



BENGALS POSTGAME QUOTES

DEC. 16, 2018

OAKLAND AT CINCINNATI

MARVIN LEWIS

Head coach

Initial Comments ...

"I think the guys deserved today. They kept digging a little deeper, finding a way, and they did today what maybe we didn't do the last few weeks: Make some critical plays at some critical moments, which proved to be the difference in the game. I've got to give those guys credit for the plays, and how they just keep grinding, keep playing and keep working at it. The game had some positives. They continued to make critical plays down the stretch which were important."

When Alex Erickson made his big kickoff return, were you looking to see if there might have been a flag, since that's been the case so many times this season?

"I wasn't, actually, because that one was pretty straightforward. You could see it set up, and the guys did a nice job at the point of attack. It's just a matter of keeping our hands in the right place. We had one foul on the one return today, and another one on a gunner. But we've just got to keep going. With special teams plays, there's so much open field that things happen. We've just got to keep doing it the right way."

It seems like Alex has done that several times this year ...

"He's been consistent with it, and he's just got to keep it up. We had the one (punt return) where they end up touching the ball, and we've got to stay out of Alex's way so he's got a chance to catch that ball. But we got a break there, where their guy touched it first and we got the ball down there."

Do you have any update on Tyler Boyd's knee injury?

"I do not."

Is this what you always envisioned for Joe Mixon — a guy who can carry a team on his back in a tough game?

"Yeah. We said two or three weeks ago, 'We've got to continue riding on Joe's shoulders.' Joe, Gio (HB Giovani Bernard) and Tyler (WR Tyler Boyd) — those guys are making plays for us, and we've got to keep riding on their shoulders. Cody (WR Cody Core) had a big catch and run today. C.J. (TE C.J. Uzomah had another big run (after the catch) down the middle of the field.

"We've got to protect Jeff (QB Jeff Driskel). He had the one interception, and we've got to protect him on that as best we can. He let the ball go and John (WR John Ross) didn't quite locate it, and they made the play. But we're taking a shot. We've got to keep taking shots down the field to get people up off us."

It looked like Mixon was playing with some pain today. Were you concerned at all he might not be able to keep going?

"I didn't see anything (out of the ordinary), other than just what you go through in a (typical) game."

The same thing seemed to happen with William Jackson, who came back in pretty quickly after his injury ...

"He just got the air knocked out of him there."

Was this win personally satisfying for you, given that it was likely the best defensive performance so far this year?

"Our football team just needed to win. Our fans needed a win. So it was a good job. The defensive guys did a nice job today. They handled the plan. We gave up the two plays that set up two field goals and the touchdown, so we've got to do better on those, but overall I felt we did a good job most of the day. We've just got to correct the errors we had today, but I thought the guys up front did a nice job today of keeping the quarterback in (the pocket) and squeezing the pocket on him."

What do you think when you see the stands so empty?

"I have no control over that."

You attempted a pass to Sam Hubbard today, and you've kind of worked on that for a while but hadn't actually done it in a game ...

"We score the first time (we do that) most times. If Sam gets an opportunity, he'll catch it for sure."

There's not too many defensive ends that play offense, so why Hubbard? What did you see in him that made you want to try it?

"I just thought that with his athleticism, he gave us something. He's another big guy that can run. He's a big athlete, he can run, he's smart enough to handle the insertion of the offense they give him each week, and he embraces it. He's done a great job of it. When we go to 46 (active) guys on Sunday, we need some able-bodied guys who can do a couple different things. Westerman (G Christian Westerman) has played on our goal line defense, so you've just got to take what you have on Sunday and do the best you can."

It doesn't hurt that you can use him as a fullback and free up a roster spot either, right?

"No. He's done a great job of it. He had a big block in Carson (City, Calif.) last week against (L.A. Chargers DE Joey) Bosa. he does a nice job."

JEFF DRISKEL

Quarterback

It's your first win as an NFL starting quarterback. How does it sound? And how does it feel?

"It sounds great. Feels better. It was awesome to get a win with those guys out there. It's been a while since we had one, and it's

just a testament to everyone in this building — from coaches, players, strength staff, guys in the training room. It's a testament to our character, after we've had a tough run, to be able to regroup each and every week and come out and find a way to get a win. That was huge."

What was it like to chant "Who Dey" for the first time in a long time?

"It was awesome. The locker room after a win is something you can't replicate. It was awesome. It really was a full, team win. It was great."

Tyler Boyd hit the 1000-yard receiving yard mark this season. What was it like to see a guy like him put in so much work and get that accomplishment?

"It's huge. Coming in (today), he only needed a few. Whenever he got there, I went up and congratulated him between plays. But that's something that he's not worried about. That's just the type of guy he is — individual accolades and individual stats don't mean much, but it was a huge feat and a huge accomplishment. It's something he's been working at for a long time. He really has had a great year and has been so reliable for us."

What about the mental strength that's required from everybody in here having lost game after game and still having to come in all week and put in the work and put in the time?

"It's hard. The NFL season is such a long deal — we started so long ago this year — especially when you're on a losing streak. It's based off the character in the locker room. If you don't have the right guys, guys might put in the towel. Some teams might say, 'We're out of this,' but not that group in there. It's just such a great group with great leadership. It's been fun to battle with those guys and finally come out with a win. We're really excited about today, and hopefully it's some momentum moving forward."

TYLER BOYD
Wide receiver

What was the emotion in the room after ending a five-game losing streak?

"It's a lot better. Guys know we have a shot and hopefully teams lose that we need to lose. We have to continue to work hard and continue to out-execute guys."

You didn't play the second half, what can you tell us about the injury?

"Nothing too serious. Nothing to worry about. I will be ready to go for sure."

Jeff Driskel made enough plays to lead you to victory ...

"Definitely. Jeff is a great player. We should have won games before this game with him. I trust him, all the guys trust him. He is a legit player in this league. He proves every day that he deserves this opportunity and we will continue to have his back."

Is it meaningful to win the home finale?

"Definitely. There is no better feeling. You can't go out like that. You have to secure your home field. You can't end the season losing your last home game. It's great that we are starting to win again. Hopefully we finish out strong and make the postseason."

How meaningful is it to reach 1,000 yards receiving this season?

"Obviously it's a huge milestone, a goal I've wanted to accomplish coming into the league. Now that I have done it, I am on to the next goal. I am going to let it marinate, but it's time to reset my goals. It was a great day for me."

JOE MIXON
Halfback

How nice was it to do the "Who Dey" chant after a game?

"It felt great. It's been a long time. I am very blessed to be in this situation to come out here and come out with a win. It was big. We fought for four quarters and made it happen."

What injury were you fighting over the course of the game?

"What happened was, I had a guy in the middle, it was just me and him, and he made a heck of a tackle. I thought I should have taken it for about 70 (yards) and I was just frustrated that I didn't make him miss."

How much was it a sigh of relief for the team to come out and get a win?

"It's a great feeling, of course. Like I said, it's been a while since we have been able to win here. It feels great. I am happy for the coaches, and happy for the fans."

How much do you enjoy being a spark for this team?

"I enjoy it a lot because everyone looks to me, whether it's a verbal meeting or going out there and playing. It's one thing to talk about it, but at the same time, you have to go out there and do it. I was happy we came out here and fought hard for all four quarters."

How different is it for you when the team is ahead?

"At the end of day, depending on the situation, I know there is going to be a time when I have to put the team on my back. We are going to dial up the run, and it's up to me and the linemen to execute. When we get in a situation like this I have to do whatever I can; know the situation, the down and distance, get the first downs and protect the football at all costs."

C.J. UZOMAH
Tight end
On the win ...

"We kind of faltered in the third quarter and didn't come out for the second half the way we wanted to, but we kept battling. Our defense played a heck of a game, kudos to them. AE (Alex Erickson), out there being the GOAT. This is fun. Last week I said we needed to have more fun and not be so uptight, and today kind of showed that."

It seems like it was a breath of fresh air, the winning feeling?

"That is what is expected. We started the season knowing we had the pieces to be able to do this. Even Jeff (Driskel) in the huddle said 'we have playmakers, we shouldn't be stopped on any down.' It was fun. I had fun out there today."

CARLOS DUNLAP

Defensive end

Did you recover the fumble on Sam Hubbard's strip sack?

"Yeah. That was a crazy play. I was there pressing the pocket, and next thing you know, it was like a scary movie with Sam coming around the corner and boom. I saw the ball down, and tried to tear off my guy and get to it. You know how it is on the bottom of the pile."

Sam Hubbard is having a heck of a year ...

"Absolutely. He is after that rookie (sack) record."

What does he do well?

"He comes to work every day with a smile on his face. He works hard, no matter what work load they put on him, he works hard, gives all of his effort, and today, he got rewarded for it. It was great to see that from him."

Do you want to see Sam Hubbard get the rookie record?

"It would be a bittersweet thing, but at the end of the day, it will help me too. They will have to pay more attention to him, so that is one less series, one less snap that might be going his way instead of mine, and I like my chances in that situation. That would be great for him, I would be happy for him, and I couldn't think of a more deserving guy."

SAM HUBBARD

Defensive end

Can you talk about playing defensive tackle, defensive end, fullback and special teams in the same game? Whatever they ask you to do, you do it with great execution ...

"It's what I try and hang my hat on. Anything they ask me to do, I want to do it to the best of my ability. Obviously it can help win games. That big play Alex (Erickson), had we were working on it all week. We had a great game plan, so credit to our coaches, and everyone went out there and executed. The defense played great, but I really wish I had that touchdown on offense."

The defense held the Raiders to only 16 points, and to three-of-14 on third down conversions. What was the difference to give them so many problems on third down?

"I don't think we were doing anything different. We have been working so hard throughout the season by covering them on the back end and trying to get to the passer as the rushers. Today, we played a complete game by covering them in the back end, which allowed us to get home (to the quarterback) by working our pass rush game. We stuck to the game plan, and everyone had faith and stayed together throughout."

ALEX ERICKSON

Wide receiver

You were able to put the game away today after your long kickoff return, and then Joe Mixon capped it off with a touchdown. Take us through that 77-yard kickoff return ...

"Plays like that are what football teams do — they find ways to finish when they have good field position. We knew we were going to get opportunities with this kicker (Raiders Kicker Daniel Carlson) — he doesn't drive the ball down the field or kick it out of the back of the end zone every time. We knew we were going to get opportunities. They were squeezing hard (in their coverage), and they got us on the last couple (returns) because they were squeezing hard. We knew we had to bounce it back, and we were able to make a big play and essentially ice the game after that."

You caught a couple bubble screens that went for good yardage, but there were flags on the plays. How relieved were you when you saw no flags on your big kick return?

"I was just celebrating and praying there were no flags. I didn't know if there was or wasn't (a flag). I know how hard these guys are working to give me space, so we have to live with a few of the flags because I know they are working their butts off to give me opportunities to get big returns. I appreciate all their effort."

It looked like Sam Hubbard had a nice block on your return ...

"Yeah. Last year, we kind of struggled on kickoff return, and this year we've had success. A lot of it has to do with Sam (Hubbard), Brandon (Wilson) and those guys in front of me. Those are tough blocks (they make). You have to be a good athlete to make those blocks, and Sam (Hubbard) has done a great job for us."

VINCENT REY

Linebacker

What was working for the defense today?

"With the run game, I really credit our corners — 22 (William Jackson), 27 (Dre Kirkpatrick) and 21 (Darqueze Dennard). These guys were coming down and setting the edge and doing a great job for us."

The defensive line had five sacks. Can you talk about the play up front?

"Those guys were getting after it. They did a good job getting to the quarterback, Sam (Hubbard) with the turnover and Darqueze (Dennard) and Hardy (Nickerson) forcing a fumble. We were out there just playing really well. We wanted to play really well at home because we haven't been as we used to. I'm glad we did."

Do you ever think, 'Why hasn't the defense played this well all year long?'

"A part of me thought that. When I came in here (to the locker room), I was like, 'Man, I wish we finished off some more games.' I was thinking after the bye, like Baltimore and games like that. But hey, we are where we are right now, and the best thing we can do right now is get better as a team."

JESSIE BATES

Safety

What is the mindset of the team going forward now at this point?

"Continue to take every opportunity, every Sunday, and try to win. This is what we do it for, and we'll let the chips fall where they fall. As crazy as it sounds, we can still make it in (to the playoffs). We just have to continue to take advantage of those opportunities on Sunday."

What was going right for you guys defensively today?

“The biggest part was Sam Hubbard, Geno Atkins and Carlos Dunlap. Once they got the quarterback (scrambling) like that, it’s always a good thing for us. The DBs didn’t get that much action, because our defensive ends were getting to the quarterback. That’s always good, and it showed up a lot today.”

When you were on the sideline watching the offense, what did you think of Joe Mixon’s performance?

“Joe is Joe. I don’t expect anything else from him. He brings a lot of energy to this team. When we see Joe running the ball like that, I’m sure it makes everyone else play hard. Not even just Joe, but the offensive line — they fed off that, and so do the receivers. It was a good team win for us.”

Was this victory a breath of fresh air for you, after five straight losses?

“Yeah. You come in the locker room and we say the “Who Dey” chant. It’s funny, because I honestly almost forgot about it because it’s been so long (since the last win). Any win is a great win for us.”

DARQUEZE DENNARD

Cornerback

A lot of times, when a corner leads the team in tackles like you did today, it isn’t a good sign. But all the corners did a good job of coming down and crashing. It was a big part of stopping the run ...

“That’s what they made us do. They used tight cluster (formations) and made us tackle. That was their plan, and we just did what we were supposed to do.”

Did you feel this defensive performance coming? It was the best of the year ...

“Definitely. Week in and week out, we grind and try to get better. Everybody in here does, coaches included. People see the end product, but we have been building to this moment. It just feels good to come out on the other end.”

Does the team hear any of the noise about fans not attending games? Do you look up into the stands and wonder where everyone is?

“We just have to control what we can control. Everybody in here believes in each other to come out on Sundays and play for one another, and letting the chips fall where they may. We have been putting these games in, and this time we came out with a win.”



RAIDERS POSTGAME QUOTES

DEC. 16, 2018

OAKLAND AT CINCINNATI

JON GRUDEN

Head coach

Initial Comments ...

"I'm proud of our team — really proud of our team. We fought back. We made it a one-possession game in the fourth quarter, and the kickoff return by (Alex) Erickson really hurt us. Turnovers, penalties — some I didn't agree with — bothered me.

(Gareon) Conley has a concussion. He left the game. I hope he's OK. I'm proud of our team, very proud of our team. It was a very difficult situation for us today offensively, with all of the changes."

What are your thoughts on play of the offensive line today?

"Well it's tough, you know. You've got to remember, the Bengals are a good defensive front. Geno Atkins, he's been in (the Pro Bowl) every year. (Carlos) Dunlap's a great player. They've got a very good front. And Hubbard is an up-and-coming player out of Ohio State. But we've got to do better. We've got to do better, and I will acknowledge that was one tough situation that we were put under today."

Do you have any issues with the energy level, particularly in the first half, with your team?

"No."

Darren Waller seemed like he played well today ...

"Yeah, he did. I was really pleased with him. We're excited about him. He got handled the ball on a jet sweep, and you see the speed. He caught a shallow cross and turned the corner. You see the size and speed and the upside that he has. I was really pleased with his ability to learn quickly. That's where these kids are. Forget about how they played. Just learning the snap count, being able to get up there and audible and switch stunts and handle the system was a challenge. But I'm really happy with Waller."

It looked like they tried to take away Jared Cook ...

"They did a good job. Obviously, we didn't have much time (to throw) there at times. We were looking for him in some passing situations, and we struggled. I think you can see that."

Why do you think Bengals HB Joe Mixon was able to get free?

"Mixon got a lot of touches. He got a lot of looks. You give a great back that many carries, he's going to make some runs. One of the runs he made was spectacular. One of the runs — the toss for the touchdown — I thought we got out-flanked on. It was a well-blocked play. He's a heck of a player."

What did you think of the offensive line's play with the penalties, holding and some sacks?

"I'm not going to single them out. They were put in a very tough spot today — as tough a spot as I've ever called plays with with a group of guys that are just getting to know each other. Cincinnati — I don't care what the record is or what the stat sheet says or what Pro Football Focus says — Geno Atkins is a problem. Dunlap's a problem. They've got a very good front, and they've had it for a very long time. We've got a lot of moving pieces right now, and it's not easy at this stage of the season to get everybody coordinated for 60 minutes."

What do you want to see the rest of the season?

"I want to keep battling, keep playing. We were in this game in the fourth quarter today. We were one possession down with five, six minutes left in the ball game. I want to see us finish with authority, with as much juice as we have, and as much heart and soul as we can showcase. That's what I want to do."

What did you see on the long ball to Jordy Nelson? Do you think Derek Carr could have led him a little bit longer?

"I couldn't see much. They blew a coverage, he was wide open, it was a big play. You should get points — more than three in that situation. Jordy had another big game for us. Obviously he's getting healthy, and that's a good sign."

What do you continue to see in Daniel Carlson?

"He's been a real bright spot for us. Hopefully, and as I said a few weeks ago, he's the long-term solution here for the next several years. You get a kicker, he's going to have to be your leading scorer every year. You get a guy like this that can kick off and make long-range field goals, and critical field goals, it's exciting. There are some positives, but it stings, man. This stings. It's hard to lose."

Is the makeup of the offensive line part of the reason why you didn't run the ball more today?

"We had a couple two-minute drives at the end of the game. We were two possessions behind at the end of the half, and we had two-minute opportunities. And then we had some two-minute opportunities at the end of the game. We fumbled the ball on a running play. We had some penalties. We were unable to convert on third down. We've got to run the ball more, and we've got to run the ball better. But it's hard to function right now with a lot of the moving parts that we have. It's a credit to our team for moving the ball and keeping us in the game."

DEREK CARR

Quarterback

How was it playing with a makeshift offensive line?

"We're working with our fourth and fifth guards. They did a great job. We didn't change the plan. We did what we normally did, and they were able to play with it. There are a few plays we want back, but for the most part they did a really good job."

Is it different to see a defense like Cincinnati's, who's ranked last in a lot of defensive categories but plays much stronger?

"Yes. We played the No. 8 defense in the league last week and were able to win. Numbers are numbers, but you see what's on the film. They have a bunch of first-round picks in their secondary; they have Carlos Dunlap, Geno Atkins, and Michael Johnson. They're all good football players. Their yards (given up coming into today) may have come from a few mistakes. Once they correct that, it's a different day for them. Give them their credit, they're a good defense. I don't take much from rankings."

TE Darren Waller flashed again today. What stands out about him?

"His speed stands out. From Day 1, it shows. He's very smart and picked up the offense well. That's the kind of players that Coach Jon Gruden likes —picks up plays fast, and plays hard. He had a good role for us today. The way he keeps playing, I can see that expanding. I'm glad we have him. He's fast and covers ground. You don't see many tight ends, besides Cook, take it up the sideline. He ran through the zone and was just too fast."

Do you just keep feeding TE Lee Smith until defenses start to respect him?

"We'll keep featuring him in the passing game. The coaches did a great job of setting that up and making it look just like a run. Lee snuck out after they brought their safety across. I saw three linemen and expected a double team. The coaches schemed it well and got Lee open. He's a good target, but the best thing that he does besides being a great teammate is his blocking. Any time we can get him the ball, it's a plus."

Did you see his celebration? Quite a Christmas gift ...

"I did. We laughed about that earlier. I was watching target tapes on all the corners, and I saw a preseason game where someone scored and didn't make it into the crowd. I told Lee he had to try (to jump into the crowd)."

On the long ball to WR Jordy Nelson, would you have liked that back?

"In hindsight, absolutely. He started digging as soon as I threw it. I was trying to just put it on him. He was digging and looked back. I wish I threw a downfield ball. In my mind, I didn't want to overthrow this. I've seen that happen too many times; it happened to the Bengals earlier in the game. You never want to miss those."

What does Coach Gruden mean when he talks about finishing the year with authority?

"He wants us to put in the effort in the way we train, practice, and play. He wants to see our effort and grittiness be there at all times. We're going to finish the right way. We have two more, and we're going to bring it. That's what he expects."

You had one reception for minus nine yards ...

"Yeah, I need to get those stats up (laughs). It was a reaction. The ball was tipped, and I didn't even think and stuck my hand out. I wish I just let it fall."

Talk about your tattoo on your arm about Jeremiah 29:11 ...

"My grandfather was a pastor at the same church for over 30 years. Our whole family worshipped there. We're rooted in that place. Before he passed away, he wanted us all to know that verse. We couldn't understand how the best person we knew could get cancer. He made sure to instill that verse in us, even through there were hard times. He wanted to make sure we knew that."

Were the Bengals trying to take away Cook?

"There were a couple of plays I missed him. There was one on the fumble I was looking for him. There were a lot of times he was doubled, but they didn't show it. We had to go to other guys in those circumstances. They did a good job of mixing it up. He did a good job of his routes though. I didn't have enough time on it. They did a good job, but I think if we had a couple more seconds, we could have hit him."

DOUG MARTIN

Running back

Did you come out flat today?

"No, but it's not the outcome that we wanted. We wanted to come in and show everyone that we could play strong. We might have come out a little flat, but finished strong. We have to start fast and finish strong. We have two more games left and I know we'll play the next two games to the best of our ability."

If the long Bengals kick return could've been avoided, we could be talking about a different outcome...

"Definitely. They made more plays than we did."

What's the biggest take-away from this game?

"This team has a lot of good people on it and we're playing to win. I can't wait to see what we're going to do over the next two games."

Head Coach Jon Gruden said he would've liked to run the ball a lot more than you did today. What stopped that from happening?

"There's no excuse. We have two guards down. I have to carry the flag and I couldn't get rolling the way I wanted to. We didn't have it today. They made more plays than us and over the next two games we're going to give it our all."

DARREN WALLER

Tight end

How frustrating was it to get so close to a touchdown but come up short?

"I'm not really tripping over that. It's been two calendar years since I've had the ball in my hand in a game. Just to get down there was great and I knew we'd punch it in, so I'm not really tripping."

Were your eyes as big as saucers as you got close to the end zone?

"Yeah, there was a lot going through my head. I knew I just needed to keep running."

Do you think your two plays show that you're a playmaker?

"Yeah, I've always seen myself as such. Whatever I can do to help this team and continue to grow. Whatever they ask of me, I'll do."

ERIK HARRIS

Safety

You got your first NFL pick ...

"It's exciting. I wish we could celebrate with a win, but I'm definitely excited about it. It's something to build on."

The defense was on the field a long time ...

"That should be expected when you're on the road. When you go on the road you always talk about bringing your defense and special teams. I thought our defense played well in certain situations. We need to play better in some other phases in the game. It is what it is."

How frustrating was it that Jeff Driskel was able to get plays extended by running the ball?

"It's definitely frustrating. We talked all week about him being a scrambler and his ability to make plays with his legs. We just need to learn and become better from it."

Coach Gruden said that there were a lot of guys out there today who weren't used to playing with each other ...

"Yeah, definitely. When you're playing beside someone new each week, it's definitely a chemistry thing, but it's not an excuse. It's always next guy up. We expect the next guy to come in there and play well."

You got to keep the ball from your first NFL interception — what are you going to do with it?

"I have no clue. I just have to keep it away from my sons because they'll be running around the house with it."