Quotes from today's football press conference

Kickoff set for 6:02 PM Saturday

September 27, 2011 · Athletic Communications

COACH STOCKSTILL'S COMMENTS
We have a great opportunity this weekend when we play Memphis. It's an in-state game, so that adds a little bit of importance. I was proud of our team's effort last week at Troy. We played extremely hard, but just had a couple of things that, had we executed a little bit better, we could have come out of there with a win. But we didn't, and we have to get those things corrected this weekend. We have to continue to play with the same intensity and effort that we had at Troy last week. They have won one game, but they have been beaten by three good teams, Mississippi State, Arkansas State and SMU. All three of those teams are good teams, like the three teams we have played. We are not going to look at their record, just like they aren't going to look at ours. Our players know this is going to be a hard-fought, 60-minute football game. Just like our players know it. We are looking forward to this challenge and the opportunity to play this football game. **ON MINDSET OF TEAM AFTER TROY LOSS:** Obviously, we were disappointed. I love the attitude and character of this team. Our players know that our backs are against the wall, and we've got to come out swinging. And that is what we are going to do. We had a good practice yesterday. I have no doubt in my mind that this team will be ready to play, and play at a high level Saturday. **MOTIVATION FROM LAST YEAR'S LOSS:** I was embarrassed at the way we played last year, and we are going to play better than we did a year ago. We are going to play better than we did at Purdue, against Georgia Tech, and at Troy. We are getting better each game, and now it's time to play at an even higher level and eliminate some of our mistakes. I don't want to win this game

because we lost last year. I want to win this game because it's this year. I want to win for these players because they play so hard and they practice well, and it's important to them. I want to win because of this team. **ON OUR DEFENSIVE PLAY:** I think we have played really, really well, defensively. I really do. We gave up 27 points defensively at Purdue, we gave up 49 to Georgia Tech, but I think people realize how good they are, and how much they score. Troy is going to score in the 30s every game. They are an explosive offense. The thing that we have to get better at is not giving up the explosive plays. That's what you can't live with. That is the frustrating part defensively. Georgia Tech takes 19 plays to go 98 yards, but we can't get off the field. We played good defense, we just couldn't get a stop. They also had a 16-play and a 17-play drive, so we made them work for it. Then they had two, one-play drives, and that is what we have to work on. We also gave up a 75-yard play to Troy last week, so the explosive play has been the negative part of our defense this year. **ON MEMPHIS QB TAYLOR REED:** The more you play, the better you are going to get, and I think he has shown improvement in each of the first four games of the year. He seems to play with poise and he looks like he's gaining confidence. I think he's a good quarterback. There is not a throw he can't make. **ON FRUSTRATION OF LOSING TWO GAMES BY A FIELD GOAL:** It is frustrating when you are that close. We've had three point losses to Purdue and Troy, and both of those came basically on the last play of the game. I want so badly for this team to experience that success and reach their goals. They practice hard, they play hard, they compete hard, so you want them to see the rewards. I give our players credit, after the Purdue game, they bounced back and we played hard against Georgia Tech. We turned the ball over a couple of times, or that game could have been a little bit different. Then we go to Troy and play a great game, other than a couple of plays on offense, and a couple of plays on defense, that could have changed the complexion of that game. We have great leadership on our team, from both seniors and underclassmen, and we can still attain our ultimate goal, and that is still out there. I know that its coach talk, and cliché stuff, but it's a one-game season. We have always taken a season one-game at a time. These guys have always responded, and I have no doubt that they will respond Saturday night in a positive manner.

PLAYER QUOTES

OL Mike Williams, Senior

On Memphis game: Our start so far has been disappointing but we're not discouraged at all. We lost two games by a total of six points. If anything, it's made us want to come out and work harder. We know we have the talent, we just have to tighten a few things up to get where we want to be. **On last year's game vs Memphis:** I don't think last season our heads were where they were needed to be. But the way we've started this season I think is more motivation to play well against Memphis. We have the tools and the players, now we just have to put it all together. **On Logan Kilgore's development:** Logan has more confidence this year because he knows it's his job. He's the leader of our team. I think he's a lot more comfortable because he's been with the first team all year. **On having more playmakers:** The guys making plays this year have been here for a few years. It's really nice to see what they can do with more playing time. They've worked really hard and deserve it. **On changes in o-line on Saturday:** Most of the changes happen on the sideline while the defense is on the field. We have a group of guys who are talented and play hard. So whoever Coach (Jimmy Ray) Stephens puts in the game, we have confidence they'll get the job done. **OL Brandon McLeroy, Senior**

On losing close games this season: It's been really stressful to lose those games we really feel we should've won. But there's nothing we can do about it now. All we can do is look forward, keep playing, and hopefully win the rest of our games. **On Logan Kilgore's development:** He has a swagger now. He's got that experience under his belt, he's not dancing in the pocket. He's been playing with the first team all summer and all camp. And the stats don't lie, he's been great. I'm

glad to have him as my quarterback. **What does offense have to do better:** Finish. We have to finish. There have been nine times this year where we've been inside the 35 (yard line) and didn't score any points. That's unacceptable. We're going to work on it and get it fixed. **On playing an in-state team:** It means a lot to play Memphis. There's a little battle between the Sun Belt and Conference USA, plus the in-state battle. A lot of kids from Memphis actually go to school here at Middle Tennessee. To me it's not so much a rivalry, but it's personal.

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