

October 21, 2009

Quotes from this week's football press conference

Blue Raiders and Hilltoppers to kickoff at 2:30 PM

Athletic Communications

Head coach Rick Stockstill

Opening Comments:

We are very excited about this game and I told the team yesterday that it is the most important game on our schedule because it is the next game on our schedule and it is a conference game. I talked to them about appreciating the way our fans and university feel and what this game means to them. There is a long history with the rivalry dating back to the OVC days. However, who you play should not determine how you play. It should never dictate how you play in the game and how you prepare. This is a very important game because it is a conference game. We had a good practice yesterday and are looking forward to the week ahead.

On the quarterback play against Mississippi State and did limited receivers effect performance:

Dwight did not play very well. However, I thought Brent did some good things and I thought Dwight did some good things. We had a couple of nice drives in the second quarter. We got down there and could not finish them off and get touchdowns. And we had to settle for field goals. Then in the third and fourth quarter we turned the ball over after the touchdown was called back. I felt Brent came in and showed composure and threw some good balls and threw some bad balls. We just have to get more consistent at the quarterback position. We are limited at the receiver position, but that did not change our offense.

On defending Western Kentucky running back Bobby Rainey:

He is similar to several guys we have played. He is not as big as (Anthony) Dixon of Mississippi State. He is a really good runner. He is a physical runner and has good speed when he gets to the second level. It is hard to compare running backs. We have faced some good runners in (C.J.) Spiller, Darnell Scott of Maryland and Troy has a good running back too.

On changing preparation for in-conference Western Kentucky:

We do not change our preparation. You prepare as a coach, as a team, as a player like every game is the most important game on your schedule. In all actuality, it is. It is not because it is Western Kentucky and it is not because it is a conference game; it is because it is the next game. We will prepare for this one like we have all the rest.

On finishing offensive drives:

We have been pretty good in the red zone this year. However, against Mississippi State we did not perform well in the scoring area. It was more our fault which is usually the case in that situation. We did not execute as well as we needed to down their in the red zone. We have to get better and continue to coach them up. Our guys are working extremely hard. They have a great attitude and a great want to. We did not do very well in the Mississippi State game, but hopefully we will do better.

On defending against big plays:

We are very proud of our defense. I think they play with a tremendous amount of effort, passion and tenacity. They are very enthusiastic and they play hard. They will strike you. The bottom line defensively, is you have to keep the opponent out of the end zone. Giving up the big play is not because a lack of ability, we have had some missed assignments. The big play at the end of the half against Troy and the two big plays Mississippi State had, we had some players out of place. That is going to happen; we just have to continue to eliminate this as much as we can. I am very proud of our defense and their frame of mind right now.

On playing against the 3-4 defense run by Western Kentucky:

We have seen enough three-man fronts and four-man fronts this year. Most defenses are complex enough to play three-man fronts throughout the course of the game. The odd front or the even front will not be the first time we have seen it. We will be ready for it and ready to play against it.

On discussing rivalry history of Middle Tennessee and Western Kentucky with the players:

I doubt they know it. They understand how long this game has been played. It is like I said earlier. We talked about it yesterday. Understand how our fans and this university feel about this game. For most of these guys, this is only the third time we have played them. The longer you play someone and when they are in your conference the game is magnified. It starts to develop more meaning, because you are starting to play this team on a yearly basis. I think our guys understand that when they see the Western Kentucky basketball team play Kermit (Davis) and those guys, they see how many fans come and the intensity the game is played. That is what will happen in football because of the past history. I think it takes time for your players. Yes, we have talked about it



Cam Robinson and the Blue Raiders addressed the media this week in

preparation for Saturday's home game. ()

and the game has been played since 1914. That part of the game is important to me because it is important to embrace the tradition and history of your school, but you do not want to get caught up in what happened 10 and 20 years ago.

Senior Defensive Lineman [Cam Robinson](#)

On defensive play to this point in the season:

I think we have played pretty well overall. I think we have given up too many big plays because of a missed assignment. We have to continue to practice hard and get better and fix those mistakes. A 3-3 record is unacceptable to us right now.

On making a lot of tackles:

They have probably been running at me a lot more! The other guys around me are good and they probably think I am not as good so they come at me a lot more.

On playing Western Kentucky:

Their red jerseys make me feel like I want to go to war. It is history and we are the last D-1 team they beat two years ago on our field. We felt they came out more prepared than we were that game. We want to come out more prepared this time around like we did last year at their place.

On playing a homecoming game:

To us it is the next game. We take it one game at a time. Homecoming is for the fans, the students and the alumni. We treat it as any other game.

Offensive Tackle [Mark Fisher](#)

On playing Western Kentucky at home for the first time since losing to the Hilltoppers in 2007:

As a player, you have to put it in the past. But it does get us fired up and ready to play. They beat us at home, which is not good. Last time we came out hesitant and they came out ready to play. This year we want to come out more ready to play.

Every week we take the opposing defense very seriously. The defense for Western Kentucky is very good. It is going to be a challenge and we look forward to the challenge.

On blocking for different styles of quarterback:

As an offensive line, we block the same for whoever is back there.

On the experience of the offensive line:

It helps because we have seen everything by now. We go out there in practice and pay attention to the details and learn to play with each other. We are trying to get sound on our technique.

On understanding the rivalry between Middle Tennessee and Western Kentucky:

Being from Nashville, I understand the rivalry and tell players about the Tennessee - Kentucky rivalry and describe it like the Georgia - Florida rivalry. They understand that and it gets them pumped up and ready to play.

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