

Army Black Knights Football

Saturday, September 20, 2025

West Point, New York, USA

Coach Jeff Monken

Press Conference



North Texas 45, Army 38 (OT)

JEFF MONKEN: First I'm seeing statistics, so not that that matters. Certainly disappointing. Very difficult to win a football game when you spot a team 21 points and it was turnover central in the first half. That was disappointing. We couldn't stop them.

But they were having a tough time stopping us when we'd hang onto it. That was the disappointing thing. If we just hang onto the ball I think we give ourselves a chance. We didn't do that.

But really proud of the resilience and the toughness our guys showed finding a way to crawl back into that thing. We were down ten points late in the fourth quarter; didn't look great. But nobody wavered; kept fighting.

We hit that touchdown pass and then got the turnover, which was huge. Unfortunately when we had a chance to put it away in regulation got to the 6 yard line and couldn't score and had to settle for the field goal and go into overtime.

They just made the plays. There were times we blocked really well. Other times, certainly that last set of downs in the overtime period, first and second down, we went backwards. That put us really in a bad situation.

They beat some blocks and so that -- they made the plays that they needed to make, and credit to them. They're a well coached football team. Eric does such a good job. Really good at what he does. They got good players. They just played a really outstanding football game offensively and made it really hard on us.

Missed a lot of tackles. That was disappointing. Missed three in the game last week or the last time we played. I bet we missed 23 today; maybe more.

But anyway, I'm proud of our guys for the effort they gave in getting our team back into it and having a chance to win

the game. Ultimately just disappointed that we weren't able to find a way.

Q. Coach, just what was different today? Tremendous performance two weeks ago Kansas State. What was different today. Cale Hellums struggled today and Coleman went in. What was different today than two weeks ago?

JEFF MONKEN: Offensively? I mean, like I said, I think we consistently moved the ball when we didn't turn a ball over. I think there was a point up until the third quarter where I believe we scored every drive that we didn't turn the ball over.

So we were moving the ball. It's just the turnovers. I mean, the one was a contact fumble, which is unforgivable. You know, the amount of energy that I have put into ball security from the Sunday after Tarleton State to running with two hands on the ball, and he didn't. And I will tell you, I kept pulling guys out of the game. I said get him out. They didn't have two hands? Get him out.

The ball is way too valuable, proven by the three turnovers in the first half. If we don't turn the ball over those three times maybe we win the game; maybe not. We give ourselves a heck of a lot better chance.

The one he pitched to Noah he missed the read, so put the ball in the back stomach and didn't hand it off; should have. So he pitched off the same guy. So pitch key is out a little bit wider, so Noah wasn't looking for the ball. He was trying to get leverage on the pitch key. Wasn't looking for the ball. It hit Noah. It's just two really difficult plays to live with.

The interception, just throwing a route over there to Brady. I don't know. I mean, I thought Brady would have a chance. Maybe the kid made a great play on the ball. I don't know.

Anyway, those three turnovers were huge. That is the difference. A week ago or two week ago when we played Kansas State, we had the squib kick which turned into an onside kick and then the interception at the end of the

game, we didn't turn the ball over on offense.

What is important about turnovers is in those situations is their offense, Kansas State's offense would've been on the field after that play had it not been for those turnovers. Those were two big plays. Same thing for us. Our offense would've been on the field the next play had it not been for those turnovers. Would've given ourselves a chance.

Turnovers, just at times poor execution with blocking and we had some opportunities to pop some runs out of there and couldn't finish blocks. I am certain we're going to see some missed assignments here and there.

But on defense we just gave up way too many yards on first down. I was tracking it in the first half, and, I mean, just first down is plus five, plus five, plus four, plus ten, plus three; a holding call and then plus eight, plus six, plus 11, plus three, plus 12, plus six, plus six. Three incompletes, and two were on the goal line.

So just we gave up way too many yards on first down and that makes it a lot easier on second, third down. Whole playbook opens up on second and three. We weren't doing a very good job getting off blocks and they did a good job running the football.

There is a lot of things that happened two weeks ago that didn't happen in the game today. With that said, we were still in position.

Q. Coleman went in and got a 17 yard touchdown pass to Samari Howard. Soon after, he gets the five-yard run running a 75 yard, 17 plays, and then went obviously the 68-yard touchdown to Brady Anderson. How do you evaluate his play? Does he bring energy to the team? Does he play the way you expected him to play this year?

JEFF MONKEN: I guess he played the way we hoped he would. Thought he did a really good job. As good as Cale played in the last game, started off this game and just really struggled. We wanted him to continue to give him a chance. We didn't want to give him the hook immediately. Just that doesn't help anybody's confidence. Sometimes guys make mistakes.

Just comes a point where it's one too many and it's time to allow somebody else to be able to play. I thought Dewayne did a really good job. He was ready and prepared. Went in and performed very well.

I mean, there are things that when he was in there that we'll see on film that we'll wish he may have done differently or done a little better with, but he's not the only

one. There are 11 guys out there. All 11 guys could find ways they could have played better and things they could have done better.

Q. Did you think about quarterback change after the second turnover or no?

JEFF MONKEN: No. I mean I think the guy competed so well and so hard against Kansas State. I mean, he performed really, really well. You know, and I think he's capable of being a good quarterback and that guy we saw.

But like I said, we just didn't want to give him the hook right away. Wanted to give him a chance to overcome some mistakes. In 2020 we're out here against Georgia Southern and Tyhier Tyler I think had turned it over two or three times. We went in at halftime and didn't make a change. We said, you're going to be the quarterback. You're going to get us through this thing. He did and we won the football game.

So I trust him. I trust Cale. He just wasn't playing very good. So that happened at other positions, too. Guys weren't playing as well and put other guys in. It's noticeable certainly when it's the quarterback. But just didn't play a great game.

Q. How much did Weaver being not able to play after that penalty affect you guys in the pass defense and also Collin Matteson also being banged up and not returning?

JEFF MONKEN: Yeah, guys are starters for a reason. I don't know that it changed entirely what we wanted to do defensively.

Perhaps maybe there were some things that those guys who were in the game feel better about calling than when they're not. Things when the other guys come in we may feel better about calling when the starters aren't.

So those guys are both backups. Stephen Nnadozie and Jabril go in there, or Jackson Hammond, the guys that took their place, we got a lot of confidence in those guys. It wasn't just them. They didn't punt the whole day. Neither did we, but they didn't punt the whole day. We couldn't get them off the field.

Maybe stopped them twice on fourth down Eric told me. Other than that, we couldn't stop them.

Q. In overtime when Dewayne goes down, looked like a cramp, was he able to go back in or not able to go back in?

JEFF MONKEN: He was not.

Q. Coach, got a game in five days. What are you taking away from this positively? Made a great comeback, got to overtime. Lost two games in OT.

JEFF MONKEN: I'm positively pissed off. That's what I'm positive about.

Going to try to do our very best tomorrow to get what's broken fixed, the errors we made repaired, try to play better fundamentally. That's blocking, sustaining blocks, getting off blocks and making tackles and taking care of the ball. We didn't do any of those consistently enough today to win the football game.

There were times that we did those things and other times where we didn't. There is no one person, there is no one phase to blame. It was all of us. I am really proud of our guys for the toughness that they showed as they kept fighting. It certainly looked bleak there and a lot of people probably are like, hey, this thing is over.

Our guys never felt that way. That's just not the way they operate here. They kept fighting and gave us a chance. We had a chance in regulation. Had a chance to go win a game. We had to settle for a field goal. Credit to North Texas. They stopped us. That was the first scoring drive where we kicked a field goal and didn't score a touchdown. That's what they needed to do to win the game. Credit to them. All credit to those guys.

They've got good, tough players. Their players played really hard. Eric has them playing really hard. They're really good at what they do.

Q. Coach, this season, especially on the overtimes, every time you guys get in the red zone you have been having to settle for field goals. Is there one or two things you've been seeing that is preventing you guys from getting it across the goal line?

JEFF MONKEN: Oh, yeah. Blocking. That's how you get the ball across the end zone. Got to block. We haven't blocked well enough in some of those moments to be able to score a touchdown.

You know, a week ago against Kansas State we did. Got down there and made touchdowns, blocked them, and got in the end zone. Just didn't do it today. Didn't do it today when we needed to on that last drive.

Again, you guys can correct me, I haven't looked at the stats. I don't have a memory like an elephant. I think when we got it down there we scored touchdowns. We scored

touchdowns on most of our drives. We got stopped out there late in the game on the fourth down. I'm not sure if Noah caught that pass. Noah catch that pass or did it? Skip off the ground or did he really catch it? You guys see the replay? We went fast because I don't think he caught it.

Q. Oh, no, no. It was ruled a catch.

JEFF MONKEN: I thought it hit the ground and I thought if we huddled up really slow they would've reviewed it and overturn it and it would've been fourth and ten. So instead we are sitting there fourth and one. So hurried up and we called the play where the quarterback was going to run the ball. Shot the A gap and tackled us for a loss.

But I think you that's the only time that I'm aware of we got stopped.

Q. Coach, I know it was a tough loss today. How do you hope to recover after a close loss like that?

JEFF MONKEN: Well, I hope we'll have a good practice tomorrow. I'll just settle for that. That's what we intend to do, bring the whole team in here tomorrow and we'll have our normal Sunday. Our guys will get treatment. They're going to lift. Going to have a team meeting and talk about the game. Going to go in the position rooms. We're going correct mistakes and we are going to turn on the film for East Carolina and start to game plan. Give those guys our initial report on East Carolina and go see if we can get prepared for them.

Because it's going to happen quick, so by the time we get in here tomorrow it's going to be four days from a game. We got put this behind us, learn from it. It's hard. Our guys are competitive. They care. They're really invested. Losing a game is really hard and losing a game like we did today, it's hard.

But we got to find a way to recover and have some resiliency and mental toughness. I'll count on our guys to do that. Recovery, like I said, how do you recover? Have a good practice in the next day and see if we can improve.

Q. I know you mentioned this, you and the staff really emphasize fundamentals, ball security, tackling, not letting Army beat Army. Yet all the things we saw today. Front seven really struggling to get off blocks. With the amount of emphasis that the staff places on that, I guess two-part question: A, how frustrating is that? And B, any idea how you can get that turned around the next four or five days?

JEFF MONKEN: Nobody is more frustrated than our

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

players. They want to make plays. They care. One thing is for sure: Our guys are tough as hell. To be able to get down 21 to nothing and come back and have a chance to win the football game before time expired and have a chance again in overtime, they're tough as hell.

So it's not toughness or want-to or effort. It's execution of the fundamentals. We just got continue to teach those things and try to get them to play with those fundamentals that they been trained to play with.

Whether it be defeating a block, taking the proper angle, tackling and finishing a tackle. I mean, they all have different job descriptions and duties and skillsets they have to have, and it's working those fundamentals just with vigilance over and over and over again.

It's on offense blocking, blocking with our feet and hands and blocking the right guy and taking good angles and good footwork and pad level. It's all those things. We work really hard at it. I know other teams work hard at it, too. The thing is that team that we played and most teams we play, the teams we're going to play the rest of the season, are all well coached. They're talented. They got guys on scholarship, too.

And so they're putting up a fight. They want to win. They're competitive people. It's finding a way to execute those fundamentals against guys playing good fundamentals themselves and good pad level and doing it better.

North Texas did it better today. They won the football game and earned the victory. For as many things as we did poorly, that's not an excuse. They won the game. They made the plays they needed to make. I give them credit. The toughness that they showed being up like they were, being up ten points, fumbling the ball, really the momentum and just the energy really shifted to our sideline and our team.

But they found a way. I've got great respect for Coach Morris and just really commend their football team and congratulate them on a great win.

Q. The last play of the game the first and five that was just over Noah's head in the back of the end zone, any thought given to potentially running the ball there or pass all the way on that one?

JEFF MONKEN: Yeah, I mean, we certainly gave it some thought. First down we I think gained zero. Second down minus one. Third down, we ran it. We ran a boot play. Got the quarterback out there and he ran for some yards and we're sitting there at fourth and five. First two times in

that series we gain minus one on two carries.

Yes, I mean we always think about running the football, but our hope was that we would get out on the perimeter, and several times today we got out on the perimeter on those boot plays, action one way and boot back the other and we were able to run for some yards.

We thought at the worst he might be able to pull it down and knife through there and get another first down and give ourselves another set of downs to try to get it in the end zone paragraph they did a good job getting back out there and getting some leverage on it. I thought he had a look at Noah and just threw it a little bit high. Sailed a little bit on him.

He may not have gotten his hips and shoulders around where he was facing the receiver. I think he probably was kind of running toward the sideline. Had his hips open to the sideline. Hard to throw across your body real accurately. I'll have to look at the film to see it. We had a chance, and wasn't like he was wide open but giving him a chance there. Noah might have been able to come down with it. Guys do that all the time on ESPN highlights. Hoping we might hit a highlight there. We always think about running the football.

I think about the series right there at the end of regulation. We were out of timeouts and if we run the ball we got no timeouts. I think 24 seconds, second down. Run the ball, try to run it one time, then have to go up there and kill the clock on third down and kick a field goal on fourth.

Instead, if we throw it on second down, throw it on third down, giving ourselves two chances to score a touchdown rather than one. If we ran the ball on second down it was going to be all in. You run the ball. If you don't get it, then you're settling for a field goal and giving up third down. I didn't want to give up a down. They're just way too valuable.

Unfortunately we weren't able to execute there and get the ball in the end zone.

Q. Question about Dewayne. Can you speak about his ability to guide this team from the abyss today? Also coming so close to that touchdown at the end of the fourth quarter? What will determine whether it's Dewayne or Cale on Thursday?

JEFF MONKEN: I'm really proud of Dewayne to come off the bench and lead our team like he did. He really did a great job this afternoon. Made some really good plays. Certainly that big throw to Brady Anderson, Brady made a great catch and out ran those guys, which that was thrilling

to see him do that. I didn't know he could. He just was able to get if the end zone. Dewayne made some really good plays. We'll determine who the quarterback will be as we go through the week. I don't know where we are with that right now.

I know we're going to need both of them. I think I said that earlier this week in the press conference. We're going to need both those quarterbacks. We needed them both today. As poorly as Cale played in the first half he had to come in in the overtime and we told him, keep yourself ready and be ready to go.

That was one of the questions about the goal line. I'm not sure if that was all thrown in with everything else. If you want to repeat that part I'll try to answer that for you, Ken.

Q. Dewayne came that close to winning the game in regulation if it wasn't for at that one tip, a great defensive play, and the ball going off Brady's hands. That close.

JEFF MONKEN: Yeah, we were pretty close. They say close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades. We weren't playing either one of those today.

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