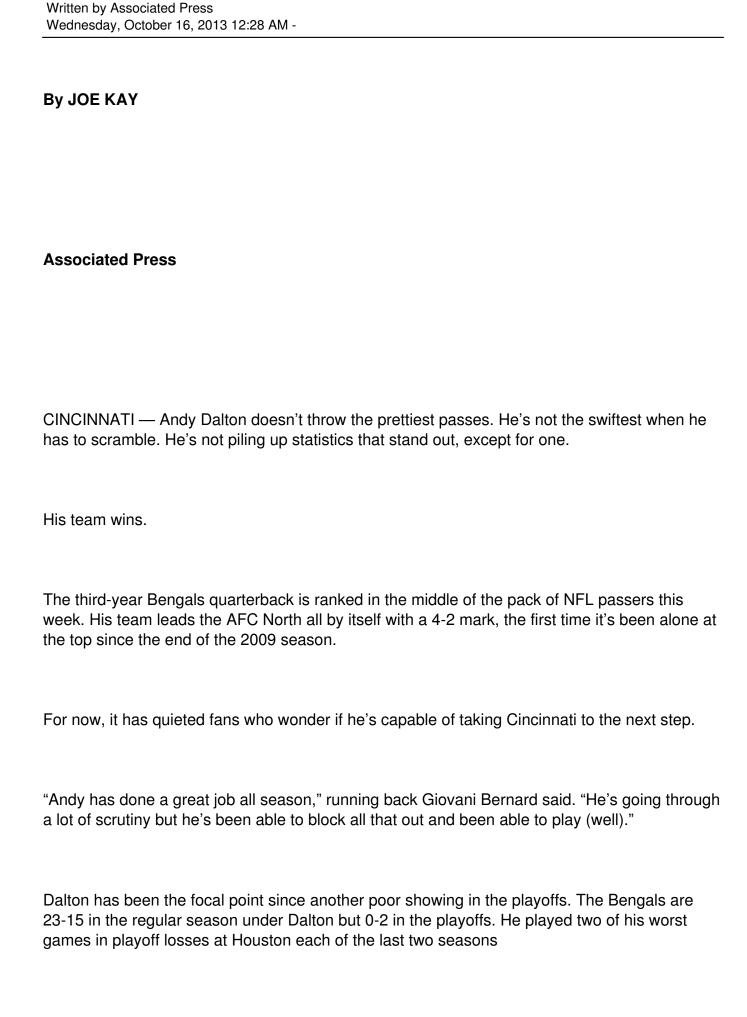
Bengals QB Dalton getting it done without fanfare



Bengals QB Dalton getting it done without fanfare

Written by Associated Press Wednesday, October 16, 2013 12:28 AM -

The ultimate test will be whether he gets Cincinnati back to the playoffs for a third straight season and wins this time.

Dalton ranks 16th in the NFL this week with a passer rating of 87.2. He has completed 65 percent of his passes with eight touchdowns and six interceptions. His fourth-quarter passer rating of 76.9 ranks 21st in the NFL.

One of the things he's done best: avoid mistakes that decide close games.

"I don't know that his predecessor has won these kinds of games week-in and week-out, you know?" coach Marvin Lewis asked.

Lewis was referring to Carson Palmer, who set numerous club passing records while leading the Bengals to AFC North titles in 2005 and 2009. Palmer had a vastly different team around him — the defense finished in the bottom half of the league rankings during four of his seven seasons as a starter, putting pressure on the offense to score a lot of points.

Cincinnati's defense has ranked in the top 10 in each of his first three seasons, taking a lot of pressure off Dalton and the offense. The Bengals don't need Dalton to put up huge passing numbers in order to win with their West Coast offense.

Lewis likes to point out that Dalton was thrown into the starting job right away as a rookie. By contrast, some of the NFL's top quarterbacks had time to learn on the bench, allowing them to excel right away when they got the job.

"We're very supportive of him," Lewis added. "As I told him, it's his football team. He just has to keep doing it his way. There's going to be a play that makes you go, 'Ah, shoot,' but they all have that.

Bengals QB Dalton getting it done without fanfare

Written by Associated Press Wednesday, October 16, 2013 12:28 AM -

"We're asking for special. We're looking for special each and every day. That's what the expectations are. He's got to keep shouldering that and keep moving forward."

One main area for improvement is how Dalton responds when the pocket breaks down. He's shown a tendency to hold the ball too long or force a throw.

The overall results are pleasing. Dalton has a chance to become only the fifth quarterback in NFL history to lead his team to the playoffs each of his first three seasons, along with Pat Haden, Dan Marino, Bernie Kosar and Joe Flacco.

NOTES: The Bengals filled an open spot on their practice squad Tuesday by signing DE Kendrick Adams, who opened the season with Cleveland and played in three preseason games before being waived. Last season, he spent time on the practice squads at Tampa Bay, Detroit and Cleveland. ... The Bengals play at Detroit (4-2) on Sunday, their only indoor game this season. The Bengals won their only previous game at Ford Field and have beaten the Lions four straight overall.