

Army Black Knights Football

Friday, August 29, 2025
West Point, New York, USA

Kalib Fortner

Noah Short

Press Conference



Tarleton State 30, Army 27 (2OT)

Q. How did you feel your offense got going early in the game and why was it more challenging in the second half?

NOAH SHORT: I'd say obviously the first drive, I believe it was a three-and-out, and that's never ideal as an offense. We want to move the stakes and get some points on the board early.

I'd say as the game went on, just some of the schematics weren't quite hitting like we wanted to, and they played their tails off, and they came ready to play, and obviously I think we got in the red zone twice and didn't get any points. It was a big factor too. Whenever we get in the red zone we want to score, so got to improve.

Q. Kalib, especially early on late in the game it looked like you guys adjusted to it pretty well, but their slow mesh with their running back, what makes that so hard to defend because I've seen it here before like against Wake Forest back in the day. What makes that so challenging?

KALIB FORTNER: Obviously it holds the backers in a little bit longer, and they were really gassing us with their power to the boundary, and we just got to clean up our fits defensively to stop the cut back. It's something offenses do to hold the backers in to hold the RPOs, and they did a good job at it.

Q. On the touchdown where they had the tight end wide open, what happened there?

KALIB FORTNER: Just missed assignment communication-wise. We were in a coverage where we typically loft the field, so we should have had somebody locked him on.

Q. Noah, usually you can smoke guys there on the perimeter, but it seemed like they had two unblocked defenders, especially late in the game every time we ran jet sweep or option to the perimeter. What was making them so tough to block that they were just flying to the ball?

NOAH SHORT: I think they made some -- had some adjustments. Like with me and Dewayne going on those option pitches, they started to bring the guy who was guarding me pretty wide, so it helped Dewayne get some yards, but they definitely just -- for the option to have somebody just super wide to where they weren't going to give that up. So yeah.

Q. You've got a whole season ahead of you. What did you learn from today that you can take forward into K-State and beyond?

KALIB FORTNER: I think for the defensive side of the ball we made a lot of mistakes, a lot to learn about our mistakes and fix that going forward, so that's the positive side of this. But ultimately it's a disappointment. But we're going to get here Sunday and practice hard and fix those things that we messed up out here and just get better for the season ahead.

NOAH SHORT: I'd say just on the mental side of things, just continuing to bring energy and effort when we do practice next. It brings me back to my sophomore year when we had a tough loss at ULM, and we ended up getting the CIC that year. It's obviously disappointing, like Kalib said, but it's just about how we can respond and try to improve.

Q. Let's talk about them a little bit. They won last week and they beat you guys. They seem to be a little bit better than a lot of us thought going into the season. Any comments about their team, the quarterback, the running backs, the defense?

KALIB FORTNER: Ultimately it's a good team in that league. I said earlier in the week, they could compete in the American, and obviously they did. I think they're a really good team. On film they showed and proved that



they could run the ball, and they did out here tonight, so that's a good team.

Q. Obviously a tough night, but what positives can you take out of this?

NOAH SHORT: I'd say just as a team, learning how to take a loss and not letting it tank the whole season. Obviously there's 11 Saturdays guaranteed left, and I think it's going to test our mental strength, and I think this team is going to respond well.

Q. You had a sack, a six-yard loss, you forced a punt early in the third quarter. Why was it challenging to put pressure on the Tarleton quarterback?

KALIB FORTNER: They identified where we were coming from. Their protection, the way they slid pretty well. That sack in particular, that wasn't me, that was Eric Ford, he opened it up for me there. They did a good job identifying where we were pressuring from.

Q. Thomas, 14 tackles on the day, your co-captain. Tell us about his game.

KALIB FORTNER: Yeah, he truly believes that your love for your brothers is your proximity to the football when the whistle blows, and he showed that tonight with flying around to the football, making plays. Super proud of him. I know he's going to do that all year for us, and we're going to make sure we knock the run down moving forward, and you're going to see a lot more of that.

Q. You had six catches on the day and you also connected with Dewayne on a pitch play very effectively during the game. How do you build on that?

NOAH SHORT: You know, just watch film, just continue to see what worked, what didn't work, just continue to build that chemistry and just try and take all the positives that we can.

Q. Kalib, as a captain, what do you say to your team?

KALIB FORTNER: We know how to win. Army football knows how to win. They move forward like Noah said earlier. We've just got to respond and we've got to bring our lunch bucket on Sunday and get back to work. That's watching film, that's in the weight room, that's on the practice field minimizing those mistakes. If you look at the touchdowns we gave up, one was a free touchdown to them and the other one was kind of a bad call in the red zone to be quite honest with you. We've just got to minimize our mistakes from the top-down leadership to the

guys on the field. We've got to do that every day by hard work, effort, intestinal focus and discipline.

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