

October 6, 2012



An Interview With:

COACH AL GOLDEN

Q. What did they do, their run game, what did they do well? What did you wish your team did a little better?

COACH GOLDEN: You know, obviously they are big, strong, physical and ran, what, three running backs. We didn't tackle really well. Defense was on the field too long there between the second and third quarter. I think we only got two first downs, so it's not just a function of the defense, it's a function of both side. Obviously it's a real good football team.

Q. First session had some big opportunities, what happened there?

COACH GOLDEN: We did. We had some drops and obviously the two penalties that aided them on their first drive and that's it. I mean, there's no excuses. We had too many penalties, too many drops. We lost our poise at times. We didn't play well enough in this environment against a really good team, and that's my fault. I've got to get it fixed.

Q. Do you think the big game atmosphere got to them?

COACH GOLDEN: You know, I don't think we did. I think we were ready to go. We prepared all week. We had a guy who drops two right off the bat that normally doesn't do that, he'll be the first to tell you that he's not going to make an excuse for it.

Then we had two penalties; I don't know if they were back-to-back but certainly we aided them on their first drive, and that's a team that doesn't need a lot of help. We didn't play smart enough, we didn't play disciplined enough and we didn't make enough plays, it's that simple.

Give Notre Dame a lot of credit.

Q. You just said you have to get it fixed. How do you go about trying to do that?

COACH GOLDEN: We are sitting there in that room over there with 34 freshmen and sophomores that just played in that game, so I'm not going to start berating them and putting them down. We've got a lot of young guys that are going to grow up some day, and that's a tough task. Again, this is our fourth road game, two against Top-10 teams. You know, and what we've got to do right now is get back to Miami, heal up and then get ready for really our first home stand of the year. We are not going to get negative. We are not going to go that route. There's too many kids in that room that have bright futures and that really played hard. We just didn't play well enough and we got beat by a really good team, simple as that.

Q. What did the Notre Dame front do to make Stephen throw on the run and throw off eyeball?

COACH GOLDEN: Well, they are very good. We knew they were very good coming in, and if you can play cover two in three-cloud like they do and get pressure with a four-man rush, then you're going to be tough to beat.

Right now, they are controlling the time of possession, they are running the ball effectively. They are not getting any penalties. They don't turn it over. So they are hard to beat.

In terms of the front four, we held the ball a couple times at quarterback. We needed to have a little bit more patience staying in the pocket and a couple other times, we should have just run and Stephen started to do that in the latter part of the game but it was too little, too late.

Q. Did they change anything in the second half, offensively? Looked like they came out in the second half --

COACH GOLDEN: No, I just think they were executing better than we were and our

defense was on the field too long. We weren't getting first downs. There was a long stretch where we were not getting first downs on offense. We were giving them the ball back. We could never get a take away. We just never really brought enough pressure on them to keep it in the game in the third quarter.

Q. At the end of the first half, on the 35-yard line, you weren't able to do anything with that --

COACH GOLDEN: It's tough. It could have been, correct me if I'm wrong, it could have been 13-10 if we go in there and even if we don't go in there, let's get a field goal and it's 13-6. We had a touchdown callback, we dropped it, one or two touchdowns, I think we dropped two. We had one called back, and, you know, we pin them down there deep before the half, we get the ball on the 35, and you know, we're three-and-out basically and they miss a field goal.

Again, too much to overcome, all three phases, and we have to go back to work starting with me. Just again, it's a tough one because I thought we had a good look. I thought we were ready to go and I was as surprised as anybody that we had kind of lost our poise a little bit in the early going.

Q. To have your defense on the field for 39 minutes, how taxing is that?

COACH GOLDEN: It's bad. You know, it's not good. Again, give them credit. They ran the ball effectively. Got a veteran offensive line. They rotated three running backs in there and I thought they blocked well on the perimeter and as I said, we compounded by not making any progress on offense with the football.

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