



# POST GAME QUOTES

## UCF VS. MERCER

DEC. 17, 2025 / ADDITON FINANCIAL ARENA / ORLANDO, FLA.

### UCF HEAD COACH JOHNNY DAWKINS

#### ***Opening Statement:***

“We were excited to get out there and play. It’s been a while, and I know our guys were excited, I think we all were. We have been practicing against each other for a while, and it’s been good for improvement defensively. I think some guys are starting to understand our concept and what we are trying to do better, so I can see some growth in us there. We’re facing a team that’s experienced. They’ve already played a very good schedule, and they play with high octane and average over 85 points a game. So I was really proud about the defensive effort because I knew it was going to take enormous effort, to just kind of slow them down. I was really proud of our effort, since Mercer is as scrappy as any team we faced so far this year.”

#### ***On what he liked about the team’s defense tonight:***

“I like the fact that we didn’t let us not making shots, especially early on in the first half, affect how we guarded. That’s the sound of the team that’s maturing. When they understand that your offense should not affect how you guard, and I thought we did a very good job of that. I think early on in the year that would have affected us and it didn’t affect us today. I see growth in that area and want to continue to see that as we move forward.”

#### ***On forcing 17 turnovers:***

“They come in and they’re a low turnover team and so I look at the stat sheet and was amazed we turned them over 17 times. I was happy to see how active we were because you have to be active through that defensively, especially against a team that doesn’t really turn it over a lot. They usually get single digit turnovers so that shows our guys were really honed in on the game plan and what we wanted to do and they were working. I wanted to see that from our guys and we kept them off the line. They didn’t choose 24 free throws and they shot a lot of free throws. Okojie averages nine free throw attempts a game and so we really wanted to hone in and keep him off the line. I think he took four free throws, so he was a main character we wanted to keep off the line. He’s had games this year where he took 20 free throws in the game. Someone like that becomes really, really dangerous on the court and I thought our guys showed good discipline by defending him without fouling.”

#### ***On the growth the team has showed so far:***

“I think our guys are getting better as they understand our system. I think they are starting to play better basketball, or I like to say play UCF Basketball, which means getting ourselves to take care of the ball better, making more connecting plays offensively. And on defense, were talking, and were in the right places, and you see guys doing that better, but these guys they have a really good commitment.”





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### UCF GUARD JAMICHAEL STILLWELL

#### ***On coming out of the 10-day break:***

"I thought we responded well, I mean, we had a week and a half of preparation, great preparation. I was just working on being physical, paying attention to detail, what to do with different coverages, stuff like that. I think we did a good job preparing."

#### ***On the team's slow offensive start:***

"Like coach preaches, some nights are more efficient than others on the offensive side, but I feel it's our defense that separates us because when we're not making shots, you depend on defense, and we play defense all 80 minutes"

#### ***On Riley Kugel's 16-point performance:***

"He's always an offensive force for us, but I feel like he found his way back. He's been trying to get back to himself, and I feel like hes getting there, just got to finish a few more shots but we've got a lot of players that can play good basket-ball."

### UCF GUARD JORDAN BURKS

#### ***On what the team's identity is:***

"Defense. We got physicality, length, toughness, and we got him [Jamichael Stillwell]. He's the quarterback, the center to that effort, we need a head to our snake on the defensive end, and that's him for sure."

#### ***On what allows him to score:***

"Just my teammates finding me. Just moving at the ball. It's being available for them whenever they need me to rally for them."

#### ***On what Dawkins' emphasized when recruiting him:***

"Defense and playing fast. He's [Coach Dawkins] is big on 'I want to get my offense from my defense when it's not going well.' and I like that."

