

Army Black Knights Football

Saturday, November 22, 2025
West Point, New York, USA

Coach Jeff Monken

Press Conference



Tulsa 26, Army 25

JEFF MONKEN: Well, to say I'm disappointed would be an understatement. I'm disappointed for our entire team, certainly our seniors, playing their last game here. They just outplayed us.

The second half, they just outplayed us. We couldn't move the ball on offense. Opening drive we had to pass it, went in the end zone and called a touchdown and we ended up kicking a field goal, and that was it. We didn't do much after that, unfortunately.

We had a lead and tried to slow the game down and didn't do that very well. Defensively -- they went up and down the field on us, almost 500 yards of offense, a back that rushed for 200 yards. We didn't do a very good job on either side. We made some opportune stops.

They hit a run play that kind of gashed us. They lined up fast, ran the exact same play and they fumbled the mesh and we were able to fall on it. Eric Ford picked it up.

Then the next drive they moved it down there again and completed a pass and we punched it out, but we weren't stopping them from moving the football, and ultimately we couldn't move it on offense. We couldn't convert on conversion downs. Then as we gave it back to them, they took advantage of the opportunities they had.

Credit to them; they outplayed us. So very disappointed, and I'm certainly sore, hurting for our seniors and our whole team. Guys invested a lot, and I thought our guys plays hard, just didn't play very well.

Q. It seemed like you were in control of the game late into the fourth quarter until you get the ball back and you have Cale throw and threw into double coverage and the ball was picked off. What was the thinking on that play?

JEFF MONKEN: We had some opportunities in that half.

We had Parker Poloskey running right down the seam all by himself and we overthrew him. If we stick that throw, that's a 1st down and a big play. The throw into coverage, unfortunately same route we threw a pick against Tarleton in the red zone.

There was three receivers on the route, two of them were open, and we practice throwing to all three. Just take a peek at that guy who was double coverage, and the other two guys were open, and unfortunately we threw it to the only guy that was covered. I know Cale feels bad, but we all do. I wish we'd have found the right guy.

They were obviously committing to the run. They had to because at that point if we turn a 1st down and run the clock, there's four minutes and some seconds left, I guess, in the game. If we were able to turn some 1st downs we could run the clock out maybe, so they really were committed to the run, and I thought a play action pass we'd be able to get a guy loose, and we did, two of them, just didn't hit them.

Q. It's got to be frustrating that you got two turnovers, the fumble recovery by Eric Ford and then the recovery that was forced by Gavin Shields that Collin Matteson recovered. You get the turnovers but you couldn't really convert on those.

JEFF MONKEN: Nope, we didn't do anything with them, unfortunately. That was the story of the second half. We just couldn't move the football. We did a much better job in the first half, and we were able to run the ball effectively. We felt like our guys were playing well on offense. In the second half, just not very well at all.

The 4th down play at the end, run the quarterback counter and really we ought to take that thing all the way around the outside, and there's nobody left out there, and unfortunately he just saw the block and saw the guy, felt like he was getting kicked out, tried to go in between and got knocked down.

If we convert that, they have no time-outs left, we take a knee and end the football game. That's the margin. There is no margin for error. That's where it is. We've just got to

make those plays.

But it's everything. It was the lack of production on offense and our inability to be able to stop them on defense.

Q. The offense being slowed down in the second half, what happened there? Are they winning the battle in the trenches, execution? What's going on where you have these gashes in the first half but struggle to get a couple yards in the second?

JEFF MONKEN: Yeah, they were getting off blocks, doing a better job. That's the bottom line. They did a better job playing blocks and defeating blocks in the second half, and we tried to get the ball out on the perimeter and get some perimeter blocks. Noah turned one of those into a gain where there was nothing.

But the third quarter drive where we had a negative yardage play on 1st down, a short gain on 2nd down, a negative yardage play on 3rd down, then we punted. We made them punt one time the whole day.

Q. The decision to go for it on 4th and 3 at the 39 where Cale didn't go outside, he went inside, yards are so hard to come back in the second half for you guys; do you think about punting the ball and pinning them deep? Why did you go for it on 4th down?

JEFF MONKEN: I thought about it, but we weren't doing a very good job of stopping them. They were taking the ball up and down the field on us. So even if we punt, there's enough time for them to drive down the field and kick a field goal. If we make the 1st down there, which I thought we had a good call and really if he kind of bounces around that block and gets a 1st down, the game is over. We can end the game on that play.

When we punt, then we leave it, okay, now we give them the ball back with an opportunity to win the game. If we get the 1st down, then they have no opportunity to win the football game.

Yeah, yards were hard to come by, but yards weren't hard to come by for them. As it turned out, we tried to end the game right there, and it's what we need to do. It's who we are; it's what we need to do. We just didn't execute it, didn't get it done.

Q. That first half, you had a 4th down, could have been a 43-yard kick for Dawson, went for it and didn't get it. Is that an analytics thing?

JEFF MONKEN: It is.

Q. Now you look at the score, of course you can't really play hindsight, but is Dawson's range inside 40 now?

JEFF MONKEN: No. Again, to extend the drive, one, you take time away from them if you get the 1st down, and you give yourself a chance to get seven points instead of three. That's the way we play.

I'm just not going to settle for a kick just because you can get a kick, just because you're going to get points. It's the analytics and our trust in those and our belief in those has won us a lot of football games here. It's won us a lot of close football games.

Today was a close football game. So if we execute one of those, if we convert one of those, then maybe it's a different outcome.

Q. Do you think the analytics lose you the game today with the decisions that happened and what you didn't get?

JEFF MONKEN: No. Lack of execution lost us the game today. That's the bottom line.

Go back to the Kansas State game, we were I think five of six on 4th down. We play aggressive; we have to. We played aggressive again today, and they made the plays. They made the stops.

Q. I think the biggest play of the game came on that 2nd down play on the last drive when you guys turned it over on downs, the outside run to Noah Short where he goes out of bounds and they don't have to burn a time-out. Before that play is there any talk about get down, and what happened on that play?

JEFF MONKEN: Go out of bounds, and he got close to the sideline and then he got knocked out of bounds, and he needed to just dive on the ground there. Unfortunately we didn't, and they didn't have to use a time-out.

Q. Jeff, obviously your team has had difficult losses before. What do you do to get this team back into the proper mindset for next Saturday against UTSA?

JEFF MONKEN: Well, we just come back in here tomorrow and try to learn from the things that we failed on today. There were some good things today, too. And we try to get better, and we improve and work tomorrow and work this week and try to get ourselves ready to go to UTSA and try to get a victory.

Q. You've told us many times about how wins you



shake off, losses stick with you for a while. What are your thoughts about coming out of this game?

JEFF MONKEN: Well, like I said before, wins are just a relief and losses stick with you for a while. It's hard. You put so much into it, our players do, our coaches do, and it's agonizing to lose. It's hard.

But our guys played hard. We coached hard. We did everything we could to try to win the football game. But they outplayed us, and the bottom line is we could not move the football in the second half effectively enough to control the clock, control the game, score points, and defensively we just didn't do a very good job of stopping them.

So we've got to figure out how we can execute better fundamentally to do that. That's it. Blocking and destroying blocks and tackling and all those things. The second half in particular, we didn't do those very well.

But there were things in the first half, too, that we talked about them at halftime that we needed to do better. We just didn't go out and do them better in the second half. They obviously executed much more effectively.

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