

September 11, 2021
Virginia vs. Illinois
Charlottesville, Va. (Scott Stadium)

Coach Bret Bielema Quotes

Opening Statement:

“There's just a lot of different things that we've got to get better at and we've got to continue to reach high expectations as coaches. Obviously, I know all players have even higher ones, so completely unacceptable for some of the reactions late in the game that we can't have. Obviously to start the game the way we did defensively and giving up two big scores, we battled ourselves back into it. The touchdown and that late second half touchdown was tough to take and then talking at halftime where we are and what we want to do, we deferred the coin toss and we take the field defensively, but the offensive players were all fired up and took that first drive and took it down to score. Obviously we did not hold them defensively. We had a few things go against us but the reactions were good, so, we've got a lot of work to do. But the good news is we have a Big 10 opponent coming this week; the two last weeks, this week and last week were learning experiences that are very, very difficult to go through. But, unfortunately, where we are right now and that's part of the process.”

On Artur Sitkowski starting at quarterback:

“He didn't get cleared until, like, literally at the end of this week. He didn't take any practice reps, he threw and was at practice, but he wasn't cleared till basically game time and to put him in that situation is unfair to him.”

On the game plan after the first quarter:

“I thought one of our things was get the ball further, things there that I thought were good. We threw in some pass plays; we gave up on a couple different looks to them that we had shown earlier in the season and during the course of the game. But just playing with some confidence we stayed ahead of the chains, I thought that was a big part of our game plan was to stay ahead of chains, offensively and that we were able to do that on that drive, really any drive that we had success with.

On Illinois' penalties:

“You know, I think we got a critical penalty I thought we had a pain in our game on that second and two, that personal foul for talking too much to opponents so that changed it from a second and two to a second and twelve. Well let's say, second and extra long, so it's hard to beat an opponent if we can't look at ourselves, to execute to do the things we have to do to beat our opponent. I look at where we were in that first game, I believe we have four penalties if I'm not mistaken, and I think we went and had four penalties on one drive this time. Like, when it rains it pours. Again It's not so much what happens, it's how you react to what happens, and the clarity of that. Even myself, I had to make sure that I am in the moment, react to the things that I see in our players.”