2023 MISSOURI FOOTBALL

POSTGAME QUOTES vs. FLORIDA – NOV. 18, 2023

Missouri Head Coach Eliah Drinkwitz

Opening Statement

"I mean what a way to send the senior class out, just that game is kind of the story of their career. Having to face so much adversity, come from behind, stick together, believe in each other and fight for each other. Well, I don't know how much more to say other than that. Just really proud of them, it wasn't perfect. You know, obviously, defensively we have a lot of things we're going to have to really work on. You know, hats off to Florida. I thought coach Napier did a great job offensively, keeping us off balance. I thought their quarterback that came in the game really made some unbelievable plays for really his first exclusive game experience that I've seen. You know, hate it for Graham, the injury. I feel bad for him but our team found a way. I mean, fourth and eighteen Brady fines Lou. You know, Demetrius Johnson used to say big-time players make big-time plays in big-time games and you know, today would have been the day that he gives away Thanksgiving turkeys in St. Louis so kind of fitting for Luther to make that play today. Proud of Harrison Mevis, proud of Brady Cook. Got to finish in the red zone. For us, offensively, that's really the story of the game. That's why it was so close. We had the chance to really have a much bigger lead, but weren't able to score touchdowns in the red zone and it's happened to us for three weeks. We'll get that fixed."

On the last timeout before the fourth down

"There was some confusion on what play we were going to go to and so I wanted to make sure that we were in the right place and give the last few coaching points. We tried to run to clear out did concept but Luther, in the middle of the field, was open and Brady saw that and threw it to him but the dig was coming open kind of behind him, too. Just wanted to make sure we're on the same page. There's no rewards for taking timeouts with you, so you don't save them for you know possibilities. You use them and then we executed after that perfectly. We hit Mehki Miller, spiked it and then hit Mookie and hit the field goal. "

On Kristian Williams' fumble recovery

"I thought it was really big, obviously, the takeaway in the red zone and then to score to go up nine. I really felt like, you know that might have been the dagger to put them away. Defensively we were just not consistent tonight. We had them behind the chains. We let the quarterback scramble and they were able to hit the fourth down, and we were just real leaky in our run fits and you know, we got a lot of work to do this week to get that stuff fixed."

On thoughts of letting them score at the end of the game to gain possession…

"If you have timeouts left and you got a lead, you're always gonna make them fight and make somebody make a kick. So, there was no thought to let them score, we're just gonna use our timeouts."

On senior night…

"I mean, they're big-time players for us and I think it was awesome to see all the seniors really play and contribute. You know, it's gonna be a special memory to these guys. Our coaching points all week were

‘focus and finish.’ We need to focus on the task at hand and we need to finish. Tonight that's what we did, we found a way to finish the game.”

On missing Ty’Ron Hopper…
“It's pretty evident honestly. You miss Chad Bailey and Ty’Ron Hopper, your starting middle linebacker and starting linebacker. That's not to say that Tristan and Chuck didn't play well. But they've never had to play, Chuck's played that many snaps but Chris has never had to play that many snaps. I think what Billy does on offense is very difficult because they utilize a lot of motions, split flow and confuse our eyes and they were able to do that most of the night. Then the quarterback run at the end was big.”

On the culture changing at Mizzou…
“I don't like to ever throw the previous staff, I don't ever like to shade. I would just say our culture is what we've made it now. Did it change from what it was good, bad or indifferent? Maybe? But it is what we do now. It's always compete. It's build trust and respect. It's do more than what's expected. It's enjoy the journey and it's about developing an elite edge every single day. I believe that the 10 seniors that stayed here, whether they signed with us or signed with a previous staff, and the 17 that transferred have all contributed to the success we've had this season. We got one more game to go.

On this game being the story of the seniors…
You look at the seniors. We got a couple of different groups but my group that joined in, they started with COVID and we had some highs and lows in that season. We overachieved. The next year we kind of took a step back, fighting our way through losing the bowl game. Last year, we had the ups and downs and some very difficult losses, some close wins. Then this year to be able to just consistently overcome adversity, you look at that game. I don't know off the top of my head how many times we were down. I know we were down 7-3 you know, but it just keeps it whether it was K-State, whether it was Kentucky, whether it was you know, Tennessee, we were down this game, our team always fights back, they believe in each other and they have. You know, part of our acronym is grit, a stubborn refusal to quit and I just think that's part of the senior class’ makeup.”

On the belief in team…
“I think I mean, it grows with results, right? Like it's, you can say you believe but when you don't see results, it's hard. But this year that we're seeing the results, and we know that our process is working and you got some big time players too. And, you know, talent plus skill plus will gives you a chance.”

On the energy coming off of the Tennessee game..
“I was concerned because of the emotion that we've had to play with the previous two weeks. And I was concerned because we were gonna sit around the hotel all day. I felt like the fans were unbelievable tonight. I mean, y'all gave us so much energy to see the fifth sell out. You know, when that was announced yesterday, while we were fixing to go to practice. I mean, our team was so fired up. I didn't sense that we came out slow. You know, I mean, we started went right down the field and kick the field goal. What I was concerned about was just that lack of execution. And I think when we're gonna watch the tape, we're gonna see that we're just a little bit of Miss execution away. I mean, we're snapping the ball on the ground, staying on a knee on a third and one in the red area. We're we have a perfectly designed Kirby. He's got a perfectly designed hide the tight end play for a touchdown and our wide receiver who's off steps on the ball for whatever reason, I mean, it's just like, stuff that we never do. We just kind of, you know, found a way to do it tonight. But in the end, we found a way to win.

Finding a way to win. I mean, you guys want to be different. By the way, sometimes it's easier sometimes to Cody Schrader hadn't 300 screenshots and some things kind of II can win out. So what does that say about this team being able to do that time and time again?"

On the different ways Mizzou wins games...
"It just means we got a lot of good players. We got a belief in each other. We got you know, Luther Barton who showed up big time for 158 yards. He you know, I don't know what Missy What did Cody do? I just had another 152. So, you know, I mean, it doesn't matter. At the end of the day, Rick Jones is just always telling me it doesn't matter at the end. of the day, and at the end of the season, they're just gonna say it, whether it was a win or a loss. They're gonna count this one as a win. Practice, practice and I thought he punted really well to the last one, obviously,"

On one thing that the team could improve...
"I think it's minute his mental toughness and, and, and growing. I mean, losses are only losses if you don't let them become lessons. And I don't think there's a thing that Brady's experienced in his life that he hasn't tried to use utilize as a lesson and you know, I was pretty calm on the sideline, I kind of had a feeling like we're gonna be fine guys. We're gonna be fine. Just call the timeout. Let's get the right play call and let's go do it. And you know, Brady gives me a lot of belief in our know our players believe in Him, too."

On the game having one second left on a clock...
"Never seen that before. I've never heard of that before. I'm not gonna get fined after a win. But that was the most reviews we've had all season not even close."

On the offensive side of the ball...
*"*I think we were trying to establish the run, we thought that we were gonna be able to run the ball on him and you know, just had to change it up a little bit. I thought Kirby got into a good rhythm. And, you know, other than that, you know, we had the drive in the fourth quarter that we got stalled. out, but other than that fit. I think we've scored on every grab, except for that one."

On Norfleet's progression this season...
"If he's not an All-SEC freshman, freshman All-American, I don't know what people are watching. So there's a true freshman going out there and dominant people like dominating them."

Being carried off by special teams...
"He obviously deserved it, but that's, that's what the seniors do. They get to get a rock and they get to get carried off by their position group and you know, I told them all we get back this senior class man, there would be nothing more for me to be like you just get to go get a rock but that's not how it works. You gotta go learn it. And you can't you can't have victory if you don't go battle and they went out and battled for four quarters for 60 minutes. And they got it done."

On Harrison's performance...
"I call him money maybe this year. I'll call him thicker kicker. I call him money Mevis he's he's on the money and I don't know how that I don't know how that guy didn't make it. A semifinalist for Lou Groza award. I know that. I mean, I don't get it, but special player. How many game winners does he hit, three? That makes three right? It's pretty good. Pretty good"

Florida Head Coach Billy Napier

Opening Statement

"Okay, you know I got a lot of respect for the players in that locker room. I've got a ton of respect; I'm proud of that group. You know, I think we showed some resiliency tonight, and look, you know, it's a challenge to be prepared to play physically, mentally, emotionally. When you come up short, a couple of weeks in a row, you know, and to have the team ready to play, I have to compliment the leadership. I talked to the team Friday about leaders on a team; the best leaders make the other people around them better, right? They raise their level of play. They're really good teammates, they're invested in the other people in the organization, and ultimately, they make everyone around them better."

On Player, Graham Mertz …

"If Gator Nation doesn't respect Graham Mertz, okay, after watching him compete this year, we got a problem. I mean, this kid has been everything you would want from a teammate; example, leader, work ethic, motivator, game day, you know, just put it on the line."

Quarterback Max Brown

On Graham Mertz's leadership and staying ready to play…

"Yeah, Graham is a warrior, so being behind him at practice and seeing him compete made me keep that one-play mentality. You should always be ready for it, and I think he (Graham) has done a great job being a great leader throughout the whole season. He has really helped me prepare for this moment. You are always one play away, you have to be ready. So being able to feel it, take a deep breath and say, let's go out here and ball."

On gaining confidence from getting quality minutes in the game…

"Yeah, it builds confidence. I think you go out there when you get any type of reps and going out there and playing actual live football, it gives you any type of confidence. So, going out there playing, it's just football at the end of the day."

On his team's support…

"My team did a great job having my back. My defense came over, telling me we got your back, we're going to get you the ball right back. They did a great job being able to give me opportunities to go into the game and make plays."