a disaster. For him to sprint out and reverse course and get us the first down is really a play that

should get more storylines than some realize because that play (came) versus a bad look and he just kind of willed it to happen. Again, I don't have the stats in front of me, but that was probably the possession we scored on during that third quarter. That got us started on that third-and-one, when he scrambled for that. If we don't get that drive, who knows how the game goes from there. It's a three-and-out and we're punting, but he just makes plays like that to will us to victory. He did a great job on the third-down (pass) to Hayden (Hurst) that got us down to the one-yard line. That was great. He took a play, made an adjustment and that's why he was able to hit Hayden. He recognized the coverage. He just makes special plays like that, and that's what you need when it's playoff time."

#### **How big was that drive you described in the third quarter for the rest of the game?**

"Our defense got us that stop and we got that possession and took over with five minutes (remaining) in the third quarter. It was a pretty-time consuming possession and that gives you a feeling like you're in decent control there. It was a big possession."

#### **What is the difference if any this year versus last year winning a playoff game given the previous history and last year's Super Bowl run?**

"It's special. There's such a tremendous history here. You don't take anything for granted in this league. At this point, it really doesn't matter what seed you are. Every game is going to be a dogfight, and we knew that, and we were going to get their best shot and we knew that. Our guys found a way to win. Is it different than last year? Winning's just fun. We work so hard and this season is so long. You go through all the peaks and valleys with all the people in this room. You're here every step of the way — to get to the playoffs and it can all be over in a heartbeat. Our guys didn't want that to happen, so they found a way to move on."

#### **How special does it feel to now face the Bills given what happened and not being able to finish the regular-season game this year?**

"It feels like two deserving teams (are facing each other). Buffalo is one of the greatest environments to play in in all of football. I've been there many, many times and it's a fun environment. It's a worthy playoff environment, and so our guys are going to be juiced up and ready to go. It should be a heck of a game."

### **JOE BURROW**

#### **Quarterback**

#### **Is this an example of 'do-or-die' football?**

"That's what it looks like. When you play a divisional team for the third time, all that matters is coming out with the win."

#### **What's going through your mind on Sam Hubbard's big play?**

"Run faster Sam! Go! Get there! (laughing) He actually did look pretty fast, surprisingly."

#### **Is he faster than you?**

"I don't know about that."

#### **How can you overcome losing Jonah and your other starters on the offensive line?**

"We have a lot of faith in those guys. Max Scharping stepped up today, Hakeem Adeniji stepped up today. Jackson Carman stepped up and got in there after Jonah went down."

#### **What does Sam Hubbard mean to the team as a whole?**

"He's one of the leaders of the team. He's recognized as captain, he's what this whole thing is built on — toughness, hard work, and leadership. Those are the type of guys we try to bring in here. He's one of my best friends and comes up with big plays, over and over. He gets his work done, has a positive attitude in the locker room. He's the type of guy you want on your team."

#### **Is it almost like you're expecting the defense to make a play sometimes?**

"You do, but at the same time, you're expecting them not to, because you want to be ready to make plays. I expect them to make big plays in big moments, though."

#### **How stressful is it watching it all unfold?**

"It's playoff football; it's what it's all about. Keep your cool and trust your guys to do their jobs."

#### **They seemed committed to preventing you from throwing it long ...**

"They mixed a blitz in here and there. They're really good on defense. They stay in their scheme. They mix up coverages. It's a really good defense — one of the best in the league."

#### **Did they change anything in the second half?**

"They just mixed it up. They make it tough on you."

#### **Is it a tough play to strip there, on a jump-over like that?**

"I haven't even seen it. I just saw Sam running down the field."

#### **Have you ever tried that?**

"I have not. And I don't plan on it."

#### **How satisfying is it to keep this momentum going?**

"It's very satisfying, especially when you play a team like that. They're so good at what they do, and to beat a divisional team for the second time in two weeks is tough."

#### **Do you ever think about the team's progression from the first game vs. Baltimore?**

"Throughout the week of practice you recall all the stuff they've done over the years. They can throw it at you in any moment."

#### **This is the first time the Bengals have won playoff games in consecutive seasons. What does that say about where this franchise is?**

"We're in a great spot. We have great leaders in the locker room and Zac puts us in the right mindset to create positions to go and succeed. We have the utmost faith in each other to go make plays to win the game."

#### **How do you balance a sometimes-clunky offense while still advancing the ball?**

"We had three possessions in the first half and scored on two. We came out in the second half and scored on our first possession. We didn't finish better, but we need to work on that."

#### **How big was Jamarr Chase today?**

"Jamarr is a great player, one of the best. I'm always going to look for him."

#### **Is there something about this team that doesn't panic?**

"We've never panicked when we've been in these spots. We understand we have guys that go make plays in moments like that. That gives us faith to stay within ourselves and do our jobs."

**Did you have a message for Jackson Carman at the end of the half?**

"Jackson's played a lot of football for us. We have faith in him. He works hard, he gets his job done. We're going to count on him a lot."

**Was the touchdown to Jamarr Chase in the slot?**

"He found a little space for me to put the ball in there. That's what he does."

**Did Zac Taylor say anything that resonated with the team this week?**

"He always knows what to say. He's not a huge 'rah-rah' speech kind of guy, but he always finds the few sentences that are just right for the right moment. They resonate for everyone."

**How exciting is it to take this team to Buffalo now?**

"It's an exciting moment. We'll enjoy this win then move on to the next one. They're a great team with a great quarterback. I look forward to the challenge."

**Is there any added emotion given what's unfolded with Damar?**

"I think now that everyone knows he's doing a lot better and back with the team, it makes us all feel a lot better about playing football."

**Was tonight an example of why you said this is where you want to be?**

"I love our fans here. I love being from Ohio, playing for this team, and representing this state the way I do. The fans do a great job of giving us energy and putting us in a good position to make it hard on opposing teams when they come in here."

**After last year's cathartic first playoff win, does it feel different this time around?**

"Playoff wins are always hard, always very satisfactory when you get them. We're going to enjoy this one, then move on to the next one when the time is right."

**SAM HUBBARD  
Defensive end**

**Can you give us your play-by-play on the goal line stand?**

"Credit to Logan Wilson, punching it out. Just being in the right place, right time. Got a few blocks along the way, and I was just worried about getting tracked down. I'm glad I made it to the end zone."

**HC Zac Taylor joked that that's why you do all that conditioning in the summertime. Do you agree with that? That came in handy ...**

"Yeah. I mean, it was a long drive leading up to that play. I was pretty gassed, but I'm definitely proud of myself on being well conditioned."

**When's the last time you ran 98 yards?**

"Actually, in the summer, I do 110's, at Black Sheep with my trainer Pat Coyne. Shout-out to him (for) getting me ready."

**Did you ever imagine when you were a kid that you would make a play like what you made on the field?**

"No, you can't even dream that one up. It's pretty special, but I was just glad to see my teammates faces because that was a bad one. It was a toughly fought game. A lot of adversity, very physical. To make the play and be the guy to come through is an amazing feeling. Not only for my teammates, but the fans as well."

**Twenty years from now, what are you going to remember about that play?**

"Probably the feeling of just running to the sideline and seeing everybody's face. You can't replicate a feeling like that in life. It's really special."

**That had to be the best oxygen you've ever had though, right?**

"Yeah (laughs). I think I was pretty dead for the rest of the game after that, but that was well needed."

**What was your responsibility on the play?**

"I'm just the contain player and they kind of washed everything down and tried to jump over. Logan is just one of the most aware football players I've ever played with. He jumped up, punched the ball out, and like I said, I was just in the right place at the right time."

**How aware are you of how close Ravens TE Mark Andrews was to tackling you?**

"I was watching on the big screen. I was like, 'He's coming, somebody block him, please don't get caught.' That's all I was thinking about."

**LB Markus Bailey said he wish you would've ran the other way ...**

"Yeah, I think Markus got a good block for me, so I'm thankful for him because I know everyone was tired. It was a caravan into the end zone, so credit to Markus too."

**LB Akeem Davis-Gaither said he yelled at you to push the ball through. Did you hear that?**

"I always joke after — I think it was the Raiders game last year — I got caught and I always tell everybody, 'If I get a fumble, just get behind me, I'm pitching it to you.' That moment didn't really call for it. I was taking it all the way."

**How gratifying is it that the defense continues to make game-winning plays?**

"I think in the playoffs, you do it by any means necessary. That's a divisional rival that knows our offense very well. We knew it was going to be a battle. We've got a lot of big-name guys on offense, but we know as a defense that we consider ourselves the heart and soul of the team, and we take pride in that. Being the unsung heroes — that's something Mike Hilton talked to the defense about in our meetings the night before the game, so it's great to see it come to fruition so many times."

**I'm not sure if you've seen the play, but did you see how LB Germaine Pratt sort of stood him up? How key was his play?**

"I haven't really seen too much yet, but I just know that Germaine's just having an unbelievable year. He's an unbelievable teammate. Whenever it seems like we need a play, it seems to be Germaine, and that's not by accident. No surprise to me that he was involved."

**Would you like to know your top speed on that?**

"Yeah, sure."

**... 17.4 MPH. Do you clock that in practice?**

"I would've liked to get into the 18s, I've been up there. Me and Trey (Hendrickson) actually try to get our top speeds after practice on Thursdays every week. He's usually in the 20s. I'm trying to get into the 18s, but I got knocked for my 4.95 (40-yard dash) at the combine, and I don't think that matters much now."

**You actually ran 123 yards total on the fumble return ...**

"I just think after it was an, I don't know how many-play drive — I was just with DJ (Reader) and the other D-linemen and everyone was so gassed. They saw me taking off and no D-linemen chased after me. They were like, 'You got it.' It was funny."

**When did you think you could take that ball all the way to the house?**

"I was just playing football. It kind of just fell in my hands, and you just go. Like I said, I was just looking on the Jumbotron. I've never really been in that position, but it's a good feeling. I could see why the offensive guys like it."

**When was the last time you scored a touchdown like that?**

"Miami. We won the game my rookie year against Miami as well."

**Did you see the ball when you caught it?**

"Yeah, just right there. Just punch, (it was) right there, and then (points forward). Crazy."

**Were you worried it was going to be punched out from behind you?**

"Yeah, we actually have meetings every week about ball security, seeing clips from around the league of guys just getting the ball punched out, and it's always just 'Don't be that guy.' I put it here, five points of contact like they preach, and I was like, 'Nobody is getting this out.' That's an emphasis, and credit to our coaches for making us aware."

**Is running backs coach Justin Hill the one that preaches ball security?**

"Yeah, Justin. Once a week, and usually defensive guys, they make sure we're engaged, too, because we find ourselves in that position a lot."

**Did you think about the Raiders game last year and how that game down to the end as well?**

"It comes down to that every playoff game, it feels like, where you're either up and you've got to get a stop to win the game, or get a stop to give our offense a chance. You've just got to stare adversity down and not flinch. That's what I said to the team. I don't care who's playing on the other side. It's going to be a battle in the playoffs."

**On the third-and-goal quarterback sneak, was a fumble even on your mind as a possibility?**

"I don't know. Logan (Wilson) is smarter than (me). I was just trying to get some penetration and get the stop, because that's what our defense does. We scratch and claw and try to defend every yard as best we can."

**Who's keeping the ball that was returned 98 yards for a touchdown? You or Logan Wilson?**

"I think I have it. The whole defense got game balls, so I don't know. (I'll) cut it in half and give him the other half. I'll cherish that one. It's probably going on the mantle of my display now."

**What was the funniest or most memorable thing that one of your teammates said to you after that play?**

"I can't even remember. I was mic'd up, so we'll see what happens. (My) first-ever mic'd up game."

**This the team's first time ever to win playoff games in back-to-back seasons. How satisfying is it for you and what does it say about the direction this team is headed?**

"I think it says something that last year, we had to break the curse or whatever, but this year we weren't worried about the past or anything. It's a whole new team, era, whatever you want to call it. That's just the mentality we have. We're not worried about curses or the past or anything like that. We're on to the next."

**How much does Joe Burrow's presence resonate with the rest of the team?**

"I think it has everything to do with it, because it's a quarterback-driven league and we have our guy. His mentality and composure and poise resonates throughout the team. We kind of go as he goes, and he's our leader at the end of the day."

**How much does your fumble return remind you of the back-to-back sacks you had on Patrick Mahomes in the AFC Championship last year? Where does that rank for you?**

"I said this last year, but it's something my mom always told me since I was little. In moments like that, I happen to just play my best, and I pride myself on that. But I think that pressure and situation and preparation brings the best out of me, and I love being in those moments."

**Some of your teammates have described you as the heart and soul of this team. How much pride do you take in knowing that you're the guy that sets the tone for this team?**

"It's great compliments. I didn't know they said that, but I really appreciate it. I just try and be the best teammate that I can day in and day out. I think it's a lot more fun when you're happy for other guys, because it takes you further. That's just the way I was raised and I appreciate my teammates for recognizing that."

**What was the environment like tonight?**

"It was unbelievable. I think our fans are some of the best fans in the NFL. The environment's similar or better than college, Ohio State. It was special. I never thought I'd see that day here in Cincinnati, but it's been a long road. I'm glad we've got that type of energy here."

**Jessie Bates III tackled Tyler Huntley at the two-yard line to set up the eventual 98-yard fumble return. Was there a sense at that time that you could turn that play into something better?**

"Yeah, I don't know how many times we've been in that situation where somebody's got somebody on the ground, and we bowed up to either get a turnover or (hold them to) three points. You don't want to be that guy that gave up and let him in and gave him something free. You always want to be that guy that gave us another chance and let somebody else make a play, and that's just our mentality. It's nothing new to us or Jessie. He's done it so many times before."

**After the defensive touchdown, the defense didn't allow any more points. Did that play help propel you to a win?**

"Yeah, I think we got a great play by Cam Sample, Mike Hilton, Joseph Ossai — guys just rolling. When I was down, those guys stepped up big time. We've just got so many great guys in this locker room. It's hard to put into words, but we've been in that spot where you're in the playoffs, it's not going how you pictured. Everyone thought we'd be blowing them out, and you've just got to rise to the occasion. All you've got to do is win, and you just do that by sticking together. I'm glad to be that guy that made a play to kind of change the momentum a bit."

**Is sticking together the reason you guys have handled adversity so well when it has come up recently?**

"Yeah, that's something that as a captain and leader on the team, I just think is so important because as soon as you start turning on each other — you've got to play the other team. You can't be fighting amongst each other. There's always something everybody can do better. We never point fingers, we never blame the offense, special teams. It's really just a collective effort of what I can do better, and that's why I love playing with these guys."

**You said you couldn't have dreamt it any better. Could you imagine being a fan in the stadium and watching you?**

"I had a bunch of friends and family out there today, and I think we put on a pretty good show."

**What did you see on the scoreboard during that play?**

"I just saw someone getting way too close to me way too fast."

**When was the last time you used an oxygen mask? Is that a regular occurrence?**

"The combination of the drive, the run, the adrenaline — it takes it out of you. I felt like my legs were dead the rest of the time, but I'll be in good shape for next week."

## **JESSIE BATES III**

### **Safety**

**How did you feel about your ability to make hustle plays today?**

"It's not about me. It's not about the hustle play at all. It's just the tradition that we've created here in Cincinnati. That's what we're all about — doing our job until the play ends. We've got one of the best red zone defenses in the league, so anytime we can line up another snap, we'll be in good shape. It's just the tradition and the standard for our defense."

**Where does your defensive mentality come from?**

"It's the chemistry we have on this defense, the love that we have for one another. We have no doubt in one another. If somebody gives up a play, we know we'll line it up and have their back. It's the tradition, it's the motto that we have here in Cincinnati. It's all love within all of us."

**Last time you played Buffalo, the team was playing very well before the game was postponed. How do you pick up where you left off?**

"It'll be another juice game. We wish that it was in 'The Jungle,' playing in front of our incredible fans, but we'll go out in Buffalo. We tend to do well on the road late when it's cold, so we'll be ready. We'll be prepared, have a great week of preparation and be ready to take them on and go to the AFC Championship."

**LOGAN WILSON**

**Linebacker**

**What did you see on the defensive touchdown?**

"Based on the distance that there was away from the goal line, I knew they were in a sneak formation. There was going to be space and time before he was able to reach the ball across the goal line. I just made a play on the ball, G (Germaine Pratt) helped make a play on the ball and bust it out, and Sam (Hubbard) was able to run it down to the other end zone. It was unbelievable."

**How difficult was it to play Baltimore for a third time?**

"We knew it was going to be (difficult), especially after playing them last week. We're going to enjoy this one for 24 hours, then we've got to get ready for Buffalo."

**What's been the key to this nine-game winning streak?**

"We're just taking it one game at a time, controlling the controllables. That's a big reason why we're sitting at a nine-game winning streak. The next one's the biggest one yet."

**MAX SCHARPING**

**Guard**

**How did your first start as a Bengal go?**

"There's always things to work on, for sure. Anytime you're out there, it's never perfect. Hoping to keep getting better every week that we're out there. Thankfully, we have another week to go. Great job by the defense today, they really helped us out."

**Did you feel chemistry with Hakeem Adeniji?**

"Yeah, real early on. Once you get that first drive done, a little bit of the nerves settle in and then we're good to go. We worked great together all day."

**TED KARRAS**

**Center**

**How does it feel to advance to the next round to play Buffalo?**

"Very excited, very much looking forward to a rematch with Buffalo. I know the last time we played was a crazy circumstance, so it'll be good to have that matchup. I've been to that stadium a lot. Feels great to get a playoff win — I hadn't had one in a while, since 2018, so it felt good."

**You keep finding new ways to win, what does that say about the team?**

"I think everyone is supremely dedicated. We're very one-track minded, and that track is to win. Everyone is doing everything they need to do to be successful and help this team be successful, and it's showing itself in wins."

**How would you assess the players who came in due to injury on the offensive line today?**

"You can't say enough about the three guys that didn't start the season as starters but came in. Jackson (Carman), Hakeem (Adeniji), and Max (Scharping) came in and beat a very, very good defense, a great front seven. They just paid their MIKE linebacker \$100 million, so we had a big task ahead of us and I'm really proud of how everyone played."

**Are the Ravens a tough matchup for you guys?**

"They're a tough matchup for anyone. They're a couple big dogs over there. You walk up to the line against the Ravens and you've got Calais (Campbell), 6'8", the rookie (Travis) Jones is a Mack Truck. They have some big people and fast linebackers, so I'm glad we got it done."

**JA'MARR CHASE**

**Wide receiver**

**How physical was the game today?**

"It was a physical game. It's a division game, so it's always physical."

**Was your touchdown catch designed to come to you?**

"No, I think I was like the third read. I saw zone, I had a shallow cross and I had to read that. I saw zone, sat it down in the zone, and Joe (Burrow) plucked it on me quick."

**How does it feel to win against Baltimore on back-to-back weeks?**

"I'll smoke my cigar to that one."

**What did you think of Sam Hubbard's touchdown?**

"I was excited. I got up and started running down the sideline. That was cool to see. Hopefully his Madden rating goes up, and his speed goes up on Madden. He's still slow, but as long as his speed goes up, I'm fine with it. I was just happy we got the ball, I'm not even going to lie. I'm glad we scored."



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### JOHN HARBAUGH

#### Head coach

#### Initial comments ...

"I appreciate everybody being here. Obviously, a hard-fought game. Really, really proud of our players. I thought we played a winning football game in many, many ways. Ran the ball well, threw the ball well, played outstanding defense, got the turnover. The difference was the two turnovers. Obviously, that hurt us. One really big one, but both led to scores. That was part of the story of the game at the end. The other story is our guys. Our guys ... Tyler Huntley coming in and playing the way he played, I think, coming off the shoulder and the wrist injuries and fighting his way back onto the field and just giving it everything he had with that type of performance. Mark Andrews coming off and just making play after play in the passing game. The offensive line the way they blocked. J.K. (Dobbins) and Gus (Edwards), the way they ran. And then to the defense. I thought our defense was just all over the field and played great football. The key is we didn't win the game. We're disappointed in that. I've got nothing but admiration for our guys. I'm very proud of our football team."

#### On the third-and-goal play that resulted in the fumble, was there any discussion on handing the ball to Gus Edwards or J.K. Dobbins?

"Sure. You decide whether you're going to hand it off, take it off the line, hand it back in the backfield, or whether you want to quarterback sneak it. We felt we had a good call. It's a push-sneak play. It just wasn't executed the correct way. Tyler (Huntley) went over the top — that's a burrow play; he's got to go low on that ... that's the way the play is designed — No. 2 was to take it off the line of scrimmage, (where) there's a chance you might score, but there's a chance they get you in the backfield, and now it's hard to get it on fourth down. No. 2 to get it there from inside the one. We felt like that was the best call, we just didn't execute right."

#### When Dobbins caught that pass and went down with about 30 seconds left and then went into a huddle, do you wish the offense had picked up the pace on the final drive?

"The idea there was to save the timeouts for the red zone. I think the thing they told us was the holding penalty, which knocked us back. The idea was we want to keep those timeouts to throw the ball. We tried to pop a run there, we're going to call a timeout after that, then we still have a run-pass option. We wanted to score without giving the ball back. We think we're going to be in the red zone. We think it's going to be just a certain number of plays, and it's going to work right down to the end of the game, rather than maybe score the ball with 30, 35 seconds and give them a chance to go kick a field goal at the end. I think we played it right. It didn't work out in the sense that after that, we had incomplete passes, so you're not going to have a chance to call them. If you complete the passes, you get the ball back in the red zone, you call a timeout. I think it's, from an elementary level, you could say, 'Ah, you should've just called the timeouts.' But we had the timeouts worked out right."

#### When you know there is a decent chance you will be facing the same team next week, how do you balance not wanting to reveal certain things? Does that even concern you?

"Honestly, no, because when you're out there, it's a war. It's an all-out war and those guys know that when we come back next week, we'll be here. I'm excited and I think it's going to be a great opportunity for us to show the world exactly what we're going to do."

#### What changed defensively for you guys that allowed you to shut down the Bengals' offense on their last three drives?

"I don't think anything changed. I think we played really good defense the whole game. We got a couple sacks, that was big. We got him down, forced him to hold the ball in really good coverage. (We) mixed up the offense, and sometimes the ball comes out and you hit a couple, take deep outs on the drive before that. The one before that, you're talking about when they went down and got into the red zone. I just think it's a function of playing great defense. We played great defense really the whole game. They're going to make a few plays here and there, but I'm proud of those guys."

#### What did you say to the team in the locker room after the game? What was the tone of that?

"Really, it was what I just said. I'm proud of these guys. We played a great football game and we had a couple plays at the end that we should've executed better, I guess. Obviously, it's the turnovers in the end — it's the thing that gets you. It's hard to play a perfect game in this kind of environment. I think obviously, the biggest play is the quarterback sneak. That's the play that turns the game. That's at least a 10-point swing, maybe a 14-point swing if you go for it and get it. At least a seven-point swing. It is what it is."

#### Did it strike you as cruel that Tyler Huntley had played such a great game, and then the third-and-goal quarterback sneak happens the way it did?

"No, I wouldn't use that term."

#### J.K. Dobbins had the touchdown catch in the first half, but was the preference to have Gus Edwards on some of those red zone runs as opposed to Dobbins?

"Both those guys can really run all those plays. Gus is a downhill, physical guy. He's got a chance to slam it into the end zone. I thought we'd probably score on that play, you're talking about the power play right before that play. We had a chance to get in there, didn't get in. I have to see the tape and see exactly why it didn't get in. I guess they played good defense. Give them credit. But who's in the game at that time? You've got two great backs. I don't think you can nitpick. Why was this guy in the game instead of that guy? Why did you quarterback sneak it instead of taking it back and handing it off four yards deep? That's just after the fact, really. Call the best plays that you think you have and you run them."

#### In a game that not many gave you a chance to win, is there any consolation in taking the game to the very end?

"I just think that we can't even win the game? We're good enough to win the game. I think people can say what they want about our team, but if they don't think we're a good team then I don't think they're paying attention. If they pay attention, you know what kind of football team this is. But if you win the game, then you prove it. We didn't win the game, so they can continue to say what they want, but nobody in our locker room cares what anybody thinks outside of our locker room. People that know football and watch the game, they know we're a heck of a football team. The playoffs, you win, you lose, based on a couple plays going your way or not going your way. That's just how it always works. We're disappointed with that, but still proud of these guys. I love the way these guys play, and I love these guys. How can you not? How can you not love these guys and the way they fight through adversity and how they come out and compete? Just put the tape on. If you want to watch a team that plays hard and is physical and loves football and plays the game way it's supposed to be played, ask anybody around the league what they think about these guys. That's what I care about."

#### Is it disappointing to not have this team be together for another week?

"Of course. Of course it is. That's what you want. You want to be back on the practice field next week. That's the toughest part."

## **MARK ANDREWS**

### **Tight end**

**Can you explain the range of emotions after Tyler Huntley's fumble at the goal line and the Bengals running it back for a touchdown?**

"Yeah, it's just tough. You look at the offense, and we're moving the ball, and making big-time plays, people are doing their jobs, and to get down to the one — or whatever it was — and sneak it, and for that to happen ... just a freak thing. And for them to turn around and get seven — it's basically a 14-point swing — it's tough. With all that being said, we were still in the game. Guys fought hard, and continued to fight hard no matter what, and you love to see that from your guys, man. I'm super proud of this team. I'm excited for this team to get back and get better."

**All of that aside, did you feel like Tyler played a good game, and did you say anything to comfort him right after?**

"He played his heart out. I think anybody who watches this game is going to look at No. 2, Snoop, Tyler Huntley and say, 'Wow, this guy's playing hard, and playing good ball.' You've got to (take) your hats off to him, and he's just going to continue to learn and get better and better and better. I love that guy."

**You guys outplayed them for most of the game. Does that make this more difficult?**

"It does. Like you said, it was efficient ball, especially offensively. Then you look at our defense, and the way they're playing — this is a scary team. That's what's so hard about this game — and losing this game, that we don't have a chance to fight for another one — because anything could happen. We know the type of team that we have, the type of guys that we have, and that's tough. I'm proud of the guys, proud of the way we fought, and proud of the way the offense battled. We probably played one of our better games."

**How difficult has this season been for you and the team, and going through all the adversity you did, and coming here and coming up short?**

"Every year, there's ups, there's downs, there's adversity, and it's (about) how you react to that. I think guys did a great job of staying together. The chemistry in this locker room is amazing. We stick together, we stay together, and that's what it's all about — having your brother's back. I'm super proud."

**Not to take anything away from Tyler, but you know there will be some fans that say, "What would've happened if they did have Lamar Jackson in this game?" Do you ever go through the "what might've happened" in this game?**

"No, I don't think you can play like that. Obviously, like I said, the way that Tyler was playing was very good, and we had a chance to win this game — more than a chance to win this game. I feel like we controlled this game from start to finish, and it just didn't turn our way."

## **PATRICK QUEEN**

### **Linebacker**

**What's your reaction to how hard you guys fought in this game, and knowing you'll not have another one to play?**

"Yeah, it's tough. Just looking at going home last year after the Pittsburgh game, and how long the offseason is, and all the work that you put in coming into minicamp, coming into training camp, and just taking it a game at a time. You just got to look at what you put in for moments like this, go out there, execute, and win. Sometimes it just doesn't go your way. It's football — the NFL. Sometimes you lose when you play your heart out."

**What's your reaction on the sideline when it looked like you guys were going to take control of the game — one yard away — and then the Bengals score a touchdown?**

"As a defense, the mentality is to beat them to the spot, and get a stop. Next time the offense gets the ball back they're going to do their thing, and we'll get a stop after that."

**Did the notion of you guys having a championship defense become part of the psychology, or is it just a win-together-lose-together kind of thing? Did you think about how well the defense was playing at the end of the year?**

"Yeah, we all knew what we were capable of. At the beginning of the season, things were going sideways, and that was on all of us. But as the season progressed, we started shooting up. There's just a lot of things to look forward to next season."

**What will you take away from this season, and what's your thought on this particular team?**

"Just the progress that we made, and the chemistry that we have together. I know a lot of us will be back, and I feel like we should have a pretty good shot at it next year. We don't have to go through that whole rebuilding thing. Got to come back, put the work in during the offseason, don't dwell on this too much, let it motivate us, and come out there next season and go."

## **ROQUAN SMITH**

### **Inside linebacker**

**Can you explain your range of emotions when the offense fumbled at the one-yard line and returned for a touchdown?**

"It's definitely crazy, but at the end of the day it's ball and crazy things happen when you play this game. That's what it's made of. That's up for those guys executing what they did, and it is what it is."

**Did you think you were the better team today as you watched that whole game unfold?**

"For sure, but not always the best team wins. Those guys end up making a play or two more than we did. They get to advance, we don't but it's just more motivation for us this offseason and going into next season. We'll see them again."

**Do you feel like this is something to build on?**

"Absolutely. You can't dwell, you can't get down about it. It's life. You're going to face adversity in various ways all throughout your life. We faced adversity throughout the game and with the loss, obviously it's adversity as well. It's about how we're going to respond next year. Letting this motivate us this offseason because we know how good we can be here."

**What's your message as a team leader to Tyler Huntley after a big play like that but a big game in general?**

"You flush it. You can't dwell on it. It's not something that you can change. It happened and that's life. There's a lot of things that happen in life that we wish we could go back on and do different things, but that's what makes life like art, really. You draw and things are happening. It is what it is. I know he wishes a lot of different things, but we're not going to dwell on it. I know he's going to bust his tail this offseason and do whatever he can to be the best version of himself come next year."

**What did you learn about the Ravens culture here and your feelings about where this team's going?**

"I've always had a great deal of respect for this organization. I admired guys who played defense here for many years in this organization. I'm just excited to be here and I just think the sky is the limit for the future because we've got a lot of pieces, defensively, championship style. And O (offensively), we've got a lot of pieces as well so I'm excited about the future and I think there's a lot of great things in store for us. We've just got to not get complacent. Just keep working and let this motivate us this offseason."

**A lot of the outside world said, 'If this team doesn't have Lamar Jackson, it doesn't have a chance.' Is there any consolation in going out there and taking this game to the final play?**

"Absolutely. I have a lot of respect for Snoop (Tyler Huntley) and think he can lead us to victory. He's done it numerous amounts of times and has done it against me when I was in Chicago. People on the outside always have things to say. Freedom of speech, their opinion, their entitled to that, so who cares. We don't care about anything but the guys in this locker room. That's all that matters at the end of the day, because we're the ones putting ourselves on the line for each other."

## **TYLER HUNTLEY**

### **Quarterback**

#### **Can you go through the emotions you had when you were leaping and the ball comes loose?**

"It was at the one (yard line), lined up at the one. I saw everybody packed down, I tried to go over the top. I thought I cleared the line. They just made a play and just happened to take it all the way back."

#### **John Harbaugh said ideally you would go low on that play. Do you wish you would've gone low on that play?**

"I mean, yeah. Maybe I run the ball in, they wouldn't return it all the way but at the time I just felt like everybody was packed in. They shot fire at the lineman's legs, package just felt pretty good up in the line, and I just tried to make a play."

#### **The message has been to 'Flush it' when you make a play like that. How difficult is it to do that?**

"It's going to be hard because we've got the offseason now. I'm going to be thinking about that the whole offseason, how just one play (went wrong) and they won the game. It's going to be hard, but that's going to motivate me to just grind hard, work hard and be ready for next year."

#### **Are you reading anyone in particular when deciding where you should put your body on that third-and-one sneak?**

"Nah, it's a QB sneak. (I was) trying to get into the endzone."

#### **Do you feel like the red zone held this team back all year and was the difference tonight?**

"Yeah. But we've got to score more. (We) can't just keep settling for field goals."

#### **On that final throw, did you see how close it was at the end?**

"I saw it get tipped, then I saw Pro (James Proche II) dive for it. I was hoping somebody came down with it, but it just didn't happen."

## **TYLER LINDERBAUM**

### **Center**

#### **The game could have gone either way. What are your thoughts on today?**

"It's a tough way to lose. The whole picture of this season is incredible teammates. Just love the guys on this team and all the things they've done for me. It's a tough way to go out."

#### **Obviously, you felt like anything could have happened out there?**

"Yeah, I mean, we had opportunities. They did a tremendous job and stopped us when they needed to stop us, and they made more plays than us and came out with the win."

## **CALAIS CAMPBELL**

### **Defensive end**

#### **You battled out there. This game could have gone either way?**

"Yeah. We were confident that we could put (plays) together that would give us a chance to win. This game is not always about who the better team is. It's about who plays the best and who makes the plays to win the ball game. Anybody that watched this game, you watch this game with an unbiased eye, you can see that. We were a great team out there. We played with a lot of heart. We didn't make the plays to win the ballgame. Tip your hat off to them. It's football, you know. It just didn't go our way. We played with so much passion, so much heart and left it all out there."

#### **What moments did you see today that maybe you'd like to have back that could have changed the game in your favor?**

"I'm all about, a loss is looking in the mirror and asking myself what I could do better. There were a few plays here and there where I was close to making some big plays and was just a step late, just inches away from batting a ball that would have taken a touchdown off the board. I had my hands up in (Joe Burrow's) face and just missed it. But that's football. Give credit to Joe Burrow for making those throws around me. There's one thing for sure, I'm proud of everyone in this locker room. I went around to as many guys as possible to tell them that it's an honor to play with them because this team has a lot of fight. A lot of teams you're a part of, it's hard. There's guys that don't play with that passion. Then there's guys like every person in here — I know they signed up to work and they play with passion, heart and left it all out there."

## **JUSTIN TUCKER**

### **Kicker**

#### **You're a longtime leader of this team, and this is a game that could have gone either way for you guys ...**

"Yeah, I think that's how these games typically go. Division opponent, at their place, a lot of times these games are a play or two away from a different outcome. Unfortunately, that didn't fall into our favor tonight. But the core of this team is strong, resilient, tough, and we have every opportunity to be highly competitive moving forward. I think that's the takeaway that we're all unfortunately getting on this plane ride with. We'll do everything we can to be back in this position where we can control our own destiny in the postseason."

#### **All of this is a battle of attrition, really. You don't have all of your players and neither did they. You have to deal with injuries ...**

"I think that's just a fact that playing in this league, especially in the AFC North, the injuries will pile up and you might miss a guy here and there. I think what this team did an excellent job of down the stretch was not really batting an eye at any moment. It didn't matter who was playing or where they were playing. We were behind each and every teammate in this locker room, supporting them every step of the way."

## **MARLON HUMPHREY**

### **Cornerback**

#### **Did you feel like Ja'Marr Chase was the key guy for them on the third downs, especially in the first half?**

"I think a lot of Chase's game is to get vertical. They did a lot of what he kind of doesn't do often. We wanted to play a little off here and a little press there, and they did a really good job based off what we were doing, they did something different. Everything they were doing, on third down especially, seemed to work."

#### **How much of a swing of emotion is it to go from one yard from taking a seven-point lead to going 98 yards the other way?**

"Yeah, that was crazy. It took me a while to realize that even happened. The ball popped right into his hands. I thought our offense bounced back and were able to make it close at the end. Generally, that's probably the biggest turn that could happen."

#### **Did you feel for Tyler (Huntley) who had played so well to that point and then had the freak thing?**

"Honestly, I didn't even really think of it too much for Tyler, but I know he played pretty well. It kind of sucks that that's going to be the play that everybody remembers. Obviously, you want to get that (ball) over and he was right there. It seemed like it was so close. It's kind of those crazy fluke things that happen, and the Bengals were right there."