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Tavita Pritchard

Postgame Media Conference

Stanford 31, NC State 28

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Just got done talking to the team. Challenged them early this week to take a step. The step that we had to take was playing complementary football, playing detailed and disciplined football, and doing that for four quarters.

What I was really proud of was the way that we started the game. I thought we punched first and came out. Then I think the focus showed in our ability to sustain through the ebbs and flows of that game, right, do exactly what we had to in all the different phases, offense, defense, special teams. Everybody contributed. You saw some productive days out of different guys, which I'm sure we'll talk about.

Yeah, was just happy with how our guys played for four quarters and played focused throughout. That's a heck of a win for our ballclub.

Q. The drive at the end of the second quarter, how important was that?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Two-minute drives, you hear a lot of talk about the middle eight, making sure that you dominate the middle eight. I thought that was big for us to get the ball before the half to go down and score.

After we jumped out to the 14-point lead, they did a nice job of coming back and tying the ballgame. To be able to get that score going in, knowing that they were going to get it coming back first, yeah, was really happy with the way we went down there and scored, got into the two-minute drive and finished that drive in the end zone.

Q. What was the key to your ability to jump out to the early lead?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: I thought there was early down success. First of all, we ran the ball really well tonight. You've heard me talk in some of the press conferences about creating clean runs, getting hats on hats, making sure we're directing to the right people.

Coach Keli'i, Heff, Tavita, Thompson did a phenomenal job of getting our guys right to go against a physical front, a team we knew we were going to have to come in and play physically against. I thought a lot of our success early on was complementary, run and pass, staying in manageable third downs, and just sustained execution.

Again, we still had some conversions on longer third downs, but whether it was those first and second down runs, play-actions, I thought just the sustained focus and execution throughout really showed.

Q. What does it say about the offense you're able to score, the way you did it differently than last week?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Yeah, absolutely, I think when Terry Heffernan and I were first dreaming up the vision for this offense, I thought about balanced football, balanced offense. What that looks like to me is the threat to be able to throw it or run it.

A lot of times we're going to try to take the advantage of the looks the defense is giving, what they like to do, put pressure on them. Everything is about putting pressure on the defense.

To be able to play complementary football, to be able to lean into the run or the pass at different times depending on what the defense is giving, yeah, gives me a lot of confidence in the step that this offense took this week.

It will be important for us to keep going on that.

Q. You mentioned complementary football. Any specifics you could point to that you thought were executed really well?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: I mean, I thought the defense did a nice job of getting stops. For us to go to 14-0 early, that was complementary in how we came out and started on offense, but then our defense getting stops early on in the game to get us the ball back.

I thought that showed later in the game, the punt by Aidan

Flintoft to pin them down deep, the on side kick return. Different elements of our team in all three phases contributing to the different parts of the game.

Even to go out and go up 10, two scores, for Emmet and the field goal team to get us a 10-point lead. All the different parts working together, I thought that showed in a lot of ways.

Q. How can you carry over the performance you had here into the three road games you have coming up?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: If I could explain it, I think it would be a lot better than it is.

All I can say is we have to stay in the mindset of being at our best every single day regardless of circumstance. I know that's a convenient, cliché answer, but it's so true.

Just having experienced different versions of home and road and ACC and Pac-12, NFL. The teams that are most unfazed by where you play and who you play and the weather, all those different things, those are the teams that are able to play at home and on the road.

I think it's really about our continued growth as a program to be at our best and perform at our best no matter where we are. We're going to keep working towards that.

I can stand up here and talk about it, but it's really about us putting our money where our mouth is and actually doing those things and getting it done.

Obviously we're going to look to do that this week. It's going to be another opportunity for us to go change some of those fortunes against a really good Louisville team. We have to figure it out. That's what we're here for.

Q. Going up seven at halftime was huge. Talk about the key to that drive.

TAVITA PRITCHARD: We kind of intentionally got it down. So much of the middle eight is also at the end of half giving yourself you have enough time to score but not give them too much time to be able to respond.

We took them down to the two-minute. We let them intentionally get it to the two-minute when they punted to us. We had a good drive starter in the run. We got it going. Again, we were good on first and second down there.

So much of those two-minute drills I learned as a young quarterback, the most important thing is getting the first first down. From there it starts rolling.

Once we were in that space, I thought our guys did a nice job of sustaining that drive, run and pass. Obviously we threw it more on that drive. But we also work two-minute a lot. That's a situation that our guys have done a nice job of working at and making sure we know the calls, we know the mechanics of it.

Yeah, was really happy with our unit putting the ball in the end zone on that drive.

Q. How would you characterize some of the offensive performance differences between the first and second halves?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Between the first and the second halves?

We were running the ball in the first half. Micah was at about nine yards per carry going into the second half. So knew that we had the ability to lean on the run in the second half, knowing kind of what game it was turning into.

I think the difference was we went in with a seven-point lead. We knew we needed to keep scoring because that wasn't a team that was going to go away. Even right there to the very end.

I think it was just continuing to take advantage of what they were doing. They were doing some different things. Not that they changed personalities completely. But they were like in our 12 personnel in and out of some base versus sub personnel. We were trying to match that, so to speak, with some of the things that we were doing. That changed the complexion of the second half a little bit.

I think what's most pertinent to your question is just the element of us having the element of the threat of the run and the pass throughout. Especially when we got in the second half, we needed to sustain that. We did a nice job.

A couple times I would love to finish that field goal drive in the end zone, but that's the way it goes. We got to keep getting better.

Q. Talk about going for it fourth and 20 and then when you got the touchdown.

TAVITA PRITCHARD: The fourth and 20 is one of those spots, go back to the Georgia Tech game, we were in a similar situation a couple of times where you're kind of in that spot that you don't feel great about a field goal from that range at that point in the game. The punt doesn't gain you all that much. Even going for it on fourth down, even if you gain some yards, you're giving yourself the chance to

get the first down. Even if not, you're gaining some field position there where a punt, especially if it gets into the end zone, you get a touchback, like that net field position is not that much. That was that spot on the fourth and 20.

Inside the five yard line, I thought we had a good plan. I really liked our play from that spot. I felt like we had a good beat on what they would be doing.

Yeah, the guys did a phenomenal job of going out and executing it. Again, we worked that play during the week. That's how it looked during the week. Hats off to them for going out and drilling it on game day.

That's really what it amounts to. Their hard work is coming through. They make the plays come to life. I was just proud of how they responded there. Gives us, as a coaching staff, all the confidence in the world to be aggressive in those spots, where the numbers help inform that.

Q. Towards the end of the game, kick the field goal, go up 10, eight minutes left. What was the strategy defensively?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Yeah, you're talking about defensively against them?

Q. Yes.

TAVITA PRITCHARD: You know what, I thought our guys did such a nice job throughout the day of limiting them in the run game. I thought we defended the fade well overall. They had the one in the first half.

When you talk about schematically or style of play, I thought we were kind of the equivalent of what I'm saying about offense, what they were presenting. I thought we had a good feel for where they were, what they were doing.

They got stuff going in the QB run game early in the second half. I thought Kris and the defensive staff did a great job of just continuing to put pressure on them in different ways. I thought our guys up front did a phenomenal job making the quarterback uncomfortable, trying to get him off the spot in different ways.

I think mindset-wise it's to try to not change too much because when you start to change altogether, I relate it to offense a lot, but if you get into a space before you're in more of a four-minute type situation, you have a lead, you don't want to come off the gas completely because you're changing the personality of how you got there in the first place.

It's the same a little bit the same way defensively because you want to stay true to who you are while also making sure you're aware of the situation.

Q. (No microphone.)

TAVITA PRITCHARD: I do my best to not put limits on myself. I do my best to not put limits on our team and what we can accomplish.

At the same point in time there's so much right in front of us. There are times where myself and/or Andrew will zoom out, but it's certainly not anything in the realm of bowl eligibility or where are we relative to our vision right now.

When we're in this space, it is so about the next practice, the next meeting, the next game. There will be a point where we'll take a little bit of stock if we need to reorient.

We're not at that point right now. Like, we're really in the space. Again, there are times we'll zoom out, whether it's looking ahead to recruiting, different things that will come down the road that we need to plan for.

It's also why our organization is set up the way it is, why Andrew, Sam Fisher, they do a great job of being able to have some of those conversations. Tyler Jones. The long-term vision so that we can really focus on football and what's right in front of us.

Yeah, certainly not putting limits on us one way or the other. I'm excited to see the next step this team has an opportunity to take, and that's an away game at Louisville.

Thank you all so much. Have a good night. Enjoy.

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