

TransPerfect Music City Bowl: Missouri vs Iowa

Monday, December 30, 2024

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Nissan Stadium

Iowa Hawkeyes

Kaden Wetjen

Deontae Craig

Postgame Press Conference



the block that Max White gave you to get that thing going?

KADEN WETJEN: Well, first off, we weren't expecting to have any returns. They have limited returns, so that was a shock to start off.

I mean, I don't know if you guys saw it. I didn't really have to do much. There was a huge hole. They gave me a crease, and I think it was Lutmer that was already at the 50 yard line when I popped through.

But, yeah, all credit to them, man. They did all the work. I didn't have to do anything.

THE MODERATOR: That was a TransPerfect Music City Bowl kickoff return record.

Q. Deontae, just thinking back on the season you guys have had, three double-digit leads this year that you squandered. How do you kind of grasp that looking back on the season? You are usually so good about putting games away.

DEONTAE CRAIG: I mean, that's -- I don't know, it's tough. I think, first and foremost, you have to give credit to our opponents. Their ability to stick with it even when things aren't going the best for them, just keep pounding, keep trying to execute at a high level.

Then to make some mistakes here and there, you have your eyes on the wrong spot, stepping the wrong way, getting out of your gap. When you lose close games like that, that's how those things happen.

Obviously there's nothing we can do about it now. Just go back and stay in the film room, figure out the things that beat us, and for the guys coming back, just work on those things and pay extra close attention to them next time you get in those situations.

Q. For Deontae, kind of with this being the end of the road, what do you hope people remember about you and the rest of the senior class?

Missouri 27, Iowa 24

THE MODERATOR: We're going to hear first from No. 21 Kaden Wetjen and No. 45 Deontae Craig. Questions, please.

Q. For Deontae, kind of what was it about this Missouri offense particularly that made them such a difficult matchup for you guys?

DEONTAE CRAIG: I mean, you have to give them credit. They've got great athletes across the board. Like you said, when you have a veteran quarterback that can get out there and improvise and make plays, you see it helps them move the ball.

I think everybody played really extremely hard. We had a great plan, but you know, the other team makes plays too, and with some mistakes that you have, that's how you lose close games like that.

Definitely sucks, but you have to give them credit. They made the plays they needed to win down the stretch.

Q. Kaden, your main thing is returning kicks and punts, but I guess offensively maybe what did you see that wasn't working for you guys in the fourth quarter and part of the third?

KADEN WETJEN: Well, I mean, yeah, starting off the game, we were going pretty good, and then they just made some defensive changes. I mean, honestly I couldn't tell you exactly what stopped us, but I mean, we had a couple of mental errors, and we kind of shot ourselves in the foot in some instances, but other than that, they did a great job. They're a great team. I mean, all credit goes to them.

Q. Kaden, can you talk about your return and maybe



DEONTAE CRAIG: I think the senior class going out was really special. We came into college at a pretty crazy time back there in 2020 and COVID. Every day it was, Okay, the season is canceled. Oh, it's back on. It's back on, but it's four games. It's a full game season. It was crazy.

When you commit so much to something and you got so many other guys that are out there doing what they love with you and you see how hard they work and you see how much they give to the game and to this team and to this university, I mean, this is why games like this suck so much because you want to go out on top.

I think this class of 2020 -- I know some guys have already left and gone on, but I think we left things in a better place for sure. Any guys out there that consider Iowa or want to be a Hawkeye one day, I mean, this is why you come to this place.

Some teams might lose in a bowl game and it might not mean anything, but just hearing you say that's the end of the road, it's like something that I still haven't even been able to comprehend yet. I'm just blessed and thankful to have experienced it and went through it all.

Q. Just what have you seen from this senior class, and assuming you're coming back next year, what do you kind of hope to take from this?

KADEN WETJEN: I know we're the same class, but I kind of came at a different time. I can't really talk about the COVID season much for them, but from what I've seen from all those guys, the leadership, and everything that they've shown since I got here, the first day I was here they were all kind of -- I mean, it wasn't just one guy. It was multiple guys patting me on the back, telling me what to do. It just shows you the culture we have here and what these guys have said.

It's just been awesome. Aside from all the losses, I mean, we made the Big Ten Championship last year, and the success that these guys have brought to this program has been pretty sweet, so...

THE MODERATOR: Kaden and Deontae, thank you both.

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