

Auburn Post-Game Quotes

Auburn vs. Arkansas State
Pat Dye Field at Jordan-Hare Stadium
September 4, 2010

Auburn Head Coach Gene Chizik

"It's great to have a win. It was good for our football team to get our first game under our belt. Obviously if you watched the game, there were a lot of glaring things that weren't very good, but things that I think are very fixable and things I think we can build on. I think the positives in the game were that we had a lot of explosive plays on offense. I think second half defensively, we got a better feel for what they were doing. It was a little bit difficult with a new offensive coordinator, trying to figure out what he did at a different school versus what he would do now with different types of personnel. That became a little challenging. Our tackling was at times good. At times it was not very good, but there were some glimmers of what we would like to be on offense and defense. On special teams, I was really proud. We really kind of soaked our special teams with a lot of young guys, and I think you could see that there was some spark in some of our special teams. The third quarter was disappointing initially because that was when you were hoping to come out and really make a statement, and the statement we made was not a good one. We turned the ball over right off the bat, and they went in and scored. So, we had to try to get the momentum back. I liked that because we fought through all of the things that were not good in the game, and we kept fighting through those. Again, a lot of young guys showed up today. You saw Craig Sanders cover kickoffs. That was glaring. Michael Dyer rushed for almost 100 yards. That was great. We did some things on all sides of the ball that were encouraging, but we have so much work to do to play an SEC game in five days. We have to start tomorrow, and we have to correct a bunch of things that I think our whole football team understands that we have not arrived yet."

On Cameron Newton's first game at Auburn

"When you go through practice, it is really hard to figure out what quarterbacks in a lot of ways can do because when you have athletes back there like Cameron, there are certain things they can make when they don't have anything. Certain runs they can make, and certain things they can do with the ball when there is nothing there, and that is really hard to tell in practice. As you can tell tonight, he did some nice things when maybe something wasn't there when he turned bad plays into potentially good ones. That is really good. Cam has a lot of work to do right now on our offense in just running it and being where we need to be in this league. For his first football game, I couldn't be prouder of what he did. He will be the first to tell you he knows there is a lot of work to be done. Overall, I'm glad he got this game under his belt and had some success both running and throwing. I think that was important."

On the situation with Craig Stevens

"As I've said many times, we hold our guys to a certain standard of excellence, and that is on the field and that is off the field. If they are not living up to that certain standard right now then I've got tough decisions that I have to make. I think our football team understands that it doesn't matter whether you are a starting guy or a potential All-American or a third-team guy. Everybody lives by the same rules. When you are not living by those rules, again I have to make tough decisions. I am not going to go into the details of his status in terms of what, when and things of that nature. But, as I said last year and as I've said many times, as long as those guys are wearing the Auburn uniform, you know they are doing right. So when you see him again, and he is dressed out in an Auburn uniform, then he will have proved to us that he is living back up to our standards."

You said you wanted to play a lot of young guys, did you accomplish that?

"I think we did. We played a lot of young guys. The thing that was encouraging tonight is we played a lot of young guys when the game was still in hand and tried to rotate our defensive linemen and get a bunch of young guys in there."

We tried to rotate our secondary and get some young guys in there, same thing at linebacker. I know we did the same thing offensively with a couple of young guys over there. I think that was encouraging, and we are going to continue to do that and of course at the end of the game, they all got a lot of reps as well.

“If you look at our special teams, I was proud of our kickoff team for the first time. When you look out there, there is a bunch of freshmen on there and that is what their role is right now on our team to be able to help our team cover kicks, cover punts, kickoff returns and things of that nature. I think a lot of them got a lot of valuable experience tonight.”

With a short week before Mississippi State, can you pinpoint anything you need to work on?

“It is just our level of focus and concentration sometimes was just extremely sloppy. Our protection of the football was extremely sloppy. That’s disappointing. That’s really disappointing. With all the good things that I think that we are going to look at that film and see tomorrow, those were glaring to me. When you go into league play, we are not good enough to beat anybody doing that.”

On Michael Dyer and Onterio McCalebb combining for 23 carries tonight and Mario Fannin only having three, is that a sign that you see the two as every down guys moreso than Mario at the tailback spot?

“I don’t think I would necessarily read into that at all. I think what we try to do offensively is we really try to get what they give us and take what we think is there. I really wouldn’t go that far. Mario had some great catches out of the backfield as you saw. Mario did that for us a lot last year. He is a very extremely talented athlete. Then, the young guys got a chance to run the football, and we mixed it up pretty good with those guys. I was proud of Michael protecting the football when he ran it. He rushed for almost 100 yards in his first college game and hopefully he gains more confidence. Onterio has really been steady for us all the way through camp. We feel like we can give all three of them the ball I guess is the morale of the story.”

How much do you let your team enjoy this win?

“I think you enjoy tonight. It is like we talked. I said I want you to enjoy this win. No question, wins are hard to come by. You are going to look up at some scores tonight from some people and be shocked for sure of teams that you would think arguably would beat somebody and didn’t. Every win is great. Every win is hard, but they do not have to be satisfied with the way that we won. Everybody ought to be happy that we won, but I don’t think there is anybody in our locker room that was satisfied with how we won because everybody knows there is so much room for improvement. I think that is fair.”

What happened on the pass defense breakdowns that allowed big plays?

“Again, there were some things they were doing early in the game right now that we really had to adjust to. They did a nice job. That offense is very similar to ours. It is fast paced, high tempo, check at the sidelines, see what you are doing, and there were some things that they had done that we hadn’t seen the offensive coordinator do at the previous school that he was at. It took us a little bit. I was proud of the way the guys stood up and made some plays at critical times. Obviously, I’m not proud of some things that we gave up with some missed tackles and some missed reads and some of the passing game early. That long one on the first touchdown drive. That was disappointing to see. Again, we are going to look back and see some nice things that they did, too.”

On Quindarius Carr

"I am really proud of him tonight. I had not bought stock in him yet. I had not bought stock in him yet, but I am going to tell you it has gone up. It has gone up as a punt returner right now. We have worked so hard on trying to have a punt returner. This is the first game that he has done it. I thought he did a great job. He got us positive yards when he could. He saved a ball from potentially getting inside the 10 yard line a couple of times which we had trouble making decisions with that last year. Of course with what he did on offense. I think he is growing up, and I think he is becoming a better football player."

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Craig Sanders, DE

On first collegiate game...

"It was exciting. I was on the opening kickoff. They had "Zombie Nation" playing and my heart was racing. After that first kickoff, I settled down a little but I still had butterflies for a while. I was just running full speed and I was lucky enough to find some guys in my lane. Everybody was giving it all they had on special teams today."

On preparations for upcoming matchup with Mississippi State...

"There is always room for improvement. We have Mississippi State coming up. Arkansas State was a good team but we have our SEC opener in five days. We are just going to get better every week and as we move deeper into the season. The games only get tougher from here on in."

Cam Newton, QB

On his 71-yard rushing touchdown...

"It was really a busted play. That is just another reason to say we did not execute on all cylinders. We have to come back and get better."

Grading the Tigers' performance...

"We just came off a great win against Arkansas State but we are stepping into the SEC. Every single game in the SEC is a big one. We have to come back and watch film to make sure we are prepared."

Thoughts on personal performance...

"As the game kept going on, I felt my feet settling in. There were a lot of times I thought I could make plays with my feet because of the man coverage."

Zac Etheridge, S

Thoughts on returning from last season's injury...

"It felt great. It was a blessing just to be out there, be with my teammates and play in front in front of 80,000 people. It was extremely loud tonight and I felt great. It was exciting just to be out there. I felt like I got my feet back under me, but I still have a lot of work to do. I am going to go watch film and go work on things like keep my head up while I'm making a tackle."

On first Tiger Walk since the 2009 Ole Miss game...

"Tiger Walk was crazy today. It was live. The DBs, we always try to get the crowd pumped as much as we can. It felt good to go through there with my teammates and see all the fans."

Michael Dyer, RB

On debut as an Auburn Tiger...

"I just went out and did what the coaches asked and played my role as a teammate. My first game was very exciting. Coming from high school to college and competing in front of my family was a great experience. It was very exciting, especially scoring in my first game.

On offensive production...

"It all started out with Cam. He did his role opening things up for us. Our backs hit the holes and we caught the ball well. We just tried to do all the things we were supposed to do tonight."

Darvin Adams, WR

On tonight's performance...

"We were able to come out with a win, but we had a lot of things we could have done better. We are going to go back and start practicing and get better, work hard and get ready for Mississippi State."

On the impact of Cam Newton, being a running and passing threat...

"As all the fans saw, Cam (Newton) is a big part of our offense. He can run the ball, he can throw the ball. The offensive line did a great job opening up holes, he is just a great part of our offense."

On being able to get more than 600 yards of total offense...

"We were able to take what they gave us. Like Coach Malzahn always tells us, when they try to stop something, do something different. I think the coaches did a great job of calling the plays tonight."

Josh Bynes, LB

On the defense's performance...

"The defense played pretty decent, but we still have a lot of things to work on. We have to make better tackles, especially in the open field. Today was the first game, and I am not going to say it was first-game jitters, but all I can say is we have some things we need to work on. As the game progressed, we were able to swarm the ball and that is something we are going to have to do every game. We have to make sure everyone stays hyped and into the game."

On playing the first game of the season...

"It felt great to go out there. It was a great feeling in front of all of our fans. I was loving it because it is my last year and I am going to appreciate every game and enjoy my time out there because I am definitely going to miss it."

On the short week of practice ahead...

“We have to watch a lot of film and communicate better defensively. Mentally, we have to get prepared. Tomorrow we will see how things go, but I think we will get everything on point and be ready by Thursday.”

On the offensive production taking pressure off the defense...

“It takes a lot of pressure off the defense when the offense is scoring like that. We have to make sure to keep the other team out of the end zone. We gave up way too many yards, but that is not to knock Arkansas State because they are a great team. They came out here and did a great job. They scored points because they did what they had to do. We have to step our game up and limit the yards and continue to play Auburn defense.”

Quindarius Carr, WR

On the game....

“It felt great out there with my teammates, having fun and getting the victory. It was awesome.”

On his two big catches...

“They are routine catches during practices. As I said before when the opportunity presents itself, you have to make the play.”

On scoring a touchdown...

“It felt great, going from the Outback Bowl and carrying over to now.”

On his goals for the week...

“I need to be a leader, that was my main goal. I stepped up and made the plays when the team needed me. I helped the younger guys and led them in that way.”

On returning punts...

“It worked pretty well for my first time out there. It takes some getting used to do it well.”

Onterio McCalebb, RB

On today's game...

“Everything went well. We came away with the win but we are not satisfied yet. We are going to have to come back tomorrow and get ready for Mississippi State on Thursday night.”

On being back out on the field...

“We have been in the stadium but not in front of a crowd. It was just an awesome feeling to be back out there. The crowd was awesome, it was loud in there for us. Even through our bad times tonight, they were still there for us.”

On his goals for the night...

"I just wanted to play my role and to help my team with the game. Bad things are going to happen but we have to look past that and move on."

A.J. Greene, OL

On tonight's game...

"I was kind of nervous. I got some nicks and bruises but as far as the game is concerned I still have to learn a lot more."

On his play tonight...

"I am not going to say I played good and I am not going to say I played bad, I just have to go back out there and get better each and every day."

On being back out on the field...

"It felt really good because it has been a while since I have been out there and I felt like I was at home again."

On his favorite part of tonight's game...

"When I was running down the field and blocking for Onterio (McCalebb). If he would have slowed down I could have blocked the guy so he could have walked into the end zone."

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Arkansas State Head Coach Steve Roberts

Thoughts on the Auburn offensive performance...

Opening Statement...

"I am disappointed that we did not win the ball game. We have a ton of things we need to improve on and that need to be corrected. We want to win the Sun Belt Championship and win enough games to go to a bowl game. Auburn has a heck of a football team, you have to give them a lot of credit offensively. I don't know if I have seen an individual performance better than Cam Newton, he is the best player I have ever seen live. He made a huge difference in the ball game tonight - he is hard to bring down. I am proud of our football team. They put in the same effort on the first snap as we did the last snap. Auburn jumped on us early and we gave up too many big plays."

On what the team needs to work on in the coming weeks...

"Mostly, some fundamental things like rolling you hips when you tackle, wrapping up and communicating some calls. We went fast on offense and we missed some calls. On offense, we had some opportunities and just didn't capitalize, especially on third down there were a few plays we need to capitalize on and did not. We will go back and look at the film and see what we need to correct and work hard to do so. "

On the new offensive system ...

"We need to finish some plays and drives. We need to put the ball in the end zone more than we did. I am pleased with the way we moved the ball. I am proud of the way we operated our hurry offense. Ryan Aplin (quarterback) preformed well, he took some shots and kept getting up and throwing the football. But, I will be the first to tell you that we left some plays on the field. "

On Auburn's 600 yards of total offense...

"It is disappointing. We wanted to go out and hold them to no yards or touchdowns. Auburn is a heck of a team and Coach Gus Malzhan does a heck of a job. They hit us with some trick plays and they made some plays when things broke down. They are a heck of an offensive football team."

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M.D. Jennings, DB

On the difficulty in stopping Auburn's offense...

"Offensively, it is the same stuff we've been seeing and we really played well at times, but they hit us with a bunch of big plays. We have to run to the ball and get better tackles."

On impression of Cameron Newton and how he fit into Auburn's offense...

"He's a great athlete. He can put the ball down and run and can make some pretty big plays too."

Ryan Aplin, QB

On tonight's performance and what he can take away from the game...

"We had a good start and moved the ball well. Like Coach Roberts said, we had too many negative plays left a lot of plays on the field. There are several plays I should have made and we didn't pull out a positive outcome. We need to fix a lot of those and get better for next week."

On the switch to the new offensive style and its effectiveness...

"I think it ran very well. We moved the ball great. The offensive line did a good job in picking up several of the blitzes that Auburn brought. Talking about things on the sideline, we thought we did a good job and I think we'll get better."

On Dwayne Frampton being your favorite target for the night...

"He did a good job getting open and finding little windows for me to put the ball in. Good job after the catch too."