



BENGALS POSTGAME QUOTES

DEC. 5, 2021

L.A. CHARGERS AT CINCINNATI

ZAC TAYLOR

Head coach

Initial comments ...

"I'll come out and say (it was a) sloppy game all the way around. To dig a hole the way that we did (with) turnovers, explosive plays, the opening kickoff going back plus-48 (yards and) things that I did were certain unacceptable. We didn't deserve to win today. They (the Chargers) are a good football team; when you put that performance out there, that's what's going to happen."

What was Joe Burrow dealing with injury-wise, and how did it compromise what he could do today?

"I thought he threw the ball really well. Joe's a tough guy; he really doesn't say much to me about it."

What exactly was wrong with his hand?

"We didn't talk about it. He just went out there and threw the ball. I don't think he had any accuracy issue because of any (injury). So, he was fighting through something; he's a tough guy."

What happened on the drive at the end of the first half? There seemed to be confusion during that sequence of events ...

"Well, we got to a third down and we were going to clock it and put us in a fourth-down position. Really, there might have been too much on the clock, (so) if we don't convert, they get the ball back, so that was a difficult one to communicate in the moment. The guys on the field were going to clock it — we were trying to get into a pass — and that confusion for three, four (or) five seconds costs you when there's only 10 (left). It's kind of a rare third-down situation we were in right there. The communication is critical (and) it's got to be crisper from me to make sure that we're all on the same page and make sure we're all getting one call, and I'm trying to change it, essentially. That's just bad ball (management) on me — bad handling, bad communication — and then we go into halftime."

What happened on the two-point conversion that didn't come to fruition?

"Horrific (management) by me. Horrific, horrific, horrific. We were going for two, and so we were a little slow making sure we had the right personnel on the field. When I made that mistake, I was going to call timeout and put the ball on the hash(mark), wait and see what personnel they were in, so I ended up calling the play backwards and I tried to correct it at the last second and ended up taking a delay of game. So it was just horrific management of a situation by me twice coming out of a timeout. We ended up having to take a delay of game, and ended up missing the extra point on top of it."

What did you diagnose the Chargers doing in the second quarter, as it had been a while where we saw a Bengals defense allow that much separation from the corners to the wide receivers? Why was Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert able to be so efficient in the first quarter?

"That's kind of how they're built. That's one of the better score groupings in the NFL, and they did a good job with what they showed in protection. He had some time back there to let some of the deeper routes develop where those holes are going to be ... I thought they did a good job on some one-on-one situations. Those guys went out there and made some plays in one-on-ones, and that puts you in a tough spot."

"The lead that we gave (them), you can just see as an offensive play caller, they opened up their whole bag of tricks at that point. They were up 17-0, getting great field position, (and) they're calling all their fun stuff. That put us in a tough spot. I thought, really, our guys — we gave up points, 24 points on the first four drives, if I'm not mistaken — and our defense really bowed up from there. We started taking the ball away, (which) gave us a chance to get back in it. It gets to 24-22 and then the fumble for the touchdown kind of breaks it open, and that's just the way it goes."

"We had our opportunities there in the fourth quarter, but once that happened, it just kind of went (downhill) when we gave up a couple of scores so easily. We turned the ball over twice after that."

Any particular reason you were so sloppy today?

"It was everything. When it's everything, it's 100 percent me. We certainly focused a lot after we get these big wins on looking for things that might pop up in the week, (but) we've got a great team. There's no secret here. When you turn the ball over four times — four times — you're probably not going to win a football game. It's as simple as that. I'm not going to make it more than it was right there, but that's a pretty easy answer."

This team has had an edge coming off most losses, but is stacking more than two wins in a row just part of the growing process for this team?

"That's a hard one for me to answer because we come into every game expecting to win. We just didn't do the things we needed to do to win (as) players or coaches. It's that easy."

Between running back Joe Mixon's fumble and wide receiver Ja'Marr Chase's drop that turned into an interception, is there anything different you guys could have done on those plays?

"No, not really. Chase has got some of the best hands in all of football. It was kind of a quirky play, how it played out with the interception. I'm assuming it went down as an interception. And then Joe Mixon's got as good ball security as anyone in the league. Maybe they just got a punch out, or he was switching hands — I couldn't see what happened — and of course it just bounces right to them and they take it in for a score. (Our) guys typically do a really good job with that stuff, and it didn't work out (today)."

There were wild momentum swings in the game and with all the injuries you were facing, especially on defense losing linebacker Logan Wilson. What did you think of your defense's effort in the middle part of the game?

"I think there are some positives we can take out of this thing; we're not looking to take many of them out. A lot of guys got in there and held the fort down, especially at linebacker, at corner and (then) harkening back to special teams. A punt (comes around) and you

lose two linebackers and now you've got to move a lot of people around on the punt team.

"I think that our depth did a good job coming in there and holding the fort down and giving us a chance to get back in the game and that's just a credit to all 53 guys that we have on the roster and all the guys making sure that they're ready, because you never know when you're going to get that opportunity (to play), and that's certainly not the reason we lost. Those depth players, they stepped in there and did the best they could."

Do you have any injury updates on the defensive players that went down today?

"No, not yet."

What do you think about the way Isiah Prince and Trey Hill played stepping in on the offensive line today?

"We'll have to see. The protection overall wasn't good enough. That's not 100 percent on the offensive line; there were some communication there that's got to take place. Sometimes the (running) backs were a part of that as well, (and) sometimes it was the offensive line. We'll just have to watch the whole thing.

"Again, when you put yourselves in a hole like that, you let them get into the fun stuff on offense — I talked about them getting into the fun stuff on offense, and they got that big lead and we saw some of the looks we saw on tape because they had the lead and knew we were in a passing situation. Really, we put ourselves (in a hole) early. It's frustrating, because we had some third-and-longs when we had efficient plays. We got two penalties early on from our center and right tackle off of good plays that put us in a tough spot, and that's just going to be part of the group of guys coming in. We've just got to learn from that and move on."

I can't imagine you just make a list of things from a game like this and say, "This is what we've got to fix." How do you mentally reset after a game like this where it feels like so much did go wrong?

"We have to watch the tape, quickly make the corrections and move on. We've got another good team coming in here on Sunday. Again, just the turnovers ... The first drive of the game (with) a potentially explosive pass, and we're down 9-0 to maybe put us down 9-7 if he scores there. We turn around later in the game and have a fumble for a (Chargers) touchdown by the defense, and then we have an (interception) in the end zone.

"There were a lot of good things that happened. We had our opportunities to go grab this game and put ourselves back in it. And I'm a big part of this; I was not my best today and I didn't give us a chance to win ... I know our players will go through it too, and there's corrections we have to make, but I can promise you this — it will be a rough night for all of us."

What was it like in the locker room at halftime?

"Guys believed (we could still win). We were down 24-13 with the ball (to start the second half), so there wasn't any overreactions. We knew that we had done literally everything that we could have done poorly in the first half to give them the 24 points and put ourselves in the hole, and we were still only down 11 with the ball. Then we went out and scored 3 points to start the (second) half and were down one score. Our guys believed, and those are the positives we have to take out (of this game).

"We crawled out of it and we were down 24-22 in the fourth quarter, and we just didn't finish it out."

It seems like you're taking this loss harder than others this year. Why is that?

"I think we're all just ... it's frustrating for everybody. We take a lot of pride in clock management and situational football. That's inexcusable the positions I put us in (today)."

When you're trying to figure out what's going on with an injury like Burrow's today, are you just waiting for someone to give you an update? How does that process work?

"I just go directly to the source."

You walked to him and asked if he was OK and he said, "Yes," and that was your only communication with him?

"Yeah."

How much does consistency matter regarding consistency in this league and where is this team right now in terms of its own consistency in play, practice habits, etc.?

"I think our consistency is as good as I've ever been around. The games are a different animal, but if you talk about (being) in the building and at practice, I don't have any negatives to pull from with this team. I wouldn't give that answer if I felt like I was just saying it to just say it. It's the truth. That's why there's such a belief we can overcome a tough game like this because our guys don't ride highs and lows of the week. They don't run the highs and lows of the wins and losses. They're able to regroup and become the same guy (now) that they were in (the beginning of the season) when they come back in the building. We're able to put stuff behind us, and that's where the belief comes from, from me and all the players, that you're going to see up here and any coaches that you speak to. We'll be able to quickly overcome this and put this one behind us and just think about it tonight, correct it tomorrow and move on."

JOE BURROW

Quarterback

How did you injure your hand, and how did it affect you throughout the game?

"I dislocated it on that first series, on the sack-fumble. So it was just something I had to play through. That's what football is — you've got to play through injuries sometimes."

Did the injured hand begin to bother you later in the first half? Did something else happen to it?

"I don't think I really noticed what happened in the beginning. I think my adrenaline was pumping a little too much. And then as it went along, it got progressively worse a little bit. But I was able to play through it."

Why did you opt against taping or putting a glove over the injured hand?

"It was a decision of, 'Make it feel better, or continue to somewhat throw the ball.' So I decided to be able to throw the ball."

Was the first half the most frustrating half of the season?

"I mean, the whole game was frustrating. It's tough to win when you play like that. But we still had chances that we didn't take advantage of."

After the injury, did you think you would need to come out of the game?

"No, it never crossed my mind."

Did trainers bring that idea up?

"No, not really."

What happened on the interception in the fourth quarter?

"I was just trying to force it, trying to make a play. He made a good play."

Do you envision the severity of the injury being an issue this week?

"It's just something I'm going to have to deal with. I'm not going to miss any games because of it. That's not something that's going to happen."

Is the injury to your right pinky finger?

"Yeah."

Why has this team struggled to win more than two consecutive games?

"Just not executing in the third game. It is what it is. We're going to come back to work. We're still 7-5, so we're in the hunt. You're going to lose some games, it's about how you bounce back."

Why are you so sure that you'll be able to play next week?

"I was able to finish the game, so unless it somehow gets worse — which, I can't imagine it's going to get worse — then I'll be playing next week."

Did you feel like you had your usual 'zip' on the ball?

"I felt like I was able to compensate for what was lost. Probably not as much 'zip' as I normally have, but I think I was still able to throw the ball effectively."

What was the communication like between you and head coach Zac Taylor on the two-point conversion attempt where you got a delay of game, as well as with the clock management problems at the end of the first half?

"The one before the half — that one was partly on me. I was yelling 'clock,' it was third down. Just a miscommunication on all ends."

What about on the two-point conversion attempt that turned into a missed extra point?

"It was just a miscommunication. Sometimes those things happen. It's nothing to be alarmed of."

How do you and the team mentally reset after today?

"The same way we have all year. It's nothing that we haven't done. We lost a game. We'll watch the film, improve what we can improve and get better every week in practice. We're going to have another great week in practice like we always do. So, I'm excited to get back out there."

Did you feel that the energy was low going into the game?

"No, I didn't feel that way. In that first quarter, everything that could go wrong went wrong. I was proud of our fight. We had the ball in plus-territory with a chance to take the lead, and we have another turnover. But, we fought back. There's not any moral victories, but we put ourselves in a position to win that game."

During the injury, describe the decision you were making to either use or remove the glove ...

"I was just trying to figure out something that would work, but eventually it just kind of swelled up on me. That kind of eliminated the pain a little bit in that second half. I was just trying to do anything I could to go back out there and play."

Did the training staff do anything to your finger?

"Yeah. We tried tape, we tried a glove — we tried all of that. But eventually I just said, 'To hell with all of that, I'll go out there and make it work.'"

Did they pop it back into place when the injury first occurred?

"I think it did it on its own. It's tough to tell."

When did you notice the injury to your finger?

"I noticed it looked a little funny when I came off the sideline, but I thought I just jammed it at the beginning. Then, I started to feel a little symptom of dislocation later on in the half, so that's when I kind of figured what happened."

Have you ever injured your pinky before?

"No, I don't think so."

Did somebody pull it? Is that how it was dislocated?

"It happened on the sack-fumble. It just hit my pinky."

Did you talk to Justin Herbert after the game?

"Yeah, we just told each other that it's a lot of fun watching each other play. He's a really good player that I have a lot of fun watching. I like watching good quarterbacks go out there and operate, and he's a really good quarterback."

TREY HENDRICKSON

Defensive end

Opening Statement ...

"This is the NFL. They are a talented football team with a talented quarterback. We knew that coming in. It's football. We took their best punch. We ate it pretty well. We're a resilient football team. At the end of the day, we need to win these kinds of games."

What was the difference in why were you able to stop them and score 22 unanswered points after falling behind 24-0?

"We had great halftime adjustments. We were doing the right things toward the end of the second quarter as well. We have to stop taking those shots that were hurting us. Moving forward, I feel like our defense is going to respond properly."

Do you take it personally when an opponent runs up 41 points?

I think that's pretty self-explanatory. Nobody in the NFL wants to give up 41 points, especially our defense."

What kind of adjustments did you make to stop the Chargers over those five drives in the middle of the game?

"We had to set the edges up front. There were a couple of back-end adjustments that we made. And pressuring the quarterback — he had too easy throwing and running lanes. We started to make adjustments before halftime so we could take control."

Can you recall playing in a game like this with so many back and forth scoring runs?

"Yes. In a game like this, how you respond is really important. I didn't see anybody hanging their head in the locker room. We can't have those kinds of errors if we want to go where we want to go. The resilience of this football team is what I'm confident in."

What did you think of your quarterback playing through an injury today?

"He's a tough football player. You never want to see your quarterback get hurt. He's a hell of a football player, and I have a lot of respect for him."

TEE HIGGINS

Wide receiver

How are you feeling? What did you injure or hurt?

"I feel pretty good. It was my ankle. I tweaked it. It's nothing ice and stem can't fix."

Were you aware of the injury Joe Burrow was dealing with during the game?

"Yeah. I saw him getting checked on the sideline. I let him be. He could fight through it and finish."

What does seeing Joe Burrow battle and deal with his pain tell you about him?

"He's the guy that's never going to give up. He's always going to fight for his team."

What did you see going on as your team fell behind 24-0 in the early going?

"Turnovers. We started slow. We can't have those turnovers. We have to start fast."

Why do you think you guys can't seem to start fast this year?

"I feel like there was no energy early in the game. Our energy was indifferent. We need to go back in the lab and come back strong next week."

What was it like when you scored 22 straight points?

"We felt we were going to finish strong and come all the way back. But we had another turnover and the game changed again."

JOE MIXON

Running back

What happened on your fumble?

"I don't know exactly. I didn't see the film on it yet. I remember a twist game inside (from the defensive line). I don't know if I had the ball all the way yet. It was a turnover that shifted the momentum. I take full responsibility for it. At the end of the day, that shouldn't happen. I take full responsibility for it. I have to do better at ball security."

How surprised were you to fumble? Your last fumble on a carry came a year ago against the Chargers ...

"It's the simple fact that it happened. That doesn't happen, usually. I have to go back into the lab and take care of the football. Learning how to shift and doing the little things is what gets you beat."

How did it feel to see Joe Burrow finish the game at quarterback, given his injury?

"Other guys got banged up today. We played all four quarters. We aren't going to let it affect the team. The best thing we have going right now is that we get to live to fight another day. So, we have to come ready next week. We have to prepare for San Francisco. We have to come back and get ready to go."

Last year, you said you watched your fumble 100-plus times. Will you do that again after this fumble?

"I'm going to watch it to see exactly what happened. I don't know what happened all the way, so I have to figure it out and do the little things. If there is nothing that I could do, I put that on me. I need to watch the film and figure out what happened."

The offense was on a roll before your fumble. Did you feel the game was going your way before the play?

"We had the momentum going there. That was a big fumble. I take full responsibility on that. My teammates count on me, and I let them down a little bit. I have to learn from it and move on. It doesn't happen often. I have to take full responsibility on that. I have to be better."



CHARGERS POSTGAME QUOTES

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L.A. CHARGERS AT CINCINNATI

BRANDON STALEY

Head coach

What was your overall assessment of today's game?

"This is a really good team. We came out with a lot of energy, played with a purpose and played the way we're capable of playing. Our execution and our energy was fantastic in the game, and then there was the middle stretch that was tough for us, which was completely our doing. But then in the fourth quarter, we finished the game playing our best. It was 17-0 in the fourth quarter. We finished the game playing our best football as a team, and I really liked the way we executed in the fourth quarter to really put that game away. I felt like it was a team win in every aspect."

How good does it feel to have a day like today with the defense forcing four turnovers?

"It's been an emphasis, and we felt like we've been getting close. You all know that. I've seen the improvement in our defense. There's been some uneven times, as you guys know, but I've seen the improvement. Today was a little uneven at times, but our guys played extremely hard. We were outstanding against the run against a really, really good back. We defended in the passing game. And I really felt we rushed the quarterback at a high level. It was all hands on deck in pass rush. Whether it was a four-man rush, five-man rush, I really felt like that rush came alive. And then the takeaways were huge. Any time you force a fumble, score on defense and then in the power-red area get an interception, you're going to have a great day. Our defense won the day for us today, because in that second half when it got tight, we had some really big stops. And then we finished the fourth quarter with a 'bagel.' I'm just really proud of our defensive staff and players."

What's the injury update on DE Joey Bosa, and how did it change what you did in the pass rush with him out?

"Joey Bosa, he was cleared of a concussion, but it was our decision to hold him back. With his history, we just wanted to make sure. As long as I'm the head coach here, we're going to make decisions like that based in the best interest of our players. But he was cleared of a concussion, so that's good news. As it related to the pass rush, we just activated a couple more groupings. We had some designer groupings there with (Kenneth) Murray, Nasir (Adderley), Derwin (James), and then those guys behind them. Uchenna (Nwosu) was fantastic in the game today. Kyler Fackrell. We saw a young Chris Rumph come alive today, so I was really proud of our rush plan, with Frank Smith (run game coordinator/offensive line coach), Jay Rodgers (run game coordinator/linebackers coach), Michael Wilhoite (linebackers coach). That was critical in the game because Joe (Burrow) is such a fantastic quarterback."

When you talked to Joey Bosa, was he OK with not playing?

"No, he's not OK with not playing. He wants to be out there. He was ready to come out there. I'm just glad that he's good. That's what's most important to me. Like I said, we're going to be making decisions in the best interest of our players' long-term health, and today was one of them."

You mentioned Uchenna Nwosu specifically. It seems like over the past few weeks he's really come on. What do you attribute that to?

"Uchenna deserves so much credit. He's really settled in to his fundamentals and assignment, and he's really made for us. I told you guys that back in the spring time. I really feel like he's made to play in our system. And Jay Rodgers is one of the best coaches I know coaching him, and getting a lot out of that group. Uchenna's been really close to kind of bursting in a little bit, and today was one of those bursts. He's just practiced consistently, he's got real toughness, he's versatile, and I'm really proud of the way he's playing for us."

How important was it to get out to that 24-0 lead?

"The way we came out offensively is our type of recipe. We got the ball to Mike (Williams) in the deep part of the field. We were aggressive in the deep part of the field today, and we had a lot of different types of passes. They turned it up a bit in the third quarter — they've got a good defense over there. They really do. But I really felt like Justin controlled the game today and made a lot of big plays in the passing game. And then we just did enough there in the second half to close it out. I liked the way we ran the ball in four-minute. That's when we're at our best. When we're at our best Mike's touching the ball, and Jaylen (Guyton) and Keenan (Allen)."

Speaking of a detailed passing attack, was that something you felt you could do today heading into the game, or did that sort of materialize in the game?

"We loved the matchups out there. Their run defense is ranked pretty high. They're fourth in the NFL (in rushing yards allowed per game) and they play a lot of deep-man fronts and they have a lot of different groupings. They bring in 'nickel' (personnel) a lot. (Mike) Hilton is such a disruptive nickel blitz. He really disrupts your run game, and their safeties are very active in the run game. Vonn (Bell) and Jessie (Bates) are both really good players. So, we felt we the matchups outside was the way to go today."

You said your message to the team last night was you're the team to beat. When the Bengals started chipping away at your lead, what gave you confidence your team would be able to close it out?

"I know how close we've come, this team. We've been in games like this, and I just felt like the way we competed in practice this week — the way we came on this trip — I knew that we had what it took to finish that game. When it started to get tight, I think you saw how our defense played. Sometimes when it gets tight, your defense has got to win the day. When you're on the road and it's loud, your defense can get you the momentum back by shutting down a really prolific offense, and that's what happened today. And the other thing is that our special teams showed up today in a big way. Today I really felt that, for the first time this season, that our kicking game won us a game. Andre (Roberts) was fantastic. We blocked sections well for him in both phases of the return, and then you saw Dustin (Hopkins) really finish the game with two field goals, and Ty (Long) did a pretty good job punting. Like I said, I really felt that this was a team win, and I felt like our guys were ready for this game today. We played like it."

Any concerns about getting out to a big lead and struggling to finish?

"I'm definitely not good with it. I think that when you're up 24-6 and you've got the momentum, and you turn the football over and lose it, I'm not good with that. That's our doing. Those are moments we can learn a lot from. There's a moment there with Jaylen Guyton on his long pass where he's reaching for the football at the goal line, which I'm not good with. That's not what we're coaching and allowing around here. But there are a lot of moments in there that we can improve from, that we can learn from, that we need to. But I think, different from the Pittsburgh game, different than some of the other games, we had control. We got control and then we put it back away. What I was satisfied with is we shut them out in the fourth quarter, and it was 17-0. We had the opportunity to do that last week, didn't do it. Again, a one-score game in the fourth quarter, and another one today, and you saw what happened."

Did you talk to Austin Ekeler after the second fumble?

"I'm not worried about the guy. Nobody's going to take that harder than him. He's got to know when to say when. The second one was a little unlucky because he splits him on an angle route and just got hit in the right spot, and their defender made a nice play. But we all see when we take care of the football, the score would not have been even close to that."

Up eight and went for two, but had the false start. What was the thinking there?

"Make it a full two possessions, a seven and a three. That's another learning lesson. We talked to the NFL. They pump the clock quick, and you've got to get your offensive team on there. I take full responsibility for that. Luckily, Dustin made the kick and truly made it a two-possession game. But we need to have a better operation."

Joe Burrow was dealing with a finger injury. Did you see that affecting him, or did that change how you game-planned down the stretch?

"No. I knew that we were rushing him really well, so that's more what I was seeing. I our pass rush was really effective. We knew outside there would be a lot of double-wide routes to try and keep him protected. So, they were more looking more at a passing game that we'd have to defend. We've got a lot of confidence in our pass rush. In 40 attempts, I think he was 5.7 yards per attempt today, and we got the big takeaways. He's such a good player, and those three receivers are fantastic, and then that runner is really good, so it's just a quality, quality performance by our defense."

It looked like you blitzed more today. Is that the case?

"I think when Joey went out, that was a component. You know, you're four-man rush is going to look different, so we felt adding an extra guy to the rush and giving them some different personnel groupings to assess, that it would be an advantage. And then again, our guys executed at a high level, and especially in the second half. I really like the way we pressured the passer, and I really felt that defensively, even on the fumble for a touchdown — that was a pressure — I thought our guys executed today."

JUSTIN HERBERT

Quarterback

How did it feel to be on the receiving end of the two-point conversion?

"It was awesome. We practiced that all week. Keenan (Allen) made a great play and was making great throws all week, so I had no doubt about it."

Did you plan your celebration?

"No, it just came naturally."

Was that strictly a two-point call, or a plan for close yardage situations?

"I'm not sure. It's one we practice down tight in the end zone. We probably could have used it in another situation, but that one was clutch for us."

Last week was a slow start, how much does a fast start like today help?

"It's always easier when you're up early. It's obviously always our goal to move the ball. The defense did a great job today coming up with some big stops and turnovers. That makes our job easier."

What did the turnover margin do to help take the pressure off?

"To be able to start with the ball at the 50 or 40-yard line changes our offense. It's much easier to get up and get going. I thought the defense and special teams did a great job of getting us good field position."

You chased down the free safety after the fumble. Are you going to play linebacker next week?

"I'm going to stay away from that. It's an unfortunate play and coach is always telling me to play it safe tackling. You don't really have a choice there though. You don't want to be in that situation, but I'm glad we got the play there."

It was a pretty good form tackle ...

"Yes. Lane Johnson, my high school coach, would have been proud."

Did you hit him with your left shoulder? Was it on purpose?

"I can't remember. I was just going for the tackle."

What allowed you to access the deep ball today?

"We believe really highly in the guys we have. Mike (Williams), Jalen (Guyton) came up with some big catches down the field. Any time you get Jared Cook in there too, it helps our offense so much to get those big chunks. It's a huge momentum shift so it's awesome to see."

Were they playing you differently earlier in the game?

"They did a good job switching up and talking it out at halftime. They get paid to play defense too. They're going to have adjustments, but I thought we did a good job of taking what we got. They were there early and we took advantage of that. As the game wore on we tried to get the ball moving as best we could."

When it was 24-22, what was the mood?

"There was no flinch. It's the NFL. Teams are good. They're going to come back and do everything they can to get back into the game. We have to do our best to limit that. I thought our defense did a great job of coming up with that stop, turning that turnover into a touchdown. It created some separation for us."

That play to Jalen Guyton down the seam, what did you see there?

"It was one of those run-pass options we practice all the time. You have multiple options, and Jalen did a great job of getting his eyes up early. He sat right in that void, I got the ball on him, and he did a great job of reaching."

Is the coaching there to go down and not risk the fumble?

"It's one of those plays that are tough. He ran a great route. We've got a guy like Austin Ekeler behind; we're okay with handing off to him and see what happens."

KYZIR WHITE**Linebacker****What made this game so complete?**

"We knew what we were capable of. Last week we had a bad taste in our mouth. I feel like we let the running backs get too loose in Denver. We wanted to accept that challenge this week. Joe Mixon is a top five back, and we wanted to come out there and shut them down."

What was it like on the field in such a crazy game?

"It's a momentum game and we know that. We know they're going to have some runs. We tried to limit the big plays and regroup. We wanted to lock in and finish out strong."

Uchenna Nwosu came up big with a few sacks ...

"I'm happy for him. He's been heating up the past few weeks. I'm happy for him."

What have you seen from him lately?

"He's just playing free. He's not thinking, not worried about anything. We came in together, and sometimes you can be worried about your future a little and psych yourself out."

Did Joey Bosa going out change the approach?

"It's a next man up mentality. Joey is a great player and we want him out there but the guys behind him knew they'd have to step up. You see Chris Rumph come in and grab a sack. That was huge."

How much of a point of emphasis was stopping the run game this week?

"We feel like we do a good job with stopping the pass, so we know teams will attack us in the run game. We haven't been putting good things out there in the film consistently. We'll show flashes that we can stop it and then be off here and there. We know we have to lock in all game and for the rest of the season to get to where we wanted to go."

MIKE WILLIAMS**Wide receiver****You were able to connect on long passes better today. What made that possible?**

"We always throw some shots, we were just able to win the 50-50 balls today. Herb (Herbert) gave us a lot of opportunities and it worked out in our favor."

What does this win against a team in playoff contention mean?

"It means a lot. Every week we preach about getting to 1-0. Going on the road, we wanted to find a way to win. We'll watch the film and get better from it next week."

What was the mood on the sidelines when the Bengals were coming back?

"It's the NFL, teams can go on runs. We wanted to keep the lead and get a win. That's the main thing."

Does it get you excited when the coach is emphasizing your matchups on the outside?

"Yes. We feel like we always have a good chance with the guys in that locker room. We preach that every week; putting the ball downfield. We took some shots early then they played a lot of deep coverage after that."

Did you know they you were going to have a lot of single coverage on the outside?

"We had a pretty good idea how they were going to play. Those guys in the secondary had a pretty good game against Pittsburgh. They were on top of their game, so we knew they'd come out with some swagger and try to make some big plays. We needed to make our plays on our end and control what we could control."