# Quotes from Tuesday's football press conference

## Blue Raiders begin three-game road swing at FIU

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## Head Coach Rick Stockstill Review of Florida Atlantic game:

"It's a good example of playing hard every game, compete the entire 60 minutes and finish games. Just because you do that does not mean you are going to win the game but if you don't do those things you can't win. I am very proud of the way our kids battled. I thought our defense played extremely well. They tackled well and did a good job of stopping the run and getting turnovers. We didn't play particularly well but we battled and we made some things happen there at the end."

What has been the response from that win and being on national TV as far as recruiting? "It had a positive effect on recruiting. We went out recruiting throughout the South last week. Talking to



players they loved the atmosphere of the crowd, the black uniforms, and the national television. I believe kids like the fact they can come to Middle Tennessee and accomplish all of their goals. I think we represented ourselves very well on national television and throughout the nation. I hope you will see the effect of this on recruiting in February."

With several players from south Florida on the roster how important is it to play well in Miami for recruiting purposes? "We have several guys on our team from the south Florida area. We will continue to recruit south Florida. It's a chance for us to show some high school coaches and players in that area what our program is about. There are a lot of good players in that area and we have a

good product to sell."

How important is it that while there have been lulls on offense there haven't been a lot of turnovers? "It is critical. That is how you win and lose games, by creating turnovers and protecting the football. With the clock rule the way it is this year you don't get a lot of at-bats so when you turn the ball over it is critical and cost you, in some cases, as much as six or more minutes. Florida Atlantic is a good example. They lose on the last play of the game and turn the ball over four times. If they don't turn the ball over that game may have been different. (QB) Joe Craddock has done a good job with his decisions and not making poor decisions. I am very proud of the ball security of our offense."

Talk about why the offense not scoring consistently in league games early. Most of the scoring has been late. "I challenged those guys this week because we have to do a better job offensively. We have enough talent in that room that we don't need to be waiting until the end of the game to score. We just have to correct our mistakes, it's not focus or how we start the game. We just have to come out of the blocks with the mentality that we are going to score and we are going to score every drive." Your linebackers have been the strength of the defense with Danny Carmichael, Ivon Hickmon, Andrew Harrington and Lonnie Clemmons playing well. Did you anticipate it was going to have to, or need to, be this way? "You always hope that your older players play their best football because they should. They have been in a lot of games and practices. Ivon was never healthy last year so we worried about him coming into the season but he's playing at a very high level. He is flying around and making plays in space. It is the same thing with Danny. He brings the toughness mentality to our defense. I think our defense rallies behind his leadership and his toughness. He is not a finesse guy. He is a tough guy, a throw-back to the old days where toughness wins games. Lonnie has been up and down. He missed all of August and came back for the Maryland game. I still don't think he's 100 percent healthy. He can play better than he has been playing. Andrew has been playing well but he needs to step up his play even more for us."

Talk about FIU and this week's game. "I think FIU is much better. They are a different team. Look at their last three games. They take No. 12 South Florida to an onside kick late in the game. They win at Toledo, who went overtime with Fresno State, and then they go to North Texas and have a pretty dominating performance. They are a good team. They have a fast defense and it is much better. Offensively they are not flashy but they have done a good job the last three games of protecting the football and not putting their defense on the short field. We have to be ready to play or we will come back with our head tucked between our tails."

### LB Danny Carmichael

Coach Stockstill has talked about your toughness. It that a leadership role you bring to the field? "I think I have developed that role over the last couple of years. I am one of the most experienced players on defense. Bringing that mentality to the field is my role for this team."

**Talk about the FIU offense.** "Their offense is good. The quarterback makes things happen and he has good people around him. They have two veterans at running back and they have some very talented receivers we must be aware of."

### QB Joe Craddock

How much of your job is to throw for 300 yards and how much of your job is to protect the football? "My job is to protect to the ball and drive the car. I have guys around me that make the

plays and my job is to get them the ball. Passing for 300 yards a game is not my job but the numbers have come because of the playmakers we have on offense."

Talk about the offense and getting off to slow starts in these Sun Belt games. "I don't know what the problem is and some of it may have to do with the defense out there. I do know we have to correct it and find ways to get in the end zone earlier in the game and not way until the end."

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