

Big 12 Conference Football Championship Game: Arizona State vs. Iowa State

Saturday, December 7, 2024

Arlington, Texas, USA

AT&T Stadium

Iowa State Cyclones

Matt Campbell

Jaylin Noel

Rocco Becht

J.R. Singleton

Myles Purchase

Postgame Press Conference

Arizona State - 45, Iowa State - 19

MATT CAMPBELL: First and foremost, let me just give credit to Arizona State. I thought their kids, obviously they executed with high precision today. Hat's off to them. Obviously they've got some great players and really well coached. So you give credit to them.

Unfortunately, we didn't play our best football game today, and that's what it was going to take for us to be successful, but I couldn't be prouder of our kids, who they are, what they withstood through the season, some of the challenges we've gone through and our ability to not flinch.

We kept playing today, but obviously you can't make some of the mistakes we made against a team of this caliber. With that said, I'll open up to any questions you have.

Q. Three possessions, three turnovers to start the second half. You probably felt like, we go down and score, it goes the other way today. How deflating was that?

MATT CAMPBELL: It doesn't get much more deflating than that. I think the thing we prided ourselves on is our ability to take care of the football and our ability to create takeaways. We felt like that, especially that margin for both teams, they were plus 11, we were plus 9 coming into the game, I felt that was going to be the key to this football team, the ability to take care of the football. And our



inability to do that in the third quarter was just paralyzing.

You can't give an offense who was really in a great rhythm, you can't give them a short field, especially to start the second half. Those are tough things because those are fundamentals and details we've done -- especially in terms of ball security, we've really done a great job prior to, but yeah, tough for sure.

Q. As you walked out, it looked like you had your arm around Beau's waist. What can you say about him, and what can you say about the message you had to them?

MATT CAMPBELL: I think the message from me is pretty simple. What Beau and this senior class has done for Iowa State football has been nothing short of exceptional. It's been player led and player driven. When you're a warrior like that, man, these moments you don't have the success that you want, obviously there's temporary pain.

The great thing is we get another football game, and the great thing is that, man, what this group has already done is historic here at Iowa State. Nobody can ever take that away from them. The reality of it is we still get one more chance to send this senior class out the way we need to.

I appreciate and love them, and that's what I told them after the game. Just because we had a result we didn't like doesn't mean I have any less appreciation and love for what this group is all about.

Q. Sorry it didn't go the way you guys wanted, and I know the turnovers didn't help. What were your thoughts on the missed tackles today and just execution on defense?

MATT CAMPBELL: Obviously again, I thought the second half of the season we've really started to shore some of those things up. Unfortunately today, that didn't show up in some of our biggest moments. We'll have to figure out exactly why.

Part of that obviously is an elite tailback, but I think the other part of it is, man, we just weren't fundamentally

where we needed to be when we needed to be there a couple of times. I think that part of it, I'll take as the head football coach. It's my responsibility to make sure where we need to be when we need to be there, and we just weren't.

I'll have to look back on, man, how do I be better in that moment to help our kids be at their best? Like I said, we'll get another shot to prove we can get that done.

Q. You mentioned the bowl game. What's the challenge of regrouping here after a loss like this, and just in this day and age too? With the transfer portal opening on Monday, it's a lot thrown at these guys.

MATT CAMPBELL: That's the great thing about our program. We're not transactional, we're transformational. Whatever it is, it is. We'll be ready to play wherever that may be. Whatever the opportunity, this senior class, we're about finishing. We're not about everything else.

Q. You finished second in 14, obviously a playoff model league. Do you think you have any chance of getting an at-large bid tomorrow?

BRETT YORMARK: Yeah, I don't. That's the reality of that situation. But I don't know enough about it, and the reality from our end is we had some opportunities late in the season to put ourselves in the best situation. Again, those are great lessons learned, and we'll grow with it.

We have a young football team that's got the ability to go forward for sure.

Q. Earlier this week, you talked about falling short in this game a few years ago. How much does it sting to kind of get back and still not be able to reach that pinnacle that you're striving every day to get to?

MATT CAMPBELL: I think those things sting for sure. You remember the losses way more than you remember the wins, especially when you don't play to what you're capable of playing. So those things, they'll haunt you, and the reality is still what drives you. It wakes you up every day to come in and be your absolute best.

The great thing about myself, our staff, and the young people that we have, they've got great humility, and they've got great character. We'll show up, and we'll be better for it someday.

Q. What's the importance of being able to have some young guys come back and potentially get back here in future years? When you think of Rocco or Brahmer or the young running backs you have.

MATT CAMPBELL: If you're a young football player in our program, you got to witness leadership for the ages. What this group has led through, the injuries, the challenges that we went through, and never, never was there an excuse, never was there a flinch. Even today, as not as great as we wanted to play, you didn't see our kids fold their tent.

These are unbelievable experiences, and if you're willing to learn from them and grow from them, then you've got this great ability to come back better for it. I think you've seen our football program do that over the last nine years. Again, you're talking about what we've been able to accomplish is nothing short of exceptional and all the credit to our kids.

Q. How impressed were you by what Cam Skattebo was able to do out there?

MATT CAMPBELL: He's a really good football player, a lot of respect for him. Any time you witness a great football player like that, you just have to have great appreciation for it. He's an A player, and he played an A game today. In those moments, you need your A players to play football, and he certainly did it. Hat's off to him for sure.

Q. Rocco took a pretty brutal hit. What's he feeling? How's he doing? What do you know?

MATT CAMPBELL: Obviously he was cleared to come back into the football game and did a nice job putting a drive together at the end of the game.

Rocco is a tough customer. That was a tough shot, and as you know, you guys who have covered us, how tough he truly is. We quadruple checked to make sure whether we were going to put him back in the game. Obviously you know Rocco, he was demanding to get back in the game as soon as he was cleared. I'm proud of him. But I think Rocco will be just fine moving forward.

Q. At the end of the second quarter, you chose to not call timeout after Leavitt got down to the 2 or 3 yard line, and you went into halftime after Abu's run. Can you walk me through your time management decisions at the end of the second quarter before halftime?

MATT CAMPBELL: Yeah, we were in a flurry of chaos there, and I wanted to settle the ship. The last thing I wanted to do is turn the ball back over to obviously them. It felt like we were getting the ball at the start of the second half, and you're talking about -- I mean, there was three seconds on the clock. What are you going to do?

So the reality of it is, man, let's get ourselves in, let's get

regrouped, let's put ourselves in a great situation to come back out. We're getting the ball, we go put a score, and we're right back in the football game. That was my thought.

Again, hindsight 20/20, we'll look at it and evaluate it. I'm not saying that was the perfect decision, but at that time and the momentum where it was, I just felt we needed to regroup ourselves, regroup. You always evaluate those things and see if it was the best decision. That was my thinking on that part.

Q. Earlier this week, Coach Heacock was talking about the running quarterback, a guy who can extend plays giving the defense a bit of trouble. What did you think of Sam Leavitt's play today and his ability to do kind of what Coach Heacock was talking about?

MATT CAMPBELL: What you said, I think those were timely. There were maybe four in the first half that were third down, fourth down conversions. We had them fourth and four, fourth and three, obviously we had him fourth and one, and he made the play.

Again, hat's off to Sam. What you saw on the videotape is a really talented competitor, and he was certainly that today. Some of the plays in the first half, you're talking a totally different football game if you win those moments. They were able to do it and really grab the momentum.

Yeah, obviously great point and certainly give a lot of credit to him.

Q. You certainly touched on it, but just can you elaborate on what it means to you -- presumably they're all playing to get another chance to coach Beau one more game, Jayden, Jaylin, J.R., all those guys down the line.

MATT CAMPBELL: To me it means the world to me. We've talked about this, my loyalty to this senior class and pulling us by the bootstraps out of really hard two years ago when the deck was falling against us and easily it could have imploded. These guys refused to allow it to happen.

The courage and toughness that they have shown over the course of the last two years is like nothing I've ever seen. When you lose some of the guys that we've left and what happened to us at times this year and never flinch, demand to show up every single day, and how those young men have led, it's been nothing short of exceptional.

To me, it's an honor to be able to coach them. To me, it's an honor that we get more time with these guys. We're

going to do everything in our power to send these guys out the right way, and we look forward to the challenge and opportunity ahead.

Q. It looked like Malik got all armored up to try to give it a go tonight. Just not able to for a long stretch there?

MATT CAMPBELL: I think we were right on the edge of him being ready to go and just physically not there yet. I appreciate his willingness, and I think it tells you everything that guy has tried to do for the betterment of our team over the course of the last month and a half. He's a warrior.

He's tried to help and tried to put himself in position to help us, but unfortunately tonight wasn't truly ready to rock and roll.

Q. We saw on that fourth and one, what's the challenge when a running back like Skattebo presents such a threat to cover all your bases, the deep passes and the play action on top of that?

MATT CAMPBELL: I don't know if it's just him. I think it's the reality -- and certainly he's talented, but I just think the holistic view model is, man, you have to be elite. Fourth and one, they're in a run formation, and you're going to have to be disciplined.

There's times we've been unbelievable with it. Against Kansas State same thing happened, and we were able to cover and did a great job. And there's been times in our past where we just haven't made the play.

Hard situation and a situation where the detail was a hair off, and that's a situation where obviously they made some great plays. You tip your hat to them, and that's something we'll continue to work forward on.

Q. Rocco, just walk us through a little bit that third quarter where everything seemed to go wrong for you guys.

ROCCO BECHT: We're a second half team, and today just wasn't clicking on all cylinders for us. That's no fault to anybody. That's just fault to -- just our leaders on our team just trying to prepare this team and get ready for that second half.

We had everything in our hands still. We just needed to execute. At the end of the day, we just didn't.

Q. Jaylin, it felt like offensively you guys were kind of doing what you wanted early on to get the one stop then it snowballed. How confident were you you'd get

that groove back and get back into it?

JAYLIN NOEL: We're always confident. Obviously like you said, we weren't moving the ball how we wanted to, but it came down to the small details. The small details weren't there when we needed them. That's what prevented us from going forward and scoring more points.

Q. Jaylin, I saw how emotional you were coming off the field. Could you just describe a little bit more about why this means so much and hurts so much because this opportunity was here?

JAYLIN NOEL: I love this team. I love this university, love my brothers, and just everybody that's believed in me.

For us to -- obviously not end of season, we've got one more game. But for us to lose this game the way we did, everybody kept fighting, though. I couldn't be more proud of this team to get to this point. I'll be appreciative forever for what this team has done for me and what my brothers have done to me, yeah.

Q. Myles, one of the phrases we've heard a lot is the attention and the detail. Did you feel like defensively you guys were as detail oriented and firm on that kind of thing in terms of the missed tackles today?

MYLES PURCHASE: Yeah, like we said earlier, I feel like in a lot of ways we just weren't clicking on all cylinders. Defense is a team effort, and if one thing goes wrong, it can make a snowball effect as well. Just not clicking on all cylinders, and obviously that's the result.

Q. Rocco, you took a pretty big hit there. How are you feeling? What was your mindset after it happened?

ROCCO BECHT: I was feeling good. I just wanted to get back in the game and keep playing with my guys and put points up on the board. So I'm good.

Q. Rocco, I noticed in the tunnel you didn't run back. You kind of stood there and made sure you kind of talked to everybody. Is that something you always do, or is that something you had to do today?

ROCCO BECHT: These guys put in a lot of work to get to where we did today, and it just didn't fall out the way we wanted it to. We've got to be better. We're a team that I feel like can handle adversity really well. Today at some points we couldn't, and we have to fix that.

At the end of the day, I told everybody coming out of that tunnel, the ones that are coming back, remember this feeling. We will be back in this game next year, I promise

you that.

Q. J.R., everyone talks about Skattebo. (Indiscernible). They added a playmaker. How difficult was it to slow them down offensively?

J.R. SINGLETON: Yeah, credit to them. That's why I feel like Skattebo is an All Conference player. We're practicing tackling all week, and we had to get population to the ball, and we failed a lot of times today.

The offense needs us, and we just didn't accomplish what we needed to today.

Q. J.R., how do you summarize what happened in the third quarter as things just started to unravel on both sides of the ball?

J.R. SINGLETON: We had a couple turnovers, and then when the turnovers happen, we're a brotherhood, and the defense, we were out there. It was on us to get a stop, and we didn't.

I mean, there's no fingers to point. It's a team effort. Team is what got us here, and we lost as a team today. That's point blank, period, what it is.

Q. J.R. and Myles too if you want to chime in, after you played against Skattebo for a game, what is it that makes him kind of unique or different than other backs that you faced? Against a guy like that, do you have to try and tackle or wrap him up like in other ways?

J.R. SINGLETON: He's just got a low center of gravity. I feel like, when he gets his engine going, it's hard to stop him. That's why Coach emphasized getting vertical this week so we could stop him in the backfield and not get him going.

When he does get going, you've got to get population to the ball. It's really hard to tackle him one-on-one. That's the biggest thing about him.

MYLES PURCHASE: Like J.R. said, I would say he's got really good contact balance. Like he said, getting population to the ball is big for us, and that's just the thing we we're doing today. I have to take accountability for that as well.

Q. For the three seniors, assuming everyone decides to play in the ballgame, what would it mean to have one more opportunity to play as a group and obviously with the entire team?

JAYLIN NOEL: Yeah, it means everything. The seniors

are going to play in the bowl game. I'm going to play in the bowl game. Just to be able to have that last moment, it will be a defining moment for this program, to win 11 games and finish better than we did last year.

I know we went in last year to Memphis and obviously didn't win that game, but this year it will be different. We've got to prepare, keep the standards the standards, keep holding guys accountable, and anybody that doesn't want to hold that standard doesn't need to go for the ride on the last game. But we'll be ready for it.

J.R. SINGLETON: I think I'll just piggy-back on what Jaylin is saying. Really anything you put your hands on in life, you want to leave it better than you got it. Really all us seniors, we take a lot of pride in being the Cyclone and leaving this place better than how we found it.

Really putting the exclamation point on it, going out there and getting the win against whoever we play wherever we play, it means the world here. We're still on pace to make history, right? Iowa State's never won 11 games, so that's still in the grasp for us.

You're going to get our all. We're going to go back to the drawing board, and we're going to win that game.

MYLES PURCHASE: I guess you can't say too much other than that. J.R. really summed it up. We have a bowl game, but we're going to prepare for that game like it's the playoffs. I'm going to give my best, and I know the seniors are going to give our best in that game.

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