

Tyler Gaffney talks Stanford football

By Dave Fowkes, Examiner.com

Tyler Gaffney put together an impressive performance against Wake Forest as most of the Cardinal players did in Stanford's 68-24 win last Saturday night. Gaffney carried the ball seven times for 76 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

On Tuesday he made his debut at the weekly Stanford press conference. He had some interesting things to say about the Cardinal:

Topic number one for the players of course was playing in those brand new black jerseys. "I loved the black uniforms," Gaffney said. "I know some alumni may not have liked them, but putting up 68 points I can't complain."

On whether the uniforms would be back, Gaffney was all for it. "That is up to the head coach. Like I said, we can't complain with 68 points. We may lobby to bring them out again."

The running back by committee approach seems to be the way of the season for the Cardinal. Gaffney says he would love to carry the ball more as all the running backs would, but he understands the situation at hand. He was asked if so few touches made it a hindrance to getting into a rhythm.

"I wouldn't say it is a hindrance, but there definitely is a groove of things the more you are in. But at the same time every time each running back is in he is fresh."

Gaffney says there are some similarities but also big differences between those carrying the ball for Stanford.

"All of our running backs are a little bit different. We have some scat backs, we have new guys that are going to lower their shoulder. I don't think the defense is able to sit on one thing."

Gaffney broke down some of the styles a little bit.

"Usua Amanam is obviously not as big as some of the other running backs we have. He comes out with speed. He is elusive. Stephan (Taylor) is a little mix of both. He is a little heavier too and he can deliver a blow. But at the same time he is quick. All of our backs just bring it a little differently. I don't think you can sit on just one thing defensively so I think it gets into their heads."

Gaffney has looked like the most physical of the tailbacks to play so far and was asked about taking on a punisher's role in the backfield.

"Nobody just wants to take a blow. I came from a defensive mindset in high school. I want to deliver the punch even though I have the ball. I would rather have them be afraid to tackle me rather than be tackled every time."

Apparently he learned some of those lessons from Toby Gerhart.

"I grilled him with questions all the time asking him what he was looking at and what he was thinking. He says when there is no other way out, let them know that they don't really want to tackle you."

Over the last few years the perceptions of Stanford are changing. No longer is it just the smart school out west, the Cardinal is a team that will try to out physical each opponent. Gaffney says he can feel the change.

"I can feel the attitude just around campus and around our own players. We want to play with class and we want to play with cruelty. We want people to know that we are out here. We are just not the Stanford team of five or six years ago when they were 1-10. We have moved on from that. Coach Harbaugh has come out and made improvements. We want the world to know we are out here to play."

As for the season and its 3-0 season, Gaffney was asked if the skies are the limit.

"I feel like we are improving and improving and I don't see any flat line coming up."