



2014 @MIAMI HURRICANES FOOTBALL

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GAME 12 - POSTGAME QUOTES

Al Golden

UM vs. Pittsburgh - Nov. 29, 2014

On playing from behind for most of the game...

"It was disappointing. That's their M.O. If they can play with a lead, they're tough. We let them do that. They had field position on us all night. They converted their chances, starting with that first third down that ended up being a big play. A couple of plays later, they ran it in. It was disappointing that they came out. We needed to respond a little bit better, and we did not."

On if he envisioned the end result...

"No. No. If you look at the line, they had 60 plays for 360 [yards] we had 73 for 421 [yards]. They made more plays than we did. They had a shorter field than we did. Our kickoff coverage was not good, theirs was outstanding. We're just not getting it deep enough like their guy was doing to us...they made us pay with that. Even when we answered in the beginning of the third quarter, we kick off and they start at our 40 [-yard line].

On if his team is more talented than its 6-6 record indicates...

"We're responsible for the record at the end of the day. I'm responsible for the record. I feel like we have a lot of guys on our team – Clive [Walford], Duke [Johnson], Denzel [Perryman] – that are chasing elite. Maybe we haven't had that for a while. Overall as a team, we need to perform better, and that's my responsibility. We are what our record is, period. I'm disappointed."

On why Pitt was so successful in the red zone...

"We didn't stop them enough on third down. I think they were 50% on third down. We didn't get any takeaways. It was a short field. When you play a team like this, it's a little bit like playing Georgia Tech – in that you have to make them go a long field, so if they're going to play like that, they need to get three or four more first downs. It gives you more opportunities, because that's how they play the game. They converted down there. We needed one stop. On the other end, we needed one more play in the red zone and we did not."

On if his team became divided during the last few weeks...

"No. I think there's frustration. We have a lot of guys that worked hard and a lot of guys that have been through a lot and a lot of guys that want to win. I wouldn't say that that's accurate or fair. I don't think it's divided. I think there's some frustration. We have Jon [Feliciano] and Shane [McDermott] and those guys who have been around a long time, and they're playing next to [Christopher] Herndon and [Brad] Kaaya and Trevor Darling. There are guys at different stages in their careers, but I don't think it's splintered."

On the team's schedule for next week...

"No. 1, just get the team healed up. From our standpoint, we have to go out recruiting right away and then we'll find out where our bowl assignment is. We'll go from there."

On his message as he hits the recruiting trail...

"My message right now? I'm really disappointed in our performance tonight and how we played. Obviously we think there are still a lot of positives. It would be fruitless for me to talk about it right now. It wouldn't be fair."

On if his team suffered a letdown after emotional investment in Florida State game...

"I think obviously as a coach, it's one of the things that I have to evaluate. I have to look closely at it. Going back to that, we did invest a lot, but it's easy during the week to just paint a brush and say that's the reason. That's one of the things that I will evaluate personally. In terms of our kids practicing, or mindset, or things like that, I haven't noticed a difference."

On playing from behind for most of the game...

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On the status of tight end Clive Walford, who left the game due to injury...

"I think he'll be okay. I wish I knew if the x-rays came back negative, but it sounded like it was going to be okay."

On how difficult he thinks it will be to turn the team around emotionally...

"I think we'll definitely turn around, I don't think there's any question about that. It's hard. You have different classifications that you're dealing with. There are a lot of guys that played a lot of football tonight - Christopher Herndon, Tyre Brady, guys like that - they have to stay positive. Some of the older guys, we need them to stay positive, finish what they started, continue to improve and try to get us our first [bowl game] win in forever."

On the balance between elite talent and younger players on the team...

"We didn't play well enough tonight. In terms of the big picture, I'm trying to get everyone better. I don't think any of us sat here in spring ball and thought we were going to be playing with a freshman right tackle or a freshman quarterback. That's how it evolved. At the end of the day, we didn't play well enough to beat Pitt. I just don't want to get into excuses or rationalization or anything like that. At the end of the day, we're responsible for every player on the team and how they perform in every position and every unit. We all know there were some challenges there, but nothing that would alleviate not playing better tonight."

On the performance of special teams...

"We're struggling with our kickoff coverage. We're not driving the ball deep enough, we're not giving our guys enough time to cover it, and we're not hanging it up right now. I tried both kickers again today. Pitt did a better job than we did in that department. Overall, I think [Justin] Vogel has had a very productive year for us. Our return game is something that we're going to have to really sit down and look at here and work on a lot before the bowl game. We haven't had an explosive return. That's disappointing."

On Duke Johnson, who became the program's all-time leading rusher...

"I wish it was a better environment to celebrate what he has accomplished, because I think it's extraordinary, I really do. For him to do it in the timeframe that he has done it makes it really unique for him. He's a unique young man. [I am] grateful for the opportunity to coach him every day. The way he has responded and accepted coaching and changed a lot of little things in his game to be as productive as he has been this year, he deserves it."



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GAME 12 - POSTGAME QUOTES

PITTSBURGH PANTHERS HEAD COACH

Paul Chryst - November 29, 2014

On when he knew that James Conner was going to play...

"I knew he was going to give it a go, all week. That's why I would only tell you the truth. I appreciate the way he prepared all week. I didn't know how much he'd get, but I thought the guys did a nice job of keeping their focus and preparing and I appreciate that a ton and just being in the moment."

On the significance of James Conner breaking Tony Dorsett's record...

"It's a heck of a record because of who did it. There's a great history of running backs at Pitt. For him to do something on the field to earn it. To earn his right to be in that place. The thing I love about James [Conner] and I appreciate as much as anything is that he knows there's a lot of people that helped him do it and yet, he did it too. [I have a] ton of appreciation for him and this group."

On earning a bowl game this season...

"You do appreciate it. I do believe that -- you do earn it. And I think we did earn it. It gives us a chance to stay with this group and for us to continue to grow. We're not where we want to be, but I like going through taking the steps with this group. I appreciate the way guys focused on the moment. There wasn't a lot of bowl talk because that doesn't mean anything. Now, you can actually take a look and make plans for it."

On having to win the last two games in order to get to a bowl game...

"I think the best thing was that we had two opportunities and I thought we took advantage of them. Two very different type games. Two different teams that we're playing against. It really was. I hope that we can start to learn that it's about the now."

On the defense's performance tonight...

"I thought they played hard. Certainly, we gave up some big plays. They're some good players on their team. But I thought we just kind of kept playing and playing the next play and competed. I think that's what I'm most proud of. This game wasn't perfect and it never is. But the guys just kept playing and focusing on the next play. You felt it and we played off each other. I thought our special teams did a heck of a job. I thought our coverage units were really good. We got some really big kickoff returns. We fed off it. Offense did a good job matching scores with scores. Defense came up with big stops. All the big things you had to do to win a game."