

Virginia vs. Miami

Nov. 10, 2012

Miami Head Coach Al Golden Quotes

On the last offensive possession:

"I thought we were running the ball well, and that we could get the first down on third and five on a run. Obviously we came up short, so that's that. I thought the strength of our team at that point was the offensive line, the tight ends, and running backs. We gave the ball to Duke [Johnson], and we came up short."

Thoughts on Michael Rocco's performance:

"We didn't get enough sacks. We hit him a couple times, but we didn't get enough sacks. Their third down percentage was excellent; we had chances to put them away on offense and we didn't do it. We had chances. We fumbled at the one yard line, and had several other chances but we weren't able to do it."

On the defense:

"The only thing that I can tell you is that we're playing hard. We were fighting our tails off. We were shorthanded, with Denzel [Perryman] and Deon [Bush] out for the game. They're dynamic guys, and that hurt. We didn't have guys that have accounted for 25-30 tackles every game. So that's tough. But we had enough talent here to win the game, and we didn't do it. There is no excuse. We needed to make one more play then them and we didn't make it, we had a chance to put them out a couple times on offense, and we didn't do it."

On Duke Johnson's performance:

"I gave him the ball in the end on third and five because I thought he was the guy that could make them miss and get us the first down. We knew that they were bringing pressure and thought it was a safe bet inside, and it's unfortunate that we came up short."

On what to tell the team after the loss:

"We're not going to go backwards. We're not going to go back to the days where everyone does their own thing and we turn into individuals. It's a tough loss, it is. But we have to bounce back. It's the seniors' last home game coming up, and we have to fight back."

On the offensive play:

"We thought there were a couple of different things that we could do to get yards. We felt pretty positive about what we were doing offensively. We needed to make one or two more third down conversions and protect the ball down there in the red zone. To be there and to fumble it, that was tough."

On shutting down Virginia's rushing game:

"It's obviously a great running attack that Virginia has, and we tried to take the running game away. Their quarterback did a really nice job. I thought they threw the ball and caught the ball really well. We didn't get off the field on third down like we needed to, and we needed to keep applying pressure."

On allowing multiple third downs:

"It was terrible. I think we were near 50 percent on offense, and I don't know if we stopped them at all on defense. It all adds up, in the end."

Miami Player Quotes

Wide Receiver Allen Hurns

On the game:

“It was frustrating, I thought we had control and I thought we were going to win the game. It was tough. It was very difficult to watch them take the ball down the field. There was nothing I could do. I was depending on my defense to put a stop to it, but obviously we didn’t get it. The offense had a job today as well but we didn’t execute.”

On the last two drives:

“It was so frustrating, but then again we created a pretty good situation when we were up. Everyone executed what they needed to do.”

Defensive Back Brandon McGee:

On having teammates out because of suspensions:

“Those boys are young and they will learn from it. That’s what Coach Golden does. He just doesn’t wash his hands of any individual. He won’t give up on them. Eddie Johnson is like a brother to me, all of these guys are.”

Defensive Back Ladarius Gunter

On coming to Virginia:

“It was a tough loss, but we came and we fought until the very end. We were just dealt a losers hand this time.”

On third downs:

“The first half we didn’t do well. But second half we just turned it on and came on out and put it on them. We came down and got a couple of third down stops so that really helped a lot. They were calling the right plays and at the end it just slipped away from us.”

Wide Receiver Phillip Dorsett:

On the game:

“We went in with the mentality that Virginia was going to score a lot. We knew that was going to happen. It was really going back and forth. I knew we were going to have to score a lot of points to win this game and that is what our game plan was from the beginning.”

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Virginia Coach Mike London Quotes

Opening Statement:

“First, I’d just like to say what a blessing that is to see something like that come to fruition at the end of the game, where there have been a couple of times we’ve come on the short end of that: muffed punt, or interception or something. To see the players and coaches be really resilient, I’m just so elated, so happy for those guys. Whether it is politically correct or not, I feel a tremendous blessing just occurred out there on that field, which is great to see. It was a great day for the program. I know we are what the record is, but at the same time, we’ve been struggling like that. You take a victory against a Coastal (Division) leader. I thought we played very well.”

On Jake McGee:

“Jake is everything we thought he could be. You ask the question, ‘when’s the last time you’ve seen a tight end that effective?’ and of course, Heath Miller was here. You can put Jake out in a slot formation, and defenses have to decide whether or not they want to put a linebacker on him. Obviously, there’s a mismatch because of the speed. They may put a safety on him. There’s a mismatch because of his height. You move him around and do different things. You catch him in a blitz; you catch him in zone coverage and man-to-man coverage. Sometimes you get the matchup that you want. We got a couple of them today. Like I said, he puts bricks in his pockets to try to gain weight. He’s going to have to gain some more weight, but I think he’ll be a good player for us.”

On Dominique Terrell:

“Our offense is just predicated upon the reads and coverages, and guys fitting into those windows. It seemed like today, whether he was the primary or secondary read, he was in position to make some of those catches. Again, another good game for him. You never know who’s going to step up and be counted on. You just have to be ready. Today looked like his day, and a Jake McGee day and a Michael Rocco day.”

On Michael Rocco:

“I think that Michael has done an outstanding job the last couple games. We talk about how selfless he is. He’s a team player. He wants to win. He has a great relationship with Phil (Sims). No one cares about who gets the credit; we just want to win ball games. He has a great understanding of the offense. Part of this time that we traveled down this season, you have to ask him, but it may have been a benefit to him as far as watching but also competing. The thing that makes everyone better is when you have to compete. Like I said, I think that may be a record, and very deserving. He’s a great teammate. I think he and Jake McGee are best friends. That’s probably why Jake got so many catches. He’s looking out for his best friend.”

On coming back from six straight losses:

“I knew that these players don’t quit. I knew that you go back and look and you’re a play or two away, a third down conversion, or whatever it may be. Sometimes you can’t measure desire and you can’t measure heart. It’s tough when things don’t go your way. The players look to leadership to see if we’re going to tank it, or if we’re going to stay positive. I’m an eternal optimist. I choose to be positive. If you can reflect that with the young men you’re in charge of and responsible for, and you set the tone and the atmosphere of ‘you can if we do this and we do that’ and accept nothing less -- whether it’s in the classroom, whether it’s in the community, or whether it’s on the field -- then, you set a culture that all things happening on the negative side for us, you just believe things can turn around. Again, against a very good Miami team today, we turned a corner.”

On Miami’s play:

“In regards to the coverage, we knew that their safeties were playing relatively deep. The crossers and the underneath and the high-low combinations were there. Sometimes, you throw the ball in the flats. With the short passing game, you create a one-on-one situation, if it occurs, and that happened today when a couple balls were thrown five or three yard flat routes that turned into nine or 10 yards. I think that’s the way they play their coverage. Again, it goes back to a guy who knows how to throw in the windows.”

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Virginia Player/Assistant Coach Quotes

Offensive Coordinator Bill Lazor

On the play of the quarterbacks:

"I thought at halftime both quarterbacks were playing very well. They were seeing the defense very well. They were getting the ball off on time and weren't letting the pressure get to them."

On the rotation of the quarterbacks:

"It is a random rotation. We reserve the right in certain situations that maybe a certain guy is more suited to how the game is going or how they are playing. What we've told them is that the best thing for them to do is approach it like they are the starter. You know you are going to play, you are going to play plenty so prepare like you're the starter and if you can sleep well at night we will tell you in the morning who is starting."

Junior Quarterback Michael Rocco

On Jake McGee being the primary receiver on the touchdown play at the end of the game:

"He is the [primary] whenever there is six seconds on the clock and you need a touchdown. We're taught, especially in the red zone, that if you are not going to hit them right on the numbers that you have to put it high where the defense can't get it and on the back line where your guy can get it so that's what I tried to do."

On his confidence in McGee in that kind of situation:

"Coming to the line of scrimmage I said, 'Jake, this one is coming to you, go catch it.' And he did. I kind of knew pre-snap that I was going to throw it high in the back of the endzone and hopefully he was going to get it."

On his view of the coverage that allowed him to have success today:

"They just did what we prepared for them to do. They played zone a lot, drop-8, so they left some underneath stuff when they drop back far leaving some crossers. Completions lead to first downs and converting third downs and we did a pretty good job of that especially in the first half. That kind of set me into a little rhythm getting completions and Coach Lazor called a good game for me to get completions."

On what allows the team to rebound and come back from behind:

"We're just winners. We all have that winning mentality that if we're in a position to win it at the end that we're going to. Sometimes the chips don't fall as you would like them to but God was on our side today. We all played with guts and effort and got the win."

On the safety call in the fourth quarter:

"I was confused because first of all I had a flat-route sitting out there that I was trying to throw the ball to but when you get hit there is obviously something that comes off the ball. It was frustrating but you have to bounce back and we did a good job."

Sophomore Tight End Jake McGee

On what Rocco said to him at the line of scrimmage before the game winning touchdown:

"We had a little communication on the way out. I had a good feeling he was going to put it up for me and I was able to go get it."

On his big catches this season and preparing for clutch moments:

"Guys have been giving me a lot of grief this past season because I haven't had a lot of big plays recently. It was starting to catch up to me and get on my nerves a little bit so luckily I was able to make that play."

On knowing he was inbounds when he came down from the catch:

"I did at first but I wasn't positive so it was a little nerve-racking for me until I saw it the first time."

On what was going on in the huddle before the final drive:

"It was real calm, actually. Everyone has complete faith that Mike [Rocco] can lead us down the field and we just knew it was hopefully a matter of time before we could get seven on the board. Everyone knew that this was it. It was our last drive so [Rocco] kept us focused and told us that we got this."

On knowing he was going to make the last catch and what was going through his head:

"If it came to me, there was no doubt in my mind that I was going to be able to make the catch. If he threw it to me, I knew I had to go get it. I felt like it could have been even higher and I would've been able to get it."

On his relationship with Michael Rocco:

"We do everything competitive. Video games, pick up in the off-season, it doesn't matter. I like winning. He likes winning so when we can do it together it's probably the best."

On what kept the team together even after all the losses:

“It’s frustrating looking back now but it is a group of guys who know what they can do and how we can perform when we’re playing at our full strength. We’ve turned it around a little bit but we just have to keep it going.”

Senior Linebacker Steve Greer

On making stops late in the game:

“Yeah we made some stops when we needed to do it. We have been talking about that all season, making an identity for our defense. There were times when we gave up a little more than we wanted to, and we had a couple missed tackles that cost us, but I think we stepped up when we needed to. We gave the offense a chance and they came through.”

On missed tackles:

“All season I think that has been a strength for us, our tackling. Today we had some missed tackles. I’m sure we will work on it in practice. Let’s not make a habit of it and let it carry for the rest of the season.”

On second half adjustments:

“We knew we had to execute. I think they made a couple plays where guys were out of their lane and they found the lanes. We tightened it up and tried to make sure everyone was executing.”

On playing North Carolina Thursday:

“Yeah it’s a quick turnaround and UNC is a good team. They have a good offense so we are going to have to watch some extra film in order to get ready with the short week.”

Sophomore Quarterback Phillip Sims

On the offense today:

“I think we had a great game plan coming into this week and we just felt confident in executing it. Both of us did a great job in the first half and throughout the game getting the ball to different guys and making plays when we had to.”

On his touchdown run:

“It was a quarterback lead to the left and they pinched the defensive line in, so I bounced left and there was a linebacker standing there waiting on me so I cut it back. I didn’t think I was going to make it into the endzone, but it happened.”

On the team’s energy:

“It was a big time win, two weeks in a row, guys stepped up and made plays when their names were called. We have expected it from ourselves all season long and I think we are finally starting to come together. It’s finally showing on the field on Saturdays.”

On the possibility of playing in a bowl:

“This is something we never gave up on. Going to a bowl game was never out of our reach as far as we were concerned. Winning these last two games has really put us in position. This is a tournament now, you win and you’re in, you lose and you go home. This is the situation we put ourselves in, but we have to make the best of it and come out on top.”

On his performance:

“It was decent. There are some things I could have done differently, but it was all right.”

Sophomore Cornerback Demetrius Nicholson

On the team not losing hope after starting 2-6:

“That was our whole motto coming in to these last few games. The only people that matter are sitting in the room, that’s what Coach London tells us at meetings. Outside the room you will have people that will root for you when you’re doing well but will leave you when you’re not. As long as we stick together as a team, anything is possible. We have been going off of that and have made a nice little run here.”

On Coach London’s optimism:

“It would have been really easy to get down after our losing streak, but Coach London stays optimistic about everything. It trickles down to the rest of our team and when we start winning people start believing. The more you believe, the better you do.”

On the defensive effort today:

“We did pretty well. There are a lot of plays we wish we could have back but overall we fought all the way until the end. We never gave up and hung our head after giving up a big play. The offense kept scoring and we got them the ball back when we needed it.”

On getting the tackle to end the game on special teams:

“It was a great feeling. I knew there were six seconds so I knew the time would run out and we just had to get him (Duke Johnson) to the ground. It was one of the best feelings ever.”

Sophomore Wide Receiver Darius Jennings

On the comeback:

“All along we kind of knew deep down that the game was in our hands. We had to take control of our own destiny. Once we got the ball with two minutes left, we knew we were going to go down there and come out with a win.”

On finding space in the back of the endzone:

“That’s just something that we practice. Just in case there is some room back there, the quarterback can throw it up and we can still land in bounds.”

On the receiving corps coming together:

“That’s something we have been working on all year, it’s something we stress. After our six-game losing streak, we rallied together and said we are going to start from scratch. We worked on technique, all the basics, and it has proven itself these last two games.”