

Stanford University Football Media Conference

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Stanford, California, USA

Coach Mario Cristobal

Oregon Postgame Media Conference



Stanford 31, Oregon 24

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Obviously did not get the result we wanted. Had some bright moments but not enough to overcome some of our mistakes. Certainly appreciate and proud of the way we played with toughness and with effort, but we didn't play with enough discipline today, we didn't coach with enough discipline today, and in the end it ended up costing us the game.

That being said, questions?

Q. Your perspective on the final drive in regulation for them, just the targeting on KT, roughing the passer on Dorlus and the defensive hold there on technically the final time to play in regulation, just your assessment of how your team is handling those moments and obviously some tough penalties against you guys.

MARIO CRISTOBAL: I'd have to see it on film. I find it interesting the way the least. The personal fouls, I've got to see them obviously if we're getting flagged for one not disciplined enough, coming after the quarterback. I did not see exactly how it happened, but I'll have to watch it on film and assess it. I know we got hit several times and got tangled up a bunch. Never got a flag, but it is what it is.

Q. Mario, those offensive call starts back-to-back, 3rd down conversions have proven pretty costly. This team hasn't consistently played well for four quarters. What do you attribute that to execution-wise?

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Well, we came back strong. We came back strong in the second half and we were one 1st down away from taking the air out of the ball and we get two successive false starts, put us in long down-and-distance situations and then at the 10 didn't get it done. There's no excuse; we've got to get it done.

Q. I guess I'm curious just the way that played out at the end offensively, would you in retrospect maybe have not thrown the ball on 2nd down, or is that just kind of the way it goes?

MARIO CRISTOBAL: No, we've got a good red zone plan. Thought there were some things that we could take advantage of. Thought we had a pretty good mix of run and pass as to what they were playing. They were mixing up what they were doing, as well. I think hindsight it might be easy to say, but overall I thought that the plan that we went on and attempted to execute was the right plan.

Q. What's CJ's status and how are you planning to overcome his absence in the game he may miss?

MARIO CRISTOBAL: CJ was hurt, and I'm not sure how long it's going to be. Seems like it's a pretty significant injury, but I don't know.

Q. Obviously you're coming into the game without a couple of guys, too, between Alex going through early warmups, Bennett not here, Joe Moorhead being ill, and yet you guys fought the way you did. Can you speak to the status of Bennett and Alex and Joe and your ability to take a lead despite being without those guys?

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Yeah, Bennett, a very freak accident yesterday in practice, hurt himself pretty good. Again, noncontact drill, just hurt himself, so he couldn't make the trip, so Jamal replaced him as the starter.

Alex Forsyth had spasms in his back and was not able to go, so we started Ryan Walk.

Joe Moorhead this morning, non-COVID illness that happened really early this morning, and so he was not available.

Again, proud of our guys for overcoming that. We expect that of ourselves.

Q. Ryan Walk stepping in for Alex in that one, and he looked like he was pretty consistent. What does it say about him to be able to hop in there and get the job done?

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Tough guy. Resilient guy. Team



player. Very accountable and responsible. Did really, really well. Put us in the right identifications to be able to block things. I think we were pretty good at protection holding up. Not sure where we were pressure and sack-wise total, but all in all just very proud of Ryan and really the way the entire team fought. A lot of guys in that locker room hurting. We should be. We all should be hurting. We just didn't do enough.

Q. The defense came out in the second half and had a really -- a lot of good stops. Was there anything you saw at halftime or in the first half that you were able to make adjustments on?

MARIO CRISTOBAL: First thing is we were playing with more physicality up front. We got a pretty good beat on what they were trying to do in the run game and felt like we were able to take away some of their explosive pass plays and play some coverage. Just got them in bad down-and-distance situations and were able to capitalize on it, also put pressure on the quarterback and force him into some tougher throws. All in all, just came out in the second half and responded really well.

Q. Your thoughts on how Anthony performed in what was at times a tough first half? I heard your remarks at halftime about the final play there, but obviously strung together some big completions in the second half to help you guys take the lead. Just your thoughts on how your quarterback performed today.

MARIO CRISTOBAL: I think Anthony did a solid job. He's always competing, he's always working. He's doing a lot. I'm proud of him. He's a tough guy. He's a competitor. He's resilient. He has the support -- like any quarterback, any player, when you suffer defeat, you'd like to have plays back. I know he does, I know he would, but he's done some really, really good things.

Q. I was going to ask your assessment of how Travis Dye played especially in the second half having to handle the load there. I know it sounds like CJ might be significant; how do you feel about him handling the load from here?

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Yeah, Travis, like always, Travis shows up on game day full speed, full throttle, tough, resilient, physical, good in protection, good at running the ball, catching the ball, elusive breaking tackles, tough guy, one of the best leaders on the team. Hurting like crazy right now, and he's vowed to make sure we get better as a football team, and we're counting on him to do so.

Q. It seems like the passing game was a weakness. The big play to Mycah Pittman -- am I correct, I can't

remember a tight end catching the ball. Were they taking away the tight ends? What was the problem there?

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Well, we didn't connect on some. I think the third play of the game we tried to hit one, bounced right off him, had him in a seam. Had another one in the corner, tried to hit him as well. Had a couple on some of those sliders when we did. Just didn't connect.

They played some of the drop eight stuff on 3rd down, which takes away another one of your zones, too, makes it more difficult to read. Played some man coverage, I don't know if we got enough separation against man coverage at the tight end position. All in all, thought, they've all been part of the game plan. We didn't get them the ball because we just didn't connect.

Q. You always speak about how after games you try to have the forward-spinning message, and when you're going into a bye week and you speak again, I don't want to make of think of injuries, but these are obviously very significant players, and your players are real, they see the playoff implications of this. The extremely big picture, what is your message to this team when they have 13 days until the next game and some key pieces could be down and implications to the big picture postseason?

MARIO CRISTOBAL: From game one we had a lot of guys going down. It's been really, really strange. We've really taken so much time investing in the way we practice, the way we take care of our bodies, and we've just been slammed with a ton of injuries.

But they are real, and guys are going to have to step up. In terms of anything regarding anything outside of our next practice and our next game, it's never been relevant to the process. Do they know that big picture implications are always out there? They always will be out there. I don't think you can try to over-hype anything or you try to mix messages with what your team has to do.

Right now our team has to heal up and our team has to get better. Our team has to make sure that times like this when noise sounds a program, you have to make sure you stick together, have each other's back and go attack the processes that are going to put you back on track to be 1-0, to continue playing in a conference that has a lot of good football teams, a lot of good football players. That's the simplicity of our message, and that's the simplicity of our process.

Q. What are your thoughts on the way KT played and how he responded physically to not having a play



count today?

MARIO CRISTOBAL: I'll have to watch film. It looked like he affected the quarterback and made some plays in the running game, chased some things down from behind, set some edges. I think our defensive front, especially in the second half, really played stout overall, so individual grades I'll have to go and check on them and see and get back to you on that.

Q. Following up on that, a couple weeks out, but the difficulty of playing a really good Cal team without KT for the first half.

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Well, I mean, we've been playing without a lot of guys a long time right now. Guys have been going down left and right all over the place. It's one of those years. It's one of those years.

We haven't had one like this, but you're not going to find us coming out here and making excuses. Certainly no one is going to have a pity party and we're not going to feel sorry for ourselves. Someone else is going to have to play. We'll get that next person ready, and that'll be it.

Q. You've been doing this a long time, and I know injuries are part of the game. Have you ever come across in your career where you've just been devastated with injuries like this, just overall, whether it be in practice or in game?

MARIO CRISTOBAL: No, sir, not like this.

Q. With zero turnovers this game after five interceptions last week, what were your overall thoughts on the defensive performance today?

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Well, I think early on they had us on our heels a little bit, and then we really buckled down, and then there were successive series of three-and-outs, and not only three-and-outs, but knocking them back and actually putting them in negative yardage situations. Just really showed up strong, kept getting the ball back to the offense, just flipping the momentum completely. Punt return helped flip the momentum, as well.

Again, took the lead -- tied the game, took the lead, and then just again, when you close out a game you've got to close out on both sides, and we were doing a real good job controlling the football and getting 1st downs, and two successive illegal procedures put them behind the sticks and then put our defense on the field again, which we didn't want to do.

We kept their drives alive with some penalties. The ones

down there at the goal line, I know our DBs were playing their tails off and they were getting pushed and shoved, but I guess they're the ones that got the flags.

Anyways, proud of our effort. None of us are happy, content or proud of our final result of our performance, and we're a driven bunch that doesn't BS ourselves. We've got to go back to work, and we've got to get better, and we've got to get guys that are healthy to play to step up and play positions of guys that are not.

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