

Al Golden

Postgame Press Conference – North Carolina

October 13, 2012

On Stephen Morris' injury:

I have no idea. I heard it was an ankle. Obviously he couldn't return in the game. I'll go back after this and try to get a report.

On whether an x-ray will be taken:

I'm sure, whether it's here at the stadium or if they take him down. We'll get it looked at.

On Ryan Williams entering the game in a challenging scenario:

It's tough. He moved us. We just needed a couple more plays. Obviously we can't take a sack in that situation, but he did move us well. We had an opportunity, and we just didn't finish. We had too many missed opportunities today to win today against a good team.

On role of the wind in decision-making:

It was definitely a factor. I thought we made the right decision pinning them down there at the 10-minute mark. We got it down at the 1 [-yard line], you couldn't have it any better than that, and we let them out. They missed a field goal and we got it back on the 30. It seemed like a better play for our team at that point, in terms of just pinning them down there. You can't let them out in that situation. They executed and we didn't.

On less offensive production from his team:

Obviously we left some plays on the field. We didn't execute at the time. We had two turnovers which is difficult. The first time we're down there we're going to go for it on fourth down, and we go offside. Next time down there we get an interception - that makes it difficult. This is team you either stay ahead or be even with, and we were behind. We left too many plays on the field today.

On the successful North Carolina two-point conversion:

We work on it all the time, and it's just really disappointing. One of our safeties ran off the field, and I don't know why. I'm guessing we had 10 on the field. Regardless, we should be able to cover down. It's disappointing we have some guys that don't know how to react in that situation. It's something that we cover often. We covered it on Thursday. We cover it all the time in training camp. We didn't execute it. We need leadership on the field, on that play, because every play is important.

On the last play of the game:

We wanted to get it further down the field. As the play went on, that looked like the best alternative to him. That wasn't his first read, that wasn't even his second read. He went to Clive [Walford] to give us a chance as opposed to throwing it over the sticks. But you have to get it over the sticks in that situation.

On his evaluation of the defense:

I don't think we're satisfied, but we played much better. We're still not getting the amount of takeaways we need. We knew they were going to get yards. We needed to win third down, redzone and get takeaways. I think we won the redzone, I don't have the third down stats. We needed to get one or two more takeaways, and we didn't get them.

On the performance of his running back tandem:

I thought we had balance. It's disappointing didn't score more points with the type of balance we had. We just have to keep working. I keep telling the guys, 'Stay positive. Keep working.' We'll keep building. Just obviously disappointed in the outcome.

On the performance of Mike James:

Mike's leading by example right now. He's like that every day in practice, and clearly he came to play today. He's healthy. He's leading every day for us.

On the performance of Stephen Morris:

I think we have to convert a couple more throws, and I don't know if that's necessarily all his fault. We had two interceptions - one was clearly his fault, and one was a deflected ball. I like the direction he's going, I like the way he's practicing, the way he's playing. We didn't connect on a couple of throws when we needed to.

On what to gain from the loss:

There's a lot to learn from this game, there's no question. We made too many critical errors to win the game, some of them I mentioned already. We have to continue to learn and grow. If I'm not mistaken, [Robert] Lockhart and Ricardo Williams played – that 20th and 21st freshmen. We're playing a lot of guys that are learning. They have to continue to grow. Sometimes when you play guys before they're ready, they can have negative reinforcement and we can't have that right now. We have to keep pushing them forward and be positive. They're playing a tough schedule, and it's not getting any easier this week. We have a rival coming in here, we have to get rested up tomorrow, shake it off and get ready to go. We just have to keep going.

On the performance of his defense in the second half:

I think guys are executing better. That was the best we've practiced all week. First half of Notre Dame was the best we've played in a while on defense even though the yards weren't super. Obviously 18 points today, we did a lot of things better. Just a couple plays where we blew an assignment. The wheel they throw to [Giovani] Bernard we blew a gasket, someone has him man-to-man. Things like that, you have to become reliable, you have to become a dependable team. Things like that we have to get cleared up because it's not a new call, it's something that is standard, and we blew it.

On the performance of Eddie Johnson:

Eddie's doing a good job. He has to eliminate some of the mental errors. I expect all those guys to continue to improve. Eddie's up to his fifth start today, so he has to continue to improve. Denzel looked like he was hobbled a little bit, but he kept fighting through it. We have to continue to grow. That was a really good offensive line, and I think our defensive tackles fought a little bit better, we'll take a look at it and examine that. We're just going to keep growing and building.