

***Cincinnati Bengals QB Joe Burrow***

***Cincinnati Bengals vs. Cleveland Browns***

***Week 1 9-10-23***

**How did the calf feel? Did you notice it at all?**

“Yeah, it felt good enough. Felt good enough.”

**How challenging were the elements?**

“Obviously, when it’s raining like that, something you have to handle. We didn’t handle it today.”

**Did missing camp have any factor on today’s game?**

“It’s tough to tell. A lot of variables that go into it.”

**What is going on in your mind right now?**

“It’s one week. Obviously, not up to our standard. Not up to my standard. We have 16 more of them, so we are going to keep trucking.”

**Did anything during this week’s practice forecast the challenges today?**

“We had a good week of practice. Stuff like this happens. We’ve been here before. We are going to come back stronger. Have a good week of practice. Get better this week. Come back next Sunday and hopefully get a win.”

**HC Zac Taylor said there were some good things from the offense today. What do you think?**

“Yeah, I don’t know. I don’t know.”

**Can you take much from a game like this?**

“It’s a rep in the elements that you don’t get a lot of. You live and you learn from it. We are going to come back. The next time we are in a game like that, we’ll be more well equipped to handle those elements and come out on top.”

**What happened with the miscommunication with the receivers?**

“That happens in Week 1. Obviously, those things happen when your quarterback doesn’t perform in training camp. That was something, obviously, I would have liked to have done. There’s no excuses. Obviously, not very good today. We have to be better.”

**Why was the communication poor?**

“It’s just some Week 1 stuff that happens everywhere. You see it across the league. That’s something that everybody has to get cleaned up. We have to get it cleaned up and we will.”

**The Bengals found a way to overcome a 0-2 start last year. Is the mentality the same this year about overcoming?**

“Nobody is panicking here. Week 1 doesn’t define anybody’s season. Obviously, not very good out there. Anybody who watched, saw that. But we’ve been in this spot before and we’ve come back stronger and had a great year. That’s what we are going to do.”

**Did you feel, in the second half, there was momentum mustering?**

“We had a nice little drive there. We were running the ball well. That’s what you have to do in those elements. We had miscommunication here and there and we then, didn’t come out with any points and that was a turning point in the game, I think.

**What were they doing to stop WR Tee Higgins?**

“They have really good corners. (CB) Denzel (Ward) and (CB Martin) Emerson (Jr.) are two of the better corners in the league. I think (CB Greg) Newsome (II) is a great Nickel too. They have a great secondary. Obviously, we weren’t good enough and me putting the ball in the right place in our one-on-one situations. We just didn’t come out on top today.”

***Cincinnati Bengals Head Coach Zac Taylor***

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**What happened with the offense today?**

“We just didn’t play well enough. [We] Didn’t handle the field position or the conditions well enough in the first half. I thought our defense gave us a winning performance. We just have to be better on offense and special teams.”

**With the conditions, was it just that the ball was slick?**

“It was tough for both teams. That’s not just us. So then it comes into managing those conditions and doing a great job running the ball, which I was pleased for the most part with what we did in the run game. Then special teams and field position. I think that they did a better job handling that than we did today. I have to give credit to them there.”

**What did you see from (QB) Joe (Burrow)?**

“I saw some good things from Joe. That’s a really tough defense. Again, it’s a real challenge when the passing game is going to be like that with those conditions, especially the first half. I thought we settled down. We just weren’t good enough overall on third down. Two of fifteen, three of fifteen, whatever it is. That’s not winning. You’re not able to extend your drives that way and keep your defense off the field. That’s really what it boiled down to.”

**How frustrating were some of the miscommunications and pre-snap things?**

“There was one time I was late getting the play call in, so we had an illegal shift because we had too many guys moving because the play clock was down. That one’s on the play caller. There was another one we had an illegal formation. We were just hugged a little bit too tight and that thing sometimes can

go both ways. It is what it is. They clearly communicated why it was. Those are the two that really come to mind for me there.”

**Do you think the time Burrow missed had an impact on today?**

“I don’t really think so. I think early on it was immediately a different game than we’ve had to play in a long, long time with the rain. I only say that because of how it effects both quarterbacks in the game.”

**How much was Burrow’s calf an issue today?**

“You’d have to ask him.”

**What did you see on the (Browns QB Deshaun) Watson draw run right before halftime?**

“It was a good check or good call – however they had it. It was a good call against the look we had. We were being aggressive which I like. I liked the call we ran and again, their player’s on scholarship too and they did a nice job executing.”

**With the way the weather and the way the offense was going did the touchdown right before halftime feel huge or did it feel like the offense was going to click in the second half?**

“We felt like the offense was going to click. Obviously we don’t want to give up a touchdown there. We felt like we had two good drives to start the second half. We went down and kicked a field goal on the first one and then got the turnover, went down and missed a field goal I think on the second one. It felt like we were in a better groove and had some more momentum. Again, the third downs is really what did us in overall in the game.”

**Was the weather what limited the full scope of the offense?**

“There’s no question, but again, that’s both teams there. Then it becomes a different game where you just have to do a great job managing the field position, winning the kicking game, doing a great job managing the run game, and we all contribute to that and need to be better.”

**Was there any consideration to going fourth down and one in the first half?**

“No. We were hopeful to not get a touchback there obviously and flip the field position. It’s a long field goal with those conditions, which we were just discussing. We just needed the field to flip in our favor to punch in some of those points. Unfortunately got a touchback there.”

**Do you think field position can be one of the biggest factors in determining the outcome in a game like this?**

“I think playing in our division, it certainly is, and playing in that weather it absolutely is. It’s two-fold there and again, as a team we just didn’t do a good enough job of handling that.

**Is there an overlapping reason for the slow starts the team has had the past few seasons?**

“I think every year is different.”

**Is rotating (CB) DJ Turner (II) and Cheeto (CB Chidobe Awuzie) a load management thing?**

“It is. Every week we’ll have to look at that, but for week one, that’s what it was.”

**What did you tell your guys in the locker room?**

“That this certainly isn’t the team that we’re going to be. We all understand that. There’s going to be some things that we have to learn from this game and we’re going to be in another type of game like this, whether it’s weather, or it’s on the road and things aren’t going our way early. We just have to stick together. This is a team that knows that. On our end, we all understand that. We’re going to quickly put this one behind us and go have a great performance at home next week.

**The Browns were open about using (WR) Ja’Marr (Chase)’s comments earlier this week. Did that impact anything?**

“I don’t really care about any of that.”

**Were there just not many chances up the middle of the field?**

“In the middle of the field? We tried a little bit of everything.”