



BENGALS POSTGAME QUOTES

SEPT. 29, 2022

MIAMI AT CINCINNATI

ZAC TAYLOR

Head coach

Initial comments ...

How do you apply credit to that win?

"Expected, just because we've got a great team. I love this team. I love everything about them. They didn't hesitate for one second after those first two weeks when all the noise was getting out about expectations. They didn't let that affect them for one second. They just came out and answered the bell, and responded for two consecutive weeks. Just really proud of them on this stage, against that team. That's a really good football team — they're going to win a lot of games. I thought they handled every moment in this game exactly how they needed to, especially in the second half. Capitalizing on turnovers, touchdowns, special teams stepping up big — that was just a great way to win a Thursday night game."

Did your decision to kick the field goal on fourth-and-one from the one-yard line have to do with your trust in the defense?

"Yeah, really it did. That was a tough decision; we battled that around. Ultimately we decided to kick it and expand the lead that way, and felt good about it."

Do you have faith in your defense more than anything?

"I've got a lot of faith in our defense. It's like comparing your children, so I'm not comparing them to the other (units), but we know that when need them to step up, they're going to do it. Whether that's putting pressure on the quarterback, being tight in coverage, creating those turnovers they did — that's a really explosive team. They put you in a lot of different tough spots. I thought we did a great job with bending, not breaking. Even the play that we gave up down the field, Chido (Chidobe Awuzie) had excellent coverage. He's right there, and they just made a play. That's going to happen when they have (great) players like that. I'm just really proud of the way that the guys kept responding and were able to help us pull it out."

How big were those explosive plays on offense?

"It was great. Two of them were go routes, and T.B. (WR Tyler Boyd) had a route that he scored on against Arizona a couple of years ago that we've been saving. We've tried to get to it before, it's just tough to get to sometimes. Those two guys stepped up when we needed them. Tee (Higgins) on the third down — that was huge. We were staring down the barrel of another three-and-out at that point, and so they were doubling Ja'Marr (Chase), they were doubling T.B., and so Tee had the one-on-one against a great corner. He got him, he scored a touchdown, so that gave us a lot of momentum at that moment in the second quarter. Ja'Marr's was when we needed it — we just got the turnover, I believe, and we needed that big play to keep going. They were challenging us at that point, playing press-man, and that's where Ja'Marr steps up big on the go route. Then T.B., same thing, we need some momentum so he ran that little corner-post and made a big play. You can talk about those three guys, they deserve credit, but the offensive line did a heck of a job. Joe (Burrow) had time to make the throws that he needed to make versus a good defensive line — a good pressure team. I thought our guys answered the bell against Cover Zero, that was going to be big in this game, they play Zero as much as any team in the league. Our guys responded with Tee's big play on the second play of the game, and T.B. with the double-pass. We got multiple people that can throw on this team — Joe Mixon, T.B., who knows? We'll find out next who can throw the ball as well."

What were your thoughts on S Vonn Bell's two interceptions and LB Logan Wilson's third-down stop?

"Huge. Vonn's picks were big, and the return was even as big because it flipped the whole field there. He probably picked that ball off at the 15- or 10-yard line, so if he stays down where they touch him, that's a field position battle you're dealing with right there. I think we're up two or three (points) right there — maybe five; I can't remember — but that was big. He did a great job. And Logan Wilson on that third-and-one — I didn't see that full play, but I saw him get up there in the hole, make that big stop and drive them backwards. That's Logan. Those two guys came up big when their number was called. It could have been Vonn, Logan, Eli (Apple), Jessie (Bates III), Sam (Hubbard) — anybody on that defense steps up and makes plays, and we're not shocked by it. So, just thought they responded in the right way as a whole."

Why were Vonn Bell and Sam Hubbard captains?

"No, honestly. It's a scramble at the coin toss to figure out who I want to send out there."

How has Tee Higgins improved compared to last year?

"I just think they're really smart ballplayers, all of those guys. I think it's only continuing to improve, and it's taking them to an elite level. I think they do a great job with their communication to our staff — 'This guy's playing me like this.' It's unbelievable feedback. Not receivers shouting. It's, 'I can get this guy his.' Very unselfish. It can be anybody in any week that gets a lot of targets or doesn't, and those guys are so unselfish. I love those guys."

How did you feel about the atmosphere tonight?

"We've worked really hard to get to where we're at. People here want to support this team, they want to support a winner, and we owe it to them to be a winner. They're here for us. It shows up when you're watching cutups from a couple of years ago that, deservedly so, there weren't many people there. And now, we've come this far. We've earned it. We've put in the work to give this fanbase something to cheer about, and they've shown up and answered the bell as well. These primetime games are special, and we have a tremendous fanbase. I know our players and coaches appreciate that. (They're the) best fans. Where else would you rather be than Cincinnati, Ohio? I'd rather be here."

Can you describe the moment you had with your team after QB Tua Tagovailoa was injured?

"It's a heavy moment. He's a guy with tremendous character, and you hate to see that happen. It's a tough moment for everybody, especially them, then to take it to third-and-long, and you got to come out there and respond. I won't say that there's in-depth

conversations going on, but certainly thinking about Tua, and that's a horrible thing to see."

What does it say about your team's ability to thrive in big spots?

"These guys are championship caliber players. They're winners. They're not just talented guys that get by. They're talented guys whose work ethic matches their talent. They have the ability to reach their full potential. It's a team that I just love to coach."

What can you say about Jessie Bates' leadership?

"Jessie's A-plus. We have the best safety tandem in the league. I'd put our defense up against anybody's, to go that far. Vonn made those great plays that turned the game for us, and Jessie made some big tackles. You look at a lot of guys — last week when we played the Jets — (it was) Chido. I didn't give him a game ball after the game because I give them to guys with turnovers. He just didn't give up a completion, so at what point is a guy going to get a game ball when you just keep throwing at him and it's incomplete? So, we've got so many guys who maybe don't get the stat production, but their role is so critical to the success of others. They allow everybody else to get the credit, and it's just such a great unit as a whole."

How good was it to see TE Hayden Hurst succeed?

"Hayden brings a lot of energy to the unit. He feeds off that emotion. He had a couple plays. He had that one, he had a tough catch going toward our tunnel on a little play-action pass where we hit him on double coverage. He did a great job with that play. Then he caught that goal line pass. Hayden's been a great asset for us."

What do you attribute the secondary's success to?

"They're unselfish, great communicators. They're always making sure who's got the call. They do a great job. If you give up a play, just let it go and move on to the next play. You don't see guys dejected and pointing fingers. That's a sign of a great unit, is the lack of finger pointing. They pick each other up."

How important was that 57-yard field goal? Did you think twice with a new long snapper in there?

"Trust that unit. Don't think twice about Cal (Adomitis) — he's done a great job for us. It's a decision you've got to make. Just because a guy can make a 57-yarder, it doesn't mean it's 100 percent, and it flips the field position. Ultimately, he made us look good, but if it doesn't go our way, that's a significant field and momentum change. We put it on Evan (McPherson), and he came through for us."

What did Joe Burrow's confidence mean tonight?

"Joe was lights-out. He was seeing it really well, giving guys an opportunity. It's man coverage, you've got to beat man coverage and we've got the guys to do it. We had the protection to match it, we have a quarterback where that's what he wants to see — 'Give me man coverage, let me fit into tight windows and tough spots.' So, I'm proud of the way all those guys stepped up."

Why did you continue to call plays for a struggling running game?

"There's spots where you get jammed. Just another inch, and we're bursting through there. Sometimes, that's the way it goes early on. It's tough. But the dam's going to break, so you just don't want to give up on it. Even though I've got so much faith in our passing game, you can throw it every snap. At some point those guys need to come off the ball, get guys in the running game, help our play-action pass, help run a couple keepers. It even gives us a chance on T.B.'s play — that run action still helps us do some other things. Again, I've got confidence that we'll get going. Watch the tape, and you're not going to see a lot of runs show up against the Miami Dolphins in the first three weeks. It's just hard. That's maybe why Buffalo threw the ball as much as they did. It's a tough unit, a good front, they've been there awhile together."

What did you think of RB Joe Mixon's touchdown?

"Awesome. Just a great momentum boost for us at that moment, when you see the pile drive like that. Running with speed — that's big. Ripping that band-aid off and getting your first touchdown of the year is important. So I was happy for Joe that it was able to happen. He earned that one."

JOE BURROW **Quarterback**

How would you rate Tee Higgins' performance?

"It was unbelievable. Tee is just a guy that you know exactly what you're going to get every game. He's going to make plays, win one-on-ones, he's going to get open, he's going to block when you need to. He's just a great player."

What can you say about Hayden Hurst's performance today?

"He just keeps getting better and better. He's finding his role in the offense, understanding that sometimes it's going to be rib and chip. But he's going to get the ball in some situations. He's a big play guy, a fast-twitch tight end. There are not a lot of guys like that across the league, so we're lucky to have him."

How would you rate the offensive line?

"It was unbelievable. All day, the protection was awesome. I had so much time in the pocket to find the guys I need to find. They'll keep getting better and better the way they work in practice."

Does it feel like this team has the same DNA as last year's team?

"On offense we're finding our stride. The defense has been great all year. We're starting to click on all cylinders. There was a spell halfway through the game we didn't put points on the board, but I thought we responded well. We scored points when we needed to, and the defense did what it usually does."

What gave you confidence the team could flip the script?

"I know the guys we have in the locker room. But it's still a long season and we have a ways to go. It doesn't mean anything if we lost the next 13 games. We'll enjoy this win, enjoy the long weekend, and come back ready to work next week."

What was the difference with the explosive plays from the first half to the second?

"They started playing more man. They had a good plan, doubling Ja'Marr (Chase) a lot and changing their leverages up. Certain plays weren't working. They have good coaches. Our guys went and won one-on-ones, and we took our chances down the field."

The last deep ball to Chase, what did you see there?

"I was actually looking the safety off to throw to Tee, and I see Ja'Marr out of the corner of my eye wide open. I figured I'd throw it to him. I probably should have started on his side."

He said you left it a little short ...

"Yeah right."

What is it about this team that thrives in these "best on best situations"?

"I think we have guys that work really hard for these opportunities. Most night games we play well. I don't know what it is. You go into the game and don't have a lot of practice, time to overthink things. We have guys that step up in these kind of moments and we're lucky to have every single one of them."

How do you process what happened to Tua Tagovailoa? Do you have a message for him?

"It's always scary when somebody goes down like that. We play a dangerous game that we know something like that can happen at any time. It's always scary when it does. They told me he's flying with the team, so that's great news. Hopefully he has a speedy recovery. I'm going to text him after here. Hopefully he comes back fast."

In the second half they didn't blitz as much as they usually do. Did that surprise you?

"They didn't blitz as much in the second half. We had one zero on the first series of the game, and Tee made a great play. We didn't see any more after that. It's kind of what we expected. We knew we'd have to prove we had a plan against it. If not, it can turn into a 20 times zero blitz game. But the coaching staff did a great job putting the plan together to execute against that. We have good players that allow me to throw it up there and let them go get it."

Did you have to be patient with their coverage?

"They played a lot of man, so we took our shots. They mixed in some two-invert that made it tough, but I thought overall we did a good job."

What was the moment at the end like for you with the offensive line?

"Those guys work really hard to have a game like that. They took a lot of heat the first two weeks, but they're getting better and better. The protection was awesome today and that's how it will be going forward. We have a great coach that understands the players up front. We have nasty guys up front that want to get better and do a great job. The fact they had the game they had is exciting."

What did you see on Tee's touchdown?

"I had one-on-one, so I throw it up to Tee."

Is he getting smarter about identifying coverages?

"There were several times today we came off talking about certain leverages in coverages and the route he liked against it. There were two or three times we hit that route off what he said. When you have smart players like that that can talk about what they're seeing, and you can get to a play that isn't in the game plan, that's a recipe for success."

Can you elaborate on the offense hitting its stride?

"We're not turning the ball over. We're staying in front of the chains so we can check the ball down and move the chains slowly. That's why we got a lot of man in the second half, they were tired of us moving up and down the field. They decided to challenge us, and that's what you have to do against that soft zone coverage. The biggest part is not turning the ball over and staying in front of the chains."

What is about Hurst where he brings huge plays for such little numbers?

"He's getting better and better. He understands his role, does his job and makes his opportunities when they're presented. We're excited to have him."

Who has a better arm, Tyler Boyd or Joe Mixon?

"That was a pretty good through by Tyler Boyd. A whole shot? That was an impressive throw."

How can the offense get better from here?

"We have to be more consistent throughout the game. We sputtered a bit, but at no point did we feel like we were underperforming. We can always do better putting points on the board, moving the chains."

What do you make of the defense making plays like they did today?

"Those guys are unbelievable. They continue to make plays when we need them when we're not hitting on all cylinders. When you have a great defense like that, it gives you a lot of confidence you'll always be in the game."

Did you like the look of the white on white jerseys?

"Yeah, I did. The white towels were a nice touch in the stands. The towel waving was fun."

How was the stadium atmosphere? Was it like the playoffs?

"Anytime you play a night game at home, the energy is different. Playoff games get pretty intense but the energy was exciting. We fed off the fans."

Has the message changed at all, now that you're 2-2?

"No. We still have a lot of football to be played. These two wins don't matter if we go out and stink it up the next few games."

Did you look at these last two games together, as a pocket to recovery?

"Yes we did. That was one of the first things we said in the locker room. We had two games in 10 days to get that ugly taste out of our month. Then we have a long weekend to enjoy, get our bodies right, eat good food, watch some football, enjoy the weekend and come at it."

What's good food?

"Maybe a little Precinct, a little Sotto. We'll see."

What was the crowd atmosphere like after the turnovers?

"I almost had to go to a silence cadence for a second. They were fired up after those turnovers, that's for sure."

CHIDOBE AWUZIE

Cornerback

How did it feel to be able to go out and help lift the offense when they were having some struggles on their side of the ball early on in the game?

"The defense, we were able to get off the field and limit them to three points — it's a beautiful thing. Short term memory is always key for a corner, but when you have a defense like this that can stop (an offense) no matter what, as long as we get them down, it's a beautiful thing to be a part of."

Did the secondary get the last laugh after all the chirping and trash talk earlier in the week?

"Of course. The whole team — I'm not going to make it about one person or one group — but obviously, when we win, we're going to be laughing. We're going to be smiling. It was a short week and now we have a long week to prepare for the next team, and that's what we're going to do. We're going to celebrate a little bit and have a little bit of fun, but get right back to work."

Did you take a moment to take in the electric atmosphere tonight in the stands?

"Oh man — it was crazy. It was crazy because one of my old teammates is Byron Jones, and in the pre-game, he was like, 'Oh, I've never really been here (before) — let's see what the fans have (in store).' And I said, 'You're going to see.' They definitely brought the energy. It was a beautiful thing to be a part of."

Which one of Vonn Bell's interceptions was better?

"The first one. I'll say the first one, because we were in a certain coverage and he had over the top, and I had the fastest man in this game (Tyreek Hill). I looked back and I was like, 'OK, I feel kind of naked here' with no help in that certain call, and I saw Vonn just flash across my eyes and make a great play. It was like a big momentum shift for the game. That's what started it all — it was just a big momentum shift for the game. The second one was just as important as it gave us position to score again ... Vonn had a hell of a game, and it's a testament to all the time he puts in."

JA'MARR CHASE

Wide receiver

What do you think was key to you guys getting explosive plays going in the second half?

"Good question. Zac (Taylor) was making some good play calls in the second half. I think we adjusted really well to their coverages, and to how they were doubling me and leaving Tee (Higgins) open one-on-one with (Xavien) Howard. We just were executing up front and running the ball, and that opened up the passing game for us."

Do you feel you're going to be double-covered every game at this point?

"I have it in the back of my mind, (but) I never go into the game thinking I'm going to get doubled. I just have it in the back of my mind."

Overall, where do you feel like you can still improve from a passing standpoint?

"I guess just moving everyone around. I feel that will be good for us, too, because we didn't do a lot of moving around today with each other. I think we could have definitely done that and made some more moves, but the game plan worked real well. Tee had a hell of a game today, one-on-one, so I'll take that too."

How important was it for the defense to give you guys a chance to get on track? It seemed like they made a lot of big stops that helped you guys find your rhythm ...

"They did. We took the ball in this game first and scored, and we wanted our defense to play while we were ahead. They definitely kept answering the bell, and I think that's one way they answered the bell. They did their job — salute to the defense."

VONN BELL

Safety

What are your thoughts on how the defense, especially the secondary, played tonight?

"We kept feeding off one another — you (could) feel the energy. We trust one another, we believe in (each other), and we just kept going out there feeding off each other and making plays. The sky's the limit with this defense."

Do you trust your ball skills?

"Go back and check (my time) at Ohio State — you'll see a lot of interceptions. It's in my roots."

Defensively, it looked like you took Jaylen Waddle away from their offense. Hill had some plays, but you contained him for the most part. What was the secret?

"Just stay on top and keep everything in front (of us, with) me and Jessie (Bates III) just having great communication, pre snap and post snap. And knowing where their guys are at, with us having depth and playing off one another. (It was) just me and him reiterating the situation throughout the downs, (knowing) field position and giving indicators to the (other) defensive backs, and me and Jessie knowing where their guys are."

Which interception did you like best?

"The first one for sure. I went over top of (Tyreek) Hill."

TEE HIGGINS

Wide receiver

It didn't look like they blitzed a lot. Did they play more Cover-2 and deep-safety blitz on you guys? Did you have to make any adjustments in that area?

"We realized really early that they were doubling Tyler Boyd and (Ja'Marr) Chase and playing zero — man-to-man — with me with (Xavien) Howard, (who's) one of the best corners in the league. We talked on the sidelines that I was going to have to win (my matchup), and I delivered. It was a big game for me, and I delivered."

The team started minus-5 in the turnover department, and now you're plus-1. That's going to help win games, isn't it?

"Yeah, man. We preach that. We want our defense to go out there and get turnovers, turnovers, turnovers, and we preach on

offense, 'Don't turn the ball over.' Hold on to the ball and protect it. We were able to do that this week, and hopefully we can keep it going."

What does it feel like to knock of the last undefeated team in the AFC coming into tonight?

"Honestly, I didn't even know they were the last undefeated team in the AFC. Man, we just attack it 1-0 each week and we were able to do that this week."

HAYDEN HURST

Tight end

Can you talk about your responsibilities in the offense? You've become one of Burrow's prime targets it seems ...

"It started in training camp. All I do is I get in this playbook, I understand Joe's reads, where I need to be, just make myself available and make plays for him. I think he's starting to rely on me in those crunch-time situations on third down, and the more I can just make myself available and understand the playbook, it's going to create that chemistry."

Your first reception, you just kept churning and probably added another 10-15 yards to the catch. What drove you on that play?

"I don't know — it's just my mindset. I've been through a lot, and I've got a lot of pent-up aggression, if you will. And on Sundays — and I guess Thursdays, too — I just flip that switch and become a different person."



DOLPHINS POSTGAME QUOTES

SEPT. 29, 2022

MIAMI AT CINCINNATI

MIKE McDANIEL

Head coach

Initial comments ...

Can you talk about the status of QB Tua Tagovailoa?

"It was a scary moment. He was evaluated for a concussion and he's in the concussion protocol. He was at the hospital, I believe he's about to get discharged. That was an emotional moment. That is not part of the deal that anyone signs up for even though you know it's a possibility in football to have something that you have to get taken off in a stretcher. All of his teammates, myself, we're all very concerned. The best news that we could get is that everything is checked out, that he didn't have anything more serious than a concussion. He'll be flying back with us here on the plane."

Is it tough to get back into the game as players and coaches after a situation like that?

"For me, yeah, I think a lot of people struggled. I know me, personally, that if I didn't have a job to do for the organization and the rest of the players and I didn't have that obligation in my mind, I would've tapped. It's not something that is comfortable for anybody. It was not a situation that you want for any of your players or your team in general. That's some scary stuff. I'm just glad that it worked out."

Looking at the game, it was a tough time with your short-yardage running and you weren't able to punch the ball in when you had it down by the goal line. Could you have used one or two of those earlier in the game?

"Yeah, absolutely. When you lose games to very good teams, you can always point to that. We lost the turnover battle and we were kicking field goals as opposed to trying to score touchdowns. On top of that, we had some third downs including the third-and-one I think in the fourth quarter or third. There was situational football that we had been executing and we did not today. You don't get freebies or you don't get passes in games against good teams. So, the point of that is it only means anything if you can learn from it, if you can get better from it, and that's what I'm going to be challenging the guys to do because that's what will happen in games against good opponents if you don't take advantage of those opportunities. They win those situations and you lose, you'll lose the game."

What was the message to the team at halftime and what was the message after the game?

"The message was that if Tua had his way that he would be standing here watching us play and that we need to put forth an effort for him because one of our teammates and our brother has gone down. That was beyond what everyone else was trying to do. They had expectations to come in and play pretty well and they didn't, so I tried to refocus them as best I could with that message."

What led to the determination to allow QB Tua Tagovailoa to play tonight? What factored into determining he was healthy enough to play?

"What goes into every one of those decisions, that it starts with your medical staff but then there's independent specialists that look into it, too. There's an entire protocol and then you're talking to the player as well. There's probably five or six different layers of a process and decision-making like you do with all players."

What specifically throughout all the layers of the process gave you guys confidence to say you feel like QB Tua Tagovailoa is healthy enough to play?

"Him getting cleared by people. Your standard operating procedure with all players in every single game."

Can you express with 100 percent certainty that QB Tua Tagovailoa in last Sunday's game vs. Buffalo did not suffer a concussion or other head injury?

"Yeah, otherwise we would've reported him having a head injury. That's why the NFL has these protocols and there's, like every single NFL game that is played, an independent specialist that specializes in the specialty of brain matter. For me, as long as I'm coaching here, I'm not going to fudge that whole situation. If there's any sort of inclination that someone has a concussion, they go into concussion protocol and it's very strict. People don't vary or stray. We don't mess with that, never have, and as long as I'm the head coach that will never be an issue that you guys will have to worry about."

What allows him to be able to fly back on the team plane? Can you walk us through some of the things that he has to clear at the hospital to make sure that he is safe to fly?

"That's told to me. It's not me making that decision, it's more the medical professionals that are there with him at the time that deem him fit to leave. What goes into that, I wouldn't pretend to know. I just report the news."

When you saw QB Tua Tagovailoa go down and saw him on the field, can you explain what you saw?

"I saw him lay down. I saw that it looked like he had some stressers going on with the impact of the hit, and then once I got out to the field, I knew right away that this was at least a concussion. What I was worried about was other things on top of that. Obviously, I was very worried about his head, but you're wanting to make sure that all things with relation to the spine and back and all that stuff, you want to make sure that's okay. But it was very clear to me from the onset that he had, I didn't really know the degree of, but I knew he had a concussion. He was asking for me and then when he saw me, I could just tell it wasn't the same guy that I'm used to seeing."

When do you think the players shook off the injury and put it behind them, or did they?

"I think that was my hope just because I knew exactly the way Tua would feel, that he would want his guys to go take care of business. So, I would hope at least at halftime when I'm extending that message. I think they put it past them. They went out and fought. I think both sides of the ball and special teams didn't show any signs of just kind of being out of it. We just didn't make the plays that we needed to make and we were playing a good team that was taking advantage of the opportunities that we weren't. I think that I

feel confident that they put it behind them, but at that point in time you have to put it behind you but you also have to rise to the occasion and make some plays on both sides of the ball, and I think we just weren't very complementary like we had been in the previous weeks."

Can you talk about the frustration of losing a game in which you had opportunities and couldn't get over the hump?

"I think that is something that you don't want to run away from the frustration. I think that you have to experience this in some part to really go after all the little details that it takes to win NFL football games, so it's very frustrating. You feel like you missed an opportunity to play toe-to-toe with a very good team and potentially beat them, but that's the point. It's not supposed to be easy, and if you're wanting to play teams like this on stages like this, you can't do some of those things. Otherwise, you're going to end up on the short side of the stick. To me, it's incredibly frustrating with good reason, and that's part of what we do in professional football, and you do one of two things with it. You either use it to make you get better or you live with things that you can't change and get worse. Our plan is to learn from it and move forward. The only thing you can do really, to me, with losses is make them purposeful, and how do you make them purposeful? You have to be better from it than had you won the game. So, that's the way I'm going to approach it with the team and so far they haven't done anything but answer the bell whenever I've asked them. I feel confident that we can get that done."

Is there anything you feel like in hindsight you should've done or could've done differently after QB Tua Tagovailoa went down the first time?

"Absolutely not, absolutely not. If I would have, that would be irresponsible in the first place. I shouldn't be in this position."

Given the manner of how QB Tua Tagovailoa went down similarly to how he went down last week, do you feel confident that you got the correct diagnosis the first time and that it was indeed a back issue initially?

"Yeah, absolutely. I don't think that an injury from last week made him fall the same way this week. But yeah, I do not have any, absolutely zero patience for or will ever put a player in position for them to be in harm's way. That is not what I'm about at all, and no outcome of a game would ever influence me being irresponsible as the head coach of the football team."

What was the reaction you saw from the players when they saw QB Tua Tagovailoa go down?

"I got out there pretty quick. I did notice some guys around that were pretty worried about it. I'll tell you this much, if you guys or people are ever curious or question if Tua is the leader of the team, I think you found out pretty quick. It was a gut punch to a lot of people and I'm just very, very happy that it wasn't anything more. I'm very happy with that and I just want to get him healthy and right for himself and for the football team whenever that is."

You mentioned an interaction with him on the field, so he was responsive at that point?

"Yeah, he was. When I got out there, which was pretty quick, he was conscious. I could just tell by what we were communicating and how he was talking to me that he was in the midst of a concussion, for sure. I'm no medical expert, but it was pretty obvious to me that he was just trying to grasp what was going on, what had just happened. There was a little of that foggy nature to it."

Do you feel like when something like this happens in a game to a player you are close with that it could have a long-term effect on you personally?

"I wouldn't say that. I'll never be comfortable with it, it's just not my personality and I'm pretty emotionally invested in these guys. It's also a part of the game. It's not something that goes away, but it's not something that's in the forefront of my mind. I don't think it's something I'd ever get comfortable with, but you know that it is an unfortunate part of the game. If I didn't have so many other people depending on me to do my job, maybe it would be hard to get over but I don't really have that option with regards to the responsibility that I feel to the Miami Dolphins organization and the fan base."

TEDDY BRIDGEWATER

Quarterback

Initial comments ...

"Tough loss tonight, man. It was tough walking away from a game like tonight, especially given the circumstances. Obviously, seeing Tua (Tagovailoa), and hearing the news from Coach about Tua, we're looking forward to just seeing him, and flying back home, and using these next few days to learn and grow from these first four games."

What was the sideline like after Tua Tagovailoa went down?

"Initially it was complete silence, because our first concern is Tua. At the end of the day, football, it's a game, but we're human beings outside of this game, and we all have feelings. In that moment, I think you saw how everyone felt about Tua. He's a captain on this team, and a leader, and guys have so much respect for him. The silence was just guys showing their concern, and it was great to see our team doctors doing a great job handling the situation — the trainers and everyone just responding."

How tough is it seeing your starting quarterback go down, and going through all those emotions, but still having to go in and play?

"For me personally, there was a lot going through my mind, honestly. Given that against the same team I was carted off the field, so a lot was going through my mind, but I knew I just had to snap, and try and lead this team to a victory. So many guys were counting on, not only myself, but us to go out there and finish that game, and try to get a win, and ultimately we came up short."

What did you see from Tua throughout the week as he got ready for this game?

"Honestly, he's been working with the trainers, and they've been doing whatever they've been doing. It's been a short week, so we really just had to focus on the game plan and things like that. Whatever he's been doing with the trainers, that's between them, because it's a short week. Guys have been locked in on the game plan, and wanted to go out and execute at a high level."

So you didn't have a ton of interaction with him throughout the week?

"We traveled yesterday, so it's pretty much been one day, and I don't really know Monday and Tuesday. The trainers have a job, I have a job to get ready to play on Thursday, and that's what it was."

What happened on the interception in the fourth quarter?

"It was a hot situation. I just tried to get the ball out to beat the defender. I didn't get what I wanted on it — tried to throw it right at Mike (Gesicki) — and it just sailed a little bit. It was tough, especially that it was Vonn Bell too — former teammate in New Orleans — he'll talk some stuff. It was just tough, man. We're fighting and battling to the end trying to come away with a victory. Guys are sacrificing so much in that situation, and we came up short. But it's a learning situation for me, for the team, there are so many things that happened throughout the game that we'll be able to learn from."

What was the reaction in the locker room when you all found out Tua was going to be on the plane ride back with you?

“Man, it was a good feeling. You could see guys’ spirits lifted, and that was some great news, especially after the result of the game. Yeah, it was just some great news, man.”

How hard is it to play the game after something like that happens?

“It can be tough. This game alone is tough, and the things that occur throughout the course of the game that happens, especially something like that tonight. It can put you on eggshells, or be mentally stable, and you’ve got a job to do. That was my mindset. Like I said, first I was like, ‘Man...’ but there were a ton of men on that sideline that were depending on me to go out and compete.”

You talked about that game in December in Denver. That struck you right away — kind of the irony right there that it was you not too long ago?

“Yeah, it definitely did. And that’s why I kind of stayed back a little bit, and just tried not to go back to December, and just really lock in on what was really in front of me.”

When you’re being carted off, are your thoughts with you and what’s going on with you, or are you thinking about the team and what’s going on after you leave?

“I can’t answer that, because I don’t remember anything until I woke up in the hospital.”

You didn’t wake up until you got to the hospital?

“They said I woke up in the back of the truck, but I didn’t remember anything until I got the CT Scan and MRI.”

How scary is that to not have a memory and blacking out essentially?

“It’s very scary. You hear people say injury is a part of the game. That’s the part of the game that sucks. It’s fun to compete, it’s fun to score touchdowns and make plays, but it’s that one side of the game that really sucks, and it’s unfortunate. For me, I just think about my son. And one day he’s going to be old enough to use Google, and he’s going to Google his dad, and he might see his dad getting carted off on the field, or his dad had a concussion. All those things play in your head. You really don’t think about that until you have children, I guess, but it’s just tough, man.”

Did you look up and watch the replay of Tua going down?

“No, I didn’t. I saw him down there, and I just started throwing the football with Mike Gesicki. I was just processing everything, because I knew that at the end of the day, no matter what, I had to go out there and compete. No matter what was going through my mind, no matter how I was feeling, I just had to go out there and compete. It was good just being back out there.”

What did you think of the hit itself on Tua?

“I’ll have to watch it on the tape. I think I might’ve been looking down the field, and I didn’t really see it. I’ll watch it on tape, but really I don’t want to watch it on tape. Hopefully we can fast forward or cut it out of the system.”

**RAHEEM MOSTERT
Running back****What were your thoughts on Tua Tagovailoa’s injury?**

“We have all the time in the world to try to reconcile what’s going on. I pray he’s doing good. We just have to play smart and go from there.”

Is it your understanding he’s going to fly home with the team tonight?

“It’s my understanding, but we’ll see. I don’t know if he’s gotten out of the hospital just yet. Mike (McDaniel) just told us that he’s doing OK. That’s the first thing we’ve got to think about.”

How difficult is it to continue playing after a situation like that?

“We played hard. We just didn’t put ourselves in that position especially at the end. We have to understand that when it comes down to those critical moments that we are the team that can get the job done in the end part. We need to start out a little bit better and then go from there. We’re definitely going to watch the film and be critical of it. We left a lot of stuff out there that shouldn’t have happened, but that’s the game.”

**CONNER WILLIAMS
Center****What were your emotions when seeing what happened with Tua Tagovailoa?**

“He’s our heart. There’s a lot of emotions inside just going through it and rallying together and playing for him at the end of the day, so we did what we could.”

What’s the impact when something like that happens?

“Definitely with a guy like Tua, your heart’s with him. It’s just devastated. Like I said, it’s our jobs to rally and rally for him, so at the end of the day we just didn’t execute enough.”

The good news is he’s going to be able to fly back with you guys ...

“Yeah, that will be very nice to see him and make sure he’s OK.”

You’re 3-1 after four games, so still off to a good start ...

“I think we have sky-is-the-limit potential. We just have to keep bringing it together.”

**JAYLEN WADDLE
Wide Receiver****Did you get a chance to say something to Tua Tagovailoa while he was down on the field?**

“I wasn’t able to. A lot of doctors were checking up on him so I wasn’t able to.”

How were you guys able to switch the emotions and still try to finish the game after seeing what happened?

“Obviously it’s on your mind, going out there playing. You want to go out there and compete for him going down the way he did.”

How tough was it to see something like that happen?

"It's tough. Injuries are sadly part of the game. To see your captain go down, it's definitely tough. But we went out there and tried to compete for him."

TYREEK HILL

Wide Receiver

As a leader on this team, how are you going to keep it together?

"It's really going to be easy. I know a lot of people are going to look at this team and say this is a young team, but my main message to the offense and my main message to this whole team is — and we've got a few veterans on this team who have had experiences like this — is let's continue to keep doing what we've been doing. A lot of people were waiting on the Miami Dolphins to lose a game, so we need to continue doing what we've been doing and having fun with the game we love."

DUKE RILEY

Linebacker

How would you address where the team is after four games?

"It's how we're working, the things we've been through as a team, overcoming a lot of tough situations. We've got a long weekend to get our bodies back together, get back to the drawing board and come back out next week and play hard and do what we do. There's a lot of things that we want to watch and get better. It's the NFL and it's never going to be perfect. We're just going to move on and move forward."

It's the first loss of the season after a 3-0 start. Thoughts on that?

"It wasn't a win like we wanted, to go into the weekend 4-0 like we wanted, but there's a lot of ball left. We just want to continue to improve and play for each other."