

December 5, 2015



VS



Stanford - 41
USC - 22

An interview with:

**DAVID SHAW
CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY
KEVIN HOGAN**

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with Stanford head coach David Shaw, Kevin Hogan, and Christian McCaffrey.

COACH SHAW: It was a heck of a football game. We knew it was going to be a battle. We knew it was going to be kind of a test of wills. We wanted to be physical up front and wanted to make big plays in the passing game. We missed a couple opportunities early, but came back and kept fighting and kept scrapping.

Defensively we knew we were going to have to make a game breaking play. At some point in the day, somebody was going to have to make a turnover, force a fumble, get an interception. Great job by Blake Martinez, great job by Solomon Thomas picking it up, really big play.

You've got to trust your senior leadership, and Kevin Hogan was great today. This game is not about stats. He understands that. This team is about making big time plays when you need to. And he makes plays with his legs, staying alive, hitting Christian on the check down. Just a critical end of game, fourth down, put the ball in his hands and trust him to make the play. He did just phenomenal.

Haven't said much about it, you guys know I haven't. But to my left here is the best player in the nation. I don't know if there is any question. There is nobody in the nation doing what he's doing. It's not even a debate. So we're excited about what we've done as a team. What Christian has done is phenomenal. 40-what yards today? Something ridiculous. I lost count. 461, something like that. He's still walking on his toes. He could still play another quarter if we had to. But he's a phenomenal football player.

The guys up front are setting the tone, and the guys are making plays. Just as a team though,

very proud of the guys for sticking together after the beginning of the year and a couple of the ups and downs. Our guys finding ourselves and then coming off and playing great football down the stretch as well as anybody in the nation.

Q. Coach, if you didn't know better and you swear it's the same game you guys played in California against USC, but what was the big difference between this game tonight and the last time you played USC?

COACH SHAW: It was very, very similar. Now they ran the ball a little bit more this game, and they ran it really physically. It was tough, it was tough to stop. They cracked a couple runs and they've got good players, they've got good backs. We needed to tackle better at times, but at the same time, you miss tackles because you're going against really good football players. Those guys are known to break tackles and we rallied around and made enough plays. We knew it was going to be tight, we knew it was going to be close. But at some point we're going to have to bow up and make a couple plays to separate, and that's what our guys did.

Q. McCaffrey, coach from USC said that you were one of the toughest players to play against. That's a great compliment to you. But in your mind tonight, what stood out the most to you about the way you played tonight?

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY: I think I was just able to -- I was put in a bunch of different situations to be successful, I think. I can't talk enough about the O-line and the holes, especially in the first half. We knew that if we wanted to win the game, we were going to have to run the ball efficiently, and those guys were unbelievable.

As far as in the pass game, my job was kind of easy. Hogan over here got us to the right check, and threw the ball on the money and I kind of had a straightaway run.

In the return game, our guys just keep working, keep straining, a great special teams unit. We did a pretty good job on them, but I think overall just an extremely fun game to play in.

Q. Christian, how do you feel about breaking Barry Sanders all-time record for all purpose yards?

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY: That's a huge

honor. It's a huge honor. I know he did it in a couple less games. I don't know if you take that into consideration or not, but that's a huge honor. That's a guy I have posters on my wall growing up. So to have my name mentioned even in the same category as him is definitely an honor.

Q. As a follow-up, could you describe the play when he threw the touchdown pass to Kevin?

CHRISTIAN McCaffrey: Yeah, we had been working in practice and it worked in practice, and it was a little bit of a reverse. We made it look like a toss to the left, and Barry did a great job selling it, and pitching it to me. My job was easy. Those are always the scariest ones though when he's that wide open. You're just praying that you get it to him, and obviously, Hogan can catch the ball and finished it.

Q. Kevin, when you took over as Stanford's quarterback, what did you hope your legacy would be?

KEVIN HOGAN: Oh, that's tough. I just wanted to do my best and put our offense in a position to be successful every time. It was following a great leader, a great player in Andrew. You know, I said out there on the field, you can't really fill the shoes. You've just got to do what you can. And I've been a part of four or five great teams out here at Stanford, and the guys we have up front in the back field, out wide, they make my job easy. So it's pretty crazy that my time here is coming to an end. But I can't say enough about the teams that I've been on.

COACH SHAW: I've got to interject something here. I was asked a question this past week. Everybody's on this thing about Mount Rushmore. And a guy asked me about Mount Rushmore, the quarterbacks of Stanford history, if Kevin Hogan deserves to be on it. And I said, absolutely. We've got Elway, Plunkett, Luck, and Kevin. I know Kevin will never say that, but I don't think it's even a question. What he's been able to do here with his arm, with his legs and to be honest with his heart and his toughness, taking us to three Pac-12 Championship games in four years is unbelievable. It's unmatched. He's been a phenomenal player for us, so thank you, Kevin.

Q. David, at any point were you aware of the Clemson score? How much did you allow yourself to follow that?

COACH SHAW: Had no idea. I didn't know until about five minutes ago walking up here. Since the beginning of the year, it's so funny too, since spring, I spent spring with Dabo Swinney

back at Clemson, and we had some great conversations. Our families got together. He kind of started it and I kind of capped it off, but we talked about the mode of the season is (indiscernible). The two of us kind of put that thing together, and we concentrated on where we are. Not where we've been, not where we're going, but where we are and what we can do today.

That was our guys today. Our guys didn't worry about anything else. All that matters is what happens on our field. What happens after that is up to other people. But for us, we tried to play our best football game and come out with a win tonight.

Q. What would you say was the biggest area of improvement for Christian from last year to this year?

COACH SHAW: First and foremost, he got the ball more. Second of all, really, and Christian knows this, the biggest difference, the two biggest differences, one was just the knowledge of all the blocking schemes, of all the plays and knowing who he is reading.

We put him in spots last year to make him successful and use his natural ability to make a couple plays. We talked about him in the spring that he's going to have to handle it all, and he has.

Second thing, for a guy that's so quick, so explosive and so fast, was patience. Patience and reading those polars, and being half speed behind the line, and reading it, and cutting full speed. He surpassed our expectations there.

We've talked a lot about (indiscernible) and how he runs, and Christian has been able to adopt that same running style. And you see that flash of lightning and the kid explodes through the hole, it's just phenomenal. It's been fun to watch.

Q. You see Christian get man coverage, how much do you (Indiscernible)?

KEVIN HOGAN: He has no idea. One-on-one, I'll take him against anyone. A linebacker, DB, you can split him out wide, have him come out of the back field and he's going to make a play for you. It's third down, and you made the right decision to cross the linebacker's space, and I just have to put it somewhere where he can catch it, and he does the rest.

Q. Do you know for a fact that you're going to the Rose Bowl --

COACH SHAW: If the worst thing we do is go to the Rose Bowl, I think that's pretty cool. I think that's pretty cool. Once again, we're not in

charge of that. We'll go where they tell us to go.

The question is should there be an eight-team playoff? Absolutely. If you win one of the big five conferences, should you be in the playoffs? Absolutely. Eventually I think we're going to get there. We're not there now, but it's the only thing that makes sense. We've made all these strides to become Power Five conferences but score four spots for a playoff. It doesn't make any sense. I think eventually we'll get there.

Once again, if they invite us, great. If they don't, great. We'll go down to Pasadena and have a great time.

The bottom line for us, we capped off a phenomenal year. These seniors deserve all the accolades that they get because they helped what we talked to them earlier in the year about about not sustaining, but continuing to build. That's hard. That's hard to never be satisfied. That's hard to never accept less than your best. It's hard to go to a bowl game last year and say that's not good enough. We can do so much better, and put the work in to make it happen. That is the real legacy these guys will leave. Yes, Pac-12 Championships and those things are awesome. But the legacy these guys are leaving is work. You can't talk about it. You have to work through it. And that's what our guys have done.

Q. USC came out more aggressive in the second half. What were some of the adjustments you had to make to continue to play your game?

COACH SHAW: The biggest thing for us was corralling those receivers. You know, JuJu, we know he's not a hundred percent. He's a special, special football player. He can make guys miss. And Alijah Holder did a really good job in the second half just getting him on the ground. Once he catches the ball, we are able to play, just getting him on the ground and rallying him to the running game.

So those guys who break tackles and make people miss. Our safeties took good angles. Our linebackers kept fighting. Up front defensive line had a couple stops and a couple of tackles for loss.

Solomon Thomas played an outstanding football game and made some plays. Brennan Scarlett made some plays. Those guys just kept fighting the whole game. It was going to be one of those games. We knew they were going to shake free a couple times because they're that good. We trust our defense, we trust our guys. Anderson making sure we mixed it up on them coverage

wise, blitz wise and dropping those guys out. They did a really good job mixing it up against USC.

Q. Considering the opposition, would you consider that the best defense of the year for you guys?

COACH SHAW: It feels like it right now. I'll let you know once we watch the film. But it feels like it because we needed it. That's the biggest thing. It's not just the numbers. It's not just the stats. We needed those guys to come up big in the second half, especially when I screwed it up going for it on fourth down there without taking the points, going for a pass. It was completely my fault.

The defense came out ask bailed us out and made some plays, which put the game back in our hands. And then offensively up front with the offensive linemen and Christian running, and then some big plays from Rector to get a couple first downs and Cajuste, and Kevin throwing the ball was huge.

Q. How is Ronnie Harris doing?

COACH SHAW: He made it as long as he could. The adrenaline kicked in. He wasn't in danger of really reinjuring himself. That ankle stiffened up a little bit, and he couldn't go in the second half. And Ronnie knows this, I told this to Ronnie, Ronnie's in charge of our juice, we felt that early in the game. When Ronnie's back on the field, it's just that energy, that fire, that passion. He made some great plays. He doesn't back down from anybody. The rest of our guys felt that. We needed a charge in the beginning of the game, so really happy with what Ronnie did today making that play.

Q. (Indiscernible) can you talk about that play on fourth down? (Indiscernible).

COACH SHAW: Well, what I love about our guys is we don't scoreboard watch. We're up three, we're down three, we're up ten, we're down ten.

First time we played USC, we were down two scores early in the game. We just keep battling. We keep playing. We know if we play our game, we'll fight back into it, if we're down. If we're up, we play our game, we know we're going to extend the lead. There's a confidence that our guys have earned by how well they've played in the last few years. So no matter what the score is, no matter if we're up or down, we don't change what we do or change how we play. We trust the scheme, we trust the guys doing the scheme.

Q. How healthy was Blake, and what was his impact on today's game?

COACH SHAW: Blake was great. Blake was great. Pre-practice we're talking about a middle linebacker here, right? I asked him how he is, and he said, coach, it's one game. You know, he says, I'm fine. Are you kidding me? He's all over the place. He's phenomenal. He's a great football player, and we needed him to play today. We taped him up, and he went out there, and made sure he can run around and he can do everything. Full speed, planting, cutting, he was ready to go.

Q. How did you get called from behind on that touchdown?

COACH SHAW: That question might be better answered by his teammates. But go ahead.

CHRISTIAN McCaffrey: I don't know how to answer that, really. Me and you are wondering the same thing right now. But, no, I had to make a couple cuts. I wish I would have cut to the right, because I think it was Michael Rector there who was running and busting his butt for a nice touchdown block, and I saw Cajuste come in there and throw a block. As soon as I turned to the left, saw someone. So, yeah, that's --

COACH SHAW: We'll work on top speed for next year.

Q. My real question was when this game gets close, what is the quarterback like? What did you get from him when it was time to regain control of the game?

CHRISTIAN McCaffrey: Oh, it's so fun when we get put in situations where we have to go through adversity because Kevin's ice man. He's got ice in his veins. He doesn't let anything bug him. Any time something bad happens, you can expect a lot of people to hang their heads. But when he's back there taking snaps, our team has full confidence. When I'm sitting there knowing that he's our quarterback, I know we've got nothing to worry about, because that's one of the greatest leaders and one of the greatest competitors I've ever seen in my life.

COACH SHAW: I have a question for you guys: Has anybody ever seen a game where two different players rush for touchdown, throw for a touchdown, and receive a touchdown? Has that ever happened in college football at or any level of football?

Q. (Indiscernible) intercepted for a touchdown?

COACH SHAW: That was a long time ago. But two players in the same game on the same team. I don't think that's ever happened before.

Q. Stanford hasn't had one guy do it in 20 years.

COACH SHAW: It's about time then, right?

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

December 5, 2015



VS



2015 FOOTBALL
CHAMPIONSHIP

Stanford - 41
USC - 22

An interview with:

**CLAY HELTON
CODY KESSLER
SU'A CRAVENS**

THE MODERATOR: We have USC here, with head coach Clay Helton, Cody Kessler, and Su'a Cravens. Coach, an opening comment or remark about the game?

COACH HELTON: Very proud of our kids and the season that they've had. To make it to a Pac-12 Championship is a great honor for us.

Very sad for them that we did not play our best game today against a very, very talented Stanford team. We've talked about our blueprint to winning, running the ball, stopping the run, and winning the turnover battle, playing great special teams, and we lost the rush game. We lost the turnover battle. Usually that, against a team like that, that's going to equal a loss.

Got some hurt kids in that locker room. They've given tremendous effort to get to this point, and obviously are extremely saddened by not finishing the job. I look forward to having a tremendous bowl game with a bunch of unbelievable seniors who have helped us get to this point. With that, I'll take any questions that you have.

Q. Coach, in the first half (Indiscernible) came up big in the game. But what adjustments did you make in the second half?

COACH HELTON: Well, I thought we executed better. We had a couple missed assignments and some physical beats in the front that cost us early and really took us out of rhythm.

And credit to them, they did a good job. There were some physical beats up front. Just at halftime we made a couple of adjustments and just tell the kids that if we do our job, the plays are there to be made. We could see them as a coaching staff.

Then we started making our plays and doing things right. So that was the biggest thing for the kids. Came back, took the lead. Thought

we had a good chance there, and then we had a critical error in pass protection that ended up costing us.

Q. Coach, what were your impressions of Christian McCaffrey? And how do you think your defense did?

COACH HELTON: Well, he's as special a player as we've played all season. His ability to break tackles is what stood out today. We talked about tackling him all week and we were going to have to. He's just one of those kids that finds ways to make yards and obviously add the back field and the passing game, and he's a mismatched nightmare. You know, when you play man-to-man against him, it's hard. And that was -- we decided we were going to load the box, try to stop the run with cover 1, cover 3, and they caught us in a couple man situations where he had big plays. Credit to him. He's one of the more special players in the country.

Q. Do you think he can win the Heisman?

COACH HELTON: There's a bunch of great players in the country. Does he deserve to be considered? Yes, yes, he does. I would anticipate he's one of those guys in New York. But that's up to the Heisman Committee to make those votes. But like I said, we've played a lot of good players this year, he's as special as any of them.

Q. Does it feel like just getting on the board before the half was able to change momentum when you came out in the third quarter?

COACH HELTON: Yeah, a little bit. We struggled in that first quarter, and credit to them, they had two very long drives and we had one series the entire first quarter. So we had to get our motor jump started a little bit. It was -- to have those three points, you get a little momentum there.

The kids were great at halftime. They knew that all they had to do was do their job, and they came right back out in that third quarter and really produced two touchdowns that not only got us in the game, but took the lead.

Q. Coach, you did a remarkable job from the start from the Notre Dame situation all the way to today, even though at this point it was a loss for you. What experience do you take from this?

ASAPsports

...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at asapsports.com

USC - Pac-12 FCG Postgame Quotes.docx

COACH HELTON: What I take away from it is a bunch of players coming together as a team, you know, and coming together as a family. That is the thing that I'll take away from this.

We're very grateful to be here in this Championship game, but these guys are starting to play for each other, and that's what I'm most proud of in the whole thing. I reminded them in that locker room just to remember what this pain feels like, because it's our goal next year to be right back here next year, and I want them to remember how bad this hurts. If it doesn't hurt, something's wrong. What I see in there is a bunch of sad kids that want this more than anything.

We've got a bright future at SC, and it started with a bunch of seniors, especially the two kids that are up here, they led us to this thing. I'm sorry that we didn't finish it for them. But they've put us on track to be able to do some great things.

Q. What makes Christian McCaffrey so good?

SU'A CRAVENS: I mean, what doesn't he do is what you could ask me. He catches the ball in the back field, makes the guy miss, and take it to the house, and rush the ball inside and on the edge and really score with any play they draw for him. He's just a special guy. In my opinion, he should win the Heisman.

Q. Cody, the deep ball didn't seem to be too much of a threat for you tonight. Was there something that Stanford was doing that schematically took it out of the game plan?

CODY KESSLER: I think they did a good job of playing their safety pretty deep. They did a good job getting pressure on me too, which was harder for those longer routes to develop. But it was our job to execute those. And we called them sometimes at the right time and called them sometimes when they play the coverage and you get it, and you know you're going to win some and lose some of those.

But I think our guys responded in the second half so good. I mean, we ran the ball really well in the second half. And our receivers made plays and stuff. Obviously, we wish we had a little more deep balls, but we had to do what they were giving us, and that was inside run or outside run and throwing short passes. We just didn't execute enough of them.

Q. You fought back and took the lead, and then the third down pass that Christian had on the long one, what happened on that play?

SU'A CRAVENS: Just got caught in a man situation. I think 99% of the match-ups he has out the back field on the one-on-one, he's going to win it. He got to the inside and took it down to the red zone to the 4-yard line. So just they had a perfect play call for their defense.

Q. (Indiscernible) Stanford's offense was going on, did that make it difficult for you to get into a rhythm?

CODY KESSLER: Yeah, it was tough, but I told our guys that we have to make the most of our drives when we do get them. The first drive or the first quarter, I think we had one drive or something. But that's on us. We went 3 and out, and I think we got one first down and gave it right back. That's tough for our defense. We have to give them a breather and help them out. In the first quarter, we didn't do that.

In the second quarter, we did that towards the end of the half, and then second half we came out and played great.

Then in the third, and it's just something that it definitely hurts, because you know you have opportunities and you could have made them. But I think our guys played so well. They put everything they had on that field. I couldn't be more proud of them.

Q. Cody, you've had a sensational career and incredible stats. Could you summarize your career?

CODY KESSLER: Yeah, when I came into this school, I knew they were going into sanctions. I knew what was going to happen, but it didn't change my mind at all. I said it before and I'll continue to say it. I have absolutely no regrets. We've been through probably the darkest times that this school has been under, this university. And I was one of the guys, looking at me, and everybody looking at me and know that I'm going to stay consistent no matter what. So hopefully people will remember that.

Obviously I wish we would have gotten to the Rose Bowl for our last game, but, like I said, I fell in love with this school. I fell in love with this team, my teammates, this guy, all the coaches I've had. We've been through so many tough times, and I'll look back -- right now it hurts, but I'll look back some day and be proud of the person I became and the players I got to play with.

Q. Cody, you got swapped for a couple months because you wanted Clay Helton to be the head coach. Do you feel it was a let down when

you finally got what you were fighting for all that time?

CODY KESSLER: No, I think Stanford is a great football team.

This man right here is 100% no doubt at all the right man for this job. He earned it, he deserved it. I would play for this guy until the day I died, if I could. He's one of the best coaches I've ever played for in my life, and even a better man. He's taught me so much, and I'm so thankful for that.

Tonight we got beat by a good team. It wasn't his fault, the players or anything. We could execute here and there and made better plays, but -- he's going to take the blame, but it's not on him. These guys played so hard, but Stanford's a great football team. They really are, and we got beat. There are no excuses to make. They beat us tonight and they were the better team.

Q. Su'a?

SU'A CRAVENS: Stanford just beat us. You can't say much else about it. You can't blame Coach Helton at all. He gave his all, and we gave him our all. I don't think it was a letdown at all. When we announced him as head coach, it was a relief. We were glad we got our guy. That's who we wanted. We knew we were going to go to war with him, but just didn't get the result we needed. It's just football (indiscernible).

FastScripts by ASAP Sports