

# Stanford University Football

## Media Conference

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Stanford, California, USA

## Sonny Dykes

### Postgame Media Conference



SONNY DYKES: Well, first of all, got to give Stanford a lot of credit. Thought Troy and his staff did an excellent job getting those guys ready to play. They came out with an entirely new defense, new scheme. Gave us problems. Not something that we spent a lot of time preparing for. Again, you have to give those guys a ton of credit for doing that.

I thought they did a great job of game planning and put their players in a position to win the football game. So hats off to Stanford. Like I said, I thought their guys played hard, thought they played smart, thought they played disciplined. Kind of like you would expect Stanford to play.

Us, we were fortunate. Anytime you go on the road and you make some of the mistakes we made, typically you get beat. So really proud of this football team for sticking with it, just keeping their head down and continuing to play hard and grinding through it 'cause there were some moments where it didn't look particularly good.

Like I said, really proud of the effort. We talked a lot about being tough, mentally tough. I thought we were. We got down, guys never blinked. When we had to get stops defensively, we had 'em, and when we had to score touchdowns at the end, we scored touchdowns.

I thought we played physical. Talked to the guys about playing physical. I thought we did that. We were able to run the ball better as the game went along. I thought we got a little bit more physical at the point of attack.

But we didn't play very disciplined. You think about it. First drive of the game I think was kind of the way the night went. We were off the field twice on third down. Two penalties keep the drive alive, and Stanford went down and scored. Had long quarterback scramble. We made some critical, critical mistakes that typically get you beat. So we were fortunate to win.

Again, credit our guys for sticking with it and making plays and doing what they had to do to win.

#### Q. Some of those mistakes, first-game jitters?

SONNY DYKES: Yeah, I think so. You know what's funny? This team was really ready to play. I don't know that I've had a team that was more focused and excited to play an opener, certainly in a long time. I think because of that, we might have played a little tight early, probably tried to do a little too much early.

As the game went on a little bit, you could tell we got a little frustrated. But I thought our guys were, like I said, really mentally tough and fought through it, kept their head down.

A lot of things we got to get fixed. We got down in the red zone and turned the ball over. We had opportunities to kind of pull away, and we just couldn't make plays. Typically, again, when you do that, normally you don't win the game.

#### Q. Josh's performance, especially on the drive?

SONNY DYKES: Good. Look, I don't know how many drops we had. I bet we had five, six drops. I thought he was accurate. Thought he made good decisions throwing the football. Thought he seemed calm and poised.

There's some decisions that we got to get cleaned up a little bit. Sometimes with run-pass options, we ran the ball when we should have thrown it, threw it when we should have run it.

I thought for a guy that hasn't started that many football games, when things got tough, I thought he got better. So I was encouraged by that.

#### Q. (Question about position play.)

SONNY DYKES: We had some guys banged up. We had Dallen kind of gotten banged up at the end of camp. We weren't sure if he was going to be available. JoJo Earle was kind of banged up as well. We weren't sure if he was going to be available. For us, it was trying to get the best guys on the field.

We felt like Jack could have a game like he had tonight. He's just that kind of guy. The more he plays, the more opportunities he has to catch the ball, the more

opportunities he has to make plays, he does it. He's just a guy that Josh really counts on and believes in.

We felt like four, five days ago that we were going to make that move. He came in. For a guy that hadn't played that position a lot, he really played well.

**Q. Can you highlight three plays: first touchdown, the deep ball in the first half that didn't lead to a touchdown, and the final one to Cam?**

SONNY DYKES: The first one was a great matchup. Savion is a guy that obviously we count on. Especially we were really trying to get him involved in the game early. He made a bunch of plays early in the game. Finished that drive off.

Josh did a really good job of getting the ball out on time. The ball got out there so quick that the defender was trying to play Savion, Savion had an opportunity to play the ball. That was that.

The long was a post drop to Bech. Really good throw. Typical of a Josh Hoover throw. Had to throw it over somebody and under the safety. Was real accurate throw. We kind of wasted that opportunity a couple times in the red zone. We got to get better on red zone offense.

The touchdown to Cam, that was a heck of a run. They blitzed right into where we were throwing the ball and he had to cut it, wind it all the way back. Did a great job of getting it into the end zone.

We didn't want to get in a situation where we needed to kick a field goal. We needed to score. That was obviously a heck of a run and a great effort. Thought our offensive line picked it up pretty good. They blitzed right into it. Heck of a cut, a great effort play.

**Q. Marcel has been doing a lot. How great is it to see that?**

SONNY DYKES: It's fantastic. He's a guy that has been through a lot. He's had injuries. I just really love that kid. I mean, I just love him. He loves being part of this team. This team means the world to him. Just really proud of him for hanging in there and sticking it out.

Great to see him make a play. He's one of those guys that he's overcome so much, it's really rewarding when you get to see him make a big play and get a sack like he did tonight. It's awesome.

**Q. Talk about how the new communication system worked.**

SONNY DYKES: I thought it was good. I thought it was really good. If you look at college football, the scoring is lower. It's lower-scoring games. It's more one-score games in the opening weekend. People are huddling more because of the communication systems. The number of series that each team gets, those numbers have dropped dramatically.

It really puts an onus on you offensively, you have to execute at a really high level. You can't mess up possessions like we did. You can't get down in the red zone and not score, turn the ball over, kick field goals. If you do that, you're going to run out of possessions. You're not going to have a chance to win the game.

I think college football is changing. I really do believe that. Again, you look at these competitive games, a lot of 'em are fewer possessions and much closer one-score games.

We're going to have to play more disciplined as the season goes along. We can't afford to get those penalties that hurt us today. Can't afford to turn the ball over like we did, particularly in the red zone. Got to execute better when we get down there.

Got to give Stanford a lot of credit. Showed us some looks, short-yardage looks, some red zone looks, a defense we really hadn't seen before.

**Q. Third time here. You did not win here.**

SONNY DYKES: Never played a competitive game here when I was at Cal. So it's nice to win. Nice to come here and win. I got a lot of respect for this university and their football program and their players, Coach Taylor. I think they got a good football team. They really do.

They did a really good job, like I said earlier, putting their players in position to win a football game tonight. We were fortunate to win. Good to get that monkey off my back. Always nice to visit the Bay Area, but I'm glad I'm getting on a plane and going home.