



Head Coach Luke Fickell Postgame Quotes
Cincinnati vs. ECU
Nov. 11, 2022

Head Coach Luke Fickell

Opening Statement

"There was a difference in quality. Now there's a lot of plays here, special teams wise, but when that momentum started to shift at the start of the fourth quarter, where we really needed a pick-me-up. We were really fortunate to be at home and in an environment like this, but it was never easy. I think that our ability to find ways to win, our ability to play together, meaning whatever it takes, and then our special [teams] units. I think the difference to me in the ballgame is special teams. I know we had the big 100-yard kickoff return for a touchdown, but our ability with field goal kicking, our ability to kickoff coverage is just phenomenal, and then our ability to punt the football as well as we do. That's a combination that obviously gives us an opportunity every week to win. This is what us looks like it, might not be what everybody wants, because you hear [the crowd] booing at times. You know they might want something different, but the reality is this is what us looks like, and us is still pretty darn good."

On the running game tonight

"It's more than just one thing. We're still trying to do our best job of pounding the football a bit more, and that's a tough team that to run the football on as well, we knew that going in. But there's not one thing you can point at, and I don't know that it was Ben [Bryant's] sharpest night. I think he said that afterward as he as he stood up in front of the team. But I think that more than anything when you need him the most he's there. I don't know what the laws are. I don't know what the starts are. I think that's a part of what us looks like. It keeps me awake at night and doesn't allow me to sleep real well. But I don't know what else we can do but keep hammering away at sharpening some of that stuff."

On Ben Bryant talking in front of the team after the game

"I usually grab a few guys after a game like that or after a victory, and sometimes it's those guys that have phenomenal games, and then sometimes it's a guy that is playing his butt off and doing so much that I want them to be up in front of those guys. [Ben Bryant] takes some criticism, he take some flack, you heard them out there tonight and you know what, to me, it just shows the care. I can promise you five years ago there was you couldn't hear a boo in the crowd. So, in some ways, I know it's hard. I know it's hard on him. But to me that's what we kind of want to get him up there for us to make sure he understood how much we appreciate what is he does and how hard he fights for us."

On finding ways for Evan Prater to have an impact

"Well, we have some packages and some things, we want to continue to find ways to get [Prater on the field] we haven't gotten into those rhythms where we felt really comfortable with switching some things up. That is the flow of us offensively and defensively to be honest with you; you guys asked about the

laws, well it's hard to have your adjustments and to throw in a package when you know that there's these laws and what it is you're doing, and you got to find ways to play through them. So, his opportunities are going to come. He is doing a phenomenal job. I know he only went in there for a couple plays. But I can tell each and every week he's getting better. He's got a phenomenal attitude. And that's what this team is really about. That's what us looks like"

On battling against momentum during the game

"Now that's where we have struggled, when the momentum shifts at times. Two weeks ago, at UCF, the momentum shifted in the end, and we couldn't get the stop, we give up a fourth and 12 and that looks like you got the game in hand. Then they make, and then we recover we had our ups and downs, we had our emotional outbursts a little bit on the sideline that we tend to have at times. We're just an emotional group of guys and with some of the youth that we have, but I'm proud to see that they fought themselves back that they stayed together, and they found a way to win a football game."

On the effect of the short week, when ECU had extra rest from a bye week

"They had 13 or so days, coming off some really good wins. They're playing really well. That's a good football team and a physical football team. I don't know I mean to be honest with you, it's tough. It cramps a lot of things, and our guys did a really good job. We had to practice on Monday night like it was a Tuesday, and then our schedules are all switched up. And then you take today that's the longest day in the history of man because there's nothing to do and there's nothing on, so the maturity that we had to have as a football team to go into this week in particular, I think it is really going to help us grow and give them credit, they did some different things. I don't know that we were as prepared for having that 13-day break. But again, that's where our guys at halftime we made some adjustments and did some things that I think really helped us down the stretch."

On how the secondary performed against the ECU air game

"They did a really good job. Arquon [Bush] was challenged a bit more, and we've been on him a little bit more to play a little bit tighter and do some things differently. And he had to do that tonight. He had to do that down the stretch when it really counted. And I keep saying I'm proud of those guys, but we've had our little chinks and we've had our ups and downs and, obviously, people like to point them out too. We've been very fortunate in the last couple of years. Having some of those guys out there in particular, didn't give up a whole lot. So, if a guy gives up a few, it's a little more noticeable and they've been mature to be able to handle it and then continue to move forward, take coaching and make some adjustments and Arquon did a great job tonight. And then Ja'Quan [Sheppard] been doing a great job pretty much all year."

On junior wide receiver Tyler Scott's performance

"Obviously, Tyler's a phenomenal player that challenges himself and has developed a lot. That's where he's even different from last year. He's making these big plays, and I keep saying it over and over. He's not just a home run hitter. He made an incredible catch on third and 12, a contested catch that was as good as any of the other ones he's made all year. He continues to not amaze me but make me realize how versatile he is and how far he has really come."

On junior wide receiver Jadon Thompson

"I'm not sure that that's the way we envisioned it. But he's another guy that when the balls in his hand, you've seen it the last few weeks. He's taken a bigger role, not just offensively but even a little bit more special teams wise. He's a guy that is playing all different positions offensively. So, his versatility has really given us the opportunity. That's a part of what you're seeing from our offense with some of the ups and downs. There's a lot of these guys that are interchangeable moving parts that, in each game, have to get into a rhythm based on where they fit best that week."

On emphasizing the importance of November games (Cincinnati is 18-4 in November under Fickell)

"November is for champions and November is for championship teams. You want to be playing for something in November. We could all say we are always playing for things, but what you do in January and what you do in that offseason is really meant for November. We talked about playing your best ball at the end of the year and a lot of things go into that but it's the way I was brought up. Coach (Jim) Tressel, former Ohio State football head coach, instilled and pounded that into my head for 10 years about what it means to play in November and what you have to do. We try to continue to pound that in. That's a big philosophy of how we do things and what we want to do."

On Ryan Coe

"I mean, even when you give up a safety and you're going to let him go out there and just blast the ball as far as he can. I mean, he's doing a great job he struggled. I don't know if he struggled and we didn't kick as much earlier in the year. You know, he was maybe a little erratic even in camp and beginning the season. But you know what? He never doubted himself. He never was a guy that looked like he was pouting and never looked like he was having issues. He hasn't, he has the confidence about him, but I just always kind of figured he's going figure this thing out and he's going be a weapon for us and he has been."