



Postgame Quotes

Cincinnati 56, UCF 21

Oct. 16, 2021 | Attendance: 37,978 | Nippert Stadium

Head Coach Luke Fickell

Opening statement

"Big win. Sometimes you go into the locker room and the energy is not there because the game was a little bit lopsided earlier in the game. So you lose a little bit of energy and momentum, but I remind the guys that it is a far cry from where we were five years ago. That is a tribute to the locker room. A lot of these guys have been here for five years...(Guys like) Ridder, Sanders, Dublanko...Those are the guys that turned this program and the culture around to make it what it is. That is a really good football team that is wounded and down a few players. That is what had me up because a wounded dog is one you really have to worry about a lot. I was really on our guys about coming out strong. That is what I am most proud of, is how they came out in the first quarter, it was only 14-0. But, I really felt like our offensive line established what we wanted to do and the defensive line established what we wanted to do. I am excited and proud for what those guys have done.

On UC's fast start to begin the game

"That is what we are talking about. Coming out and playing that complimentary, three-phase football. That is what I think will make it difficult to beat this group because they can play all three phases of the game and they can play all of it. They take pride in it. They are not just an offensive or just a defensive team. They can play all phases. This is a team that feeds off of each other and plays complimentary ball. And guys like (Josh) Whyllie, not getting the touches or passes he wants, but turns around and gets a play that gets the ball rolling."

On concerns about how they'd start

"(I) always have concerns but you rely upon those guys that have done it for a while. I keep saying the maturity of this team...we didn't come out exactly how we'd want to in the second half but that gives us something to work on. The maturity of the team and handling the noise after the games or during the week and Des (Ridder) doing different things. They have been able to handle that and control the locker room and to me that is where this team is really headed. As long as the guys have the maturity and stay hungry that is where we are going."

On running back Jerome Ford

"I think he is just getting stronger and stronger. The good thing for us and for him is that he hasn't had that 30-something touch game. At some point it will probably happen but I don't worry or bat an eye that we can do it. We've just been fortunate in some situations where he hasn't had to. He is going to be a really fresh for the second half of the season and that makes a more explosive offense and team and if we need to we can throw him out on special teams like he has been asking for."

On Ford's long runs

"It's tough...when you see guys run away from you. Don't get me wrong, five years ago we saw a lot that running away from us against UCF. But you see a guy who can run away from a team with as much speed as they have and the kid can go. We have to continue to find ways to get him to that second level and we did."

On national awards chatter on social media about Jerome Ford

"Laughs...I don't know...I say whatever category to put him in that motivates him I'll put him in whatever category he wants. The great thing is he is a humble kid. He doesn't get too high or too low. You wouldn't know the difference in the locker room if he had 22 yards rushing or whatever he had tonight (189). Whatever comes his way he's earned."

On College Football Trophy in town

"The makeshift one in the stands? No, I don't notice a lot of those things from Thursday on. That is not something that is a big deal to us. We try to stay focused on things we can control and we have a ways to go. That second half gives us something to lock into and how we can put four quarters together no matter the situation."

On style points

"You weren't here last week?. I have no style. My wife is the only one that has style. I am all about playing four quarters and playing complimentary football. If someone thinks that's good style, bad style. I don't know. I know my kids played hard. No matter what, if we want to continue to talk we need to play our best football down the stretch and continue to get better."

On the freshman punter Mason Fletcher

"He did a really good job and that is probably the first time he has faced a little wind. Something that is different on a young guy...and we got some rush early in the game too. You didn't see him bat an eye or panic at all. I think we got one fortunate roll, and we are halfway through the season and being here in January he is not a freshman at all."

On senior cornerback Coby Bryant's pick-six

"Awesome for him. Not sure the guy running down the seam needs to help him. Don't need to worry about that but players make plays. So happy for him. A lot of attention garnered on the other side with Ahmad (Gardner) and all he does. But the heart and soul and the captain of that defense is Coby. (He deserves) those plays where everyone recognizes him."

Senior quarterback Desmond Ridder

On if Jerome Ford deserves Heisman Trophy consideration

Yeah, 24 for is a good, great player actually. He makes my job a whole lot easier. You know, when you have five, six great big guys up front, and do their job and move the line of scrimmage, it makes it easier for both of us back there. But, yeah, there's not, in the locker room, there's not much Heisman talk. You know, we're a team, we're about team goals, and team achievements, but when you talk about that, Jerome Ford is a player.

On team adjustments in the first half

"You know, every week, we want to dominate up front on both sides of the ball, both offense and defense. So you know, coming into the game, we know we have to establish a dominant run game, and then everything else is going to take of itself after that. Once we got going, we felt that we were getting good movement up front, Jerome was seeing the holes very nice, it was just flowing for us. And once you started getting a little tempo going, they started getting jumbled up, mixed up, made it easier for those big guys up front to do their job and move them."

On Ford's 79-yard touchdown run

"So obviously, I know the play and I see it, once I hand the ball off I kind of see it work out, and you see it when you go back and watch Lorenz Metz, he pulled and filled that gap and cleared a big hole, Rome [Jerome] shot right through him, but once I see Metz made contact and there is a slight bit of hole, that's right about where it is, when you start getting excited and you see no one else behind."

On coming back after the Notre Dame win and consecutive 50-point scoring outputs

"I think we have handled it very well, I think we still have a lot of growing to do, as a team. I think, you know, we are a little disappointed in how we performed in the second half, as offense, we didn't come out and jump on them the way we wanted to, kind of got complacent and slow, and kind of dragged it along, when it could have been a lot easier for us. So we still have a lot of room to grow, but, you know, I like where we're at right now."

On his connection with wide receiver Alec Pierce

"Yeah, so we had motioned him over, and it was just two go-balls, I think I had Mike Young on the other side pressed up, off coverage on AP to the boundary, everyone was safety over, which usually isn't played on AP, you know, and I just put up a ball and if you put a ball in a six, seven-foot radius of that kid, he's going to go up and catch it."

On offensive expectations

"I mean I feel like we should put 50 up every game, just because that's how we actually good our offense is, that's how it should be a win. We have good weeks of preparation, good days of practice, and we come in juiced up, ready to go, so I mean every game is obviously not going to be a 50 point game, but I'm sure we would all love for it to be a 50 point game."

On the team's history with UCF and their overall growth

"I think there was only 10 or 12 of us that are here now that were on that team, so we made it a point to make sure that the young guys knew that, you know, that just because we beat them last year, we beat them the year before that, that this isn't an easy game like we have history with them, and so, I feel like the young guys really got ahold of that and it kind of just went out through the whole team. So coming out here, we had a lot of the guys from that team back here today and were at the hotel last night, and you know, we were just like, 'hey this was lowkey for you guys too', so we came back in there and Tyler Cogswell, and Carter Jacobs, you know, they just came in and said 'Thank you, bro'."

On tight ends Leonard Taylor and Josh Whyte

"Yeah, he's a big versatile tight end, you know a lot of people think he's just in line and not gonna block, but he's pretty shifty, and he can jump, I mean he runs good routes, you know, having those two guys, you know tight ends, it makes it very difficult for defense for what they are doing, and they do gotta guard them, both of them are mismatched, so like I said, again, it makes my job a lot easier when you got great guys on the outside like them."