

New Era Pinstripe Bowl: Virginia Tech vs Maryland

Wednesday, December 29, 2021

Bronx, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

Maryland Terrapins

Taulia Tagovailoa

Quarterback

Press Conference



and take the ball and not just take a knee, but to really push down there, how much confidence does that give you to know that your coach wants you doing that kind of stuff, to play with that kind of aggression?

Maryland 54, Virginia Tech 10

Q. Coach talked earlier about how the momentum that you guys had actually began on that last drive in the first half. It gave you guys a nice shot in the arm going into halftime where you guys were able to carry that over. If you could expand, I guess, on what went right on that last drive to get those points and the confidence that it gave you guys going into the locker room to where you were able to take control in the second half?

TAULIA TAGOVAILOA: I think we knew it was going to go two-minute, and I think we had two time-outs left, and we were just trying to get whatever we could. If we could score, that would be great, but we know we have a good kicker Petrino, and I think the whole drive, it was just everyone doing their job and Coach putting us in the best position. There were some pickups that is our running backs and our O-line picked up very well. It gave me a lot of time to throw the ball, and we just executed.

Q. You had those two nice touchdown tosses to Jones there. Was there a point today when you thought that he might have it going on where he would have such a special day?

TAULIA TAGOVAILOA: I think like that every day for all our -- any receiver that's on the field. They work so hard, and I'm happy that Darryl got to experience scoring. This is his first time scoring, and he scored twice. So I think that's a big confidence booster for our whole team just with this whole win going into next season, going into our offseason, and stuff like that.

Q. Coach spoke a lot this past month about viewing this game as much of a beginning of 2022 as the end of 2021. To follow up a little bit on that before, to get the call from him to go out there to end the first half

TAULIA TAGOVAILOA: Yeah, it gives me a lot of confidence. In two-minute drill it's like seven-on-seven out there. You know you're going to throw the ball. Depending how much time you've got left and time-outs and stuff like that, you get to run the ball. I think that just comes down to preparation. I think throughout this whole time, we had to prepare. We had a lot of two-minute drills going on in practice. I think that it just showed up right there, and it gives us a lot of confidence. The O-line, receivers, running backs, and myself. It's just throw the rock around, and I feel like we have a lot of confidence in our pass game.

Q. What do you think the winning record can do in the trajectory of a program, and just in the time that you have been at Maryland, how have you seen program improve and the rebuilding effort?

TAULIA TAGOVAILOA: I just think it starts with our leader, the head man, Coach Locks. The way he pushes us and the way he does things around the building. He works hard. A lot of sleepless nights for him just trying to make sure everything is going good. I think that's just the biggest thing, and the famous four words he says, you know, "The Best Is Ahead." I feel like that's what we showed out there. We're only going to get stronger, bigger, faster. We just feel like a family.

Q. My question for you: I think, like you said, the best is ahead. I think what does it mean for you personally to help push this program forward to where they want to go?

TAULIA TAGOVAILOA: I think it's a great feeling. Coming into this game, we knew what was at stake. We are just happy it didn't get canceled. It means a lot for our Maryland family, our fans. They've been waiting a long time for us to have a winning season and make bowl games and win a lot of games. I know it's hard to stay patient and stuff like that, but we feel like the best is ahead, like I said. We're just continuing to get better, and Coach



talked about this being the start of our next season, and so I feel like we gave people something to see.

Q. I know you talked about Darryl a little bit earlier, but what has his leadership sort of brought to the team, and this probably being his last game, what has his leadership brought to the team and kind of how good does it feel for you to see him go off like he did?

TAULIA TAGOVAILOA: It's a long time coming. Since I got here, when you see Darryl run routes, it just pops out to you. Very fast. Very quick in and out of his cuts. He is just a hard worker, and I think that's the way leads. Not talking and just working, like a lot of our guys. To see him have the day he had today, I can't be nothing but very happy for him. I'm pretty sure his family was happy. It's just the hard work that he has been putting in his whole time here. Hopefully there's some way that we can continue that because I'm pretty sure that's just the start for him.

Q. You guys essentially had a mini-camp worth of practices leading up to this bowl game. Did that help? You looked fresh out there, almost like it was the beginning of a season. I know Coach Locksley said it was the beginning of the 2022 season. Do those practices help you get in rhythm and come out with the energy that you showed today?

TAULIA TAGOVAILOA: 100%. We had player-ran practices. It was just doing little seven-on-seven, nothing too crazy. Then when Coach got back from recruiting and stuff, it was fall camp all over again. Getting back to the basics. Install one for me with Coach Enos is getting my feet right, two hands on the ball, the basic stuff. I think the way we responded to it was great. I think that really did help us getting back to the basics because it's something you don't really get to focus on when you are in the season because it's more about schemes and watching film and stuff like that. I feel like it was good. It was a good thing for us to go back to fall camp.

Q. What was it like for you and the rest of the offense to see the other phases of the team performing at such a high level, especially in such a big game? How difficult was the defense was making it for the offense? What was that like for you guys?

TAULIA TAGOVAILOA: That was exciting. I think I almost got penalized the second time G. Rose scored. It was just exciting for us to see. Heeb's punt return and our defense getting in. It's just a great feeling when our whole team really dominates the game. We scored if in all phases of the ball, and it's just the hard work. I know we see what goes on in practice and who is working hard and stuff like

that, and it's just great to see our defense get one in and our special teams as well.

Q. Just what does a performance like this do for you personally going into next season, and do you feel like you proved anything today?

TAULIA TAGOVAILOA: Obviously, it gives us a lot of confidence going into the offseason and going into next season. For me, myself, I think it was good playing against an ACC team, and I don't know. I think I'm just ready. Going into spring ball and offseason training with confidence, and I think it's more so just our team kind of building off of this and going into our next season.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports