

# Stanford University Football Media Conference

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Stanford, California, USA

## Tanner McKee

Postgame Media Conference



Washington State - 52, Stanford - 14

**Q. Since there's so little availability in the running back room, how does that change your preparation being that you're probably going to have to throw the ball 50, 60 times a game now?**

TANNER MCKEE: I mean, I'm up to the challenge. O line and receivers are up to the challenge. We know when things like that happen there's going to be more pressure. There's going to be more weight on our shoulders.

But we just have to take it on. I thought Mitch did a great job knowing his assignment. Picking up blitzes was huge, doing his job. I thought he did an unbelievable job, especially for only having like a week's preparation and being a safety before then.

But, yeah, we know as an offense, me personally, that I'm going to have more on my plate. I might have to tell him a few times what his responsibilities are, what he's going to do, pass protection-wise and go out for a different route, things like that.

But I just think it puts more weight on our shoulders that we're going to have to handle and we're up for the challenge for it.

**Q. Higgins and Yurosek got a couple of fumbles that were costly. Just what's your message as a leader on this team, what's your message to your teammates that make mistakes like that what do you do to help them shake it off? What is your message to guys when things like that happen?**

TANNER MCKEE: They're both big-time players. It's definitely not something that's been a consistent problem for them. But I mean, the details are important. When you're in traffic, having it high and tight. Both those guys can get hit by two, three, four guys because they're so hard to get taken down. Teams are going to rip out the ball. Definitely not something that's going to happen in the future.

I know that they've made the change and it's going to be more of an emphasis for them. But, yeah, they're just really good players. They have a lot of guys trying to take them down at the same time. That's got to be a point of emphasis, keep the ball high and tight.

**Q. Coach a few minutes ago said that he needs the best player, particularly on offense, to play better. He also said that he doesn't want you guys to try to do too much. He thought maybe a couple of the fumbles might have been guys not accepting a 10-yard reception and trying to get a 12 and that's how you fumble. How do you balance knowing you've got to do more particularly with the running back situation as it is without trying to do too much more?**

TANNER MCKEE: I think just doing things we've done in practice. I mean, it was, honestly, probably offensively one of our best weeks at practice. And I think we just have to kind of put more confidence into that instead of thinking, oh, my gosh, we're down by a score or two possessions. There's no play that we're going to run that's going to get us 14 points in one play. We'll have to take it one play at a time. March the ball down the field. Trust our defense, get the ball back, go score again.

I think realizing football is a long game, it's a process. You'll have to march down the field, not going to get all the points back in one play and honestly trusting all the guys around you.

**Q. (Question off microphone) ... the position and how things went for you guys out there offensively today?**

TANNER MCKEE: I mean, field position's huge in a game like that. But I mean offensively we're going to have to move the ball. We're going to be backed up a few times. And so we're going to have to move the ball regardless. Had a few things -- I just feel like we made like some mistakes that we usually don't make in crucial times. Whether that be in the red zone or backed up. Maybe it was a release or missed assignment or things like that that just don't seem like a really big difference.



But when you're in the red zone or backed up on your own 10-yard line, I mean a yard or two making a guy miss, busting a big play is a momentum changer, game changer. I think just tightening up the screws on those things.

**Q. Wanted ask about Ben Yurosek. Eight receptions for 90 yards, had the fumble. But as he got going today, had a lot more yardage. How nice was it to get him in a rhythm and him a touchdown last week. Seems like he's starting to get into more of a flow, which is a good thing.**

TANNER MCKEE: Ben's a stud. We like him going up the middle when it's too high. We like him when it's man one-on-one. We like it when they're going to back out and he can find a hole. I feel he knows football really well, can find holes.

A lot of times we just give him the freedom, like, hey, this is your assignment; you can take your angle high. You can take it short. You can sit. Do your thing. Because he knows football very well. And so he's a very valuable asset for us.

You can see from this game, the last couple of games, just on third down, he's had a few really big pickups, tough contested catches, a few times that were close to being PI. But he makes those contested catches and he's a great athlete.

**Q. With three games remaining, what's the team's mindset moving forward? What are you thinking about next week heading to Utah?**

TANNER MCKEE: We have to turn the page and believe in everybody in our locker room and in our facilities. Utah is a great team. Very hostile environment. We know it's going to be cold and it's going to be loud and we just have to believe in our guys left and right.

And we know we'll be the underdog especially after today's performance. We're probably not going to have a lot of people betting that Stanford is going to pull up a big upset. But we know in our locker room we definitely can, we have the capability. We have the potential. We have the talent. We just have to go out and execute, like Coach said, play our game.

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