



Cleveland Browns Head Coach Todd Monken
Cleveland Browns vs. Pittsburgh Steelers
Week 6
10-18-26

Opening statement:

“What can you say about our guys? Man, It's been the last five weeks. It's been an unbelievable credit to our team, especially our defense. Early on, after 10 points, shutting them out and constantly getting us the ball back and giving us a chance to win. I thought the offense responded better in the second half. We had a couple of drives where we had second-and-shorts and weren't good enough. But for some reason, just the way our guys work and the way they believe, there's just something about this group that makes them special and pretty impressive. And we have a lot to work on, and we'll go back to work tomorrow, but that was pretty cool, just the way the guys fought and to get that big completion at the end, because there were a lot of things that weren't clean enough, in coaching or playing. But our guys are a scrappy group, and they play their rear ends off for 60 minutes, and that'll always give you a chance to win.”

Carson (Schwesinger), he's got the ankle injury, doesn't practice until Friday, but comes up with, not just comes up with the play of the game, maybe with that strip of Derrick (Henry), but 13 tackles. Just how much does he sort of epitomize this overall team, the grit you've been talking about?

“Well, we had a lot of guys that were fighting to get back. You had Quinshon (Judkins), Mason (Graham), Derek Barnett. He was hurting and was able to play. And I know I'm missing some guys. Who else? Mike Hall Jr. We had a number of guys that were fighting to get back, and Carson. What's interesting is early in the week, the trainers were semi-optimistic, but they said, ‘well, it's Carson.’ And every time I'd see Carson, and I'd ask him, he would get this silly smirk on his face, like, ‘do you know who you're talking to?’ Like, ‘if I can go, I'm going to go.’ And then we worked him out Friday, and he was going through the bags, and he was like, ‘well, how do I look?’ Like a little kid. Of course. What did I say? ‘Oh, you look great. I've never seen you better. That ankle looks like, I mean, a million bucks.’ And you could just tell, if he could play, he was going to play. And we had a number of those guys that tried like heck to get back and they just couldn't. And we'll get them back going forward.”

It's a division game at home. What does it mean to you to beat the Ravens?

“Means it's a division game. I've got a ton of respect for that organization and the players and the coaches from top to bottom. And like I said, I owe a lot to Coach Harbaugh (John Harbaugh) for hiring me there. Kirby Smart for three years previously, changed my career path in a lot of ways after here, and then John took it to another level there of hiring me. I wouldn't have this job without them, without the Ravens and without the players and the coaches that were with us and the players that Eric DeCosta and those guys have drafted. And I saw a lot of them afterwards, and it was a lot better with a win, I'll tell you that, seeing them afterwards. But I wish them nothing but the best, as individuals. I sure as hell don't want them to win every game. That's not it. But I had a good talk with Eric before the game, and we both know from afar we wish each other well. There's no ill will there. It's a divisional game, and this is all about the players.”

Andre Szmyt, just coming back and making that kick after what happened on the previous one. How cool was that to see?

"No, I mean, when you think about it, he misses an extra point against the Jets, so I don't know how many kicks in between there. What do we have? One field goal, I guess we had an extra point, a field goal, an extra point. Then he had the miss, right? So, then you get the block, which ends up being like an ice, right? So, it's like all your rhythm's off, right? They jump; they get the block. Yeah, we get to move up five yards, but you've got to refocus, right? It kind of gets you off a little bit. Like, boy, the last one just got blocked. I know they jumped, but, man, good for him. Good for us. Like, right? Talk about when you've got a kicker that's now made a couple of game-winners and what that means to your team, because whether he makes it or not, it wouldn't have meant we won or lost the game based on that. But the way it's looked at from a kicker's perspective, it falls squarely at that moment. And that's so cool for him and for our team. It's hard to really put into words."

Talk about that last drive, Deshaun (Watson) getting off the mat, he didn't have the greatest game. But again, last drive came through and Jerry Jeudy.

"I don't know what to say. I really don't know what to say. I mean, we go a half feeling like, did we even meet this week, coaching? I mean, did we just take the week off and show up freaking today? I'm joking. But when you put a lot of work into it and you do that, forget the players, as coaches you're like, 'boy, we could have just rolled out the same damn game plan last week and done that.' And Deshaun, he knows he can play better. We can play better around him, but he's just got something in him, the ability to make a play when needed. We just kind of flatten out some of the other ups and downs that we have. And it starts with me, starts with our offensive staff. And that's going to always be the case. It's a we thing, not an individual thing."

What do you think the biggest difference offensively was between the first half and the second half, where you started to be able to do something?

"I don't know if I knew that we'd have changed it then. I mean, we just never seemed to get in a rhythm. Whether it was, sometimes we weren't running. We ran a little bit better, and then you're trying to get Harold (Fannin Jr.) the ball and you run a screen and they play it good. Well, then you dump it. Well, that's, screens are great, but you've got nowhere else to go, right? So, everybody says the screen game, which, I'm a big believer in it. But when there's nowhere else to go with the ball, it guarantees what? Frick, you're at second-and-ten. And when you're not running as well as you'd like, you're not throwing as well, that's not a great down and distance to be in. And we found ourselves in a number of those. And either by scheme, by call, by execution, it's all of the above. And you're going to give them credit. Jesse Minter is a hell of a coach. And their staff, they have a great staff, and they've got really good players. And when you're just a little bit off, you don't get any rhythm. And you don't get that first first down, you just don't feel like you've got any of that momentum. And we've got to look back, like we do every week, and look at it and say, where do we go from there? Because it felt like two weeks ago against Pittsburgh, we kind of felt we'd gotten a little bit of a rhythm there, run and pass and what we were doing, and again, credit to them and their defense. They've got good players, good coaches. But did we turn it over today? In four games, four the last five games, we haven't turned it over till Deshaun at the end of the game last week. So, that's what's winning games, right? I mean, now Pittsburgh, we turned it over a couple of times, but we were able to move it offensively. So, if you're going to scratch and claw your way in these games, you have to go where you don't turn it over, because their turnovers change the game, right? We've had that. We had a chance two weeks ago for Carson to change the game, right? And that's what it comes down to. Just look across the league in terms of what it is. Thursday night game with Denver and Seattle, right? Three turnovers. I mean, just keep fighting, don't turn it over. See if we can get it right and find a way to win in the fourth quarter. And like I said, a huge credit to Rudy (Mike Rutenberg), the defensive staff and the players, because after the first 10 points, they did a heck of a job, really."

Todd, what about just Jerry? You talked about him sort of accepting a different role. I'm sure it takes a level of, like, swallowing your pride to do that, but what does he mean to this team, to this group?

"I gave him a game ball and he deserves it. We're better on offense when Jerry's a part of it, and I can certainly do a better job of incorporating him in it. And you can see a difference in his juice in practice and on the field. And that credit goes to him, and his decision to say, 'all right, this is where it's at. I'm going all in.' And what I mean by this, where it's at with KC (KC Concepcion Jr.) and 12, right? Does that make sense? Like, okay, this is where it's at. And as a man, he said, 'I'm going to battle and I'm going to fight, and I want to be a part of this team, and I want to help make plays.' And it builds confidence for us to continue to play him. And he made a bunch of plays. He's working every day catching the

ball. You can see a difference in that. And like I said, we're better on offense when we're able to utilize Jerry and what he can bring in terms of his explosiveness."

You mentioned Carson's play to punch the ball and change the game. You're an offensive guy, I think you normally think about sparks coming from skill guys. What's it like to have a linebacker that can play like that?

"Gave us a chance last week. We just didn't take it from there. We went three and out, then had the unfortunate deal on the snap. But, you know, that's everything. Those momentum plays and how about the defense as a whole? I don't know what Derrick Henry had in the first drive, but I think, with 58 yards in 17 attempts. He might add 30 yards on the first drive."

He had 11 and a 17 then he kind of shut it down.

"That's pretty cool, man, to hold that guy to that. I mean, that's where it starts, right? Stop their O-line and the engine, and Derrick Henry is their engine. He is the guy that makes it go. He was when I was there and he is now. And for us to do that and to hold them where they were at, man, it's so cool. So cool when you're the head coach. Not so much when you call offense, but really cool as the head coach. But for our team, for those guys to keep battling. And at times it just takes one or two stops, and we've had that happen to us. We haven't started fast on offense, which is an understatement. And then defensively, we've given up touchdown drives, right? But it hasn't scarred them, and it seems to have not scarred our guys on offense. Like, I don't know what to say. Like, let them go score. We don't do anything, and then all of a sudden we get stops. All of a sudden we figure it out. I don't know what to say in a lot of ways other than we've got a lot of work to do on the offensive side of the ball, and we'll continue to work at it and get better."

What can you say about the contribution that Jaleel (McLaughlin) and Audric (Estime) made? We saw Quinshon try to work out before the game and get back out there. What can you say about those guys?

"Yeah, he fought to try and get back, and hopefully we'll get Samp (Dylan Sampson) back this week and we'll get Q back. We're hopeful to get two. Heck, we didn't have those guys. But J. Mac ran hard, man. He ran hard. He ran with a passion and a mission. And I thought, that's hard on hard on Audric. The guy just showed up this week. Hell, I remember it just like it was yesterday, putting up 'Hey, welcome to the new additions.' Usually you're not counting on a plan. They're going to the practice squad and hanging out and giving some reps. Oh, no, you're in the show, man. Let's go. And you get a touchdown. How cool is that for him, right? Like, whatever, you're on a practice squad in Minnesota, we call you up, and all of a sudden, s--- you're scoring touchdowns. It's almost as cool as being the head coach of the Browns. I mean, maybe not even close, probably, but it's almost as cool as that s---. I mean, is there any better than this? To work your whole life and have wins like that. I mean, nothing like that locker room, but I know I that turned into me. I'm not wired that way to turn it about me, but it's really about those guys and next man up. I'm really, really proud of the guys and the way they battle and their toughness. And now I'm going to enjoy tonight. And that's what you have to do in the NFL. These are the nights that you don't ever want to end, because tomorrow it's on to the next game. And so, I sit there, I know it sounds really goofy, but you sit there in bed and you don't want the night to end. It's 10:30 and you're tired as hell and you want to be up another 15, 20, 30 minutes to enjoy it, because, s---, tomorrow I've got to look at the offensive tape and then you've got to move on to the next game. And until we get things squared away and move in this direction offensively, every game is going to be a scratch and claw like this. And I love that type of game with the guys we have. We're wired for that. Our guys are wired for that. Now I prefer the other, but we're more wired for that. And, man, it's so cool."

Given what you just said about the offensive struggles, how do you feel about being 4-2 and on top of the AFC North, despite not playing your best football?

"Well, I think our defense is playing really good. I told that, but we haven't played our best football on offense. And we've had moments on special teams where we've let some things slip. I love the way our guys play. Like, we've got the right guys, but we do too many things on the offensive side of the ball that hurt us. That doesn't allow us to stack plays. Coaching and playing collectively. Who we're going to be, what we have, what they do best, which is still...we're under construction, man. All you have to do is look at some map where you've got all these damn signs and stop, and there's a Tonka truck, and there's digging up dirt, and there's a building and s---. And you're like, okay, how do we manage this and get ourselves to where we want to be at the end of that path? And that's what I love about our guys, because it

wouldn't matter if it's one side or the other, because after the Jacksonville game, our defense, you're working to fix it. And so that's what I love about our guys, is they love that path. They love everything that goes into that path. And then you have a chance. If you have the coaches and the players that realize where we're at. There's no blame here. There's owning it and fighting like hell to fix it. And when you have that, you've got a special group. Now we just got to clean some stuff up, starting with me."

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Cleveland Browns QB Deshaun Watson
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Is this getting old at all?

"No, not at all. I love winning, man. Especially the way we won. Perseverance. Through the ups and downs. Offense, defense, special teams sticking together. It's amazing, especially being so young with this team. The will, the grit that we're building as a unit. It can be very special. If we can keep learning from these and winning at the same time. We haven't even played our best football. It's definitely fun."

How close do you guys feel that you are to playing your best football?

"We're close. There's spots, there's flashes. We just got to be consistent overall. And that's starting with me, starting with (HC Todd) Monk (Monken), getting the guys in, making sure we're all on the same page. Knowing what we want to call versus what they're doing, being able to adjust on the fly. Again, we're right there but there is still a lot to learn, still a lot to do and one of these weeks, it's going to click and then we're really going to get the ball rolling."

Can you just talk about overcoming a cold start with it not really going your way, you came through again in the fourth quarter like you have been doing this season. How does it feel to pull that off again for the fourth time this season?

"Yeah, we just got to keep working. It's the NFL, so days are going to be tough. It's going to be hard especially when we have a lot of new pieces. We had new running backs that just got here, trying to put in new schemes, and then going against a team that is very dominant, very veteran-wise. They play a lot of football so they did a good job of just mixing up what they are doing. They didn't really call the same stuff. They were rotating, Jesse Minter did a good job of calling, not repeating calls. You got to keep fighting. A lot of games from now until those two minutes and I've learned over the years, so when you put me in that spot, I'm prepared and ready for those moments. I love it and I enjoy it. Hopefully, we don't have to do it more often and we can kind of put the game away. While we have it, I am ready for it."

When you guys are in a position like that you guys have done that over and over, do you feel a confidence building, like 'hey its ok we have done this before and been here before, we know what to do when we are in these situations'?

"Most definitely, it is all in the confidence. This is what we practice for, we practiced it all offseason and we practice it every week. Once we get into that huddle, I take charge and look at every single one of those guys in the eyes and let them know like 'hey, opportunities are gonna come let's finish it, let's go win, let's be the legends and all the work we put in is here for us.' Yeah it is just a confidence thing, a still peaceful moment that I am in and they feed off the energy that I bring. I just tell the guys again, I told Jerry (Jeudy), 'hey man be ready on that in cut', and he was ready for it and made a big play."

I was going to ask you to relive that 3rd-and-3 play with him.

"It was one of the plays where we had an opportunity earlier in the game. I can't remember what quarter it was, I think I threw it to TE Harold (Fannin Jr.) and he was telling me about the in cuts. So, I always kept that in the back of my mind. That was him being a vet talking to me. And it was a late check for me. I thought they were doing one thing, and then they disguised it. And I just wanted an in cut to the field. And I checked it and wanted to confirm the coverage down the middle. 14 (Baltimore Ravens DB Kyle Hamilton) ran with the middle route, and then WR Jerry (Jeudy) did a good job getting his depth and I put it on time, he caught it and got the extra yards, and put us in position to win. So it was a full task. Everyone was on the same page, and that's what we talked about and adjusted on the sideline."

You mentioned the Ravens did a lot of things to disguise what they were doing, did you pick up on anything in the second half that allowed you guys to get in a rhythm?

"Really just for me, just to try to get the ball out. Don't try to read what they're disguising and rotating and rolling different coverages. They play a lot of quarters and they can palm it, they can cloud it, they can match it, they can zone it off. It's a lot of different things that they kinda rotated. A couple zeros and pressure looks that we didn't see."

Saw for the first time, all the different looks that they've been doing for the past couple weeks. We had to adjust to those. Especially when they brought up pressure and the back picked up the pressure, but the zero linebacker, we call them green dog comes later and no one is accounting for him. Different things like that we had to adjust to. Maybe get the ball a little faster and find my checkdowns. The defense helped us out, they put us in good field position. We just tried to adjust and ball kind of bounced our way and we took advantage of it."

How does it feel to be 4-2 and first place in the AFC North, especially when you haven't played your best offensively?

"It feels good, like I mentioned before, you want to work out the kinks early in the season, especially September, October football, working that out, so by the time we get to November, December that's when you really got to lock in and you can't make those mistakes, you have to be as consistent as possible, we're still working out, first time playing teams, we are gonna get another opportunity to play them, and other divisional teams, and that's when we got to be at our best, this is good to, again, watch the tape but also get the victory, like you mentioned and it feels good to be able to do that and learn on top of that."

What can you say about the two new backs you had with you this week?

"I think, really just kind of the work that they put in this week. The knowledge they kinda picked up. I think the work with Duce (Staley) and the staff, putting in overtime, staying late, getting there early and they didn't have a lot of checks when I was out there on the field. There were a couple things...there were a couple motions and stuff like that, they were asking questions on, but the majority of the time they knew exactly what they wanted to do, and they knew exactly what they needed to do, running the ball and protection wise, and also routes. It was good to kinda feel that. It kinda made the game, especially in the second half, easier for me to be able to find them. So, I started trusting that and they did a good job of doing what they needed to do."

You've talked about wanting to be one of the chosen ones to get that win in the fourth quarter, this is the fourth time this season. How does it feel to be able to be that this season and treat this home crowd to euphoria?

"It's amazing. I've been wanting to be that person since I was in high school, college, going back to my national championship last drive, to even my Houston days, and now. I've always been like you give me an opportunity and a two-minute drive, I want to be that guy who's going to make something happen and finish the game, and bring so much joy to the fans. These are games that the fan base is going to always remember. I know they want better play. We want better play also. So we got to continue to provide that for them early on in the games. But, regardless, getting those victories, especially against a divisional rival like this, especially in our home stadium, it's very big and huge. We have to continue to stack up these and bring more victories. We want to put up more points and more explosive plays, so they can have more things to cheer about throughout the game."

What's it like being a part of this sports moment for you personally? 4-2, atop the North, and now across the street the ALCS is being played, so back-to-back. How cool is that for you as a sports fan in general? What is it like as a player being a part of a moment like this that's kinda historic.

"You try to just be in the moment honestly. You try to just enjoy it. I was watching the game last night. Wish they could've pulled it out. Just to be in this environment, this excitement, you don't really get these opportunities to be able to be here. It's a blessing and it's a moment that you don't want to forget. You wanna try to cherish it and feel it and dive deep as much as you possibly can into that great excitement, that energy in the city. We want to be able to build on that. We're pulling for the Guardians. We're gonna continue to pull for them. Hopefully they can pull it out and get the World Series here. We wanna continue to win games also for us on the football field. The Cavs are gonna start up soon and get the ball rolling too on the court. It's a great time to be in Cleveland most definitely."

Todd was praising you guys for how you're wired to stick with it in some of these games and to make runs in the fourth quarter. How can you tell the way a team is wired?

"Just the energy throughout the game, no one was getting discouraged and everyone was kinda picking each other up. There's moments where guys wanted to make plays, guys missing plays, stuff like that but you can tell right after that we are on to the next drive. You can see that with this young group, and with these veterans that we have around here. Through all three phases, defense, offense and special teams, no one is bashing each other. Defense is making plays, constantly making plays and stopping the team and offensively we haven't picked up our pace yet but they're still encouraging us. When we're coming on the field, 'let's go, let's go, y'all got it, y'all got it'. That is very motivating, and once we get to the fourth quarter you can feel the energy within the stadium, within the sideline. Hey

we are about to win this game, and that is very positive to have. I've been around where you internally want to play in those games, but you don't, you can kinda feel that energy that we might not. But I think every week we have the opportunity, even last week in the elements that we were in, we felt like we were going to have a chance to win, but it didn't turn that way, but this week it did and it was awesome."

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Cleveland Browns Players
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WR KC Concepcion Jr.

How would you describe your “never give up” attitude?

“I just feel like that is just the way that everybody on this team is made. No matter what adversity we go through. We are ultimate fighters to fight back.”

What is it about the fourth quarter that kind of just pumps everyone up? Especially on offense?

“I don’t want to lose. Whatever we gotta do in the fourth quarter or second half to get the job done, we are in for it.”

With K Andre (Szmyt), he misses the one, you guys get him the second one. What does that say about him that he steps up there?

“That just shows his determination, his ability to block it out after missing the first one and win the game.”

RB Audric Estime

What’s this week been like from recently joining the team and scoring the game-tying touchdown?

“It feels amazing, honestly. This team took me in and treated me like I’ve been here all offseason and all year. It was a long week, learning the playbook, but I have great guys around me. A lot of great coaches helped me get adjusted and good teammates who helped me get adjusted. It just feels amazing getting the win in the first game.”

What was the process like to learn and to get up to speed so fast?

“Honestly, just laser focus. I had to take it one step at a time. Obviously, attack everyday from Wednesday to Thursday to Friday to Saturday. It was just a reflection of the type of coaches we have here. Coach Duce (Staley) took time out of his day and made sure he met with me for extra hours, just everyone involved it took a team effort. It was just a blessing.”

What did you see on the touchdown? Just the space you found and to go and get to the end zone.

“I just had to bounce it and then follow my puller. I think Burt (FB Michael Burton) was the one who was the puller. So I just followed him and the coaches trusted me. They said, ‘when we get down there, you’re gonna get in the end zone, you’re gonna get into the paint today.’ And I had confidence in myself that I was getting a touchdown today and that’s what happened.”

WR Jerry Jeudy

Just start with your kicker, to go out there and hit another game winner, what can you say about Andre Szmyt?

“Man, he’s gonna come in clutch every time. We got a bunch of faith in him, you know he is gonna finish it at the end of the game.”

What was your reaction watching him go out there, knowing that you guys have just driven down and given him that opportunity?

“Just excited for him, just excited, knowing that we were about to win the game, and it just came down to the kick, had all faith in him to make that kick, and we came out victorious.”

Jerry your catch, the 33-yarder, seemed to be a little bit behind you and you pulled it in. Can you describe how you did it?

“It was a dig route, they went cover two, so the middle was wide open and Deshaun (Watson) delivered a good ball and I just made a catch, and tried to get the most I can and go out of bounds.”

How hard has it been for you to kind of stay patient in those moments and wait for a moment like that to present itself, and how gratifying is it to come through in that big moment?

“It’s pretty difficult, as a receiver, wanting to be out there and compete, wanting to be involved in the game plan, wanting to go out there and make plays, but you can’t let that discourage you, got to stay focused and wait your turn, week by week, and eventually once your numbers called, make a play and that’s what I did.”

How about offensively as a unit, the second half was a lot different than the first half, how frustrating was the first half and what turned it around?

"It's pretty frustrating, the first half not being able to sustain drives, get first downs. And I think second half, coach did a good job of adjusting our play calls and our routes, and I feel like we executed a lot better the second half."

LB Carson Schwesinger

When did you know "I'm gonna give this a go today," did it take all the way until Friday?

"Yeah, probably. Obviously try and do everything you can through the week. Part of that is rest, so you wanna test it out until that day. That was really that process. Once that happened I felt like I was good to go."

What happened after the first two series?

"I think we just had to execute, obviously get our eyes right. Sometimes we need to come into games with our eyes right, get em right a little bit quicker. A lot of times when you're able to fix your eyes and do your job you get with the rest of the group."

You came out with 11 tackles in the first half, what kind of flow were you in there early?

"Just play football. That's it. Make the plays that come your way and do your job. We got the outcome we wanted at the end."

What about the fumble, going against (Derrick) Henry, it's hard enough to bring him down given his size, how'd you manage to swipe your hand in there too?

"That's what we talked about. The ball is oxygen. That was big in the offseason for me with trying to get the ball out in the run game. I was able to get one of those and we were able to get on top of it and get the ball, and put the offense in a good position to score and get the momentum going."

How important is that for you to lead by example to your guys and be a leader of this defense?

"I think part of it is that I love football. I wanna go out there and play and if I get a chance to do that then that's what I'm going to do. That's what we got a lot of on this defense is guys who love football and love to go out there and play."

Which part of the game did you feel like you started getting to (Tyler) Huntley?

"With our front four we're getting after any quarterback all game no matter what. I think that's one of the cool things about the engine we have that runs our defense. When they're making him run around and scramble and they're getting sacks we just build off it."

Do you feel like you have, as a defender, your particular skills align for this matchup? Do you look forward to this matchup and more?

"I look forward to every week that I get to go out and play football is probably what I'd say. So yeah I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to next week too and then the week after that. It being a divisional game and things like that it's a lot of fun. You're familiar with their team, they're familiar with you, so those are fun."

K Andre Szmyt

Take us through the game-winning kick? What was your mentality going into it?

"Obviously, I wanted to make the one before, but (LS) Rex Sunahara snapped the perfect ball, so it makes my job easy."

How about the comeback ability of this team?

"We've been playing great. There is a lot of good camaraderie and trust in each other."

What happened on the missed field goal and what was it like to have another chance?

"Going that way, I thought it was left-right wind, so I tried to plant it more left, kind of like I did in the Steelers game a couple of weeks ago, and it just stayed left, so I was 'Ok, whatever.' You can see it had a left-right fade to it, which is what I expected on the last one, but you flush it and look at what the wind is doing and move on."

What goes on in your mind when the offense is moving and you're going to have another opportunity to kick?

“Just breathing, sticking to my process, forget about my last kick and just move forward.”

DE Jared Verse

What was the change for you guys after those first two drives?

“We just got the mindset. Carson [Schwesinger] came up to me and said, ‘Be you. Just be you.’ I said, ‘alright, we’re just going to keep doing it.’ We just became who we are. Those first two drives are out of our character.”

How impressive has Carson [Schwesinger] been since you’ve gotten here, playing through the ankle, I think he had a wrist injury at some point today, punching that ball out.

“He has an old school linebacker mindset. He’s not going to go to the guys, which is like insane to me. He’s a hooper. You can count on him for anything, whether it’s on the back end or it’s up front to fill a gap, he’s somebody you can rely on. He’s one of the most reliable guys I know.”

Where does that belief come from for this team, over and over, knowing in the fourth quarter, giving you guys a chance, you’re going to figure out a way to win?

“Everybody works too hard to give up. You work so hard it’s unfair if you don’t win.”

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RAVENS POST-GAME QUOTES

BALTIMORE RAVENS

HEAD COACH JESSE MINTER

Opening Statement: “[I] give a lot of credit to [the] Cleveland [Browns]. That’s a type of game where I think [in] all three phases, you have chances to create more separation in the game with where the score was at. We weren’t able to do that really from our own self-inflicted things [such as] putting the ball on the ground, missing a kick [and] getting a penalty down in the low red [area]. We look at that really as ourselves, allowing the game to end up that tight where, for a lot of it, we played well enough to be able to separate and potentially have more than a one-score lead at certain times in the second half. We’ll look at ourselves, [and] that’s really what we’ll do. [We will] try and improve and get ready for next week.”

As one of the self-inflicted errors was RB Derrick Henry putting the ball on the ground, you know how valuable he is to this team, what do you say when he has a moment like that? (Jamison Hensley) “There’s not a lot to be said, I mean [Derrick Henry] just said something about it. Nobody works harder at ball security and does those things. Again, it happened, [and] it was a good play by them. I’d like for us to be able to rise up and get a stop right there and have each others’ backs, [and] we weren’t able to do that. It becomes an even bigger play when you’re not able to kind of back it up with the defense. So, it is what it is.”

What were they doing after late in the first quarter that was giving you so many problems offensively? (Jeff Zrebiec) “That’s a really aggressive front. We weren’t able to really sustain anything in the run game. I thought the first drive was really well done, and then after that, it was ... They’re jetting up field, and they’re cutting off some of our angles in the zone schemes. They did a really good job, and we have to find a way to have more answers for that type of defense.”

Was it more of a just them stacking the line of scrimmage and taking that away from you in the second half? (Mike Preston) “I think it was a little bit of both. They were aggressive in coverage, as well, so I thought they played both the run and pass game pretty well. They were playing really tight, aggressive man coverage, at times, and obviously, that allows you to get an extra guy down there, so credit to them with what they did.”

What happened on that late WR Jerry Jeudy catch? Did CB Nate Wiggins just fall down? Was it as simple as that? (Jeff Zrebiec) “It was – again – a good play by them. We’ll look at the tape and see what it was. I thought we had bottled up the passing game for the most part all day, so it was really unfortunate [for that to happen] at that time, but it is what it is.”

DL CALAIS CAMPBELL

How challenging was it to go against QB Deshaun Watson today? “He’s a very slippery guy [and] is able to create a lot with his legs. He had a couple of opportunities to keep drives alive. I’m really mad about that last play where he ran out of bounds. You know, I was running to the sideline with him. I [have] got to find a way to keep him in bounds and just tackle him – not even get a sack, but just tackle him in bounds [and] try to break down with him. But he’s a good player, and they made the plays to win the game. But I think we had a good game plan. I think we executed it fairly well. It was just one of those days where we didn’t do enough to win it.”

When RB Derrick Henry fumbled the ball, what was the message amongst the defense as you retook the field? “It would have been nice to have a TV timeout there. That would have helped us because we’d have more time to talk, but we didn’t really get a TV timeout, so we had to just go. I think that kind of hurt us a little bit, because they were able to get 7 [points]. [If] we get a stop there, I think the game is different. I think we win that ball game. We [have] got to find a way to protect our brother and have his back in that moment and get off the field and hold them to 3 [points], and we didn’t get the job done. Even on that touchdown play, I really can’t wait to watch it because I’m not sure exactly what happened, but I feel like we [have] got to find a way to make those plays.”

I know you haven't been here in the past few years, but there's been a lot of talk about losing double-digit leads and how you guys have changed. Now that that happened again, what does it feel like in the locker room? What's the message moving forward? "I mean, it's football. It's a tough game on the road [versus] a divisional opponent. It was nice to have a double-digit lead, but in this business, [when you] give up 13 points, it is usually a win. We just didn't do enough in the second half to really keep them out of the end zone. I mean, [you can] give [them] field goals, but not touchdowns. That red zone play, [with] them getting in the end zone, that was really the difference in the game. We [have] got to find a way as defensive players to get stops there. But I mean, in this business, you [have] got to take your hat off to them. They did enough to win the ball game. They made big plays in big moments and came up with the play when the game was on the line. You [have] got to give them respect. I wish that block would have counted. I think it was pretty close. I [have] got to watch that on tape too. We made them earn it. We just didn't do enough today."

What would you say was working at least early on? It seemed like every time QB Deshaun Watson saw an opening and tried to go, you guys would stop him. What was the game plan with him early on? "We were just trying to rush coordinated. I think this is the most we've rushed coordinated this year. There's a lot of new people playing together, and just a lot of variables in the way [head] coach [Jesse Minter] is calling it and trying to get a feel for what we do well. I think today was the first time we really rushed together. [It's] the best we've rushed together. There's other moments too, of course, but this was the best we've rushed together. Still, there's a lot of room for improvement in that category as well, especially later in the ball game. I think we could have had a few more big plays. [Deshaun Watson] was tough. We have to get him down though. There's a couple times where we had a chance to get him down and change the ball game, and we didn't get it done."

S KYLE HAMILTON

You guys controlled the game for a good portion of this game. How tough is it to not be able to pull this one out? "I think that's one where we definitely should have won. In this league, you let a team in the game, especially at home [in] this division, [when] you let a team stay around, they're going to find momentum. [For the] defense, we [have] got to go out there and get some stops and ice the game at the end. It's about playing complementary football, and we [have] got to pick our offense up when something may happen. It was a team effort today. It was a team loss."

QB Tyler Huntley said RB Derrick Henry apologized to the team for putting you in a bad spot. How difficult is it not to pick him up, knowing how much he's done for you guys? "You just said it. [With] the amount of times [Derrick Henry] has saved our asses, excuse my language — the defense — [by] giving us opportunities to go out there and win the game. [It's] countless times. Obviously, he's Derrick Henry, [a] Hall of Fame running back [who] wants to hold onto the ball. He knows that. He's his harshest critic. I'm not going to say anything ill about it. He's put us in a position to win a lot of games. I feel like a moment like that is where the defense can step in and pick him up and we'd have a different reaction in this locker room right now."

It seems like you guys have obviously lost a number of games this way. What do you feel like you need to do to kind of get past that and get past these mistakes and not have it happen, whatever the case may be? "I'm not going to sound like a broken record. It's 'Groundhog Day' with this question. I don't know. I'm not going to give you an answer. I really don't know. So, sorry, that's the best I can give you, but we've had this conversation so many times. I don't even feel like addressing it again."

How frustrating is this one, given what you have on your schedule coming up with a daunting task that's in front of you over the next three games? "I honestly don't even know our schedule. [I] just focus on this week."

Could you sense that there was frustration mounting on the offensive side throughout the game? "I mean, they're human. They have a high standard for themselves. I don't think the quarterback thing is an excuse at all. 'Snoop' [Tyler Huntley] is very capable of going out there and winning the game. We were singing his praises last week. It is what it is, [and] it's up to us as a defense to pick our teammates up when they're down. I think we did that for a lot of the game, but you just [have] got to do it a couple more times at the end. Again though, like I said, [the] defense has put them in bad positions a lot of times. Not saying they did that to us today, but like, if anybody is due a little grace on that side of the ball, it's 'Snoop' [Tyler Huntley], 'D-Hen' [Derrick Henry], Zay [Flowers], Lamar [Jackson], Mark [Andrews], all those guys. It's a team effort today."

OLB TREY HENDRICKSON

You guys were pretty much dominating for two-and-a-half quarters. What did you feel kind of changed in that game to where it seemed like you were probably giving up a few more yards than you wanted to? “Yes, we’re going to have to take a look at it tomorrow. We’ve got a lot of great defensive minds in our building. Execution has to be at a higher level. It’s onto the next [game].”

What’s the frustration level when you have that kind of performance defensively, especially early, and then it kind of slips away the way it did? “It’s a win-loss league. We’ve had some great comebacks. We’ve got to learn from this one if we want to go where we want to go. But God is great. We give him the glory during the wins, and we give him glory during the losses. This is when we’ll reset our jaw, and [it’s] onto the next [game].”

How did you feel like you got out of the game health-wise, and what did it just feel like overall to be back out there? “I love football, and to be back out there after having surgery like 16 days ago, [it’s a] credit to our [health & performance] staff. Everybody surrounding me has been so supportive in everything that we’re doing. Again, [I am] disappointed with the loss. That’s the main concern – getting better. As far as my health, it’s an ongoing process.”

Head coach Jesse Minter had mentioned to you guys that a win in the AFC North is almost worth more than one win. I think he called it one-and-a-half wins. Does it feel like it’s more than a typical loss because it’s a divisional game? “That’s standard in whatever division you’re in. We’re fighting for that spot at the top. It’s just one of those that we have to focus on the next [game]. That becomes the next and most important game. [We need to] learn from these mistakes [and] don’t just flush it. There’s a lot to learn from [it] and get better about, so [it’s] on to the next [game].”

RB DERRICK HENRY

How would you assess the team’s performance today? “We will watch the film and be self critical when we watch it by ourselves and then evaluate when we watch it together. So, yes, I know we can be better.”

Was there anything in particular that happened on the fumble? Did the guy just make a quick on the play, or were you loose on the ball? “[I was] just going back and trying to fight for yards [with] my momentum [and] his momentum, he ended up pulling it out. I have to take care of the ball. [There are] no excuses for that. I have to be better, [and I can’t] put the team in harm’s way. I sound like a broken record with this, but I have to go back and work on it. I told the team [that] I put this on me, and I just have to be better. I can’t put the team in that situation.”

You mentioned, and some of the other guys mentioned, that you did address the team. You’ve done a lot for this team. Why did you feel like you had to address them? “Because I just felt like, in that situation, it was a positive gain. You never know what that might have turned into. But putting the defense on that side of the field and putting them in that situation, it’s kind of tough on them. So, I just have to be better, be better for this team, be better in my play [and] better taking care of the ball. [Fumbles] can’t happen.”

You were moving the ball pretty well in the first half. What changed in the second half? “We just didn’t execute well enough. We couldn’t get any momentum, and [the Browns] played better [on defense] than we did [offensively] for us not to be able to move the ball like we did on that first drive. We just couldn’t get anything going. Hats off to them; they played a hell of a game. Like I said, we have to watch the film, evaluate and get ready for next week.”

To some extent, is it safe to say that all the guys they had packed in the box, that you guys were just never able to get them out of it and back them off a little bit? “Well, at the end of the day, what we call is what we call. We have to go out there, execute and run that play. We believe that when we call it, we’re going to make something positive out of it – no matter what the defense gives us. That didn’t happen. [The Browns] played a hell of a game. As I said, hats off to them, and we’re going to look at the film and get better.”

CB MARLON HUMPHREY

Why do you think these types of losses continue to happen? "It's a tough one. Throughout my career playing here, it just seems like you never get a smooth one. I think I talked about it during the week. I feel like a lot of times, you [have] got to be prepared to play your best football. I feel like you take a step forward [and] take a step back with last week. Then you were up [this week]. It doesn't matter really what happens. You [have] to be more resilient in the later halves of our games."

How frustrating is it that it seems like you hold those double-digit leads and then you lose another double-digit lead? How frustrating is that as a guy that goes through and experiences that? "It's definitely pretty frustrating. I mean, honestly, I'm just still processing it. It's tough, man. I think [we will] get in [and] look at the film. The good thing [with] the new schedule change of coming in the day after games is better for losses like this, to where, the chit-chat, you have it together instead of [when] you have that off-day, and it just can go everywhere. But it's pretty frustrating. I think we feel that we are better, we feel that we're equipped, [and] we feel that we're ready for these moments. We just [have] got to consistently do it. We [have] got to consistently believe that you trust the guy next to you. I think it all starts with communication. Someone has to end the game for us. I think that's the biggest thing. Are all 11 guys thinking, 'I'm going to be the one to end the game.' That's where it starts, and that's where it ends."

Do you think the frustration stems from the way all these losses sort of seem the same? Obviously, there's different plays and self-inflicted things that happen, but does that add to that level of maybe it creeping in mentally at all? "I mean, being a member of the secondary, it seems like whenever we are losing these games, the ball is in the air. I feel like that's a direct reflection of myself and everybody in that room. I feel like it doesn't happen very often where we're losing a game because they ran the ball and just busted one. It definitely falls on us. Obviously, we played a decent game before that, but when it counts, how can you win the game? I feel like that's usually won in the back end, and we just weren't able to do that today."

QB TYLER HUNTLEY

In the first quarter you guys put up 10 points, and after that it was kind of a struggle. What do you think changed for you guys? (Jamison Hensley) "The Browns did a good job of adjusting. We just didn't make a couple plays that would have pivoted the game and allowed us to go ahead, but we just have to make those plays when we get them."

Was something with the operation off? Was there some confusion pre-snap? I think you guys had three delay of games penalties, and another timeout got in the way of a delay of game. What was going on there? (Jeff Zrebiec) "It could have been a variety of things in the moment. I have to go back and look. I know one time we were trying to get them to get offsides, and that caused one of them, so we'll see once we get to look at the tape."

What was your assessment of your play? How do you think you played today? (Mike Preston) "I don't know. I have to see how [the film looks] when I get on board [the plane], but like I said, some plays [need to] be made out there, and we have to make those."

How different were the looks they gave you after that opening drive when you guys went down the field? (Cliff Brown) "Man, [the Browns] were doing a good job of switching it up all throughout the game. I don't know how many times I can say they changed it up, but they did a great job of switching it up every drive that we came out."

Head coach Jesse Minter said RB Derrick Henry said something after the game in the locker room. Was that to the whole team? (Jeff Zrebiec) "Yes, [it was toward] the whole team. [Derrick Henry] told us [that] he has us, and we got him. We are just going to make it better and get ready for next week."

When you guys got in position for that field goal and K Tyler Loop isn't able to convert, how big of a momentum swing do you think that could've been? (Jamison Hensley) "Man, it is what it is. Like I said, there was a play to be made, and we didn't make that play. So, it doesn't come down just to that. It's a variety of plays that we had out there that we could have capitalized on, and we have to get better."

WR JA'KOB LANE

How would you evaluate the team's performance today? "I think we kind of lost momentum for a little bit, and it was a little bit hard to get it back. [We will have to look at film] to be able to see where we fell off."

How were you able to have success today? "Just really staying with it, details and execution. Not really trying to beat the odds and the defense on one play, but just taking it where it is."

What was the mindset after the Browns tied the game up after a Ravens' turnover late in the game? "[We had] the same mindset as before – just trying to put the ball in the end zone. I don't think the fumble affected our mindset. No matter what, the goal is always to score. So, no matter what happened, you have to try to get to the end zone."

The team seems to have full confidence in RB Derrick Henry even after the fumble. "Yes, it's no shock – he's a dog, and I don't doubt that the next time he carries the rock, he'll end up in the end zone. Derrick Henry's the goat."

K TYLER LOOP

Was there anything in particular that went wrong with the 49-yard FGA in terms of the way you struck it or the way it went? "Yes, I just did not strike it the way I needed to. [I] didn't hit the ball clean. It ended up having some bad rotation, and [it] just slid out to the left."

I guess how tough is that in the moment and obviously with the final result of this game? "It sucks, because it contributes, like we don't have those three points to hold on to at the end of the game. [I] just have to be ready for the next opportunity. Misses happen, [and] unfortunately I missed. I didn't hit the ball the way I needed to. I wish I could have it back, but [I] have to be ready for the next one. That's just the nature of the job. I like to have these guys back, because they have mine. Unfortunately, I was unable to do that, but we have to keep rolling, have to keep sticking to the process, matching foot to ball, hitting the ball well and continuing to get better."

Does it ever start to seep into you mentally when you have a couple of these misses now this season? "Nope."

DL NNAMDI MADUBUIKE

Obviously, after having such an emotional high in Atlanta and then having a low like this happen, how do you guys go forward with those emotional swings? (Jamison Hensley) "We just didn't make the plays that we wanted to make this game. One thing I know about this team [is that] we are going to learn from this, we are going to grow from this, and we are going to get better. We are going to have our eyes moving forward to the next opponent. At the end of the day, [I give] credit to the Browns; they're a great team. We all know what type of game this was going to be. This is a divisional game, so it's going to be a dog fight every time. They got one up on us, and that's alright, because we are going to get better, and that's what this team's going to do."

Was the frustrating part about knowing that you guys felt, defensively, you were in control of that game, at least in the first three quarters? (Jeff Zrebiec) "The frustrating part is the fact that we lost. That was a game that we believed that we should have won, and we didn't. We didn't make the plays that we were supposed to make. [We have to give] credit to the Browns, but that's on us, and we are going to get it fixed."

Does it ever feel like there's pressure when teams are kind of hanging around in these games, and you guys have had opportunities, whether it's the pressure being on the defense to kind of try to close it out? (Brian Wacker) "In every game, there's going to be pressure, especially when it's neck and neck on the scoreboard. But that's when we want to go out there and shine and finish strong. Today we didn't do that. We didn't make the plays we were supposed to make, but we are going to get better from this, and we are going to grow from this. I know this team – we are going to do that, and we are going to have our eyes set forward for the next opponent."

T RONNIE STANLEY

With that kind of end to the fourth quarter, how do you feel after a game like that? “[I am] disappointed in how we played most of the game. I think we had a couple good drives at the beginning, but for the rest of the game, as an offense, we couldn't finish, and we couldn't get into scoring position, so that's something that we need to get better at.”

What do you think happened there? To your point, you guys moved the ball pretty easily down the field on the first couple of drives. Was it something they were doing adjustments-wise, or was it just kind of a combination of things that you guys weren't doing? What do you think happened to the rhythm? “I think it just comes down to the details – lining up right, making sure you're taking the right leverage on your block, and a lot of those plays come down to one block here or one person there. Putting us behind the sticks, it's always going to be a long game if you keep doing that. So, we had plenty of opportunities to create separation in the game, and we let them hang around. So, that's kind of what happens.”

I know you guys have all the faith in the world in offensive coordinator Declan Doyle, but do you think that there are lessons to be learned going through your first AFC North game as a play-caller? Is it different as a play-caller than it might be for a player? “Yes, I think there's lessons to be learned. Even if we won this game by 40 points, there'd still be lessons to be learned for [offensive coordinator Declan Doyle] and for our whole offense. I think there's always something to be learned. I do think since we did lose this game, [and] knowing the guy that Declan is and how persistent he is, he's going to look at this stuff in extreme detail and make sure that this stuff doesn't happen again, because it shouldn't. And like I said, we had enough opportunities to put this game away, create separation, and throughout the whole game, we didn't do that.”

Why do you think there were so many delay of game penalties today? “I couldn't tell you. I really don't know.”

Head coach Jesse Minter mentioned that a win in a game like this would feel like one-and-a-half wins just because of what it means for the divisional standings. Does it feel like more than a typical loss, kind of on the flip side of that coin? “Yes, it definitely does. We know how important divisional games are. Especially, playing in [Cleveland's] stadium – this would've been a great win to have under our belt. It didn't happen, but everything we want is still in front of us, and we have all the opportunity in the world to get what we still want. [We are] blessed for this to be a learning opportunity, and we just have to grow from this.”

When you have these losses that are familiar losses in similar ways with the self-inflicted kind of stuff, does that start to stack up when you're out there, almost like a 'here we go again' or in terms of trying to block that out and not prevent it from happening? “I've been here long enough to know when I sense a few drives [that are] not going the way they should, [the] sense of urgency definitely needs to be there because of what you just said. There are games [where this] has happened too many times in our past where we've had the lead and [lost the game]. At least from an offensive perspective, I think the defense gave us plenty of opportunities, and I think we just need to go out there with extreme detail as if those drives are game-winning drives at the beginning of the game. Getting up 10-0 is not much, and we didn't play like the rest of the game that those drives were game-winning drives in my opinion.”

You guys have mentioned some of the losses of the past, and you just mentioned the energy when you guys start to fall behind. Did the energy feel like those in the past few years, or did it still feel different this year? “I still think we have great energy. For me, I think I've just been around enough to know how important those drives at the beginning are. Because looking back at it, during that present time, it might not seem as important [that we are] up [by] two possessions. Maybe you get a couple three-and-outs, and it's OK, because we're up two possessions. But in my head, I just realize how important those possessions are at the beginning of the game to really just put the team away. We had opportunities to do that, and we didn't take advantage of it. I don't think it's any one person's fault. I think [offensive coordinator] Declan [Doyle] called a great game and gave us opportunities. It's our job to detail those things out, and we weren't on those details enough.”