

There's more to it, though. That first game on Sept. 29 is still a sticking point.

"I don't care what player you are in this league, you've been humbled at some point," left tackle Andrew Whitworth said on Wednesday. "And sometimes it takes a week that humbles you a

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little bit to get the best out of you.

"So they caught us and it was a good day for them and we get another chance. Round two is coming up."

The first time the Bengals faced their intrastate rival, they had an overriding issue. With rookie tight end Tyler Eifert and rookie running back Giovani Bernard blending into the passing game, Cincinnati was still trying to figure how all the pieces fit on offense.

The no-touchdown loss in Cleveland prompted offensive coordinator Jay Gruden to dub the offense a jack of all trades and master of none. Looking for that identity, the Bengals committed themselves to running the ball the following week and beat New England.

Andy Dalton then went on the best 3-game stretch of his career, throwing 11 touchdown passes in wins over Buffalo, Detroit and the Jets. The offense had come together.

In the last two weeks, it's reverted to a pass-dominated approach that's come up just short.

Dalton threw 53 and 51 passes in overtime losses at Miami and Baltimore. He was sacked 10 times in the two games and threw three interceptions in each game. The Bengals managed only three points in the first half at Miami and were shut out in the first half at Baltimore, forcing them to throw in order to pull off second-half comebacks.

"Part of the reason we're down is because of the turnovers," Gruden said. "We're putting ourselves into a hole with the turnovers. We're putting ourselves in little holes and then they turn into big holes because we're pressing."

A lot of it is on Dalton, whose interceptions have been too much to overcome. It's the first time in his career that he's thrown six interceptions in two games.

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"I've got to do a better job of not turning the ball over, and that's what it comes down to," Dalton said. "You've got to understand when you can take your chances and when you can't. That's something I've got to do a better job of."

The Browns put cornerback Joe Haden on A.J. Green and Dalton tried to take advantage of the 1-on-1 coverage. Fifteen of his 42 passes went toward Green, who managed to come down only seven of them for 51 yards.

Green got frustrated and showed it in his body language. Afterward, he called it a mistake and has gone back to keeping his emotions in check. He'll get a second chance to get the best of Haden, who gave him few openings in Cleveland.

"It wasn't my best game," Green added on Wednesday. "A lot of out-of-character stuff. I can't get frustrated like that ever."

Notes: TE Jermaine Gresham, who sat out the loss at Baltimore with a groin injury, practiced fully on Wednesday, an indication he'll be available for the Cleveland game. ... LB Vontaze Burfict (knee), S Chris Crocker (hamstring), C Kyle Cook (shoulder), LB Rey Maualuga (knee), DT Devon Still (elbow), DT Brandon Thompson (ankle) and guard Kevin Zeitler (foot) were held out of practice. LB Mike Boley (hamstring) and CB Terence Newman (ankle) were limited.