

November 17, 2009

Blue Raiders preparing for ASU, Senior Day

Final home game of 2009 set for Saturday

Athletic Communications

Head Coach Rick Stockstill

Opening Comments:

It was a great win for us last week. I thought our players played extremely hard and extremely well. We wanted to go in and play a physical, tough football game. We knew it would be a four quarter game, which it was. We were just really proud of how physical we played and how tough we played. To be at 7-3 halfway through November is a huge compliment to our football team.

On the 2009 senior class:

When I got here four years ago, the guys who we did not recruit bought in from what we were doing the very first day. I have a tremendous amount of respect for those seniors. Anytime you make a coaching change, it is not easy. I have a special appreciation for those guys because they made our job a lot easier. We talked about this from the very first day; being a winner, playing like a champion, and doing what winners do which is be a good person, a good student, and a good football player. It is gratifying for these guys to go out in their senior season as winners. They can look back on their collegiate career and say they had two winning seasons, they went to two bowl games, they had a share of the conference championship, and they still have a shot to win another conference championship.

On the defense's attack style, leading to sacks/tackles for loss:

That is who we are. We are an attacking, blitzing defense that plays multiple coverages. We blitz from everywhere. Our defensive coaches deserve a lot of credit from how we come up with different schemes each week, but it is not all about coaches, it is about the players. We have good players out there. Last year we were young at a lot of areas on defense. The 2006 team had an older defense. In 2006 and 2007, we were a younger defense. If you look up there now you see a group of guys that have played a lot of snaps. We give them the opportunity, but they are the guys who make the plays.

On the changing of confidence from passing offense versus a running offense:

We have no less confidence in our throwing game then we do in our running game. You would like to be able to run the ball effectively. Early in the season we were not a good running team and had to throw the ball more. Now we are pretty effective running and we do not have to throw as much which balances us out more. It is not a lack of confidence. If we catch passes against Louisiana, Dwight (Dasher) probably would have had four touchdowns and 300 yards. It is not a sign of a lack in confidence. We are a better running team now, so we are doing it more.

On eight wins versus seven wins, when attempting to get bowl invitations:

In the big scheme of things, there is no phrase in the bowl contracts saying an eight-win team gets invited over a seven-win team. There are phrases that say a seven-win team gets in over a six-win team. It enhances your marketability and makes you more of an attractive team, but I do not know if winning eight gets you a bid more than winning seven. We want to get to eight to stay in the hunt for a conference championship.

On Coach Stockstill's name being mentioned for the University of Memphis coaching vacancy:

I have been contacted by Memphis. It is something I am flattered and honored about. When your name is thrown into the mix for a coaching opening, it is a compliment to you, but it is more of a compliment to your football team and university and what both have accomplished and stand for. I have not had any interviews other than when they called and asked for permission to speak with me. I am focused on this week and this season and making it as special as we can make it.

On staying focused against a quality opponent who's record does not reflect talent level:

We do not look at a team's record to tell us anything about them. Yes, they have a bad record, but they played good teams close. They barely lost to Iowa, who was in the running for a BCS game. And had they covered kicks better against Troy, they could have won that game.

They are the number one defense in the Sun Belt Conference. They are high, if not number one, in all defensive categories. This is the best defense we have seen in the last five or six weeks, including Mississippi State. Offensively, they have been close. They have been scoring points, but turnovers have hurt them at times.

On comparing the Sun Belt Conference to Conference USA:



Rick Stockstill addressed the media on Tuesday as the Blue Raiders prepare for Saturday's game against Arkansas State.

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We beat Memphis and Troy beat UAB. Watching Conference USA teams on television you can see they are quality programs, but I do not think anyone in our conference has to back down from them.

Offensive lineman [Mark Fisher](#)

On Arkansas State's defense

They are very physical up front. Five of their front seven are pre-season all-conference. They are a very sound team.

On offensive line's confidence running the ball versus throwing the ball:

Whatever they call, we haul. If it is a run or pass play we just concentrate on doing our job.

Printed on May 23, 2012

Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/42404>