

Stanford University Football Media Conference

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Coach Justin Wilcox Postgame Media Conference



California 41, Stanford 11

Q. Justin, can you just talk about how your offense was able to pick up where you were before the whole COVID outbreak and perform the way it did today?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Yeah, well, I tell you what, with the number of guys that made plays today on offense, starting with Chase, throughout the receiver group, the running backs, tight ends, I mean, it was really impressive.

The number of contested plays where guys are breaking a tackle, make a contested catch, Chase putting it on the money, that's what it takes.

Also want to -- you know, Bill Musgrave and the offensive staff putting the guys in position to do that with multiple formations and wrinkles. I know how hard it is to defend in practice and it showed up today, so really couldn't be more impressed with the entire group.

Q. Did you have some questions about how this would go after really not having your full offense together since October 30th, and are you surprised at all?

JUSTIN WILCOX: No. I expected us to come out and play well. I think -- I don't think, I know -- our players expected us to come out and play well.

You know, things came together. And, again, the number of contested plays the guys made, whether it's catches, runs, blocks, one-on-one plays, really all over the field there on offense, that was the difference for our offense tonight.

It was a lot of fun to watch them go out and compete because you could just tell that they kind of had that won't-be-denied attitude throughout the entire game.

Q. Congratulations. We talked earlier in the week about how emotional and satisfying the win here was two years ago. Is tonight as emotional, satisfying?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Oh, absolutely. If you could feel the energy on the field with the players and the alumni and the students, the fans, and then this locker room that we just walked into, there is no doubt about it.

It's a hard feeling to describe to somebody, but I want our guys to soak it up. It's something that people can never take from them, and there is not substitute for it.

Q. We talked about a lot about what's been going on the past two, two and a half weeks. Maybe take me back to the middle of October when you guys were 1-5 and things were not looking very good. You put together in your three wins really overwhelming dominant wins. Did you think in the middle of October this team would be able to do that?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Yeah, the results weren't what we were expecting during that time, but it never felt like we were far off. We were a playoff here or there.

You know, the guys never lost confidence. They got frustrated, we all do a little bit, but guys didn't lose confidence in each other, in what we were asking them to do, or the process which we were doing it.

So that's the reason we were able to continue to grow as a team as opposed to guys folding up shop and cashing it in; nobody did that.

So I just got great respect for the players on our team and how they approach each and every day and care about each other. It shows up in how they play.

Q. Coach, you ran I want to say four trick plays today. I don't think I've seen you run that many in your time being at Cal. What changed for you guys to open up the playbook that much?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Well, we've had them in. We had the opportunities to call them today. You know, the situation has to be right, but I still just want to go back and give the credit to Bill and our offensive staff, the players, because there is multiples in there.



We run more than one group, personnel group or one style of run or one pass play. We give them a lot, but they do such a great job of taking that to the practice field and to the game. The full credit goes to Bill, the offensive staff, and ultimately the players who make it happen.

Q. On another note, Lu had a fantastic game tonight. Made a number of different plays. Just what can you tell us about his progression from coming in as a true freshman to making big plays in the Big Game?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Well, Lu really since he's joined us in summer is a very steady guy. Each and every day you know what you're getting with Lu, and he plays a position where you could be an island at times and everybody sees you.

But he's got ability, really quick feet, good anticipation, very smart, and for being a young guy that doesn't have a ton of experience.

But maybe the most impressive thing is the calm he plays with. At that position for a young guy like that to play with such calm and confidence is very, very impressive.

That's hard thing to measure in recruiting. I don't know that you really can. So we're sure glad Lu is on our team. I think he's got a very, very bright future.

Q. A lot of times it's tough for those of us in the media, and I'm sure you guys as well, to put things into history perspective while you're doing it. Chase now has had two great, Big Games here at Stanford. Pretty good one last year even though you lost. Can you put in perspective in historical perspective for Cal, which has had a number of great quarterbacks, where Chase Garber's performances put him in the Pantheon of Cal quarterbacks?

JUSTIN WILCOX: That's a great question, and I bet there is people who might give you -- who have seen more big games than I have. All I know is I'm really glad Chase is on our team to quarterback the Big Game. Had another excellent one today.

Chase is playing his best football since he's been here, and it's not even close. The last month or so just his execution, the control, making plays with his feet, with his arm, it's just been a lot of fun to watch him.

And he's had two big wins in the Big Game.

I'm sure that people at Cal will remember that a long time. If he happens to come back when he's older and is sitting around campus for lunch, I bet he doesn't have to pay.

Q. Justin, not to get ahead of tonight's game, but you've got UCLA and USC coming up. You need to win both of those games and sweep the California schools to become bowl eligible. How much does a performance like this give your guys confidence heading into next week?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Yeah, I think just validates what we're asking them to do. Not that they ever have doubted, to be honest with you. They've always given us their best effort.

That's why myself and our coaches, we love these guys so much. We trust in them. I don't think that will change. They're going to come out, show up on Monday with a workman-like attitude like they always do, and understand we'll have another challenge in front of us next Saturday.

But they were such a humble, hard working group. I think they won't approach it any different than this past week. I know they'll be excited to play next Saturday down in L.A.

Q. We haven't seen that much of Dancy this year. Every time we do it seems like he makes a big play. Can you talk about what he's done both in the games and behind the scenes in practice?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Yeah, I could talk forever about Marcel Dancy. Since he's joined us he's one of the most humble, hard working guys. He epitomizes what Cal football is about. Here is a guy that in a lot of ways when you have good depth at positions guys don't get maybe the reps they deserve.

I mean, that tap in before where you got some good players and some guys probably deserve more reps, but because of the competition at the position don't get them. I think Marcel falls into that category. He's never once complained. He works every day. He's the first guy to the meeting. First guy in the practice field.

For him, for the past few years to be that person and then show up and have the game he did tonight, I'm just really happy for him. Really couldn't be more proud of him. And like I said, he just epitomizes what we were all about.

Q. You had a first quarter that was a tit for tat trade of turnovers. Then you went into the halftime 14-0. Can you walk us through what the atmosphere was like in the locker room at halftime.

JUSTIN WILCOX: Really like all of our halftimes. Solving problems of what happened in the first half. What do we need to identify and fix? Wrinkles or adjustments need to be made, whether it's offense, defense, or special teams.

But certainly no panic. It's all problem solving and adjustments, and I thought the guys handled it really well. There was a couple early in the first quarter we had some chances to get points on the board and had a couple mistakes. Guys never -- you know, never blinked, never flinched. They just stayed with it.

We came in at halftime and made whatever adjustments we needed to make and finished the game.

Q. Despite all the offense did, can you talk about the importance of the two goal line stands in the first half?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Yeah, I mean, those are huge. Two fourth down stops, interception, and then two fourth down stops early in the game. As you know, that changes things.

So really our defense battled all night, and we knew with McKee coming back and some of their wideouts coming back that they got weapons and they would make a few plays. I thought our defense just battled all night.

To get these stops is big, because now you got -- it's a different dynamic going into the half, and then we came out I think the first drive and got three points on the board in the third quarter.

So, yeah, it's a different dynamic when you can get those stops.

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