

December 28, 2022

## **QB Carson Wentz**

### **On how it feels to be back as the starting QB:**

"It feels good, it's exciting. I think it's exciting for me personally, but I think at the end of the day it's exciting for this team. We have a shot like I said after the game, we control our own destiny and to get to that point, this point in the season, after everything we've been through as a team, I think it means a lot to us. And we all know where we're at. We all know what we're capable of and what we're up against. So, it's exciting for us as a team. Obviously, I'm excited for my opportunity as well."

### **On if there were some throws that he felt were a result of being more comfortable in the offense:**

"Hard to say exactly. I know I felt good to be back out there again and nothing was perfect by any means, but I think felt like it had been a long time coming to some extent with the injury and everything that had transpired. So, it was just fun to finally get back out there and face live bullets and everything. Again, it wasn't perfect, but I thought it was overall exciting for me to just get that chance."

### **On how excited he is to play with the pieces around him:**

"Yeah, I mean it's been exciting and fun for me to watch. Obviously going through rehab and then as the backup the last couple weeks, just seeing [RB] Brian [Robinson Jr.], [RB Antonio Gibson], even [RB Jonathan Williams] get in there. Just the way they run, the way the o-line moves people up front. I think it's always fun to just see Brian, especially finishing runs. He is hit at two yards, but all of a sudden, we're in second and five, stuff like that I think can just wear down an opponent. I think it has been fun for me to see from the sideline and I'm excited to see it firsthand and see how that potentially opens up some other things in the passing game and to be a part of that and then just distribute the ball to the playmakers. Those guys outside, the receivers, can't say enough good things about them. They're playing at a high level, you can see they're playing with confidence. They're playing fast and making the most of their opportunities. So, I think it'll be fun once I'm out there."

### **On what it means to be a part of this locker room:**

"I think it's meant a lot. I think it's; I said it when I got here, one of the older guys in the locker room and seems like a young, kind of fresh team and nucleus of guys. And just the ups and downs we've been through as a team, the ups and downs I've been through personally the injuries, and other guys going through the same. I think it's a really tight-knit group and guys that support each other, have each other's back. I think just the way [QB] Taylor [Heinicke] has supported me and I've

supported him, I think really speaks to that and you see it throughout the entire locker room. And I think that means a lot to us as players because there's a lot of other things that come with this league and a lot of things that are outside of our control as players. And so when guys can support each other, have each other's backs and really care about each other, I think that shows up and I feel that way in this locker room."

**On needing to potentially win the next two games to make the playoffs:**

"Obviously there's a whole bunch of what ifs that lie ahead. But at the end of the day, we know we're in control of what we can. And the Browns are no slouch, you know, they're a good team. Their defense plays fast. They got some playmakers over there that we have to account for that can make life really difficult. So they're a good team. I'm excited that they're coming to our place, that we get 'em at home and they present a tough task. Obviously defensively, they do some good things and they're similar schematically to what the Niners did to some extent kind of similar systems. So I think some of that recollection and kind of overlap can help us. But they're a good team and a good defense that we gotta show up and be ready for."

**On WR Jahan Dotson's progression:**

"I've seen a lot from that kid. I think I said it early in even OTAs when he got in here over the summer and in camp. I think the last few weeks has just kind of been something that we all knew, but it's just finally cool to see him kind of do it in games repeatedly. And just to see that confidence building in him as well is really cool to see and to know we got a couple guys out wide that teams can't just kind of hone in on one guy. And I think that makes my life easier as a quarterback to distribute it to them and not worry about where's the coverage indicating all of those things. We got guys all over that can make plays and I think they all complement each other really well as well. So I'm just happy for the kid to see the way he's kind of come along and finally have that the opportunity in the games to do what I think we've all known all along."

**On how he can ramp up his leadership and locker room responsibility before a big game:**

"I think you try not to take that from zero to a hundred. I think for starters, I try to be the same. Even when I was trying to back up and support and help Taylor, I tried to be around, be involved, be the same amongst the guys, and so try not to, oh, hey guys, now I got to do something different. I'm just who I am, you know, I'm going to show up ready to work and try and make everybody else around me better. And whatever shape or form that looks like, that's what I'm going to do and that's who I'm going to be. And nothing on that front's going to change majorly. Obviously out of practice it looks different, you know, in the game it's going to look different, it's going to feel different, but from a day to day, I try not to change too much."

**On how he can provide a spark to the team:**

"I try not to think too much on that. I try to just play the play. Every single snap, whatever [Offensive Coordinator] Coach [Scott] Turner wants to call, try and execute that to the best of my ability and go on to the next. Not try and, okay, I got to do this, I got to do that, or this is what we need. No, I think we have a really solid group of guys, and I think we've shown that we're capable of winning and being explosive in a variety of ways offensively and so for me it's just come in and do my job and when the play is there, try and make it."

**On him handling blitzes better and on if observing the offense as a backup has helped him:**

"Yeah, I think just being out, I wasn't just out and away from everybody. I was still in every meeting trying to learn and trying to grow within this offense and take every chance I could to get better and further my understanding for this opportunity. And I think by no means do I got it all figured out by any means, but I think just trying to understand it and see it from a different perspective when you're not going out there and having to play it and go through it and you got all the other things that come with being the starter. I've been able to kind of understand it a little bit deeper and hopefully recall quicker and different things that I think have helped. Just being on the sideline with opportunities and experiences that I otherwise wouldn't have gotten."

**On if he thinks about the way last season ended as the team heads into their final two games:**

"I try not to think about that. Every year it just seems so different. There's years that the season has ended positively and negatively. It's a whole new different set of guys. It's a different team. I'm wearing a different uniform, the whole nine yards. So, I'm gonna show up and try and do my job to the best of my ability and hopefully we like the result."

**On his chemistry with WR Terry McLaurin:**

"Yeah, I think just going back to camp, going back to the first six weeks, I think you just build off of that. That's the thing about this league. There's no time to try and work on those things. We'll get obviously a couple reps at practice and then go make it happen in the game. And so you kinda rely on what you've done to that point and those moments that in training camp when it's hot and you're tired, all of those things that kind of in the game situation, they show up. And so I've been nothing but confident in his ability and I think he trusts kind of the way I see the game too. And I think that'll just continue where we kind of left off as we were growing and developing together, however many weeks ago."

**On if he expected the 49ers to blitz him as much as they did:**

"No, I didn't actually. I mean, that's not really their DNA. That wasn't really who they were, so that obviously surprised me, and everybody else. But I thought [offensive coordinator] Coach [Scott] Turner did a really good job of calling things that allowed me to get the ball out quickly, once he saw kind of that was their MO a little bit. So yeah, I never know. But we always have plans and hopefully we can get the protection set right and I can make quick decisions when those things happen."

**On if getting the ball out of his hands quickly is a focus for him:**

"Yeah, I mean I've always tried to have that be my MO. Obviously there's moments I'm kicking myself where I should have got the ball out quicker and there's moments you're trying to make plays and do different things and so in that moment, obviously against a really good pass rushing unit, and obviously bringing the pressure, I don't want to go down with a ball in my hand back there. Just get it to the playmakers and I'm gonna continue to try and keep doing that."

**On playing with four different centers this year and on OL Wes Schweitzer stepping into the role:**

"Yeah, I think Wes has done a really good job. Obviously it's been an interesting year for him as well

with the injuries and coming back and being thrust into playing center when he is normally a guard. I think it's been interesting on a lot of different levels for a lot of guys. And so the way he's kind of handled it and adapted and obviously playing center mentally comes with a lot. I think he's handled that really well and I think he's gotten better and better at handling all of that as well. So yeah, I think playing with a bunch of different guys every week will help going forward. I have nothing but confidence in Wes going forward."

**On what he has learned about this locker room and on his reaction to the Pro Bowl video with Coach Rivera and S Jeremy Reaves:**

"I feel like that video and just Coach Rivera and Jeremy, and then Tress [Way's] reaction, the whole nine yards I think kind of just sums up what I've felt in this locker room. I just touched on it a little bit and you know we have our highs and lows out on the field, and we all go through different things, but I think the way guys still rally around each other, have each other's backs through the good, the bad, the ugly. You know, guys are hurt, guys are down, you're trying to pick 'em up. It's a tough business. It's a tough league. It can be tough personally and individually for guys. And I think the way guys can still support each other and ultimately genuinely care about each other, and then seeing that video I think kind of was just kind of a summation of what I feel every day coming to work in that locker room."