



## UCF Football Postgame Quotes - Nov. 2, 2024

UCF 56, Arizona 12

UCF Head Coach Gus Malzahn

### Head Coach Gus Malzahn's opening statement:

First of all, I'm extremely proud of our players. We went through an extremely tough stretch. They hung in there. Real proud of our coordinators. Coach Tim Harris did an unbelievable job today leading our offense. Coach Addison Williams did a unbelievable job leading our defense. It was just a completely different feel on the sidelines. Our players really responded well to them. Hats off to our crowd. Crowd was great. They were loud. Played well in the space game. You know, Dylan rizk. That's his first start. He looked like he had started a lot of games. I mean, he really handled the offense well. I think you can see, man, when we can be balanced on offense, we're really good offense. And I think we had almost 300 yards passing, 300 yards rushing. R, J, Harvey did his thing again. One of the best running backs in college football, our o-line did a good job. And you know, our defensive line, they played better, you know, and so that's a real explosive offense that quarterback and receiver, two of the best in the country. overall, really quality win. Proud of our team. Lot of smiling faces in the locker room. That is a great thing to see.

### Malzahn on quarterback Dylan Rizk's first career start:

Yeah, I mean, you know, you can, you know, you can call any play and he can execute him. He really get great command. He threw people open again, you know, he threw a good, deep ball. He made a play with his feet. We were down there, I think, on the 10, 15, yard line, or whatever's third and 10, and he runs for 30. He just really did some natural things, you know, and really gave us some some balance, you know, in our offense

### Malzahn on if Rizk looked this good in practice:

Well i mean, mean, he is. He knows our offense extremely well. You know, he's been waiting on this opportunity, real proud of him, and he seizes the moment with his opportunity. And I said out there today, he looked like he'd been playing a long time.

### Malzahn on what it meant to see coaches Tim Harris Jr. and Addison Williams contribute in the victory:

Yeah, Tim and Addie have a lot of confidence in their big time coaches. They're great people. They're very, very good relationship people. Our players respond to them. The energy was different on the sideline. I know we played well, and when you play well, your energy different, but it was a different field. Really, all we can practice, they responded to those guys. I'm real proud of those guys. I'm real proud of our team, and we're set up to finish I think everybody can see that. I mean, we're set up to finish this thing the right way.

### Malzahn on the energy the defense brought:

Well, I think you just said our defensive line, I think they dominated the running game. There's no doubt to hold a team or 14 yards rushing. You know, I think we were 50% on third down. We still need to get a little better. But what I did like, even when they got it, they were contested plays. You know, they weren't just running open. And you know, offensively, we were good on third down. We hadn't been very good on third down. And Dylan gave us that, that spark when he made some of his feet. He made some really good throws on third down too. And so that was great to see

### Malzahn on Rizk's game:

Yeah, he spread the ball around. There's no doubt. And we have receivers that you know, can all make plays, and a lot of them did tonight. He spread the ball around. The RPO game was, was pretty good, you know, he threw a couple good back shoulder and anytime we can push the ball down the field with the deep, the deep shots that really opens up our offense.

### Malzahn on Rizk's performance and status as the starter:

Well, I think after this, you know, I think it's almost common sense. I mean, he handled himself well. I mean, we had 600 yards offense, and that's a quality defense, you know, they went to Utah and won at Utah earlier in the season. So real proud of him and his effort.

### Malzahn on being a part of his fourth Space Game:

Yeah, we need to have space game every week. That's what I asked Terry, if we can work that out.

### Malzahn evaluating Rizk:

Yeah, it says a lot about Dylan. He's battled, he has handled the whole situation season with class like a winner. He's been there for the other quarterbacks, and he had his moment. You know, we put him in there the last two drives last week. You can just kind of feel like you just felt different and gave us some momentum. He threw people open. He handled himself like a champ. He was a great competitor. And so this week in practice, I mean, he really even took it a step further. And I mean, there wasn't hardly any balls on the ground in practice. I mean, it was really impressive. And so it's great to see him carry that over to the game. And you know, he's given our whole offense a lot of confidence

### Malzahn on Randy Pittman Jr.'s performance:

Randy is a he's one of our best football players, offense, defense, special teams. You know, we're trying to find ways to give him the ball. We ran a couple wide middles, and of course, the play he made, you know, right before half, right there that just kind of, that was a wild play. There's a great job of the offense getting in. Dylan really made a great play by buying himself a little time going left, throwing it up. But Randy is a real football player. He's an old school football player, and it was great to see him get the ball.



**Malzahn on what it meant to get a win:**

Yeah, it's tough just day and time with social media and everything. You know, it's tough when you go through tough times, and you know, the game of football, You learn so much about yourself that you can carry over in life. And I was real proud of our players to keep battling. It's been tough, and they kept battling. They kept practicing, you know, and that's it had been real easy for some of them, throwing the towel, and they didn't. So hats off to those guys, they kept fighting and then to have a performance like we did after everything we went through, I mean, like say, we're set up to finish this thing. And you can just tell that, that you know it's going to be a good way to finish.

**Malzahn on how the coaching changes affected the team this week:**

Well, first of all, it's extremely hard to make any changes in the middle of the year. I think that's probably the first time that's ever happened. It was hard, but it was the right thing to do. And, you know, I said, Addison is a guy that man the players have a lot of trust in and he did an unbelievable job with the staff today, Tim has just been waiting on his moment. I mean, he's a he's a real guy, and our players have a lot of trust in him. I mean, first time he calls plays, we have 600 yards and 300 yards passing, 300 yards rushing. So you know, I'm real proud of both those guys.

**Malzahn on getting the win following the losing streak:**

Yeah, yeah. It's been tough. It's been tough. And I think from my standpoint as a leader of our program, just to see those smiling faces of your players and to get that joy back. You know, they've hung in there and but I'm just so happy and proud of those guys.

**Malzahn on running back RJ Harvey:**

Yeah, he's a big time player. I mean, I think you know that his lateral quickness, his vision, his toughness. I mean, he's just done a great job. He's one of our leaders. He spoke to our team before we left the hotel, and he didn't say much, but when he does, people listen and just real proud of him. And a second space game that he's knocked it out of the park, you know, and he had a great day today.

**Malzahn on what it was about the defense tonight that made them more successful:**

You know, we tried to, obviously, you can't make a lot of change. We tried to simplify some things, to play a little faster. I think our guys did that, you know. I mean, there was the third downs, a couple of them we like to have back, but they. Were contested, you know, and so we just got to keep building upon that. I think the big thing for me is holding them six yards rushing. I mean, that's hard to do in college football, because they got some good players so real proud of our overall defense.

**Malzahn on what a 56-12 win does for the team's confidence:**

it would give us confidence to finish this thing out. I mean, we, you know, we want to get it, we want to make a bowl game, and we're just going to take it one week at a time. And that was our approach this week. I mean, we just, mean, we got to, we got to win this one. We got to be ready to play our best game. And you could just feel it. It was just, I really, I'm not saying it surprises me. It was just we had to go do it, and we did it, and so now we're in a good spot.

**Malzahn on UCF's eighth straight Space Game victory:**

It's special, guys. I mean, it really is. It's hard to explain. I think you got to be a part of it and be in it. I just know it means so much to our fan base. And I'll tell you this, it means stuff to our players. Now, our players have been looking forward to this, and I mean the uniforms and and the team that puts all the videos, and Eric and his team Jimmy that put so much work into this thing before it's a year round deal, and for us to be able to play well, it just it feels good.

**Malzahn on Tim Harris Jr. calling the plays on offense:**

Yeah, you know what? It really wasn't that difficult. We've been, Tim we've been kind of setting him up probably the last couple weeks in practice and doing things. I just, you know, you felt about halfway through the year like a head coach. I don't I just, it's, there's too much going on. And, you know, I spent half the time with the defense this week in practice. That was so refreshing for me, just to be more of a head coach. I love calling plays, but, I mean, obviously it worked out great today. Tim was a superstar in the making, I think, and, and he is too. So, you know, it's one game, but it was really good to see them do their thing. And really allowed me just to flip over and be a part of the defense. I watch more of their offense than I have, you know, all year, and special teams and everything that goes with it.

**Malzahn on wide receiver Jacoby Jones:**

Yeah, he's coming on. I mean, he really is coming on. He's a wonderful human being, first of all, and he's been waiting his time, and you saw him and Colby on the field at the same time, and we weren't able to do that earlier in the year, and now we are, and it's really helping.

**Malzahn on linebacker Ethan Barr:**

Yeah, I mean, it'd be great question to ask him, but I mean, we tried to simplify things as our guys could play fast, and he's a real football player. He's an old school football player, and he's one of our leaders. He also spoke to our team before we left the hotel. He played really good.

**UCF Running Back RJ Harvey****Harvey on what it meant to get a win after the five-game losing streak:**

Yeah, it's special, you know, there was no quit in this team. You know, we've been through a rough stretch, just like last year. But you know, we just came to practice with our heads on every day. Just kept working and it finally paid off.

**Harvey on what he told the team at the hotel before the game:**

Yeah, I just told them, just to play every down like it's their last down and just go out there and just play, you know, just play hard, you know. I told them I've got their backs. I told Coach Harris, Coach Addie, I told them I got their backs. Everything just went our way today.



**Harvey on Rizk's performance:**

Yeah, Dylan comes to work every day in practice, just, you know, just working hard, just motivating everybody. And I'm just so proud of him. He's just a great human being, and he deserves everything that has come his way now. So I'm just super proud of him, and I'm just excited for his future.

**Harvey on what coach Tim Harris Jr.'s playcalling brought to the table:**

The guys, they were excited about Coach Harris. You know Coach Harris, he has great relationships with everybody, with pretty much everybody on the team. He's just a guy that we just want to play hard for. And, you know, we just want to get the win for Coach Harris. Just win. That's it.

**Harvey evaluating the offense with himself and Rizk leading the way:**

Yeah, I feel like it was a dominant performance between all the running backs, offensive line, they played extremely great today. And Dylan, he played great. The receivers, they were catching balls. So I just feel like it was all around, just a great effort for the offense.

**UCF Tight End Randy Pittman Jr.****Pittman Jr. on the hail mary at the end of the first half:**

I didn't know I scored right at the moment, it happened so fast. So this is kind of, it's kind of shocking whenever, whenever you take in everything. Dylan made a great play making a defender miss, didn't let the ball die in his hands, he put the ball in the air and he gave all of us an opportunity. I was just the guy who was lucky enough to get my hands on the ball, and I came down with it and scored. It was big for us.

**Pittman Jr. on Rizk's performance:**

I think he brought some really good energy. I think we rallied around him. We loved his performance, he had 300 passing yards, he rushed for a couple of yards. He's slowly building into the guy that we knew he could be. He's a guy who hasn't taken a lot of snaps, but he's quickly growing into the shoes that he needs to grow into.

**Pittman Jr. on how it felt to be involved in a big game for Harvey:**

I feel great. I'm just really appreciative to RJ. His elusive running game is what opens everything like that up. Having a powerful back like him and backs who can run the ball will always open up the pass game.

**Pittman Jr. on what it's been like watching Rizk's rise from a fourth-stringer to the starter:**

I think Dylan, when he accepts his role and takes leadership from others, I've seen different quarterbacks play in front of him, John Rhys, Timmy, KJ, Jacurri, you've seen what he did today. He did a lot of different things. To me, it shows a lot of different pieces of those other guys' game. Those other guys have been big leaders in our program, even though they haven't been maybe as successful or anything like that, but they have been big leaders and mentors to him and other guys like him. Watching him be able to step up and embrace those roles and fill out that information and those details that these leaders have given to him was big.

**Pittman Jr. on playing in the Space Game:**

I think we all understand circumstances as far as the Space Game, to my understanding we've never lost one. I obviously came in ready. Just looking at the history of our Space Games, last year we beat a top 15 team, it's a different feeling when it comes out. Some people spend their last bit of money on the Space Game, so making it one of those things that's good for experience, and more of a holiday.

**UCF Linebacker Ethan Barr****Barr on dealing with the adversity of the coaching changes this week:**

Yeah, we came here this week. It was a little weird. Obviously, the guy who you're always with isn't here, so we just had to adjust and change. And I think at the end of the day, we had more games to play, so we all had to just take a challenge and be able to, like, find growth and learn, and, you know, come in with a mindset that this doesn't stop us from being able to go win games. And I think our group did a really good job just responding back to something, I guess, you know, some adversity, some of the change, and just took the test. And I think we played well today as a defense, I think Coach Addi did a great job, you know, set the mindset for the defense this week. I think we showed up today.

**Barr on coach Addison William's message to the defense:**

Yeah, you know, I think from, from the beginning of this week, you know, he just really emphasized the fact that we were, you know, everyone on each play, or someone on each play was making a mistake, and so we had to eliminate mistakes and play clean football, you know, some that he really appreciates as well. Just every play has a life of its own. And we got to just play each play as, like I said, has a life of its own, and just move on from the play no matter what happens. And so I think we took that one thing mentality throughout the game, you know, this week, also put up practice we had so much like as a defense and as a team. Really had so much more energy on the sideline. You know, people chant on the sideline when we were going team, things like that. I think that really carried over to just our belief and, you know, our confidence, our ability to play today.

**Barr on defensive tackle Daylan Dotson's performance:**

Yeah, no, I think, I think Day has done a great job, you know, just doing whatever he's been told. You know, earlier in the season, they moved him inside, and he's typically outside guy, and then he was able to move back outside, and he's been making much plays last game. He really went crazy. So it's so good to see him be able to have, like, the breakdown moments that he's had. And he's such a great player. He's a special player. And so I'm really glad that we're able to use him and he's able to help us.



**Barr on snapping the five-game losing streak:**

Yeah, no, it's huge. I think sometimes you lose five games in a row, and you kind of, but what can't happen is everyone you know gets down, gets sad and you know, I don't think that our team has done that from week to week. We always come back each week, you know, energy and ready to respond. And I think it really just showed up this week that we that we were able to come and respond, and really played like a complete team game. You know, some of the past games we have been putting it together on all three phases. And so today, I think we really did that, and it shows up, if you play a complete game, be playing to score, you're gonna score more points. So I'm really happy that our team was able to do that today.

**UCF Quarterback Dylan Rizk****Rizk on his first collegiate start:**

First and foremost, I want to thank God. God put me in this position, and thankful for my teammates and my coaches, and thankful for everyone in the whole UCF organization for supporting me, supporting the whole team and all that good stuff. Back to your question, obviously with the BYU game, when I went in there, I was just trying to do what I do, everyone was telling me 'Just go in there and do what you do, Dylan.' Obviously that translated over to the next practice. The whole week I got first team reps. The coaches did an unbelievable job in planning, coach Harris did a great job in planning calls, everything to go with that. I thought the team did unbelievable today. 600 yards of total offense is amazing, so I'm really proud of the team.

**Rizk on his mentality going through this season:**

I always believe that God had a plan for me. I would always pray, saying 'I know you have a plan for me, God,' even though I was watching, not getting many reps during the season. I always knew there was a plan for me. I always stayed ready. Coach Gus, Coach Hinshaw, Coach Harris always told me to be ready. You never know when your time comes, that's a big thing in anything you do in life. You never know when your time comes, and I was prepared when my time came. We executed and we got the job done.

**Rizk on hail mary to end the first half:**

That was awesome. First game starting, throwing a hail mary and completing it is pretty cool. I had to buy some time for myself, we were pretty far away so I had to buy myself some time. Threw it up, didn't really see him catch it, I was just looking at the crowd behind, and when I saw them go crazy, I was like, 'Oh, well that's a touchdown!' So I started going crazy all that good stuff. When the review was going on, I was like, 'That's a touchdown.' I watched it, it was a touchdown. It was awesome. I can't explain the feeling, it was great. It was awesome.

**Rizk on what it was like having coach Tim Harris Jr. more involved in the offense:**

I thought coach Harris did a great job. Also coach Gus did a great job when he was playcalling. I thought he did a great job also, but coach Harris did an unbelievable job. Me and him, we went over the callsheet every day of the week, making sure I'm prepared for what's coming. Doing specific plays for specific coverages, we knew what they were going to do. Coach Harris did an unbelievable job playcalling. He put me in the right position to succeed, and I'm really thankful for him.

**Rizk on if he felt any added pressure in starting the Space Game:**

I didn't really look at it like that, but it was definitely cool to start your first game in the Space Game. The Space Game is a big deal here. There was a little bit of pressure, knowing if we were to lose, but I never even had a doubt in my mind that we were going to lose, I knew we were going to win. I thought a great gameplan was going to be called, so I was confident in the offense to get the job done."

**Arizona Head Coach Brent Brennan****Coach Brennan's Opening Statement:**

A really hard day out there on the football field. Credit to Central Florida and coach Malzahn, that staff. They got after us in all three phases, and no part of that is...it's just totally unacceptable and we need to coach better. We need to go through everything and get back to finding how we can execute in all three phases and play some clean football, because we did not do that tonight in any way. I think we have great coaches, I think we have great kids on this team, and I think they'll be diligent in the process of getting right. We have two weeks to get ready for another good opponent in the Big 12, and so hopefully the bye will be a good thing for our football team to evaluate every aspect of what we're doing, and our players will get a chance to go to work and we can start to hopefully fix it. That's where we're going to start, and we need to play better. It's that simple

**Coach Brennan on what allowed UCF to get out to a big lead:**

I think the turnover hurt, the rain hit and so we had that early turnover on that second possession that led to points for them. I thought that was part of it, a big momentum swing there, and then our inability to effectively move the football consistently ended up having our defense out there on the field too much. That played a major role in that.

**Coach Brennan on what impact the UCF hail mary at the end of the first half had:**

I think that was definitely a really crushing blow at that moment. That's one of those plays that you practice and you rep, and it's so hard to duplicate on gameday, but we're going to look at that and everyone's going to agree that we can play it better. That was obviously a huge play in the game, and a huge play for just how the game felt.

**Coach Brennan on the impact UCF's RJ Harvey had on the game:**

Obviously he was a problem. He's a great player and they did a nice job scheming it up. I do think we had a chance with some missed tackles, so that's another thing we can evaluate as a football team, that part of it. I think that showed up, we lost the edge a couple times there, and we missed tackles in space. That's something we need to do better.

