



***Cleveland Browns Head Coach Todd Monken
Cleveland Browns vs. Pittsburgh Steelers
Week 4
10-1-26***

Opening statement:

"Alright, great job again by our guys. Resiliency at the end. Big credit to Denzel Ward. I mean, he changed the momentum of the game. We just didn't convert the first drive, and then we had a big play and then stalled, and Denzel flipped it. And then we kind of got things going a little bit, got in a good rhythm. Then we just turned it over in the second half, moved it decent. But a credit to our guys, we actually got the ball backed up at the one, got a first down, really had a chance to end it and didn't. But just a credit to our players, I mean, just never say die attitude. And happy for Deshaun (Watson). Not happy about the sack there at the end, okay. But three straight fourth quarter comebacks, man, really cool, really cool for him and our team. I've said it since I got here, our guys just come to work every day and say, spot the ball. We had a great Monday, and they didn't blink when we did a little bit on Tuesday, trying to speed it up a little bit. And then Wednesday, and we walked through today at the facility, again, they didn't blink. They didn't say, 'why are we doing this? Why are we doing this?' They just show up and work. And so does our staff, they show up and work. And a credit to our staff and the players, that this is what it's all about, is the players, the work they put in, and our staff."

I know you mentioned this a little bit, but how can you just encapsulate or put into words how Deshaun came up off the mat after that first game and put together an amazing run here to get you guys into first place?

"First of all, it's a credit, I'll go back to Deshaun, but to our team. I mean, that was a complete, maybe disaster is a little bit strong, but that's a tough opening game in every phase, other than maybe kickoff return, maybe, other than that. But the guys trusted the process. We got stung a little bit, and our guys responded to that. And, man, that locker room is fun, right there celebrating those guys. Big, big, big divisional win. And so, but Deshaun, before the game, I got a chance to, I was in the coach's office, and I was going over the call sheet with him again, and I said, isn't this really cool? Like, you're going to be introduced last, isn't that really freaking cool? It was only seven weeks earlier, and, right, it's, 'where are we going to go from here, right? The Bills game at home, right? Where are we going from here, where are you going, where are we going?' So cool."

Do you have an update on Mason (Graham)?

"I do not."

And can you talk about the way that line responded losing him, and then Mike (Hall Jr.) goes out, but is able to come back?

"I don't have anything on Mason. Mike, how awesome is that, to come back? Gets hurt, probably going to be out, you're going to be down to two defensive tackles, and Mike comes back. And that's just how our guys are wired, man. They want to play for each other. We've got a tremendous connection. Winning helps that connection, just does. Seeing the fruits of their labor coming to fruition is probably the biggest thing, I think, with anything in life, is the work you put in, you got to see the results. It's one thing to talk about it, it's another thing to go out there and do it. And they did, and they have."

Can you tell us who got game balls tonight?

"Mike Hall Jr., Denzel, Grant (Delpit) for the game winner, Bojo (Corey Bojorquez), who's been kicking the hell out of it, that 81-yard punt that backed them up, Dre (Andre Szmyt) for the game winner and Deshaun."

When you talk about Szmyt, no question about 56 yards? Just go out and put it right through?

"I mean, he said he could make it, so I said, 'well, go kick it and make it.' I said, 'no pressure, but they're going to have the ball about midfield with one of the best kickers in the history of the NFL. No pressure.' I'm joking. I didn't say that to him. I was thinking that, though. I'm like, s---, I hope he makes it."

What was that moment just like for him, seeing him knock that home and be the guy who's delivering the final kick?

"He's in such a good place right now, really, and that's our job to keep him there."

Given that you had to wait so long to get your first head coaching opportunity, for it to start like this, and I assume you still have a long way to go, but how do you feel your journey has prepared you to be where you're at right now?

"Well, first of all, you said it, we've only got three wins, right? But I've said this all along. If you had gotten me at 45, you wouldn't have gotten the best version of me. And this has nothing to do with me, first off, I'm not saying that, I'm very humble, because I've always been around really good players and really good coaches. But the last years, I think that experience has helped. And I feel like I still got juice, still feel like I go to practice and get after our guys, but it's still only three [wins]. And there's a lot of things we can continue to get better at, and we will, because our guys are humble and they're still hungry. And it's really cool, because it means the next one continues to matter. That's all you want to be. You just want to be in a position where the games matter, right? That's what we want to be in, that's what our fans want to be in, and that's what we're going to fight for every day."

Did that opener shape you at all? How you guys played and have you even let yourself think about maybe being three and one at this point?

"I mean, I'm human. I don't go beyond thoughts. If you said that was the way we would start the season after the way we worked, I would have said you're nuts. And if you'd have said we'd be three and one after that first game, I would've said you're nuts. But that's a credit to our players, because all they do is just work. It's them. I mean, they didn't blink. Like I said, that week after was a little chippy, and that was a good thing, they were not happy with the way we played, and sometimes that's good."

This team would have reason to have some self doubt after the last two seasons. But your influence in telling them from the very beginning how much you believe in them, how much of an effect do you think that has had on these guys?

"You'd have to ask them. I can't speak for them, but I've always believed in the players that I've coached, and I believe in these guys. What other way is there? What other way is there than to believe in the players that you have to play for you? I don't know any other way. It makes so much sense to me to believe in the guys you have and the work that they put in. It just seems so simple. Believe in your players."

Can you talk about the way you guys had to beat out that amazing comeback by Aaron Rodgers and all the crazy things that happened at the end. Starting at the one, and all of the stuff that happened, him sneaking for the conversion, and Jared (Verse), and just the dramatic fashion that you guys won this game.

"First off, what a great catch by Jerry (Jeudy). I'm so happy for Jerry. And it probably wasn't enough for a game ball, but for a guy that really isn't starting now, he's a rotational player, that's so cool for him. And it's not easy. Not easy for a veteran player to have young players kind of beat him out, but we needed it in a big time, and that was a big time catch."

Can you talk about Jaleel (McLaughlin)'s first touchdown when he ran in? I mean his journey to get here seems almost impossible.

"Yeah. Great job blocking. He made one cut. The guys on the perimeter finished. Malachi (Corley) was out there blocking. And that was a spark, the interception and that, kind of a little bit like maybe it was at the Bucs with Denzel (Boston) and the catch and the breaking the tackle. And sometimes you need that, you need plays to change the momentum, the field, where it's going, especially with a young team, especially with us, like, hey, let's go. And then you stack some plays together, and you score touchdowns in the red zone, and that gives you a chance."

What about the ice in Deshaun's veins for him to just maintain his composure throughout the game with everything that went on, penalties and young guys?

"Yeah, no, again, a big credit to him. And we still have a ways to go collectively. He does, we do, offensively, putting it all together, being able to stack plays. For the most part, Browns didn't hurt Browns, but we still, too many, too many alignment issues. We turned it over twice. The one was unfortunate, the batted ball, the exchange. What a great play by T.J. Watt. That's dumb by me, to run a zone read at him, you'd think you'd have learned your lesson, over seven times playing them, just dumb."

The offensive line, it kind of feels like their best game cohesively as a unit tonight. How did you feel about their presence?

"Again, we're always under construction, all of us, the older guys and then the younger players that are in there, that are just going to continue to get better. Certainly, there's some things we do schematically to help them, but no, I mean, I think they're going to continue to get better, because the way they work, like all the players we have, with the way they work, they're going to continue to get better. There's no way you can't. There's absolutely no way you can't. But get out there and work."

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Cleveland Browns QB Deshaun Watson
Cleveland Browns vs. Pittsburgh Steelers
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Can you put into words what it felt like to go out there and beat the Pittsburgh Steelers?

"It was electric. It was amazing. From the time we came out pregame, it was super dope to be called out,, hear the crowd and feel the energy. From start to finish, the crowd was in it, the energy of the stadium, we fed off them. To get a big victory against a divisional rival on primetime, this what you dream about. This is what you work for. These are the things that you put that grind in during the summertime and training camp for nights like this. It was amazing."

Was this the most you've ever felt in this stadium?

"For sure. It's hard to think about all the other times with so much going on, but it was definitely one of the best times - if not the best night I've been in this stadium for sure."

What is the conversation on the sideline like with you and Todd after they come down and tie it?

"Really, when they are driving down, you're talking with the coaching staff. If it going to be four-minute, two-minute, going over certain plays. Me and (HC Todd) Monk (Monken) speak before the game and go through the whole gameplan. I kind of already have a jist of what he's going to call throughout the week and just the pregame. Once they scored and tied it up, it's like, 'this is what we practice.' We practice it every week. We practice two-minute every day, so get to our spot. I talked to the special teams staff, and asked them where that landmark is. That's what we were aiming for."

What were your emotions like during the game? A slow start, then a big second quarter, you don't score for a while then you get the win. What was that like?

"That's part of the NFL. You have to ride the waves. So many momentum shifts, they are the best in the world, just like us. They are a really good team. They are going to make plays, and they made a couple of plays that went their way. We made a couple of plays that went our way. We just have to ride the wave until our opportunities came and at the end of the day, whenever those moments come, especially at the end, we found a way to get the W. That's what ultimately matters."

How important has it been to your success this year that you knew that Todd Monken believed in you from the very beginning?

"He believes in all of us. Coach is a player-coach. One thing he's going to instill in the locker room is that he wants everyone to play their best. He wants everyone to be at the top tier. He's going to bring it out. For him to be able to trust me in these moments is major. Coach Monken is awesome, I love playing for him and he's going to always make sure he tries to bring the best of out each other."

How do you feel now - the incredible turnaround in emotion since the Bills game?

"It's all God. I just let him take the wheel and he controls everything else. Nothing changed, I think just being able to show my character, show who I am as a person. Speak the truth, continue to pray and do everything right and live right. Try to win games and play good football. I let him control everything else. It's a great opportunity, great moment. I want to continue to ride this wave with the fanbase, and the city and the organization. We're 3-1, and that's a great feeling. We're doing it for the city."

A national stage watched you tonight, as a player, what is different about you than back in 2024, 2023, etc.?

"I'm healthy. My mental is straight. My emotions are super good. Spiritually, I'm in a great space. We have all four wheels rolling and when they are on the same pace, you can be able to improve and show you're capable of being that special player and person you are. That is pretty much it."

In an interview with Taylor Rooks during the pregame, you said that a few years back it was hard for you mentally to be out there and play. When and how did that start to turn for you?

"I don't know exactly when, but it's no secret of what I went through. I've just been trying to manage, day by day. There were challenges. There was a lot of self talks, family talks, mental treatments that I had to go through. Again, I

am in a great space. That's in the past. I'm moving forward. That was moment where I wanted to be honest to the world. It has been tough. This hasn't been a smooth ride at all, physically or mentally. Every day is a challenge. That's why I say my slogan is "4OVE." It's focusing on victories every day. I gotta win today, and I gotta win this moment as I talk to you guys and go from there"

Jared Verse said in the locker room that this team has a lot more swag. They want to shut other teams up and show around the league that this is not the old Browns. This is a new Browns team. What do you feel exactly has clicked for this team the last couple of days? What is so different about this year compared to any other year?

"Really just the chemistry. We're so young, and we have that mix of veterans that are open to the young guys, and just bringing that energy and that swagger. We wanna just hang out with each other. Defense, special teams, offense, that bond. It starts with coach Monken. He's making sure that we're spending time together. We're hanging out together. We're not separate all the time. Defense is with the offense, offense is with the special teams and vice versa. We're just hanging out, kicking it with each other, spending time with each other, and really just grinding. It brings it out. The young guys are the energy of that locker room for sure."

How is it to be able to deliver that joy and euphoria in the stadium to those fans, and feel everything coming from them?

"It's amazing. This is what it's all about. For the fans, for the city. They pay to come watch us perform and bring joy to them. I think these last three weeks there have been some ups and downs, but at the end, we finish with that joy and those cheers, and we want to continue to bring that. That's why we grind, that's why we strive. Monken preaches all the time "they come out here to watch us perform and bring that joy every time we have that opportunity. It's been awesome."

Deshaun you just said it, it's a young team, the energy, the roster is like 25.5, how has this group so quickly been able to in those clutch moments, be so unwavering and then the offense, how do you help them be in better places?

"Just instilled motivation, belief, hope, discipline, and consistency, you know all these opportunities, and letting these guys know, hey you're going to have your opportunity, like we mentioned last week, you probably seen the video of Denzel (Boston), like you got to slant right, you got to glance, go win. The opportunity is coming, and he's looking me in my eyes and goes I'm gonna win. Those moments like that, talking to Jerry (Jeudy), hey your opportunity is gonna come, I'm gonna need you, and he showed up tonight and made some big catches late in the fourth quarter and third quarter. All these guys are staying positive, staying intrigued in the moment, and just for the opportunities and when they come they take advantage and the veteran guys are making sure the guys are learning and we're teaching them the right way. Its been a big collective and team collective. It has been awesome."

What were you thinking when Andre (Szmyt) lined up for the 56-yarder?

"That was money. I just knew, I knew it was money, he told me the landmark, which was like the 42-yard line, he was like man, you got me a little extra, so he would just line it up and we see it all the time, he's just going to be money."

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Cleveland Browns Players
Cleveland Browns vs. Pittsburgh Steelers
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S Grant Delpit

What's it say about this team? Back-to-back weeks, getting it done when it matters most in the fourth quarter?

"I think it's a testament to the work that we put in. It shows how much we care about this game. Shout out to the fans too for supporting us, it means a lot, it carried us deep in that game."

What's it like being part of this 3-1 team? Is it fun?

"It feels crazy. It feels good to say the least. Winning is fun, let's put it that way."

Do you feel like this team is making a statement?

"On defense, they know what we are going to do. We line up and we are going to play man. The Steelers knew that, they hit us on some awesome plays. But they know that attitude that we are going to come with and they felt it today."

How nice was it to get that interception to seal the win?

"It's very nice taking the ball, always. We're just killing ourselves. We have so many things to clean up. So many penalties on us. A lot of questionable calls, I'm going to leave it at that. A lot of penalties we have to clean up."

TE Harold Fannin, Jr.

This one felt like a statement. Is that how you guys are feeling in the locker room?

"I mean, obviously, feeling good. Beat all the obstacles. We're juiced up, we're pumped. I don't know, just excited, proud of the guys, played their tails off. It was good to see all our hard work come out."

Another game, another trip to the endzone. What's the connection? What is working so well?

"You know, it's simple, practice. Talking through things. I mean, (QB) Deshaun (Watson), got me the ball, I just went out there and caught it."

What was the difference, first half, second half, looked like you guys had a little trouble getting going?

"Just got a little bit off schedule. We just gotta, as you said, first downs, be more efficient."

What were the conversations like before the offense went out there for that final drive?

"I mean, not much for there to be said. We knew what time it was. You know, obviously throughout camp, we did situational. We already knew what the moment was, we just gotta go out there and do it."

(K) Andre Szmyt hit a career long 56-yard field goal. How were you feeling in the moment watching that ball go through the uprights?

"Words can even explain it, man. I'm proud of him, you know. People don't even think about all the stress that goes into it. But every time, he goes out there and does his job. I'm very proud of him, I love him, man, and excited to see him do something that great."

How do you guys approach the external noise and come out here and get wins?

"Just keep coming to work everyday ready to work, and you know, don't settle. Just keep coming to practice and keep working hard."

LT Spencer Fano

What allowed you guys to start running the football more effectively in this one?:

"I feel like, every day we're working on running up the ball and giving different looks to different teams."

What do you think of the Browns and Steelers rivalry so far?

"It's so much fun. It is a lot of fun."

For an offensive line that is so young, what does this mini-bye allow you to do?

"It allows us to recover, for the most part. And get together and continue to work on our craft."

First place in the AFC North right now, how does that feel right now?

"That's pretty freaking cool. Hopefully we can keep it that way."

What was it like inside the huddle on the final drive? Knowing you have to get to a certain spot and maintain your composure through all that.

"I feel like it was just belief. We'd already done it the last two weeks, and so we just believed in that huddle that we were going to be able to get it done."

What does it say about this group, especially given how young you guys are, three straight wins and all of them have come with those kinds of moments? Needing a game winning drive to win it and you guys are able to pull it off.

"I think it's all the credit to the older guys in the room, and our coaches, that prepared us for those situations every day."

WR Jerry Jeudy

As a wide receiver, was it tough to go through the first couple weeks with not getting many targets? Was it tough to deal with it?

"As a receiver, it is always tough not getting the ball, but I just got to do what I got to do. It is what it is."

Jerry, this is the second straight week that Deshaun (Watson) has had the ball with a chance to lead you guys on a game winning drive. What do you guys think when he is in that moment?

"You know, Deshaun has just been doing him. Two straight weeks with the ball in his hands and he has just been executing on a high level. That is what he does."

Jerry, what is different from Deshaun? We have seen the struggles and the injuries. You were with him in 2024, what's different this time around?

"He is just healthy, man. He has gotten a lot of ball time under his belt. Mini-camp, OTAs, mandatory camp, so he has had a lot of repetition with everybody and has been healthy this whole year."

Jaleel (McLaughlin) and Quinshon (Judkins) both finding the endzone and getting the run game going. How important is that and how much did we see in how the receivers were able to produce?

"It is good. It opens up the field for the receivers on the back end. We just have a good duo back there, making plays that opens up the whole offense. It makes the offense a lot more balanced so the defense won't get a step on us. A good run game and a good passing game balanced out like that will just help the offense overall."

Jerry, with the swagger this team has, Jared Verse was saying that you guys have to be the sort of team that people have to shut up. Is that how you view it and what is the swagger with this team right now?

"I mean I feel like everybody wants to win. That's it. Everyone is doing whatever it takes to win. Nobody wants to lose anymore. We are tired of losing and everyone is doing everything it takes to get the win."

RB Jaleel McLaughlin

Were you surprised when the hole opened up?

"No, I work on this stuff everyday, making people miss and like I said, trying to get better and better. So I wasn't surprised, but I was thankful."

Hitting the end zone here, for you, in the long road it took and the unusual journey to be here right now, just walk me through that and what it means to be here?

"It means everything, I just thank God for putting me in positions. I could just thank him, and thank the coaches and thank Cleveland for believing in me. I am very happy to be here, and let's keep doing it man. We are 3-1 right now, we are doing amazing so let's just keep going."

You ever think in a million years when you're running in touchdowns in South Euclid that you would be here today?

"You know what no, I have never been to a Browns game even when I was out and playing right here in South Euclid. But I am here now and man, it is amazing. The fans are amazing, this team is amazing, tight brothers and it is exciting."

S Emmanuel McNeil-Warren

You had a couple other breakups throughout the night. Did you feel like that was just another one of those?

"Yes sir, just attacking the ball, see ball get ball. I should've came out with one of those, but we got an incomplete on them."

I'm sure (CB) Denzel (Ward) getting an interception was a huge moment too, what did you think of him tonight?

"Very good, he is going to play his heart out everyday, every Sunday, every Monday, Thursday we get a dog. So that's what we do, make plays."

K Andre Szmyt

On the broadcast they were saying it seemed like (QB) Deshaun (Watson) said you told him "just get me to the 40".

What was that moment like after talking before that drive?

"He told me what line to get to and I honestly said, 'I'll hit it from anywhere', but I told him 'let's get to the 42, maybe a 60-yard field goal'. Obviously he got me a couple extra yards, so kudos to him. I mean (he) played a heck of a game. These guys next to me, (P) Corey (Bojorquez, (LS) Rex (Sunahara), they make my job easy. The way they execute it, is at such an elite level."

You hit the game winner in Cincinnati last year, but how does this one compare in terms of what it meant and everything tonight?

"I don't think I can process quite making the comparison between the two, but obviously it feels good. Just to hit that touchback right after that. But it feels good. Just take it in, enjoy it with the teammates."

Does a game like this where you come in and hit a kick like that, allow you to reflect a little bit on just the last year, year and a half for you and what your journey has been like?

"Yeah, I try not to think too much about the past, obviously. I said it last week and probably the week before, I just enjoy being where my feet are at, and just living everyday."

DE Jared Verse

How was the crowd tonight?:

"They came with that energy. They came with that energy. They came to help too. They had us lit over there. They did everything they had to do. Got (QB) (Aaron) Rodgers off their snap count, having them messing up."

Walk us through your emotion during the last two minutes of that game?:

"You know, I feel like I was responsible for giving them that two point. You know, Rodgers, he's an old quarterback. He knows the little tricks and everything like that. I got a little antsy, got a little too excited for the play, everything like that. And then, you know, for our offense to go out and do what they have to do, put us in a great position like that, and then you know, GD (S Grant Delpit), to end the game like that. No, it was a great feeling."

You guys had a lot of penalties tonight, kind of let them back in the game. I know it's a short week, it's hard to, but how do you clean those up?

"Yeah, it's just gotta be taking care of that one play. Some of them are getting a little excited, you know, myself included. So we all just gotta focus on taking care of that one play, not anything before that."

3-1, this town is about to go nuts over that because teams that start 3-1 generally play beyond the last game of the year. How do you keep the hype away from you guys?

"3-1 don't matter too much. We gotta get 4-1 now. This is a great win, we needed this one, but 4-1 is our main focus now."

Did you have a message for the offense when they went out there for the final drive?

"I didn't say nothing. I was just quiet. I was, like, let me let them work. I don't want to say nothing to get them off their groove. They been killing them all day, let them keeping working."

What would your message be specifically?

"This isn't the old Browns. We've got new swag. We're a lot more aggressive, a lot more, you know, getting after it. This is something different here. We're going to make this whole city rock."

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Pittsburgh Steelers Head Coach Mike McCarthy
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It looked like on several series it took a length of time to get plays in.

"In the beginning of the game, the first drive was hectic. I think it ended up being about 20 plays. I was talking fast - more than normal. I think once we settled in after that drive that resulted in a touchdown, I thought the communication was solid."

There seemed to be some back and forth at least on the broadcast between you and Steelers QB Aaron Rodgers. It was a little heated at times. Did you feel the communication was fine?

"Yeah. I think the biggest thing - I think Burt (Lauten) said something about something on the TV. Communication sometimes is not the best choice of words, but everybody is competing on the field. I think what's said on the field - the way I grew up in this game - usually stays on the field. That's not the case today. I understand that, but any negative communication on my part, I wish I wouldn't use those words."

Aaron (Rodgers) was on his back a little bit too much. Was that Cleveland or was that him holding the ball?

"We had some protection challenges. They did a good job up front. It was a five-man pressure, man-to-man game. They established that right from the beginning. That's the challenge that we went up against all night. It was herky jerky. When you play those games, it's who is going to make the big play. You have to step out of tackles, you have to separate, you have to give him time to get through the progression. I think it was an aggressive game plan by them. I kind of expected some of it, but I thought it was a very competitive environment tonight, and we were one play short."

How do you explain the discrepancy in the way that the offense was able to move the ball in the first quarter and at the end of the fourth quarter, but kind of stagnant in the middle?

"Frankly, I think that's the National Football League. I think it is games with this level of intensity. I thought the environment tonight was outstanding. It's the best environment I've played in this stadium in my time in the league. I think once we settled in, we made some mistakes. We had some mistakes in all three phases. We definitely have to be better on the road. We've had two games on the road. You can go through the offense, defense, and special teams where there were breakdowns. I think my biggest disappointment that I expressed to the team would be, I just believe that you get what you emphasize in this league. We put a tremendous amount of time and energy into situation football, the calls in those situations. And we came up short when it counted most in the two-minute there at the end of the game. I think the guys did a great job battling through the ups and downs of it. Playing from behind once they took the lead, after we had established the lead early. It's a back and forth division game, which I think is what you'd expect. The situational football I think we've got to be a little bit better."

What were you seeing from your defense in the second quarter that they were able to capitalize on?

"I think it's early. (Browns HC) Todd (Monken) is a very good offensive mind. He's done an excellent job in the league for a long time. He's an established coach. They have weapons. I think they did a good job spreading the ball around. The backs ran hard. I thought they had a very balanced attack."

Did you also feel like you missed a number of tackles?

"I don't know what the number was, but yes we did not tackle well. That was not a positive for sure."

How hard is it to trade someone (Steelers CB Joey Porter Jr.) 24 hours before a game?

"You never hope business gets in the way of your preparation and playing, but it's the modern NFL. It was a situation where it's been going on for some time. As an organization we felt like this was the best thing for us, and we wish Joey well. I never really got the chance to coach Joey. He obviously did some great things here and we wish the best for him in Dallas."

What did you see on Steelers K Chris Boswell's missed field goal? Was it a bad snap, a high snap, or something else?

"I didn't see it that close. I don't have an evaluation for you on a kick."

On the trade for sending Joey, did you get the sense that there were any lingering emotions or effect that this had on the locker room, whether that's in preparation or in taking the field today, just with the tumultuous nature of the situation?

"That's really a question that is specific to individuals, and I can't really speak on every individual. The timing was the night before a game. I'm sure that's what the guys woke up to. It's part of our business."

Were you planning for Joey to play this week?

"We were giving him every opportunity. There was definitely a point there - I want to say on Tuesday - where I definitely thought it was a possibility. We were hopeful and had a rep count in mind. That's what we were working toward."

With Steelers CB Jamel Dean out of the game, how did that impact you?

"With corners, I just know my personal history as a head coach, that's a position that's a challenge. It's a sub-offense, sub-defense league. It has been for decades. Those guys play a lot of football. When it happens, our young guys have to rally and we keep playing."

Can you walk us through the process where there was the pass interference call that ends up reversed because Steelers LB Jack Sawyer tipped it?

"Obviously we felt that Jack tipped the ball, but we were not getting a replay upstairs because their replay was showing the catch at the end of the play. Frankly, the defensive coaches felt that he tipped it, so I had the flag in my hand and we were yelling at Jack. He said 'yeah, I tipped it.' I told him after 'if you tipped it, why the hell didn't you tell us and why did we have to ask if you tipped it?' When that was all going on, frankly I got a clean [look] - they showed it on the jumbotron, so that was when I threw the flag."

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Pittsburgh Steelers QB Aaron Rodgers
Cleveland Browns vs. Pittsburgh Steelers
Week 4
10-1-26

What did you guys unlock during the fourth quarter and the last drive that you hadn't been able to find up to that point?

"DK (Metcalf)."

How do you explain how you guys were able to start on that long drive and then it goes quiet for two quarters and then you come back? How do you explain the discrepancy there?

"I would have to look at the film, but I wouldn't say it was our cleanest game all the way around. They're a good defense so you gotta give them credit. They were getting after us on some of the long yardage stuff that we weren't winning a bunch. I missed some throws I usually hit."

On the communication with the sideline, were you getting plays in late?

"It was loud. Great crowd tonight, it was loud. So some of the calls it was hard to hear."

On the first two-point conversion, it was 21-16, was Jaylen Warren the only option on that particular play?

"There were five guys out in a route so no he was not the only option."

Do you feel like you held onto the ball long? What was leading to some of the pressures?

"I'm going to have to look at the film. It didn't seem like there was a ton of guys running free but I'll have to look at the film."

On one-yard runs like that do you like to do the "tush push" or do you like taking it yourself?

"I felt like there was no chance they'd be expecting that. I just told them in the huddle, 'if I can, this one, I'm gonna sneak it.' They had a shade and a three technique. I was like, 'I can probably get a yard.'"

What kind of an impact does it have on a locker room when you have a player traded the night before a game? How do they compartmentalize that?

"You gotta ask the defensive guys. They were probably around him more often. I thought Joey (Porter Jr.) might play this week based on his practice stuff. We wish Joey well."

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Pittsburgh Steelers LOLB T.J. Watt
Cleveland Browns vs. Pittsburgh Steelers
Week 4
10-1-26

How frustrating is tonight's loss?

"Extremely frustrating. To not sit here 3-1 isn't acceptable. Obviously, it's a long season to go, but we just have to put it together. Even at the end of the game, it was way too easy getting down the field and getting in (field goal) range. Just have to look at everything and move forward."

What were the Browns doing in the second quarter to go up 21-10?

"I have to go back and look at it honestly."

Was it more missed tackles or what the Browns were doing?

"I mean credit to them, they had a good game plan. Clearly, it worked for them. There's going to be situations that we feel like we could have had back or we could have done better. That's what we'll get in the lab about, watch the film, have to get better and get better quick. You can't just move the ball that easily, you can't."

What led to that spark in the fourth quarter?

"Trying to make plays. Just trying not to do too much. Just understand big plays are going to come. Coach (Mike) McCarthy always says that, 'Don't play outside yourself, big plays are going to happen.' (ROLB) Jack Sawyer, hell of a play. RJ (S Robert Spears-Jennings) on the pick too, but clearly wasn't enough."

What was the mood of the team at halftime?

"We always have faith. Anytime you have 8 (QB Aaron Rodgers) at quarterback, you see those guys move the ball up and down the field all the time. We are just trying to give those guys a chance and we didn't do it tonight."

Do you think anything was weighing down the defense?

"No."

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Pittsburgh Steelers Players
Cleveland Browns vs. Pittsburgh Steelers
Week 4
10-1-26

CB Daylen Everette

How do you mentalize what is going on off the field, Joey (Porter Jr.) being traded last night to then running around and you guys playing tonight, you playing extended snaps tonight.

"At the end of the day, that's what happened but I mean we still had a game to play so its not like we have to worry about what stat you're playing, but at the end of the day you still have to play the game so we try to block it out as much as we can."

You guys have played three games without him (Porter Jr.) already but do you feel the added pressure now that he's gone for good?

"I'm not sure, I mean honestly, like you said he hasn't played in the three games and we haven't had him out there but you know, you're counting on the guys we have, making Asante (Samuel Jr.) and myself really really confident."

Do you think tackling was a bit of an issue tonight, especially in those middle quarters?

"Uh some plays, we just got to do a better job tackling and getting them on the ground."

What do you think went differently in the second half where you guys were able to shut them down and only let them score six points in the second half?

"I mean we just saw what was going on, we came into halftime like we know what they got, what happened in the first half, we still got a lot of football to play, so we tried to lock in and execute the best way that we could."

TE Pat Freiermuth

How frustrating is a loss like this for you, especially the way you guys were able to claw back and fight back?

"Yeah, pretty frustrating."

On some of those drives that stalled for you guys, what allowed you to get into a rhythm in the second half to be able to fight back the way that you guys did?

"Aaron (Rodgers) was hitting open receivers and we were getting open for him. Just got to be more consistent throughout the game."

Pat, you guys dropped to 0-5 on Thursday nights in Cleveland, can you put your finger on what it is about this place?

"No idea."

Pat, you mentioned consistency, what will this offense look like when it is consistent, what's going to be this identity?

"Moving the ball more consistently. I mean starting the game on a 20-play drive and ending in a touchdown, that's the way to set the tone on offense, but we need to continue to do that throughout the game and not go through these highs and lows."

How deflating is that too, and just the way you guys were able to start this game and then couldn't find that momentum in the second quarter?

"It's pretty deflating, wish we were able to continue to move the ball on offense, put our defense in better situations, but we got to figure it out, come back next week and go against the Colts."

OLB Alex Highsmith

Do you feel like tackling was an issue here tonight?

"Yeah, I mean there was definitely some missed ones, but like I say, we just got to hold each other accountable. But like I said, I love this group and I know we are capable of a lot more than what we put on that field, like I said. So that's why it's disappointing."

How disappointing is it when the offense goes down and scores towards the end of the game and then you guys aren't able to get that stop there?

"Yeah, it is because we pride ourselves on the defense on being able to make stops, especially in those situations at the end of the game. So, it's definitely frustrating that we weren't able to get on the field at that point."

Obviously, you guys are professionals, but is there an emotional component to some of the outside stuff? A teammate of yours gets traded, someone that you guys have bonds with in that way, especially the hours before the game in the way that it did?

"Yeah. Joey (Porter Jr.) was definitely our brother. A lot of us reached out to him. We know he's going to go be great. We know that we had a game today and we had to strap it up. And so like I said, it was just disappointing we didn't get it done."

Were there times when communication was an issue? It seemed like maybe there were a couple times blown coverages where maybe you guys weren't all on the same page.

"Yeah. I think it just comes back to the detail. We just got to be more detailed. Like I said, we are a lot better defense than what we put on that field today, and we just got to play like it."

ROLB Jack Sawyer

What did you see on the interception?

"I just felt like I was able to get a hand on the ball and RJ (S Robert Spears-Jennings) came up with a great interception. Our offense went down and scored and did what they needed to do. I was fortunate to make the play, but unfortunately we didn't get the W."

That first half, do you feel like they showed you anything that you guys didn't expect?

"There's just things that we need to clean up on our end. They did a good job. They executed at a higher level than we did. That's why they were able to put up points in the first half."

How disappointing was it to have the Browns get in field goal range for the game-winner?

"It's always disappointing when they are able to get in field goal range. They made a couple of plays. The kicker (K Andre Szmyt) hit a deep kick, hats off to him. Obviously, we would have liked to keep him from getting into range, but obviously we didn't. So yeah, disappointing."

I know it was kind of crazy in the crazy moments, but you make that big play, your defense gets the interception. What did you see on that?

"Oh man, I just felt that I was able to get a hand on the ball and RJ (S Robert Spears-Jennings) came up with a great interception and our offense went down and scored and did what they needed to do. So, I was fortunate to make the play and unfortunately we didn't get the W."

How frustrating is a loss like this knowing the way that you guys fought back, knowing the second half you guys had?

"Yeah, I think it's disappointing regardless. I think that obviously we showed up in the second half and made it a game and they made the play at the end to execute with the kick and a tough-fought loss and it goes back to the drawing board to get better every day and get them next time around."

I know Joey hasn't played with you guys yet this season, but now he's officially off the team. Is it tough to kind of block that noise out?

"No, I think obviously we love Joey (Porter Jr.) and it sucks to see him leave, but I think that we were all focused on the game today. We still have a job to do, and I thought that that wasn't a factor at all."

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