

September 4, 2012



**ALEC JOHNSON
RYAN KATZ
TIM VIZZI**

Q. What kind of stuff did Washington throw at you that maybe surprised you a little bit?

RYAN KATZ: Some of their fronts were a little different, some of their blitzes on that aspect. They weren't doing too much different stuff coverage wise. I would say mostly in the box.

Q. What would be the outcome if you had a chance to play them against this weekend?

RYAN KATZ: We'd watch the film and get better. We'd have a little bit better beat of what they were doing. Who knows, we don't get to do that.

Q. What were you seeing and are you working on sort of staying in the pocket a little longer, something he said he would like to see out of you this week?

RYAN KATZ: Yeah, I would definitely like to do that. You know, at times I had to run and there was some pressure and other times guys just weren't open. I'm not just going to stand back there. If nothing is open, I'm going to try to make a play. Our offense is designed for me to stay in the pocket. We'll do a better job of that this week.

Q. Can you talk about the touchdown play? Did you have to talk with the officials about that before the game to put them on alert you might try that play?

TIM VIZZI: Yeah, Coach Ludwig talked to the referees before to make sure it was all go. That was something we talked about and knew that it might not be legal, especially with the Pac-12 refs. So he checked and got the okay. Then

had the perfect opportunity at the start of the second quarter to run the play and we ran it.

Q. And then what is your job on that? Do you have to run inside the numbers or inside the hash marks?

TIM VIZZI: We had a sideline huddle and I had to proceed inside the numbers and then just jog right off, a couple yards away from the sideline and they didn't take notice of that. You know, that's what we wanted.

Q. What was going through your mind as the play progressed?

TIM VIZZI: Catch the ball. That was my first and final thought, catch the ball and then run with it.

Q. What were you thinking after, considering it's your first touchdown for SDSU and first Division I collegiate touchdown?

TIM VIZZI: I was excited. I knew we were down two scores and I knew one play of the game could put us (within) one possession. So that's what we did and when we completed the pass and got the touchdown, and knew we were only one more score away from tying the game up.

Q. How do you feel the offensive line did?

ALEC JOHNSON: We were all right. We were shaky at times. Way too much pressure and four sacks is not acceptable. But there were times where our protection was pretty good and that's something to build on and something to learn from in the film and work on for next week.

Q. What do you guys see out Army's defense? What do you see that they do differently?

ALEC JOHNSON: It's a different defense. We have the experience of playing against it last year, so the guys who played it last year will have some experience with it. It's unconventional, just

like our defense. So that helps us a little bit, just going against unconventional defenses.

Q. What's hard to do against them?

ALEC JOHNSON: We were decent at running the ball last year. We landed a couple passes early last year that got us a lead. But we really stalled offensively. We have to get the run game going this week.

Q. Do you guys have to block any differently as a line when Kazee runs as opposed to Muema?

ALEC JOHNSON: It's the same thing. We try to block as long as we can and finish blocks downfield and protect our backs as much as we can and give them yards, open up holes for them. So the change of the backs doesn't really matter at all.

Q. Did you practice more on two-point conversions or short fourth-down conversions coming into this week?

RYAN KATZ: That's what we did all during camp. In our scrimmages, we went for two, went for it on fourth down. In the game, I really didn't think about it. That's what we do. That's what we did going into the game and that was the game plan. So just we go from there.

Q. What's that say about your coach? Do you admire him for being innovative?

RYAN KATZ: Yeah, we were playing the game to win. Coach tries to put the team in the best possible chance to win, and just because it's not by the books doesn't mean it's wrong. That's what we were doing as players we just have to go out there and make plays. If we make those plays, it's great job, who thought of that.

You've just got to do what you're coached to do and that's what our game plan was.

Q. What happened with the first and second two-point conversions?

RYAN KATZ: Yeah, I had time. I got to my third read. Might have been a little window, as I watched the film, where maybe I could have got the ball in there. The second two-point conversion, they had it pretty well covered. They only rushed four and had a lot of guys in the end zone. I just tried to make something happen and unfortunately it got tipped.

Q. Coach was saying this week that one of the things that Army does, they hang on to the ball forever, which is perhaps a little more pressure on the offense to be mistake-free and to score as soon as you can. What are your thoughts on that kind of pressure going into this game?

RYAN KATZ: Yeah, just as an offense, we want to score every time we get the ball. It was a little shaky as a whole this past weekend. I mean, we are going to learn from it. We watched the film. It's going to be nothing different. They keep the ball for a long time, but our goal is to score. Put points on the board and we are going to try to do that every time we get the ball.

JAKE FELY LEON McFADDEN JOSH WADE

Q. How do you feel about Army's offense?

LEON McFADDEN: This offense is a tough offense. We have high respect for (Army), they run the ball hard. It's a difficult offense to prepare for within a week, but all we can do is go out there and work hard and try to understand it to the best of our ability.

Q. Does having a lot of veteran guys who have seen this offense before help going into the game vs. Army?

LEON McFADDEN: It most definitely helps a lot due to the fact we have played against the offense a couple of times with the different academies. So it does help.

Q. Do you enjoy Army's offense or is it a challenge?

LEON McFADDEN: We enjoy it because like I said, we have respect for these guys. They always come and play through the whistle and that's all we can ask for. We love the competition.

Q. Coach said last week you started out a little slow on defense the first half; what was the issue going in and how did you guys fix that, because the second half you played great.

JOSH WADE: Guys just started settling into the game a little bit more and got back in the

rhythm of things. Progressively we started playing better as the game went forth. You can see that statistically in the second half compared to the first. I think just settling in and guys getting back in the rhythm of the game and trusting things and not all flying around to the ball.

Q. Last year you guys were down on multiple occasions and that happened again on Saturday. Obviously it's something you have to work on, but what do you think the reason for it has been?

JAKE FELY: I'm thinking the first half we always come out and think that we are just going to play our ball and the second half we always try to correct our mistakes that we made the first half. When we should just correct our mistakes in the very beginning and start off fast and physical. You know, that trend started last year and we are definitely trying to stop that trend so we don't start off slow this year. We definitely need to work on that. Even though we started this game like that, we are going to try to work on it this year so we eliminate that.

Q. As a cornerback, how do you guys prepare for Army not throwing the ball that often?

LEON McFADDEN: We just have to be prepared to make a lot of tackles going into this game and that's basically it. We really have to key in, though, because they will run the ball and lull you to sleep and then they will try to do a big play. So we really have to pay attention to details.

Q. How good was Keith Price compared to some of the quarterbacks you faced in the past?

JAKE FELY: He was good and elusive. He knew where to throw the ball a lot. But he's the same quarterback, just a quarterback. We should have been able to adjust to it. But he was a good quarterback. Give him the credit that he deserves. Next time we need to go out and show him that we are a good defense.

Q. How was it playing in that stadium? Was it as loud as you guys thought it would be?

LEON McFADDEN: Yeah, it met our expectations. It was very loud. But we felt privileged to be able to play in that stadium.

Q. What are some of Walter Kazee's strengths as a running back?

JAKE FELY: I would say being small, not too small, but being shorter than others, he's able to stay under the view of the offensive linemen, which opens up holes for him. He's able to search the holes that he can fit through with his size, and he runs hard. He doesn't give up. He just keeps running. That's the thing I like about him.

Q. Who would you say is the most elusive runner of all the running backs that the team has?

JAKE FELY: I can't just pick out one. But I would say that Walter Kazee and Adam Muema, because they run the ball consistently hard.

Q. How weird is it spending most of fall camp preparing for Keith Price and then having a quick turnaround to prepare for Trent Steelman?

JAKE FELY: It's always a challenge to adapt to every game and have a new game strategy. You know that Army is going to be mostly a running team, so even though the last game it was mostly pass, we are going to have to adapt and just play ball like we know how to play.

Q. When Coach first told you that he was thinking about this chart and going for it on fourth down, what was your reaction? When did you first hear about this from him?

JOSH WADE: Coach talked about it through camp and we were practicing it. We were excited about it. We knew as players that doing this kind of strategy, we would have to execute. We have faith that we can convert over 50 percent of our two-point conversions and going for it on fourth down and things like that, that's more of an offensive strategy.

But defense is ready to go out and play with any field position. Every time we go out to the field, we feel like we have to stop the offense no matter what the situation is. We are ready for any situation on the field and we just go out and play defense every week and try to stop them in any situation.

Q. How do you feel like the game plan worked out for the team last week?

JOSH WADE: We were not effective enough. We didn't execute enough to win the game obviously. But we'll see how this game plan goes. It's still early in the week. Coach is probably

going to come out and give us the game plan, the statistics and break it down. We'll do what's best for the team, the smartest decisions. We are going to roll with it and practice hard and see if we can make the proper adjustments to win this week's game.

Q. How excited are you to be playing football at the Q?

LEON McFADDEN: I'm very excited to play at Aztec Warrior Stadium. It's good. This is the best time of the year. The San Diego County is supporting us more and more these last couple years. We are excited, this being our (home) opener, we are very excited.

JAKE FELY: Not every team gets the opportunity to play in a professional football stadium and we obviously get the opportunity. It's always exciting to play football in our stadium. We just have to go out every game, excited to play each game so we can win.

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COACH KIRSHNER

COACH KIRSHNER: Well, obviously it's nice to be in here and discuss something that when I first stepped foot 15 years ago, was kind of a dream. The investment of our administration of putting in 1.3 million dollars to put lights and take our program to the next echelon is just, we have so much gratitude and appreciation for it. Looking forward to getting this information out to the community, selling the deck out and as we have been seeing, stacked the deck while we light the night.

We open up our first games over the weekend against number 15 Notre Dame where unfortunately we came up a little short, lost 3-2, and then tied the No. 8 team in the country at Indiana, 0-0.

Q. How good is that opening with two national teams --

COACH KIRSHNER: Probably too good of a test with the amount of injuries we have taken prior to the camp getting started. Four of our possible starters are out right now, and our captain is playing at 70 percent, and Jose Altamirano who is a former national team player was unable to play much on the Friday game.

It was a very big test and it showed great fortitude in our group to go out and make sure that they could find the result necessary on Sunday after not a great performance on Friday. But to come back Sunday with the confidence and the ability to get that tie was very good for our confidence in getting us ready for the game on Friday.

Q. And how excited are you and the players for the first night game here?

COACH KIRSHNER: I wish I could actually articulate the excitement that is going on within the program, and as much as our kids are very excited to play underneath the lights and in front of a huge crowd here in San Diego; as I mentioned earlier, it's been 15 years of me discussing that lights were very program to our program.

When I first came to Montezuma Mesa, I did mention to our administration that there are about three things necessary for me to never look for another job. Two out of those three games have taken place; getting to a resource level with fully-funded complement of scholarships; getting

lights up there, and then a full complement of assistant coaches. Hopefully that's coming with the move to the Big East so that our position can be reinstated. But at this moment the administration is not getting rid of me by me leaving. This is very exciting.

Q. Did anything stand out to you last week?

COACH KIRSHNER: What stood out was the mental fortitude, as I used that word earlier; the determination to succeed. The fight and the battle, the will of this team. We are certainly still trying to find ourselves in our first two games, and we are still struggling to find our lineup with all of the injuries that are there.

But the mental capacity of our group to go out thereafter a bad performance on Friday in the heat; to turn around in conditions of rain on Sunday against probably a Final Four team -- I would be very surprised if Indiana does not end up in the Final Four with the talent and depth that they have.

It was telling to me to know that this is a group that no matter who comes to play us, they will have to compete at the highest level to have a chance to beat us, because our guys are in a fighting battle.

Q. Inaudible.

COACH KIRSHNER: Fortunately it was just a laceration that was able to be stitched up. They put the stirrups on to get him to finish the game and after the game the doctors stitched him up. It would be remiss of myself not to mention the wonderful camp that Tim Peitsch had and for him to step in for that 15 minutes while Blake was getting the stirrups putting on his eye, he was phenomenal. He made a game-saving save that kept us in the match and our goalkeeping here, as always, conducted by Matt Hall, our assistant coach; phenomenal.

Whether it be Blake or whether it be Tim on the weekend, we are fully confident in our goalkeeping.

Q. Could you talk about the huge difference, shots on goal, 29-13 and you guys, 10-4. Just talk about that a little bit if you could.

COACH KIRSHNER: Yeah, I think, you know, one, you've got to give credit to Indiana in what they did on the day. They were extremely

sharp and played way better than I thought they played on Friday night.

This is a very good team that came at us very hard, as I mentioned, we are down in our numbers right now, and the ability to have game fitness, as that was our first weekend of games, really played a toll on us and our need to defend. Certainly we never like to be dominated like that and the last time I remember being dominated like that was 2005 against Cal and matter of fact I think we won that game, as well.

So this is something to put a similarity to; that the resilience and the mentality of this group is going to be very high. Once we get all of our bodies back, we are going to be extremely talented again, not to say that we are not talented now, looking at our results against the No. 8th team in the country.

Q. The irony of the guys practicing on the field below you have a quote, unquote kicker controversy over there; do you ever look over there and think you could help those guys out? Just as a bit of tongue-in-cheek.

COACH KIRSHNER: Yeah, yeah. No tongue-in-cheek at all. I walked into Rocky Long's offense and told him he would be absolutely crazy not to take Chance Martin. The gentleman is the epitome of what an Aztec student athlete should be. He's a scholar athlete. He is a wonderful young man and human being. His work ethic and his locker room presence is enormous.

So no tongue-in-cheek at all on that. That would have been a big mistake on their part not to grab him for GPA alone; let alone that Chance is a very talented kicker and we actually stole him away from football originally. They were courting him out of high school and Chance's love was in soccer, the real football (Laughter) since we are going to go tongue-in-cheek.

So there's no doubt that Chance wanted to try to perform on his first love and he got four years of that and decided to have a go at football where he was extremely talented in the Mission Valley Athletic League, which is my former league. We are actually from the same hometown, as well, to give you another story on that. He went to Washington High School and I went to Michigan San Jose High School.

Q. And anybody named Chance has probably --

COACH KIRSHNER: Got a good opportunity to succeed? Yeah.

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