

Stanford University Football Media Conference

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Stanford, California, USA

Coach Kalani Sitake Postgame Media Conference



BYU 35, Stanford 26

KALANI SITAKE: Well, good win. We challenged the guys to do something that we hadn't done yet, so felt good to come here and get a win on the farm.

I thought we obviously had some guys get banged up, but they executed the game plan. Stanford made things difficult for us, and I felt like we could run away with it, but they did a good job powering back. They've got some really good coaches and good players, too. Just thankful that we were able to get this win. Looking forward to the bowl prep.

Funny, the destination really not that important to me or the opponent right now. It's just extending the bowl prep and having extra practices. That's going to be key for our program, especially for our developmental (indiscernible).

Any questions.

Q. Is Jaren done for the season?

KALANI SITAKE: No. I think Jaren is going to be fine for the whole year.

Q. Will he be available for the bowl?

KALANI SITAKE: Yeah, I think when we were looking at him coming back, I think it was going to be difficult for him to function at a high level, so we made the decision to keep him out. Feel good about it. But he feels good about being able to come back.

Q. Nothing comes easy for you guys; looked like you were dominating and tightened up. Why is that do you think?

KALANI SITAKE: Yeah, I think you've got to give credit to a lot of guys that played. We ran into Stanford on senior day, on senior night. They obviously wanted to win this game, and knowing that they're not going to a bowl game, I thought they put everything they could put into this game

plan, and we were not able to be dominant on the defensive side.

I thought it was good to be able to stop the run, but with the talent of Tanner McKee, those guys can (indiscernible). That's pretty much what they did, I mean, looking at the amount of times that they threw. Just didn't get enough disruption on the (indiscernible).

But I think for the most part, guys felt good about defending them, making it hard on them. And then just on the offense, guys on offense felt really good about the run game, so just going through that and I didn't complain about it.

Q. (Indiscernible) short yardage situations?

KALANI SITAKE: Well, yeah, we tried a lot of different things and maybe just simple is the way to go. I thought maybe overthought a little bit. Good to get some stuff on film, but we need to start converting those and flipping the conversion our way a little bit more.

Not happy about that, but something to work on for next time. I just like the way Chris and (indiscernible) ran the ball. I thought they made some big plays. I thought there was maybe one missed tackle, one breaking a tackle to spring a big one.

But I think Stanford, they started to play tough on defense and made their tackles, and it was kind of a battle towards the end.

Q. Chris hasn't been a (indiscernible) until really tonight. What kind of changed to make that happen?

KALANI SITAKE: I thought he ran really physical last week. I think the injury and having him be out, I think he's got a little bit of -- taking out his anger on the field, which I'm really good with.

I got one more goal with him, and I thought he played physical, put his head down and move on to -- showed some physical play. I thought the O-line did some good things in run block, and that's why we ran it so many times.



We only threw the ball 12 times. I thought that was good for the run game. I don't think we ever let him run 23 times. I felt like he was getting stronger towards the end. We had some success with guys that can do that.

Q. Is Lopini done for the year?

KALANI SITAKE: He was sick and not able to go so he missed a lot of practice this week due to illness. That was the main reason.

Q. The sequence right before halftime where they hit the field goal, should the clock have started up again?

KALANI SITAKE: Yeah, I was talking to the refs about it because it didn't seem like they had enough time, but the malfunction of the clock allowed them to get one more 2nd and allowed them to get their kick team ready.

I was looking for an explanation, and from my understanding you're not allowed to do a play with that much time, three seconds or so. I think the malfunction and adding the one second created time for them to get their kick team ready, and I took a time-out.

They were going to start the clock on the whistle and Stanford just snapped the ball at the whistle, so they were going to get a play and just wanted to get a good block in, and in the end the kicker made a kick.

It's just unfortunate the timing and everything, but from what I understood -- and the refs explained it to me, and that's just the malfunction of the clock, so it didn't work in their -- to benefit them this time.

Q. Along those same lines, what was the explanation from the refs on the touchdown grab in the fourth quarter?

KALANI SITAKE: Yeah, I'm not in the booth and seeing all of it, so from the replays that we saw on the field, it didn't seem like his toe or anything touched. They must have saw something. It happens.

Q. What's the initial insight on Keionte? I saw he got banged up a bit.

KALANI SITAKE: Yeah, a lot of guys got banged up, but from what we were seeing, nothing -- Jaren and others, I don't feel like those guys are out for the year.

Q. Does this feel like kind of a positive note for a season that's had a lot of ups and downs? Does it seem like this team is starting to play at its best?

KALANI SITAKE: Yeah, I felt like we played some moments at our best. My goal is to put 60 minutes together, that we could do that consistently. I think the game plan we were going through, I don't know if we planned on running, how many times to the 55s, but if we need to we can. I like the fact that the guys (indiscernible) the play, and I thought we were able to get some pressure on the quarterback on defense. Thought special teams was clean. Overall a good win.

Like I said, this was something that BYU team (indiscernible) beat Stanford, so these guys did it.

Looking at the year as a whole now, there's a lot of guys that predicted that would happen, and now they're all surprised by it. By what I've seen from the beginning to the end, there's been a lot of progress in the program, a lot of things we know will be better going into this bowl game and to get ready for spring games in 2023, but focus on this bowl game right now.

Q. You mentioned last week wanting to see Jacob Conover throw a little bit more. When he came into the game, was it just by nature how the game played out that he didn't get more throws?

KALANI SITAKE: Yeah, I don't know that that was the time, but looking at it, Jaren threw it 11 times, so I don't know if he planned on that. I felt like looking at the offensive game plan we just felt like we were really good with the run game and making (indiscernible), so that was the outcome right there.

It doesn't really matter to me. I just want to get the win. I feel like we could have made it a lot easier on ourselves (indiscernible) making plays and trying to stay in it.

Q. What becomes of the schedule for you and the staff and the program between now and when the bowl gets announced next week?

KALANI SITAKE: Yeah, we've got to get back to work. Obviously there's guys that got to heal up, but I think we take advantage of getting back to work and working so the young guys getting better at fundamentals and technique. There's going to be quite a few guys with the redshirt rule that are going to be able to play, and what's holding them out from playing, especially from special teams, is that they just weren't able to practice enough to understand the scheme.

So going into this last -- you'll see a lot of new faces, guys that are going to be here definitely for next year and are committed. (Indiscernible) four games, and there's some

that we've got to hold them out for that, but I feel really good about the guys that are going to be able to play and take the field.

Q. Are you expecting any opt-outs or guys going in the transfer portal? Are you expecting that?

KALANI SITAKE: I haven't heard that from any of the guys. We spend quite a bit of time, especially in the bye week, talking to them, and so I don't anticipate that, but that's kind of the thing.

We'll communicate and talk and then obviously decide what's best for the players and what's best for the team that may happen, I don't know, but I'm not anticipating it right now.

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