



Postgame Quotes
Cincinnati vs. Indiana
Sept. 24, 2022 | Nippert Stadium

Opening Statement

"Sometimes, the score really doesn't dictate exactly how the game was. I'm not saying it doesn't, I just don't know walking off that I felt as good as what the score looked like. We pride on and say that this team will be about finishing. That is the thing that sticks inside my head right now coming out of the second half. I don't know that we did a great job of finishing and I'm not pointing a finger at any one side of the ball or anything like that. The reality is a team that can play together. I know we are still growing. I keep saying that over and over every week. It is a reality that we are going to continue to grow. This was an opportunity for us to grow a little bit more too that we have not been in that situation, where we have been up a lot and have to handle that, but come out in the second half and adjust a little bit in the way that we are playing but still play to our style. I think it's going to be a good learning opportunity for us. It was good football team and is still a very good win. But, as I stand here, it's the same thing. It's just the ability to play clean with some of those penalties and the ability to just finish things in the second half. There is a lot of really good I mean, there's some really good play defensively, obviously with some penalties and then overcoming the penalties and then the same thing has offensively, Ben Bryant played his butt off. Tyler Scott had three touchdowns in the first half, there are some really great things. They are going to give us a chance to win a lot of football games, but there are some things that kind of stand out in my mind that we got to do better."

On penalties in the second half being frustrating after playing clean in the first half.

"I think it is. You can't be overly greedy like I am sometimes but the reality is that you got to be able to come out and finish things off. It's two-fold, you got to be able to run the football and then you got to be able to play clean defensively. I know there were 66 throws from Indiana and when you play as much man coverage as we do, as much body coverage, there are going to be some of those things. I do believe that is going to help us really grow. I think there are some young guys that maybe got in that situation, that got a bunch of penalties. That was maybe their first real opportunity to play and Justin [Harris], he didn't panic, he kept continuing to play and I think it's going to be a big learning experience and growth because we are going to need him down the stretch."

On a slow second half, adjustments made by both teams.

"They (Indiana) did a good job. They did a good job adjusting, I think that they came out the second half and said, we are going to challenge you. If you want to still throw the football, we are going to load the box, lock the guys up outside and see if you are going to be willing to keep slinging it around, while we throw the ball 66 times. When we did not do a good enough job at running the football and then we are put in position as a head coach where you are kind of handcuffed and it's probably not fair to the offensive guys at times, but when it comes down to it, you have got to find a way to win a football game. I think that I got to look at myself and some of those situations, but we got to do a better job."

On the 104 offensive plays Indiana ran today

"That's a lot more than I would like. I don't know what it was in the first half and second half, but like you said, would you have any other way? If you are going to get a win, you are going to get a win, but that's why we played 28 guys on defense. That experience is really going to help us in the long run. It was great to have Dominique Perry back. We got a little bit thin on the defensive line and he got back here for us and goes in and plays a lot of snaps for us gets a turnover and scores a touchdown. As I said, there's a lot of young guys that got a lot of action today because of the 104 snaps, especially on defense."

On how it felt to beat a Big Ten opponent

"I don't know that we look at it like that, for us, it's another opponent. It's an undefeated 3-0 opponent that is a good football team. It is just it's another opportunity for us to play in front of this crowd, another opportunity for us to continue the streak that we have here at home and protect our house. We look at those things before we look at anything else and we will let everybody else on the outside kind of talk about that. But as we've said, since we've been here, there's no difference between us and the teams in the Big Ten, ACC, or Big 12, that we will be facing next year. We got an expectation and in some ways, we expect to play a little bit better."

On areas of the team's game being affected by having players out

"We aren't going to make excuses. I think that we got to do is get better. We got to get better defensively, the penalties and things like that, but still be aggressive. We got to get better at finding ways to run the football, move people up front. That's a part of getting better. If you don't have balance offensively to run and throw. If you don't have balance defensively, for us to play man and play zone and be able to pressure them, then in the long run it's going to be tough. I think as a team we got to continue to find balance."

On being not as comfortable with the win

"There are things that just ended up being the way they are. I screwed up the fourth down play that we were not going to snap the ball, I should not have put us in that situation. That was poor on my part. If I could take it back, I would, I should have not put them in that situation. Those kinds of things can cost you and put a little bit of handcuffs on the guys. Offensively to start the second half or in the second half might not be the best thing for us. There are a lot of things I got to do better. It's going to start there."

On being pleased that Ben Bryant took more chances down the field this week

"I really am. He is aggressive. He's doing a really good job. I know Tyler had three touchdowns, but he moves the ball around. He is going to take what's given to him. That's where you're seeing the confidence in everybody. It does wonders for the locker room when a guy can spread the ball around. For defenses, it makes much more difficult too, they know that we can just kind of focus on Tyler Scott and then all of a sudden, you got to do big tight ends that can do it too and you got Tre Tucker and Nick Mardner to throw in there as well. There are still things we got to grow to, but we are going to continue to focus on Ben's [Bryant] strengths and make sure we've got enough balance before we win a championship."

On if he saw this season coming from Tyler Scott

"In some ways yes. I mean, halfway through last year, I still kept talking to him about if he kept dropping the ball that he was going to get moved to corner. I think by the end of the year last year that became a

little bit of a joke. I don't know why they would think it was a joke we could if wanted to. Now think everybody would look at it as a joke. I think he's pretty safe and staying at the wide receiver spot. "

On how valuable it was for JQ Hardaway and Justin Harris snaps during the game

"It was really valuable. Those guys did a really good job. That's why in those situations, it's still a game like some people might look at and say that it is not much of a game. No, that's, that's incredible work for our young guys. I didn't say we were perfect, we had three pass interference calls. They were overly aggressive in some of them. I do believe they probably all were penalties. It is not like I can stand here and say that it wasn't a penalty. The reality is those are penalties, and we'll get better at it. It's going to be a really big growing experience for a lot of those guys. I think this is really what's going to help us in the long term. "

On tonight's running game

"I think they did a really good job. they jump into some of the bigger stuff that makes it a little bit more difficult to run the football. In particular, the second half, they loaded they got some big guys up front. We got to find ways to create movement, create some seams. We got to get Charles [McClelland] and Corey [Kiner] and those guys better opportunities to get to the second level. That was a big deal for us, finding ways to create big plays and get those guys to the second level. Today we didn't really give them an opportunity to get the second level."

On the play of Bryon Threats and his big interception

"He did. He had a big interception. That is another guy that didn't stand out as much with some of things, penalties wise, but the game was really fast. I think a little bit of the youth in him showed, but he's such a dynamic playmaker and a player that plays so hard that he overcomes some of those things, due to his ability to run, hit and be aggressive. That is another young guy. I know he's been starting, but he's a young guy. This experience today is going to grow on him."

On game being a turning point for Eric Phillips

"It was another opportunity and we got to see as many snaps as we had today, but we envisioned him even been through camp as a starter. I know there's only three guys out there most of the time, but even before Malik [Vann] was out, he was one of those guys we had. We got four maybe five stars on the defensive line as Dontay [Corleone]. He obviously had to step up. I think he's done a really good job and we are going to rely on him."

On Ivan Pace Jr. being a weapon on defense

"He's doing a great job. I don't even notice it. Sometimes they tell me afterwards he might end up with 15 tackles or five tackles for loss. He's a fireball. He goes. I think we are going to continue to use him in different ways but find ways that we can kind of let him go, that's where he's dynamic. We're glad we got him. He now fits, I don't mean in the scheme of what we do. He fits so well with the guys in the locker room. We brought him up there afterwards. He's not a real talker. He gave me a little message and I relayed it to the team. I know he cares a lot. I know this means a lot to him."

On the rush defense holding Indiana to 1.8 yards per carry

"The only play I remember is the one we spun out and they bounced over the edge, so I'm glad you told me that because that makes me feel better. For some reason I just remember those bad ones. They are a physical group and I think we played physical. We'll find out a little bit more, especially next week. We haven't fared well in the rush game against Tulsa the last couple of years. I will kind of throw that

compliment out the door a little bit and say hey, we'll be tested even more next week, but we got to continue to do well."

Senior Quarterback Ben Bryant

On throwing for over 300 yards in the first half

"I have never [thrown for 300 yards in a half]. We got to be a lot better in the second half. We missed a lot of things execution-wise, so we got to learn from it and just get better."

On how the team feels about the play today, in the 21-point win

"I am really happy that we won. That is obviously the goal every week. I am tough on myself, and the offense in general, so we will definitely go back and look at the tape to see what we need to do to get better."

On how it felt for the team to have such a strong first half

"Coach Fickell has been preaching to us to start strong, and start the game fast, and that is what we really tried to do today. But we must be able to put one altogether and have a full game like the first half. Credit to our defense, they were really good today, and they really helped us out when we were struggling."

On connecting on deep passes in the last couple of weeks

"I think everywhere we are continuing to get better and creating more chemistry with each other. Tyler Scott and I have found that, and all the playmakers that we have, and we are going to continue to use those guys."

Senior Linebacker Ivan Pace Jr.

On his message to his teammates

"I can't do it without the team. I came here as a transfer, but it all connected really fast."

On how much fun he is having playing with this team

"A lot of fun. Especially coming back and playing with my brother. So, this is more fun than anyone else thinks it is."

On his celebrations

"I try to come up with different outlines and different celebrations, but I always go back to the Superman celebration."

On today's performance and proving people wrong

"I was always an underdog because I was so small but I'm still explosive and quick. So, I just have to do what I do on the field and I'm going to show out no matter what."

On the success of the defense

"We still have work to do and to practice moving forward in the season."

On adjusting to different positions on defense

"At Miami (Ohio) I played a little bit of so it's not much different. I'm way more comfortable attacking from the middle but I had six sacks on the edge so it's nice to do that too."

Junior Wide Receiver Tyler Scott

On his connection with quarterback Ben Bryant

"It gets better every week. We talk after each play, whether we have a connection or misconnection, we are always talking. It has been great, having such a big day I'm blessed."

On playing against All American Tyrone More

"I am blessed. He looks crazy. He was the host when I went to my Indiana and he walked me around with me, yeah, it was good going against him."

On offensive growth

"I know the second half was a bit of a struggle back here, back here. But the offense was obviously dynamic and awesome in the first half. How long do you feel like this group is really growing together since week? One and just gelling together as a crew? I think we just got to continue to trust each other, trust each other do our jobs and, you know, we'll continue to grow and, you know, be you know, explosively where we want to be."

On scoring three touchdowns in a half

"I am so grateful for opportunity to play. Every time I thank God because he's the only one gives me strength. My teammates and everybody trusted me saying and Ben [Bryant] put the ball in my hands to make best big plays for the team. Like I said last week, we want to make history and I want to continue to do that."