



Postgame Quotes
Cleveland Browns at Carolina Panthers – August 8, 2025

BROWNS HEAD COACH KEVIN STEFANSKI

Opening Statement

Lot of good things, lot of things we need to clean up. Obviously you're keeping score, so you want to win these games. I'm pleased with the competitive nature of our guys. Pleased with how hard these guys played for 60 minutes. Plus two in the turnover margin. Usually equates to a victory, so that's just reinforcing how important that is for this football team, for every football team and every game. There's a ton that we need to learn from in this game, and we will. We'll coach off of it, we'll teach off of it, and we will learn from it. I was pleased with how the guys came down here, got that work done in that practice, got that work done in this game, but we got a long way to go. We're just going to get there by keeping our head down and keep working. With that, I'll take any questions.

On QB Shedeur Sanders' performance

Yeah, pleased with Shedeur, pleased with the offense. Again, not perfect, plenty that we can work on, but I thought the guys did a really nice job of Shedeur and operating, the guys making plays, so, again, a ton to teach off of.

On seeing rookies step into bigger roles in games

Yeah, that's the exciting part for us as coaches and their teammates to see those guys perform under the lights and make plays. We see them making plays in practice, see if they can do it in these games. That will continue to be part of this preseason.

On this game's impact on the quarterback competition

We're really just focused on developing our players. We're in evaluation mode. I'm pleased with where the guys are, but I'm not diving into a quarterback competition.

On how QB Shedeur Sanders' lengthy performance helped in terms of assessing where he's at

Yeah, the situations were invaluable for Shedeur, for all of our offense. We got a third-and-one where we had a quarterback sneak. There's just a lot of football, and that's by design with him getting a ton of reps in this game and he'll get a ton of reps next week as well. That's all part of our development of our young players.

On if they went to WR Kaden Davis specifically on both touchdowns

You know, when you call those type of plays, I think there's a lot of options on them, including the quarterback running, so not necessarily.

On if WR Kaden Davis will start next week

Yeah, I'm not there yet. I got to see who's healthy, all those different things.

On if any particular play from QB Shedeur Sanders stood out to him

I thought the scramble, the throw to [wide receiver] Luke [Floriea] where Luke grabbed it with one hand was pretty special by both those guys. And, again, that's the fun part of this sport. That's the fun part of coaching. We get to pour everything we got into these young players and you get to go see them perform.

On running a lot of shotgun and whether that was done specifically for Sanders

It wasn't. Yeah, we can do either. We don't -- we like a lot of things we can do from under center like a lot of things we can do from the gun. It wasn't intentional.

On QB Shedeur Sanders playing under center

Good. For all our guys, there's things that we believe in in terms of technique and how you do that. I think the young guys in particular when they're coming from college, they don't have as much work so I think they're continuing to get better and better.

On LB Carson Schwesinger's and DT Mason Graham performance

Hard to say. Obviously I saw the stats and I saw Carson making those tackles but need to look at it to see exactly -- I know this: It wasn't perfect for any player out there, but I appreciate how those guys compete and those young players, that's the first time putting the uniform on, first time getting out there and some game action. They both got a lot of reps in that Wednesday practice as well.

On If QB Shedeur Sanders surprised him in any way

No, I think we have an expectation for our quarterbacks and we have an expectation for our players when they're playing this game in that position to go operate and make good decisions with the football. Our quarterbacks took care of the football which is no small thing. The guys who touched it had great ball security. Again, zero giveaways is a really big deal and the two takeaways I thought were excellent.

On whether he considered going for it on fourth and short during the first drive

Yeah, you're always -- yes. You need to get your special teams work in as well, so there's times when you want to get a kick in when maybe normally you wouldn't. There's times when you go for it, maybe normally you wouldn't. It's really based on the play and what you need to see from your players and the preseason.

On if the missed extra point is a concern

I think we're always going to be looking at our technique and those types of things but I thought [kicker] Dustin [Hopkins] has been really kicking the ball well.

On some of the strengths that QB Shedeur Sanders displayed

Yeah, I thought there were a bunch of play where the guys were working together. Sometimes, it was in rhythm and we got to a read because we're in rhythm and the protection was good. There were other times we had to make plays off schedule and those are the things, again, when you're at practice, you preach them and you work those off-schedule plays so it was good that those came up tonight.

On if QB Shedeur Sanders earned more reps with the first team or second team

Honestly, I'm pleased with the way Shedeur played. I'm pleased with the way the offense operated tonight. All things moving forward as we continue to practice will be focused on all of our guys' development and getting these guys ready to play for the season.

On how QB Shedeur Sanders handled the nerves and adrenaline

You're not going to make every throw, and, that's part of this game. Any of our young players, we talked to them last night about this first game and the jitters that come with the first game so I thought all the guys handled that well.

On whether QB Shedeur Sanders, was fine with everything over the last 24 hours

Oh yeah, absolutely.

On whether QB Shedeur Sanders is firmly in the mix along with the others for this competition

Yeah, I'm honestly not focused there. I think the guys need to continue to earn their roles. That's what these guys are doing.

BROWNS QUARTERBACK SHEDEUR SANDERS**On what changed**

I would say just the energy. The energy around, I would say the energy around the Browns, I just feel like overall, it was a different spark. I feel like there was a spark. Even though it's a preseason game, typically people don't take those too much serious, but that's our Super Bowl, you know? That's each and every players' Super Bowl. The change is a family thing. It's a family. You got to be able to go to war with each and every guy and understand we're not playing for ourselves here. We're playing for each other, so not making selfish mistakes, not doing that type of stuff, getting through reads, hand the ball off, doing what you got to do. Everybody do their job and that's how we believe in one another.

On if playing more reps in the game than practice helped with his comfort level

I'm comfortable being uncomfortable. That's what it is. I got pockets of finding my rhythm and I got to get into that quicker, regardless of anything, but overall, I feel like me out there, you know? I couldn't do it—of course—without the time. I couldn't do it without the play calling. I couldn't do it without anything. I'm just thankful to even be able to have the joy of being on the field overall and carrying the responsibility of doing the right thing. That's two badges under my belt already that I got out there. I feel like we operated the huddle really well. So, it's just the small details that of course we practice on and we talk about. Towards the end, I'll say we got a little sloppy and we overall are going to finish it up and that's going to be a point of emphasis going into this next week. I was just thankful just to share that moment with everybody.

On how he thought he handled the nerves and the adrenaline

I'm going to be honest, I wasn't nervous. I didn't really have too much adrenaline. It was just getting comfortable. That's all it is. [There were] plenty of games before I felt like I was nervous, but I felt like I knew the answers to the test. When you feel unprepared then you don't feel like you're ready for the moment. I know I'm ready for the moment. Did I play up to par? No, I don't feel like I did, but overall, the main goal was to win and that's honestly what we did.

On his dad Deion Sanders tweeting during the game

I don't even have Twitter on my phone. Y'all get reckless on there.

On if he's talked to his dad since the game

I texted him before the game. I called him, he didn't answer. I said, 'See? This is why I just don't call you.' He didn't answer the phone. He didn't answer the phone when I called, but they have their own fall camp going and everything, so I forgive him a little bit. He sent me a voice message that's pretty cool overall. I don't know if it's still on my phone, but overall, I'm just thankful for the opportunity.

On what he says to the people who believed he wasn't put in a position to succeed

I mean, I think overall in life I don't want anybody to make excuses. I feel like making excuses for whatever situation—you ask God for something and it's there, then you're going to complain about it? So, there's two ways you can look at it. You can look at it and be thankful and take full advantage of the opportunity or look at it like 'Dang, this is what I've been asking for and I'm not prepared.' I would say I have been able to sleep good at night knowing I was playing. I didn't know I was playing until one of those days that was close. I just prepared as normal, but [there was] definitely a switch that kicked in. When you're out there on the field, it's just different. You understand, ball is ball. I never—the ball's never been a problem for me. It's whatever optics or whatever everybody else makes up after outside the game. In the game, y'all kind of know who I am.

On when he felt himself settle in

I don't know specifically when, I just know the feeling overall. That's really the most routes I threw to all the receivers, so I really didn't know. Someone came out the breaks and everything. That's why I feel like a point of emphasis this week is just be prepared even more because I feel like I was straight, but I feel like to be where I want to go, I don't think that was good enough.

On if he can walk us through those two touchdowns passes

I don't even remember the play honestly right now.

On why he said he didn't play up to par

Incompletions. There's incompletions out there that I know I'm able to complete. That's the only thing.

On the one handed catch he threw to WR Kaden Davis

Yeah, I'm just excited for all of them. I gifted a lot of receivers the Prime DT '96s. A couple of them had them on so I just gifted a couple—the main receivers going into this game. I gifted them some cleats. Some wore them, some didn't but I'm like, 'Okay, this is just my little appreciation gift to them,' because they don't be having a lot in stock. I couldn't do everybody. I wish I could. It's great knowing that he's able to come out here and put on a show how he's supposed to and how he knows he can. We still need a couple more receivers and them to be able to get off. The way we were able to run the ball and how the running backs were running, they were running physical. The line was making their blocks and not letting people get back there so I was thankful.

On if he knew the throw to WR Kaden Davis was good when it left his hand

Yeah. That's what I'm saying, it's a feeling. The first one I had 22. It was like eh, but it wasn't me, you know? So that's when it's like you know it, internally. I don't know. What do you do for a hobby? Like what's your hobby? You know when you're going to swing a good one. You know when you swing it, it's going to come out right, so you know that's it.

On if he thinks he has a fair shot to win the starting quarterback position

See, that's—I just think about when I get out there just doing what I got to do, you know? Everything else is not in my hands, so why worry about it? That's like, I don't know. I just don't think that deep into everything because there's nothing you're going to be able to control. So why put energy into something

that you can't control? The most you can do is when you get your opportunity, when your number is called, perform, at least do the bare minimum and win the game. That's what I feel like we did today and definitely things I'm able to grow off of.

On how he's been able to be so patient

God's patient with us as humans. We mess up at times, but I don't feel like he throws us away as individuals. [There are] different things and different life lessons you got to go through, and I haven't went through this situation that I'm in ever. So, it's really just a test I feel like, from God or whoever it's from. It's just a test. I'm just thankful that I was able to see the day of light and get out there and be able to play. They didn't have to let me play. So, anything and everything is good for me. Then the kids looking up, the kids definitely inspire me, of course, more. There's a lot of people incarcerated that definitely talk to their friends that talk to me to tell me my friend from jail was watching you play and watching everything that's going on. The world is so small, and everybody sees everything and I'm thankful to be able to inspire people through everything. A lady just told me now, 'When I'm having a bad day, I just think about Shedeur and I'm saying I'm going to act like Shedeur.' That's so cool to me that I'm some form of inspiration.