



BENGALS POSTGAME QUOTES

SEPT. 15, 2019

SAN FRANCISCO AT CINCINNATI

ZAC TAYLOR

Head coach

Initial Comments ...

"That's a loss that we need to own. We were not good in any phase. On defense, we didn't tackle well enough. Offensively, we killed ourselves with penalties early on. We didn't take advantage of the opportunities they gave us. We had a couple special teams miscues as well — some of those kickoffs got brought back by penalties.

"This is not something we're going to run from. It is what it is. We got blown out at home. We could say it was frustrating, but we will not allow our guys to hang their heads. This is one game. We have 14 more to go. We have a tough one next week at Buffalo. We can't waste one second feeling sorry for ourselves because no one else is going to do that. These guys will rebound. We have great heart in this locker room. We all know that this is not us — this is not what we're about. We're a much better team than that. We expected to come out and play much better than that, but we didn't, so there are no excuses to be made. We need to turn around next week. No one is going to feel sorry for us. I feel bad for the players because we put in a great week of work and we felt good with where we were at, and we just didn't do it. That's just the way it is. We'll turn it around. We have another big (game) next week."

Do you throw away the film after a game like this?

"No. There are way too many corrections to be made. In Week 1, we didn't have a lot of mental errors. In this one, we had a lot of mental errors. That's just not what we're about. We didn't see that coming. It is what it is. We need to make those corrections. We need to be better as a coaching staff and as players, and it's on all of us. Nobody can look at themselves and say, 'I did my job.' Everybody can look at that game and improve."

What was the biggest problem in this game?

"On offense, it was the penalties early on. On defense, we need to tackle better. We couldn't stop the bleeding in the first half. They kept moving the ball. They rushed for a ton of yards — six yards per carry — that's tough. Especially the 49ers, they can run the ball on first and second down, then it opens up all the play-action screens and some of the things they can do to really keep you on your heels. Then it's tough to get pressure on the quarterback when they're reeling like that. When they can play with the lead, they're going to be a tough team to beat, and we gave them a lead early. On the first possession of the game, we were backed up because of a penalty. We didn't execute on the first two plays. Right off the bat we made mistakes, and then it was seven to nothing before we could get going. We just need to do better in all three phases, especially in the first quarter."

Why were the 49ers able to run the ball so effectively?

"We need to tackle better. We need to get off blocks and we need to tackle better. They're a good rushing team. They invest a lot of time and energy (in rushing), and that's always been their forte. We need to do a better job of getting off blocks and making tackles."

Was there something intangibly wrong with your defense today?

"No."

Did the defense's mental errors lead to open receivers in the secondary?

"We just need to be better with our eyes. They do a really good job with the play-actions off the run game. When they're running the ball so successfully and you're hell-bent on stopping the run, that's when they pop one on you over the top. That's where you saw that come from."

How would you describe the way you and your staff prepared the team for this game?

"We felt like we were prepared. The players bought in. We had a good plan on both sides of the ball. I had a good feel for what (the 49ers) were going to do both offensively and defensively. They didn't do anything that surprised us. We just didn't make the plays that came to us. 'Embarrassing' isn't the word. This is football. It's going to happen. You're not going to play your best game sometimes. We just need to learn from this and not let it happen again."

How tough was it to hear boos from the stands?

"We're focused on ourselves. We were playing poorly in all three phases. It's not anything to be excited about, if I was a fan in the stands that paid money to come to this game. It's on us to fix the issues that we have and play better, and the fans will rally behind that. Right now, we didn't give them a good enough product to be excited about."

What was the team's biggest issue in this game?

"Tackling and penalties right out of the gate in the first quarter. We let them take the lead, and that's a good team when they're playing with the lead. They can be sound in what they're doing defensively by keeping everything in front of them. Offensively, they have all facets of their game open. We needed to get out a lot quicker than what we did. We just started slowly in all three phases. The penalty on the opening kickoff, the mistakes on the first two plays, we're backed up, we punt and they score a touchdown. That's not the way we envisioned starting the game."

Was OT Andre Smith's removal in favor of OT John Jerry injury-related?

"Andre got hurt in the first half, so we threw John Jerry in there."

Was the defense confused as a result of San Francisco's misdirection plays?

"We need to get off blocks and make tackles. That was the biggest thing in the running game that I saw. It wasn't anything that we hadn't seen before, but we need to be physical and get off the blocks and we can't miss open tackles."

What is your level of concern in the Bengals' running game?

"It wasn't good, obviously. Starting with that third drive, the penalties killed us, so we were behind the sticks. We really had to throw the ball to get back on track, because if you get a four-yard run on first-and-20, on second-and-16 we're not in a great spot. Some of those first couple third downs we were third-and-19, third-and-22. They're scoring touchdowns when they get the ball. It was getting to a two-possession, three-possession game quick in the first half. That's not what we want from the run game. We need to be better. We need to win our blocks. On some of our combinations, they split our combinations and hit our backs in the backfield. We just need to do better in all phases on offense."

Is there an injury update on OT Michael Jordan?

"We're hopeful. I don't know the initial diagnosis yet, but I know he came out of the game and couldn't return. We'll find out a little bit more tomorrow."

How would you assess the Bengals' defensive energy?

"Last week, we did a better job getting early stops and getting off the field, and then you can play with a little more energy. In this game, that just wasn't the case. We didn't get the stops. They got a lot of first downs. They had a good rhythm on offense. We didn't have a good rhythm on offense or defense, because they took it to us. We didn't respond in the way we expected to respond."

Were there any problems with effort?

"Not that I saw. That's something you watch on tape. I'm not discouraged with the character of our guys. When I'm walking around the sideline talking to guys, looking in their eyes, I'm not discouraged. There is no quit in our guys. We just need to be better. We need to learn from these mistakes. We need to be better. I know that's a frustrating thing to hear. I didn't see anybody quitting. I saw the right attitude. We just have to play better."

Do injuries limit what you can do on offense?

"Every team in the NFL can make that excuse. Every offensive line in the NFL is beat up already in Week 2. You see it around the league, so that won't be an excuse for us."

As a coach, how do you get players mentally focused?

"These guys believe in themselves, so I don't think it's going to be a challenge to get them refocused. On Tuesday or Wednesday when they come back in the building I don't think that'll be a problem, with what we've seen from our guys so far. Now, it's just regrouping, learning from those mistakes and not letting them beat us again next week. It'll be a different opponent with different schematics and we just have to rebound and play much better."

After two games in the NFL, have you stopped to think about holding the same position as many legendary head coaches?

"I need to get better. You learn from your experiences, and so far, through two games I have learned a lot but I still have a long way to go. Again, we aren't pointing fingers at anybody. I should be pointing a finger at myself as much as anybody else in this locker room. Again, we can all make improvements. I'm going to be better every week to give these guys the best chance to win the football game. It's on all of us to band together."

How important are these first few games in establishing team culture?

"We worked to establish that over the last six months. We knew there would be adversity. We didn't plan on losing 41-17 in Week 2 at home. That's not something we planned on, but it happens. The important thing is that there's still a lot of football left to be played. We can't let the 49ers beat us twice. We need to rebound. We have the culture and the foundation established where guys can respond right away."

ANDY DALTON

Quarterback

How would you sum up that performance?

"Poor. It's not how we wanted to come out and play today. They took it to us today, and it's disappointing. It's not the team we have. It's not what we wanted to show today. And, we know it's not a representation of what we've got here. They deserve all the credit — they came here and hit us in the mouth. They had control of the game from the beginning, which is unfortunate because we felt going in that we had a good plan and were going to handle it very well. We just didn't get it done today."

You had a decent start, but did you start to feel it slipping away from quarter to quarter?

"We didn't really get in any rhythm — that's the thing that was tough. We'd have a good play, a positive play, and then we'd have a penalty and we weren't able to overcome getting set back. We had way too many third-and-longs. When you do that, you're making it hard on yourself. That's what it comes down to."

Since training camp, we talked about how you all were shuffling some of the guys on the offensive line due to injuries. Does that make it hard to get into a rhythm?

"We expect whoever is in there to get the job done. Would we like to have one starting five play the whole year? Absolutely. I think that's how everybody wants it to be. But that's not this game. We know injuries happen, so guys have to step up and play. Whoever is in there has to get the job done."

Through two games with Zac Taylor as head coach, how do you feel about how the game operates?

"These were two completely different games, obviously. And, two different game plans. There are some positive things that we've done offensively, and some things we have to be better at — things that I have to be better at. We have to look at the film and what we did today and see where we need to make the corrections."

What do you like that you've done so far?

"We've done some good things. We've had some big plays. At the end of the game, we had two receivers with 100 yards. There's obviously some guys making some plays in there. But we don't have that yardage when it doesn't matter. We've done a lot of good things in this offense so far, we just have to put it all together and find a way to win now."

Throwing to Tyler Eifert must feel like old times ...

"Yeah. It was good for him to get that touchdown. With everything that he's been through, he's done well. He did a great job on that play."

What is your role this week as a captain to bring this team back from this big loss?

"We have to move forward. It's all we can do. We have to realize that this is not the standard of play. We are a lot better team than what we showed today. So, there's go to be an extra focus this week. We have to have attention paid to all of the little details as we go into next week for this game plan. We have to be ready to go. We set ourselves back. We're 0-2 right now. We need to find a way to get into the win column. If we can do that next week, we put ourselves in position to get some momentum and go from there."

You were chasing the game for the most part today. Does that affect personnel?

"They played well. That's what it came down to. And we did not. It's as simple as that. As far as positive things — we didn't give up all the way down to the end. Even with the game out of hand, we were still doing things to try to get positive plays and get points. That's what it comes down to."

On offense, there were a lot of errors. Do you attribute that to nerves?

"No. It's just not getting the job done. That's what it comes down to. When you have an assignment, you have to do it. And you have to do it within the rules. It's unfortunate with some of the penalties that we had, but we have to get that fixed."

Joe Mixon said he was frustrated by fans booing. What are your thoughts?

"It's one of those things where we want to put a good performance out there —something they can cheer for. I've never understood booing; I don't know what that accomplishes. But, at the end of the day, we have to play better and give them something to cheer for. We want the fans to be behind us, and we want the city to be behind us. We want the support from them. It only gives us an advantage. We want a home field advantage. When you're here, they can be loud when the defense is on the field. It makes it hard for an offense to operate. So we want the fans to be involved with everything we're doing. They're a big part of this city, this organization, and what we want to be. Unfortunately we didn't play well today and didn't give them too much to cheer for. But we want this city to be behind us."

ANDY DALTON

**Quarterback
and**

TYLER BOYD

Wide Receiver

It was a tough result, despite good days from two of your receivers ...

Dalton: "It's tough. We did have a few guys go for over one hundred yards. There's some things we did well, but for the most part we didn't give ourselves a chance."

How do you move forward?

Boyd: "We just have to keep believing, working and fighting. Sometimes things don't go as planned. We have to keep scheming plays, and make sure we execute better."

It's tough when you're in a hole early ...

Dalton: "We set ourselves back a lot. We had opportunities in the game to get back into it. We knew their offense was doing some good things. We weren't able to make the play that kept the drive going. We'll take what we can from this one, learn from it, and move on. We'll find a way to win next week."

What things are talked about in the locker room talk at halftime?

Boyd: "To never give up and trust each other. We can't quit. We have to trust the scheme and trust the process. We all thought we had a chance of coming back down 14 points at the half. We just fell short."

The start of the game really stalled things ...

Dalton: "It wasn't how we wanted to start. We had a plan going in to start fast. We didn't do that on the first drive. Then they went down and scored on their first possession. We bounced back though, so that was good to get back on track. It never happened after that though."

The struggling running game makes it hard on receivers ...

Boyd: "You have to go out there and find windows. You have to have some feel. It was tough because we didn't establish anything immediately. Like Andy said, we had a great game plan. We thought we were going to come out roaring and scoring like crazy. But it wasn't in our favor, so we have to come back this week and polish up the things we struggled at."

The injuries to the offensive line are tough ...

Dalton: "We can't worry about that. We expect everybody to get their job done. We never want to have injuries happen, but unfortunately have had some on the line this year. But we expect those guys to come in and fight and get the job done."

WILLIAM JACKSON III

Cornerback

What were they doing offensively that was so difficult?

"They came out with a lot of gadget plays. They used every trick in the book."

They ran an offense that made you defend every blade of grass, what's that like?

"It's about having the right eyes and being in the right spot. They clearly play some Madden. We have to come back next week and get a win, and this will blow over."

Does this loss shatter confidence?

"No, we're a connected team. We won't listen to outside voices. We'll come together as a team and do great next week."

What was the halftime emphasis?

"There wasn't any pointing of fingers. We just had to play better. All of us had to play better. I had to play better. We'll work on our fundamentals and get the job done next week."

JOE MIXON

Halfback

How disappointing is this, after an encouraging start against Seattle Week 1?

"It's very disappointing. At the end of the day, we didn't come to play."

Is that controllable?

"Yes. We just have to play better."

How much does this motivate you?

"For me, I have a lot of catching up to do. I have goals for myself and the team that I want to hit. Everybody as a team has to come together. We all have to take looks in the mirror."

Did you get the touches you wanted?

"The game determined the plays called. I can't control that. They came out and jumped on us."

CARLOS DUNLAP**Defensive end****What happened out there?**

"They out-executed us with their game plan."

What were they doing to take advantage?

"They challenged our eyes and leverage. All day."

How frustrating is it to take a step back this week?

"We got punched in the mouth today at home. That's something we pride ourselves in."

Was it a lot of quick snap motions and play actions?

"It was everything. Pre-snap, post-snap, changing gaps and challenging us on the edge."

Were you prepared for that this week?

"Yes. We worked our butts off this week too. They just out-executed us today. I don't think that will be every day, but today they did."

How do you assess this performance compared to last year?

"It's a new year, a new day. That wasn't us out there. We have to go out there and play a whole different way. Today, we have to own that."

What did they do on the edge?

"They challenged us on the edge trying to bounce the ball. They were making more plays than us. I missed some plays early. We have to make plays."

It was a positive vibe last week ...

"There still is. We're not discouraged. We know who we are. We have more heart than that. They just out-executed us today. It's an isolated incident; it's not a snowball effect."

Did it feel like last year at all?

"We know who we are this year. We've worked too hard to change the culture and create a new identity for ourselves. Today we faced some adversity. Tomorrow is a new day."

Did you guys struggle tackling?

"We didn't tackle well and we missed plays. We can't do that and expect to win."

Do these types of losses sting harder?

"Losses are losses. Today, it is what it is. I'm eager to get back to work and fix this. We'll get things done the way we've worked on. Today, they won the day. Simple as that."

Was it surprising to see how well they executed?

"No. Everybody wants to hit us in the mouth. That's what they should do. It's how we respond. We have to make more plays than they do. We didn't help ourselves today with the way we executed the game plan."

How was Coach Taylor after the game?

"He was good. He came in and was still positive. We know what we can do. We know the ability we have. We didn't do any of that today. We played to their game plan. We didn't stop the bleeding ever. That's why the score reflects that. We were playing on our heels."

As a leader on this team, what do you tell the guys?

"We have to look at how you can do better to contribute plays to this team. We didn't make many plays today, and the score reflects that. We have too many playmakers to not make plays. I missed plays early that are big momentum changers. I can't do that, and neither can the team."

JOHN ROSS III**Wide receiver****What are your thoughts after this game?**

"I have the utmost faith in this team. Not for one second am I going to hang my head, and I know no one else will. We know that wasn't our best performance. We know we left a lot of plays out there, and we shot ourselves in the foot. We know it's going to happen. It's Week 2, we still have a lot of games to play. I know we will get back out there and continue to grind and pick each other up. That's what we do."

With the optimism after Week 1, how surprised are you with how the team performed today?

"It was just one of those days. I'm still optimistic. Why wouldn't I be? We are going to do a lot of special things. There's not one

team that is going to go out and perform the same each and every week. In my opinion, there is no way you're going to put up 500 yards a game every week. You go back in and continue to grind it. That's all you can do."

Are you perplexed by the lack of a running game?

"We're working on it. That's all I can say — we're working on it. It's still early. That's all I can say. We're going to have our games where it's going to be like that. I know for sure that when we get it rolling, it's going to be real scary."

How much do you need a running game?

"A lot, apparently. We have an amazing backfield — you guys know that. We'll put everything together and continue to build. It's still early, and there are a lot of things that are still new to us. We just have to continue to build."

What did you see on that first long run?

"I blew it. I slowed down, and sometimes I just need to trust my speed. I got a second chance at the end of the game. The coaches told me, 'When you catch something like that, just run through it.' In college, my coaches always told me to run through the smoke. I got another chance, but I should have broke the first one, in my opinion. I tried to make a move, and that wasn't a good idea."

TREY HOPKINS

Center

When did you feel like this game was slipping away?

"As the game progressed and we started to get our big plays called back by penalties. We were shooting ourselves in the foot — that's how the game got away from us."

How valuable is the game film from a game like this?

"Very. We know some of the errors, obviously, and some of the blatant ones. But there's still some technique stuff that you might not notice when you're looking at a penalty that you still have to go back and correct. So, the film doesn't become any less or more important. It's an exciting thing."

For two weeks, the run game hasn't been there. Can you put a finger on why?

"Today it was more of putting ourselves behind the chains, and putting ourselves in position where we had to throw the ball. Then we got in situations where some of our big ones we were popping were getting called back because of penalties. We had to fight from behind the chains a lot. It's situational football. As long as we can take care of that and get rid of those penalties and things, and we can play on time and ahead of the chains, you can see your whole offense."

How demoralizing is seeing a flag or hearing the official after a long play?

"Football is a play-to-play thing. You don't have a lot of time to think about it. You have to get to the next play and make that one successful."

Do you still have the positive energy after the loss today?

"We're all competitors in this room. You get here by being a competitor. So, obviously it's not what you want. It doesn't feel good — it feels pretty bad, actually. You don't have a lot of time to lick your wounds. Today you might feel bad. You might watch the film today and feel terrible. You come back tomorrow with the coaches and the rest of your teammates, get critiqued, get coached, and then you have to move on. It's Week 2, so that's a positive thing. But we can't put a product like that on the field ever again."

DRE KIRKPATRICK

Cornerback

What do you feel went wrong today?

"They got us a little off. They got us rattled today. We definitely could have communicated better, and executed the plays better. For the most part, they played hard-nosed football and took it right to us today."

Were there any surprises you saw from them or wrinkles that were different?

"They ran a lot of trick plays — a lot of misdirection plays. There are some things we have to work on, obviously. For the most part, to me personally, they just brought it to us. They outplayed us. They just shoved it down us. We couldn't get it going today."

After an encouraging performance last week, a game like this probably wasn't expected, right?

"I definitely thought we would play with a lot more of a sense of urgency. But at the end of the day, it's football. Everything they did today, we've seen before. We just have to go out there and take a good look in the mirror at ourselves, because we didn't play up to Bengals standards today."

Are you more frustrated or disappointed?

"A little bit of both. I feel like we could have won this game. They were the better team today. I'm not going to take anything away from them, they took it to us and we have to own it. We didn't put our head down, we kept trying to fight. That's the one thing I'm proud of."

Is this something that can be fixed?

"Easily. I feel like it can be fixed tomorrow. We're going to go out and watch film and see what we missed. At the end of the game, this is a good tape for us to watch."

SHAWN WILLIAMS

Safety

Is the key to bouncing back from a big loss just treating it like 'business as usual'?

"Never get too high or get too low. There's no reason to jump off the ship and say we're not worth a damn, because I know the work we put in. We just have to put it all together. No one is going to feel sorry for you. This is the NFL. Every Sunday counts. Yes, every Sunday counts, but this doesn't mean we're out of anything. Everything we want to accomplish is still ahead of us. Tomorrow, we come in, fix it and get back to work — just like any other day. Even if we would've won today, there are no perfect games. You come in, fix your mistakes and go back to work. You treat it like 'business as usual.'"

What was defensive coordinator Lou Anarumo's demeanor like on the sideline?

"He was poised. Things got of hand early, and we put him in a difficult situation to make calls. I know it's a lot on him. For the most

part, he stayed calm and tried to make adjustments, and we played football.”



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SEPT. 15, 2019

SAN FRANCISCO AT CINCINNATI

KYLE SHANAHAN

Head coach

Initial Comments ...

"OK, (Joe) Staley went out. He has a broken fibula. (Dee) Ford went out with a quad irritation."

How long does it look like Staley will be out?

"From what I hear so far — we'll find out more tomorrow — but it should be less than eight weeks so I don't think he'll be an IR candidate, but I'll find out more tomorrow. I think it's something he's had before."

So you said it could be less than eight weeks?

"Yes."

What about Dee Ford?

"He had a quad irritation. It happened close to halftime, and he didn't go back in the second half."

Could he have gone back in or were you just protecting him?

"We made that decision based off the lead at halftime."

How significant is the Staley injury?

"Any time you lose your left tackle, it's always significant, especially when the guy who backs him up we lost in preseason."

Will you consider moving Mike McGlinchey over?

"I doubt it. We'll talk about it tomorrow, but I don't see much of a difference. You don't want to have to change two positions when you only have to change one."

Did he get stepped on by Raheem Mostert as he ran by?

"I don't really know. I didn't see it. I just saw him on the ground."

It seems like you had control of the game right away with the sack on defense, and then you go down and get the quick score. Did you feel everything was going right up until the Staley injury?

"I thought they got a lot of momentum back with our interception, I think it was on second-and-long. I thought their team came out playing well. I mean, I know we got that score with the big play to Marquise (Goodwin) early, but then they responded with that turnover. I thought our defense really stepped it up because they got that momentum there, and our defense got them on a 10-yard loss — I forget how — but then they missed that field goal. So, it was a chance to change momentum. We made a mistake and we got it back and went down and scored, and scored in the second quarter and scored in the opening drive of the third quarter, so when you whack people like that, it's nice."

Assume you thought you'd be better offensively than Week 1, but did you expect to be that good?

"You always hope to have a chance to. I thought there were a lot of good looks that the guys had, and they made them — they made some big plays. And then there were some bad looks. We had a couple broken tackles and things like that, where people still got some yards. I thought all the guys played really well and we kept getting the ball back, which always helps too."

As a play-caller, do you feel a rhythm? Can you establish it when you're able to stay on the field like that?

"Yes, the more you're out there — it seemed like, for a while, we didn't have to call a third-down play — which means you're in first- or second-down, so that's going well, and that's the goal. You want that stuff to play off each other. When you get to third-down, everyone in the league is pretty one-dimensional, and when you're getting good plays on first and second, it kind of opens up everything."

It looked like the execution was sharpest in your time here...

"Yeah, that's something I feel like we've struggled with. When we got the right looks, guys were on it. You get the right look sometimes, but it's always hard for 11 guys to do it exactly right. It only takes one weak link on a play. When we got the right look, the guys executed it very well, made the blocks and eliminated penalties. Usually when that happens, you get a big play."

Looking back over the past week, what do you think the team did well in Youngstown that allowed them to have a performance like this?

"The same things we did we did the week before. I don't think you want to overrate just when you do good. It has all the feel of what you do during a week when you do bad — you obviously messed up on the week. Football's a tough game. I thought we competed our tails off against Tampa. We did a lot of good things but didn't quite play as well. Today, I thought was similar. Just to be on the road for 10 days, that adds up. I thought our guys were juiced today."

You said on Thursday you thought everybody felt exhausted, but that you expected them to really improve Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Was that the case? Did you feel they were more energetic today?

"Obviously it's proven now, right? We had a few tips, and a few turnovers, and then that would have been a bad case. That's what science says, and today, it backed it up well, so I'm sure we'll stick with it."

Does that make you more inclined to stay out on the east coast?

"I knew there would be questions after the game, so I talked to (GM John) Lynch and tried really hard to make a decision before the game happened. We felt like it helped us before the game happened. Now, we definitely would have probably changed our mind if that score were opposite."

Do you feel Jimmy Garoppolo is getting more comfortable the more snaps he takes as he progresses?

"Yes definitely. Everyone knows the ability Jimmy has and he's shown — it's not just felt. A guy with talent — a guy who's played in games and shown everyone he can play at a high level — the more he's out there, I'm sure the better he's going to get, even when he makes mistakes, as long as he learns from them. I know it really helped him out today just having a run game. It really helps you be balanced and takes the pressure off of him, takes a little pressure off the whole line in the pass game and it gets you some cleaner looks. I thought, as a team, they did a lot better, and Jimmy did too."

How important were these first two weeks in the big picture in terms of incremental steps?

"It's everything. We haven't gotten off to a very good start here in the two years I've been here, so to start out 2-0, especially two games on the road — and we know we've got some tough games ahead of us; we've got one before the bye week — it was huge. We didn't want to put ourselves in the hole. We know we had two good teams, especially the way Cincinnati played last week, and we knew it was going to be tough. They were two different games, but we're proud of the guys."

Talk about the running back group ...

"We've got a good group and everyone blocked really well. We've got a bunch of guys that can run ball. We're very happy that we were able to keep Jeff around here. We knew it was just a matter of time before we were going to need him. You're never hoping that it's this early, but we knew it was going to be a matter of time. We went through four backs last year, and we've already had to do it this year. The guys stepped up huge. (Matt) Breida, we took care of him in the second half and tried take away some of the wear and tear on him."

Don't want to overreact as a head coach, but is this the most encouraging game for you since you've been here?

"Yeah, in all three phases I would definitely say. I think it's the most decisive win that we've had. I thought we had a pretty good one against Oakland last year on a Thursday night. But overall, as a whole team, I thought it was really good. We haven't had too many games that we felt that comfortable with the last 45 minutes."

JIMMY GAROPPOLO

Quarterback

There were some concerns about the offense from the public after Week 1. Did you feel like you answered any questions about that?

"We've always been ... we want to keep it about us. Throughout this whole week we've been saying if we go out there and execute the way we know how to, and what we've been doing in practice every day, we'll be in good shape."

What kind of rhythm was Kyle Shanahan in today calling plays?

"Great one. Makes my job very easy. His mind is incredible — just how he's two plays ahead while we're running the current play. It makes everything so easy. When he gets in a rhythm like that, it puts everyone in a good position."

How important was it to get the running game going?

"Yeah, the O-line got after them early, and they got after them often. It made everything easier when they own the line of scrimmage like that. The pass game, the run game — everything — those guys dominated up front. It just makes everything so much easier, so you've got to tip your hat to those guys."

How big of a loss is Joe Staley for the foreseeable future?

"It's tough. I just heard about the news, especially with the situation we were in — the game is kind of out of hand at that point — Joe goes down and it sucks. Especially with a guy like Joe. We'll be in good spirits, but it's tough."

On the first touchdown to Raheem Mostert, you got rid of the ball just at the right time. And then the play down the sideline to Deebo Samuel. It seemed like the execution for some plays was as crisp as we seen since you've been with the team ...

"Yeah, we worked on a couple of plays, and that week in Youngstown really paid off, getting us on the timeframe and everything. We had some extra time to be together with each other and talk through things. I thought, as an offense, we were all on the same page, and it makes everything easier."

Was that touchdown pass to Marquise Goodwin something you had worked on?

"Yeah, we've been working on it a little bit. Those are the little details of execution. If Marquise does it perfectly like he did, he's going to be wide open, and we knew that. It's a credit to him and everyone who saw it run, and makes for an easy touchdown."

How much energy does someone like Kwon Alexander bring to the team?

"Yeah, Kwon's awesome, man. He really is. The defense as a whole, it's a different attitude, and I've never been around a defense like that. When I turned the ball over, and they hold them to a field goal and miss it, it just gives you so much confidence in those guys. They played their ass off, and it's incredible."

How much more has your confidence been building as you take more snaps and get more into a rhythm?

"Yeah, just keep moving in the right direction. Each game and practice you try to improve and get better. It's coming along, and (we have) just little things to clean up. I had a stupid interception today, but a lot a lot of positives came out of it."

On the play at the beginning of the second half, you took a hit and completed the pass to Deebo down the sideline. Does that give you more confidence knowing what you've been through to get here?

"It was a phenomenal route by Deebo first of all. He was open by like five yards, and the run-after-catch was awesome. Yeah, it's good to get hit I guess. It sounds weird to say, but it's moving in the right direction like I said."

On your scramble up the middle, were you thinking you were going to slide with your legs or you were going to go head first?

"It was third down. I kind of looked at the marker while I was running, and I thought I'd go head first. If you go feet first they usually mark you a little short so I didn't want to risk that. Yeah, it was good."

When a guy is as open as Marquise was on that first play, is that a hard throw sometimes?

“It’s not hard, but it’s just nerve wracking. Because you’re like ‘If I miss this one, I’ll be on Sports Center Not Top-10 (laughs).’ Yeah, so you want to stick it on him. Marquise is so fast I think I could’ve thrown it anywhere and he would’ve gotten it.”

What does it mean for the offense in the huddle when you have someone like Deebo looking for contact after the catch?

“Yeah, it’s awesome. It’s like having a running back at receiver once he gets the ball in his hands, but he can run routes at the same time. It’s very unique. I love having him, and he’s so raw and still has a long way to go. That’s the exciting part.”

RICHARD SHERMAN

Cornerback

There was some minor grumbling about the offense after Week 1. Do you feel like they answered any questions today?

“I guess they answered any questions you guys had. We knew what they’re capable of. Some games you have those games. This is the NFL — there’s talent on both sides. As you saw, Tampa played a good game on Thursday night. They played great defense, and their D-line was pretty stout. We knew what our offense was capable of. We knew what Kyle (Shanahan) was capable of, in terms of his play-calling and creativity. We obviously know what Jimmy is capable of, so we weren’t really concerned. It’s a team game. If the offense doesn’t have their best game, the defense has to step it up. If the defense doesn’t have their best game, the offense has to step up. Some games you both step it up, and you end up with a great result.”

Last season got away from this team early. Now that you’re 2-0, people are going to look at you as contenders. How does that feel?

“It has nothing to do with us. It’s like you just said — if people are grumbling about the offense, that has nothing to do with us. You’ve got to play every game, prepare, play hard, and treat it like a championship opportunity. That’s what I think our team is prepared to do. Obviously we’ll take 24 hours to celebrate this one, but we’re also getting our minds right for Pittsburgh. We’ve got a tough game — our first home game in front of the ‘Niner Gang.’ We’ve got to be ready for them.”

Were you impressed with Shanahan’s variety on offense?

“Yeah, I’m always impressed with it. But we also deal with it in training camp and OTAs, with everything he presents. He’s one of the best offensive minds in football, so we hold him to a pretty high standard, and he lives up to it. He’s a guy that’s going to give defenses trouble, and he did that again today.”

The first touchdown to Marquise Goodwin — you’ve probably seen that in practice, right?

“Oh, we’ve seen it a lot. The Bengals were running a similar offense to ours, so we’ve seen most of the looks. We’ve seen how the Rams attack, so we were prepared for a lot of their looks. Our D-line played a heck of a game, especially in the run game. I think they had 30 yards or so. You’ve got to give the D-line credit for their pressure and sacks, but also for the way they played the run.”

There was a play down the sideline that Ahkello Witherspoon broke up, and he pointed across the field to you. Did you tip him off?

“No, it’s just love and appreciation. He’s playing fantastic football, and he deserves everything that comes his way. With as much negative attention as you guys have been giving him — nothing personal, obviously; some of it was merited some of it wasn’t — but he deserves all the positive attention he’s been getting. I don’t think he’s concerned with it. I think he learned to be self-aware and self-motivated, and that’s going to benefit him down the road. You can’t ride the roller coaster of how they treat you when you’re playing well, and then when you’re not they’re ready to throw you away. So you can’t ride that emotional roller coaster, and I think he’s learning and staying within himself. He’s having a great time out there. It’s fun to see.”

This is probably looking down the road a bit, but you have road games coming up against Baltimore and New Orleans. As a member of the leadership council, would you be receptive to doing another trip similar to this one, where you stayed in the Eastern time zone all week?

“Honestly, I’m trying not to look that far down the line. I’m just getting ready for Pittsburgh. But once we get there, we’ll address it with Kyle. Obviously we won this game and had a successful trip, so I’m sure we’ll take that into account. But I’m sure they’ll take what our wives have to say, and what his wife has to say, and what the kids have to say. We might be taking a bigger trip with a bigger group of people (laughs), because it would be another 10 days without the family in the middle of December or November — whenever it is.”

JOE STALEY

Offensive tackle

It looked like your leg kind of whipped around on the play where you were hurt ...

“I think I got hit on the outside. We’ll watch it on the film.”

How are your spirits?

“It’s football. It is what it is. I’m really happy we got the win. It was a great road win. I’m going to do everything I can to be part of this team for an end-of-season run.”

What are you going to do while you rehab?

“I’m going to do everything I can. I have a lot of years and knowledge. I’ve always thought that after my football career ends as a player, I’d give coaching a try. Now maybe I’ll have some time to try it. I’m bummed.”

MATT BREIDA

Running back

You had some big runs today ...

“I was just playing football. The offensive line had a great day. I was able to make some plays.”

There was some concern over the offense last week. Do you feel like you’ve answered any questions with regard to that concern?

“Most definitely. I was saying all week that this is the first game we’ll all actually be playing together since last year. We had some guys still knocking off some rust. I feel like we came out today and executed better than we did last week.”

At what point did you know you had this game under control?

“We have that mind-set going in from the get go. You want to keep that mind-set throughout the game without letting up. You have to play the whole game. This is the NFL and nothing is easy.”

How did you feel about the running back rotation?

"It's going great. That was the plan all year. All of us are great running backs and all of us are starters."