

Stanford University Football

Media Conference

Saturday, October 17, 2026

Stanford, California, USA

Sam Mattingly

Postgame Media Conference



Stanford 34, Elon 7

Q. Sam, talk about overall thoughts on the defensive performance, giving up just seven points tonight.

SAM MATTINGLY: Obviously I'm a little upset it wasn't a shutout. I think our guys played well. I think for the first time in a minute we started putting together some really good football. I know we put it on tape. But tonight was the first time where I really felt like guys were coming together. Even though there was bust sometimes, other guys were making guys right.

Coach always preaches ruthless and relentless. I felt like there was a lot more of that on tape tonight. Obviously the defense is connected. Those guys love each other. I trust every single one of them.

I'm really excited about this performance. It's something where there's a long way to go, we have a lot to build off of.

Q. Matt Rose being out, you being one of the leading tacklers. Given that Matt Rose has been out for the past several games, how would you say you would prepare for facing a team like Virginia Tech or NC State where you might be operating in a different environment?

SAM MATTINGLY: Yeah, absolutely, man. Matt is one of my best friends. I can't say enough good things about that guy, man. He is a true leader. I mean, he loves Stanford football. Everything he does is to get us better.

It hurts bad not having him out there. But I've watched that guy for the last three years that I've been here prepare, prepare, prepare. Even when he wasn't the starter, he was preparing like he was.

I think I've picked up a lot of that from him. Honestly, watching him watch tape, all off-season we're up there watching tape, he's such an inspiration to me. Obviously I can't say enough good things about him. That is my role model. I try to model my game after him.

Playing in those places that we're going to be coming up against, I think a lot of it is just our routine, flying across the country. I think there's a lot of things where we've been feeling it out and we're making progress there.

I'm super excited to go play in those places. I'm super excited to play in Blacksburg. I think it's going to be a team effort.

Tonight I think we showed a few big strides. There's a lot on tape that we can get better. Man, I'm so excited to go play there.

Q. What has been the key to your ability to build on this? More broadly speaking, you've done a good job at home, 3-1. Talk about what has been the key to finding success here.

SAM MATTINGLY: Absolutely. Obviously it's a blessing to have all these fans out here, play in our home. It's difficult to fly six hours across the country every other week. When we're here, man, it is home. I think there is a huge advantage on these teams coming from the east coast, having to gain three hours, whatever it is, coming out here and having to play us. That's a huge advantage.

I think obviously, like, that's one of the those things where we pick up big there. But Richard has preached ruthless and relentless over and over and over again.

Tonight I think we started to put a lot more on tape. I think we're going to build off of that. We have the game plan. We just need to execute. In the past it's been execution on us. Tonight I think that's where we took a step. I think there's more to go, but I think we're headed in the right direction there.

Thank you guys so much. Appreciate y'all.

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