

Stanford University Football Media Conference

Saturday, October 22, 2022
Stanford, California, USA

Coach David Shaw Postgame Media Conference



Stanford 15, Arizona State 14

DAVID SHAW: Interesting game, this football thing. A lot of credit to our guys, their preparation and how hard they play.

We didn't play a clean game. Execution-wise was down for us, especially on the offensive side. Effort was there. The energy was there. The fire, the passion was there.

Moved the ball, and it's very similar to last year's game against Arizona State where we moved the ball 20 to 20 very, very well, and they got down in the red zone and just missed the opportunities. Dropped two balls, missed two passes, ran a couple of bad routes, didn't sustain in the running game.

So a lot of those things that kept us out of the end zone. Those things that we did before we got to the red zone, we didn't continue to do there.

But a lot of credit goes to our defense. Three weeks in a row, defense playing their best football. Again, not perfect, but, man, the energy, the passion, the fire, the pressure on the quarterback, much better against the run. That whole group is playing better and better, even with the injuries.

A couple of obvious shout outs. Josh Karty, we talk about during recruiting, we watched his film thinking is that right? You're watching a high school kid kickoff and it's not going three yards deep in the end zone, not just going through the goalpost, it's going midway through the goalpost.

We kept watching and thinking at some point this kid is going to be the best kicker in America. We may be there. We may be there.

Does a great job on his kickoffs. Does a great job on his field goals. Steady and consistent. He's one of our leaders.

I've called him a weapon for years, and that's exactly what he is.

In the vein of preparation, a lot of kudos to our defensive staff also for getting ready for Ernest Cooper, a true freshman to play. Having him know what to do. He's been working extremely hard. A couple of injuries. We had to put him out there.

He pressured the quarterback. He got sacks. He ran some stuff down from the back side. He plays with energy and passion and fire, and fired up about what he showed today. Look forward to seeing him have some more opportunities as well, even as the other guys come back.

But bottom line for us is found a way to win, doesn't have to be perfect. Like I told the team, nobody asks how you won, just if you won, and we did.

That's two games in a row, and now we're going to play one of the hottest teams in our conference, one of the hottest teams in America down south.

We can play with those guys. It's going to take a much cleaner effort than we had today, but we're going to be ready. We're going to go down there and prepare and give it our all and try to give ourselves the best chance to win.

So I'll take questions.

Q. To see it overturned, what was that emotional roller coaster like for you?

DAVID SHAW: Those of you that know me, I don't typically do the emotional roller coaster. I feel for my wife. I know she does. A lot of our families and fans do.

But it's part of where we are right now. I've accepted where we are. There are a lot of positives about where we are and a lot of things that we have to correct.

I told a couple guys on our team today, hey, we've got to play through some of our bad plays. The world doesn't come to an end because we have a bad play. We had a couple of difficult plays and we came back and got a stop on defense. Had a couple of difficult plays on offense and came back and got a first down.



I thought we did a great job on third downs today and we put ourselves in some difficult third down positions. We have to clean up a lot of our -- you know, across the 50, but up to this point we've been pretty good.

We've got talented receivers, a talented quarterback can run, a talented tight end. We've just got to connect. We're not missing by much. We're missing by inches.

Just not going to wipe the whole thing clean. We're just going to work on the things that we need to work on.

Part of it is, hey, even our older guys, like we can't get so excited because it's there. We got so excited we missed the throw. We got so excited we ran a bad route. We got so excited we dropped the ball.

We're going to have opportunities to make plays. We've just got to step up and make them. The ups and downs have a lot to do with us, and we've just got to even some of those things out.

Q. Coach, how gratifying was it to get your first conference win at home, homecoming, and especially after that big win in South Bend?

DAVID SHAW: Yeah, it doesn't make any sense, but as an old coaching thing that I heard a long time ago that I say sometimes too, which is like, you win one game, win the second one and make it count. That can't just be a stand-alone game. You have to go on and win the next one to prove that it wasn't a fluke.

So for us to come back and find a way to win two in a row now. We've played well three weeks in a row, even though that Oregon State game, we didn't close it. But we're finding our groove in at least how hard we play and how hard we push in finishing those games.

The ball bounced our way a couple times, which is great. Because balls bounced against us a couple times too throughout the season.

Looking forward for this team to come back and see who's healthy this week from today, and then put together a good plan, have our guys get ready to go down to Southern California and fight, and looking forward to this week.

Q. Two things if I can. One, any initial word initially on Filkins and Bonner at this point?

DAVID SHAW: No word yet, but I would say next week is in doubt for both of them. We'll see where we are the next couple days.

Q. Pretty pass heavy approach, it seemed, today. 35 passes called versus just eight runs in the first half; 57 passes thrown by McKee today. What were some of the things that went into emphasizing, in particular, that phase of offense?

DAVID SHAW: So a lot of our offense right now is run/pass option, so I would say of those attempts -- which I heard that number a while ago and it kind of shocked me because we didn't call that many passes. We called quite a few runs.

He changed a couple of the runs to passes, and a couple of the runs have pass options. So a lot of those times you saw a ball go in the belly, that wasn't play action, those were runs, and he pulled it back out and threw the ball to, early on especially John Humphreys with some big plays. Two of those, I think, were pulled out and thrown to Elijah. A couple were thrown to Ben.

So a lot of those were called runs, and the quarterback did a great job of pulling it back out and taking advantage of some of those.

I thought Ben Yurosek did an outstanding job today. So much man coverage, which is the other part of the reason -- they had all the guys down in the box, playing a lot of single high, a lot of man-to-man. We ran in there a couple times, and it was hard to find space. We bounced out on a couple of them.

Casey slipped through on a couple of gap schemes, but for the most part it's just a tight box in there and a lot of man-to-man outside. Even when we did call runs they ended up being passes, and our passes -- we wanted to attack that man coverage as well.

Q. Defense obviously has been improving a lot over the last few weeks. What has been the key to that growth? Is it just guys gelling more? Is it anything you guys have done schematically or told them? What has been the key to the defense's growth over the last few weeks, would you say?

DAVID SHAW: So my answer to that question is kind of twofold. One is our defensive staff, I think, has done a good job of adjusting to our guys. We came out of training camp with kind of an idea of what we wanted to do, and we've had to adjust that to a certain degree.

We didn't have to take a bunch of stuff out and put a bunch of stuff in. It was just emphasizing certain things. I'm not going to be specific there before you ask.

But we've also had an interesting combination of high rep experience guys, right? Kyu, Ethan. These guys have played a lot of football. Ricky Miezan, a lot of guys.

But then some older guys that maybe hadn't played much. I out pat Fields in there as a guy who played a lot of football but hadn't played a lot of football with us. So finding where he's best.

And then some of the young inexperienced guys. They haven't played a lot of football. Tobin Phillips is playing a lot more football now than he played earlier, so he's playing better and better and better. He doesn't get any accolades, but he's playing better.

Then you get really younger guys, guys like Jaxson Moi and put Lance Keneley in that kind of getting used to playing. He missed a bunch of time, and now he's back.

David Bailey, him getting better and better. Ernest Cooper going in.

We have a lot of young guys getting better and better, and coaches are saying, now we have an idea of what we emphasize, and we're also being more aggressive as play callers and how we play.

Our younger guys are getting more experience, and we're just kind of getting better and better and better, and hopefully that continues next week.

Q. Can you just give us a little more background on Ernest Cooper, where he's come from, what he's shown, and how he got to this point.

DAVID SHAW: Yeah, Ernest, right outside of Dallas. Ernest is long, obviously long; he's explosive; he's athletic. Showed up, and our edge rushes are -- our edges are one of the deepest parts of our team.

So early on, David Bailey coming in spring really helped him jump and get ahead. So has been so dynamic. Ernest wasn't quite ready at the beginning of the season, not to mention we had so many veterans out there.

So he's just been working on the scout team. He and Teva, both of them, they've just been working. They're the first two guys out there before practice, working on all their technique. Both of those guys have gotten stronger. We knew one or both was going to have to play today. We leaned on Ernest. Ernest has a little bit more size and length.

It didn't surprise us because what we've seen every single day at practice, he's gotten better and better throughout the

year. His length, his speed, his athleticism. We knew he was going to be a superstar. We knew that when we recruited him. We just didn't know how soon.

In our locker room, he became a superstar today. His passion, his energy, one of his first plays was a run away from it, and he ran it down the back side. That's what we saw in his high school film. That's what we've seen every single day of practice.

Like I said, he's going to be a superstar for us, and looking forward to him getting more reps throughout the season.

Q. Bryce Young was here today, and then you have McCaffery being signed by the Niners, so he's back in the area. What type of morale does that -- I mean, what type of boost in morale does that do for your players and then also for you that you coach these guys?

DAVID SHAW: Talking about Bryce Love, Bryce Love was on the sidelines today. I think last time we played Arizona State at home he had 300 yards rushing, so a lot of guys remember that.

But just having him come and be around, any time our football alums come back it's an uplifting thing for our guys because they see somebody who is in their shoes. They see somebody who has success and still wants to come back and pour knowledge back into our team.

So excited to have Christian McCaffery back in the Bay Area. I know he's ecstatic. John Lynch is ecstatic. Callahan is ecstatic. The whole Niner Nation is ecstatic.

I'm excited to have Christian be around. He's got a job to do. It's going to be great, but he's not going to be too far away. I know they have their days off and love to see him. He's excited about being around. I'm excited for this push for him and that football team.

That's just another weapon for Kyle to have, and I'm excited for him and their future.

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