

Stanford University Football Media Conference

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Stanford, California, USA

Tavita Pritchard

Postgame Media Conference



Stanford 34, Elon 7

TAVITA PRITCHARD: (Stream started with no audio. Joined in progress).

While it's good to get a win, there's plenty to clean up. There's a lot to go in and watch the film and get better at. We have to do so in a hurry on a short week, knowing a Friday game is upon us, an NC State team coming to town, an opponent that we're going to have to get ready for.

Q. Can you talk about some of the goals you had in practice and how you think you did on any of them?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Yeah, I would say on the offensive side, obviously you're trying to create explosives both in the run and pass game. We had some tonight on both sides of it. On defense so much of it always just comes back to tackling, leveraging the football, running our feet through contact, taking that last step. Obviously being gap sound and gap control. There was a lot of focus on that on the defensive side of the ball.

On special teams we knew that was a team - goals going into the week - they had shown some different looks. They were kind of a game plan special teams unit going in, really kind of honing in on the different looks we might see from them, making sure we were well-prepared for what they were going to bring.

Q. Talk about Micah's performance. How huge was it to get him rolling?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Yeah, first of all, indicative of the group playing better up front, blocking for him, creating some seams, him seeing it well, hitting it where he had to.

But yeah, I think that's a hats off to the entire unit of kind of we've talked a lot about playing five is one, those combinations, seeing it through the same set of eyes.

There were certainly some that were blocked well tonight. There were some where he made more than what was

there. I think hats off to the unit, but hats off to him, too. That's obviously a really productive night, ties a record for Stanford for touchdowns in a night. Proud of him, proud of the whole unit.

Q. Sam Mattingly, talk about his performance.

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Obviously big with Matt. Matt creates a big void on our defense, but on our team. Not just as a productive player, but being the green dot, calling the defense, being a leader on our team.

Yeah, for Sam to go in there and perform well, not just be productive, but call the defense, have those guys aligned, playing as one, was obviously big.

Like I said, the defense really did a great job throughout the game. I thought they really tightened it down in the second half. That was great to see, getting stops, three-and-outs. It obviously fed what we were able to do on offense.

Q. What is the key to making sure you have consistent energy that you're looking for for fourth quarters?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Absolutely. So much of it is when we do have a better half like that, trying to bottle it up is probably the wrong term. When you feel something closer to it, pointing it out as the example of that's what it looks like, that's what it feels like to strain, to have the energy to have the focus.

Our guys have a willingness and desire to play hard, right? Sometimes it is more a matter of focus, making sure that I'm honed in on what I'm supposed to do, my responsibility, my technique, so that I can just concentrate on playing fast.

Trying to catch them doing right, catch them doing it well, pointing that out, whether it's in practice or in a game. We exist as coaches to both point out the positives and when we're falling short of it. We have to do both well.

Q. A question about Andrew Luck. How has he changed from his time when you were students

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together to now? Also, what has surprised you about the role he's playing, the way he's doing it now?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Yeah, that's a great question. How has Andrew changed? Man, to come up with that right now...

Andrew has always had a lot of depth to him. As a player that manifested in his relationships with teammates. I think it's really easy as a quarterback, you're the leader of the team, you're vocal, call plays, you throw touchdowns.

But knowing Andrew as a player, it was always the depth of him. It extended into his relationships with people, the interactions he had with teammates, with staff, with support staff, all of the above.

I think as I've seen, as I've continued my relationship with Andrew, that part has continued to give depth to the human being that he is. Seeing him as a dad and a husband. Obviously that changes a lot of us, for those who are parents in the room.

I think knowing Andrew in that, but still maintaining the energy he has, the charisma that he has, the competitive nature that he has, it just continues to add depth to the human being.

Q. (Question about substitutions.)

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Yeah, it's of course good to get other players in there to get game reps, 'cause there's no substitute for getting out there on the game field.

To get touches for some of our other running backs, to get Mike with some snaps under center, completing some passes, but help leading a drive, there's no substitute for that.

Frankly, you never know when you need a guy who might be a backup right now to help not just in a game but maybe it's through the rest of the season. Really good to get those guys time, as much as anything for those who haven't had as much game time, seeing and feeling the speed of the game, the tempo of it, how it feels to go in there, get a call, execute, is really invaluable.

Yeah, was pleased with the opportunity to get to play guys in really all three phases that were part of our depth. Look forward to how those guys then take to that practice and are able to apply what they learned and keep getting better.

Q. Davis Warren found his stride in the second quarter with his passing game. What played into him being

able to execute that so effectively?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Yeah, you know what, I agree. I thought we had some good rhythm in the second quarter. That comes with some of the tempo we use. But also Davis is really doing a good job of, to use a cliché, he's staying the course, right?

There were some drops, some plays he wanted back, but he's staying in it so when some of those plays do start to go our way, he's ready for those moments. He's not pressing, if that makes sense, putting the ball in jeopardy.

He has done a good job of taking care of the football this year, and tonight was another good example of that. I think Davis is doing a good job of not biting off more than he can chew, taking what's there, and that allows for plays to get a little bit more yards, use the running game, run after catch, be able to utilize some of that more intermediate passing game.

Q. In regards to tackling, are you feeling like you need to repeat stuff or are you satisfied?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Whether it's tackling or blocking, to repeat and to reemphasize is to be a coach. So I think even when you're the best tackling team, you're the best tackling team because it's what you emphasize and you can never stop emphasizing it.

Of course, we will continue to emphasize tackling and keep finding where are the areas that we have to continue to improve in tackling and continue to emphasize those things and find ways to drill it and emphasize it in our team drills.

Yes, we absolutely have to keep emphasizing tackling. We will. That's something that we will continue to get better at.

Q. I know that culture is something that you have emphasized repeatedly, strongly from the start. Also obviously the school culture plays a part because these are student-athletes embedded in that culture. Stanford has a kind of expectations of excellence, the duck syndrome where students are gliding along. The team has had a couple of not unexpected losses, but tough losses. How do you come out of those games and what do you tell your team when you are in such not only high-pressure college football environment by student body environment?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: I'll start with part of your question, which is the idea that the university culture is very closely tied to the culture that exists in our athletic department, therefore in our football team.



One thing I think that's cool is Stanford, in my opinion, is at its best when it's not just pursuing excellence, it's when it's doing that collaboratively and in teams.

I think we have a chance to display that as much as anyone as the football team. I believe it's the greatest team sport in the world, because with the way it's constructed, like, all 11 guys need the other person on their unit to be successful.

I think we get to live out a really cool element of the ethos of Stanford, which is collective and collaborative excellence.

With that being said, to the question about how do we bounce back from tough results. Honestly, it's not a lot different than continuing on from a result like tonight. Culture is just shared values. It's kind of the language that's embedded or installed in your building with your people.

When it comes to collective excellence, in our case continuing to improve and be the best at getting better, it's really more about how do you take a win like we had tonight or a lopsided loss like you've mentioned and continue to drive forward and get better because of those things in every scenario.

It's a cool part of what we get to live out and strive for. I think our guys, they've done it well at times, other times we could be better. That's always what we're pushing for.

Q. I'm curious about whether or not you've noticed any changes in the overall culture and values in Stanford as it has become even more tech-driven? Has that changed the culture at all?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Yeah, the culture, there's parts of the culture I believe that have changed. I don't know that I can put my finger on exactly what that looks like. I'm feeling very old when you ask that question. I've been here a long time. Experienced the culture as a 17-year-old, now as a 39-year-old.

At the end of the day as the world changes around us, in our world it's the college football world, whether it's tech in the area or college football and all that has swirled around us, I think finding the constants of the Stanford culture are what I'm really interested in, and frankly why I'm back because those parts of the culture still exist and can be strong and can be the reason why we are the university we are, why I have so much belief in it and its people.

Q. Today the offensive line did a great job with protecting Davis Warren in the pocket. I wanted to ask

how the team has been practicing as a unit with Davis and the O-line and the tight ends and receivers? Any different this week compared to any other weeks?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: We'll start with the wide receivers because I appreciate the question about the different guys rolling in there, the targets they're getting, whether it's receivers, tight ends or running backs.

Brian Bratton, our receiver coach, does a phenomenal job of developing those guys. Part of that role is really making sure that as we have different personnel groupings and he subs different guys out, that different guys are getting work and they're improving and they are available for a game like that where the ball is being spread around.

Sometimes when you come in against a defense, that defense has done a nice job this year of creating issues for offenses with disguising looks. I thought Davis did a nice job and the offensive line giving him time to do so, going through progressions.

JonAnthony, Jordan, Micah Ford obviously had a couple big catches out of the backfield. When you're able to spread the ball around and you don't become centered around one player and one player only, it really does open up the game for everybody. Makes us better as an offense.

I'm pleased with the job that those guys did night, the pass catchers, and the staff of getting those guys ready. That's something we need to continue, that we keep bringing those guys along and those guys are available for plays like that.

Q. How do you manage a kicker that isn't delivering what you want, given it's a mental position?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: For Emmet and for kickers, a little bit like quarterbacks, so much is about the process. I think like we were just talking about, results-based to a degree just because it's data, to be able to say I missed this one left, then what's the thing, what's the part of my process that I can come back to to address that.

I have great faith in Emmet and Coach Kaczor, that they will get those things addressed. Then it comes back to, okay, creating the habit of what was it about the process, whether it was his approach or his setup or what have you.

So yeah, it comes back to process for him and all of us really.

Thank you, guys. Have a good night.



