



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Head Coach Scott Satterfield

Opening Statement

"Good afternoon. Going back to Saturday in Oxford, I thought it was a huge win for us and one that we had circled on our calendar all offseason. Our guys did an outstanding job, coaches and players and everybody that was involved in our program. It was a great energy there as well and it felt like we had a ton of Bearcat fans in the stands cheering us on and I love that. I was proud of the way we went out there and executed the way we did. I thought it was a complete team win on special teams, offense and defense. Defensively, we held them to 24 yards rushing, which is the least we've given up since 2020. Obviously, we need to limit the big plays. I think that's the big thing defensively, is the big plays. Those big plays really bit us versus Pittsburgh, and then obviously in the Miami game as well. Offensively, I thought we were still efficient and did some good things. They did a good job of limiting us in our big plays, but we had enough to be able to get the win. On special teams, I thought we covered great and set ourselves up for great field position, and obviously knocking down the two big field goals was huge as well. I am really happy about the win but we're moving on to Houston and Willie [Fritz] is an outstanding football coach. I didn't realize he's been a head coach for 32 years. That is a lot of years being a head coach. He's been successful everywhere he's ever been, and his teams are always in the game. They play hard, they're coached well, they're where they're supposed to be, and he's done an outstanding job. His team defensively is one of the better defenses in the country, top 15 in a lot of categories. For the first year, Shiel [Wood] has done a great job with their defense. Offensively, they are not as good statistically, but they can run the football. They got a lot of speed outside at wide receiver and their quarterback has played a lot of ball. He's a really big guy, we know he can run, and he's got a big-time arm as well. Their return game really stands out as well. I look at their punt returner, kick returner and they have a really good return game in the special team. It is a great challenge this week against Houston for the Big 12 opener and we are excited about it. We need to feel the energy at Nippert and have everybody out there cheering us on. This is a big-time game for the Big 12."

On making a change at kicker

"It's never easy to make a change particularly when someone's been at that position for a while. Carter [Brown] had a great season last year and kicked this offseason but had some injuries during camp. That's where I believe Nathan [Hawks] really started to stand out because he was kicking a lot and doing a really nice job. Carter [Brown] wasn't out there because he was injured. Carter [Brown] came back, and he's been good so it's tough to make the change. Obviously, the easy thing would be to tell Carter [Brown] to keep going and we will work you out of the slump but in this game against Miami, we felt like we were going to need to make

some field goals. When we looked back at last year, we knew they were stingy defense in the red zone, so we're going to have to make some field goals. We wanted to see what Nathan [Hawks] could do and he did a great job. Obviously, we didn't expect his first kick to be a 55-yarder. That's a little tough for that to be your first kick, but he nailed it right down the middle. I think that certainly relaxed him, and he felt great after that. I know people don't talk about the second kick as much but that was a huge kick. It was an eight-point game and if we missed that right there then they get an opportunity to go tie the game up. He made that field goal and now that made it a two-score game. So that's a huge kick to be able to knock that down and he's kicking with great confidence right now."

On big plays from Joe Royer and Evan Pryor

"We have been talking about Joe [Royer] a lot. We think he's one of the better tight ends out there with his size and speed and catching ability, and he can block also. So, defenses know where he's at and they're going to have to know where he's at. He also helps free up the wideouts as well. So, I think he's added a ton to our offense, and Evan [Pryor] has been great, so it's kind of that one two punch outside of Corey [Kiner]. He has incredible speed and has two touchdowns over 60 yards now in three games, and that's incredible. I think this is where he excels, when he gets an opportunity out on the perimeter to be able to run by people. He has excellent hands as well and we haven't even seen that yet from him. I think he's a good receiver out of the backfield. We have not thrown it to him in that regard, but I think he can add to that as well. They are both outstanding players for us."

On his decision to kick a long field goal late in the game.

"We had three things we could have done. You can go for it. It's fourth and three, which the analytics said, "go for it". You can kick it and try to go up two possessions, or you can punt and pin them down. So going back to the Pitt game, we punted, tried to pin them down and it didn't work. So, that's out. Then it came down to do we go for it or kick the field goal? I felt confident about it because he, [Nathan Hawks] had nailed the 55-yarder from almost the identical spot. He had the wind going that way, and I really felt let's get this thing. If we make this right here, we're up two scores, and we're going to be in great shape. Corey's [Kiner] run helped the decision too, because he ends up bouncing it back to the middle of the field on that particular run. We're on a right hash. I felt good about it, but there's a lot of things that could go wrong with that. They blocked a field goal last year as we recall. That kind of crossed my mind too, because if they do block it, now, they have an opportunity to be really close to go get a touchdown. It's a gutsy call there, but I felt Hawks had good confidence, let's go ahead and get it. And obviously, he nailed it. It was great."

On how important it is to defend Nippert Stadium.

“Our whole deal this year is just moving forward, talking about taking care of our home field. It's a big game for us. It's the first Big 12 game. We're playing a team that Cincinnati has played in the past. For us the first Big 12 game is a huge game. I mean, a huge game. And playing a team like Houston, who is playing really good football. They had an opportunity to beat Oklahoma two weeks ago. This is huge for us. And all our focus and attention is on Houston right now.”

On how much the freshmen have impacted the team so far this year.

“We felt good about them. When we signed this class, we knew it was going to be a special class. I think 10 came in January. The rest came this summer. But as the camp went along, there were a few guys we felt like they're going to play right now. As we've gone throughout these weeks, you get a couple injuries here and there. These guys were kind of right there on the cusp. When you start inserting them, they start making plays. I think they're going to continue to play more and more, so they've had a huge impact on this program and will for years to come. They're number one, great people. They have great character, most all these freshmen do, and they're also really good players. I think they're going to continue to get better and better as we work going throughout this season. There'll be some guys that will make some big time plays for us as we as we head throughout the year.”

On what the playing time for freshmen could look like going into this week.

“We see these guys move forward; their roles are going to increase. I think some started the season getting five or 15 snaps, and I think starting to get a little bit more into the 20s and maybe even into the 30s. Marquaze Parker's a great example, where he didn't play hardly any of the beginning of the season. Saturday, he had some impact plays for us. He'll continue to get to play more and more. Particularly, as you look at defensive line, we have gotten dinged up a little bit down there. Simeon Coleman had four tackles in the game and played about 28 to 30 snaps. That's a lot of production in that small number of plays. I just think you're going to see more and more of these guys really come to the forefront and start making more plays and more opportunity. I think that was probably the biggest thing.”

On kicking off at noon for the third straight week.

"I don't know about the team. I personally love it at noon. There's nothing better than playing at noon, getting a win and putting your feet up and relaxing watching college football. You don't care who wins after that. One of the negatives of playing late games is the fact that as soon as you play your game, when you go home, you have to go to bed, you have to get up and go again. You don't have any time to relax or decompress at all. You're also locked in every day of the week. So, I do like to have the fact that you play early and now you least get a few hours to relax on Saturday afternoon."

On Houston head coach Willie Fritz

"Willie's does a great job wherever he's been a head coach, they've always won. He always gives his teams chances to win. I've known people that have worked for him, they all like working for him. He treats people really well and it's a good culture over there. A lot of respect for him. Everywhere he's been, he's been successful."

On how defense improved since the first two games

"I thought we got better push off the edges and up front. When I did try to run the football, we were right in the backfield. I thought our safeties did a better job of coming down and fitting the run, where we didn't against Pitt. There were several times safeties came down and we didn't make the tackle. We actually came down and made it fit like we were supposed to this week and made the tackle. They had 24 yards, and I think probably 12 of those yards were the last drive. The whole game we pretty much shut the running game down and they didn't really try to run the football. They were trying to throw it more but we did fit the run better. Our guys came to the ball better and I thought we tackled better. I think for all of those reasons, obviously we held them under rush. This week will be a bigger challenge. I think this team is going to try to run the football. Having to stop the quarterback runs is a different animal as well. With the speed that they have at running back, and the size and speed they have at quarterback, this will be a better, bigger challenge. Hopefully we'll continue to get better at that as we play this week."

On Corey Kiner and how much he brings to the offense

"We feel like we say this every week, he is such a beast at running the football. One of the greatest plays that we had the whole day Saturday was on the third and two, when he hits number 15, who is a heck of a football player, and Corey basically just ran him over and rushed for about 40 yards and really set us up for a field goal that last drive. It was an incredible play. They stop us right there and we had to punt which gives them plenty of time to go score. That was an unbelievable play by Corey. But I feel like he does it each week in and week out. First three games we come to halftime, we don't have many rushing yards, and our defense is kind of worn down, and all of a sudden, the second half, it's go time for him. I think that's when he's

his best, when he gets those carries up towards the 20-carry mark, defensive starting to get worn down a little bit, and that's when it's go time for him. He's just a very, very solid running back. He's done a great job for our offense. Him being able to run the football certainly should help and open up more passing lanes. I think it has in the first three weeks. We'll continue to ride Corey, he's a stud."

On starting Big 12 Conference play this week

"I think our leadership, they're obviously celebrating big time after the Miami win, but Sunday, we came back. It's all business. It's all about Houston. It's about going out and having a great focus and being intentional in every one of our meetings and every one of our practices. We're not coming just to any Tuesday practice this afternoon. It's Houston, this is the first Big 12 week practice on a Tuesday. We ask, 'how intense can we be today'? I think the leadership as a team has really brought that to the forefront. I'm excited about that. I'm excited to go to practice this afternoon and watch these guys. Tuesday's always a little bit rough because you're implementing the game plan for the first time, but these guys will be ready to go and excited about getting on the practice field."

On the offensive line

"[Jonathan] Harder did a great job filling in when DT [Dartanyan Tinsley] went out. I think Harder has had a really good offseason, spring practice and fall camp. I would suspect Harder will play anyway this game. There potentially could be some shuffling. [Deondre] Beuford's played guard and tackle. He could play both. It feels available so there's a chance or opportunity there to where we can move some guys around. I do think when we go into the game, to try to find our five best that we want to try it out there first, and then obviously be able to rotate a couple of guys in those positions, guard or tackle. I think today's practice and Wednesday's practice are going to tell us a lot and figure out who the best five may be."

On Sorsby missing throws vs Miami

"We're pretty efficient on the first and second down stuff. I think third downs were a little bit off. They played a lot more man, which is a little bit more different defense than what they had shown on film. I think a little bit had to do with that. I think a little bit of the rush there got to him a little bit as well, kind of threw his timing off a little when you do that. Sometimes the ball is not as accurate. I still think he played a solid football game of what we're asking him to do. We'd love to have the 80-yard touchdown pass back to [Joe] Royer. Three catches, 27 yards, I think he had. If you look at the game, he was a lot more impactful than just three catches 27 yards. I think Brendan [Sorsby] was obviously solid, but I do think now, 'hey, we're in the big 12 play', there's going to have to be some great quarterback play as we move through this conference."

On Sorsby when he's in the zone

"Yeah, I think so. And a lot of it depends on who you're playing that day, and what are they trying to take away, and how are they lining up? And to your point, the quarterback is really seeing it. Yeah, you want to let him. Let's keep feeding it, keep feeding them. And keep giving him opportunities to make plays because there's going to be other games where, man, maybe you're not seeing it as good, and maybe you have to do some things different. But absolutely, man, if you get a quarterback that's feeling it, let's let him continue to do that, distribute the ball."

On Joe Royer fumbling before the half

"First of all, I just told him to keep playing his butt off, because he broke about three or four tackles right there. You should reach for the goal line in the half, last play in the game, or fourth down. There was time left on the clock right before the half. He's fighting to get yards, and you should never reach the ball out, and he reaches it out. I mean, it's so close. It is short, unfortunately, but it was so close. In fact, the referee called it a touchdown, and then you go back and look at it. Actually, during the play, I was talking to our guys upstairs, and they were like, it's out, it's out. I love the passion and the effort that he played with. I'll take that all day long. Sometimes you may lose the ball. We don't like it, but I love the passion. I think you're gonna get a lot more positive plays, than negative plays with Joe Royer."

Redshirt sophomore quarterback Brendan Sorsby

On getting into a rhythm at QB

"Obviously, the first couple drives you'd like to start out hot and not take any time to get going but for some reason, there was a little bit of miscommunication between me and the wideouts. So, starting off early there's a couple things that I would like to have back. I feel like we got into a good rhythm after a couple drives, and we got it going. It felt good out there after those first couple of drives."

On comfort level with Xzavier Henderson

"Just like Joe [Royer], he's another outstanding player and anytime you get the ball in his hands, he does great things with it. Miami was doing a great job of taking away the deep passing game so any chance we had was through the underneath stuff. It was a good opportunity to get the ball in his hands and let him do some work and good things with it. Obviously, we need to get the ball in his hands, Joe [Royer's] hands, and then all the other guys that we have as well. I believe going forward it is going to be really good."