



## BENGALS POSTGAME QUOTES

AUG. 27, 2022

LOS ANGELES RAMS AT CINCINNATI

### ZAC TAYLOR

#### Head coach

#### Initial comments ...

#### How does it feel to be done with the preseason and moving on to the regular season?

"We got really good work in and a great chance to evaluate these guys that are fighting for every spot. I thought some guys showed real well tonight so it will be fun to evaluate that tomorrow and make some tough decisions and then for the Pittsburgh Steelers."

#### Is Cordell Volson entrenched as the starter at left guard?

"This was Jackson's (Carman) opportunity. He had missed a couple days. He didn't get to play last week, so we thought we gave him a great opportunity to show himself today."

#### What did you think of Jake Browning tonight?

"I thought he did a nice job. He did a great job moving us down the field, especially there at the end of the game when it got tight. They scored to pull within three and we threw the ball every play, and he made plenty of plays. He scrambled around and made some plays with his feet, made some plays on the move, threw on time, so I thought it was well done by Jake."

#### Is Brandon Allen the backup or is there competition there?

"Those guys have competed all of training camp, you know. We've got a lot of confidence in Brandon. He's got years in the system. He does a real good job operating our team. I think those guys have both done a nice job and done what we needed them to do."

#### What do you make of the punter competition after tonight?

"We just talk through it. We've got to make those decisions before our next practice. We'll talk through it and come to a conclusion."

#### What do guys like Trayvon Henderson and Trenton Irwin mean that have been around a long time?

"Guys that love ball, guys that want to be what we're about. They're good guys in this locker room that work their tails off. They're here a lot. You always see those guys in the locker room and in the gym. It's important to them and you like being around guys like that."

#### Was it good to see Kwamie Lassiter II respond after the dropped punt?

"Kwamie's had a nice camp. He's stepped up two weeks in a row in his games and that's really good to see."

#### You had the reserves out there tonight and they were forcing fumbles, recovering two. What does that say?

"That shows that it's seeped into our defensive culture, how important it is to get the ball out. The coaches do a really good job of overemphasizing that. The players do a good job working in practice all the way from the Vonn Bell's of the world all the way down. You hear it from the guys on our sideline tonight as guys got guys wrapped up and had an opportunity to do that, so it's something we've really improved on over the years and we've got to continue to be really good at it."

#### What was the team unhappy about that forced the 15-yard penalty in the fourth quarter?

"I'm not sure."

#### What are your thoughts on the crowds for the two preseason games and what it says about this fan base?

"I thought the crowd tonight was outstanding. I did not expect to see that many people in the crowd for the last preseason game. As we all know, there's plenty of great things to do in Cincinnati and they chose to come here tonight to watch us play. That means a lot to us and it's appreciated. Just goes to show the generally feeling amongst our fan base right now. They're pretty amped up to see this team play, so we've got to make them proud."

#### Is it safe to say handing out game balls at bars pays off?

"I think winning pays off."

#### Why were the five captains all Cincinnati natives?

"We're fortunate to have such great high school football here in the state of Ohio. Great tremendous, tremendous college football in the state of Ohio, so those guys have represented us well. It's not like we seek out and let's go sign three local Cincinnati guys to be on our roster. We don't go about it that way. They've earned the right to be here and there happened to be five of them on this team. There was six with Drew Plitt last week. We're proud of the football culture we have here in the state and thought those guys represented us well at the coin toss."

#### The touchdown pass was also caught by Justin Rigg, a Springboro, Ohio native.

"Right. He (Justin Rigg) has done a nice job, too, and so it was good to see him rewarded there with that touchdown catch."

#### How satisfied are you with the depth overall?

"We owe it to our guys to give them the best opportunity to show themselves. They've come in here and worked hard for us, and we like to reward them and put them in good position to earn time here or somewhere else. Our guys have been provided with plenty of opportunity, everybody who's here — all 80 guys to have an opportunity to put their best foot forward and we're proud of the guys that

have been with us the entire time.”

**When you went back to watch the film on Cordell Volson, what do you see?**

“I see steady improvement. He’s consistent. We know what we’re getting out of him. It’s real important to him. Again, we’ve seen steady improvement from him over the course of training camp.”

**What are your thoughts on how Zach Carter fits into this defense?**

“I thought Zach has made some plays for us. He’s got the right mentality. He’s played a lot of snaps in these preseason games. None of our defensive tackles play that many snaps in a real game. I think it has been a really good experience for him, and I think it’s going to serve him well when he plays a role for us this upcoming year. I think he’s got the right stuff, and that’s good to see.”

**How do you quantify how much football matters with Cordell Volson?**

“He’s hungry. He’s always asking for meeting time and asking good questions to the vets, so you can just tell when a guy’s got a great mentality like that. He’s a multi-time national champion. He comes from a winning culture, winning program. You can just tell he exudes that as you’re around him.”

**Did you have any conversations after the game with Rams head coach Sean McVay about what happened at Thursday’s practice?**

“We put it behind us. We went to dinner the next night —that night actually. We’ve got a great relationship with that coaching staff. It was good to see a lot of those guys.”

**Decisions need to be made for the practice squad. Are you thinking about that that as you look at the roster?**

“Of course. There’s always guys that you’re trying to do the math on what you’re going to keep and what position depth is important. I like that we’ve got 16 guys now — that’s helpful. You can fill a lot of needs there. Again, we have tough decisions to be made. You can’t keep everybody that’s been on the roster. You certainly consider that over the last week and a half that would be good development players.”

**How much does it factor in that someone might be claimed when making decisions or can you not worry about what might happen?**

“You weigh everything. That’s part of the decision-making process. Sometimes that comes up in a year, and sometimes it doesn’t. We’ll start having those conversions over the next 48 hours.”

**What has Dax Hill shown you throughout the preseason and training camp?**

“He’s really hit the ground running and started to play fast. Early on in the process you could see a guy that was trying to get a grasp on the system, but these last couple weeks he’s played really fast which is a tremendous trait of his. He’s got really good speed, quickness, and so those are some of the things that have really shown off. You like to see a guy play to his strengths and as camp gets rolling he gets more comfortable in the system. So now it’s about plugging him into the system as Jessie (Bates) is coming in and playing every snap as the free safety, finding the right role for him. I know that we’ll be able to do that.”

**You have two weeks until the opener. What does this week look like?**

“You handle personnel stuff early in the week and then you get a chance to spend a couple days, not just focusing on the next opponent but focusing on some things to get our guys not in shape, but more playing situations. Let’s have some longer drives now and get these guys ready to go for a game in a week and a half. Then you start to turn your attention to the opponent. You can spend too much time on a team — you can overdo it. It’s a team that we’re familiar with, they’re familiar with us. There’s always tweaks and changes on both sides, but we’ll get a chance to start that process this week.”

**Does La’el Collins need more time to gel with the offensive line?**

“He’s going to need every rep he can get so these practices this week will be important to him. I don’t care how long you’ve been around, him and Jessie (Bates) both, you know, just getting out there and playing football with their teammates and all that brings to it. It’s difficult to simulate that when you’re doing rehab work or you’re away. Both of those guys are pros, they’ve handled themselves the right way and I have no doubt they’ll be ready to go in a week and a half and when we’re getting ready for Pittsburgh.”

**Did you have to remove the roster exemption for Jessie Bates?**

“No, he didn’t suit up tonight.”

**You’ve had a chance to see the offensive line in practice. What do you make of it?**

“I think they’ve made good progress as a unit. You find out a lot more as really kick the season off and get these games under way. It’s a long season. Sometimes we’ll hit the ground running on Week 1 and be where we want to be and just try to keep improving on that, and other times you need some games to sort it out and find your strengths and weaknesses and play to that. I’m just excited to see what this team is about as we get to Week 1.”

**TRENTON IRWIN**

**Wide receiver**

**It was a good day for the wide receivers, wasn’t it?**

“We have a very good, young receiving corps here, and they’re a bunch of good dudes, too. We really ate ’em up there, (QB Jake Browning) was diming it up, so everything came together and they couldn’t find a way to stop up. I’m just happy to be out there with the dudes.”

**Was the offense feeding off of the defense’s success?**

“Yeah, when they were shutting them out and they weren’t getting any yards, we knew we could just play our game. We didn’t have to force anything, we didn’t have to be anything other than ourselves, and we were able to do that every down and have some fun with it.”

**Have you gotten everything out of training camp and the preseason that you wanted?**

“Training camp is a lot of learning. (WRs coach Troy Walters) always says that if you’re not going into practice trying to get better at something, then you need to go do something else because you have to get better every single day. I think we learned a lot and had a lot of growth all around. It’s good to get a win with the guys.”

### **What was it like practicing against the Rams?**

"When you go against your own team for so long, it's good to go against someone else — see some other coverages, some people who don't know a lot of our concepts and checks. It was good to go against some fresh competition there. It got a little bit chippy. That was expected after the Super Bowl. But this game is a physical game, and I think everyone came out of that incident healthy which is a blessing and we got to get on the field and have some fun with it."

### **CLAY JOHNSTON**

#### **Linebacker**

#### **How long did it take you to recover from that 20-tackle performance last week?**

"I feel like I'm still recovering, honestly. I was sore, especially because we had those two joint practices, so I felt like I was recovering throughout the whole week. But, I feel good, just thankful that we got a win this preseason. It fired me up."

#### **How hard has the last week been mentally and physically?**

"That was difficult. I hate to sound soft, but I went and got an IV somewhere, just trying to get in the baths and soak up. It was good, it's been six days. During those two joint practices, they said the (first-team players) were going to be going a lot, and they were, but the (second-team players) were going just as much as them. It was good to go against them — we saw their looks in practice this week, so we felt confident. We were still working in different personnel packages. We had three linebackers in the second half instead of the nickel."

#### **How did you feel the defense played?**

"I thought the defense played fairly well, honestly. I wish we could have denied that deep ball toward the end when they ended up scoring. But, we rallied and finished it off the right way."

### **DRUE CHRISMAN**

#### **Punter**

#### **Do you feel like you've done enough to win the punter job?**

"It's a tough question. I think if you look at the statistics, it's pretty much a dead heat at this point. At the end of the day, I wasn't really competing against (P Kevin Huber), I was just trying to be the best punter I could be, so we'll see what (special teams coordinator Darrin Simmons) thinks and see how that goes in the next couple of days."

#### **How much do you think your holding has improved since last year, and how have you improved it?**

"A lot more reps. I probably spent more time holding this summer than I did actually punting. It's like anything coming from college to the next level — there are always certain things you can get better at. Especially learning from Kevin — he's one of the best to do it. Learning under everything he does, especially with the success they had on field goal, I think that helped me a lot. I understood what was expected of me at this level, and I think I've improved like night and day."

#### **If you don't win the punting job, do you think you put enough on tape to get an opportunity elsewhere?**

"I think both of us put enough on tape to where, whatever happens here, one of us are most likely getting a call in the next couple days to have a chance to compete somewhere else, if not a starting job. I think both of us would feel pretty confident about that."

#### **What would it mean for you to be the punter for this team?**

"Oh my gosh, it's indescribable. I was looking out at the stands today and I saw high school friends, and people that work at my dad's store who came to the stadium. Obviously my family — they had a whole row to themselves. It would mean a lot to be able to stay home and be local, and I think it would mean a lot to my family as well."

### **ZACH CARTER**

#### **Defensive tackle**

#### **How much confidence do you gain from the defense's ability to make game-changing plays?**

"I feel like it gives us a lot of confidence. We had guys flying around tonight. We talked about it as a group before the game — it's the last preseason game, but whenever you chop it up, it's time to go. I feel like the guys did a great job tonight flying around and creating turnovers all night."

#### **How much do you want to be a part of the D-Line's depth?**

"I want to be a part of it bad. All camp, I've been working, fighting with the guys. We've been grinding. I'm just trying to help the team get better, honestly."

#### **Does this preseason win help carry some kind of motivation into the season?**

"Definitely. Winning is always a confidence builder. Especially the confidence that the defense played with — it's a lot of young guys on the field but I feel like we showed a lot of promise tonight. The overall effort — guys flying around, stripping balls, turnovers all night. It was a great effort."

#### **How does it feel to come back to the sideline after a big play?**

"It's a good feeling. I practice with these guys every day, and guys are helping me every day with my technique. When I finally accomplish it and all my guys are dapping me up, it's a great feeling."

#### **Do you feel good about your tape?**

"I feel good about it but I'm not satisfied at all. I feel like I'm just scratching the surface, honestly. There's another level that I can definitely get to, and I just continue to stack days on days and keep getting better."



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### **SEAN McVAY**

#### **Head coach**

##### **Initial comments ...**

"First of all, I'm really just proud of this group — appreciative of all these guys and the way that they've worked day in and day out. We've got a lot of tough decisions down the line over the next couple of days, but (we're) really grateful. It was great to see a lot of guys come out here and do some good things. (There were) good learning opportunities for us this week against an excellent football team. We got a lot of good work in and we're grateful for that. I'm sure you guys will wonder about the situation that occurred like we had talked about. We've handled that in-house. I do trust that if something like that occurs again in terms of if there is a fight or whatever, that those situations that played out won't be a factor, because I have such trust in our players, and they understand. Aaron (Donald) understands that that was something that we were fortunate nobody got injured, and for that I'm very grateful."

##### **Was there any discipline involved?**

"We're going to keep all that stuff in-house like we talked about, so hopefully you respect that."

##### **So there was discipline for the incident in practice?**

"I talked to Aaron (Donald), we've dealt with it in-house. Yes."

##### **Did the plan to get RB Kyren Williams some in-game work change?**

"Yeah, he did really well this week. I thought he got a bunch of good work in, and then you kind of just weigh the risk/reward, and he's a guy we anticipate having a big role for us. He's mature beyond his years. He's going to be a part of this game plan moving toward the Bills, and so we just felt like that was the right decision. You always kind of go back and forth, but that was just kind of what we felt like was best ultimately."

##### **Will WR Lance McCutcheon make the roster?**

"I think that he has definitely put himself in consideration. I think he has played three really good preseason games. He has caught the ball incredibly well; he has separated. We've talked about how he has got to make sure he does a great job of contributing on special teams if he's going to have a role because of the depth of our receiver room, but he is certainly a guy that has earned that consideration. We really like Lance McCutcheon."

##### **What was the situation with QB John Wolford tonight and what's his prognosis moving forward?**

"The thumb injury that he had sustained, he was having to change and alter the way he was delivering the ball. It was another good opportunity for Bryce (Perkins) to come out here and shine. He is a fun guy to watch, but it's really day-to-day because it's not anything that's like a ligament or a bone or anything. It's just working through that threshold, which that can be a tricky thing with your throwing hand. If it was a different situation and circumstance, he probably could've pushed through it, but I thought it was a good opportunity for Bryce to be able to continue to shine, and do a great job for our team. He is fun to watch out there."

##### **In addition to WR Lance McCutcheon, where is QB Bryce Perkins at in terms of securing a roster spot?**

"I think it's the same dialogue and discussion. Both those guys have done a great job. You'd be hard-pressed to think that they haven't done what they could to earn that. Love both those guys."

##### **What do you think about LB Chris Garrett's performance?**

"I thought he did a great job. You felt his presence on a handful of plays. He obviously does a nice job when he's able to go at the quarterback, but he did a nice job in the tight red area peeling when they ended up releasing the back that led to us having a stop after we gave up the big play earlier in the game, so we'll look at the film but some of the things that I just saw kind of off the cuff, I was pleased with Chris."

##### **What were your thoughts on OLB Keir Thomas II?**

"Keir was awesome. He's heavy at the point of attack in the run game, and he made some plays in the pass game. You could feel on one of our pressures where he was sticking inside. He is heavy at contact. He's got a great demeanor. I like being around him. Also, Jake Hummel ended up breaking the Rams' preseason record tonight for 21 tackles. He's been active throughout all three games. Like we've talked about, this approach is different than a lot of the other teams, but what I think is really cool that you can see is these younger players get better with this game experience. You've watched the ascension of Lance McCutcheon, Jake Hummel, you're mentioning Keir Thomas, and that's where it's really beneficial to get full speed reps and evaluations. I like the way that (Jake) Funk and (Trey) Ragas were running, and it's great learning. Obviously we can't put the ball on the ground. Those are second-effort runs. We've got to get that off-hand cover in there. They did a good job attacking at it, and I thought that was really the difference in the game, those two turnovers. They didn't turn the ball over at all, and that's ultimately what usually leads to winning and losing in this league."

##### **With regard to DB Robert Rochell and TE Brycen Hopkins, is it the same conversation as RB Kyren Williams?**

"It is, absolutely. We felt like it was a good chance to continue to evaluate some of the other guys. Rochell wasn't totally full speed, he's working through some soft tissue stuff, so he could go but didn't want to push it. Brycen, obviously he is clearly our No. 2 tight end, so we want to be able to get a chance to evaluate those younger guys tonight."

##### **Do you anticipate that RB Cam Akers and RB Darrell Henderson Jr. will be back practicing when you guys return from the break?**

"I do. Darrell definitely will. Darrell was able to run full speed today. We were able to get a workout in on the grass. Cam wasn't

able to do that quite yet, but I'm really excited about getting Darrell back out there for us."

**JAKE HUMMEL**  
**Inside linebacker**

**What do you think you did to secure a roster spot?**

"Obviously, just coming with the reps in practice, I was able to get a decent amount of reps in the summer and the fall, which allowed for me to prepare for some of these games. Also, just the guys in front of me doing their jobs allows me to get a clear fit to the ball. That also helps — making the fits a little more clear, and finding my way to the ball myself. It was a collective effort as it should be. The linebackers were stepping up and filling the hole."

**What will it be like waiting until Tuesday to hear if you made the team?**

"I left it all out there. Everything I could've done, I felt like I've done. I gave my 100 percent effort and I've got to just let the cards lay where they are and see what happens."