

# Army-Navy Game

Saturday, December 9, 2023  
Foxborough, Massachusetts, USA

## Army Black Knights

## Leo Lowin

## Kalib Fortner

### Press Conference



Army 17, Navy 11

LEO LOWIN: You could tell it was going to be a quarterback sneak. Just tried to fire out. I know Kyle Lewis was in the middle. I'm not honestly sure who was in at the time, but just had to fire out, stop them.

This guy made a huge play on that 3rd down right before it in case anybody missed it, just to keep that guy short. I mean, couldn't ask for a better way to go out. Just had to make it interesting at the end, I guess, but definitely a good way to win it.

**Q. On the strip sack, what happened there, if you could describe that, and then the tackle in space, how that set up the conclusion.**

KALIB FORTNER: It was a crazy, crazy surreal moment, but we called a play where I blitz off the edge and kind of contain or else a linebacker will come inside. I almost missed the defensive call, but I came and I hit the ball. They were showing on film that they were kind of loose with the ball when they were in the pocket. I hit the ball. It's almost kind of like I planned it the way it bounced in my hands.

I had to start a run, and I saw on the Jumbotron a sea of gold jerseys behind me, and I kind of let off, but it was just a surreal moment.

Then to go back to the 3rd down play, we were in a play where we were man on the back, whichever way he went. He was on my side to begin with, so it was man on the back, and then almost got picked, but I was able to get underneath and kind of wrap him up and make sure he didn't fall forward and get outside. It was a great play.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

KALIB FORTNER: Yes, sir. I love the seniors we had here. The group of guys we had in the locker room leading

us was just unbelievable. This was like the leadership that they showed all year long was just something unmatched. I hope I can do that once they leave. To leave it on the field for them just meant the world for me, and I just wanted to make sure I did that for them.

**Q. Kalib, can you describe the emotions of how frantic that final possession was as they're getting closer and closer to the 3rd down play and then the unique situation where there's no time-out and you go into that final snap and maybe some of the panic and it all turned into jubilation?**

KALIB FORTNER: Yeah, it was crazy because the drive before they kind of marched it down in something similar. But that final drive was just crazy. It was something we had to knock them down, make sure that time hit triple zero. That last possession leading up to the QB sneak where they fell short, it was frantic, to be honest with you, just to make sure they didn't get in was just our main objective, and it was a crazy last drive.

LEO LOWIN: Yeah, we practice one-minute every day in practice, so that's definitely a common thing that we do. I think that was part of our bend-but-don't-break mentality. They all the way down there, but they didn't get it in. They had to be able to get it in, and we held up.

**Q. This game has so much tradition. Obviously it's the first time it's here. As best you can put into words, what's it like to be the last team out on the field singing the alma mater?**

KALIB FORTNER: It's always a great feeling, sir. I mean, it's always awesome singing second. I guess we've never been to Foxboro, but this was an amazing atmosphere, and we're glad we could sing second here.

**Q. You guys shut them down pretty much the whole game, and then the last four minutes, the drive down the field, touchdown, then you guys were able to come up with a goal-line stop. Was the plan to keep everything in front of you or were they just making good plays?**

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LEO LOWIN: Definitely a credit to them. That quarterback was definitely throwing it around a little bit, and they were getting 1st downs when they needed on those last two drives.

But yeah, we were kind of definitely playing a little more pass coverage at that point, knew what they were trying to get at, but they did a good job executing, so we just tried to slow them down as best as possible, and we knew when we got in the red zone that you can't throw it as far, obviously, so we kind of hold up a little more.

**Q. As they kind of mentioned before, the history of being here in Foxboro, can you talk about from the historical perspective and can you talk about the defensive impact today?**

LEO LOWIN: I know Boston has a rich history with like American history, so obviously it's an honor being two service academies to represent the nation, represent America, especially in, obviously, like you said, a town rich in history.

I know Boston is near the ocean, but I guess it was good to get an Army win over here.

KALIB FORTNER: Carrying off that, I think your second question was about the defense and the impact they made today. It was a black flag mentality all day long. I was saying out there on the field that we didn't have the start we wanted to, but we hit mid stride right there against Air Force, and we picked up steam, and you saw that today.

**Q. The entire Gameday crew took Navy today. There's a lot of attention with Bill Belichick and his connection with Navy here. Was any of that kind of motivating for you? There was so much attention on them, and is it a little bit satisfying to win despite all of that?**

LEO LOWIN: I honestly didn't know about that. I know Belichick has a rich history with Navy, and I know his dad coached there, I think. I don't think we needed any extra motivation than we already had. Obviously it was just good to get the win for all these guys we've spent all this time with and you've been through thick and thin with.

**Q. Was there contingency plans in place for a change in quarterback?**

KALIB FORTNER: To be quite honest with you, we knew they were going to play maybe multiple guys. We knew they were going to start with Arline, and then just the way we bottled him up in the first two or three drives, and then No. 1 came out and we just -- we knew it was going to be either-or, so we kind of planned for that all week.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

LEO LOWIN: Yeah, it definitely would have been nice to have more of a stress-free game, but I think that just kind of speaks to the Army-Navy rivalry. They don't quit, we don't quit, so in the fourth quarter you could tell they turned it up a little bit, and our guys just kind of held on.

When you want to talk about the fourth quarter of the season, just the way our guys had stepped up in these past four games -- I know it's the third, but it's been awesome. I'm just so proud to be a part of this team and proud to be able to say I was an Army football player.

**Q. Kalib, the emotion is so high for this game and obviously it's the biggest game for you guys. How would you describe what the emotion is like from the start to the finish? Does it get to a point where it feels like a football game or is it always something bigger than that throughout the course of it?**

KALIB FORTNER: Definitely the last portion you said there, it always felt like there was something more at stake. But as the game progressed, you just realized you've just got to do your 1/11th and trust that your brother is going to do his. It just kind of boiled down to that.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

LEO LOWIN: Yeah, it doesn't get much better than that. Definitely a goal we had in mind for a long time. In my freshman year we won the CIC, during COVID, though, so we couldn't go down to the White House, so no better way to end it off and just go to pass the torch to Kalib right here and I know Bryson is back there, and it's their team in the future, and I'm just so happy to have left it the way we did.

**Q. You got off to a good start with (indiscernible)?**

LEO LOWIN: Max has been an awesome player for us ever since he got here. He's just always been kind of an impact player, making big plays in big moments, and today was no different. He's been consistent all season, one of the most consistent workers we have on our team, and obviously that tends to come to fruition when you play big games, and he had a heck of a game.

**Q. You had a tough stretch in the middle of the season and then you won your last four games. What did it take as far as senior leadership on the team to pull that off?**

LEO LOWIN: I think that it is 100 percent just how hard you work, and as long as you remain consistent and

believe in each other in this team and what we're doing, obviously, like you said, we went through a tough stretch, but not for a moment did I doubt what we could do and what we could become. We did, and I'm just so proud to be a part of this.

**Q. I know you just talked about the history of Boston and everything like that. Specifically when it comes to Gillette, what was this environment and experience like?**

LEO LOWIN: It was definitely an incredible experience out there. Great weather; that was pretty nice. But yeah, I know I came up last week for a big Media Day, and they just welcomed us with open arms, rolled out the red carpet, and like the way we had the hotel set up. It's just been an awesome experience.

I know Army-Navy is just a big deal for us players, so having the red carpet rolled out for you and just the way people treat you here is an incredible thing and the atmosphere tonight was awesome. Obviously to win like that just makes it that much better.

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