

Stanford University Football

Media Conference

Friday, November 5, 2021
Stanford, California, USA

Coach David Shaw

Postgame Media Conference



Utah 52, Stanford 7

DAVID SHAW: Just a terrible showing top to bottom. Obviously we missed some guys that aren't out there. Right after pre-game warmup tried to see how Elijah Higgins was going, but couldn't go. That being said, 11 out there at a time, strapped it up, went out there to play.

Defensively got to have a lot discussions on how to stop the run. All year it's been close. Today wasn't close. As much as anything, we missed a ton of tackles. Missed a lot of tackles. It's one thing to have gaps run through, but when you miss tackles, that's why you give up the big, big plays. Inexcusable.

On the offensive side obviously we were hampered, but we had opportunities. Much like most of this year, we didn't take advantage of those opportunities. So we'll take a couple days off, give players couple days off, as a staff look at a couple things, and see if we can find a way to come back next week and be the football team we're capable of being.

Questions.

Q. Tavion Thomas rushed for 177 yards of four touchdowns. Why was he able to so consistently eat you guys like he did the first half, like every run basically?

DAVID SHAW: I just addressed that. We missed a bunch of tackles. Big lanes to run through and missed tackles.

Q. After the last couple games you said how close you were to winning and it wasn't going to be about benching one guy, there is no magic play call. Does a loss like what happened tonight make you reevaluate anything?

DAVID SHAW: Yeah. Because tonight was not close. We're in different stages as a team right now. We are not playing as well as we can. Utah is playing very well. They played even better tonight, and we played worse. That's

why the score is the way it was.

Q. Take us through the night for both the quarterbacks, Sanders and West.

DAVID SHAW: You know, you got to look at the film to really know, because there were opportunities where we thought had a couple chances, and by the time we looked back, either got rushed, got sacked, the ball got knock out, ball got deflected. So a combination of protection-wise. We know they're a really good front. We did not do a good job blocking them.

It's tough. Couple times we did have opportunities. We missed a couple of those. Nice job by Isaiah getting the big one to Ben and getting down do the red zone so we could get a score. We just didn't give ourselves a chance either protection-wise to really see what the quarterbacks could do.

Tried to come out with a run game plan to try to be efficient, using Isaiah for has natural gifts. Early in the game, we did not do a good job blocking them. Got stuffed in our face couple times in the run. A lot of things we have to look at.

Q. Season debuts for Michael Wilson and Salim Turner-Muhammad today. What was it like having them back?

DAVID SHAW: It was great. Obviously Salim, Ethan Bonner, both back after long time out. Both guys made some nice plays. Both guys were a little bit rusty. That's what you expect first time back.

Michael Wilson did a nice job. Didn't get an opportunity to get to him. If he was really open two more times would have been nice. Didn't have the opportunity protection-wise to get him the ball. Ran a really nice comeback route, did some other good things as a blocker.

Unfortunate he was given that unsportsmanlike conduct. Just blocking the guy and the guy rips his helmet off, and I guess they thought he was too upset and responded in a way they didn't think was right.

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But great to have Mike back. He played really hard.

Q. Is it possible Tanner McKee comes back this season? And if not, how do you rally the team around Jack and Isaiah?

DAVID SHAW: It is possible that he comes back. It is. Not sure exactly when. Next week might be a little early. We'll see.

But do anticipate him coming back sometime this season.

Q. (No microphone.)

DAVID SHAW: Well, I mean, it's more than the quarterbacks. That's part of it. You know, we got to be able to stop the run, we got to be able to run the ball. Those are things we been saying all year. Got to make some major adjustments to get that opportunity to do that. It was not good tonight.

Q. You got some guys that could make some plays as returners. What needs to happen to get those guys across the 50 more and maybe put themselves in position and maybe take one back and make some explosive plays in the special teams?

DAVID SHAW: Yeah, kickoff return has always been one of our things here. Over the years, you know, Nathaniel, was -- finished No. 2 in the conference last year; most of the year he was No. 1; he's up there again this year. What Christian has done, Ty Montgomery has done, all the way back to Chris Owusu, kickoff return has been big for us.

This entire year we've been one block away multiple times. Tonight there was a really nice one that we had and one guy slipped off, because if we ever get No. 8 in space, he'll finish it.

But got to keep working. Guys got to train that much harder. We got really exciting returners; to give them opportunities to make plays.

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