

Army Black Knights Football

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

Carson Smith

Eric Ford

Press Conference



Army 24 - Charlotte 7

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Carson, talk a little bit about the 17-play drive in the second quarter. You got the touchdown, had a couple of key runs. What is it like when you get the running game going so well?

CARSON SMITH: It's what Army football is. A 17-play long drive like that, it's what we're known, for our culture. Being able to have a drive like that, set the tone for what was a dominant first half by us, was really nice.

Q. Eric, you had a sack end of the second quarter, forced a punt. Tell us about that play.

ERIC FORD: It was a pretty nice play because the D-line has been working with me in practice, trying to get me better at my pass-rushing skills. It just finally paid off.

Q. We talked a little bit with Kalib Fortner about stopping the opening drive, forcing a punt. What did you do that enabled you to get off to a good start on defense?

ERIC FORD: We just played together, just played with a fire. Just went out there with a focus.

Q. You're 3-3 now, winning the last two games. What does it say for the team? How does this help the team going forward?

CARSON SMITH: Yeah, I mean, it's momentum coming off back-to-back wins. You build that confidence back up and build that momentum to where you get the middle stretch the season where teams are starting to get banged up, body starts to take a toll, I think that's where we take a shine. We played a tough, hard-nosed brand of football. The middle to late season is where you really see us thrive.

ERIC FORD: Definitely momentum. Nice to be 3-3. Better where we could be if we lost. It's just better with us.

Q. The team comes together, less errors, one turnover by Army today. Do you see a change in the attitude of the team, the play making of the team?

CARSON SMITH: Definitely. I think especially in practice I think we just come into it with a lot more enthusiasm, overall just life during practices. At the end of every practice, we're shoving guys, just getting hyped. That was a great practice. Each day trying to have a great practice so come game day we're able to do what we do.

Q. Eric, seems like now there's an expectation for the defense to kind of shut teams down and get the offense the ball. You're going to go up against Tulane, who has put up some points. How important is it to keep that defensive momentum going into practice and next Saturday?

ERIC FORD: Well, Tulane has a really good team. It's very important. But regardless of who we're playing, it's always important for the defense to go out there and show what they can do, play to our max potential.

Q. Eric, did you come in the game today with any specific strategy on how to go up against Charlotte?

ERIC FORD: We watch film, just like they do. We had our strategies.

But at the end of the day regardless of what you watch, you got to go out there and play. That's what I did.

Q. Carson, talk about getting your first career touchdown today.

CARSON SMITH: Obviously it's great. It's what you dreamed of. It's why I play college football, just to make those moments. Obviously it was really nice.

Like we talked about earlier with the long drive, just being able to see us come together and sustain just a dominant



Army football drive. Run after run we're hitting everything. To be able to cap that off, build that momentum for the game, was really nice.

Q. Looked like especially on that drive you were four, five yards into the defense before you were getting touched. Talk about what that felt like being able to run behind that line.

CARSON SMITH: I mean, yeah, those guys, they're animals, man. They're so dominant, such a great core of dudes who will fight for you. They were getting a lot of movement. Very first few plays, All right, what is the front, let's see how the line do does. The line is moving 'em every single play. That makes my job so much easier, instills confidence in me to be able to go out there and just play.

Q. Eric, is there something about the defense playing better together these last two weeks? Do you see something happening?

ERIC FORD: I see us coming out with more focus and intent. It's about how we practice. We've been practicing a lot better, with more enthusiasm, focus and effort. It definitely paid off.

Q. Is there something about compatibility with one another, understanding your roles?

ERIC FORD: We're all pretty close with each other, so I feel like we're very compatible. We're just putting more focus on things. We have to turn it around.

Q. Carson, not to rain on the parade, Coach Monken, for as happy as he was during times of the game, he was very critical of the team in the second half, offense not getting it done, et cetera. How important is it for you to be reminded by the coaches that you got to play a full 60?

CARSON SMITH: It's vital. There's four quarters, two halves. You have to play a complete game if you want to be a great team. If we want to continue the success, run the table town the season, we've got to play four quarters of fundamental, good football.

Obviously in the second half there was a lot to be desired. Definitely could have played better. But coming out 3-3, that momentum's good, confidence is good. Patting yourself on the back sometimes... It's nice to have that reminder we got to be better in certain areas. Coming out with that mindset, come back tomorrow and keep working, practicing harder, so we can continue to build. You can't just stay complacent.

Q. This is a definite positive direction for Army.

CARSON SMITH: 100%. We're not going to dwell on the past. That's not what this is about. Immediately it's a 1-0 mindset. This game is behind us. We're on to the next week. It's 1-0. This next week, nothing before it matters. We don't care we're 3-3. On to the next game, the next opponent, doing our best to win.

Q. Excited to play Tulane?

CARSON SMITH: 100%, yeah. Excited to play every game.

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