

Florida Blue Florida Classic: Bethune-Cookman Wildcats vs Florida A&M Rattlers

Saturday, November 23, 2024

Orlando, Florida, USA

Camping World Stadium

Bethune-Cookman Wildcats Raymond Woodie Jr.

Maleek Huggins

Dennis Palmer

Press Conference

Florida A&M 41, Bethune Cookman 38

RAYMOND WOODIE JR.: Really proud of our guys tonight. They fought in every aspect of the game. Obviously we didn't finish the game. It was going back and forth. But the guys played hard, played really hard. We came up short.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Changed the offensive coordinator this week. Did that make it more difficult to prepare for the team not knowing what the new coordinator would be doing?

RAYMOND WOODIE JR.: We figured they would probably run the ball, and they did, not knowing what they were going to do. Our goal was to stop the run. That's what we attempted to do.

Q. Coach, the Florida Classic is part of the history and the experience here in Florida for a lot of people. Talk a little bit about this. You've been a player and you're coaching it for the second year.

RAYMOND WOODIE JR.: It's special. I mean, having an opportunity to be from the state of Florida, both schools from the state, knowing a lot of people who played in this game. I mean, great crowd. Like a homecoming-type situation. It's what you sign up for, to play a game like this.

Q. Coach, your guys tonight did pretty much what you wanted them to do. How discouraging is it to come out on the losing end?



RAYMOND WOODIE JR.: Like I said, the players fought, coaches fought. It didn't happen for us. That's the extent of it. Blame it on me, no excuses. We didn't finish the way we needed to.

Q. To have games like you both did, is it discouraging to see what happened on the scoreboard?

MALEEK HUGGINS: I don't know, man. We've been fighting all year. I'm not going to say we used to it. I don't know. I think we took a big step in the right direction.

DENNIS PALMER: Like he said, we took a right step in the right direction. It's unfortunate to fall short like we did. We're going in the right direction.

Q. Sometimes when a season is not going the way you want it to go, how difficult was it to keep your guys together and understand that you still have before you the biggest game of your season?

MALEEK HUGGINS: I don't know. I don't think it takes much to get up for this game. I was younger, probably like eight years old, I came to this game for the first time. It changed my life forever.

I kind of put that expectation on them guys, that it's different planning for it than going to it. It was special for me to play in it the first time.

Q. This is one of your higher offensive productions for the season. Talk about some of the things you were able to take away, the positives.

RAYMOND WOODIE JR.: Being able to run the ball, then also getting the ball out on the perimeter. I think we did both of those aspects. We did it well. Like I said, I'm proud of the guys progressing and not degressing.

Q. Coach, Dennis comes out of this one with 37 carries. Was the game plan coming in to have him carry that type of heavy workload?

RAYMOND WOODIE JR.: Well, we wanted to run the ball. Whatever they gave us, we wanted to take advantage of.



So when you ask that, obviously, I can't say we said we were going to give him the ball 37 to 40 times a game.

Whatever we saw, we ended up trying to stick with it. If it was successful, we stayed with it. That's contributing to him calling the ball so much.

Q. Any fatigue as you're carrying the ball late into the third and fourth quarter there or not really?

DENNIS PALMER: I'm just ready for the next play, ready to score. Whatever my team needs from me, that's what I'm going to do.

Q. Freshman coming into the Florida Classic. You darn near set a freshman record. Speak to your experience here, pretty much being the MVP for BCU?

DENNIS PALMER: I want to thank God first and foremost, my teammates, my coaches. Without them, I couldn't have had the type of game I had.

It's special. I never really seen or been a part of a Florida Classic. It's my first one. It was great out there, man. All the support. It was just a fantastic time. Once-in-a-lifetime experience. It was great.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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