

Stanford University Football Media Conference

Saturday, October 28, 2023
Stanford, California, USA

Coach Troy Taylor Postgame Media Conference



Washington 42, Stanford 33

Q. How long are you going to think about that fourth quarter pass?

TROY TAYLOR: Oh, you know, it's the play probably a lot of people will remember, but many more plays in that game and opportunities, not just one play.

You know, Tiger Bachmeier, you know, it was really Casey Filkins that typically runs that play for us. We practice it. Casey wasn't up and Tiger has practiced it a couple times and he was ready to roll. Jayson Raines was trying to catch the ball and make something happen.

You know, I told him in the huddle, you're going to be open. Catch it and do something with it. Those guys are just trying to make a play. Came up a little bit short, but super proud of those guys and everybody on our team, everybody on the roster.

Q. Just kind of what's your message to the team overall after this one? What will it be?

TROY TAYLOR: Yeah, talked to them briefly. Told them how proud I was. Talked about coming out fast and competing, and, you know, obviously we're not satisfied with coming close. I am proud of how they played and how they competed.

You know, sometimes in life you don't get the tangible reward for great effort, preparation, and making plays. But the resiliency of these guys and their ready and willingness to play and give everything they got against a really, really good team, super proud.

We'll learn from it and move on to next week against another really good team, Washington State Cougars.

Q. Did you say anything to Jayson or Tiger after that fourth down?

TROY TAYLOR: You mean after the play?

Q. Yeah.

TROY TAYLOR: I did. Hey, good effort. I know you were trying to run with it. Those guys you know, it happens fast. I just said that they did a great job. I know they were trying to make a play.

Q. On that outside kick, what's the thought process there?

TROY TAYLOR: Yeah, could be one of those things we could certainly try and pin them back, and we've done that before. They're really good on offense, and I thought we're going to have to -- give us an opportunity, we get a good bounce, which we did. Josh made a great kick. The ball popped up and came loose.

So just kind of playing the odds that we might get an opportunity. There is an argument to be made to kick it deep; that's what we did.

Q. What does this say about Ashton that he was able to match Michael Penix touchdown for touchdown, yard for yard?

TROY TAYLOR: Ashton played a great game. He's really tough. He made some great runs, timely runs. Made great decisions in the pass game and checks that you wouldn't necessarily know about. Made a lot of great throws.

He's just -- his disposition is always the same. He's really competitive, but his demeanor is always the same. So really proud of him, how he played.

Q. I know Maikkula and also Baklenko were in an offensive line today. Some new guys. Talk about how you felt the offensive line did today.

TROY TAYLOR: Baklenko, a true freshman, started and played the whole game at left tackle. Then Jake Maikkula, young guy that hasn't played at all played right guard. I got to watch the tape. I'm not watching them the entire time.

But we moved the ball pretty well up and down the field, so



I think they did a pretty good job. We'll look at the tape. That's a pretty big task to be a young freshman, come in and play against a team like that with that quality of player and play well.

Really, really proud of those guys. Got some good young players that are really tough.

Q. Jackson Harris made that big catch down the field. I think first one of his career. What have you seen from him leading to this to give you faith in him?

TROY TAYLOR: Really talented. Got great speed. You know, he's a guy that when Elic went down, we wanted to give him a shot. He did a great job.

Got a lot of the young guys like that that are talented and just need an opportunity, need a little bit more experience, but he's going to be a great player.

Q. You mentioned Elic going down. Any early word on him?

TROY TAYLOR: No, no word at all. Hopefully we'll get more of that tomorrow and Monday to see where he is at.

Q. Then the defense hasn't caused many turnovers this year. How big was it to get those two in the fourth?

TROY TAYLOR: Massive. Unbelievable play by Tristan Sinclair, and Mitch got it and Zahran. That was great. Gave us an opportunity. Yeah, so those were both huge.

Q. Aidan Flintoft, talk about what you saw from him and the job he did coming in.

TROY TAYLOR: Yeah, so those guys have both been kind of battle, and Connor and he, and talented guys. Could have been a little bit better on special teams. Kind of hurt us on our field position tonight.

But we'll bounce back and we'll improve.

Q. You've had a couple games like last week that the score got out of hand at the end. Is it harder to get over a game like this where you were so close?

TROY TAYLOR: Yeah, good question. I don't know. If you're competitor, and everybody that coaches or plays, they all kind of hurt, you know. But my job is I got to be resilient, learn from move on to the next game. They're painful. I'm really proud of how they played though.

There is a fight to these guys and a consistency in their

demeanor and how they approach the game. When I look at this game afterwards I'm really proud of that. Now, we want to win the game and make a couple more plays. We didn't do that. But I do feel like we're improving and showing incredible resiliency.

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Tiger Bachmeier

Postgame Media Conference



Washington 42, Stanford 33

Q. First walk us through that trick play you saw where you tried it throw it to Jayson and he didn't catch it.

TIGER BACHMEIER: Yeah, it was a play that we just been practicing for a while and was just time to call it in a big game like this. We were all excited to call it and then, you know, was just whatever happened, you know.

Yeah. That's really all I have to say about it. But I don't know. It's tough.

Q. What are the emotions like after a game like this to come so close and not get the win?

TIGER BACHMEIER: I mean, there are ups and downs, a lot of ups and downs. We came off a really good week of practice from the loss last week. Came back and had one of the best weeks of practices we've had.

Just goes to show how we were in the beginning of the season and the grit we have. We're going to keep coming back and putting together practices, and it showed today. We came out firing and then just missed by a little bit.

Q. Seems like your connection with Ashton has grown as the season has gone on. Talk about the development of that.

TIGER BACHMEIER: Yeah, I think a big spark in Colorado. We were just kind of giving a lot more trust to everyone and saying we just got to go out and make a spark out of something.

Ashton put in a lot of trust in me; I'm putting in a lot of trust in Ash and all the other receivers getting together and building that kind of trust. That's what comes from a season.

So it's just building that trust.

Q. Just what's the key to securing those kind of deep

receptions through traffic? You've done a really good job not just today but throughout the season. What's the key to succeeding in that department?

TIGER BACHMEIER: I feel like I just gave you the answer. It's just about building trust. He's trusting me to go in and I'm really trusting him to throw the ball in a great area.

That's really all there is to it. Good chemistry.

Q. Just kind of in general, talk about the progression you guys are showing as a team. You guys pulled a big win at Colorado last week. Not the way you wanted to go, but you bounce back this week, play the No. 5 team in the nation to the final quarter tight. Just what's been the key to your team offense and defense progressing in the way you guys are?

TIGER BACHMEIER: We're going to go and watch the film tomorrow and we're get the same exact talk whether we win or lose. It's about coming back and hammering on all the things we need to get better at, to every finite detail.

It's going to be the same as after Colorado game, UCLA game, and this game. You can see that progression coming from it. Somewhere, something has to click for us, you know.

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Zahrán Manley

Postgame Media Conference



Washington 42, Stanford 33

Q. Just walk us through that interception that you got.

ZAHRAN MANLEY: We played man coverage. Rome widened his split so initially I was off. When he widened out I wanted to press him because I had a feeling they would go deep and take a shot. I think he ran a double move.

I just tried to stay on top, have good eye control. Tried to play his hands for the PBU, and then I just saw the ball and I just grabbed it. It was a heads-up fun play for me.

Q. There were quite a few plays where Penix had an extended amount of time to throw the ball. Talk about the challenge of their skilled receivers?

ZAHRAN MANLEY: They're a talented group of receivers. You know, when the quarterback scrambles you have to cover the receiver twice, so that's always a challenge. We're coached well to plaster the guy and have eyes on our man. That's really all you can do, just hope that you're in the right spot once he does throw it.

It's always a challenge, especially with a talented quarterback and talented wide receiver corps, yeah.

Q. Just what are the emotions like after a game like this?

ZAHRAN MANLEY: Yeah, like we're a resilient group and we're hungry, and every week we just try to get better.

Even though we lost the game, which is unfortunate, there is a lot of positives we can grow and learn from. That's really what we're trying to do. Just set the foundation for this team for the years to come with the new regime that Coach Taylor is setting forth.

We won't get too down on it. We'll watch the tape and get better and attack Washington State next week.

Q. Just in general, talk us through the game plan that April put together. What were the key points for your defensive unit?

ZAHRAN MANLEY: Shoot, just be aggressive. Simulated pressures, blitzes, try to make the quarterback uncomfortable really every snap. I think we did a good job at that. We also knew as a secondary that they were going to take this shot.

Just making sure that our technique was on point and practice during the scout periods we were attacking it like a game. You know, we got challenged a lot. Me and Collin got challenged a lot. I think we held up well. That's the game plan, being aggressive and, yeah, that's really all I can say.

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Coach Kalen DeBoer Postgame Media Conference



Washington 42, Stanford 33

KALEN DeBOER: Way to win those close ones here tonight, and I guess to me, there is just a great belief and trust when it comes to those moments. Yeah, there are some times when we could have kept ourselves from being in that moment. Couple turnovers in the fourth quarter where we didn't get any points ought all in the red zone.

But the fight and the belief and trust and everyone just continued to forge ahead. Defense, you know, in the fourth quarter, just getting off the field there, they played a lot of snaps tonight. They did a good job controlling the football. We struggled in the first half to just make some plays and stay on the field offensively.

So just a gut check all around. I'm proud. We fought to the end and found a way to make enough plays to get it done.

Q. Mike said that he's been sick. I think seems like he's still sick. Did that affect the way that you guys approached it at all, the way he played?

KALEN DeBOER: I think there are just things throughout, especially the early part of the week when, you know, just reps and rotation of guys and guys who were maybe dinged up and you were hoping they were going to play, and some guys who have battled it out and gutted it out to get on the football field, even tonight, you know.

Proud of just the way that it's really important to them. If they have even a chance to get out there they're going to do it. Some of the rhythm and things, you can see it. It's just there is some plays that we always make very easy have been harder the last couple weeks.

And so just different personnel kind of groupings and guys that maybe don't even practice together much or in those spots lending to it just it being harder.

Mike's situation with his just -- his feeling good, you know, certainly throughout the week, just keeps you from having three, four solid days of practice.

So it was harder tonight than you want it to be.

Q. A win is a win. Is there any concern that two weeks in a row against (indiscernible)grind to the end?

KALEN DeBOER: I think a lot of it has to just do with getting some of our guys, getting the right guys out there and playing together. There is a little bit of rhythm and being in sync and stuff like that.

And so, you know, I guess to me, next week will be its own week, and I know we go into it always looking to improve, and I think that we did improve from last week to this week in a lot of ways.

So we'll go clean those things up and get better. Every week is going to be a dogfight.

Q. On the defensive side of the ball you talk about guys playing total. Was Michael practicing with the ones all week? (Indiscernible.)

KALEN DeBOER: Yeah, he was practicing all week with the ones, so that was -- couple different personnel groups depending on their personnel they put on the field. Even had a three linebackers out there at a time, playing at the same time.

Q. Any update on those three guys?

KALEN DeBOER: Yeah, so I think Asa and Kam Fab will be day-to-day throughout the week. There was no way that they could play this weekend for sure.

Q. Jalen just couldn't go after...

KALEN DeBOER: Yeah, he's just been battling -- you know, probably early in the week didn't really feel like it was going to be a go, and then as the week went on here the last part, picked up some steam and was feeling good. Got out there again tonight and just kind of -- it's just small tweaks, you know, and just trying to get over the hump.

So he's super frustrated. He had just a crazy positive



attitude about really trying to get out there and help us tonight, and he was trying to will himself to get on the football field and get it done to get all our guys kind of working together.

Germie is a guy that didn't practice hard at all during the week and was a big deal for him to gut it out, and I think he feels better now than he did going even into Friday's practice.

Just one of those things out there where the adrenaline kicks in, and really proud of the way he fought tonight and helped us win.

Q. How was it with your guys in the locker room? You won the game. Were they able to celebrate?

KALEN DeBOER: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, I think -- I mean, I think last week was the one that was probably a little bit harder. I think the guys just understand we're going to get everyone's best shot. Yeah, there are things we can improve on, but there was some stuff in the third and fourth quarter where I felt like we were starting to get back into doing what we do and, you know, the turnovers in the red zone certainly were costly, right?

I mean, those are drives we're going down the field and we didn't get any points, even a chance to kick a field goal. So felt like we were in control as the game went on more and more, other than the scoreboard, which is obviously the most important thing.

Q. That fourth down that Stanford goes for, kid drops it. What was your reaction to that play? Obviously it opened...

KALEN DeBOER: Yeah.

Q. What you did see there? What was your response?

KALEN DeBOER: Yeah, you know, a lot of guys committed to the run. Good call by them. You put a lot of pressure on people and throw was a little bit low, and got guys that aren't used to doing that.

Some of the same things when we draw those plays up happen to us. Doesn't go, especially in the heat of the moment, like I hoped it would.

Q. Were you surprised by some of the explosives they were able to hit in the pass game? You hadn't gave up a lot of those this year.

KALEN DeBOER: Yeah, we'll have to look at that. Again, just combinations of guys that haven't repped as much.

Yeah, I mean, I think we'll look at those and know that's where it starts. We have to limit those explosives and, yeah, I think it was just a grind over the week, all week long, just with the health of our team.

So some of that showed as far as the execution on both sides of the ball when it came to playing tonight, so I think there will be a few guys that hopefully get back and could be fresh, Tooley being one of them.

That would be a really important guy for us, especially with stopping the run, maybe getting a little bit more pressure and finishing plays in the backfield and taking a few reps off some other guys up front as well.

Q. Tooley was obviously here. Was it a game-time decision for him?

KALEN DeBOER: Yeah, as the week went on it just kind of felt like at the end that it was only an emergency situation where he could give us a couple snaps. The risk of like long-term health existed a little bit.

But I think just going into next week -- he was smiling because he knows I think that he'll feel pretty good about being back and rock and rolling throughout the course of the week. Really just didn't take any reps hardly at all throughout the course of practice.

Q. Just to clarify, there were things Michael couldn't do in practice this week that he maybe would've done otherwise?

KALEN DeBOER: No, I mean, he practiced. He practiced all week. I think there was just a lot of moving parts, personnel groupings and things like that, and some of those throughout the week changed, and they changed going into even the game.

Then it changed in the course of the game, so the guys you're used to throwing to -- yeah, there is just going to be a lot of things I think that will be settled going into next week, hopefully when there is a rhythm we can build off from today's game.

Q. So he sounded sick when he was talking to us.

KALEN DeBOER: Yeah, he's not feeling good. He's definitely not feeling good. But he's not going to make excuses and we're not either. He was out there and threw the ball. There are a couple things, he's battling through it.

Q. (Indiscernible.) Will you talk to the guys ahead of the time about how to handle that or let them manage themselves?

KALEN DeBOER: The only thing I will say on Sunday is what I say pretty much every week. Just if you win, take care of business. Things will happen and take care of itself. So we really won't get caught up in that because we know that we have to continue to win, and the rest will all work out.

But I'll credit our D. We found a way at the end when you kind of know what's coming and getting it done there on those final possessions.

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Q. (Regarding the running game.)

KALEN DeBOER: I thought it got better as the game went on. Talking about us offensively? Yeah, it was frustrating early. Beginning of the third quarter even trying to commit to that a little bit.

But we won the game with it, running out the clock. I thought, you know -- just I think there became a little bit more confidence and just slowly wearing them down a little bit I think was helpful.

But it wasn't early on in the game what we would hoped. We were a little frustrated by that for sure.

Q. You seemed to be riding Dillon quite a bit on that, a little bit more speed there.

KALEN DeBOER: Yeah, yeah, Tybo, I think is a guy that we would like it utilize for that purpose with some speed. Will is doing a good job. Just I think trying to find that rhythm and trying to find enough reps and giving Dillon a chance to get his pads down and get some a little -- get lathered up as they say so he can get into a rhythm.

But when you're not on the field a lot and there is a limit number of plays it's hard to get that. So we have all the confidence in him as well as Will and Tybo and the rest of the crew. Great catch by Sam out of the backfield early in the game. Took a big hit.

Proud of the way he held tonight football there. So all of them contributing.

Q. Thoughts on Stanford's quarterback?

KALEN DeBOER: Yeah, obviously threw the ball down the field and made some big plays. I thought we were just right there a couple times and they found way to make some nice catches. We need to get our hand on it. Our hands were right there. Just attack the ball and break up the pass.

But credit to both of them, because you could see that they came in and fit roles that their coaching staff has for them and kept the chains moving with some of the runs in those situations.



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Jabbar Muhammad Postgame Media Conference



Washington 42, Stanford 33

Q. (Indiscernible.)

JABBAR MUHAMMAD: I mean, just the opposing team coming out and executing the game plan at a high level. We understand that we're the No. 5 team in the country and we're going to get everybody's best shot. So just coming out, they got some fire up under them. We know they're going to get their best shot.

That's pretty much what it was.

Q. Looked like you made a couple good plays and got flagged for it.

JABBAR MUHAMMAD: Yeah.

Q. What do you think?

JABBAR MUHAMMAD: They called it. It is what it is. I mean, they called it.

Q. Looked like they were going after you with your big wide receivers. What did you see out there?

JABBAR MUHAMMAD: Oh, yeah, they tried to -- I think a few of them was trying to copy a little bit of Arizona State's game plan a little bit, trying to? Single up the corner, put the formation to the boundary and single up the corner backside. That's what it is.

We know we're going to get everybody's best guy to that side, so we got to hold up on that side. They were definitely coming after the corners.

Q. You're missing Asa, missing Vince, missing Kam Fab.

JABBAR MUHAMMAD: Right.

Q. How much impact does that have?

JABBAR MUHAMMAD: It was a big impact. Those are vets and guys that know the playbook in and out. They can tell you what I'm doing, what the linebackers are doing, what the D-linemen are doing, so whenever you lose somebody like that it's a pretty big impact.

Q. Seemed like you were getting beat over the top.

JABBAR MUHAMMAD: Yes, that is probably the coverage. That's probably what it is. We know on the edge we got to hold up, play everything deep that's short. Few times we didn't do that today.

Q. It was a closer than people expected, but you still made an O. How do you come out of this one? Do you feel happy? Last week all you guys said you weren't quite satisfied. Almost disappointed when you walked off the field.

JABBAR MUHAMMAD: Right.

Q. How do you feel this week?

JABBAR MUHAMMAD: It's the same way. A W is a W, so of course we're happy to be 8-0, but there's going to be a lot of corrections that we can look at. Got to watch the film. That wasn't our best football, so we know we can be better.

We're going to watch the film and try to clean it up.

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Stanford University Football Media Conference

Saturday, October 28, 2023
Stanford, California, USA

Dillon Johnson

Postgame Media Conference



Washington 42, Stanford 33

Q. Dillon, why do you think (indiscernible.) Last few weeks?

DILLON JOHNSON: Just the execution. Lack of communication. Just trying to be on the same page with each other. We're trying to find a way, but it's getting better. We'll find a way.

Q. Offense for while this season looked like it was just working really fast, last couple weeks. Scored points today, but everything wasn't in rhythm quite the same way. You have a sense of why that is last couple games?

DILLON JOHNSON: I think teams are doing a -- got to give credit to other teams. They're doing a really good job of studying, like moving the defensive linemen around, blitzing at the right times, and they just playing hard.

You know, we can't get complacent. We got to go out there and take every team just as we would any other team. So just staying level headed and not getting too cocky.

So, yeah.

Q. Jabbar was just saying that you get every team's best effort because you're the No. 5 team in the country. Do you feel that, that you're going to have to deal with the rest of the way?

DILLON JOHNSON: Yeah, absolutely. And another thing is I think last year's team, last year's team would not have won the games we won this year. Just the maturity, the growth that both the defense and offenses collectively has come through.

Because, you know, if ya'll didn't know, even Arizona State, they beat us the last 13 out of 15 times, so any Arizona team is tough. Stanford played us tough, man. Lucky we came out with the W.

Q. Where is the confidence for the offense right now?

DILLON JOHNSON: We're still confident, just trying to -- actually we're just trying to stay level headed. That's the thing. We know we can score and we got the guys on the offense to score any time we want. It's all about execution. That's what we got to do.

Q. Dillon, in terms of overcoming adversity, you guys had two chances to put the game away; two turnovers; and then come back and score again. What was the mindset of this offense? What were you talking about coming off the field after those turnovers?

DILLON JOHNSON: Ball security. That's been our problem last two games: Turnovers. I think we had four turnovers versus Arizona State and tonight I guess -- I think we had two or three. We can't turn the ball over when you're playing a team like Stanford that they're going to play hard. They come and they're come to go play hard, we're at their house.

But I think we got to just execute better, man. Just really do.

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Michael Penix, Jr. Postgame Media Conference



Washington 42, Stanford 33

Q. What do you think it took to kind of find your guys' rhythm offensively? Seemed like it took you a while, took the team a while to kind of get going in this one.

MICHAEL PENIX, JR: Man, we just had to continue to keep pushing. To be honest, ya'll might want to back up. I'm a little sick.

But just I was battling some things as well early on. I have to do better, being able to convert some of those throws, I was under-throwing a lot of stuff.

But it's no excuse. I found a way to help my team move the ball. We found way to get through it. I started feeling a lot better as the game started going on.

We were able to get the win, so was good.

Q. Were you feeling sick or...

MICHAEL PENIX, JR: Yeah, I've been working through stuff all week. I'm good though. Nothing is going to stop us from winning, so...

Q. When you say sick, just sick?

MICHAEL PENIX, JR: Yeah, just sickness. I'm just sick. You hear it in my voice a little bit probably.

Q. Last two games, are you seeing a theme or some consistencies on what defenses are coming at you with right now?

MICHAEL PENIX, JR: No. Wasn't nothing that they did today that we saw last week. It was different. Each team has their -- coaches, they have their own structure, what they want to be on the defensive side of the ball.

But obviously film study helps coaches say, okay, maybe they struggle with this or maybe they're good against this, so we want to go to this route.

At the end of the day, they have their own DNA. Each team has their own DNA. They're going to see some of those things that you might have seen weeks before if you struggled with it, and they showed a couple things, but it was nothing -- it wasn't similar as last week or the week before even.

So it's usually different, but maybe a splash one or two plays you might see.

Q. Is it odd none of you guys seem satisfied the last couple weeks with the victories?

MICHAEL PENIX, JR: No, I wouldn't say it's odd. Even if we were winning by 30, if we're not playing to the standard that we feel like is set in our room and in our locker room, then we know we got to do better.

Each and every game we try to continue to take those steps to do better. Even when we were winning by putting up 50 points and winning by 30 and 40 points, we still wasn't satisfied. Never satisfied.

We're always trying to continue to improve and get better each and every week, so that's our mindset.

Q. Was there an emphasis on trying to get the run game going early after last week's result?

MICHAEL PENIX, JR: I don't know. You know, Coach Grubb, he calls the plays. I trust him. You have to ask him that.

Q. Threw a 92-yard touchdown pass today, which is second all-time Husky history. Kind of weird play because guy not only committed pass interference, he fell down. Just walk us through the play a little bit.

MICHAEL PENIX, JR: Yeah, we knew they was going to take a shot coming out when we was backed up. We just took advantage of it, and Ja'Lynn Polk, he did a great job of fighting off a guy holding him trying to pull him down, and he was able to make a big time play. That's stuff we rep every day in practice and you see it every week.

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That's all it was.

Q. Two weeks in a row you've been heavily favored and went down to the wire. Is that a wake-up call for you guys? How do you look at that?

MICHAEL PENIX, JR: Nah, man, we look at it as a opportunity to continue to improve. We understand we got to play to our higher standard, higher level. We're going to do that. We just continue to find ways to win. That's what it's all about and that's what we been doing these last eight weeks.

So as long as we continue to find way to win, that's what matters at the end of the day.

Q. Being a little bit sick last week, does that change your day-to-day or the way you went through the week?

MICHAEL PENIX, JR: No, it didn't change nothing. Just I had to stay away from some people. I didn't want to get the rest of the team sick. It doesn't change nothing. I was still doing everything. I'm going to be out there unless -- unless I don't know, unless I can't. Sickness ain't going to stop that.

Q. You guys have a mammoth November coming up here. Do you view the challenge as more physical or mental?

MICHAEL PENIX, JR: You said the challenge for physical or mental?

Q. Is the challenge of having four or five huge games in November more physical or is it more of a mental challenge?

MICHAEL PENIX, JR: First of all, I say every game is huge for us. Don't matter who we're playing or what week it is. We want to win football games and that's what it's about.

But I feel like football, it's a lot more mental than it is physical. I would say like I guess mental, but for us it's just about finding ways to win.

Like I said before, that is all we're worried about, finding ways to win and keeping a 1-0 mindset and coming out and dominating each week. We're just going to take it one game, one week at a time. Doesn't matter who is in front of us we're just going try to find a way to win.

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