

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS at CLEVELAND BROWNS POSTGAME TRANSCRIPTS

Sunday, October 9, 2022 ⚡ FirstEnergy Stadium ⚡ Cleveland, Ohio

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

On the decision to go for it on fourth down late in the game:

“I just wanted to finish the game with the ball. I felt like we liked the play and we liked the matchup. We knew what coverage they were going to be in. We wanted to finish the game on our terms on third down. We felt like we had a good runup against that defense. We had a pass solution. They defended it well. Then on fourth down, it just really felt like the slant to (WR) Mike (Williams) was going to be the play call there. It just didn’t go down for us, but I had a lot of confidence in our defense to go out there and get them stopped. That was a big motive because we knew that they would have to throw the ball to beat us. We felt like we could cover them. I love the way that our team finished that game. Obviously, the storybook would have been just to finish it right there and walk to victory lane, but that’s not how it went. We had to go play defense. We had to go defend and our defense ended up winning us the game with that takeaway and that stop at the end of the game.”

On knowing on third down that they would go for it regardless of the circumstance:

“Notwithstanding a negative play or something that gets blown up, or a penalty.”

On the play call for the fourth down and feeling like it was a good matchup with Browns CB Denzel Ward out of the game:

“Yes. No. 23 (Browns CB Martin Emerson, Jr.) on 81 (Chargers WR Mike Williams). We liked it.”

On S Alohi Gilman starting over Nasir Adderley and whether it was a game plan decision:

“It’s just to create competition within our football team. We feel like (S Alohi) Lo (Gilman) had earned an opportunity to start. We wanted to see that combination out there of him and (S) Derwin (James Jr.) playing together with (S Nasir) Nas (Adderley) playing a dime as the sixth DB. We felt like Lo had earned an opportunity to show what he can do. Like I said, we’re a work in progress and we’re trying to find those right combinations on defense.”

On the run-game clicking:

“It was the story of the game for us. We came in here and certainly there were a lot of questions about us being able to run the ball in the first four games. We had a lot of confidence in the plan, a lot of confidence in who’s running the ball and who’s blocking for them. I just think our O-Linemen came alive today, and our runners – (RB Austin) Ekeler, (RB Joshua) Kelley. I mean, those guys were flying out there and just running with a purpose. I thought we had really good scheme in the plan. I thought (OL Coach) Brendan (Nugent), (Assistant OL Coach) Shaun (Sarrett), (TE Coach) Kevin Koger, (RB Coach) Derrick Foster – those guys had a great design. I thought (OC) Joe (Lombardi) called a really great game. It was patient. We needed to be with those two rushers. You can’t say enough about our O-Line group. They got a game ball.”

On how much emphasis was put on the rushing attack this week:

“We don’t want to be looked at as a passing team. I think our guys were tired of hearing that because that’s not what we believe internally. We just needed to play together more and find our rhythm. We really believe in how we want to run the ball. We just needed more time on task. I thought you saw that today. I thought our guys were consistent throughout all four quarters. As you saw, it allowed us to control the game and take the crowd out of it. I thought it really allowed us to tire them out too, and really put the pressure on them to have to go fight the fight. Again, we got the explosions in the run game. That’s the other thing. It wasn’t a bloody run-game like it had been for four weeks. We were able to get the explosions and I thought that really allowed us to get moving on offense.”

On Chargers RB Joshua Kelley:

“We talked about it. JK just earning more playing time. He’s doing it every day in practice. He had a good preseason, but I think the preseason and regular season are two different things. Every single game he is just getting better with his carries. As you saw today, the plan was to get him more touches. I thought that he and Austin just did a really good job of complementing one another today.”

On stopping Cleveland’s run game:

“It was up and down. There were some really good stretches in there that I think we can definitely build off of, but there are too many of these runs and loaded boxes that we have more than they have. Whether we miss a tackle or we misfitted upfront, we’ve got to be better. We’ll learn a lot from this tape. It takes nothing away from them. They are who they are. They average 190 on the ground. They’re outstanding. Their backs are tough. I was a little bit disappointed because part of the run game is the quarterback rushing the ball and getting out there in the scramble yards. We’ve got to do better at the point of attack. That’s all there is to it. I know that have the guys for the job and we just have to go back to work.”

On calling timeout on Cleveland’s fourth and one:

“We had a guy who shouldn’t have been on the field that was on the field. We needed to get the right amount on the field and get the right grouping on there. That was a huge play in the second half. That’s why I said defensively, us getting that fourth down stop, the takeaway, and then really finishing it there at the end of the game – there were a lot of good things that our defense did today, but it was up and down.”

On Chargers CB J.C. Jackson:

“He was up and down. There were some good moments and then there were some moments where he needs to be able to be a lot better. He just needs to get in his comfort zone from a fundamental standpoint, and that’s still a work in progress. We know that he’s the man for the job. He did a lot of good things in the second half. I thought in the first half he was up and down, but in the second half he was much better, much more like what we’re used to seeing. We’re just going to keep working with him because he’s the right guy to be coaching. We believe in him so much. It’s our job as coaches to get him going.”

On J.C. still working to get back from the ankle injury:

“I think a couple things. Definitely, you lose four weeks and that’s tough. You guys all saw him in training camp. He was rocking and rolling. I think it’s just four weeks, time on task, you know, every player needs practice, especially at that position. It’s just him getting back in the swing of things. We’re really glad we have him. He’s going to be a big piece moving forward.”

On Chargers WR Mike Williams:

“The toughness. He lands on his back on the high wire act and he just comes right back out there. He just has so much toughness. I was disappointed that the replay took away the lob there. He has been our offense outside. He’s there for us in every single game. He has all the competitive traits that you’re looking for in a football player. Then as a receiver, as you’re seeing, this guy can win one-on-one. He can win a lot of different places. Like I said, when Mike Williams touches the ball, it’s good for us.”

On whether he was giving an explanation on the overturned call:

“We thought so too [that there were two toes down], but they said toe heel. That was the explanation given to me. Not toe-toe; it was toe-heel. That’s what they’re saying.”

On the fourth down decision and knowing that most people would expect a punt:

“You know where I stand on that. We believe in our process. We believe in our players on both sides. We were coming out here on the road to win this game, not kick it and then go hope to win. I believed our defense would get a stop if we didn’t make it because I knew that we could cover them. You have to live with it when it doesn’t go down. We went for it on the first drive and it didn’t go down, and we’re willing to live with that. We know what that means to our group and playing that way. There was no way I was taking our offense out of the field at the end of the game.”

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QUARTERBACK JUSTIN HERBERT

On Chargers Head Coach Brandon Staley’s decision to go for it in the fourth down late in the game:

“I think it says a lot that he believes in us. Just like I believe in our offensive line, our receivers, and our running backs. I knew that we would go out there and convert. It did not go our way unfortunately, but we were riding with that play. The defense came with that big stop when we were down.”

On what he thought about the ground game today:

“I thought it was awesome. We believe in those guys so highly over the past couple of years and to see them break out of a run like that, especially the way that they blocked. It is great to see.”

On RB Austin Ekeler’s career high in rushing:

“He is a pretty special player. We’ve known that, and anytime we get the ball, something special is going to happen. We saw that happen today. He is one of the hardest workers on the team, he is a great leader.”

On the performance of K Taylor Bertolet and dealing with the wind on the field:

“It got a little windy at times and it is not easy. That job is definitely one of the tougher in the league. For him (K Taylor Bertolet) to step up, we had complete confidence in him. He came into practice on Thursday, was perfect on the field goals, and the entire team was rallying behind him. To see that, that was huge for him.”

On the impact of WR Mike Williams:

“He is a competitor and the game changes when he is out there. Third down, you have to be alert for him. We think so highly of him in man coverage, finding the sweet spots in the zones because he is a smart player. He is super athletic and has done a great job stepping up and being a leader the past couple of weeks. It has been awesome to see.”

On what it is like to know that Williams is going to catch the ball:

“It makes my job a lot easier. Just knowing that he is out there and anytime it is one on one, we think really highly of Mike Williams. He has gone up there and competed time after time.”

On if it amazes him when Williams catches an unexpected ball, ‘there’s no way he is going to catch that:’

“There are definitely times where the pass rush is coming and I get the ball off early-on. He may not or may not see it early-on, but just for him to be able to track it and see up in the air, especially when we got a callback with that touchdown, he made a great play on that one as well. That is not an easy catch by any means, but he is able to do it.”

On the Chargers defensive stop that kept the Cleveland Browns from getting close to their field goal range:

“I thought it was huge. The defense got some big time stops and forced the turnover down in the red zone, which was huge for us. While I would have liked to close the game out on offense, we believe one hundred percent in those guys.”

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS DEFENSIVE LINEMAN CHRISTIAN COVINGTON

On how good the Cleveland Browns backfield is:

“Sometimes we knew exactly what they were going to run but they are a talented group and one of the best at running the ball. At the end of the day, we will take this win and correct what we have to correct.”

On settling down after the first Cleveland Browns drive:

“At the end of the day, you can not press that panic button ever in a game. It wasn’t starting off pretty but it’s not about how we start it’s about how we finish. There were moments when it wasn’t pretty and there were moments when it was pretty.”

On being able to slow down the Browns running game:

“Absolutely, they (Cleveland) have a talented backfield right there. There is not another team in the NFL that has a 1-2 punch like them. We knew that they were going to be hot sometimes and we knew we were going to make some plays. At the end of the day, it was about coming together and getting the win.”

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS RUNNING BACK AUSTIN EKELER

On if the Chargers’ run game made a statement today:

“We have been building. Last week, we had a little bit better production. This week, obviously more. I want to see us continue to do that. It is not necessarily a statement until you can continue to do it for a few weeks in there. To actually create an identity, it takes more than a couple of weeks of success. We are going back to work. We are going to try to do the same thing again next week.”

On if he has anything left in the tank:

“That is the NFL for you. We come out with a plan and rarely things stay to plan. It is more so we go out there, have an idea, and then react to what happens. We had an emphasis today to get the run game going and guess what we did all practice – we ran the ball. We did not do anything different that we have in the past, just continued to stay with it, continue to trust it, and finally put some product on the field of the run game today.”

On how the Chargers responded being down 14-0:

“That is what we do. It does matter what the score is, we have to go out and we are trying to put our best foot forward going down there to get more points. That is all we can focus on as an offense.”

On if emphasizing the run game during the week helped create more holes today:

“I do not want to say we emphasize it like we have not emphasized it in the past, it has definitely been an emphasis for us. But today, the offensive line ended up getting the game ball for good reason because they were definitely moving some people out of the way. We switched up our scheme a little bit, some a little different than we have done in the past. We were able to exploit that.”

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS SAFETY ALOHI GILMAN

On if he thought QB Jacoby Brissett was going to try to run it on his interception play:

“I thought he was, but I kind of felt the guy behind me. I think it was (TE David) Njoku. I know a lot of quarterbacks in the red zone like to run to the line of scrimmage and stretch it out, then dump it off like (Kansas City Chiefs QB Patrick) Mahomes. So it was me and him really. We were playing that game. I ended up baiting him a little bit, came back and made the play.”

On explaining more of his interception:

“That part of the field is usually where quarterbacks like to stretch it out, dump it out, or run the ball. Mahomes is one of the masters of those. He kind of just did that. I baited him (Browns QB Jacoby Brissett) into doing it. I took a couple of steps forward. Me and him are looking eye-to-eye and I fell back into the window once he threw the ball.”

On how he felt like he played today overall:

"I have a lot to work on. That is part of football. It was good to get my feet wet and get out there and play ball. I have not done that in a while. Shout out to everyone else, they helped me. Shout out to all the safeties for helping me out. My brothers. All the defensive backs were a big part of this. Good start."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS SAFETY DERWIN JAMES JR.**On S Alohi Gilman's interception in the end zone late in the fourth quarter:**

"MVP. It was an amazing play. Big play, taking points off the board. We were only up two points, they were already in field goal range, so to take points off the board, that was so big."

On Cleveland's rushing attack:

"It was by far one of the toughest rushing attacks that we have seen. We could have played better in some spots, because we gave up a lot of those explosive runs. Second quarter, we kind of settled in. Third quarter, we kind of played well, but we just have to play better on defense. Hats off to the offense for helping us out today."

On what he was thinking when the Chargers offense went for it on the final fourth down:

"We are with them. We are going for it. Even though they did not get it, so what. We have to go out there and get a stop. It is on us to get the stop. We believe in our offense. We will go for it again. We do not care."

On how proud he is of the defense on getting the stop:

"Definitely proud, because either way we were going to have to get the stop. Whether we punted to them or went for it, we were going to have to get a stop on defense. We got the stop we needed. Held him in enough range and he (K Cade York) missed the kick. We got the W."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS RUNNING BACK JOSHUA KELLEY**On if there were any nervous feelings on the last play:**

"No, absolutely not. Our preparation has got us to this moment and we just go out and make a play."

On the feeling of getting to the endzone:

"I just told these guys it meant a lot. It felt good and these offensive lineman are going crazy. The tight ends, wide receivers, just everyone is getting off the ball."

On how much fun a game like this is:

"When you get fed it is a lot of fun. (Chargers RB Austin) Ekler set the standard making guys miss, breaking tackles and hitting big plays to start the game."

On the fourth down decision at the end of the game:

"That's the coach's decision and we roll with it. Now for me, we play aggressive as a team so the team believed we could get it and we believed in the offense."

On watching the defense during the game and what it means to him on their performance:

"For us, we watch the defense at practice. We know what they are going to do and we know what they are executing. Shout out to those guys they battled and those two running backs (Browns RB Nick Chubb and RB Kareem Hunt) aren't easy to tackle at all. Chubb is probably the best back in the league so it's tough and their offense line comes off the ball hard too."

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS TACKLE TREY PIPKINS III

On the mentality of the team coming into the week with rushing the ball:

“I think it was an aggressive mindset. We had heard all week about Cleveland’s rush game and we were sick of it. We were excited to show we could run the ball too.”

On the old school style of play with rushing the ball:

“That’s an O lineman’s dream. It was awesome and a lot of fun to get out there and establish your run game like that.”

On the performances of Austin Eckler and Joshua Kelley:

“I think that is back to our mindset for us. We knew Cleveland was going to come out and try to pound the ball against our defense so we wanted to do the same. So that was cool to see them do that.”

On that game feeling like playoff football and stacking wins together:

“I feel like every week in the NFL it is playoff football. Everybody is playing hard. Most games are close and it comes down to the last five minutes of the game it seems like almost all the time. The wins are awesome we have to keep stacking them up and that’s always the goal.”

CLEVELAND BROWNS HEAD COACH KEVIN STEFANSKI

Opening statement:

“Injury wise, (CB) Denzel (Ward) has a concussion.

“Very frustrating. We come in here to play good football and get a win versus an AFC opponent, and we just did not get it done. We are going to share in this one. All of us had opportunities at the end, and we just didn’t come through. It is really, really hard and frustrating, as I mentioned. We have to figure it out. We have to start playing smarter in certain areas and find ways to get a victory, especially at home [versus an] AFC opponent.”

On the Chargers’ success running the ball today despite not being as productive in the run game earlier this season:

“We gave up way too many yards, including a real big one early in the game. It is always a combination of things, but we have to be better stopping the run. Have to.”

On the mindset when the Chargers went for it on fourth-and-2 late in the fourth quarter and the Browns defense made the stop:

“We are ready for them if they decided to punt or go for it. In that case, they went for it. You are just trying to help the field goal in that case as much as you can. Ultimately, I have to give him better stuff to get down in there and not attempt a 50-plus-yarder. Obviously, we have faith in (K) Cade (York). We expect him to come through. I think he will come through for us in the future. We have to help that field goal.”

On York’s recent misses, including two today:

“With a young player, you kind of just focus on getting better each day. Not losing confidence in him. He is not losing confidence in himself. Not an easy place to kick in. We will be counting on him next week and the week after that type thing.”

On it appearing QB Jacoby Brissett had room to run on the play that ultimately resulted in an interception late in the fourth quarter:

“He didn’t see the linebacker underneath there. Ultimately, just we have to come away with some points there, whether it is a field goal or a touchdown. We just have to make sure that we are operating on a high level and giving those guys plays that they can have success. In that scenario, Jacoby will talk to you, and I know what he will say. He just can’t turn the ball over.”

On if the Browns were planning to go for it on fourth down earlier in the game, including before and after the Chargers called timeout in that circumstance:

“Yeah. With a lot of this, you have to give credit to them. They stopped us. Felt good about the play, but they stopped us.”

On Brissett having hands on hips after failing on the fourth-down attempt:

“I don’t want to get too into it. We didn’t execute, but of course, I could always give him a better play.”

On if the mindset was the Chargers were going to go for it on fourth-and-short in the third quarter, when the Browns accepted a procedural penalty that resulted in third-and-long, which LA ultimately converted:

“I was.”

On how the team can be smarter:

“We had a bunch of 15-yard penalties, and those are killer.”

On what S John Johnson III was upset about prior to drawing a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, given he also appeared frustrated after the play:

“We can’t lose our composure in those moments. Regardless of what we think we saw, what we wanted them to call or those type of things, we can’t lose our composure.”

On defensive struggles during the past couple of weeks:

"I think we didn't play well enough. That is always the easy answer. The long answer is in a bunch of areas, there are things that we have to do better. Tackling, we have to tackle better. There are a lot of things that if you want to play good defense, we have to start doing."

On not being able to finish a close game late in the contest again:

"It is very frustrating. We have talked about it, and everybody sees it. These games are close. You have to play 60-minute football. You have to come from behind. You have to put teams away. We haven't done it and didn't do it today. Again, credit to them. They did what they needed to do to get a victory, and certainly, we have to look inward and fix some things."

On the long pass attempt to WR Donovan Peoples-Jones near the end of the game:

"He is one of the options on that play. Felt like he had one on one, but I have to obviously look at the entire play, but if he comes down with it, it is a huge one."

On if the new concussion protocol's agreed to by the NFL and NFLPA that were recently applied to this weekend's game affected CB Denzel Ward's status:

"I don't know that. I am not sure."

On if it was disappointing for Brissett to throw an interception despite making plays running the ball earlier in the game:

"In these games you lose, it is just so frustrating, and it hurts. We didn't do enough as a team. We didn't do enough as coaches. Are the guys playing hard? Of course. I am not questioning that at all. Jacoby is making plays, but we have to clean things up. If you want to get a win in the NFL, you can't do some of the things that we did."

On hearing boos from Browns fans at the end of today's game and if it was disappointing to hear the fans boo:

"I think when it comes to fans... I can't get into that type of thing. They were great today. They support us. I get that that is part of it."

On Browns fans leaving the stadium after watching another loss:

"It is frustrating. I get it. It is very, very, very frustrating. I go back to 'What do we need to do to go get a win?' We have to fix things if you expect to get wins in the NFL."

On the Browns defense giving up big plays or drives at times due to different reasons in recent games, whether it is in the run or pass game:

"When you are playing good defensive football, you are playing consistent. Obviously, run or pass you name it, we have to play more consistent. We are not playing consistent really right now. We can. There are opportunities to do it. There are opportunities to make some plays and those type of things, but we are just not doing it consistently right now."

On if he was surprised the Browns run defense did not perform as well today after DE Myles Garrett and DE Jadeveon Clowney returned from injury:

"I just think that they [the Chargers] did a nice job. We have to stop the run, we have to fit the run, tackle and all of those things. We have to get that fixed."

On CB Martin Emerson Jr.'s pass defended on the Chargers' late fourth-down attempt:

"MJ, I know he is a rookie, but we are counting on him a lot. That was a big play to come through, especially with what was at stake there."

CLEVELAND BROWNS QUARTERBACK JACOBY BRISSETT

On the interception late in the fourth quarter:

“We talk about this all of the time. It is just bad decisions late and late throughout the play, and just making good decisions. That was a poor decision by myself. Yes, I saw (WR) Amari (Cooper) coming. I know I am better than that, and I just made a bad decision.”

On if he considered running for a first down or to the end zone on the interception:

“Yeah, but like I said, I saw Amari in the back of the endzone. Yeah, it was in my mind, but yeah, a really poor decision.”

On being known as someone who takes care of the ball and doesn't throw many interceptions:

“It sucks. It really sucks. That is a pivotal moment in the game. Obviously, the ball was in my hands for a reason, and that was not the outcome obviously that I was intending to happen. I am just better than that. I truly am, and I know that. I will be better next time.”

On his mindset when the Chargers went for it on fourth-and-2 late in the game and the Browns defense getting a stop:

“We practice this situation a bunch. Once they went for it, I was like, ‘Alright, we are going to stop them and go down and win.’ I knew we had to get a couple more yards. Wish we could have gotten a couple more obviously on a couple of those throws.”

On the Browns going for it on fourth down earlier in the game and if the Chargers defense took away the QB sneak opportunity:

“I have to go back and look. I don't remember right now off of the top of my head. Sorry.”

On the Browns handing it off to RB Kareem Hunt on that fourth-down play rather than running a QB sneak:

“Flow of the game. From what I remember, we had a good play on. It is 50-50 right there. Just being better.”

On if the Browns had called a QB sneak on that fourth down prior to the Chargers timeout:

“No.”

On if the mindset with the Browns offense after K Cade York's game-winning FG in Week 1 is that anything above a 50-yard range is makeable and that's only as far as the team needs to get and if the assumption was York would definitely make it from there:

“Oh, hell no. Hell no. Ultimate trust in Cade and our field goal unit. We will go out and do the same thing again with the same trust in him. [Stuff] happens, and it is more than that play that I would say caused the outcome of this game. I threw a pick in the red zone, and we are about to go score. It is definitely not on one person. The trust is still in Cade.”

On appearing to be 'in the zone' for most of the game prior to the late interception and if that makes the play and loss tougher:

“All of it makes it so tough. It all gets overshadowed by one play. That just shows you the margin of error in this league is so slim, and regardless of whatever plays you make throughout the game is it always comes back to that one play.”

On if he has had or wants to have a conversation with York that the team hasn't lost faith in him:

“No. He knows that. We sent him out there smiling. Why would we not have faith in him? Like I said, stuff happens in this league. We have a long season ahead of us. It is on to next week. He understands that. Why would I go bother him?”

On the reaction knowing Browns fans are disappointed following the loss:

“It is tough. I felt like they kept us in the game. A couple of miscommunications on their [the Chargers'] side, burning timeouts and stuff like that because of what our fans were doing. It is tough when we leave this room and this stadium without a win. It sucks. It is going to turn. It is going to turn.”

On the belief that results are going to turn around and lead to Browns wins:

“Because I trust No. 1 myself and I trust the men in that room and the coaches, and I know what we are working towards. It is like a three-point shooter; once one goes in, hopefully, they start coming in bunches. It is just one at a time. It will turn.”

On takeaways from recent games about the team’s heart and desire:

“I think it is all of those things. It is a no-quit mentality in that locker room. All of the players in that locker room feel the same way I feel up here right now. When you have that, that is the mark of something. I know that the guys in that locker room are going to come back and be ready to work for next week because that is all we have. This is going to suck to all of us because we understand how... I am sure everybody when we are watching this film is going to be like, ‘That play right there for me. That play right there for me.’ I think that is when guys are really looking in the mirror and being honest with themselves.”

On QB Deshaun Watson being able to return to the team facility tomorrow:

“Oh, nice.”

On if Watson’s presence will provide a ‘nice emotional boost’ for the team:

“Oh [expletive], I hope so (*laughter*). I don’t know. It will be good to see him.”

CLEVELAND BROWNS GUARD JOEL BITONIO

On the Browns’ production in the run game today:

“Having (RB) Nick Chubb helps a lot. We knew they were going to try and stop the run. They had some six-down fronts where they were putting all of the big guys there. They had a couple stuffed up pretty good, but we kept to it.”

On what the Browns need to do to finish close games:

“We just need to find a way to execute. You don’t know when the play is. There could be a play in the first half or third quarter. Obviously, it came down to a field goal today. There is always a play where you just need to find a way to execute. We stress execution for 60 minutes.”

CLEVELAND BROWNS RUNNING BACK NICK CHUBB

On the mindset when the Chargers did not convert on fourth down late in the game:

“We had an opportunity right there at the very end to make something happen. You have to give props to them for holding us, going for it and then holding us to a field goal [attempt]. Props to them. We have to execute better.”

On the Browns’ production in the run game today:

“It is just who we are. Our offensive line does a great job blocking up front, the wideouts blocking outside and me and (RB) Kareem (Hunt). We do a great job running the ball when it is time to run the ball. I think overall as an offensive team, we are really a good team running the ball.”

On the red zone efficiency:

“It worked out for us. We still need more touchdowns. At the end of the day, I think we did some things well, but a lot to work on.”

On if he was surprised the Chargers went for it on fourth down late in the game:

“I was a little surprised. It pretty much put us in field goal range with 10-15 yards. It happened like that. The ball bounced in our favor. We have to execute better.”

On the Browns not being able to finish close games in recent weeks:

“We have to find a way to finish. We are always in position to finish and win the game. Just as a team, find a way to pull through and win the game. We are in a great position the last couple of games to win the game and we did not do it.”

CLEVELAND BROWNS DEFENSIVE END JADEVEON CLOWNEY

On how he feels physically following today's game after returning from an ankle injury:

"A little sore. Got a little aggravated throughout the game, but I was able to finish the game and compete."

On if he is only dealing with an ankle injury now:

"Yeah, just an ankle. It was still bothering me during the game, injuries."

On the Chargers' success in the running game today:

"No clue. No clue. Beating us. Running it. We had lots of tape. As far as a group, we just need to make adjustments and try to fix it next week."

On how the Browns defense is playing right now:

"Right now? It is not good. We have names and the pieces on paper, but we have to come out here and put it together. I have been on my fourth team, and this by far one of the [most] talented defenses I have been on in my four I see a lot in this defense, and right now, we aren't showing up and doing it."

On if there is a specific issue causing problems on defense:

"I think it is a little bit of all of us, everybody – like everybody. We all just have to lock in, look in the mirror and see what we can do individually and as [a team]. I can't point fingers at nobody. I am not going to do that. Look into the mirror and see what I can do to help this team and try to focus on myself. If everybody is there looking in the mirror, I think we will be alright."

CLEVELAND BROWNS DEFENSIVE END MYLES GARRETT

On if not being able to finish a game is getting difficult:

"It would be tough for any team. It is tough in any situation when you lose, but when everything is going your way and you can't put it away, especially in our case when we had a lot of these types of games this season, it wears on you. We have to put it away, watch the film, see how we can get better and move on. It is one of those games that you have to learn from it and use it as fuel to prepare for the next team."

On the issues with the Browns run defense today:

"A couple of misalignments. Just not being where you are supposed to be. Normally, it wouldn't cost us, but they were able to take advantage of some of those mis-lineups. It is hard to say that it is one guy's fault or another, but we have to communicate. If one guy is out of place and normally another guy fills that same gap but it doesn't always work like that. We weren't able to see it when it happened. We are trying to make it better and get better on that side of the ball. We have to fix up some of those leaky lines."

On if he was surprised that the Chargers ran as much as they did today:

"No. Once they cracked that 75-80-yarder, I knew they were definitely going to lean on it. They felt like they had an advantage on us, being able to attack some of the soft spots on our defense, and that is what they did. They were able to get over 200 yards rushing, and that is completely on us. That is on us the D line, making sure the edges are set and not getting knocked off the ball."

On how to help turn around the season after the three games slipped away from the Browns and resulted in losses:

"Slipped away or lost, it is the same thing. When you lose, there are always circumstances behind it. Whether it is early or late, it is all in the minor details. That is always what it has been for us. Making sure we are in the right spot, communicating and executing. That is what we have to take care of. That is what we have to get ahead of. We have to take pride in doing our job. Right now, we have to have some more pride."

On how much it hurts sending Browns fans home disappointed after the loss:

"It hurts more that I have to see the faces of my teammates disappointed that we lost. I don't have to look all of the fans in the face, but I have to look every one of those guys in the locker room, every one of those players, all of the coaches and those staff members that work so hard and I see every day. The fans, I love the hell out of them and appreciate them. They are reacting to the display that we are putting on. I want to hear them clap and cheer when we do our best for them, but those guys I'm fighting with and for, that is what makes me disappointed."

On how disappointing it is that the Browns defense doesn't seem to be taking the desired steps forward in recent weeks:

"We are just up and down right now. We have certain drives and quarters where we are all over it, but then we let off the gas and they take advantage of miscommunication or lack of effort or misalignment. When we are not on the same page as a defense, teams like that and teams that are very talented and have a very competent quarterback who able to make every throw on the field, they are going to take advantage of that. Ekeler played a hell of a game, as well."

On QB Jacoby Brissett's no-quit mentality:

"I don't know a lot of quitters in any sport. I don't think there are any quitters in that locker room."

On if he said anything to K Cade York after the final missed FG:

"I saw him once in passing. I gave him a dap and a slap on the back. At the end of the day, I will see him tomorrow, and we will talk about it then. Most guys don't want to hear about anything after something happens. You are in your own head, going through your own thoughts about the situation and how you could have played it better – everyone is – but just letting him process it and go through his steps in the game and how he can do better and then talk about it tomorrow. He is a competent kicker, a great kicker, I think he will definitely let this pass and move on from it."

On confidence in Brissett despite the late interception:

"He is better than that. He has shown such awareness and playmaking ability throughout this season. He had one mistake. We got the ball back. We got in position to win, but we didn't. That is just how it goes sometimes. We were able to do what we could to rectify those mistakes on defense, but we made mistakes on defense and they corrected ours. We are not going to be holding him down because he made one mistake. We all individually made a mistake here or there. It is part of the game, picking each other up and making sure that we are ready to go when time comes."

On if he thought the 54-yard FG was 100 percent guaranteed to be a make:

"No. I don't think anything is a sure-fire. Whether it is us making a stop or offense scoring, nothing is 100 percent. There is no guarantee in anything. I have faith in him, and I have faith that he will make the kick. I am sure as hell hoping that he will. At the end of the day, there is a process to it, and anything can happen."

On how he felt playing in today during his first game following the one-car accident:

"I felt a lot better. I am getting better. It is a process to return to 100 percent. I am just glad to be out there. I don't want anyone feeling bad for me. I am going out there and giving 100 percent of what I have. I am just glad to be playing football. As long as I am able to move and fight, I will be out there."

On how close he thought he was to taking down Chargers QB Justin Herbert on a few occasions:

"Within half a step, a half-second. Right there in the red zone, I almost knocked the ball out. There were a couple times I got a hit or was able to pressure. He was able to step up and move out of the pocket so it is hard to make a play on it. We have to find a way to get it done. We as a defensive line have to find a way to get it done."

On if he believed Emerson set the team up to win with his big play to stop the Chargers on fourth down late in the game:

"Yeah, I think he put us in a good position to win. It was a short field, and the offense had been firing all day so I was definitely thinking that we were going to make it happen one way or another, whether we scored a touchdown or a field goal. IT is the NFL. They get paid to show up and play at a high level as well. Sometimes it goes our way, and sometimes it goes the other way."

On his reaction when the Chargers went for it on that fourth down:

“I expect him to go for it, but it is still disrespectful towards us. I know he has an offense that was doing well all day and he expects them to get the first down, but to us, that is telling us that he is trying to take advantage of us and we don’t take that very kindly. It is disrespectful to both sides of the ball. He is playing the numbers game. He is thinking analytics wise, like we are far enough to make the stop on defense and get the ball back or get a first down that is two yards away, we have been rushing the ball pretty well and throwing the ball pretty well. At the end of the day, we got the stop, but we have to get the win.”

On what was wrong with the Browns run defense today:

“I couldn’t tell you until I watch the film. There are a couple of things. Same as on the pass defense. You have to be able to be in the right spot at the right time and communicate. Simple stuff. The little things are really killing us and showing up every time we are playing.”

CLEVELAND BROWNS CORNERBACK GREG NEWSOME II

On if it is frustrating or puzzling that the Browns defense played as it did today:

“It is definitely frustrating. We know what talent we have in the building. We are just not showing it every day on Sunday. It is just all about being consistent.”

On if the consistency in practice is there and if it translates into the game:

“I think we practice very well. You have to show up on Sunday with the same enthusiasm, the same effort and just stay locked in. It is all about keeping our eyes right. We have been communicating pretty well lately, but we just need to stay to our techniques and focus when we are out there on the field.”

CLEVELAND BROWNS LINEBACKER SIONE TAKITAKI

On how to improve in run defense:

“Just everybody playing consistently. I feel like we did some good things. They were just really able to run the ball.”

On if somebody has taken more of a leadership role on the Browns defense, especially after losing LB Anthony Walker Jr. to injured reserve:

“I feel like everybody has. As a defense, we have good camaraderie. Next play, best play. We just have to show up.”

On if he was surprised the Chargers went for it on fourth down late in the game:

“Yeah, I was surprised, but we were ready. Obviously, we got the stop and that was exciting, but I was definitely surprised.”

On how frustrating it is being so close in each of the team’s losses this season:

“Obviously, it is frustrating. Tip our hats to those guys. They came out and played. Tomorrow, we will look at the tape and get better. That is all we can do.”

CLEVELAND BROWNS DEFENSIVE TACKLE PERION WINFREY

On what the Chargers did to make it difficult to stop the run today:

“I would not say that they were doing anything strange. We were really just hurting ourselves. They were not doing anything that we have not seen. It was really just a matter of stopping it or not.”

On the Browns’ defenses third-down stops in key situations:

“We know that we are a really good defense, and those stops let us know who we really are. Just continuing to have that confidence and get those stops.”

On if the Browns defense is close to being what it hopes to be and executing better:

“Most definitely. It is not like we are getting blown out. It is a couple little things that we need to tighten up and fix. Communication needs to be a little better, and we will go out there and dominate teams like we know how to do.”

On what has to change to clean up mistakes on defense:

“Communication. Communication is key. We have to communicate and focus on what needs to be done, and then go out there and execute. Talk is cheap”

CLEVELAND BROWNS KICKER CADE YORK

On if he was surprised the Chargers went for it on fourth down late in the game:

“I was surprised that they went for it on fourth down. I was not shocked to have a chance to go at it.”

On this missed FG at the end of the game:

“I hit it well. My head was still down, and I thought it was going to be dead straight, right down the middle. I looked up, and it was just outside.”

On if there was any wind that affected the last FG attempt:

“It was a little bit left to right. Nothing to affect the ball like that. Just a strong push.”

On why the west end of FirstEnergy Stadium has been more difficult to make FGs recently:

“I would not say that it has been a tough end. I have just missed a couple kicks there.”

On if getting pissed off and moving to the next kick is his same mentality after a miss:

“Yeah, for sure. 24 hours and then get over it. That was my first time ever missing twice in a game. It was not like I went out there telling myself I missed the one before. I hit it hard and strong, but just barely missed it.”