



BENGALS POSTGAME QUOTES

AUG. 12, 2016

MINNESOTA AT CINCINNATI

MARVIN LEWIS

Head coach

Initial comments ...

"We wanted to win the football game and we had an opportunity at the end of the game to score the two-pointer, and we even got the ball back again. I guess the positive of tonight is we got a lot of situations out there. We got AJ McCarron in a one-minute situation; (Joe) Licata obviously got one. I was pleased that the starting defense went in, did their thing and got out of there. The starting offense did a good job. There's a lot of work to do still, as we know. I thought some young guys emerged tonight and played. I thought Brandon Tate did a nice job in there tonight, so it's good. It's what we want. We want competition, and that was a real positive tonight for that. We have a short week this week, and we have a lot of preparation to do for our season."

So much of this preseason is going to be about the young receivers. Alex Erickson had both of your touchdowns tonight; did he kind of prove he is ready for the stage?

"I guess so. I thought he took advantage of his opportunity. Alex has done that since we have had him. He showed what he has shown throughout his career at Wisconsin, that he makes football plays, and I think he is a really good football player. I am really glad to have him."

What was your biggest concern tonight? Or something that you hoped to see that you didn't see as much as you would have liked?

"I thought we got into good situations; I would like to see us convert. We missed a field goal, we had an opportunity for a touchdown; we got inside the five-yard line and got stopped on fourth down. We left a good opportunity for a safety out there, so I count that as 12 points. And we gave up a big touchdown pass, so that's a negative seven points. Those were things that happened on the bad side."



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ANDY DALTON

Quarterback

What are your thoughts on getting Brandon Tate involved with the first-team offense?

"Brandon's been around for a while, so he understands what we're doing. He was part of the first play of the game. It's just good to get him into a groove."

Tyler Boyd had that really nice over-the-shoulder catch from AJ McCarron. He's been really impressive in camp, hasn't he?

"Yeah, he's done a lot of really good things. We've been really impressed with what he's been able to do. He's been making good catches like that and running good routes, so I was happy for him to make that play."

How was it seeing Jake Fisher and Cedric Ogbuehi out there protecting the pocket? It seemed like you were able to get the ball out quick ...

"It was kind of just how we started. We were able to start fast and find some soft coverages to get it out underneath. There weren't any issues obviously, and I didn't even get touched. I thought they did a good job."

Did it cross your mind that it's been since December since you last played?

"No, I really didn't think about it. I got asked the question other day if it's a different feeling because I missed the end of the season. The thumb feels completely normal."

You came out four-for-five in the first series. How did you feel?

"I felt good. Obviously, we'd like to convert on that last third down, but the guy made a good play on it by jumping inside. I felt like I saw everything clean and thought we did a real good job."

Did you feel as if you had a good connection with A.J. Green tonight?

"Yeah, I think it's good for us to get back into this thing and start the season off. On the first drive, for him to catch three balls is good."

The first-stringers seemed to play really well tonight. Is that what you like to see in preseason games?

"You evaluate how you do personally, but I thought we came out and moved the ball well and were able to do some good things. We started out well and played fast by getting in-and-out of the huddle. Communication and everything was smooth. I thought it was a good first drive for us. Obviously, we wanted to convert and come away with points. Overall, I thought we did a really good job."

Were you surprised to come out in the first possession of the preseason and be that sharp?

"No, I wasn't surprised. I feel like we've done it in the past. Not surprised by it. It's what we expect from our guys."

Everybody was talking about Alex Erickson tonight. How much fun is it to see a teammate have a chance and really take advantage?

"It's great for a guy like that who has an opportunity to really prove what he can do, and he made the most of it. To catch a touchdown and return the punt for a touchdown was huge. I'm really happy for him."

Tyler Boyd made some big plays tonight. Are you pretty used to seeing this?

"Yeah, he's talented. He can do a lot of things, and he made a big play on the over-the-shoulder ball, and AJ (McCarron) made a really good throw."



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ALEX ERICKSON

Wide Receiver

Was this kind of a surreal night for you?

"As a competitor, any time you have an opportunity to go out and make plays, that's what you want to do."

Take us through both of the touchdowns. On the pass reception, it looked like they gave you lots of cushion ...

"The nickel came off the edge, and the safety over the top was playing a little soft, and we had the right play call. AJ (McCarron) threw it right where it needed to be, and I was able to walk in."

Take us through the punt return ...

"I knew I was going to have a chance to return it, just because the punter drove it – he hit it pretty good. I caught it going backwards, and I was able to cut off some of their blocks and got on the punter and outran everybody. On a punt return, that's such a long play. After looking at the clip you can just tell everyone was straining. It makes it fun when you just do your part and everyone else is doing their part as well."

Was it one of those times where you felt you had a shot at going all the way?

"When you're driven back, there's going to be more space. There's going to be more room to make guys miss. It also makes it harder on our guys. They've got to run a little bit farther, too."

When was the last time you returned a punt for a touchdown?

"High school. I had some returns in college and got a few touchdowns called back, but never had a touchdown in college. I returned punts in college, too."

When you broke the tackle on your punt return, did you think you could outrun everybody at that stage?

"I saw the punter, so I cut back on him, and then I knew I had to outrun somebody, and I was able to do that."

Did you expect your first NFL game to be this productive and this exciting?

"No, you never predict the numbers or anything like that; you just try to play (and) be the best you can be with every opportunity that comes your way. We talk about it all the time, making the most of your opportunity, and I was able to do that. It's a team game, too. AJ (McCarron) threw a great ball off the blitz (on Erickson's touchdown), and on the return, it took all 11 guys."

As an undrafted guy, it looked like you felt the need to make an impact. Is it hard not to try too hard to do something spectacular?

"I've done that in college, where you press a little bit too much and you end up hurting yourself. So I just come in and work hard every day, taking what the coaches tell you and just being as prepared as you can, whether you get one play or 50, and making the most of those."

Do you feel there's an opportunity at receiver for you? There are a lot of guys fighting for a handful of spots, but there are a handful of spots ...

"Yeah. As a competitor, anytime you have a chance for something, you feel like you're in it. I'm not trying to worry about the numbers at all; I'm just trying to come to work every single day, take what Coach (James) Urban is teaching us and do my best every day."

Talking about rookie receivers, Tyler Boyd and Cody Core had their moments, too ...

"Yeah. We're all just trying to push each other and keep taking our game to the next level. That's what competition does: it brings the best out in everybody, and that's what we're trying to be, the best players we can be. We just come out every day and keep working."

How often did you return punts in college?

"I did a little bit my junior year and then my senior year, I was the primary returner."

JEFF LUC

Fullback

You got a chance to go out there in the first half and make some plays – how do you feel like you did?

"I did all right; you could always do better. The biggest thing is we go back in the film room and correct my mistakes. You don't know how you did until you watch the film. You never did as bad as you think you did or as good as you think you did. I'm just going to keep my mind straight and make sure I go back and learn."

On short yardage situations, we saw you come in frequently. Is that what you expected?

"Tell you the truth, I didn't know what to expect. I knew I was going to play and get an opportunity, but I didn't know it was going to be so early. I tried to grab this opportunity and roll with it."

You've been asked about this position change from linebacker at the University of Cincinnati to fullback with the Bengals ... How do you think it went tonight?

"It went well, very well, especially on special teams. I had a chance to show my talent a little bit. I think I did pretty well, but at the end of the day, you can always do better, so I'm going to go back in the film room ready to learn."

AJ McCARRON
Quarterback

Andy Dalton said in preseason you evaluate yourself; how do you evaluate yourself tonight?

"I don't know. I hate to do that because I haven't seen the film yet, but it felt good. Everybody around me played great. The offensive line played great with the protection. The running backs made hard runs and got the first downs when we needed them. The receivers caught the ball great. One thing I love is being able to come to the sideline and have someone like Andy, who if he sees something, he'll let me know. Overall, I felt the communication was great from everybody and they made a bunch of plays."

Was pushing the ball down the field a result of chances that were there, or part of the game plan?

"I was just taking what they give me. Don't try to make it too difficult – just take what they give you and hit your shots when you can. We did that, and it was a good job for us."

People have been talking about Tyler Boyd's big play ability in camp and then tonight you guys did it in a game – take us through that play ...

"He did a great job of tracking the ball and making a good play on it. I just liked him, liked my matchup and took it. That's what he does – he makes plays."

Alex Erickson came in as an undrafted free agent and had a big game ...

"I'll tell you what – the game's not too big for him. The moment's not too big and he's a hell of a player. He really is. He's definitely going to be able to play a lot and make a lot of big plays."

TYLER BOYD
Wide Receiver

You got your first taste of NFL action against another team tonight – what was the experience like and how would you evaluate your performance now that the game is over?

"You know what? It felt real good inside to get that NFL experience. I try to go out there and just go and do what I was coached to do throughout minicamp and training camp. I feel confident in myself, so when I went out there and made that big play, I knew things were paying off."

What happened on that play?

"It was just me reacting to the type of defense they were in – man press with one high safety, so we knew we were going to get a deep throw there. It was a great play for that coverage. I stacked a guy, he threw it over the top and I was able to box him out and make the play."

There's a lot of competition at wide receiver on this team for spots and several guys had big plays tonight – what do you think tonight's performance says about the level of talent at that position?

"It's always good to have a lot of playmakers around you because it will make the guys around you better, so we love to compete with each other but at the same time, we've got to keep each other up, keep each other in tune with what's happening in the game and let everybody know what they're doing well."



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MIKE ZIMMER

Head coach

Initial comments ...

"Every time we go out, we want to win and it was good to be able to win. There were a lot of good situations that came up throughout the course of the ball game, especially at fourth-and-three and several third-and-ones that we didn't run the ball well and it was hard to defend the run game in those situations. The two-minute drill before the half was a good thing. There were some good things when we dissect the game."

Talk about that second possession where you went 96 yards?

"He did good. Teddy always takes good care of the football. He's a very accurate thrower. He's nimble. He avoided some rushes and found Charles Johnson for that touchdown. Teddy continues to improve every week and I expect him to improve more."

What did you think of that pass to Charles Johnson?

"I was just calling the plays. He hit it pretty good."

Teddy was throwing the ball well especially airing one out. How good is it to see Teddy throw like this in a preseason game?

"Well it's good to get chunks. That's what you got to do to get a chance to loosen up the defense a little bit. That helps."

Did you think they got better in that second series?

"It seemed like they were blitzing every snap. It worked some times and sometimes it didn't."

Do you like how they handled blitz on that scoring play?

"To be honest with you I was doing a lot of stuff with the defense. So I don't know how they handled the blitz."

How do you think the defense did?

"Not good enough. Soft with the running game. Soft with the linebackers."

How did you think Trae Waynes was out there?

"I thought he did some good things. I was a little disappointed. He covers all and takes off. There are going to be some high balls that need to be contested. Those weren't as good as we hoped. But a lot of this is a learning experience. There were a lot of good situations tonight. We punted the ball down inside the 20 a few times. Blair hit the 51 yarder right before the half. There were some things tonight that will be good to teach off of."

How did you think Tre Roberson did tonight as he seemed to have a good camp?

"Considering he was a quarterback learning how to play defensive back, I thought he looked good."



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TEDDY BRIDGEWATER

Quarterback

How did it feel to get out there and start playing football again?

"Man, it was a great feeling. It was a long offseason, a long spring. Training camp has been a grind. To get out there and play some real football, it was pretty great."

Can you talk about that second possession—a 96-yard drive capped off with that touchdown?

"The good thing about that drive was we got to work different situations. We got to work some of our coming out plays, our coming out package. We had some big third downs. That's what kind of gets guys going. You hit a third down on a backed up situation, and you get your momentum, get your rhythm. The guys did a great job just executing that drive."

Being so close to Louisville, you had a lot of Louisville fans make the drive up. How cool was that?

"It was great. I got to see some close friends—Little Garrett and Mike Kurowski—that's my old equipment manager at Louisville. Mike Kurowski and his wife Valerie came up to support me, and they've been huge supporters since I was at Louisville. To see other fans, it just means a lot to me. It's just an hour-and-a-half, hour-and-45-minutes away. It kind of feels like I'm back home being able to play in front of those guys. It was a great feeling."

We've been asking you about the deep ball throughout training camp, but how does it feel to just get out there and let one loose the way you did?

"It was a great feeling. Charles (Johnson) did a great job tracking the ball. The offensive line did a great job giving me a clean pocket."

I know there were second stringers in there and it's a preseason game, but is that the kind of drive you can build on going forward?

"We were able to accomplish some things on that drive and get to work different situations that we've been working on throughout training camp. It was good to get a nice drive like that and get the momentum going."

How comfortable do you feel entering your third season?

"I feel very comfortable. As a team we know we have a long way to go. We're going to continue to work hard. We have tomorrow off, and when we come back we're going to watch the tape and make adjustments, make corrections and move forward."

Do you still think about the way that playoff game ended last year?

"It's a new season. Prior to today, it kind of sits on the back of your mind, but it's a new season, it's a new team. Nothing in this league stays the same. We have new guys here. I was excited to see a bunch of guys get the opportunity to showcase their talents tonight—(Laquon) Treadwell, Mackensie Alexander, Jayron Kearsse—those guys. We have a group here that understand what Coach Zim is asking of us. We're not looking back at last year, just going to continue to move forward."

Do you think any of those memories might surface this week because you're playing Seattle on Thursday?

"I'm pretty sure, but we have to move forward. Seattle's a different team. Nothing in this league stays the same. They've lost some guys and they've acquired some guys. We're going to approach this week with the mindset that we want to accomplish something. We play this game to win. We're just going to work hard this week. We have a long flight out there, but I'm excited."



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BLAIR WALSH

Kicker

Did your ball hit the bar or the support on the field goal attempt?

"Honestly, I'm five-foot-ten and I can't see over the line very well. It's the truth."

It seemed like you were trying to pin them inside the five yard line on kickoffs...

"Yes, it's pretty evident the direction we were going with that. That won't always be the game plan. It will switch up depending on who we're playing or kicking to. We weren't kicking any of them deep tonight."

TRAE WAYNES

Cornerback

How do you feel things went tonight?

"It was good. It was good to play against a team for once and kicking the season off."

Did you feel like it was easy to get into the flow?

"Yes, I definitely feel more comfortable. I give the credit to the coaches and my teammates for that."

You saw some actions in the playoffs last year too. Do you feel like that was helpful?

"Yes. Every rep I took last year was helpful. I just want to continue to progress."

JERICK MCKINNON

Running Back

Things seemed to go well tonight...

"Things are getting better, getting out there against different competition and seeing where you're at. We have a long way to go, but we came out with a win."

How important was the touchdown on the second series?

"Very important. The first series, we went three-and-out. Coach Zimmer always talks about starting fast. Three-and-out is definitely not what we want to do."