

# Division I Football Championship: North Dakota State vs South Dakota State

Sunday, January 8, 2023

Frisco, Texas, USA

North Dakota State Bison

Coach Matt Entz

Michael Tutsie

Cam Miller

Postgame Press Conference



good calls for what they were running at us, and they just out executed us. That's as simple as I can put it.

Yeah, I would say just nothing -- they didn't throw anything crazy at us or anything we hadn't seen before or anything we weren't prepared for, just they executed better than we did.

**Q. Michael, is there a moment of disbelief out there? This doesn't really happen to the Bison very often.**

MICHAEL TUTSIE: I wouldn't say there was any disbelief, just the nature of this team and the nature of the guys in the locker room, we're going to keep playing to the last second. A lot of people say that, but we're going to mean it, no matter what the scoreboard says.

I think we just tried to stay in the game, not try to let distractions get to us, and just keep playing. So I wouldn't say that we ever had any disbelief until the score was the end of the score, to answer your question.

**Q. What set apart of the Jacks' offense from other offenses you faced this year?**

MICHAEL TUTSIE: I think today they executed better than us. They didn't throw anything crazy at us. They have great players over there, and they made plays when they needed to.

**Q. Cam, can you just sum up your disappointment with today's outcome? Just give us a thought where you're at.**

CAM MILLER: Obviously we wanted to win this game. I thought the guys played extremely hard. I felt like Bison pride showed up the entire game. We never quit. We attacked them each and every snap. They just outplayed us today, and they won.

**Q. Cam, it just seemed like you guys couldn't really get any traction or rhythm going. Did you kind of feel that early in the game, or how was that going from an offensive perspective?**

South Dakota State - 45, North Dakota State - 21

THE MODERATOR: We're going to go ahead and get started. Joining us is North Dakota State, their head coach Matt Entz, Cam Miller, and Michael Tutsie. Coach, we'll start off with opening statements, and then we'll have questions for the student-athletes and go back to Coach.

MATT ENTZ: Congratulations, South Dakota State. Played a very good football game. I'm disappointed. I'm disappointed for our players. I'm disappointed for our seniors, guys like Michael here, who helped me be the best coach that I can be.

Having an opportunity to recruit him, to coach him when I was a defensive coordinator, and now to see him done with his career -- on the wall of our locker room, it says those who stay will be champions. It doesn't say conference champs. It doesn't say national champs. But when you get to work with guys like this every day, this is an example of the champions in our program.

Tough to lose. Hate to lose. Not something we like to do and not something we're going to make a habit of at NDSU, but I'm more concerned about our players right now. They'll bounce back. I know that.

**Q. Mike, I guess first and foremost, their rushing attack that they had today, that was one of the bigger factors in the game. What did you see from your perspective? How were they able to dominate so much on the ground?**

MICHAEL TUTSIE: I think they -- you know, they just executed. They executed. A lot of the times, we were in

CAM MILLER: We didn't execute very well on third down. When you can't keep the chains moving, it's really tough to be effective on offense. That's something that we're going to work on and something that we're going to fix.

**Q. And one for Michael. Just kind of encapsulate just what your career has meant to you and just kind of a summation of just your career overall.**

MICHAEL TUTSIE: Man, I would do six years over like that, if I could. To answer it bluntly, I would do it all over again, without question.

I love the people that I've been able to build relationships with, coaches, players, this program, the people in the community. It's an amazing, surreal experience.

I do have a daughter, and to have her a part of it all, I know that doesn't happen a lot. So I just know how special this place is, and it's been truly an honor to be a Bison. Bison family, that will last forever. I know I've got these people on my side, and I'm on their side forever and ever to come.

It's just been a true honor and an amazing experience for me, and I'll never forget it.

**Q. Cam, as the quarterback of this team, what's the message for the guys coming back next season?**

CAM MILLER: Just build upon this year. I thought we had a really good year, just couldn't finish it. We've just got to work harder this off-season.

We always stress don't ever take these opportunities for granted, and I don't think we did. But we just need to execute better. I feel like some of these younger guys just need to step up more as being a leader for us.

Me myself, I need to be more vocal. I need to be better. And we'll all be better from this, I promise.

**Q. Michael, you guys couldn't get off the field on third down. I think in the first half, they were like 7 of 8 in third down, finished 9 of 14. Some frustration there, obviously, not being able to stop them and get off the field?**

MICHAEL TUTSIE: Yes, definitely frustrating. That was one of our keys too. We talked about we've got to be better on third down both sides of the ball, but on defense too, and especially third and longs.

Again, they executed when they needed to. It really wasn't about the scheme or anything. They just made the plays they needed to.

**Q. Just a comment on Mark Gronowski too, player of the game and played well.**

MICHAEL TUTSIE: I've gotten to play against him a few times. I'm not sure how many exactly, but he's always been a good competitor, good moxie, runs their offense well. He did his thing today. Salute to him.

**Q. Does it feel odd to be in Frisco and be on this end? You guys haven't lost down here. You've got a couple yourself down here. Describe the feeling of being on the other end of this down here.**

MICHAEL TUTSIE: It's extremely off to me. Obviously the expectation here is we come here and we win in Frisco. It is extremely odd, honestly, to be honest with you.

I'm more worried about spending these final moments with my teammates and coaches. Whatever happened on the field, like Cam said, Bison pride showed up on the field. We never quit. That's all that I'm really worried about. Being able to spend my last moments as a Bison and with my teammates and coaches.

THE MODERATOR: We're going to release our student-athletes. Gentlemen, congratulations on an outstanding year.

**Q. I'll ask you the same thing, Matt. How odd does it feel to be on this end here, when everything down here has gone NDSU's way? It didn't turn out that way today.**

MATT ENTZ: No, it did not. Like I said, we played a really good football team. Of course it's different. It hasn't happened very often in the history of NDSU where there's a loss in the National Championship Game. That's not the expectations of this place, and that's not the expectations of our program right now.

I saw a lot of our players standing out there watching the trophy presentation. I hope they remember that.

**Q. Just two things. The early turnover, which you talk about turnover advantage and getting off the field on third downs, just address both of those.**

MATT ENTZ: All the things we talked about, all the things we worked on for the last three weeks came to fruition. We couldn't turn the ball over to a good football team. We needed to be better than 9 of 14 on third down.

We've lost the last couple games to them. I think they're averaging about 65 percent conversion on third down.



We've got to get off the field. There's only eight to ten series a game, and we can't let them have the ball as long as they do, and we have to be better on third down moving forward.

**Q. Just kind of thinking back about this group, this year, kind of what are your biggest takeaways this year, just your immediate thought about this group this season?**

MATT ENTZ: Having recruited a lot of the players that are seniors right now -- and I'm anticipating you're talking about, when you say group, those are the guys -- they're all going to continue to be successful, just based on the comment I had in my opening statement.

To hear a guy like Michael Tutsie say that he'd do it all over again is as good a compliment as you can get as a program.

I've got a lot of laughs inside, a lot of stories I can't tell you until prime time probably, with this group of guys. You talk about Cody Mauch, Nash Jensen, Michael Tutsie, Dawson Weber, guys that I've known since they were 17 years old. Now some of them -- Dawson just turned 24 years old. I've known him for 25 to 30 percent of his life now.

I'll continue to know them. The guys have become great friends along the way and great family members.

**Q. Two things. One, fits seemed to not be squaring up the way you would like them to square up. They were able to cut back some things and get some bit chunk yards in the run game. Also, pass rush, you weren't able to get a lot of pressure on them, especially on those third down times. Were those things -- were those keys that you were looking at coming into the game saying, hey, we're going to have to really be sound here?**

MATT ENTZ: It was. One of the things, they did a great job of getting into three by one, cracking our safety, forcing our corners to get into run fit. We missed some tackles. I can remember the ball going from south to north, I believe it was towards the end of the first quarter, or first half, and our corner missed the tackle.

All of a sudden, it's a one-on-one tackle with a really good running back, a big physical kid who gets his shoulders downhill and can go and has good speed.

So they did a good job scheming us. Again, we've struggled at times tackling on the perimeter. You can't do that against a good football team.

**Q. Matt, you gave up an average of 14 points a game in the previous nine trips down here. What changed today?**

MATT ENTZ: I'm not sure if I could just come out with an answer. Played a good football team. I'm not going to take anything away from our opponent. That would be disrespectful. Coach Stieg did a good job with this group of young men they had there.

Just didn't make plays when we had opportunities to. That's what's frustrating. We're better than the product we put out there today, I firmly believe that. I'll continue to say it. Our best football is still ahead of us.

**Q. How has South Dakota State flipped this over the last few years where they've had the advantage now in this rivalry? Where have you seen it?**

MATT ENTZ: I think they've continued to put an emphasis -- they're recruiting at a better level than I think they were maybe early in my career.

Improved play up front on the offensive line and having more skill kids. They've done a nice job of expanding their offense, getting into more quarterback run game. Their quarterback is a tremendous competitor, very talented young man. You can see kind of his growth as the year has unfolded, very limited mobility-wise, and they really cut him loose here today because he's healthy. And it showed.

You're going to pull out all the stops in this National Championship Game.

**Q. Turnovers in this series has been completely one-sided. Describe that and how that's flipped as well.**

MATT ENTZ: If you lose the turnover margin by one, you're going to lose -- statistically or analytically, you're going to lose 60 percent of the time. When you lose by three, it's almost impossible to win.

It's something that we continually harp on all the time and drill work and things of that nature. Just kids making plays and kids not making plays. But it is something that we have to continue to talk about, to work and practice, especially as we move into our off-season.

**Q. Do you -- I know it's just after the game, but the result of the game today, are you going to have to address things in the off-season from what you saw today, just in terms of matchups and things against South Dakota State?**



MATT ENTZ: Yeah, we probably will. Of course when you get beat in the National Championship Game -- guys, I'll be on the plane tonight, and I'll be writing down notes to myself. The calendar's turned. The 2023 season now is fast approaching. We've got to continue to improve this football program.

Our fan base, our administration expect us to do it the right way. I know we're all extremely disappointed in the game today, but I've got a sneaky suspicion that we're going to continue to play good football here at NDSU.

I like the makeup of this football team. Like I said, this is a great opportunity to learn and grow.

**Q. Sorry for the tough loss this afternoon. I feel like the key of the game was that turnover in the beginning of the second quarter. You guys didn't respond back to it. What happened on that exchange from Johnson fumbling the football?**

MATT ENTZ: It looked like, as he was getting tackled, someone caught him from behind. I don't know if someone intentionally punched it out, but as they were wrapping it up, came through his armpit and kind of got the ball on the ground.

Again, it looked like Kobe had decent possession of it, wrist was above his elbow, but it's one of those things we've got to squeeze that thing into the pack and make sure we have the five points of pressure for ball security.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thanks for the time. Congratulations on an outstanding season.

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