

University of Tulsa Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 4, 2023

Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA

Coach Kevin Wilson

Press Conference



Tulsa 26, Charlotte 33

KEVIN WILSON: Again, disappointed with our loss. Thought we came out and played hard. Some guys stepped up. Some injuries on defenses, some guys stepped up and really played hard. Had the lead until the fourth quarter. Had too many mistakes. Might be the personal fouls or the holding penalties or blocked punt, missed field goals, things in one-possession games that beat you beat.

Turnovers at the end of first half at mid-field when it's a 17-3. So just enough plays, an undisciplined team, and that's our team, my team, and I got to take responsibility for that. We're just not playing very good ball.

Thought they played hard. Had a good week. Liked their vibe going into the game. Just disappointed we weren't able to make the plays to win the game.

Q. I would like an update on Cardell.

KEVIN WILSON: Got his shoulder. I don't think it's severe. It's his throwing arm, and I think it's some degree of a sprain. It's his right arm, so throwing, and he is a 180 pound slight guy, so wasn't able to play.

Q. I know just in the past two games the quarterback has really kind of under-performing; you had to bring in another one. Brought in Kirk Francis today. Talk about what he did for the team at least in the second half.

KEVIN WILSON: Yeah, I just thought Braylon is a good athlete and a good leader and has done well for us, but he's not throwing the ball well. Hasn't thrown it well in practice and just been off target. The first drive we missed couple. Went with Cardell; he got hot.

I thought we would probably need, with Cardell injured, a combination of Braylon and Kirk, because Kirk throws the ball reasonably well. Didn't have a great game. Made a couple mistakes. Made a few completions.

That's a work in progress. Got to get Braylon to continue to play better and bring Kirk along. Still we didn't -- I think we were, what, six of 11 and six of 16 at whatever, so 50%, when everybody in college ball is throwing 70% now, so we got to throw better, catch it better.

We tried to get the ball down the field more. Thought Anthony ran hard. Billy Jack came in and ran hard. We had some chances. I just think Braylon just hasn't thrown it as well as I would like to see. Hasn't been on target.

Kirk is showing he can. At the same time, you're a freshman, first time out there, you're under fire, people coming at you.

So he did okay, but he also made a few mistakes that young players are going to make. Just kind of where we at are right now. Kind of thought we needed to go with Cardell though even though we -- I had actually talked to him, like I would like to see him play well. I thought he gave us a good chance of running and throwing. At the same time, he's a developmental guy and weighs 180 pounds, so those hits add up. We got to get him stronger in the future as he goes forward.

That room has to keep getting better. There is some great talent there. We just got to get that room better.

Q. We talked earlier this week about the goal of bowl games. Even know you lost tonight, you got Tulane next, just a really good Tulane team. The goal is still there. I'm sure that's still the goal.

KEVIN WILSON: Correct. So without making deal, all we said is with each loss the margin of error has gotten thinner, so you're going to have to play well. At the same time, that's a big picture. Hopefully, again, yeah we've tried our best to stay with the crowd, stay together. I thought we had a good week. I thought we came out and played like a team that was playing good. Jumped on a really good -- 17-3, two minutes left in the first half; lay the ball on the ground at mid-field.

You know, like I say, to me the team has been good, staying together good. We got to do that as we play



another really good opponent next week with Tulane down the stretch. At the same time, that's a two-way street. They'll have to choose -- we're going to choose as coaches. It's hard to stay with them, so try to keep correcting mistakes and try to get better as coaches the best we can.

At the same time it's a two-way street. The players got to work with it, the coaches got to work with it, we got work together. We'll work as hard as we can and have another good week and see what we can do next week for Tulane.

Q. Last thing from me about Ben Kopenski, just the way he played today and really stepped up and lead the defense.

KEVIN WILSON: Played his heart out. Really emotional downstairs. I know he wanted to win. Same with Kendarin, two of our leaders in performance. They're playing hard. Love them. Appreciate them. I appreciate what they do for us.

And not just the way they play the game, off the field, great kids, great leaders. Proud of those guys.

And like I say, Ben plays hard. He gives it everything. Sometimes you look at him and he just totally drained and exhausted. He gives us everything he has got.

I I've been around a few players that do that. He pours every ounce of energy into playing and plays as hard as he can, so a lot of respect for him.

Q. Talk about the final drive of regulation. Nice drive. You don't have a lot of time. Francis leads these guys down there, almost -- looks like you almost had two touchdowns and got field goal and send it to over time. Talk about that drive.

KEVIN WILSON: Yeah, I mean, we weren't in two like a -- hell, we did have a timeout in our pocket. We were able to get first down or two there with Kam. Got it going. Threw a big ball I think to Carl Chester out to the field and got it down close. I think they had a personal foul that got us closer.

Then, unfortunately, we had a timeout and we had to use one for miscommunication, getting a signal. Our quarterback had difficulty, Kirk had difficulty finding a signal and what the play was.

So unfortunately we lost our one timeout. That meant we had to throw it into the end zone, because if we got tackled it was going to be a panic. So took a few shots; didn't work out. Ran the ball that drive before and had a great drive all

the way down the field.

I thought we just could mash it for a two-point play. Maybe we shouldn't. That's a bad decision. Go back and look, that thing doesn't work. Couple times in the red zone early I thought the way their defense was the quarterback play, we had some third and nines that we didn't call some good operations or execute a play good.

It's on the nine yard line, you're running the ball, because we'll take three. Wasn't trying to play conservative, but just as youthful as we've been at quarterback, the way we been, didn't maybe push the envelope. And so again, we left some points on the board there.

But like I said, it was a nice drive. It was good for Kirk to do that. He gave us a chance on a couple throws. He threw two up high. We couldn't get our feet in. We tried. Their defensive guys made some plays. Tried to back shoulder fake the last one; couldn't get it in.

In overtime, maybe should have ran it a play or two. I thought the first pass had a chance; we missed the read. Second play we get it bobbled; almost a pick there. So maybe we should have ran the ball and got it a little bit more manageable that last -- that overtime drive. We didn't get it done.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports