

Northwestern vs. Stanford
Ryan Field
Sept. 5, 2015
Postgame Quotes

Head Coach David Shaw

Opening statement...

“We didn’t give ourselves a chance to win. They played well and were well prepared, and we thought we were well prepared, but it didn’t show. We had opportunities on defense to get our hands on a couple of balls but I thought for the most part defense really played well. Offensively, we had a lot of opportunities that were let go. Passes, runs, etc. we had opportunities but we didn’t make them. We’ll hopefully get everybody back up next week and hopefully play better. We’ll have to play better to give ourselves a chance.”

On Hogan’s performance...

“Outside of really a couple throws I thought he played well. We had four dropped passes and protection errors. He got hit a couple of times, and a couple times too many, but for the most part he played really well.”

On Northwestern...

It’s subtly versatile what they do. They have a lot of line movements, they have some blitzes, and we prepared the best we thought we could for those. It’s a style of offense that you have to account for the quarterback on every play and we did for mostly every play except for one. And every time he pulled the ball we had guys there, but still he’s a good runner. He is a good physical runner and we gave him a clean lane to the end zone, and he took it.”

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Stanford Player Quotes

QB Kevin Hogan

On what wasn't working...

“(We) didn’t convert third downs, killed ourselves with penalties, self-inflicted wounds... can’t do it.”

On the biggest disappointment of the game...

“We had opportunities and we didn’t take advantage of them.”

LB Blake Martinez

On the team's preparation moving forward...

“There is always room for improvement. We just need to look at the film to see exactly what we need to fix. Obviously, we missed tackles that were there, so we need to fix those and work on that stuff and kind of work on the overall execution of each play like knowing where your gaps are, who is your help and everything.”

On being in sync...

“We had a lot of unproven talent and we kind of had to see what they were going to show up with today. They made the plays that they made, and it kind of just came down to who’s going to make the most mistakes, and it ended up being our side of the ball, so they got the win.”

On Thorson's touchdown...

“It was kind of just a gap assignment mistake where one of our guys just didn’t realize he needed to stay on the outside and got sucked in, and the quarterback just bounced through.”

On Thorson...

“He was doing great. He was commanding the offense well, and was kind of keeping that pace going. They never stopped that quick offense and it was kind of cool to see that he was able to be doing that in his first game.”

OG Joshua Garnett

On the loss...

“Every team makes mistakes and it’s unfortunate that we made our mistakes so early on. We still have so much football ahead of us. We have 11 more games, 11 more promised games... so we have to come together and keep our heads up so we can really keep moving forward.”

On how the first game factored into their performance...

“I’m not sure, I mean obviously with the first game there’s always little jitters, technique things, and guys always kind of play high a little bit. But when we look at the film we’re going to have to go and critique it and really get rid of those first-game nuances.”

On the identity of the team...

“We’re a power football team. What we want to do is really like a big boxing analogy, we want to kill the body and the head will follow, throwing body blows... We want most of the guys go to the coaches and say hey man, we don’t want any more. We want to keep throwing those body blows until we can really run the ball downhill.”

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Head Coach Pat Fitzgerald

Opening Statement...

“First of all, I want to give great credit to Stanford. That’s an outstanding football team we just played. [Coach Shaw], I have a ton of respect for him and the way they run their program. I thought our guys came prepared to play an outstanding football team. We really stuck to our plan. This goes all the way back to January, when we came back together after a long offseason that none of us were happy with, and quite frankly, that we were bitterly disappointed about. We started talking about what we need to do and change to get back to the culture that we’d had here over my time. Credit goes to the seniors. It starts first and foremost with them. They’ve done a terrific job leading and of getting this team prepared. And then obviously to our strength staff. Jay Hooten leads that staff. There is no doubt we were in great shape today, well-conditioned and ready to play. We had a great, great plan for today. We expected heat. We expected the humidity. I want to thank Mother Nature for last week’s weather in Chicago that gave us a great chance to enact our plan. I’m proud of our guys. As I told them in the locker room, this is stop one on the train. Let’s not act like we haven’t been here before. I really look forward to watching the way we mature here throughout the course of this week. We’ve just beaten a very good football team and [I want to see] how we’re going to handle a short week here and preparing for another team coming in here next week that has a lot of young men from Chicagoland, a lot of young men that are going to be stoked to be playing a Big Ten opponent. Proud of the guys for the win and looking forward to cleaning up some of the things we made mistakes on.”

On redshirt-freshman Clayton Thorson’s first career start...

“From the standpoint of who he is as a young man, I think that is what you all saw today. He made some really good plays. He made some decisions he would probably like to have back. He will learn and really grow from this. I thought he played outstanding. I talked to him earlier in the week about not trying to outplay a fifth-year senior and just doing what we do. And through that, he outplayed a fifth-year senior. That’s what I saw today. I thought he stayed within the framework of our offense. I don’t think he tried to do too much. I think this is a great win for him. From the standpoint of where is he going to go from here and where are we going to go from here, we have a lot of work to do.”

On the team executing the game plan...

“Every football game is the same way, but this one for sure needed to be won up front. That is what I saw from the boundary. I thought there was a dominant performance from our defensive line. It looked like we controlled the line of scrimmage on every single play defensive line-wise. I thought our offensive line did some positive things, and obviously for us, when you look at our ability to run the ball for 225 yards and hold them to 85, that was a dominant performance on both sides of the line of scrimmage. Perfect? No. But dominant from a standpoint of a team we have the utmost respect for.”

On playing a power-five conference opponent to start the season...

“I can’t speak for anyone else, but (Vice President of Athletics and Recreation) Jim Phillips and myself had a plan about our schedule when we first got together. We want to play a challenging schedule by playing academic comparables, Stanford, Notre Dame, Duke, Boston College, Vanderbilt and so forth. These are the types of games we should be playing. We learn a lot about ourselves. Our expectation is to go 1-0 each week. If you want to get yourself in position to win a championship you have to test your team. You have to test your team. I am really proud of the way the guys started off the season.”

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Northwestern Student-Athlete Quotes

Clayton Thorson

On first game nerves...

Obviously some butterflies, you know every game you have little butterflies, but once I got into the flow of the game, it was good. You know, I felt comfortable out there. It was fun.

On how he performed...

I thought our team as a whole played well. Our O-Line did a great job the whole game. You know, me personally, I think I can always do a lot better. I missed some throws, some decisions I made weren't great. I'm excited to get after it next week, though.

On his 42-yard touchdown run...

Our O-Line had a huge gap and I just took it. It's pretty easy when you've got about half the field to work with. Our O-Line did a great job on that play and the entire game.

On celebrating his touchdown...

Just with my teammates, the O-Line. They really hit your head hard when you score. But that's what being a team is really about, celebrating with the guys. They made a big hole for me. It was a great moment.

On the defense's performance...

When you've got guys like that playing on the other side of the ball, it makes it a little more comfortable. But you can't get complacent and think, 'well, the defense will just stop them. We only need 10 points.' But that wasn't our mindset today. Our mindset was that we need to go out there and score. And I think that's what we did. But it's definitely nice to have a great defense like that on the other side of the ball. And they played well today. And they deserve all the credit they get.

Christian Jones

On Clayton Thorson's performance...

He did really good. It's good to have Clayton out there. He's got a lot of talent that Fitz wouldn't tell anybody because he wanted to keep it a secret. But now, the cat's out of the bag. Clayton's a

great quarterback. And even with him playing such a good game, he feels like he can do much better, which is a really good sign.

Anthony Walker

On the defensive line's performance...

Aw, man. The big guys up front. They did the dirty work today. That was a great, hard-fought game. They came to play and we won the line of scrimmage battle today. Credit goes to Stanford, their O-Line came to play too. But, we just made a little more plays than they did.

On the statement the defense made in the win...

I think we just wanted to let everybody know that we are a physical football team. We wanted to be able to stop the run first, and that starts with the front seven. And I think we were able to get that job done today. Our back four — safeties and corners — I think they played with that swagger that lets everyone know that they can't throw the ball either. All we wanted to do was set a tone today.

On dancing after the game...

AW: We just want to have fun. That's the main thing. Football is a fun game. Playing with a lot of swagger, I'm from Miami, that's what I'm used to, playing with swagger and having fun. I think that's a combination of our team camaraderie and, everybody's just having fun and coming together, and at the end, you celebrate a victory just like that.

Dean Lowry

On the defensive performance...

I felt today that, defensively, overall, we unleashed a caged bull today. I think it's been a long offseason — it's been a long time since November. So, we've definitely had an unmatched work ethic this offseason, and I think it showed off today. It's a start though, just a start. Consistency is key to continue.

RB Justin Jackson

On beating a ranked team...

It was really awesome for us to go out there and get that first win. The thing that's really different about this year is that we were really confident in ourselves going in. We had no doubt we were going to go in there and win the game and we played like that. Obviously, we have to clean some stuff up but I think, overall, we did a pretty good job of just moving the ball and playing our type of football. Our mission this year is just to prove we need to be where we feel like we should be as a team and as a program, so we're really trying to get back to that standard.

On an effective running game enabling the defense...

We want to go as fast as possible and get as many plays in as possible, to tire out their defense and — our defense, man, they're awesome and they did a great job today. I knew it all along, just watching them work, they work so hard and I knew that they would come out and have a dominant performance because that's just the type of character guys they are and that type of work ethic they've had throughout the entire offseason so I'm really proud of them and they made it easy on us.

On Clayton Thorson's personality...

He's a chill guy and he's always calm in any moment. And he's been like that since I can remember playing him when we were younger. So, nothing's different, nothing's changed, he's just learned how to be a great leader. For him to be a redshirt freshman starting at quarterback against Stanford in his first game, you know I think he did an awesome job so I'm really proud of him. We played basketball against each other and together in middle school, played football against each other obviously in high school and middle school, so it's been a while.

On having a running quarterback...

Yeah, it's awesome. Just having a guy who can get on the edge and go — teams can't crash their D-Ends as much in our zone game, so we get the ball a lot more. And when they do crash their D-Ends down, he can go. And he can also pass it out to receivers. So, it just opens up our offense a lot more.

On outrushing Stanford 225 yards to 85 yards...

Just a credit to us in the offseason. Everyone who's helping us — our strength staff, our training staff, everyone — just getting us to where we wanted to be and we knew that we could run the ball because we have confidence in our running back room and our receivers on the edge and the O-Line in the inside and we just came out and we balled out today, so I'm really proud of everyone. Not only the running backs and the wide receivers blocking on the edges — I think our O-Linemen, they really showed up today.