

Outback Bowl: Mississippi State vs Iowa

Tuesday, January 1, 2019

Nick Easley

Iowa Hawkeyes

Iowa 27 - Mississippi State 22

SAM SPEARL, OUTBACK STEAKHOUSE JVP: On behalf of Outback Steakhouse and the Outback Bowl, it is an incredible honor for me to be able to introduce a player who left it all out on the field. He definitely deserves this incredible award with eight receptions, 104 yards and two touchdowns, please allow me to introduce Nick Easley, the MVP.

Q. Of course you want a hundred catches, but were you aware of that the winning touchdown was your 100th catch?

NICK EASLEY: Honestly I had no idea. When I'm out there, I'm pretty unaware of how many yards. When someone told me I had a hundred yards, honestly I had no idea.

Just a testament to my teammates and how hard we've worked day-in and day-out, my fellow receivers, the offensive line; Nate for always putting the ball on me. Just really proud of this team.

Q. When you lined up for the 75 yarder, did you see something that you thought could work?

NICK EASLEY: There's a couple different options on that play, a couple different places where the ball could go but with the play action and how aggressive their defense is, they kind of bit on that a little bit, bit on the play fake, and luckily Nate was able to find me. He did a really good job, by him seeing me down the seam and put a really good ball on me.

Q. Did something happen to your headgear on that play?

NICK EASLEY: I had a little bit of a malfunction with my helmet strap. A little piece broke like a play before.

So as I was running, it started coming off a little bit, thankfully I was able to pull it back on and continue the run.

Q. When you're running that route and you run by the safety, what goes through your mind?

NICK EASLEY: Yeah, into that look, you know, with the guy biting on the play fake, I just looked early. Nate did a really good job recognizing that. It's a tough thing to see, especially with a play fake going on, as well, and

just put it right on me.

Q. Coming a long way from kicking in D2, what does it mean to be in this moment?

NICK EASLEY: Yeah, it means a ton, being a part of this program, being an Iowa Hawkeye is the best decision I've ever made.

I'm so proud of this team and I'm so proud that I got to be a part of this team and this program under Coach Ferentz. It's been an unbelievable ride and I've loved every minute of it.

Q. The second touchdown, what was happening there?

NICK EASLEY: Yeah, you know, that's kind of the play that sticks out to me, just because if you look at that play and you look at the guys blocking for me: Kyle Groeneweg I think put his guy on the ground, and that's an undersized guy going against a backer, doing a great job there; and then Brandon Smith holding that guy off in the end zone allowing me to get the edge and get in there. So the credit really goes to them on that.

Q. Talk about playing under Coach Ferentz. What's it been like?

NICK EASLEY: Yeah, you know, Coach, with him, it's what you see is what you get. Just get emotional talking about it. I'm just so thankful for him and the opportunity that him and his staff have given me.

You know, I don't think there's a better coach in the entire nation, and I'm just talking, you know -- but giving kids a chance, treating everyone fairly and with respect, I'm so glad I got to play for him.

Q. There aren't many programs where a walk-on gets into the starting lineup and stays there. What is Iowa like, working hard?

NICK EASLEY: Yeah, kind of like I said, there's not a lot of places where a guy like me could come in, two years of eligibility left, walking on from junior college. No one really knows who I am, and they gave me every shot in the world to compete, just as much as a scholarship guy, and I'll be forever thankful for that.

Q. Is that Iowa's reputation? If you're good enough, you play?



NICK EASLEY: Yeah, absolutely. If you just look at the history of this program and you look at guys who have walked on in the past and become great players here, it's a rich tradition, and it's something that you know, looking at it from the outside, I wanted to be a part of.

Q. It looked like they wanted to take away Hockenson? Is that what you saw?

NICK EASLEY: Yeah, absolutely. If you look at the first touchdown that I was able to score, I think they were all looking to him, coming in motion. Rightfully so. He's a heck of a player, someone who has done a lot for us, and playing with a great guy like that, it takes a lot of pressure off of us.