

Stanford University Football

Media Conference

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Stanford, California, USA

Rhett Lashlee

Postgame Media Conference



SMU 40, Stanford 10

RHETT LASHLEE: Obviously we're really happy to get win number six and be 3-0 in the league and come on the road and get a road conference win. Those are always good.

Really was pleased with how fast we started. Was kind of worried about that coming off the bye week. We started really fast obviously the first play of the game and thought our defense was strong throughout.

The middle, wasn't pleased with some of the -- we had two turnovers on special teams. We had another pick that led to a touchdown inside our own 10. Kind of sloppy with a lot of holding penalties and things like that.

At the end of the day really a lot of respect for Troy and his unit. I think he's going to do a really good job here. They play the game the right way, and we're very fortunate to get out of here with a win.

Q. I know you have bigger goals for this season, but bowl eligibility is certainly a milestone. How does it feel to get there...

RHETT LASHLEE: It's awesome. Seven games in to say we're bowl-eligible, that's something you have to check off every year. That's your hope, if you want to go somewhere, you have to get to that point. To do it our first year in the league is humbling.

I think our guys do know we just put ourselves in position to play for stuff continually down the stretch. I don't think we're going to sit around and be satisfied with that is the end result that we want, but it is a big deal.

So really proud of them for that.

Q. What did you see from the defense tonight, and how are they able to pretty much do it all night?

RHETT LASHLEE: They were just swarming. Obviously Daniels is a great player. And after he went out a couple of

drives in, I do think the young quarterback played really well for a freshman.

Yeah, I thought what they did the best is we stopped the run, which is something that we've really been working hard on. And they did a really good job of sticking Ayomanor. He made the great touchdown catch. He's going to make those plays. He's really good at it.

In general, did a nice job making sure we rolled our coverage that way. Tried to make someone else beat us, but they were solid. I mean, we gave up the ten points off turnovers. But to hold someone around 200 yards that knows how to play offensive football the way they do, I thought that was really special.

Q. What was the key to the big plays in the first quarter?

RHETT LASHLEE: The first play we felt good about the look, and we felt like if we hit it perfectly in stride, it could score. We thought we would get at least a good positive completion. I mean, Kevin just threw it perfect, and it hit Moochie just right in stride. The way they played that formation, there just wasn't anybody over the top. That was good.

We've really been working hard on hitting some deep balls. We haven't hit deep balls this year as well as we have maybe in the past. So for Kevin to heat Key'Shawn for a second touchdown on the go ball was big. Then he scrambled and extended the play for R.J.

College football is about stopping the run, the turnover margin and explosive plays. We did two of those well tonight. I don't know. I think Kevin does a really good job of seeing the field. Like I said, the first two throws were really good football plays. But to extend the play he did on R.J.'s throw and others, it's probably the biggest help for us being explosive.

Q. Speaking of R.J., do you have any update?

RHETT LASHLEE: No, I don't. You know how it is. Until you can get back and get imaging and all that. We're



always hopeful.

It's unfortunate it just hit just right, so we'll see. We won't know until we get the imaging done either tomorrow or Monday for the doc to look at it and see.

He wasn't in a lot of pain, so that was positive, but it was a pretty violent hit right on his knee.

Q. You talked about that first play of the game and guys score touchdowns on a lot of your first drives lately (indiscernible)?

RHETT LASHLEE: It's important. You got to start fast, especially on the road. The last two weeks we had a good touchdown drive at Louisville and the big play to start today. It settles everybody down.

I think our last four games we've played our best we've scored on the opening drive. So we're not going to do that every week, but we're sure going to try to.

There's a lot of stats out there about deferring and taking the ball, all those things. I'm a big believer in taking the ball because it gives you a chance to score first. It doesn't matter the scenario.

Then it gives you a chance to pick the way you want to kick in the second half, and that typically allows you to take the win in the fourth quarter.

Our guys have been doing a nice job of that. We need to try to continue.

Q. After the game you applauded the SMU fans that travelled all the way out here. What can you say about the growth you've seen?

RHETT LASHLEE: It's awesome, and they're excited. There's a lot of California kids that go to SMU and a lot of California families out here. To be able to come out on this coast every year I think is pretty cool. Just the way they travel.

We're used to going and singing with our band. It's a long trip. With our band not here, our players were, like, What do we do now? Just seeing how many fans we had on the SMU sideline and hearing them throughout the game with the SMU chants, it's really cool.

It's the vision. It's what we want to build our program to. To prove that not only do we have great home environments like we've had this year, but our fans will travel. They were awesome at Louisville and awesome today. I sure hope a bunch of them are at Duke next

weekend.

Q. Ever since you got Kevin Jennings you've talked about his talent, but now that he's taken on the starting role and obviously a lot more experience. Where have you seen the most maturity or growth as he's stepped into this leading role?

RHETT LASHLEE: Yeah, I think he's really gotten almost better and better each game really. The one interception today was really bad, but for the most part over those four games he's protected the ball. I think he has two turnovers in four games.

To be an aggressive player like he is... It's not like he stopped playing aggressive. It's not like he's not playing with confidence, and he's still only turned it over twice.

I think he's done a nice job for the most part other than that one play of when things aren't there, throwing it away. He's thrown the ball away. He's tucked it and ran. He has an incredible ability like the Jake Bailey third down late in the game. How he can tuck the ball, run around, and pop up and know where everybody on the field is really a special gift.

I think that's the biggest thing is he's obviously a passer grown I think, continued to be aggressive, continued to be a play maker for us while still valuing the football.

Q. What's the message to Junior? He seemed pretty frustrated?

RHETT LASHLEE: I trust Junior. He's a really good punt returner. He's taken one back this year for a touchdown already. He did it last year.

He slipped on the first one. He was fair-catching it and slipped as the ball was coming down. Then the second one they just did a good job putting the hat on the ball.

It's not like we had a true freshman or a redshirt freshman out there. We have an experienced guy. We believe in him. He's going to return our punts no different than if another experienced player. No one is perfect.

So he's going to be harder on himself than anyone, and that's why I know it will get corrected.

Q. And Brashard?

RHETT LASHLEE: We just decided offensively he wasn't going to play in the first half. Nothing major. He's a great kid. We love him to death, but we value our culture, and we expect people to show up to class and to show up to

our meetings on time.

If you miss enough of them, we get with our captains and came together and felt like it was good to say let's set up for a half. They even said he can return kicks, but just not going to play on offense in the first half. That's what we did.

I thought L.J. having him back is good. Him and Junior handled the load. Second half started, and it's all gone.

We'll work on being where we're supposed to be this week. Nothing major. Just internal things we try to do to right. We're going to respect our professors on campus and respect our teammates with internal meetings as well.

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