

Stanford University Football Media Conference

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Stanford, California, USA

Coach Frank Reich Postgame Media Conference



Stanford 31, Cal 10

FRANK REICH:

Q. Coach, first time around, big game, a lot of excitement going on. What was it from your perspective to experience this big game and get The Axe back for the first time in years?

FRANK REICH: Getting The Axe back is huge. I mean, this was such an incredible experience for me. I'll remember a lot of things about this year, but these last two weeks and this game tonight will certainly stick with me for a long time.

I mean, just seeing and feeling what it means to the players the coaches, really everybody connected with Stanford football, former football players, alumni, like just proud of this team, proud of getting the Stanford Axe back where it belongs.

Look forward to this team making a habit of keeping it here.

So much credit to our players, man, the way these last two weeks you could just feel a different energy. This is college rivalry football. It was a new experience for me, and I felt every bit of it.

Like I said, really credit to the players.

Q. Coach, I got to ask you about this defense. Obviously one of your best performances of the year. Just talk about your defense.

FRANK REICH: Defense was incredible. I mean, players were make plays all the over the field. Listen, I give a lot of the credit to Coach Thompson, Coach April. Scheme was amazing. They been great the whole year. Obviously today against that offense, that quarterback, did a phenomenal job on defense.

How well they played early and not only playing well, but scoring two touchdowns, I mean, are you kidding me? We

were struggling on offense so it's one thing for the defense to keep you in the game while you're struggling; it's another thing for them to score two touchdowns for you and go in with a lead and you feel like you haven't even made a first down.

I just think that really kind of injected us with some confidence. We came out and we moved the ball down there to start the second half, and then we didn't come away with points, but I just think, again, the defense has been really good the whole year. Super great game tonight. Happy for Coach Thompson, Coach April and Jay and Double D coming up with those two touchdowns are massive.

Q. I was here for the San Jose State game and you said that was one the best wins you've had as a head coach. Previous the Boston College game was. Where does this one rank? The second part of the question is I know this is supposed to be and is likely going to be an interim and you're done after next Saturday, but a win like this, does that make you think, hey, I would liked to this again?

FRANK REICH: Of course it does. We know it's done after this. Andrew and I know that that's always been the plan. I'll tell you what, it means a lot, this whole thing. That's part of why I came here, to experience what it would be like to be a part of the Stanford football community. This is a special place and that's why every win has been incredible.

But this one, this one means more, and I learned that these last two weeks, how important this game is. That's why I'm so proud of the team for the way we played tonight and getting that Stanford Axe back in our house.

Q. The way you guys played in the second half and sort of really dominated both lines of scrimmage, we able to run the ball, is that the vision that you see that Andrew has for this program...

FRANK REICH: No doubt. I think when I first got here Andrew's vision does include really dominant play up front. He understands how important that is winning football

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games and how important that has been in Stanford's winning tradition. That when we been at our best, that's what we do.

So tonight was good. Man, we did it on both sides of the ball. Took us a minute. Obviously didn't do much on offense in the first half. The way we ran the ball in the second half was a beautiful thing. Simi getting back in the action and playing the whole second half was a big deal. We felt his presence out there.

Q. Coach, just talk about -- on the second half what was the key to Elijah finding his rhythm, deep ball to CJ? Just what clicked at halftime to get the offense rolling and particularly Brown?

FRANK REICH: Well, I think the run game, getting the run game going. We hit some play-action passes. We had a feeling coming into this game -- not a feeling, just by looking at the film there were certain types of play-action passes that we thought we would hit against this particular defensive scheme.

I think we hit a bunch of them, and ones we didn't hit, we got pass interference on one of them. The dagger was the touchdown pass to CJ, so I think the run game helped Elijah get his groove in the second half.

But then offensively that dagger on the third and six or seven, whatever it was, and they're playing a three lock coverage zone in the front side, you know, the field side and playing man-to-man into the boundary. He just throws a perfect strike that basically seals the game. Credit to EB and CJ on that play. It was awesome.

Q. Of course are a veteran coach. Coached on both levels. Will you still be a stickler on, hey, we tied the most points we had all year, 31, but left six points on the board on the blocked field goal and the missed field goal. So will you be a stickler about this week even though you got the Notre Dame game coming up?

FRANK REICH: Yeah, for sure. I mean, not just that, there is -- I can tell you we left points out there in offense. When we kicked those field goals we shouldn't have been kicking field goals.

That's what we do, we hold each other accountable. Win, lose, or draw, we come in on Sunday, we grade the film, we highlight the things that we did well and try to -- want to repeat those and the mistakes we made as coaches and players, we own up to those and we hold ourselves accountable and we get those things corrected.

But that's just football. That's football. So every team, probably 90% of the games every team is saying the same thing, we left some stuff out there. You understand that as a player and as a coach. I think that makes it easier to say okay, listen, you play enough plays you're going to make some mistakes. We're not worried about that. Let's learn from it and get better.

Q. Coach, wanted to ask about the quarterback, JKS. When you're going up against a quarterback of that caliber it tough to game plan. How would you kind of assess how you guys did against him?

FRANK REICH: Phenomenal. I mean, phenomenal. I don't -- I mean, I think that, yeah, I think our defenses did a great job. I think we got good pressure with four-man rush. We had some blitz schemes that Coach Thompson and Coach April put together that were really well executed by the players. We won one-on-one matchups. We finished on our sacks. Got him to the ground. We hurried him. We had him off his spot a large part of the night and got him out of rhythm.

Then we played good coverage on the back end. That's some of best coverage I think we've played all year as a secondary, so proud of the way our secondary played as well.

Q. Just what's it like being part of a game where the defense is able to kind of dictate the scoring for the first half? Kind of a unique game. Talk about managing a game like that and being up at the half. Talk about the uniqueness of this kind of game.

FRANK REICH: It's great. I mean, as an offensive playcaller and offensive coach, man, when your defense is doing that, you just know you just got to keep grinding, keep being patient.

I think our defense has played really well all year for large and long stints, so this was really nothing new in it many respects.

But as a playcaller on offense, hey, don't force it. Our defense is keeping us in there. Keep believing. It's going to break for. It's going to break for us.

Let's just keep grinding it out. We know we're going to make plays. That's what we were able to do in the second half.

Q. Coach, I know the ambience, the emotions of this game is permeating, but got Notre Dame coming up. What does that mean to you as an ex player back at Maryland and your days of coaching? What does it

mean to go up against Notre Dame if you haven't yourself?

FRANK REICH: Obviously a great football tradition. Listen, where I grew up in Pennsylvania, Notre Dame football was everything. I grew up watching the Ara Parseghian Show, all that stuff.

They always had the -- so probably at one point I wanted to go to -- as a young player go to Notre Dame. So a lot of respect for the program and what they have done and continue to do.

It's going to be a great test for us. We want to finish strong. So we're going to prepare to win, prepare to play to win. You know, I know this: We've played a very tough schedule this year. We played a lot of really good football teams.

This is just going to be the next one, and so we are not going to get too caught up in their tradition and who they are. We'll watch the tape. We talk about faceless opponent. They're just the next team in one regard. We got a lot of respect for them. They obviously are having a great year. Had a big game today from what I saw.

So look forward to the week of preparation and getting a chance to battle against these guys next week in our house.

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