



BENGALS POSTGAME QUOTES

DEC. 4, 2022

KANSAS CITY AT CINCINNATI

ZAC TAYLOR

Head coach

Initial comments ...

"Good win. But this team is so confident right now, this is what we visualized entirely. I know a lot is made because they're a tremendous football team. (We've) got a lot of respect for them. We are a tremendous football team as well. This team is playing as well as I hoped we'd be playing right here in early December. Like I told our guys, we didn't win a division championship today. We didn't win our conference. We just won a game in early December. We still have a long ways to go. We've got Cleveland (Browns) coming in our house next week and we want to keep the momentum rolling. So, I think we got the right mindset right now to handle this victory and be ready to move on next week to Cleveland."

Rivalries are defined by two great quarterbacks, but what about the plays from Germaine Pratt and Joseph Ossai?

"The Germaine play, that's just what Germaine's all about. If there's a guy who's scratching and clawing to get turnovers just like he won us the game against Minnesota (Vikings) last year in Week 1 doing the same thing. Finding a way, sticking with it — that's what we appreciate about Germaine. Germaine is playing some outstanding football right now. That's not shocking. For Joseph Ossai, the hustle play of the century right there. I mean, he was on the ground, got up chasing and found a way to get that stop leading to the missed field goal. Two great plays by those two guys."

What do you think of Joe Burrow's performance today?

"Awesome. But you've got to start with the offensive line first. They gave him a lot of time to be able to get a chance to find those guys open and make the plays with his feet, with his arm. I thought our offensive line played their tails off. That's a really good front. They did a good job holding them at bay. They did a great job getting us started in the run game and Joe does what Joe does. He had about 30.5 or 31 or 32, or whatever it was. Just when we needed somebody to step up, Joe made a play."

Do you feel like he's playing at an MVP caliber level?

"Absolutely. Absolutely. He's playing at the level we need for him to lead us to be confident that we can go win every game we play. Whatever those conversations are like, there's no doubt as I've said before; I wouldn't trade him for anyone in the world."

What's your reaction to Ja'Marr Chase's performance after missing four weeks?

"He's obviously feeling pretty good, I would imagine but ask him that. That's really what we saw in practice. Since he's got back, I've kind of been surprised at how he looks the same as when he left. I hadn't felt that after some reps last week, just watching him do routes on air. Before the Tennessee (Titans) game, I knew the wise thing to do was communicate with him and keep him out. But watching him move, man, if he comes to me and says 'I'm definitely playing this game,' I might have a couple plays ready for him, but he's just a freak."

When this offensive line was put together in March, are these the type of performances you had envisioned?

"Sure. Giving (Joe Burrow) time to do what he does and get us going in the run game as well. They're just so smart. That group, they are tough, they are smart, and they love football. Those are the three things I think you want to describe your offensive lineman — smart, tough, eat, sleep and breathe football."

How big of a play do you think Joseph Ossai's sack on third down was for the whole outcome of the game?

"It's a three-point game and if Patrick (Mahomes) scrambles for that first down, you just never know because they're always one play away. I've got a ton of confidence in our defense, but let's be real. He's a great player, they are one play away and you don't know how much time is going to be left on the clock. Maybe if they do kick the field goal if that were to happen after that, such a great play by him."

What did you feel like this game came down to at the end of it?

"Our guys just made plays. We just told our guys to cut it loose. There's no fear of failure in this building. We want to go be aggressive and go make plays. This is the type of game you want to do that. Our guys are so poised, so confident. I think what we're asking them to do and just their abilities, they are able to play fast and go make plays that we need to win a game like this."

Did they do anything to make it a Samaje Perine game? Did they dare you to use him?

"No, they did a great job. We knew we were going to have to mix in some of those gun-runs and under-center runs and he grinded out some really good runs that were well-blocked. I thought our tight ends did a good job, too, in the run game. Joe (Burrow) had some decisions to make in the run game also. He was decisive and gave us some good opportunities there to get those runs."

What was the choice in the third-and-11 play to put the ball in Joe Burrow's hands?

"Yeah, there you go. So, that's really what it comes down to is giving ourselves an opportunity there. I changed the play call probably three times. And ultimately that's as simple as a play as it gets. It's whether or not our guys go win one-on-one's and that's what they did. For Tee (Higgins), I don't know how Tee came down with it. The ball was caught way further inside than I'm used to thinking. But again, Joe had to hold on to it for a while. So again, I can't wait to watch that clip on tape and see how they won us that game."

What were some of the other options there that you went away from and why?

"We were hoping not to go backwards on second down. It was a tricky spot for Joe because there's 2:05 left there in the fourth quarter and so you're able to throw the ball there as long as he uses the whole five seconds. Joe was kind of put in a tough spot there because he knows we want to eat up all five (seconds) and not give them a bonus timeout. You're just mindful there. So he was looking

to extend the play, making sure he ate up all five seconds. That's just a situation that can be difficult to manage. Ultimately, he got us, secured the ball, third-and-11. We just got to let our receivers be in a position to go win us some one-on-ones and Joe found the right guy."

The first two scoring drives, you guys went right down the middle of the field, no sidelines. Did you see something in the Kansas City defense that opened that up?

"No. I mean, we try to make them cover the whole width of the field. We had things going on with the perimeter that you have to be mindful of because you've got a receiver back. Again, that comes down to, when you make a statement like that, you go down the middle of the field, that's our offensive line. Samaje (Perine) running downhill and making the most of his opportunities there."

On the third-and-11 it looked like you were trying to get Tyler Boyd lined up or some sort of scramble?

"No. Again, I'm not a mind reader. So it's hard to know when Joe (Burrow is) using his cadence, if he forgot to send a motion or he's just trying to get a tell on the defense. There's a little stress and anxiety that comes from me sometimes, when you're not sure exactly. But they're on top of it. They got it."

There were moments last year where you spoke about maybe regretting take the ball out of Joe Burrow's hands. How much has changed? How much growth has he shown?

"Well, he's always shown us that. Since his first day of training camp, August 15th or whenever that was a couple years ago. I thought that for him forever. And as a coach you've got to be smart. It's not just because you've got this great quarterback, that means you always throw the ball in these situations. You want to let the clock run sometimes and put them in a tough spot. I thought we found some really good balance there. I always trust Joe to put us in a good position."

What did the return of Ja'Marr Chase open up for you guys?

"Everything. No disrespect to anybody else but you got two of the premier receivers in all of football on the outside and TB (Tyler Boyd) in the middle, so that can stress a defense. They pay attention to that. That helps the run game. It really does, when they got to devote a little bit more coverage over there to Ja'Marr and Tee (Higgins) so that really helps."

Does he get a pass on the taunting penalty after the win?

"Nobody gets a pass on the taunting penalty. I saw it. He apologized afterwards. We had two of those, that's uncharacteristic of our team and we've got to do a better job of controlling the emotions there."

What does it say about your team that you've beaten this team three times in the same calendar year, in which all games you were the underdogs?

"We don't care what the narrative is. There's just too much confidence in our locker room. We have everything that we need to be successful and win every time we walk on the field. It just comes down to being dedicated to the six-day week and put in the right work to feel confident when we walk on the field. I felt very confident when we walked on the field today. Our guys were ready for this opportunity. I felt like our fans were ready for this opportunity. I went to lunch yesterday and I filled up my gas tank today and I heard more 'Beat the chiefs, Who Dey.' I don't know, these guys were coming out of windows and stuff. You can just feel the excitement in the city. But again, it's December 4th. We've still got a lot of football left to play so we've got to do a great job of putting this one behind us and moving on to Cleveland."

What did you see on the decision to hand the ball to WR Trent Taylor on the fourth-and-one play?

"It was a loaded front. We tried the quarterback sneak, it was third-and-a-quarter-yard there if he could get it. You're leaving the defensive end unblocked, and so it's up to him to make that play and you're trying to block the perimeter. I think we did a great job blocking the perimeter. When the end, if he's going to jump up field and make the play, he's going to make the play. So, again, you're always going to feel like, 'Oh, man, bad play.' No, that's just the design of the play. If that guy chooses on third-and-inches, fourth-and-inches to jump the field, then they're going to make the play. Oftentimes, they don't. They crash down. So credit to them, a great play. Of course, you want to regret not taking any points and walking away and losing some momentum before the half, but we did our research and felt good about those calls down there."

What did you think about the way the team responded after WR Tyler Boyd dropped that pass?

"Not every play is going to go your way. In a big game like that, we're going to make some plays. You have to be able to weather the storm and just not let it break your momentum. TB (Tyler Boyd), that was uncharacteristic. We all know that. That's such a rare thing for him that we're just able to move on. When a guy makes a mistake and something bad happens, we know that he's there to make that play for us every step of the way. We know that we can always trust him, and on that huge third-down play later in the fourth quarter there, that really got us in scoring position. That was a critical play and TB stepped up."

Who got the game balls?

"A lot of them. I'm sure the video will come out at some point. It was a really good performance by all of our guys."

How impressive was Joseph Ossai to get that sack?

"It's awesome. We're counting on guys like that to step up. Sam (Hubbard), Trey (Hendrickson) get all the attention. DJ (Reader), B.J. (Hill) — when Joseph could step up and give us a big energy boost like that, it's huge."

What makes this team good at managing the emotions of the season?

"They just understand what it's going to take to be successful over the course of the season and not to live in the past with our victory or defeat in the week before. We just have such great veteran leadership that's really teaching our young guys how to be a pro so quickly that I've got confidence that we're always going to manage the weeks the right way and know that we've just got to put our guys on Sunday, put our best foot forward, quickly put it behind us and move on. I can't tell you how special that locker room is in that regard of just being able to move on so quickly and focus on the next game, and not riding high and not riding a lot of the lows. Everyone is in there when we were 0-2 (asking) 'What's wrong?' Nothing's wrong. It's the same team we expected to have. These guys are just finding out a way to win at any way that the team plays now, we know that our team can play that style."

Do you have an update on Hayden Hurst?

"I think it was a calf and he was out for the game. I don't know what the long-term prognosis is, but I'll find out more tomorrow."

JOE BURROW
Quarterback

What goes through your mind after a win like that?

"It's another game like last week where we left some points on the field, but we found a way to win. That's great, but (there is) a lot to get better at. We have five games left; it's still a long season, so we have to keep this train rolling."

You were able to bounce back after a few plays didn't go your way, what does that say about the offense?

"We know what it takes to win those types of games. It's December, this is when we turn it up. That's all there is to say about it. We're going to get back to practice, keep getting better, correct the mistakes we've made, and move on."

Ja'Marr Chase said the team has a championship swagger, do you feel that?

"We know the guys we have in that room. We've been there, done that. It's December, where teams start to separate themselves."

On the third-and-11, what was going through your mind?

"You know the quarterback they have over there. We can't settle for a field goal there or else he goes down the field and wins the game. We had to find a way to get that conversion, and Tee Higgins made a big play, just like he did in the AFC Championship. It was the same route and an unbelievable catch."

So it was basically finding the right one-on-one?

"I'm not sure, there were a lot of people in the middle of the field. I just found a window for him."

The offensive line again played well ...

"Top-notch. When you have that kind of time in the pocket, it's hard not to find somebody open. What this has also done is give us more off-schedule opportunities. I'm starting to be able to run the ball more now. If something's not open, I still have time to find an escape lane and get out of the pocket. I can't say enough about those guys."

Did you picture games like this from the line in March?

"When you have guys playing the way they are, it's a blessing. Not all quarterbacks in the league have that. We have guys up front that work really hard to get the job done. They fight their butts off every day to get better and put on a great performance every Sunday. They've shown that the last three-fourths of the games we've played."

Why are you able to execute under pressure so well?

"We have players that have been in these spots before. Whether it's college or last year, we've accumulated players that it matters to them. The character of these guys is what wins games down the stretch in December and January. They've done a great job of finding those guys; we have one of the best locker rooms I've been around. You feel the energy in the room every single day. We have the utmost faith in one another. If one unit isn't playing great, the other one will step up and make plays."

You went right back to Tyler Boyd on third-and-two after his dropped pass. Did you say anything to him?

"No, we all know it is what it is. It's tough to leave points on the field like that, but he responded well. That's unselfish guys that care and work really hard to make the plays in those moments."

What is it about this team and the Chiefs?

"We have really good players, really good coaches, great game plans every time. We have guys that know what it takes in those big moments."

What enables you to be successful in matchups against Patrick Mahomes?

"I have great players around me, guys that seem to make big plays in big time games."

What's it like to hear MVP chatter from your teammates?

"It is what it is. I don't play the game for those kinds of accolades. I play the game for those guys in the locker room. Whatever it takes from me every Sunday, that's what I'll do. If I have to hand the ball off 72 times and come out with a win, I'll be happy."

You completed 72 percent of your passes, what else is clicking for you besides the offensive line?

"Our receivers really understand spacing and timing, and the concepts we're running. If we get man coverage, those guys will go win, because they're three of the top receivers in the NFL. We work hard every day every week to get all of the concepts exactly the way we want them. We have a constant dialogue about what we expect from each route, what they expect from the ball, what they see from eyes, feet, and steps. We have so much attention to detail in the routes; it's a fun offense to be a part of."

You also ran for 40 yards today — what is it about you that makes it so hard to stop?

"My legs have always been the last resort for me when the going gets tough. I know I can rely on that to make a play in a critical moment. I don't do it often, but I know I have it in my back pocket always."

Did the Chiefs change anything today from the previous two games?

"It was a mixture of the two games. The first game last year they blitzed us a lot. In the second they barely blitzed us at all. They did show some pressures in some key moments, but also played the zone they play really well."

What was going through your mind after the Germaine Pratt strip?

"Time to go win the game. That guy, I feel like I say this every week, but he just makes plays in big time moments to get us the ball back."

Do you have thoughts on the Justin Reid comments?

"I didn't really care. I would have cared a lot more if he knew what he was talking about. Maybe he hadn't been in the scouting report yet. I don't know, it is what it is."

What are the benefits of having a punishing runner like Samaje Perine?

"I'm so happy he's taken this opportunity and done what he's done. He's one of those guys that you love being around. He brings the juice, and is so consistent day in and day out. He'll get you two or three yards if there's nothing there, and that's so valuable."

How else would you describe the team besides swagger?

"We're just really dialed in. We know the mistakes we made, the corrections we have to make. There's a lot of celebration in the

locker room, just like every win, but everybody knows there's a lot of room to improve and we have the guys to go do that."

Was that the message? Points left on the board?

"It was a tight game, that's how it's going to be when we play those guys. Patrick (Mahomes) is the best in the game now, so whenever you play him it'll always be close."

What does it mean to beat Mahomes three times in a row?

"It means we have a great team. Our defense steps up in big spots, gets stops and turnovers when we need it. We've been able to come up in some big spots on offense as well."

What was the sense going into the half?

"It was a lot of excitement for the second half, because we left points on the field. I hate when we do that, because those opportunities don't come around a lot. We left 14 points out there we should have scored, so we'll get back to practice and take advantage next time."

It looked like you had a nice moment with Carlos Dunlap at the end ...

"I always appreciated the way Carlos treated me when I got here. He helped me find my footing in the NFL. He was a great teammate to me when I got here, so I told him that."

What does it mean to have all of this offensive balance?

"That's when you're rolling. You can run it, throw your RPOs, toss it down the field. We're playing really well on offense and it's exciting. But there's room to improve as well."

Did today's game feel different in the moment, given everything?

"It just felt like another game, another regular-season game. They all matter and they're all important. It didn't feel any different playing those guys again."

CORDELL VOLSON

Guard

How did it feel to have the offensive line play so well today?

"We just have a great group of resilient guys who just want to win and are going to scratch and claw and do whatever it takes to get the job done."

You did a great job against Chris Jones. What was your preparation like going into the game?

"Obviously we knew that we had a good D-line coming in, and it's no different than every (other) week — finding out what we can get better at. It's about us. It's about having the best technique, and being the best that we can be."

How big was it to get Ja'Marr Chase back?

"It was huge. He's a great player — one of the best in the NFL. He's another weapon that we have out there. And as you guys saw today, he just makes plays."

Where does your maturity and poise come from?

"I'm just fortunate. There's a lot of great guys in this locker room. The veteran O-linemen are great to me — great role models, great guys. I'm just really fortunate to have those guys help me continue to improve and get better."

SAMAJE PERINE

Running back

What was it like out there tonight?

"It was a fun football game. We came out and were clicking on pretty much all cylinders. We just made plays when opportunities showed up. The line did a fantastic job opening up holes, getting on blocks, and staying on blocks — just one play at a time, and (we) kept it moving."

What can an opponents' defense do when the offense plays this well?

"That's their problem. We just come out and do what we can and try to make plays. We did that today and thankfully we came out with the win."

Did you feel like no matter what they did defensively, the offense could answer?

"We knew they like to blitz — and that was a big part of our preparation — because they do a great job at dialing up some exotic blitzes, so we had to be on top of that. Our receivers did a great job getting open, because with us in the backfield blocking, Joe Burrow loses the check-down. If receivers don't get open, just got to throw it away. But today, they did a great job getting open, and we did a great job blocking."

JA'MARR CHASE

Wide receiver

How was your conditioning?

"Out of shape like crazy, oh my god! I was so tired out there. It was good to be back though. T.I. (Trenton Irwin) and Stan (Stanley Morgan) were doing a great job getting me out of the game when they saw me tired. Zac (Taylor) was doing a good job on the play calls and stuff too, so it was all-around good."

Where does your ability come from?

"I really don't know, man. I was so excited to come back today. I was really trying to hold all my energy — that's probably what happened. If I'd have been too excited to play this game, I would have wasted all my energy in the pregame and in the locker room celebrating, then I probably wouldn't have had that game. But I saved all my energy for this game."

Every game against the Chiefs comes down to one play, right?

"Exactly, and we did a great job of that today. Me getting a first down, Samaje (Perine) getting another first down, then Tee (Higgins) getting another first down. That's constantly first down and keeping the chains moving so we can keep the ball."

Why is this wide receiver group so unselfish?

"It's funny because Tee (Higgins) went off on me today. Tee never went off on me (before). So when Tee went off on me, I was a little struck. I was supposed to stay and fall in bounds on the two-minute drill. Tee looked at me and started going off, I didn't expect him to do that. So that means he's caring, and he wants me to do the right thing. I need somebody to be on me like that, so ... good teammate."

Did you figure out their defense?

"Zac (Taylor) is just calling good plays, receivers are on the right page with the quarterback, and we're executing."

MIKE HILTON**Cornerback****How did you mix up coverages to confuse the Chiefs' offense?**

"That's credit to Coach Lou (Anarumo) and the staff. Those guys put a real good game plan together. They trust us to make good adjustments and just have a good week of work. We came out on Sunday and played real good and got a big win."

How did you control Travis Kelce?

"In our room we say, 'Make them play left-handed.' Take away their main guy, and make everybody else beat you, and we did that well. Even when he did make a big catch, Germaine (Pratt) made a hell of a play, stripped him, which was a game changer. It's just credit to everybody doing their job and making a play when they have the chance."

Are you aware of how rare it is to beat Patrick Mahomes this many times?

"It was three times in the same (calendar) year, if you want to throw that in there also. That's just credit to the whole team. Guys know what to expect, guys are confident in each other, and we just love playing with each other and going out and having fun. When we play well, we come out with big wins."

JOSEPH OSSAI**Defensive end****What did it mean to make such a big contribution today?**

"It means a lot, because all I've ever wanted to do is help the team out and contribute — do something to say, 'I'm helping the team out.' It's a huge thing for me, and I'm thankful for it."

What was your reaction to making such a big play today?

"It was lit, it was lit. I was ecstatic. I was just happy because I didn't know at that point that it was going to be the biggest play of the game. But I'm happy."

Where does that play rank on your list of biggest plays of your career?

"Definitely No. 1."

Was today proof that other teams should be scared of the Bengals?

"Absolutely. Like we said, they've got to come play us. That's the mentality. It's all really a mentality we're taking in — they've got to come play us. We've got to do our jobs, we've got to stay sound, and they've got to respond to us."

TYLER BOYD**Wide receiver****What does it mean to beat this team three times in one calendar year?**

"There's no message for us because we know what caliber of team we got going forward. It's a great win for sure, but it's a message to all the other guys who doubted us and think that we just had a lucky run last year. Nah, we're here to stay, we're here to keep winning, and we're here to fight for another Super Bowl."

Do you feel that this locker room has championship swagger?

"Absolutely. And I'm not just saying that because we beat the Chiefs, but because we play so good on the back-end of our schedule. In November and December — those are the most important months to play football. We've got to get those wins, but most importantly, we've got to win our division games. If we take care of those division games, then it's all said and done."

How did Ja'Marr Chase look today?

"He looked great, nothing really changed. We missed him, but we still made ways to win ballgames. Now that we got the three-headed monster back, you can't really stop us now."

GERMAINE PRATT**Linebacker****How did it feel to force that fumble and change the game?**

"We knew that we needed to make a turnover. We were in Cover-3, (and Travis) Kelce sat down in a little weak spot of the defense. I just had an opportunity to go for the ball."

There was a lot of talk this week. How determined were you to shut down Kansas City's offense?

"Anytime you go against a great team like Kansas City, you want to impose your will on those guys — show them how much of a physical team we are, and how well-connected we are, and try to get a win."

Was there supposed to be a defensive celebration after the fumble?

"Nah, I messed it up. That's on me. We'll get one next week. We'll get two next week."



CHIEFS POSTGAME QUOTES

DEC. 4, 2022

KANSAS CITY AT CINCINNATI

ANDY REID

Head coach

Initial comments ...

"All right. As far as the injuries go, Pat (Mahomes) hurt his foot there at the end (of the game), but he's going to be OK. (Today was) a hard-fought game. The Bengals did a nice job. And coming down the stretch, we can't turn the ball over, and you surely can't miss a field goal. But there were a lot of things in between that we could have done better, so we'll go back and work on it and make sure that we learn from it, and we'll try to become a better team."

Can you take us through your thoughts on the decision to kick the field goal as opposed to going for it on fourth-and-five in the fourth quarter?

"Yeah, (that was) very similar to what we've done before. That's within (Harrison Butker's) range. You (need to) get that combination of the snap a little higher, and the kick a little stronger. You have to get that going, but it didn't happen."

You have to make that decision whether to go for it or kick a field goal in such split second. Can you take me through your thought process?

"If I don't think he can make that, I'm not going to do it. It's pretty simple. But I felt like he's been in a good place, and we just have to execute it better all the way around. It really shouldn't come down to that too, but it did, (and) if we're going to be a good football team, we've got to make sure that ... you always take care of those things."

How would you assess trying to tackle the Bengals skill position players, and how much that impacted the outcome?

"I think we tackled as well as we had been. We need to do a better job with that. That's something (where) we'll look at the tape and get it fixed. It's the same way on the offensive side. We can block better — and do a lot of things on that side of the ball — too. Everybody's got a little piece of this. We've got to take care of that."

Was there anything in particular you saw that led to Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow having generally a lot of time to work with?

"Their offensive line at times did a good job. Other times, he was slippery, and he kind of worked his way through (and) made some plays with his legs. I thought we had decent pressure on him throughout (the game)."

The third-down defense played a big dividend but overall it just wasn't up to the standard I'm sure you've set. Would you agree?

"Yeah. We've got to do better there. We'll go back and look at that. We had a third down on the offensive side, then we had a chance to fix (it) there, and didn't do a great job on that."

There was a little bit of a slow start today. Anything you can put your finger on why this game started so slow?

"(They're) a good football team (that we were) playing. There were things we put our finger on, because we were able to score after that, and I thought we played a little better defensively."

After the third-down play, it appeared Mahomes was limping off the field. Did that weigh into the decision to attempt the field goal in the fourth quarter?

"No. I thought we had a chance to make the field goal. He's OK. He's all right."

Is there anything to this particular team that you feel like you all may have issues matching up with them?

"This one came right down to the end. I think it's (just) two good football teams playing each other. We've got to take care of business down the stretch. (The) last couple of series, we've got to take care of business."

How do you think the rookie cornerbacks played going up against Ja'Marr Chase, Tee Higgins and Tyler Boyd?

"They did a good job. They competed. And they're going to be better for that. This game right here — they'll be better for it. They can learn from this. It's very important that we do that as you know — as a team, and for those young guys."

PATRICK MAHOMES

Quarterback

Your ankle or whatever it was is good?

"Yeah, I'll be fine."

On that fourth down when Harrison Butker came out on the field, I know you're a competitor, so I'm guessing you wanted to stay out there?

"Yeah, I mean I'm ready for whatever coach decides. If we want to kick the field goal, I believe we have one of the best kickers in the league, so I'm going to give them a chance to kick the field goal, and if coach wants to go for it, I believe we can make it happen as an offense. Whatever coach decides — I know he's been in these moments before — I'm going to trust in that. But we went for the field goal, and it didn't go our way this time."

Did you try to do any persuasion in that moment?

"The persuasion is you just stay out there, and you hope that he calls it, and you get that fourth-down chance. We'd gone through a lot of fourth downs throughout the game, and we were doing a good job. We had hard-fought ones, but we were converting them. But we paid (Harrison) Butker, and we have one of the best kickers in the league, so we trust him in those moments. He's made a lot of big kicks. This one didn't go our way, but if we're in that moment again I trust that he'll make it."

What did you try to get across to Travis Kelce after the fumble? Did you have some words of encouragement for him?

"Yeah, I mean I just told him to continue to be himself. We've seen Travis do that many of times, and get all those extra yards — those hard-fought yards in this league. Obviously they made a good play. They stripped the ball out right at the very end there. But I'm taking Travis fighting for extra yards every time because that's the type of competitor he is."

Did you have to pick him up at all?

"No, I didn't. I just tried to get the ball to him as quickly as possible after that. We trust in him, man. He's a competitor. He's the reason that we play in these big games like this. We're going to go down fighting, so we're going to keep giving him chances to make plays."

You haven't been able to beat this team yet. What is it about them that makes them so tough?

"First off, they have a great quarterback, and a guy who's won a lot of football games, even if that was in college, and now he's won a lot of football games in the NFL. He's someone that competes to the very end too. They've got playmakers all over there, they're well-coached, have a good defense. At the end of the day, they've executed at a higher level in the critical situations. We started off slow, we got back in the game in the flow of things, and we had a turnover late, and the missed kick. If you just try to take away those two things in the fourth quarter, and if you're playing good teams and you make those turnover on downs basically in the fourth quarter, those are the things that kind of bite you in the end."

You've been successful against good teams throughout your whole career. What do you think they do on defense that's been tough for you?

"Yeah, they just have a well put together team. You saw the offense, even though it has the playmakers, but they'll take their time, and kind of utilize the clock. Their defense changes up a lot of different coverages. They did a good job trying to take Travis (Kelce) away as much as possible, and that's why you saw a lot of the other guys making catches. I feel like we executed at a very high level, aside from that one three-and-out drive. It wasn't high enough because we didn't win. We've just got to go back and look at the film, and just try to get better from this game."

Can you go over your leap on the touchdown?

"Yeah, they played a good coverage. I was looking at JuJu (Smith-Schuster), and I didn't think I could get it in there where he would get in the end zone, and it's fourth down so you have to try and go for it. I was running, and the only way to get it was going over the top, so I just tried to reach it over and get in the end zone."

Are you pretty confident you did get the ball over the goal line there?

"I knew it was close. Obviously, you don't want to fumble any time. I know it's fourth down and you're going for it, but I just had to reach it across. The ball came out, and I looked and saw they had kind of jumped on it, and I looked at the ref and he had said touchdown. About as confident as you can be when you're kind of flying in the air."

It seemed like they mixed in a lot of three-man rushes. How do you feel you executed against that look?

"We definitely executed at a higher level than we did during the playoff game. I thought our guys did a great job of blocking there, they got us that look at the very end. We wish we could've had a little more time, but at the same time, they had a really good game plan, and I thought we executed at a high level during some points of the game. But if you're going to beat a good football team then you have to execute at a high level throughout the entire game."

WILLIE GAY **Linebacker**

That's obviously not the result you wanted. How would you assess how they were able to get it done, especially on third down? Is it the details?

"We've just got to see what we can correct with the play calls, the tackling. It's the small stuff every time. They're not doing anything special, nothing that we haven't seen before. There are those details that we talked about earlier in the week that we have to reckon and right."

What is it about this team that has proven to be difficult, now for the third time?

"It's part of the NFL, you know. They're not doing anything we haven't seen, like I said. It's part of the game. You win some, you lose some. Unfortunately, we've just lost the last three we've played against this team. We've got to bounce back. I'm sure we'll see them again."

How much were you trying to give your offense one more chance in the fourth quarter?

"Me personally, I try not to put it on our offense. If we do our part on defense, we know we'll get chances on offense. The details are what we need to correct. Every position."

Is Joe Burrow difficult to bring down, or to track down in the pocket?

"No. He's shifty — I will say that. He's shifty. These quarterbacks nowadays, they're protected so you have to be careful how you bring them down. You have to be careful to make sure he's not sliding. When he starts ducking down, with his head hidden behind his offensive line, it's just angles and being under control to bring him down."

JUSTIN REID **Safety**

What are your thoughts on today's game?

"We made some plays but didn't make enough in the end. Credit to them, they made a few more plays than us."

There were a lot of penalties early in the game. Did that impact the start?

"Some of those calls are questionable, but the game is played how the game is called and we have to play by the terms of how the referees call it. Despite those calls, we still managed to make some plays. We just have to figure out a way to get two or three more of them, especially at the end of the game to close them out."

Was there anything on third down you had trouble stopping late in the game?

"Shoot, man, it was a tough game. They have some real firepower on that offense. They made a couple more plays than we did at the end of the game. We had a really good game plan going in — we felt really good about it, really confident in it. But this one's going to hurt. In the end I think we'll be better for it, especially using these feelings. It will be good for us to turn the chapter and get on to Denver."

You faced them when you were with Houston but was it more difficult than you thought it would be the second time around with some of the guys they have, like Ja'Marr Chase?

"We knew this was going to be a playoff atmosphere. It's a rematch of the AFC Championship game and it lived up to it. It isn't a good feeling right now but the good news is we have a lot of football left to play in December, and I'm sure we're going to see those guys again come January."

CARLOS DUNLAP **Defensive end**

Was there anything they did protection-wise that wasn't shown on film?

"No. They did a lot of what we expected and they out-executed us today, and they won."

On the third-and-11 late in the game, were you surprised to see a pass on that play?

"No. They needed to get a first down. We've got to prevent the first down and they made a hell of a play. They out-executed us."

What was it like to come back and play in Cincinnati?

"They were booing me instead of cheering me. That's the difference."

JERICK MCKINNON **Running back**

You had a good game individually, but overall as a team what was the part of the game that you just couldn't seem to pull out tonight?

"There are multiple things that happened throughout the game that we couldn't capitalize on or could have done better. At the end of the day, we just didn't get it done and do what it took to win the game when it came down to it. We've got to live with that and bounce back. I'm pretty sure we will like we always do. We've got to come together and finish out this last stretch of the season."

You've been a part of all three of these games against Cincinnati. Do you feel like it's something that they do in the fourth quarter or just some miscommunication on your end?

"That's a good football team. They've beaten us three times in a row, so they obviously have our number right now. Looking at it and what we're going through, a lot of times it will come down to just doing what it takes. A minor mistake here and there, and it will come back to cost us. You can't make mistakes against a team like that. You live and you learn and you bounce back. That's the good thing about this team. We stick together no matter good, bad or however it is."

Is there one or two mistakes that come to mind when you talk about mistakes?

"It doesn't really matter. A mistake is a mistake. It's not on nobody but all of us collectively. We go through it together. It's nobody's fault."

At the end with 3:19 remaining, did you want to stay on the field or go for the field goal? What was going through the offense's head?

"I was thinking we didn't get it so we're probably going to kick the field goal. With Coach Reid, you kind of feel you're going to stay out there but we went to kick a field goal and came up short."

How much of a motivator is this?

"We're always motivated. This is a locker room of humble guys. This one stings. We've lost to this team three teams in a row. Everybody knows what we've got to do."

ISIAH PACHECO

Running back

What was Andy Reid's message after the game?

"Time's like this is where we build. Come ready to work at practice on Monday and get rolling for next week."

What were you seeing out there that allowed you to have some success?

"Just following the leaders and just doing my job to the best ability that I can, and one play at a time."

Cincinnati did a lot of three-man in the beginning and then mixed in some four. What did you see out there with their defense that made you stall out?

"It's a good defense. We've just got to execute. Come ready to roll at practice Monday and clean some things up and get back at it."