

Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl: Pitt vs Michigan State

Thursday, December 30, 2021

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Michigan State Spartans

Cal Haladay

Press Conference

Michigan State - 31, Pitt - 21

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Cal Haladay.

Q. On that last interception, it looked a lot like the one at Indiana. Did it feel the same? Was it similar at all to that play? What's going through your mind when you're running down the sideline there with that?

CAL HALADAY: In my mind I was just thinking I'm probably going to get yelled at a little bit because I'm supposed to go down in that situation. But I couldn't do it. I couldn't pass up the opportunity in my head.

But it was really similar to Indiana. Now I just -- there was nothing in front of me and I just had to keep going. And I was nervous someone was going to catch me from behind.

Q. The defensive approach you guys had in the second half, how much of that was trying to maybe adjust to a new quarterback in the first half and then kind of settled in, and how much adjustment did you guys have to make?

CAL HALADAY: I didn't think we had to make any adjustments. We just had to clean up how we were playing. Our adjustments just were tackle better, drive on the ball better, break, just doing the little things better. That's what we did at the end of the day. We just needed to go out, get the ball back to our offense as quick as we could and give ourselves an opportunity to win the game.

Q. This is a lot like other games you guys had this year, maybe not the Indiana game, but Nebraska and Miami, you guys have had late plays to seal or win a game. I know that obviously speaks to the keep chopping, relentless sort of mantra thing. When did you notice or feel that was taking root in the program and it wasn't just a saying; it was actually a thing? It



wasn't just a hashtag or sign on the wall, but it was something that this team actually had?

CAL HALADAY: I think it started in fall camp. I think we believed it from day one. Coach Tucker's culture is keep chopping, keep grinding, be relentless. That's the way we've been since fall camp. It got us through these tight games, to be honest.

When they talk about 15 rounds and taking it to the deep water, that's what we did. Coach Tuck believes in this conditioned and physical, technical, fundamentals, things like that. And I think that's what this game came down to.

Q. You're a guy who either was limited to special teams last year; no one anticipated you being a starter this season. What's it like to end the year not only with the team's success, but winning the MVP of the New Year's Six bowl game?

CAL HALADAY: I just am thankful for the opportunity I got. I've got to thank my parents, the team around me -- those guys worked their butts off every single day -- the coaches always pushing me to get better never letting me settle. And always constantly grinding every single day. I just need to thank everyone around me because without them I wouldn't be able to be where I am today.

Q. How does it feel to go out on a high note in dramatic fashion like this for the seniors? I know you're a younger guy, but to send them off like that, and to see guys like Connor Heyward making big plays, and it's perhaps their final game as a Spartan?

CAL HALADAY: That was the goal at the end of the day. We wanted to send our seniors out on a good note. We came down here for the 11th win and that's what our goal was after Penn State. I'm glad it all worked out. I'm proud of the guys. They have great careers here. And I'm just proud of what we did this year.

Q. The fans are starting to call you Pick-6 Haladay. Do you and Quavaris Crouch have to change numbers?

CAL HALADAY: Maybe. I don't know about that. But I



think I'm going to stick with 27 for now. But that's funny.
I'm glad everyone's enjoying it.

