

Army Black Knights Football

Saturday, October 11, 2025
West Point, New York, USA

Cale Hellums

Kalib Fortner

Press Conference



Army 24 - Charlotte 7

KALIB FORTNER: As a team, I think we played really great in the first half. Second half, we had to clean some stuff up. It was great to get our first win at home. Just really proud of the guys.

CALE HELLUMS: Kind of what he hit on. In the first half I was very pleased with the offense. We score all of our drives, minus one. We can't have a turnover. We'll learn from that.

Then second half we got to be better. We can't take the foot off of the gas because going on in the future, if we do that, teams can sneak back in. We need to play really good football all four quarters.

The defense played phenomenal. That's what really helped us win today.

Q. What do you think happened in the second half with the offense?

CALE HELLUMS: I think we just got content and comfortable. We were up 24-0, which is a positive, but you'd like to score or end every drive with points. Once we got to 24, we didn't do that.

Q. As far as the defense, pretty outstanding, how were you able to contain them?

CALE HELLUMS: We just saw on film they were kind of rotating quarterbacks, trying to figure out who they were going to go with.

Have some pretty good runningbacks and their offensive line was pretty good. Had to make sure we could stop the run, hold them to one-dimensional throwing the ball. That's not something they do really well.

We played good complementary football on defense. Everybody was making their plays.

Q. Kalib, how important was it to stop their first possession?

KALIB FORTNER: It's not something we've done much this year, is stop a team on their first drive. That was great to stop them on the first drive.

Like I said, it was outstanding seeing everybody, every position, making their plays. Jay Bousum and that D-line group as a whole played a really good game.

Q. At the end of the second quarter, Eric Ford had a sack, which again forced a punt. How important was it you were able to force them to punt?

KALIB FORTNER: Yeah, I think it's important to give the ball back to the offense, let them take control of the time of possession, also put their defense back out and let them get beat up and battered.

Ford made a really good play. Our D-linemen had two really good plays down there, forced them to punt. We just did that quite a bit today.

Q. Cale, in the first quarter, you had a 50-yard run. You just missed it, one yard line. Tell us about that sequence.

CALE HELLUMS: Yeah, leading up to that, we were moving the ball well on the ground. Coach had a phenomenal play call, the defense bit on it. We got great leverage. Guard and tackle pulled, Teddy Williams made a phenomenal block. I cut off of it, pushed to get in the end zone, but I got caught. Got to get faster, I guess (smiling).

Q. Fourth and goal at the one, you scored on the one-yard run. Tell us about that.

CALE HELLUMS: Yeah, that drive, the fact we ended with a touchdown was huge. We got behind the chains. Don't need to do that. Getting in third of longs is not the type of offense we want to see.



Dialed up a good play, installed that play today. Noah ran a great route and got separation. I was able to complete the pass. Ultimately scoring on that drive, coming from third and nine from the 50, being able to put six points in the end zone, that was huge.

Q. To go 14-0 up, you had a 17-play drive. Six different ball carriers. Tell us about what it was like to keep that momentum and rhythm going.

CALE HELLUMS: Yeah, that was huge. That's Army football right there. That's Army's offense. That type of drive, we need to put those together all the time. That's huge. We allowed the defense to get Russ on the sideline. We have the capability of six people running the ball. A lot of teams don't have that. We have that. That's huge. We rely on it.

O-line is the engine to our offense. We were able to run behind them. They what kick-started that drive. It's Army football.

Q. Cale, was there any point in the game where you felt like you had a solid lead over Charlotte today?

CALE HELLUMS: Yes, sir, for sure. Going into the halftime 17-0 is a great feeling. We wanted to score on the first drive, we didn't. The defense got a stop early. We were able to score, go up 24-0. That was a great feeling.

Q. Cale, how much was the game plan centered around opposing your will on offense? Seems like you were ready and willing to grind out of drives.

CALE HELLUMS: I think I hit on this earlier. Me and (indiscernible), we both do a great job of practicing, practicing as if it's a game, putting ourselves in game situations. It wasn't till Friday that got told by coach that I was going to be the guy.

It's PRAP, there is peace in preparation. When you practice as if it's a game, when your number's called, it's good. Coach really likes to run the quarterback. We have great B backs that can run the ball or block. We are getting five, six yards a carry, why not keep it going?

Q. Kalib, looked like today was the most pressure you have gotten on opposing quarterbacks all season. The pressure was there on almost every pass play. Complemented really well your short-yardage run defense. Talk about the pressure you were able to apply today and the play of the front seven, specifically the defensive line.

KALIB FORTNER: Without a doubt, I think the defensive line did a phenomenal job of giving the quarterback off his spot. Causing some hurry-ups and pressure. Backers blitzing, getting the quarterback off his spot, a great job in the box. It's something we got to continue to do moving forward to be successful in defense.

Q. Cale, Army kind of dominated in the trenches a lot of the day, specifically in the first half. Not to single anyone out, Teddy Williams had a couple pancakes, big block. Talk a little bit about the O-line's play specifically in the first half.

CALE HELLUMS: Yeah, man, those are my guys. Like I've said every time, they're the engines of our offense. They're phenomenal. Last year they got voted the best O-line in the country. I wouldn't put it past them this year, as well.

Those guys, all five of them, are incredible. Our tight ends are incredible. They just impose their will. When they're moving the D-line, creating new line of scrimmage four, three yards off the ball, it's an awesome feeling. I love running behind each and every one of them. They're awesome.

Q. Cale, could you talk about the efforts of Carson Smith and Briggs Bartosh, what they offered today.

CALE HELLUMS: Those guys are great. For weeks on end they've been playing excellent. They stepped up. They're great with the ball in their hands. What's impressive is how they play without the ball in their hands.

I don't think we'd be able to rush for 300 yards in a game if it weren't for our how our B backs block. They pick up key blocks each and every play. When they get the ball in their hands, they run hard. Very rarely will you be able to see one guy bring them down. It's awesome.

We pride ourselves on running the ball and blocking. When you see skill players get physical and dirty, kind of like an O-line mentality, it's awesome to see.

Q. On your 50-yard run, did you get tired at the end?

CALE HELLUMS: Yeah, for sure. Coach was in my ear to get back on the ball. We were just going to run it down their throat.

Q. Kalib, how important was it to get the nature of the win heading into the Tulane matchup?

KALIB FORTNER: It's good momentum. It's really good to go into a tough game as Tulane is going to be a really hard

one for us, with a win.

I think it's going to be a really hard week of practice and good preparation in order for us to compete against Tulane. It's awesome to finally get our first win at home.

Q. How do you set tone as captain of the team?

KALIB FORTNER: Third set a loaded question (smiling). Everybody has to execute and make their plays when it comes to them, but knowing that they don't just do it for themselves, but they do it for the person beside them. That's ultimately what it's about when you play here at Army.

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