



BENGALS POSTGAME QUOTES

NOV. 25, 2018

CLEVELAND AT CINCINNATI

MARVIN LEWIS

Head coach

Initial Comments ...

"Obviously, we didn't start the football game off well enough. We let them go down and score the first drive like that. We had some things going on offense, and we don't finish it off. And then again, we end up getting the ball back again and scoring, and then unfortunately we have the turnover. That's about all I remember at this point here. We've got to settle down and just do our jobs. That's disappointing, no question about it. Just settle down and do our jobs. The plays are there, everyone's just got to make them. Defensively, we've just got to settle down and execute and do our jobs. We're really struggling with that."

Why do you think the team is struggling to do that and making mental errors?

"We're just pressing to make plays instead of just relaxing and (doing) your job. We relaxed more and did a better job of that defensively in the second half, and things are going to come to you. They went four wide receivers and we were a little off balance there for a bit — then we fixed it, and we're good. We've got to just understand that things are going to happen in the game that are going to be a little different. We've got to make the adjustment and then play to it."

What about the mental errors, like the false starts on the last few drives?

"Again, I can't tell you what happened in that area. The communication — whether it was the center or whether it was the line, I don't know. I can't help you with that. That's the point. It was huge. Billy's (Price) got to wait for the signal — we've got to get it from the quarterback — and we've all got to be on the same page, no question. We can't have (those mistakes) in the critical moments. Those are the things that we did very well to open the season. We didn't have those things, and today we had too many."

Did you have an issue with effort from the team in the first half?

"No. I did not have any issue with that."

Is there any concern that Andy Dalton's injury is serious, and might cause him to miss the rest of the season?

"On first look and everything, it's not. But they're going to do some further tests."

Did he have an MRI during the game?

"He's had some scans. But again, they're going to continue to look."

Why do you think you've had to come in here week after week and say the same thing about what went wrong?

"It's three weeks in a row. It's unfortunate, so that's the bad thing."

Is the slow start a preparation issue, or a discipline issue?

"I think I said it about three or four times over — it's not. Our guys just need to relax and do their jobs. Just execute your assignment."

The season's not over. Are there any adjustments that you can make, and are they more difficult to make at this point of the season than they are earlier?

"We've got to bear down. We've just got to bear down and relax. We don't have to press. We've just got to bear down and relax and get it done. I've got to do my job. I've got to do a better job. I've got to prepare them better. They've got to go out, and they've got to execute their jobs better. Okay? It rests squarely on me."

Did Billy Price say anything about what happened on the snap that got away?

"No. I haven't talked to Billy."

Was that pretty much when the game got out of hand?

"Well, we don't want to give up the score there right at the start of the third quarter."

Is it possible to get a team to stop pressing and relax when they realize the season is basically on the line?

"We've got to right the ship. We will."

You said they came out with four wide receivers ...

"Four wide receivers in the first half, and the defense had adjust to it. We talk about it on the sideline, and then just execute. It doesn't matter if it's a wide receiver, back or tight end, we've just got to execute things."

If the team can't relax at home against an opponent it has been traditionally pretty good against, when might it relax?

"I don't know that the opponent matters. You've just got to do your job. Whether you're on the road, whether you're at home, they're playing football. It's just the execution of football time and time again."

Does something like that fall on the team leaders and captains?

"It falls on everyone. This is not the time for them or anybody to point fingers at this or that. It's time to self-correct and get it done correctly."

Do you have an update on Tony McRae's injury?

"Things were positive at this point."

JEFF DRISKEL

Quarterback

What were you thinking when Andy goes down and you had to go in? And what about when you got into the huddle?

"You never want to see anyone go down. Unfortunately, that's part of the game. I was ready to go. I've been ready all year long. I told those guys, 'Hey, we're going to come back and win this game.' They had full confidence in me and, on our sideline, everyone had the mentality that we were going to come back and win that game."

Do you think you were able to create a spark when you came in? If so, was there any reason behind that?

"When I came in, we went three-and-out, and that's not any way you want to start. The defense did a good job getting the ball back to us the whole second half, really. We got some things going there, and had a couple long drives we were able to cap off with touchdowns. Unfortunately we just came up short there at the end, but I thought we competed. We've just got to make a few more plays."

Andy isn't a quarterback that gets injured all that much. How difficult is it to be ready? How surprised were you when they said, 'Hey, Andy's gone. Get in there'?

"It's a challenge. At the end of the day, that's my job to be prepared if Andy goes down. That's what I've been doing since I've been here. For the past three years, I've been preparing and making sure that when it's time to get in there, I'm ready to go and give our team a chance to win."

After a 4-1 start, this team has lost five of the last six games. What do you say to fans that might have lost hope of making playoffs?

"We're definitely not out of it. We have five more games, and we have to come out and win those games. We've put ourselves behind a little bit, but we still have five more games to go out and compete. Like I said, we thought we were going to come back and win this game. We think we're going to win the rest of our games this year and give ourselves a chance at the end of the year."

On that final drive with a couple false starts, were you guys out of sync or trying to go too fast? Was it a miscommunication?

"Definitely miscommunication, and that's something I have to get cleaned up. I haven't had many reps with those guys, and whether it's the way I'm telling them the snap count or just my tempo with the snap count, I've got to get that cleaned up. It definitely hurt us today, but that's something I'll get cleaned up and something I've got to be aware of."

Marvin Lewis was understandably exasperated with the slow start. What do you attribute that to?

"I'm not sure. I thought we had a good week of practice, and I thought we were ready to go. Our guys were ready to play. For whatever reason, we came out and we didn't execute. They got a big jump on us, but we weren't hanging our heads on the sideline and we were competing the whole four quarters. I don't have an answer for that."

How would you characterize the difference between Andy's setup and when you come in. And how does that change the offensive attack?

"I don't think that changes. The game plan was the game plan for Andy (Dalton), and we went off the same sheet for myself. I've just got to be able to execute at the same level as him. In the NFL, it's the next guy up, and that's for every position. You've got to be able to go in there and execute the game plan. That's what we've been working on all week, that's what I've been studying, and that's what I was ready to go in and do. I don't think it changes at all."

Weren't there more designed runs?

"We didn't have any today."

In developing that game plan, how much input do you guys specifically, as quarterbacks, have with the coaches? Do they seek your input?

"I think so. We're working together to get the best plan together and give ourselves the best chance to win. It's definitely a back-and-forth. It's an open dialogue, and they want some input. What we're most comfortable with is what they're going to call. We're definitely on the same page there."

Is there any difference in planning for the last half of the season, as opposed to the beginning? Is it harder or easier to institute changes and put in new wrinkles at this particular point?

"Every week is different, just because the defenses we're seeing are so much different week in and week out. We always have those plays we've been working on since training camp, and those are going to be the type of plays we hang our hats on. In the NFL, you have to be able to adjust, and you have to be able to install plays on a week-to-week basis so they can't know your tendencies and know what's coming."

You haven't been in there that much, but from the outside looking in, this game looked like it was above and beyond the chippiness a normal NFL game would have. Did you notice that, and what kind of reaction did you have to some of the stuff going on out there?

"It's definitely a rivalry we have going. Yeah, there's going to be chippiness. There's guys out there competing. That's just the nature of football — guys are going to be on edge and feel like they have something to prove. That's just the nature of the game. It doesn't affect me either way."

How much confidence does this performance give you? What do you know about yourself now, after finally getting a little game action?

"I know, personally, what I've known all along, and that's that I can play at this level and give our team a chance to win. We had a couple drives there, and at the end of the game we were rolling to come within striking distance. With more reps and more game action, you're going to get on the same page with your guys — whether it's the line with the cadence, or the receivers and tight ends, or with the route tree. I don't think I learned too much about myself. I've known that I can play all along."

JOHN ROSS

Wide receiver

Marvin Lewis talked about this team maybe trying too hard and needing to relax. Do you feel that?

"I don't know so much about that. I think we have a lot of guys that are very talented who get very impatient with getting an opportunity. They want to get it so bad that they might make a mistake."

Looking at the first half; how hard is it when you look and things are just starting and it's already kind of getting away from you ...

"It was tough. Like you said, it's very hard to start very slow and start to pick it back up so late. The margin of error is very small in our league. In order for us to start like that, we have to finish strong. We started to but we have to start that in the first half, not the second."

Where does this team go from here?

"Tomorrow we get ready for Denver and that's all we can really focus on. There's not too much we can say about the losses we have or really even the wins that we have. We have to continue to progress and get ready for next week."

Marvin Lewis and the coaches can only say so much about getting this team ready. Who is the voice right now that is going to get this thing turned around?

"I wouldn't say it's just one guy. I think we have a lot of guys that step up and want to be a voice. I wouldn't pinpoint that on one guy. We have a lot of leaders that we expect to step up and they do. It's just tough right now."

What's the biggest difference in the style of Andy Dalton and Jeff Driskel?

"It's hard to say. They are two great quarterbacks. I think the biggest thing is Jeff can run a little more than Andy. I think that's one thing that sticks out. They obviously both do things that are really good. Andy has a long, great career doing the things that he does. Jeff comes in and fills that void when he needs to and can do things with his arm and his legs. Jeff fits right in when he comes in."

JESSIE BATES

Safety

You guys have made changes. Teryl Austin is no longer here. What's it going to take, is it going to be more changes to get this thing turned around? What do you think it's going to take?

"That's not my job and that's not my thing to focus on. I think everyone in this locker room needs to focus on doing their part and see where that gets us."

Marvin Lewis said in his press conference that guys aren't doing their jobs. Is that something that you see?

"We all just have to do our job and be on the same level. I feel like sometimes everybody is doing it right and one guy is doing it wrong and that just hurts you. Like I said, at some point we as players have to step up. We can make all the changes, but if we aren't playing hard, that's the kind of stuff that's winning games."

Is there any point where it's a feeling of shock in the first half when you can't believe your eyes a little bit?

"Anytime you're down 28 points, you get knocked back, but it's all about how you respond."

How do you deal with that as a player?

"I think the biggest part is just worrying about yourself and what you can control. We have to come together as a team, but unfortunately, it's hard to do that when you're down 28-0. You just have to play play-by-play."

On Marvin (Lewis) saying the losing is on him ...

"I don't like the fact that Marvin keeps saying it's his fault that we are losing. At some point, we as players have to step up and say it's our fault."

VINCENT REY

Linebacker

What was it like for you guys when Andy Dalton went out? What kind of impact does that have?

"It hurts. The most important player is the quarterback. (Jeff) Driskel came in and did a pretty solid job. The most important thing is not turning the ball over and he did a good job there."

How much does Baker Mayfield change things?

"He did a good job of getting out of the pocket. When he extends the play, now we are looking for our guy whoever is in our zone or we're looking for our man. He was able to make completions while getting out of the pocket and we can't let him get out of the pocket."

Marvin Lewis said it and has said it for years; do your job. What does do your job mean to you?

"Do your job to me means whatever you are called to do in the defense, whatever your job is, do your job, don't do anything else. Because if you don't do your job, then who will? The time on third and short; we were playing run and they had their run guys in. And they had a play action complete to 85 (TE David Njoku) from the off side. They had 24 (RB Nick Chubb) in and had 82 (TE Orson Charles) at fullback and they complete that one and that one's on me; I wasn't doing my job. So everybody just needs to look themselves in the mirror and say do your job. Don't worry about what the coach calls or about what the offense is doing or what they're not doing. Just do your job man. Because if you don't do it, then who will?"

Then why hasn't that sunk in yet?

"I just think that sometimes it's pointing the finger at somebody else. If I'm a linebacker, oh it was the defensive line's fault or it was the safety's fault or it's the offense or the special teams. No, it's no one else's fault but your own. Take accountability and then we will be more consistent in our play. Anybody can go out there and make a stop here or there, but how about you be consistent. When they hit the red zone, you consistently don't let them get them seven, make them get three. We have to be more consistent."

DARQUEZE DENNARD

Cornerback

Do you think it's too late for this team to make a run?

"No, it's never too late. I remember the Giants going 9-7. They got hot at the right time and beat the Patriots in the Super Bowl. We can do that; we just have to get together now. We have the players to do it. We just have to get players healthy and get the players that are playing motivated to get back to the same goal. We just have to figure things out."

Marvin Lewis said in his press conference the responsibility falls on him. Do you think that's fair?

"That's definitely not fair. Me myself, every play (that I don't make) I have to take fault. We just have to come back together as a

team and figure things out and start looking forward to the Broncos.”

Is it hard to not let losing five of six fracture a group?

“It’s hard, especially when two losses are division losses. We just have to figure things out.”

ALEX ERICKSON

Wide receiver

It’s been mentioned several times that the team is killing itself with penalties, which led to you having some of your kick returns called back today. How demoralizing is that to the team?

“It’s deflating, you know? You get a big play, and then you look back and see the (penalty) flag. It’s just deflating. Obviously, losing the yardage (hurts) because then you’re looking at first-and-20. It’s tough to stay ahead of the chains when you’re at first-and-20, so it just puts you behind right away, and then the trickle effect from there. We just have to look at ourselves, be more disciplined and just find a way to not make those penalties.”

It was awfully chippy out there. Was that a factor in this game?

“We knew it was going to be. Obviously, all the talk and all that stuff going into the game — we’re all prideful men. (We’re) competitive, and as much as you want to say (stuff), when you see it, you see it, and you know who said it, so that’s just part of the game. We all know that. As long as it stays (there). Everybody knows what’s all right and what’s too far, and as long as you don’t cross that line, I think that’s football.”

Did you see a difference in them and their mentality with Gregg Williams taking over their team as head coach?

“Obviously, they were confident coming into the game. I don’t know. I didn’t notice a difference from years past. It’s just a matter of them jumping on us right away, and it was an uphill battle the rest of the way for us.”

TYLER BOYD

Wide receiver

How would you rate how Jeff Driskel played after coming in due to the thumb injury to Andy Dalton?

“He’s a confident player as well. I know he’s going to come in as the top player he is. That’s why he’s here. He came in and played a phenomenal game to me. Regardless, we were still moving the ball with him there. We just have to start faster, earlier in the game.”

Did the Browns’ smack talk before or during the game get under your skin at all?

“Nah, it didn’t get under my skin, but I did feel some type of way (about it) because, how can you say one person (A.J. Green and his injury) justifies a win? But at the end of the day, we had to go out there and show them that wasn’t the reason (we wouldn’t win). I’m not saying it is, but, regardless, I’m going to go out there and fight my tail off and try to get a win.”

Is it bewildering that the team was 4-1 at one point and it’s since spiraled in a bad direction?

“Yeah, it hurt a lot, especially for me. I’m really mad, but it’s football. It’s the National Football League. It’s hard to rally up wins consecutively. But we’re a great team, and I believe that. We’ve got guys that can step in for the guys that are hurt, and we can still win. We’ve just got to play a little more perfect. We’ve got to play penalty-free and just play — just ball and make plays like we always do.”

All teams face injuries, but it has to seem crazy with the amount of guys you’ve lost this season, no?

“I still feel we have the better team overall; we just started slow. We knew we had to outscore them. No matter what the defense is doing, we’ve got to score points regardless. But we started slow, and that’s what we need to fix. That’s what we’ve been trying to fix through this journey. Once we develop better efficiency, we’ll start running (smoothly).”

JORDAN EVANS

Linebacker

When you look at film, Atlanta didn’t get to Baker Mayfield and you guys didn’t today. What made him so tough and elusive?

“Baker’s always been an elusive type of person (on the field). Their offensive line has gotten better in the past couple of weeks with pass protection. They’re doing better over there, so we just fell short.”

What was the mood after cornerback Tony McRae went down?

“That’s always tough, especially when people get hurt. You know it’s going to happen, but you see the (medical) cart coming out there, and you get so scared for the person, and you just pray for the best. I’m praying for him right now. I just hope for the best for him.”

What was Marvin Lewis’ message to the team after this game?

“We just have to get it together. He’s did his best coaching this week, and we lost, and we’ve got Denver coming up, and we can’t sit around and cry about this and mess around next week. We’ve got to try and get back on track and win next week.”

If anyone knows what Mayfield is capable of, it’s you. Do you think he has given that team a newfound sense of confidence?

“Yeah, for sure. I just know that’s what he brings to any locker room. That’s the type of person he’s always been. That’s what he was at (the University of Oklahoma), and that’s just what he’s brought to Cleveland. You’re obviously seeing it.”

What have the injuries done to the mood of this team throughout the season?

“Yeah, there have been a lot. Obviously, you don’t want to see anybody get hurt. The sad part is that’s just part of what (life in) the NFL is. Obviously, we just want those guys to get healthy as soon as possible. Until then, we’ve just got to keep (going) out there and trying to perform.”

BILLY PRICE

Center

What happened on the snap that led to the fumble to start the second half of the game?

“I just pulled it. That’s it. I just pulled it, something that doesn’t happen (normally). I’ve never done that. I just held on to it a little too much and just pulled it. It’s a mistake on my part, and it led to seven (Browns) points ... It’s my fault (in terms of) execution.”

The last offensive drive had a few decisive penalties in it, including one that killed a long pass to Tyler Boyd. Were you guys just trying to get out of your huddle too fast?

"It was just a miscommunication. I have to be better. I'm the guy who's in the middle, so I have to be better."

That was a tough drive because of a couple false starts and an illegal shift penalty. Was that all the result of miscommunication as well?

"No. It's execution. I have to be better for this team, and I have to make sure, again, that everybody's on the same page. Some of those were me at the end there. I thought we were in a different type of hurry-up (offense) ... It's just a miscommunication. The responsibility is on me, and I have to be better."



BROWNS POSTGAME QUOTES

NOV. 25, 2018

CLEVELAND AT CINCINNATI

GREGG WILLIAMS

Interim head coach

Initial Comments ...

"We've got a good locker room in there, and it's always a better atmosphere after a win. Today we made it interesting, but our guys played hard and the final outcome is ultimately what we want.

"Our sideline demeanor was the same all game, and I thought it was positive that we started both the game and the second half fast. However, we did have a little bit of a lull there at one point. We have to maintain focus on finishing plays.

"We committed some penalties on plays that extended drives for them, and that's not who we are. We hammered home the emphasis on reducing penalties this week in practice.

"You know, we're coming out of a bye week and I've been measuring penalty statistics coming out of a bye week for over 20 years. Sometimes a bye week leads to slipups, but we have had two good weeks of practice and I think we got better.

"During the game today, we did a couple things that are not necessarily characteristic of who we are, but overall I thought our guys fought and played hard while also making some timely plays."

You spoke this week about your focus on Cincinnati and how you planned to attack this game. Those things seemed to work today, especially with the success that you had on offense ...

"Yes. We had focus on packaging, and also put together some specialty packages that we thought would cause some stresses for them. Especially, early in the game.

"I thought Freddie (offensive coordinator Freddie Kitchens) and the offensive group did a good job with our game plan this week. Throughout the game we substituted those packages well, and I thought Baker (QB Baker Mayfield) did a good job managing those adjustments too."

Baker Mayfield only threw the ball four times in the second half, but you were up 35-7 at the time, did you ever consider pulling him from the game?

"No, that is not our thought yet. It is good to understand how to win games at the end. We need to continue to learn how to do that. He's our guy."

Baker Mayfield had such a good game against Atlanta, and backed it up with a very good first half today. What impressed you most about him today?

"We're taking the next step. I'm not making today's win less than what it is, but our focus is gradual progress.

"Lots of people sometimes see that progress on game day, but as coaches we get to see that every day. He took a step again today, and I thought he did a good job with that."

You call it "gradual progress", but that was an impressive half of football that he (Baker Mayfield) played today ...

"Yes, I do. I always call it gradual because I believe we always have room to improve. We haven't made it yet."

Do you believe the team was more pumped up today than usual because they were playing against Hue Jackson?

"I think our guys were excited about playing. I mentioned this to you earlier this week, that we had a number of players this week coming into the building hours before they were required to be there.

"They were driving the coaches nuts about meetings, and also wanting to get into the weight room and workout.

"This is a good group of men that we have in that locker room. These guys want to do the things to get better. They want to practice and play.

"Usually there is energy after a bye, and it was good to see that."

Did this team need a win on the road to take itself seriously?

"I think you need to win consistently. However, winning on the road does help that. We need to take that next step as an organization. Consistent winning is the focus, and we need to keep that trend going."

Do you feel like you have something going here?

"Yes. We have two games going. You know, we tackled better in the Chiefs game and played them really well too.

"Overall, we're getting better with recognition. However, we didn't tackle great at times today. "It's fundamentals and energy. We have a good team in that locker room, there."

Do you think the way you played in the first half today, even showed improvement over the Atlanta game?

"It's just taking the next step each and every day."

Were you aware that DB Damarious Randall gave Hue (Jackson) the ball after that interception?

"No. I didn't know that until we got in here. Those things are sometimes fun parts of a game. However, we don't want to do anything that hurts us, or that negates our progress as a team regarding penalty yardage.

"You know, we ended up having a penalty on that play. We don't want pre-snap or post-snap penalties to happen."

You talk about RB Nick Chubb as a runner, however, he had a nice catch in the game, can you talk about that?

"Great, catch. He catches the ball like that in practice, too."

Did you ever consider backing off or changing your approach when the score was 35-7?

"I talked to our coordinators, and we decided to stay with our plan. The big thing was, keeping the football in-bounds."

“We were not going to change our play call structure. We could have probably executed a few more things better in the second half, but those are things we have to learn from.”

What has made you feel best about your progress in the last few weeks since taking over as head coach?

“I’d say, focus. But you should ask that question to the players. There is a good feeling of routine in the building.

“We’re not allowing outside distractions, in. Work is a safe place for them. Our meetings and practice is routine. Focus. Discipline. Responsibility.

“I’ve been preaching those things for 40 years no matter what level I’ve been coaching at.”

You’ve been speaking about gradual progress, but you have managed to win two in a row. Your thoughts?

“The players have done a very good job responding. They deserve the credit.”

BAKER MAYFIELD

Quarterback

You’re not used to pressing the brakes like that are you?

“No, not at all. We found a way to make it interesting. When you get ahead like that, yeah, you want to take time off the clock, but at the same time we need to find that happy median where we’re still playing aggressive but also taking care of the clock. There’s a tricky way to do it.”

To what do you attribute the fact that almost every play was working through a big chunk of the first half?

“Good calls and good execution. My offensive line and our guys were making plays. They’re protecting, I’m getting the ball out quickly, getting it into our playmakers’ hands, and they’re doing the rest.”

Does the crispness of all of that kind of indicate that you’re still growing and getting better up front?

“Absolutely. We spread them out more today. We’ll see what we can do with that package. We’re doing a lot of different things, and we’re doing it well. We have to be able to run the ball better, but as long as we’re able to spread them out, then that’s something we can grow upon.”

You guys have struggled to score in the first quarter throughout the first half of the year. The last couple of weeks, you’ve done a good job of that. How much of that can be attributed to Browns offensive coordinator Freddie Kitchens and his script?

“A lot. We’re taking shots when they’re there, and we’re able to play aggressive. Against a team like that, you want to start fast. They’re a team that starts fast, so we needed to do that. We were emphasizing that all week. But yeah, a lot of that can be attributed to Freddie.”

Did the first half to you feel like your days at Oklahoma, where everything was clicking?

“A little bit. Everything seemed to be working, but that’s the way we want it here in Cleveland.”

What was up with the pregame dancing?

“Pregame dancing? We had Philly Collins playing the drums (playing in the stadium).”

Were you just feeling loose today? We haven’t really seen that from you before a game ...

“As the experience continues, the comfortability grows. There’s really nothing else to that. As I see more looks and more things, I’m going to be more comfortable. I just have to go out there and do my job, as I keep saying. It’s repetitive, but it’s the truth.”

It look liked you had a brief encounter before the game, and again after the game, with Hue Jackson. Did he have a chance to say anything to you, and if so, what did you say and what was that like?

“He said, ‘Good job, good game’. It was brief, I didn’t feel like talking.”

You or him?

“Me.”

Why not?

“I don’t know. He left Cleveland and goes down to Cincinnati. It’s just somebody that was in our locker room, asking us to play for him, and he goes to a different team who we play twice a year. Everybody can have their spin on it, but that’s how I feel.”

So you had a little bit of a bad taste in your mouth ...

“It’s just like any rivalry game. That’s just how it is now. That’s how I’m going to treat it every time we play them. But there’s no hate. That’s just how it is, that’s how I’m going to treat it, and I think that’s how our team should treat it too.”

You’ve always been able to find motivation and put a chip on your shoulder in all kinds of ways. Now that it’s over, do you think the presence of Hue added any of that for this game?

“A little bit. We have a lot of guys who have a history with Cincinnati. Orson Charles, who played like a maniac today, kept saying that those are the people who cut him. Then our quarterbacks coach, Kenny Zampese, was there for 15 years. We have a history with Cincinnati. That’s what happens when you have a division rivalry. We play them twice a year, so there’s going to be that. But the best thing about that is our guys handled it well. That motivation and emotion can sometimes get in the way, but our guys handled it the right way.”

Is there any feeling in your mind that he was the reason you weren’t winning?

“No. What it comes down to is that we have the same players. That’s what I said when everything was happening — we just had to play better. You can put your own spin on it, but we have people we believe in calling the plays now.”

With Zampese, was it a seamless transition after Todd Haley left, or did it take some time with the new dynamic with Kitchens, Zampese and you to get it rolling?

“Kenny and I have always had a good relationship. I’ve been open and honest about what he wants to get accomplished. It’s just a matter of how he wants to coach it, based on what Freddie is calling. There was a little bit of a learning process, but it didn’t take very long at all.”

You said that we now have people we believe in calling the plays. Does that mean you didn’t before?

“No. Todd Haley was calling the plays before, and I believed in that. It wasn’t about that, we just didn’t execute. Freddie is running the same system we had then, he’s just putting a little bit of a twist on it. So it’s not about that. I’m not trying to make a headline. That’s not it. It’s the fact that we didn’t do our jobs then, but right now Freddie has us believing in it. That’s what it comes down to.”

You’ve won two out of three since the coaching changes. How much has that mattered?

“We used it as something to come together. That’s what I said when all of that happened. It could’ve been something that tore us apart even more or brought us together, and that’s what happened. That’s how we wanted to handle it, and we have.”

Did you happen see Browns DB Damarious Randall go over to Hue Jackson and hand him the ball after his interception?

“I did not. Oh geez (laughs). Surprising? No, not really out of Damarious.”

You knew what Damarious said before the game, that if Bengals WR A.J. Green was inactive ...

“What did he say?”

He said that the Bengals were ‘going to get their asses kicked’ if Green was inactive. To follow up on that, do you like that attitude of this team and where it’s at right now? Like I said earlier, you’re playing loose ...

“We want that, but we don’t want the bulletin board material like that. I think there’s fine line, but that’s who Damarious is. He’s going to talk, and he’s going to try and back it up. Most of the time he does, so that’s okay.”

Will you make it a point to go and watch that video?

“I’m sure I’ll see it in the locker room pretty quickly.”

With this being your first game in this rivalry, did it feel different from the Steelers game or about the same? Was there a different edge to this one?

“A little different, but that’s just based on me being more comfortable. It’s wasn’t as hectic or physical as we were able to spread them out and get the ball out quickly. We’re just playing better.”

Was this just another tough road venue, or was there anything distinctive about playing at Paul Brown Stadium for the first time?

“It’s another road game, and it’s something we have to get used to because we’ll play here a lot. We have to play well on the road — four of our last six games, before this game, are on the road. So we have to take care of business.”

Browns interim head coach Gregg Williams threw us another curveball when he said that you were going to use the wishbone 50 times ...

“That’s what he did at Alabama when he looked a lot better (laughs). I heard what he said — he said I wasn’t very funny. No we didn’t run the wishbone.”

You have seven touchdowns with no interceptions in two games. That’s a high standard. Is that what you expect out of yourself?

“Yeah, that is. That’s what I wanted to get accomplished, which is taking care of the ball, getting the ball out quickly and putting us in a position to win. We had one sack maybe?”

None ...

“Oh that’s right, it was called back. So two games in a row with no interceptions and no sacks. That’s the goal, and it also needs to be the mentality.”

Gregg said that Nick Chubb catches the ball really well at practice ...

“I’ve never seen that before. I’ll tell you what, he was snoring very loudly last night. We’re roommates on the road and at home. He made up for the snoring with that catch. That was an unbelievable catch.”

Did you think when the ball was in the air that he wasn’t going to be able to get back to it?

“I didn’t think that I gave him a very good chance to catch that. I put it in a bad spot. He beat the guy, they brought a blitz and the defender had to peel and cover with him. He did a good job of winning, and obviously did a good job of finishing.”

How big in your mind is it to win consecutive games?

“It’s huge. You see teams around the league that build on those wins. It builds the confidence and the energy throughout the locker room that you need to have to play on the road and finish tight games. You need to believe in it, so yeah it’s huge for us. We need to continue that.”

Did it feel like a true road game with as many Browns fans that were in the crowd today?

“It was a little different. There were a lot of Browns fans. So it was a little different, but this next one will be a true road game.”

Do you ever try to stop Nick Chubb from snoring, or what do you do? Do you sit there and take it?

“Let the man sleep. My thought process is if he’s going to have another 90 plus-yard run, then I’m going to let him sleep.”

DUKE JOHNSON JR.

Running back

The Browns are 2-1 since the coaching changes. Does that matter?

“Not to me. My job is the same every day, regardless of what’s going on.”

The play calling seems to be seamless ...

“Yeah, Coach Kitchens calls his game to what he feels. Whatever direction he feels the game is going, he feels good about it. So for him, he’s just out there having fun.”

Did you get the sense that these guys really wanted to play this game against Hue?

“At the end of the day, we’re professionals. Regardless of who is coaching, we still have to take care of business.”

Did you see Damarious Randall give him the ball?

“That’s Damarious (laughs).”

How is the game different when you’re able to jump on somebody and play with a lead like that?

“It makes it a lot easier, but at the same time, you still have to finish. I think we’re doing a great job of finishing.”

DAMARIOUS RANDALL

Safety

Why did you give Hue Jackson the ball after you intercepted?

“That’s something I’d always said I would do.”

Did you plan it ahead of time?

“I said it to a few guys on the sideline — maybe two or three plays before that.”

You realize you’re a folk hero in Cleveland?

“I wouldn’t say all of that. We still have a job to do. We know that each and every week is like a playoff game for us. Just taking a glance at the standings, I feel like if we win out, we have a pretty good chance of making the playoffs.”

JABRILL PEPPERS

Safety

Did Damarious Randall mention plan to give the interception ball to Hue Jackson?

“I think he just kind of improvised that. We’re tired of being disrespected. Before the game, they said, ‘Why are you talking? You play for the Browns.’ What does that even mean? We’re an NFL team. We don’t have the worst record in the league. We’re a tough team to beat — go watch the film. The only teams that really got the best of us were the Steelers, Kansas City and the Chargers. We know we’re a good football team. It doesn’t matter if Hue was over there or not. We don’t like them, and they don’t like us. We came out here and did what we had to do.”

What does Baker Mayfield do for this team?

“He’s been terrific. When you have a guy who manages the game and makes plays, it makes playing defense a little easier. When you’re not playing from behind all the time, it makes defense a little easier. When they’re controlling the clock like that, it makes defense a little easier. Baker has done a great job coming in and taking control of the offense. He makes plays in crucial situations. He’s been a blessing, and I can’t wait to see him develop. We’ll see how this shakes out down the line.”

What do you think after a win like this?

“It’s now or never. We know we’re right there in the conversation. That’s the main focus. Everyone has disrespected us and labeled us as a win on their schedule. We come out with a chip on our shoulder every day. It’s a blessing seeing all sides of the ball come together.”

JOEL BITONIO

Offensive lineman

How much scripting went into your celebration?

“None. He handed me the ball and said “Do the chief slam.” I tried to throw a little O-lineman razzle dazzle in there.”

Geno Atkins had a quiet day. That means you guys came out and played well, right?

“Yeah, we were in good positions. That guy is a good player. He made some good plays and did some good things stopping the run. Kevin Zeitler did a good job with him. He was on Kevin’s side a lot, and Kevin shut him down pretty well.”