



BENGALS POSTGAME QUOTES

OCT. 15, 2023

SEATTLE AT CINCINNATI

ZAC TAYLOR

Head coach

Initial comments ...

What was going through your mind the final three minutes of that game?

"We have a lot of faith in our defense, especially when they have to go out there — we put them out there in tough spots. To have those four low red (zone) stops that they had, they held them to a field goal, two turnovers on downs and a turnover. Exceptional job by our defense. They give you a lot of confidence. It's a stressful situation. Seattle has a great team. They did a great job in some plays, moving the ball down there. But at the end day, we just have tremendous confidence that our defense is going to figure it out and they did. And they had a huge stop there at the end."

What can you say about Cam Taylor-Britt's game?

"We have a tremendous group of defenders. First of all, our DBs have really stepped up. And Chido (Awuzie) always has been a big force there. Mike Hilton, Cam Taylor-Britt have really come on this last year. DJ Turner II has really stood up as well. I'm really proud of Cam (Taylor-Britt). He has great, great ball skills, tremendous ball skills. When the ball is in his area, he usually has a great chance to go get that thing, and I'm so happy that he did."

What was the difference near the goal line for your defense today? What do you think was the game changer?

"Just because a team gets in there at the three-yard line, it's not, 'Oh here we go, it's seven points.' I really think our defense believes, worst case (scenario) we're holding them to three here. In best case (scenario), we're getting the ball out. Going back to that New England game last year, you always feel like these guys have such an attitude to find a way to get that ball out and not just be satisfied giving up any points. It's turnover on downs and it's get the ball out. And I feel that. We didn't strip it out or anything, but we tried. I saw a lot of good plucks at the ball there and I'm just really proud of the job that our defense did. They stepped up big time."

What do you think was the overarching theme as to why offensively you guys weren't able to be as productive?

"That a really good question. We'll have to watch it and see because (we) felt like we had some opportunities. (We) felt that we weren't in a great flow, but it's really hard for me to put my thumb on it and I'll have to check it out. And the good news is we found a way to (win). I walked off the field and I had I texted Steve Specht yesterday, the St. (Xavier) coach. They had a win on the road and that's a great job. He said it's better to win ugly than to lose pretty. And that was the first thing that hit me when I walked off the field today. At times it felt ugly, especially on offense. But again, our defense stepped up and made some big plays for us. It allowed us to get out of there."

How big is it mentally being .500?

"It's good. It's like I said, we kind of stubbed our toe starting this race off. And we're going to continue to pick up steam. And again, there's days where our defense is going to lead the charge and lead us to victory. There's times where the offense is going to reciprocate that. There's times special teams can take over. I think good teams just find ways to do it. And right now, we're at that 3-3 mark going into a bye. We get a chance to get healthy and then hit the surge after the bye (week) starting with San Francisco."

One of the things after last year was getting a more disruptive pass rush to get key sacks and key rushes ...

"We have a lot of guys, and it starts with the starters, up front and then those guys coming off the bench. I saw Cam Sample going in there today. So, it's good and that's why we've drafted the way we have. It's always good to have reinforcements in there. But our starting group is just as good as any in the league. And so, again, a lot of credit to those guys up front and in the back end supporting them and making some big plays today."

The defense as a whole — first five weeks not quite at the level it was at last season. Did you see something or feel something today that was different from the group as a whole?

"No, no. I thought that they did a good job. And again, we are similar to last week. We did a better job on offense, starting strong and getting some points that we can play with a lead. That's the difference from those first couple of weeks. So, again, we certainly want to score more than 17 points. We should score more than 17 points. But that makes a big difference because then you can play your style of game still and not put as much pressure on those guys."

I feel like in some ways that today's game was a lot like that playoff game against the Raiders where defense and special teams really just saved the day ...

"Sure. We'll take it. Again, any way we can find a win, we're going to do it and we're going to be happy about it. And that doesn't mean that there's not a lot we can improve on offense. I'm sure there's going to be some things that we're going to improve on defense as well. But it's a lot easier to make those improvements after you win."

Was there a game ball given to a defensive player?

"Yeah, the whole defense. The whole defense. I was happy (Andrei Iosivas) got his first touchdown, but the whole defense really stepped up and Cam (Taylor-Britt) with the turnover and Mike (Hilton) with the turnover and it's good to see."

What led to the fast start on offense?

"I don't know. We just have to get that first down, and then you feel like, here we go. We have a good rhythm there. We had some good catch and runs. We had the free play at the end of the first quarter, where we got them to jump and take the shot to Ja'Marr (Chase). So, I just think we were really efficient on first and second down, kept ourselves in some really manageable situations and were able to finish off in the red zone. We felt like we had a good red zone plan this week and only got two opportunities down there and were able to capitalize on them."

You mentioned the Andrei Iosivas touchdown. Did you send Joe Burrow to get that ball?

"I did not. No, that was Joe. I didn't."

When you win ugly, does that help at a later point in the season like closer to playoff time?

"The wins and losses, to be honest with you, we draw from all of them equally. I think we've just got a lot of confidence as a team that we'll figure out a way at the end to close it out. And this was one of those games. We had a good lead. The whole game had a lead, and the defense was able to close it out for us."

With both draft picks and free agents, why is it so important to invest as much as you have in the defensive line?

"This game starts in the trenches, on the offensive and defensive line. So, you can say the same thing on both sides, really. And if you don't have strength up there on the offensive and defensive line, it makes everyone's job really tough. And we're very fortunate that we've done a good job, investing in our defensive line, and our offensive line."

What happened with Orlando Brown Jr. today?

"I think it's his groin. So, we'll see if the bye week comes at a good time, and we'll see where it goes from there. I'm not sure of the total severity of it."

The splits with DJ Turner II and Chidobe Awuzie, was that kind of a wait and see thing or was that was Chido's back giving some problems today?

"It's tough. Chido just managed through the week. He repped as much as he could. And so, then it's still unknown. It's still bothersome. He really played through something today. As did Tee (Higgins). To both those guys, I'm appreciative of what they decided to do for us. A lot of guys could have just said, 'No, I'm going to wait through the bye week,' and Chido and Tee are two of our most competitive guys we've got. And so really, really thankful we've got guys like that that that helped contribute to the win."

JOE BURROW

Quarterback

Was that the perfect example of complementary football?

"Yes, our defense stepped up big in the second half. Offense was really good in the first half; we were horrible in the second half. So, we just have to be able to put together a complete game."

What changed after those first two drives?

"We'll watch the tape and see."

What was your confidence in the defense it was trying to keep Seattle from scoring inside the 10-yard line?

"I know they were going to make a play, but at the same time, I knew we had opportunities on offense to put it away and we didn't."

Last week you were able to improve the passing game, and you carried that over to the first half. Was it disappointing for you to not be able to carry the improved passing game through to the second half?

"Yes, there were definitely opportunities that we had that we didn't capitalize on, but we got the win. It's a lot easier to fix things when you're 3-3 than if you had lost this one. So, I'm never going to apologize for a win."

How big is it, given how you guys started, that you're heading into the bye week 3-3?

"The bye is coming at a good time — get some guys healthy, come back. We have a grind ahead of us, so we have to get better."

What was going right on the first couple of drives?

"We were making plays; we were executing at a high level. In the second half, we weren't."

Did Seattle do anything to change your rhythm? Did you feel a different tempo to the game starting in the second half?

"Yes, you have to give them credit. They made some adjustments that worked for them, and we didn't capitalize on our opportunities in the second half."

Would you say short-yardage situations is at the top of the list of things you need to fix in the second half of the season?

"One of many."

Overall, how would you evaluate the offense?

"[We're] not where we want to be — not where we want to be. We've had moments, but we just have to put it all together. So, we'll evaluate this week and go from there."

Did anyone give you a heads up to get the touchdown ball for Andrei Iosivas?

"No. I knew it was his first one though."

What kind of confidence do you have in this defense in a game like that. You're on the sideline and the game is on the line and they're on third and fourth down near the goal line. What's that like for you?

"Yes, like I said, I'm confident in their ability to get the job done, but I just kept reflecting on the moments that we had opportunities to put that game away when we didn't take advantage of."

Did you have words with Jamal Adams in the first half? Did you take exception to that hit?

"No, that was just two tigers talking. It wasn't anything crazy."

Joe Mixon said this week that everything is still ahead of this team. You guys are still right on track. Do you feel that way and feel good about where you are going into the bye?

"Yes, I feel good. Everything's ahead of us. This was a big win. Like I said, we have to get better though."

What did you think of Ja'Marr Chase's new chain?

"I didn't see it."

It's a 7/11 chain ...

"I like it then."

Is there a lot of conversation on the sideline, and more so when things aren't going well between you, Dan Pitcher and Zac Taylor even to try to get things right in the second half?

"I wouldn't say there's more. There's always dialogue going on, talking about what we're seeing, what we want, what we think can work. So, that's always going on."

Zac Taylor called this winning ugly. Does winning ugly help you, particularly later in the season?

"A win's a win. Like I said, I'll never apologize for a win. But win or loss, there's always room to improve."

Are you less happy or excited than you would be if it was the other way around and you played better in the second half?

"I've learned winning is too hard in this league to not appreciate wins. So, I'm going to enjoy it, but like I said, there's still a lot of room to improve and a lot of room to grow."

CAM TAYLOR-BRITT

Cornerback

Two games, two picks. They seem to be adding up, no?

"Yeah, we've got to keep it going. It feels good."

How do you feel about being 3-3 after an 0-2 start going into the bye week? Does it feel like a fresh start?

"It's back to 0-0, how I look at it. I think that's how a lot of guys look at it. Like you said, it's a fresh start and we've got to come back after the bye and keep on our feet on a lot of people's necks because as you can see, it's not going to be easy like it wasn't today and we've got the (San Francisco) 49ers coming up right after the bye."

There were so many red zone plays where the defense got to Seahawks QB Geno Smith. When you're covering and you hear a roar from the crowd, do you realize that they were able to get to the quarterback?

"Yeah. It's actually crazy. I was guarding DK (Metcalf) on one of them — I think it was a back line route — and they threw the ball to him and it was altered because Sam (Hubbard) or Trey (Hendrickson) got back there. But I knew the ball got altered because I heard the crowd, so I looked and the ball was coming and I was like 'Oh!' But it does give me little tips here and there."

A lot of guys are waving their arms to get the crowd to make a lot of noise. Did that make a difference in the red zone?

"That was huge today, man. I can honestly say I couldn't hear a thing and I think that's great. I was just going to line up, get a signal and go and make the play. Communication was real hard out there towards the end of the game. But we live for those moments."

MIKE HILTON

Cornerback

How do you see the defense helping to provide critical stops when the offense may be having difficulties at times?

"We know they lean on us and they know we lean on them. Some days, we have to pick them up and vice versa. It's a team game and we're just happy to go into the bye with a win."

How important is that for you guys to be back at .500? Is that kind of a reset?

"It's a whole reset. Some guys can get healthy and other guys have a week to take that mental and physical break and get ready for the back half of the season. Having a two-game win streak going into the bye is big."

Were you surprised that they threw that ball you intercepted? It looked like you were running the route with the receiver ...

"It was a route that I've seen on film a lot. They want to give him the ball on wheel-type routes and I knew that (play) was in the same area, so once I saw the formation, I was expecting it."

He ran a motion route, yes? Is that something that tipped you off?

"Yes, absolutely. They have certain formations with him in the backfield, but it's usually 16 (Tyler Lockett), so when you know 11 (Jaxon Smith-Njigba) is back there, something's up. I just made a play when I needed to."

So, that's a film study interception?

"Yes. Film study and the whole defense calling that out and alerting."

Why are you guys so good in the red zone? That won the game for you.

"We take pride in not letting guys in the end zone. We know with the offense we have, (if) we hold a team to 0-3 points (on a drive), our offense is going to put up some more. We just feel as if we keep guys out of the end zone, we'll win games."

JA'MARR CHASE

Wide Receiver

Why do you think the offense kind of sputtered a bit in the second half after starting so well today?

"In the second half, we kind of had some miscommunications sometimes, not just putting our head down and getting that extra yard (to) make it third-and-one. We have to fight for the extra yard sometime and make it first down."

Do you feel like it's a little disappointing — you got the win which is obviously most important — but a little disappointing after last week's offensive performance to have the one the team did today?

"It's not disappointing — we just hold ourselves to a standard and we've got to execute. As good of an offense as we have, we just have to stay on top of that and not have mental errors like we did today. I think we had a couple of those. I know I had one today. Simple things like that will take us a long way."

Did they make any defensive adjustments in the second half that stalled the offense?

"They came in and played their own new style of defense. They mixed it up a little bit."

The first two drives couldn't have been much better though. Describe how those drives went ...

"That's how we always want to start. We start out fast, we start out quick and play physical. That's how we always get our wins."

You had a new accessory with the 7-Eleven logo necklace — that was a nice touch ...

“Yeah, shout out to 7-Eleven. They just sent me that the other day with all the hats and ‘Always open’ stuff. That was nice.”

They saw your post on Twitter, the other day and sent you the necklace?

“The next day, yeah.”

SAM HUBBARD

Defensive end

You guys played complementary football today. When the offense had its first two possessions they scored and then the defense backed up the offense when they needed it. Was it a good sign to see complementary football like that?

“Yeah, definitely. We know there are going to be times when we’re not playing our best and the offense is going to pick us up, and that’s the beauty of being on a good team with good players. We have good people who want to play for each other, and it’s fun being out there with those guys.”

How big is it to get a win like this and head into the bye week at .500, climbing out of a hole?

“It’s huge. It’s what we needed, it’s what we talked about and I’m happy we got it done. A lot of football left.”

Talk about how you played today, including getting a big sack at the end.

“Just relentless, rushing all day. I was winning my matchups all day and finally he (Geno Smith) held the ball and lined up for me to get a sack. I was close all day with five QB hits but to get the sack at that moment of the game, it’s special. I’m happy.”

You had big play after big play late in the game. Talk about the effort by the defense.

“I just looked at the 11 guys on defense and nobody was batting an eye. Everybody’s tired, everybody’s battling, and it was just such a grind. Being out there with those dudes, I knew nobody was going to tap out and we were going to keep fighting.”

TED KARRAS

Center

It looked like the play in the red zone won the game today with those stops today ...

“Yeah, the defense won the football game. Let’s give them a shout out. The story going into the bye week is our defense is elite like they’ve been for a long time. They won the game for us today. We did some good stuff in the first half, didn’t get much going in the second. That’s a good football team — a playoff football team coming into town. I’m really grateful to even up our record going into a week off. I’ll say this as much as I can about the defense, it was an unbelievable performance by them. Their back is against the wall on the 10-yard line three times in a row to win the game. Three drives in a row, really, to win the game. That’s unbelievable. We wanted to be able to do more for them. I thought we did a good job protecting, though. I thought we had a pretty solid day against a really, really good front. That’s a good group over there. That’s a Pete Carroll defense with a Hall of Fame ‘Mike’ linebacker. I’m glad we did enough to win. There are still some things to work on. We’re going to take a good look at ourselves this week, get some rest, and get ready to go to San Francisco. It’s going to be a big one.”

Your first two possessions went well. Did they make any adjustments or was it just a tick off on execution after that?

“I’m sure they made some adjustments. That’s a Hall of Fame coach over there. I think the main thing — and I’ll look at the film — but probably went from a two-high shell to playing middle field closed, blitzing a little bit more. They blitzed Bobby (Wagner) quite a bit, but overall solid performance. Left some things out there on offense, but we’re going to continue to improve. Kudus to the defense. Unbelievable performance. Really proud of these guys. What a relief to get a win, even up our record to .500 going into a week off.”

What does it mean to go into the bye week at .500?

“It means I can go to my dad’s game a little bit happier.”

Talk about starting quick today ...

“We came out and executed at a high level and answered a score. They scored first and we answered that, and then took the lead going into the half. This is the NFL and that’s a good group over there. Defense — unbelievable job. They’re the kings of this week. Really grateful going into the bye healthy and evened up.”

ANDREI IOSIVAS

Wide receiver

How did it feel to score your first NFL touchdown?

“It felt awesome. At first I didn’t know if it was going to stand or not because they threw a flag. They said it was a touchdown and I started to tear up a little bit. It was a great time. It was a scramble drill, you work on that a lot and especially with Joe Burrow, he can extend plays a bunch so you’ve always got to be ready. He was actually nice enough to get me the ball after it, because I’d completely forgot about it, but that’s the kind of guy he is — super thoughtful, and I’m appreciative of that.”

Joe Burrow made a mad dash to the end zone to make sure that ball was recovered ...

“Yeah, he did. I honestly completely forgot about it and he came up to me with the ball. He just shows how thoughtful he is.”

On the touchdown, Joe Burrow extended the play. From your perspective, when do you realize he’s buying time and you have to do something to get open?

“You look at him, my route took a little bit longer than it would have taken in the first place so I already knew there was a possibility, and I looked at him and he’s already out of the pocket so I just tried to find a hole. At that point you’re just looking to see where something’s open. Lucky enough, he put it right on me and I was able to score.”

Joe Burrow wasn’t able to do that much in the first four games like he has in the last two weeks, so how important is that, specifically in the red zone?

“It’s super important because there’s such a short field to work with, especially in the red zone where sometimes plays need to be extended. You need that extra factor for it to work because you’re so confined.”

Four times in the second half Seattle had the ball in the red zone and scored three points. How nerve-racking is that to watch?

“I get nervous a little bit but there’s something about that D that you know they’re going to pull something out. They’re all dogs on that defense, all ready to make a play. Yeah, I’m nervous but also confident at the same time.”



SEAHAWKS POSTGAME QUOTES

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PETE CARROLL

Head coach

Initial comments ...

"I thought that was an incredible football game today. So hard-fought, both teams were so close. The game started differently than it ended. I thought the guys played about as good as they could play on the defensive side of the ball. They lit it up in the second half with pressure, didn't make a yard on the turnover they got, and forced the field goal. The defense gave us every chance. We had our opportunities, and I liked the way we went about it. We had our shot, going for the win. We weren't trying to kick a field goal there, going for the win with all four downs. We liked the calls we had; we just didn't execute well enough to get it done. All the red zone stuff is where they got us, where we needed touchdowns. Our numbers will look bad there in the red zone, but we were so close to winning that football game. Give them credit, they hung in there and got it, but I loved the way we played today. I know we had our penalties and there's stuff to get better at, but that's a competitive group. They fought their butt off today, both sides of the football. It's going to help us down the road. We're going to keep playing hard, keep playing tough, and make it hard on everybody we play."

Was there any common theme to the red zone issues?

"I have to watch the film. I don't know."

Did anything change defensively for you guys in the second half?

"We hung tough on so many situations. Joe Burrow is a heck of a quarterback and he showed you that right off the bat. First couple of drives, he was nails. Our guys then tightened things down, we got more pressure, and made the throws more challenged. We made it hard on him. I don't know how many yards they had today, but it wasn't a lot. I thought we played the way we've been playing. We played the game plan we went in with, stayed with it all day long, and it worked for us. We did a really good job on third down in the second half. Both sides of the ball, third down was an improvement today, which is a step in the right direction. It wasn't quite enough, but a step in the right direction."

On that last fourth down where both teams called timeouts, was there something you were looking for there?

"Yeah there was. We had the opportunity to do it so I wanted to make sure that we were really clear and everyone knew exactly what had to be done. That was the play."

Does a loss like this make it more frustrating, considering how hard the team played?

"It makes it more frustrating, of course. That was a game to win, right there. We came out here on the road, their crowd going crazy, and we're right there. We're inside the 10 a bunch of times to win the game. Unfortunately, we couldn't get it in."

How did it look having Jamal Adams back for a full game?

"It was great he finally made it through. I'm really happy for him. That's a good accomplishment, and now he can take the next step. He had some really nice plays today, good contributions."

What happened with DK Metcalf? Is he fine?

"He got hit in the hip. He went back in, he sucked it up and went back in."

The plays Tre Brown made today stood out ...

"It was another impressive game from him, terrific with the interception. It was perfect coverage, and he finished the play, which was great. I think it was on third down too. It's nice to have him back out there. Michael Jackson played also; we rotate those guys a little bit. Tre did a nice job."

Geno Smith took a sack on one of those fourth downs ...

"Yeah I'd love to get the ball out there. It's killing him, so he knows."

GENO SMITH

Quarterback

What was the issue in the red zone today?

"We didn't finish. We didn't finish in the red zone. I think that's pretty obvious. I thought we moved the ball well pretty much all day and stalled out down there. We'd have to actually look at the film to see exactly what happened but just from thoughts after the game it felt like we didn't finish and didn't execute as good as we did in the open field."

What were you looking for on the two fourth downs?

"Just trying to find the open guy. Going through my reads trying to find the open guy. Like I said, I'll have to go back through the film to get an exact observation of what I should have done better, but overall I just should have been better. I feel like my guys and the defense played a tremendous game. I feel like the offensive line played a tremendous game. You felt Charles Cross out there when he got back in the game, he did a tremendous job. I thought Jaxon (Smith-Njigba), I'm so proud of Jaxon and the way he played. So proud of DK and the way he played as well as Tyler, man. I felt like the guys deserved to win today. Obviously, I didn't do my best job today to get that done. So those are things I put on myself, I lay right on my feet right, on my shoulders and I look forward to the next opportunity."

The first interception, what happened there?

"I need to be better. Can't do that, especially in the red zone. Can't put the ball in harm's way. Like I said, the defense played a tremendous game, and we had points right there. I've got to protect the ball and I've got to be better."

On the second interception, it looked like there was a miscommunication there between you and DK Metcalf?

"That's on me. Again, another chance for us to go down there and make plays and score points with our defense playing great, and didn't do the right thing on that play. Those are things that are not characteristic of the way I've been playing, and I know that I can be a lot better. I need to look myself in the mirror and figure those things out, so I will."

On that last fourth down there were two timeouts called. Did that change anything following the timeout call?

"Not for us. Maybe for them but not for us. We knew exactly what we wanted to do. We had a great play. I thought Shane (Waldron) called a great game today. As well as Coach (Clint) Hurtt. On that play, Shane gave us the right play call. There was a guy who was open. I was trying to get it to Colby (Parkinson) there, he had a chance to maybe score in the end zone right there and it just didn't work out. Like I said, those are things that I need to fix myself and I look forward to that."

Was Colby Parkinson the primary target there?

“When it’s fourth down for the game, they’re all primaries. Just find the one-on-one and get it to your guy. He did a great job, and I just didn’t get it to him on time.”

On the replays it looked like you were looking left the whole time, so is that who you were looking at the whole way?

Yeah, once the defense doubled DK (Metcalf) and doubled Tyler (Lockett), Colby (Parkinson) was one-on-one.”

Is this one you’re going to flush easily, or will you beat yourself up over it?

“You’ve got to flush it. If you play long enough in this game it will happen, but you have to flush it and you have to move on to the next one. We have a lot of football left to play. I believe in the type of player I am. I know today is not indicative of who I am as a player. A few mistakes that I’d love to have back but sometimes that happens in a game. You’ve just got to flush it and move on.”

You guys moved the ball so well on the first drive. Did anything change after that?

“It’s the NFL, man. They get paid too. It’s going to be tough. Every week is going to be tough. I say that all the time that every week is going to be a new tough opponent. They’re going to bring some different things to the table, and we were able to move the ball pretty much all game. They stopped us a few times, but I felt like we moved the ball pretty well and we just have to finish in the red zone.”

What do you make of the offense being so good on early downs but not so much on third down?

“Like I said, I’ll have to go back to the film on that. I can’t give you a proper answer without doing that but overall, it always comes down to execution. It always comes down to how we execute as players. Never putting it on anyone else, always pointing the thumb right back at myself, and I know that I can be a lot better on third downs and I know I can be a lot better throughout the game for our guys, so like I said I’m looking forward to that next one.”

You mentioned the defense earlier. How encouraging is it even in a loss seeing the way they play, knowing what it can mean moving forward?

“Really, really proud of those guys and that’s what we expect from those guys. They have a lot of great players on that side of the ball. They’re a big reason this team is going to win a lot of games. We are going to need them to play like that and continue to play like that for the rest of the season. As an offense it really hurts, especially as a quarterback. Seeing those guys battle the way they did — I think they only gave up 50-something yards in the second half. For us to go down there with two or three opportunities to take the lead, and for us not to do it, that’s really on me. Like I said, have to be better and I will be.”

You were OK physically?

“Yes.”

What’s the attitude in there after a game that probably was winnable?

“Obviously after a loss, no one is going to be happy about it, but you have to look at it the proper way. It’s always the process over results. Like I said, I feel like the guys played a tremendous game and if I make a few less mistakes and a few more plays then we’re in here talking about a win. Really that just falls on my feet, on my shoulders, and like I said that next one is what it’s all about.”

JAMAL ADAMS

Safety

It wasn’t the result that you guys wanted, but how did it feel personally for you to be out there the whole game?

“I’m grateful, man. Grateful heart. Obviously, that was the goal. I was just taking it one quarter at a time. Obviously, I was on a little rep count. That was killing me to be on the sideline, but I understood the routine, and I understood the plan. I feel great.”

How did the game change as it went on? It seems like you were blitzing a lot early, and then maybe not as much later on.

“Joe (Burrow) was getting the ball out quick. Obviously, we figured that out early on. He wasn’t around when our rush would get there. Obviously, we were trying to hit him from different angles, coming up the middle or whatever the case may be. He was doing a great job of getting the ball out. We were just trying to rally and do our best to get to him, but honestly, it wasn’t happening as much as we needed it to.”

There were seven stops in a row on defense. How encouraging is that for you, even in a loss?

“It’s phenomenal. Obviously, you come out and you have a mission. We got started really slow, kind of putting ourselves in a hole as far as penalties and killing ourselves. But, I felt like we finished the game strong. We felt like we came out there and we had swagger, we had juice. That’s just Seattle; that’s just what we do. That’s our DNA.”

What were these last couple of weeks like for you, after coming back in New York before your concussion and all of that?

“Obviously, that was a lot going on. Obviously, I was just focused on the next week. I was excited to get back out there, and I knew I had an opportunity. We treat it like a championship opportunity every week. Obviously, we don’t make it bigger than what it is, but it was exciting to get back out there and play a full game, for sure.”

Where do you feel like you guys are at defensively through five games?

“I feel like we’re just getting started. Obviously, just having everybody out there, that’s the key. Just flowing and understanding where everybody’s going to be. Communication-wise, playing as one. But, the sky is the limit. We just have to keep working, put our heads down and just continue to get better.”

JULIAN LOVE

Safety

What changed for you guys defensively after those first two drives when they went down and scored, and then didn’t really make it to the red zone the rest of the way?

“They had good scheme. They were doing some good things on the first drive or two. A lot of scripted plays on that first drive. Then, we kind of brought it up to what they were doing and what we had to do. We switched it up a bit scheme-wise. It was going to be tighter in coverage and make plays.”

Even in a loss, is this still something you guys especially as a defense can build on?

“Yes. I quickly looked at the numbers, but we accomplished a lot of the goals that we wanted to accomplish on defense. I think it’s a step, but it’s not end-all-be-all. I think that next step for us to be great is we have to get the ball. We had opportunities. Tre Brown made a great play, but we have to create three turnovers. That’s what can make a team great. So, we’re always pushing for that. That’s a goal that we didn’t hit. So, I think there’s always things that you can build on to try to be a little sharper.”

How frustrating is it that you guys had the win there for the taking, but didn’t quite come up with it?

“It’s extremely frustrating. We played, all in all, a good game. We could look objectively at the stats sheet and all that stuff, and it doesn’t represent fully what happened out there, but that’s football. Their defense, they made some crucial plays in critical situations. That’s something for us to take. To be considered one of those teams, you have to capitalize on those. So yes, we’re leaving frustrated, but we know what’s ahead of us, and that’s the message that coach Carroll shared.”

The way the guys as safeties have had Jamal Adams’ back, how do you feel like that’s all coming together?

“I think it looked good. I think we were pretty effective when all of us were on the field today. It’s different for sure. Last year, I didn’t leave the field too much at the beginning of the season. But, I understand that my goal is for us to be winning games, and to win games, Jamal needs to be on the field. So, I think that was pretty effective, and I know we’re going to do some things that are going to be fun moving forward. We have a lot of

talented players on this team, a lot of talented DBs especially on this team. There are going to be a couple that aren't on the field every play, and so the people on the field have to make the most of their opportunity."

JAKE BOBO **Wide receiver**

Let's talk about that catch you had. How do you hang on to that ball?

"It was a great ball by Geno (Smith). He put it in a spot where I had to go up and get it — gave me time to get down, and protect myself a little bit. It was a great call. Great call. Got the coverage we wanted, and got it done."

What did Cincinnati do different with their pressures the last couple drives?

"Yeah, a little bit — I felt like we were prepared. We knew what we wanted to do, we knew what we were going to get, but they're a good defense. So, it's execution on execution at that point, and they obviously had the advantage."

It hurts to lose any game, but to be in the red zone twice ... does this one sting more?

"Yeah, it stings a lot more only because we couldn't finish a couple times. It hurts a little bit more, because our defense played the way they did. So, we wanted to get it done for those guys. They came out here, and did what they needed to do, and what they expected to do. So, it's tough not to be able to get it done for those guys."

Kenneth Walker said one of the things he takes away is just the fight and resiliency. Would you agree with that, or is there something else to add?

"No, this team's going to be just fine. We're going to keep battling, keep following No. 7, keep following those guys on the other side of the ball, and we'll be alright."

What was fun to watch what the defense did today?

"Our secondary. They have arguably one of the best receiving corps in the league, and they got it done. No. 21, No. 27, Tre Brown — they got it done, and it was fun to watch."

Kenneth Walker III **Running back**

Talk to me about the touchdown ...

"We ran to the right side, and the O-line did a great job, and they had to hold, so it was pretty much a walk-in touchdown."

What was their defense doing to you in the second half in the red zone?

"I believe it was one of those things (where) we didn't finish and execute, so we just got to go fix that."

TRE BROWN **Cornerback**

Can you talk about how this secondary was able to hold their receivers down after they had a big game last week?

"Shout out to everybody in the secondary — the whole defense really. Guys were able to get pressure, and then ended up getting Joe Burrow out of his game to make those type of throws, so the back end was locking down and doing our thing. We haven't even scratched the surface of what this secondary can be, and this is the first time really we've had everybody healthy. To see that, and realize what we've got in front of us, it's going to be special."

On that interception, how'd you read that play?

"We were in three-by-one backside, Ja'Marr Chase by himself — I'm on an island — so it's going to be a fade or hitch. I knew I was by myself, I saw him look back early, turned around, turned into him, caught the ball."

On a back shoulder throw is the trick to get your head around before the receiver?

"Yes. It's pretty tricky to play a back shoulder throw. Good thing I was able to be in position to make that play."

Did you guys dial up more pressure in the second half?

"Yeah, we dialed up a lot of pressure. Guys were able to get home, we were able to cover on the back end. The coaches trust in us — we're able to play man-to-man — and it worked out for us."

How were you guys able to make them one dimensional? That run game never really got going today ...

"The D-line has been doing a really good job this year stopping the run. Everybody's been averaging 2.5, 2.3? That's Top-5, Top-3 in the NFL. We knew what those guys were about, we just had to come play our game."

You mentioned the secondary playing together for the first time today. What did you think about the overall effort from the defense?

"I like that because I know the offense is going to fix their problems. If we keep playing how we're playing, we're going to be one of the best in the NFL soon. Like I said — can't point the figure, we've got those guys' backs, so whatever goes on, we know they're going to fix it."

DRE'MONT JONES **Defensive end**

Coming in, one of the focuses was making the Bengals one-dimensional. How did you guys go about shutting down the run?

"I thought we did a hell of a job shutting down the run — side to side, top to bottom, doesn't matter what it is — we held them to like 45 yards? You can't do better than that against that team."

If you look at total numbers, I think they were just over 200 yards of total offense. Where can you say where the defense stepped up and did exactly what you wanted?

"We just played the best we could, and when it was time to go get Joe (Burrow), we did what we could to go get Joe."

How could you tell that pass rush was getting to him in the second half?

"He was getting a little frantic. I know Joe, and he likes to be comfortable back there, and he likes to get dinking and dunking and taking his time."

How can dinking and dunking catch a defense off guard?

"He didn't really catch us off balance, we just (made him off-balance). The first 15 plays by an offense are usually scripted anyway, so it was just going to something they knew would work real quick, and it worked real quick, but everything else was smooth sailing for us."

You did get to Burrow, and he's a former teammate from your college days. Did you have any advantage having seen him enough?

"I ain't no DB, so I have no advantage. Our advantage is playing against the O-line, and watching them, and seeing if I can pick apart what they do wrong."

What did you say to him after you sacked him?

(Laughs) "No comment. I can't speak on that one."

What did you think about what the defense did overall today and what you can build on?

"I thought our energy and effort was there. That's something we always want — we never got discouraged. We really believe we had a chance to win this game, but if we keep up that attitude, there's going to be more numbers in the win column for sure."

What did Tre Brown's interception do for everybody on the defense?

"It gets everybody going, gets everybody fired up. Tre had been battling an injury, came back strong with a crucial PBU, and a crucial pick, and that's a testament to how hard he's working and how hard he studies."

BOYE MAFE

Linebacker

Let's start with you getting to the quarterback. You had a free run — what happened on that play?

"As you noticed, we had a blitz on, tackle slid down to pick up the blitz, I came free off the edge and took advantage of the opportunity. I appreciate the guys helping me out on that and making the lane open for myself."

You guys put more pressure on in the second half. What were the other adjustments you made?

"We understood the situation, and had to settle ourselves down. Everyone had to come together, regroup, and reset ourselves and our focus. We just took that accountability, and said we had to be better in the second half."

Tre Brown had the interception and a big PBU. What do you like about his game?

"He's playing confident, he's taking his chances, and we love that. To see him step up in coverage, and making those plays up top, that's the stuff we need, and the stuff that energizes our defense. Those are big, explosive plays."

The defense had a couple big stops in the fourth quarter. What's the confidence level for you guys in the way you're playing together?

"It's that chemistry we're building — that chemistry and that trust in each other, seeing how to play off each other and with each other. Just understand that when you look at the guy to your left and your right, that you can trust them."

What's your confidence level in the offense?

"Very confident — our offense has been clicking all year. It's nothing to us. Now we know just as much if they give us opportunities to go out there and play defense, we have to give them opportunities to go out there and play."

As you turn the page to next week, what do you build on?

"We build on that by understanding we have to come out strong. We're going to start fast, put ourselves in a better position, hold that accountability, and figure out where we have to get better after that. Take that accountability, digest the film, and get ready for the next one."