

August 31, 2013



Eastern Illinois – 40
San Diego State – 19

A Postgame Interview With:

COACH ROCKY LONG

Q. What happened to Derek Largent?

COACH LONG: Derek Largent hurt his knee and Adam Muema hurt his ankle.

Q. Is it serious?

COACH LONG: Don't know yet.

Q. What happened out there today? It looked like you guys came out a little bit flat, four field goals instead of touchdowns.

COACH LONG: We can get into it and I'll get into it so you don't have to ask a million questions. That's as bad as performance as I've ever been around, but you've got to give them a lot of credit. They came and they played extremely well and didn't make many mistakes. We played poorly and made every mistake in the book. Give up long touchdown passes, turn the ball over I think five times on offense, were in scoring position, we have to kick field goals instead of scoring touchdowns. We get a punt blocked, we get a punt turned for a touchdown against us.

That's as bad a performance as I've ever been around, and obviously I'm responsible, so that's my fault. It was a horrible, horrible job of coaching.

Q. Why not let the players address that?

COACH LONG: I didn't feel like it.

Q. Was there a particular reason why you didn't feel like it?

COACH LONG: Certainly. It's my fault, so I'll answer the questions. It's not their fault. They don't have to answer the questions. It's my fault. I'll answer the questions.

Q. When you say it's your fault, there was a lot of poor execution out there, so why is it your fault?

COACH LONG: I'm the coach. If you have decent players and they don't execute very well, that means that we didn't put them in the proper position, we didn't teach them the proper way. If they perform bad, it's my fault. It's as simple as that.

Q. How concerning is this going into next weekend?

COACH LONG: You wanted to talk about next weekend all along in fall camp. I told you about it. I told you not to. I told you how good Eastern Illinois was. I told you. I told you a long time ago, but nobody wanted to listen. I mean, one game does not make a season.

We'll regroup. Competitors regroup after they've been embarrassed and beat up like that. Competitors regroup and they go back to work and they work on the next competition. Other people quit and say it's over.

Q. You said that we didn't believe you. Did that include your team, as well?

COACH LONG: Obviously they didn't catch the drift.

Q. Did you feel like your defense was sort of taken aback by the pace that their offense played?

COACH LONG: No, that's just an excuse. I think maybe the first series of downs they were not used to it, but after that it wasn't the pace of the game. We can say that that's unusual, but it's not. If you watch TV, more and more and more teams are doing that. I saw Fresno State go down in a minute and a half or something and scored the first touchdown of the game against Rutgers, too. If you just watch TV it happens over and over and over again. Maybe they were a little shocked at the pace the first series of downs, but they weren't shocked the rest of the game.

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Q. What does this game say about your cornerbacks?

COACH LONG: They were beat on two long passes. I mean, they were beat by the goal line one time on a short pass, but they were beat on two long passes.

Q. Did you expect the pressure from the outside from the Panthers on defense?

COACH LONG: I mean, it was a very simple thing, and they even gave it away. So yeah, they executed us. They got in a certain defense, you knew the pressure was coming, we couldn't block all of them, so you have to throw a pass to a slant or throw a pass to a receiver on an out. Our ability to do that did not happen. I mean, it happened maybe once or twice the whole game, but you have to complete those slants and compete the quick outs. If you throw it on the money and you catch the ball, guess what, they'll stop blitzing. But it worked almost every time they did it, so why not keep doing it? We have an answer for that. Everybody else has the same answer. We blitzed them a couple times and they hit the slant for the 1st down.

Q. What do you tell your guys after this?

COACH LONG: I told them it was a terrible performance, but one game does not make a season. I mean, there's a lot of -- we've got to play a lot of good teams left, and we haven't even played a conference game yet. Last year we played poorly in the preseason, also, if you remember. We had one good game against Army, and we almost got beat by North Dakota State, we got beat by San Jose State and we got beat by Washington.

Q. Can you comment on Adam Dingwell's performance tonight?

COACH LONG: I didn't think Adam played very well.

Q. I think you said in your presser, the games that scare you make you worry because you don't know what your team is the first one, two or three games. With what we know now, is this what your team is, or is it something you're still trying to build?

COACH LONG: I sure hope this is not what our team is, but we can change some things as coaches when we -- you're going to have to

watch the film. I have an initial impression on the way things went, but you have to watch film to find out, and we might be asking some of our players to do things that they can't do, they just can't perform, they're not skilled enough to perform that duty, so you have to do some other things. We're going to give our corners some more chances, so get ready. We're going to give our corners some more chances because you can't play good defense unless those corners can match up. If you have to protect the corners every single time, they're going to rush for 5,000 yards. That's just the way the game is now. So we're going to give our corners some more chances the next couple, three weeks, and hopefully we'll be a good team by the time conference play starts.

Q. How much of the offensive play calling was sort of affected by Adam's injury? Was that part of the game plan or did you start doing that a little bit more because he wasn't playing?

COACH LONG: No, I don't think that had anything to do with it. I think Pumphrey ran pretty well, I think Dwayne Garrett ran pretty well at the end of the game, but they were playing a defense that they were playing really, really soft, so he should have run pretty good. They didn't have enough guys up there to stop the run. But Pumphrey ran pretty well. I didn't think the game plan changed.

Q. You have a few new guys on the offensive line. How do you think they played?

COACH LONG: Well, if you were watching closely, we put Darrell Greene in at guard for Nico Siragusa because he wasn't playing very well. I mean, he had a holding penalty and we got a quarterback hit two or three times, so we put Darrell Greene in to try to help that. I don't know if it did or not, but it didn't seem like it did much.

Q. Do you think Adam Dingwell suffered because of it?

COACH LONG: Because of the pressure? Yeah, all quarterbacks suffer because of pressure, sure, they do.

Q. How do you regroup after this? What do you tell your guys?

COACH LONG: We'll watch the film like we do all the time. We'll try to learn from our

mistakes and move on. We'll see if we can get better between now and next weekend. Don't make any mistake, they outplayed us and outcoached us. We talk about our execution but some of that is caused by them playing well.

Q. Their quarterback had a big day. Was that in your secondary or the lack of pass rushers?

COACH LONG: It's all connected together. If he doesn't complete the long (passes) then he doesn't have very many yards. The coverage wasn't good enough on the long two passes. I think there was 150 yards on two plays, maybe more. We didn't play very good pass coverage and when we tried to put more guys in zone coverage, tried to drop eight, we didn't get a very good pass coverage with three guys. They did a nice job of scheming the three guys. When we rushed three they did a nice job, if people weren't open they dumped it to the back right over the center, and they didn't make big yards, but they got six, seven and eight sometimes, which helps drives continue.

Q. You had 63 pass attempts and 35 rush attempts. That seems very different from what this team has done in the past in terms of sort of like a pass rush ratio. Is there a reason for that?

COACH LONG: You're talking about our stats?

Q. Yeah, your stats. Is that something you're just trying to do more this year?

COACH LONG: No, some of it was because we were behind. I would say a lot of those pass attempts were in the last quarter and a half of the game after we fell behind. And then they did a really nice job of putting a lot of guys up by the line of scrimmage. That made it hard to run the ball. So the only way to back them off was to be able to complete some passes, and we didn't do that. We didn't throw it very well sometimes, and we didn't catch it very well sometimes. Early in the game if we catch a couple passes that are touchdown passes that looked to me -- I'll have to watch the film, but looked to me like they should have been caught. The momentum is different and the whole game probably changes, but that's why we play.

Q. There's only three points scored the second half. What was the mood like in the locker room?

COACH LONG: No, I think we realized we were in a game -- and I'm not saying they didn't, because I don't know. If they didn't think that they were here for real, that they weren't a real football team, they knew at halftime, so I think we came out at halftime with a very good attitude, and we were going to go at it and try and win the game, and we made way too many mistakes. I don't know how many interceptions, a couple, three interceptions in the second half, and we fumbled a couple, three times. I don't know exactly how many, which added to their momentum. Whenever you turn the ball over it adds to their momentum.

Q. Did DJ Pumphrey make a case for them to take the running back job?

COACH LONG: I thought he ran pretty well. I mean, I can't say anything like that until I watch.

Q. Is Dingwell still your starter?

COACH LONG: Right now he is.

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