

Head Coach Zac Taylor

On where the game got away from them:

“It’s really easy to be quite honest with you. It was 18-0 there late in the second quarter. We miss a field goal. They go down and kick a field goal to go into the half. There are three points; 11-0. They get the ball first. They score seven, so there’s 10-0. We go three and out and they score again. 17 points. Offense has three plays – three bad plays. Three and out. And they go 17 points. Really, that’s where the game is 25-0 before you even know it. Just not good enough in any of the phases there. Obviously, they tipped the ball in the first possession on offense and it set us back there. We had a good drive and good rhythm. (Browns DE) Myles Garrett did a nice job of getting his hand on the ball and he tipped it. We just didn’t do a great job of overcoming that on offense early and getting points on the board or giving our defense some help. I thought in the first half they played well. They really did. We just didn’t give enough help on offense. In the second half, we just didn’t hold up as a team.”

On CB Chidobe Awuzie:

“I don’t think it’s great. It’s a knee. I don’t think it’s great. Didn’t get confirmation yet.”

On how losing Awuzie affected the defense:

“It’s tough because Chidobe (CB Chidobe Awuzie) is a guy that is one of the hardest workers on our team and one of the most focused guys. Great man of character. He does everything right, does everything to lift up his teammates. He does everything to prepare himself. He is all about

the team. He puts his heart and soul into this thing so to see a guy get hit like that is tough.”

On why the passing game struggled:

“I wouldn’t go that far. I think we had a great drive to start the game and had it tipped on a pick. We were moving the ball really well. Then we just had two three-and-outs. We had a big drop on one that would have kept us moving. We had a great opportunity there and just didn’t get into a rhythm with those two three-and-outs. It just didn’t allow us to do anything. A couple two-yard gains on 1st and 10, then you’re 2nd and 8. Just stuff.”

On any specific reasons for the struggles:

“I think we just didn’t do a good job finding our rhythm early on. It’s as simple as that because I thought we had great rhythm on the first drive. We had a wide open hitch route and they just tipped the ball. We had what we wanted and they just made a good play. I thought we had great rhythm on the first drive. If you get some points there, you get some momentum and things are different because our defense did a nice job in the first half. We just didn’t get it done.”

On why they couldn’t find that rhythm on the next drive:

“I think it was decent. I think the next drive was maybe a six-play drive. Again, it just wasn’t good enough.”

On special teams and K Evan McPherson’s missed kicks:

“I think we’ll just have to see it to be sure.”

On what made Browns DE Myles Garrett and the Browns pass rush difficult:

“I thought really in the first half we did a nice job. He got us the one time on third down. I thought we had a good plan. I thought our guys executed really well. The worst thing you want to do against the Cleveland Browns is give them a two or three score lead and let their running game get going, their play actions, and let their pass rushers key in. That’s a recipe for disaster. Unfortunately that’s what we gave to them.”

On the message to the team with this being a short week:

“It’s easy to see what this one comes down to. Like what I mentioned in the first question, the way that segment of the game got away from us, this isn’t the type of team we are. This is a 17-game season and this is one game. We weren’t at our best today at any phase. I’m confident that’s not who we are, but we can make the corrections and flush this one away quickly, turn our attention to Carolina on the six-day week. Have a great opportunity to get this out of our system quickly and play next Sunday.”

On climbing out of the hole:

“We can’t control that right now. We just have to focus on beating Carolina.”

On losing CB Chidobe Awuzie and CB Tre Flowers:

“We’ll have to see. They quick-snapped us on one third down so I don’t think we were totally lined up properly. They got us on one. I think (Browns WR Amari Cooper) made the play over two guys there late in the game. We’ll have to look at them and see what corrections can be made and what we can do a better job of, but credit to them because they made some good plays.”

On whether the Browns defense was trying to take away the big plays:

“They mixed it up. There was one-high, two-high. There were a lot of different looks. They switched up their coverage when they could, but I wouldn’t say it was predominantly one-high or two-high.”

On how not having WR Ja’Marr Chase affected the game plan:

“I thought our guys did a great job preparing and were ready to go.”

On the strip-sack-fumble at the end of the first half:

“I think he was just pulling to throw it. He’s one of the best in the pocket at securing the ball so when he pulls to throw it to (Bengals WR) Tee (Higgins) they got him on the wrist. That’s tough. As any quarterback [knows], when you’re separating your hands for a throw and they get you on the wrist, there’s just not a lot you can do about that. That’s unfortunate because the two turnovers, if you’re looking at it to assess blame, that’s a difficult thing to do because one is just a block by the defensive end who got his hand up, and the one is as you’re going to throw to what appears to be an open guy. He got his hand hit. That’s

tough because both of those drives took points off the board and maybe some early momentum. We talk about slow starts and all that stuff when in reality we had two good drives there and they just made plays.”

QB Joe Burrow

On how the Browns pulled away:

“Defense gets two turnovers there at the end of the first quarter, early second quarter, around the midfield mark and we do not really do anything with it. First drive, we drive right down there, (DE) Myles (Garrett) makes a great play on an RPO, gets his hands up and knocks it down, ends up falling right into him. That was really the start of a long day for us.”

On the difficult match-up between the Browns:

“You have to give credit to them. They always play well against us. It is tough to answer that one. They have really good players on defense. They are good on the outside. They are really well-coached. They are sound in their leverages and their coverages. Obviously, they have Myles Garrett and (DE Jadeveon) Clowney that can get after the passer. They have had our number the past couple of years.”

On if he is still encouraged with progress of the Bengals’ offensive line:

“Yeah, we will have to watch the tape. I have all the faith in the world in those guys to go out there and I thought they played well enough to win.”

On if the Browns’ defense did anything to take away the explosive plays:

“They did a great job in their leverages and playing soft and making us check it down. They tackled really well. The last couple of weeks, we got teams out of that because we were able to break some tackles, and we got yards after the catch. You have to give them credit. They were great tacklers today.”

On if the Browns ran a lot of Cover 2:

“A lot of Quarters and they were playing Cover 1 and real high.”

On how much he missed WR Ja’Marr Chase tonight:

“Any time that guy goes down, it is going to have an effect, but we are a better offense than what we put out there tonight, even without him. There are no excuses for that.”

On if the Browns were doing anything differently without Chase in the lineup:

“It is tough to say right now. I will have to go back and watch the film. Like I said, they were playing their Quarters and mixing up Cloud to Cover 3 or Quarters. They did a good job mixing it up.”

On his reaction on Chase being injured:

“It is tough, whenever one of your friends goes down like that. You do not want it to weigh on you. We expect him to be back at some point. When that is, I am not sure. He is going to do what he needs to do to get back on the field.”

On his message to the team being 0-3 in Divisional play:

“We are not panicking. We know what went wrong in each game. We have to go back and watch the film, make our corrections in this one like we always have and come back out firing next week.”

On his interception on the RPO:

“Yeah, (WR) Tee (Higgins) was open. Myles made a great play getting his hands up.”

On if the early turnovers took the Bengals out of their rhythm:

“The first one, I thought we had a touchdown to the left side. I thought Tee got held, did not get that call. Then, Myles made a great play on the RPO getting his hands up. Not much you can do about that one. Then, get the turnover and have great field position, Tee wins on the route, (Browns LB Sione) Takitaki makes a great play on a pass rush, applied pressure and was able to knock it out of my hand.”

On the difficulty in facing a player like DE Myles Garrett:

“He is one of those elite of the elites in the league, so he is always going to go out there and make plays. You have to try to limit his impact on the game, but it is always hard with that guy.”