

MEMPHIS POSTGAME QUOTES



Game Seven – vs. Cincinnati – October 30, 2013 – Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium – Memphis, Tenn.

MEMPHIS HEAD COACH JUSTIN FUENTE

Opening statement

“First of all, I would like to thank everybody that came out. It was a great setting and a great opportunity for us to show off the progress we have made in the last year and a half. We played a really good football team today and they’ve got good players across the board on both sides of the ball. Our guys battled their tails off to hang in there with a pretty stout group. Obviously we give credit to Cincinnati for winning the ball game.”

On passing game

“They hurt us on both sides of the ball in man coverage. When we were in man coverage, they hurt us with some switch routes. When they were in man coverage, we couldn’t make the play. That is kind of the synopsis of the game if you look at one-on-one battles. We didn’t win enough of those one-on-one battles, whether it be man coverage in our secondary versus their receivers, or our receivers versus their secondary, or in the offensive/defensive line.”

On coaching quarterbacks, advice for Paxton

“You got to get keep plugging away. Obviously, we didn’t catch the ball the way we needed too. Our margin for error is not very big and we played a really good team. You don’t have to be perfect, but you have to be pretty darn good, execution-wise and you just have to keep plugging away and putting the ball in there.”

On team not quitting on the season

“There isn’t any talk of that. It is a different dynamic and our guys have expectations now on our level of play and expectations of themselves and when they don’t meet those. This is a big mountain that we are climbing. To build this program and take a step up in competition is a tremendous challenge. We don’t need to lose sight of the challenge. We need to understand the process that we have to go through. I told them today, I said I am never going to coach a game where I try and dance around the word ‘win’ during the week because I don’t want you to be disappointed if we don’t. We are not going to coach like that. I will live with the prospect of disappointment if the things don’t go well, but we are not going to approach it any other way. I think they start to understand that a little bit because you want it to hurt. We just have to keep plugging away. Our guys will. They are not happy, but they also understand where we are at and where we are trying to get to.”

On having Bobby McCain back

“It is always great to have Bobby back. He is just a tough competitor. Obviously he plays corner and he plays nickel, he is a leader and great worker for us. It is also good to have him back.”

On Warford’s fumbles, being a young player

“Well you saw, we dealt with it today. Ultimately that’s what we have to do. We continue to address it and work on it and we continue to talk about it and drill it and emphasize it.”

On Brandon Hayes

“What a great kid -- attitude, work ethic, dedication, grit, all of those things. He is just incredibly positive and an incredibly hard worker. It just continues to be a leader for us. It is hard for me to really explain how much we appreciate him.”

SENIOR RUNNING BACK BRANDON HAYES

On Level of Effort Despite Falling Behind...

“I’m going to go out there any play until the clock strikes zero no matter what the score is. We were still in the game at 21-7. I just try to keep our guys in it. We came back from 34-3 against SMU so we were still in it. We failed to execute at the end, we had a nice run but we were just out executed in the end.”

On Who had More To Do With Offensive Struggles...

I think it was a mixture of us making some mistakes and them making some plays. I’m not going to take anything away from Cincinnati; their front four was causing havoc in the back field. At the end of the day it just comes down to execution. We had some dropped passes and gave up some fumbles. On offense we have to minimize the mistakes, and capitalize on our chances.

JUNIOR CORNERBACK BOBBY MCCAIN

On being back out on the field and making an interception

“It felt really good. I’ve been training the past few weeks and working on recovering with our trainers. So, it felt really good to be back.

“I made a play and I appreciate my teammates and my defensive line being out there and getting pressure.”

On being unable to play

“It’s really hard. It’s hard to not be out there and have to watch your teammates play. That’s one thing I hate to do is be on the sideline. I appreciate my teammates for accepting me back in and letting me play ball with them.”

On being able to return for tonight’s game

“Well, after the UCF game and after I had surgery, I told myself I would push to be back for Cincinnati. I had to stay consistent with my training to get my strength back and my flexibility back, and make sure I was in that training room every day.”

On how he felt after the game

“I felt really good. I was moving around fine. I did a lot of warming up before the game and then I just went to work. And after that, the adrenaline kicks in.”

On the Cincinnati offense’s success on third-down conversions

“Third down is the money down. We preach it week in and week out, we have to get off the field on third downs, regardless of if it’s third-and-one or third-and-twelve. We have to come through there for our offense and for our team. Their offense executed very well and we didn’t.”

On the mindset of the defense

“Regardless of whether we are on the field for 50 plays or 100 plays, allowing something like 400 yards in a game is unacceptable. Being a leader on defense, I tell our guys that’s unacceptable. We have to get off the field on third down,

execute your assignments, everybody has to do their job. We need to keep playing ball and being there for our team, that's what we need to do."

On the Cincinnati offense

"Cincinnati is a good team. They are physical out there on the perimeter and between the tackles. We had to play more physical tonight, and we weren't consistent enough with that."