

November 3, 2009

Blue Raiders begin three-game homestand

MT-FIU to kickoff at 3:37 PM on Saturday

Athletic Communications

Head Coach Rick Stockstill

Opening Comments

I thought the FAU game was an extremely good win for our program and I am proud of our players. The toughness that they showed in that game was great. There were many times in that game where they could have folded, but they continued to fight and played with a great attitude. I'm looking forward to this week's game against a very good FIU team. It will be another fourth quarter game against a talented group.

On the production of the team's walk-ons

You do not always expect it but you have to prepare those guys in case of injuries. When we lost Malcolm (Beyah) it gave (Harold) Turner an opportunity to play. When [Sammy Seamster](#) got hurt it gave [Sherman Neal](#) an opportunity play. If you had told me at the beginning of the season that [Harold Turner](#), [Shane Blissard](#), and [Sherman Neal](#) would score touchdowns I might not have agreed with you, but when opportunity knocks you have to be able to answer. Everyday in practice, the walk-ons work just as hard as the scholarship guys, so it is good to see them get a chance to play.

On [Dwight Dasher](#) improving himself as a passing quarterback

It is not something anyone set out to prove. I always thought Dwight could make all the throws and he has proved that this season. He has been a little inconsistent in the passing game this season but I like what [Dwight Dasher](#) is about. This is the first time for him as a full-time starter. He is still learning. There is not a doubt in my mind that he can do everything we want him to do.

On playing through injuries

Injuries are part of the game. We have a bunch of guys that may not be able to play this week. You hope throughout the course of the year that you get your second team guys some snaps in the game so when injuries do occur it is not their first time playing. Some teams cannot afford to play there second and third guys because of the drop off in talent.

On [D.D. Kyles](#)

I think he has changed his practice habits. If you are not going to practice hard and with great intensity you are not going to play. When Phillip (Tanner) went down early in the year D.D. thought he was the guy. He did not practice as hard as he needed to. Therefore, he did not play as much as he thought he should. Then he realized if he wants to play he had better become a better practice player.

On the improved performance of the running backs

It's a direct reflection of the offensive line and I think the offensive line played their best game of the year both in the run and pass protection game. They were dominating against Western Kentucky and at times against Mississippi State. It's an evolution over these past couple of weeks and they're continuing to get better. They are playing with a nastier mentality, getting people on the ground, taking great pride in protecting the quarterback and rushing for more than 200 yards the past two weeks. D.D. had success at FAU, Dwight rushed for over 100 yards at FAU, and we rushed for 200 yards against Western Kentucky all because of the offensive line.

On Bowl Eligibility

There's not one ounce of talk about it. The bowl deal is out there and we know it's out there. The bottom line is that we have to get to 6-3. That's all we're focused on and not worried about two weeks from now, three weeks from now, or what happens in December. We are just focused on these next five days and getting ready for FIU because this is going to be another fourth quarter game. FIU has a really good team with a bad record. They have played some good people and lost some games, but they are very athletic and may be the fastest team we've played since Troy. We are just trying to get to 6-3. That is our goal and focus and all we are concentrating on.

On [Paul McCall](#)

There are a lot of things you would like to have in a quarterback. The first one is having a guy who is a winner. Someone who will lay it on the line and do whatever it takes to win. Obviously, you would like to have a great leader out there also. The third thing is toughness. You have to be mentally and physically tough to play that position. You are the focal point and the team has to rally around and respond to you. The hits he has taken this year and gotten up from shows he is an extremely tough young man. I don't know him, but I bet he is a great leader and a guy who practices hard and studies the game tremendously. He has those intangibles to run that offense and I have a lot of respect for him. McCall is an excellent quarterback.



Head Coach Rick Stockstill talked to the media today about this week's game against FIU. ()

On Injury Updates

Malcolm (Beyah) cannot take a medical red-shirt because he played in the first four or five games and to get a medical red-shirt you can only play in three of the first five if you have a season-ending injury. He is still probably a week away and we may get him back earlier than I thought. Malcolm practiced a little yesterday and still has a cast on his thumb from his surgery. Tavarres (Jefferson) is out for the year and had surgery last week. He can't red-shirt for the same reason as Malcolm.

On punt-blocking

When you say you're a punt-block team you want to see a punt blocked. But, there are more factors in being a punt-block team besides blocking a punt. We've had games where we have done such a great job pressuring the punter that their coverage couldn't get down the field to cover our punt returner. We've done a good job with that. When another team punts, they're giving you the ball back and the number one thing is getting the ball. [Patrick Honeycutt](#) is not going to razzle-dazzle you back there with punt returns, make seven people miss and take it to the house. But, he makes great decisions on catching and fielding the ball. Saturday against FAU, our coaches did a great job of preparing our players and our players did a great job of executing. I told our team, you have to be a man, a cold-blooded tough man to run your 300-pound body twelve yards full speed into another man's 300 pound body, not flinch and knock that guy back into the punter. Those guys showed tremendous toughness and effort to get that punt blocked.

On the next three games at home

It's exciting to be at home and this is the first year we have six home games. I hope everyone will come out and support this team. They've had a heck of a year and are 5-3 right now. We are second in the conference and there is so much out there to play for, not only for the team, but for the fans of this university. There's going to be great weather this weekend and we should be able to sell this game out. With the ticket pricing the way it is, you can't get better entertainment for 10 dollars than what you are going to get this Saturday.

Player Quotes

[Brandon Perry](#)

How do you focus on one game without looking at the big picture of what could be ahead with potential bowl eligibility?

The bowl is after the season and we still are in season with four more conference games left. That's our big picture. We will worry about bowl games after Nov. 28.

How does being home change the comfort level for this team? It's a great opportunity for us. The Florida boys had a bunch of family down at FAU last week, but there's nothing like playing at home and having the MT family behind you.

What were you guys thinking going into the fourth quarter of last week's game? Leave everything out there on the field and don't bring it on the plane. We played hard and it was very hot down there. It was more of a mental thing than physical.

Talk about the importance of the linebackers to the team. With Danny and Cam playing behind us they make up for a lot of mistakes the defensive line makes.

How does the team deal with varying game time weather conditions? It's just about adjusting. You saw we've had to adjust wherever we are. We just have to concentrate on what we have to do.

[Mark Fisher](#)

What turned the game around in the running game? The offensive line. Coach Stephens always talks about taking pride in your work and always being proud of your work. That's what we set out to do before the game because we always like, as an offensive line, to get a running back with 100 yards rushing or even more. D.D. (Kyles) did a great job hitting the holes this past week and he has really stepped up as a player.

How educated do you think the team is of the bowl possibility if you can get to that mark? We know it's out there, but we don't really want to focus on the future because we'll lose focus on the present.

Talk about Dwight's development from a running quarterback into more of a passing quarterback. I think his development has improved a lot as a pocket passer now. He has gotten a lot better with his reads and feet which have helped him with his passing game.

Talk about the mentality of the entire team playing the next three games at home especially with you guys in the bowl hunt. Having the next three home games is great for the team, university and this community. We just have to take it game-by-game.

Does the blocking style change at all when its Dwight rushing opposed to any of the running backs? No. As the offensive line, you block for whoever is back there. You don't change anything, but just try to pay attention to the details.

How is FIU from a defensive standpoint playing against them for the past few years? They're a very physical defense, very athletic and run the ball very well. Some teams give up when they get tired, but FIU doesn't give up. It's going to be a fourth-quarter game.

Coach said the FAU game was the best game for the offensive line so far. Do you as a group take pride in and continue to work on that? As a group, we need to take pride in that. Of course, we made mistakes because we aren't perfect and we need to improve. Coach Stephens does a great job coaching us and he makes sure we know our stuff. He is a great coach to play for.

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