

Bengals aim to snap 3-game opener skid vs. Browns

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cincinnati (9-8) at Cleveland (3-14)
Sunday, 1 p.m., FOX
BetMGM NFL Odds:
Bengals by 5 1/2
Series record: Bengals lead 55-48.

Last meeting: Bengals beat the Browns 24-6 in Cincinnati on Dec. 22, 2024.

Bengals offense in 2024: overall (9), rush (30), pass (1), scoring (6).

Bengals defense in 2024: overall (25), rush (19), pass (21), scoring (125).

Browns offense in 2024: overall (28), rush (29), pass (22), scoring (32).

Browns defense in 2024: overall (19), rush (21), pass (12), scoring (27).

Turnover differential in 2024: Bengals plus-3; Browns minus-22.

BENGALS PLAYER TO WATCH

QB Joe Burrow. He goes into his sixth season after leading the league in completions (460), passing yards (4,918) and TD passes (43) last season. Burrow lost four of his first five starts against the Browns, but won both meetings last season with five touchdowns and no interceptions. However, Burrow has a 1-4 mark in Week 1, including losses in the past three and no touchdown passes in the past two. He had a passer rating of at least 105 in five of the six games against AFC North opponents last season.

BROWNS PLAYER TO WATCH

DE Myles Garrett. The four-time All-Pro pass rusher has



Matt Slocum/AP Photo

Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow passes during the first half of an NFL preseason football game against the Philadelphia Eagles on Thursday, Aug. 7 in Philadelphia.

nine sacks against Burrow, his most against any quarterback. Garrett led the league with 22 tackles for loss last season, was second with 14 sacks and fourth with an 18.7% pressure rate. He is the only player in the league with double-digit sacks in each of the past seven seasons.

KEY MATCHUP

Bengals WR Ja'Marr Chase versus Browns secondary. Chase has struggled for most of his career against Cleveland, but he had 11 catches for 152 yards and two touchdowns last season. In the second meeting, Chase had his best success against the Browns on short routes. He had five receptions for 65 yards on passes under 10 air yards, including 42 yards after the catch.

KEY INJURIES

Both teams go into the opener healthy. Browns DT Mike Hall (knee) was the only

player who did not practice on Wednesday.

SERIES NOTES

The Bengals swept the season series last season for the first time since 2017. Cincinnati has a 31-21 edge since Cleveland's return in 1999.

STATS AND STUFF

Cincinnati has lost its past three openers and is 7-14-1 under coach Zac Taylor in September games, the fourth-worst mark among teams since 2019. ... RB Chase Brown averaged 116.3 scrimmage yards per game over the final eight games of last season. ... DE Trey Hendrickson, who led the NFL with 17 1/2 sacks last season, has had at least half a sack in four straight games against the Browns. ... LB Logan Wilson has 11 interceptions during his five seasons in the league, the most in the league by a linebacker since 2020. ... K

Bengals WR Tee Higgins had at least 50 receiving yards in six of seven road games last season and has a touchdown catch in two straight games against the Browns.

Evan McPherson has made 24 field goals of at least 50 yards, tied for fifth most in the league since 2021. ... Cleveland is 3-21-1 in openers since 1999, but two of the wins have come in the past three seasons. ... The Browns are 9-2 in September games since 2020 with Kevin Stefanski as coach. ... QB Joe Flacco will be the eighth signal-caller age 40 or older to start a Week 1 game in the NFL since 1948. Flacco is 12-2 in starts in Cleveland. ... RB Jerome Ford has 92 rushing yards and a TD in the previous meeting against the Bengals. ... TE David Njoku has at least eight catches and 65 yards in each of the past two games against

Cincinnati. ... WR Jerry Jeudy set a Browns single-season record with 90 catches last season.

FANTASY TIP

Bengals WR Tee Higgins had at least 50 receiving yards in six of seven road games last season and has a touchdown catch in two straight games against the Browns.

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