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Blue Raiders look ahead to Maryland

Weekly press conference quotes

Athletic Communications

Head coach Rick Stockstill

Opening Comments

This week we will play a good team in Maryland. They struggled against California in their first game, but California is very dynamic with one of the top running backs in the country. Last week, they played a good James Madison team. James Madison does not have a good football name, but it is a good football team. They won the 1-AA national championships a few years ago and they are always in the 1-AA playoffs. We have got our hands full and need a great week of preparation and practice.

On Turner having the worst game of his career last season against Middle Tennessee

That was the first game he started last year. He had played in some games, but that was his first actual start. He threw some balls he probably wishes he had had back, but give our guys credit. They challenged our players. Danny (Carmichael) made a nice play getting the interception, but he might have made the throw blind so that would have led to the interception. Give our guys credit, but I think there were a few balls he might wish he had not thrown.

On Maryland wanting to revenge last year's loss to Middle Tennessee

Their fans probably want revenge, but it is a completely different team. We have some guys that played in the game and remember it and some guys that did not play and the same goes for them as well. As a player or coach you do not get caught up the revenge or payback, that is more in the fan base.

On the perception of playing Maryland after last year's victory

This is the next game on our schedule. It is not a conference game, but we do not approach Clemson or Memphis any different than we will approach North Texas the next week. We try not to worry a lot about who we play. It is more about us and how we prepare because we have no control on how good Maryland is. All we can do is worry about us getting better on offense, defense and in the kicking game. This is another great opportunity for us to go on the road and play an ACC team. We have not had success on the road against these teams but this is a great opportunity for us and I know our guys are excited about competing. We just want to play better against Maryland than we did against Memphis.

On team's approach playing the next three contests on the road

We still do the same thing. I said at the beginning of the year. You have to play good at home because it is so hard to win on the road. To be successful you have got to be able to win games on the road. Our next few games are on the road so we have to be a mentally tough team and know we are going into some hostile stadiums with rabid fans. You have got to be able to block out all the distractions and turn all the boos into cheers. You train your mind and body to turn those boos into cheers. You treat it like a business trip and your business is to win the football game and not get caught up in all the outside stuff.

On losing [Phillip Tanner](#) to injury and how it will effect your game plan

It definitely hurts us losing Phillip. He was such a vital part of the offense as a runner, a pass protector, and another receiver coming out of the backfield to catch the ball. He is a senior that has played in a bunch of games. He is a good positive leader for us that works hard in practice. He is a good example for players to watch in practice. Losing him will hurt us, but it gives D.D. (Kyles), Benny (Cunningham) and Marquise (Branton) a good opportunity to be part of our offense.

I think we have got great leadership on our team. We have got some guys on offense besides Dwight (Dasher) and Phillip (Tanner). [Patrick Honeycutt](#) has done a good job, [Gene Delle Donne](#) has done a good job, Desmond (Gee) has done a good job. Dwight does not have to do anymore because Phillip is out. He just has to drive the bus and manage us where we need to go and not do too much because Phillip is out.

On Maryland's Chris Turner

This is Chris' third year starting. He has played a lot of games. He has got some new guys around him. There are some growing pains and a learning curve you have got to deal with. Usually he does not do things to get you beat and he will protect the ball. Obviously he did not do that last year against us. But for the most part throughout his career he has done a great job protecting the football. That is what you want out of your quarterback

On the fan support against Memphis



Head Coach Rick Stockstill addressed the media today at the weekly press luncheon. [\(\)](#)

I think it is great. I have talked before that I cannot get this program to the next level by ourselves. We want everyone to get involved with it. This is Middle Tennessee's team. If you are a Middle Tennessee alumni or a Middle Tennessee student or a resident of Murfreesboro you need to support your team and come to the home games. I thought our fans did a great job. I thought our students were awesome getting dressed up. It was a great crowd and I thought our players responded to it and appreciated it. Now our goal is to completely sell out the stadium. We need to make our stadium a complete home field advantage.

On the victory maintaining fan support

You hope you are building your fan base to not say, "I'm going to come because they won or I'm not going to come to this game because they lost." I hope fans do not say that. You hope they have a great experience, you hope they see a great game, you hope they see a win, but most importantly you see a team that plays with great passion. You want them to see a team that represents the university the way you want. It is easier to come back when they win, but you hope they come back anyway.

On looking past non-conference games to play conference opponents

We have not looked past them a bit. When you open with Clemson, Memphis and Maryland you have enough on your plate. I am glad Lafayette beat Kansas State and I am glad North Texas won at Ball State, but you do not look past teams to play other teams.

PLAYERS QUOTES

WR [Gene Delle Donne](#)

Tell me how you have come into your current position as a slot receiver. "Early on, the change was a little hard as far as running the routes and me being a quarterback and getting familiar with stemming a receiver, or just breaking it down. Right now, I feel real comfortable. I love the offense and I love what we are doing. I think we are headed in the right direction."

Having been a quarterback and now playing in an offense that is pass-friendly, do you think it is easier for you to jump into that type of offense? "I think it helps. Being a quarterback, you know when a receiver should settle in the zone or keep continuing to the end. So obviously having that previous knowledge helps. That is definitely a benefit."

With this game being so close to home, how much of this game will be like a family reunion to you? "I will have quite a few people there. I guess there will be about 30 family members there. But for me or any other guy on the team, it is just another game. I have to treat it like I would if it were Clemson or Memphis or North Texas."

Do you enjoy playing in a hostile environment? "It is definitely fun. The loud crowd fuels our team. It is fun to travel on the road and play in front of 55,000 or 80,000 people. It is great playing at home, but a loud crowd is a lot of fun playing in front of."

Are you aware of the redemption factor? "Oh yeah. We know that us beating them last year will probably mean they will come out strong. They want to get payback and I am sure their fans do as well. They are a good team and we just have to focus on what we do best. If we play well as a team, then hopefully we can come out and be successful."

DT [Brandon Perry](#)

What do you think your role is in the interior defensive line? "No. 1 is stopping the run. It comes down to me doing my job. If I do my job and get double-teamed, then that leaves [Danny Carmichael](#) and the rest of the linebackers open to make plays."

Having beat Maryland last year, do you think that adds or affects the confidence at all playing them again this year? "It is an entirely different year and they have a different football team. We also know we have to play our best. It is not about them; it is about how we play and how we take care of business."

How important is it to keep their running attack from having a big game? "A lot. He (Da'Rel Scott) is a great running back and a great runner. He is tough to stop so we will be challenged."

Talk about your transition into a starting role this season. "It has been a great opportunity and knowing that guys are looking up to me is special. Me being in the middle, they are looking up to me a lot. I am just approaching each play as if I have to take care of business so everyone else can do their job."

What was the talk among the players about playing in front of a full house last week? "It was great. We can always use that 12th man. It was a great atmosphere and we all enjoyed it. We do our best with people behind us."

With a conference game next week, how do you guys stop yourselves from looking ahead? "We are not. We are just taking it game-by-game. We have Maryland this week, so that is all we are focusing on."