



Auburn Post-Practice Quotes

Scottsdale Community College / Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Head Coach Gene Chizik

On how well he knows the Oregon team:

"We've had about five weeks to look at them on film, but we know that they'll be some new things. When you have some time to create, they'll be some new things that you'll have to adjust to. But the bottom line is that we have a good feel for them right now."

On Auburn's practices and how they appear loose if the guys have been all year:

"The great thing about our team is when it's time to get going, we know how to work ... and when it's time to let them kind of have some fun. You've got to have a mixture of both. The guys have really been able to turn it on and turn it off, and when we started practice today it was on and we were able to have a great practice."

On comparisons to Oregon's practice tempo:

"When we need to practice extremely fast, we do. Our tempo is always up-tempo ... very physical practices when need be. Philosophically, we go how our team goes. When we need to do something tempo related, we do it, and when we have to slow it down and have an extremely physical practice, we do it. We go as our team goes."

On the team speed of Oregon:

"Their whole team concerns me with their speed. You just look at their special teams units. Usually you can gauge a football team on how they are on special teams, their return teams, their coverage units. A lot of great athletes, a lot of speed. They have it all over the team and all over the field. As a football team, they have a lot of quickness and a lot speed."

On comparing Cam Newton with Vince Young (who he was with at Texas):

"I don't like to compare two guys. I think that everybody is different in their own way. Individuals have different strengths and different weaknesses. So I'm not going to get into the comparison game. But Cam Newton is definitely one of the greatest players I've seen. Both players are great."

On drawing from past experiences in big games

"Everything a coach does is a product of his past experiences, I don't think there's any exceptions to that. I've been blessed to be in this game before, and certainly that helps me in the time from the last game we played until this one. In general right now, it's all about keeping focus."

—continued—

January 5 / Auburn Post-Practice Quotes (2)

Head Coach Gene Chizik, continued

On the practice facility

“This is as good as it gets. The fields are in excellent shape. The people who run this, and there are so many people behind the scenes who are involved in it. You can tell there are a lot of people who have really spent a lot of time on it. We really appreciate it, the players really appreciate it, the administration. It’s been a great two days.”

On how Auburn has had to win games in 2010:

“I think the chemistry of our team was built on the fact that we’ve had to win games about every way you can win them. We’ve had to win the late, in different, ways, offensively, defensively, with special teams. We’ve been in a lot of big games, and anytime that you’re really exposed to a lot of different things, it can’t do anything but help.”

*** **

CB T’Sharvan Bell

(Soph., 6-0, 180, Kissimmee, Fla.)

On how Auburn practices loose and how important that is before things turn serious:

It’s big. A lot of people are thinking that there is a lot of pressure, but there’s no pressure on us. We come out here and this is what we do, we’ve been doing it for 13 weeks, and we’re going to keep doing what we do.”

No pressure in a national championship game?—“No pressure on us, that’s the way I see it, no pressure on us.”

On Oregon WR Jeff Maehl:

He’s a good receiver, and he’s a good blocker downfield. I think he’s complete. He can do it all, he can block, catch the ball, make moves in open space. I think he’s a pretty good receiver.”

On if he’s seen teams that block well downfield:

“Not the way Oregon does. They’ll block you up high and cut you. They’ll give you everything you’re looking for out on the edge.”

On if it helps that Auburn’s receivers they see in practice are similar to Oregon’s:

“It helps us, because when you cross over, if we know a play and we jump it, they’ll come cut us down, so it helps us more with our fundamentals. Make sure you see a receiver, and see what he’s going to do, whether he’s going to put his hands up or shoot you low. All those things help us.”

On if Oregon will go over the top early:

“I expect them to come out and do a couple of different things, but I think they’re going to stick to what they do, because I heard their coach say it’s not about what we do, it’s not about what they do. So they’ll come out and do a couple of different things but they’re going to do what they do best.”

—continued—

January 5 / Auburn Post-Practice Quotes (3)

WR Emory Blake

(Soph., 6-1, 192, Austin, Texas)

On Auburn's receivers:

"We always want to make plays on the perimeter. I felt like in the SEC championship, we were a big part because Cam threw for a lot of yards that game, and we made some big-time plays. So we like to take responsibility."

On if Auburn's receivers have come into their own this year:

"We've come a long way in the past year. With Coach Troop (Trooper Taylor) being there for the first year, it kind of took a while for everyone to get used to each other, but now we're a family and we're doing big things."

On how Auburn practices:

"That's just how we are. We like to have fun but to take care of business at the same time. You don't want everything to be all cutthroat all the time because it's not going to be fun. We tend to play better when we have fun. The SEC Championship was fun, it was a fun game and that's just how we are."

On Auburn offensive coordinator Gus Malzahn:

"He's funny because he's always so serious."

RB Michael Dyer

(Fr., 5-9, 215, Little Rock, Ark.)

On any pressure he is putting on himself to relieve Cam Newton:

"This game, I am putting a lot pressure on myself because I know that he's been carrying our team the whole year. They're looking at him, they want to go and try and hit him every play and we need somebody (else) to step up. I want to be the guy, and I know of lot of people on our team are thinking the same thing, that want to be that guy to help him out however we can."

On what his real strength is as a running back:

"I'm a between-type kind of guy. I like running between the tackles, physical. You know, downhill football."

On why he chose to go to Auburn:

"I had a lot of different choices, but this was a choice from my first visit I knew that I was coming to Auburn, because of the coaches, the players on the team and the atmosphere here."

On if he thought he'd be contributing this quickly:

"The only thing I thought is I'd come here and learn the offense my freshman year, get some snaps here and there, but as the game goes on and progresses, I get more carries."

On how Auburn practices and plays:

"We just play loose, we just play Auburn football. We try to have fun and do it the right way. I definitely like it (the atmosphere), and even though our coaches are really, really strict, we get to play loose and do the little things we like to do as running backs, or quarterbacks, or the wide receivers."

On what he meant by the coaches being strict:

"Strict in that we get our plays down, our timing down, the little things, get our blocks right, being sure we pick up the right guy. All those things we're supposed to do, because if we don't do it right, we're going to have to come back and do it over and over again."

—continued—

January 5 / Auburn Post-Practice Quotes (4)

RB Michael Dyer, continued

On if it is cool that he is starting in the national championship game:

"Everything works out. God had a great plan and so far it's been going great. I've really enjoyed what the team has done for me and my family, and to play in this game is a big deal for me so I am sure happy to be here."

C Ryan Pugh

(Note--from the morning, not post-practice)

(Sr., 6-4, 297, Hoover, Ala.)

On if Oregon's strength is their depth, and how they rotate so much on defense if Auburn can take some of that away by pushing the tempo:

"I don't know if you can take it away because they're used to it. They used to practicing at that tempo every day. ... But, at the same time, we're a different style of offense than they are. We're spread offenses but probably as different a spread as you can get, really."

On when he knew Gus Malzahn's scheme would work:

"Probably the day he set foot on campus. It's not hard to explain, 500-and-something yards of offense (per game) every year playing good teams. ... His first year at Arkansas, they played in the SEC Championship Game. When he was at Tulsa, they put up unreal numbers out there and they were playing SEC schools."

On what it's like going every day against Nick Fairley, who is so dominant on the field:

"Tell you what, he wouldn't win the Lombardi going against us (laughs). We mess with him all the time. We said that we helped him more than anybody win the Lombardi because we took all the other candidates out of the race. We give him a hard time. "He's a great player. He's made us better and we've made him better, I think. It's one of those things when you get in practice and you get so competitive, each player wants to win every play so bad, it's get to where, literally, it's a fight every play. It's good. It's what makes us and drives us to be champions."

On when he noticed Nick Fairley was a special player?

"We knew in the spring he was going to be a heckuva football player. He's an amazing athlete. If you're 305 pounds and you run with the receivers and you can be the MVP of the state championship basketball game in high school, there's no doubt he's probably one of the most athletic people on the field, other than our quarterback. I think that he being so driven to become a better player allowed us to become better players because he competes so hard every day. It's just a testament to his determination."

On Cam Newton and dealing with the controversies:

"If you saw him in the locker room, saw on the practice field, saw him on the street, I don't think you'd ever know that his name was being mentioned every other minute on every media outlet in the country. I think he's been the same person throughout it. We've always been here to support him whenever he needed it because he is our teammate. And, he's our quarterback. As an offensive lineman you don't just protect your quarterback on the field; it's an off-the-field issue, too. There's no doubt he's a heckuva football player. Everybody's seen that. But, more than that, he's a better teammate than you could ever ask for."

On how it was pretty tough to tune all that out and play the way he's played

"The thing he wanted more than anything was to be on the practice field because you don't have to turn on the TV, you don't have to hear someone other than your teammates at practice and you can really focus on just playing football then. I think that's kind of a safe haven for everybody on the team because, when it first hit, it caught everybody by surprise because we didn't think it would be that big in magnitude. It really go blown up quickly. It really could have affected our team, but it didn't. We stuck together as we have all year and just really used it as motivation."

—continued—

January 5 / Auburn Post-Practice Quotes (5)

On having one more game with his offensive line and if it is special:

"It is. The four seniors have put in a lot of time together. We've been through a lot. We've been through losing seasons. We've been through winning seasons. Now we're here, playing in the national championship game. We like to believe it's all because of us, but we know that without great players around us, great coaching, that we wouldn't be where we are today. It's the bond that the offensive line, and not only the offensive line has on this team, but the D line, because we get along so well.

Nick (Fairley) gets a lot of recognition but he makes a lot of it for himself. It's not one of those things where the linemen go unnoticed. We feel that we make him better and he makes us better each week and we do our best to keep the other Lombardi [contenders] out of the race."

