Quotes from today's football press conference

It's Blackout night Thursday vs WKU

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HEAD COACH RICK STOCKSTILL OPENING COMMENTS: I am proud of this team, and the way they came back from being down 17-0 in the second quarter. It says a lot about the resiliency and character of this team. It was a hard-fought win in a game that was exactly what we thought it would be, a 60-minute game.

STOCKSTILL ON WKU: They are a lot better than some people think. They are at the top of most defensive categories in our conference. Their defensive front is excellent, their linebackers run really well, and their secondary has done a nice job not giving up a lot of big plays. Their offense has the leading rusher in the conference in Bobby Rainey. Their quarterback is much improved from last year in both throwing the ball and running the ball. They've got an experienced offensive line, and their receivers are making plays. We are not looking at this game like we are playing an 0-4 team, because they are a lot better than that. They went to the wire with an SEC team in Kentucky. This will be another hard-fought, 60-minute game and hopefully we will be ready to go and play our best game on Thursday night.

STOCKSTILL ON PREPARING FOR A SHORT WEEK: The preparation actually started last week before the Memphis game. I talked to our team and told them to make sure they take care of their bodies a little bit more than normal. They got in the ice tubs after practice last week; to hydrate their body more than they normally would in the course of a week, to prepare for their recovery after the Memphis game. Memphis was big and physical up front, and both our offensive and defensive linemen are a little sorer than they would normally be. We got in the tubs again after the game, and

again on Sunday to help us prepare for this quick turnaround. You can't practice as much because you don't have as much time. You don't have as much meeting time in a short week, so we have had to abbreviate some things and shorten some things. I do not believe that has hampered our preparation. We've got some guys nicked up that have missed practice sessions this week.

STOCKSTILL ON BOBBY RAINEY: Bobby Rainey is an excellent player. I think he carried the ball 40-plus times against us last year. We have to do a good job of tackling him. You have to get a lot of people around the ball. He's not a big runner, he's a small guy that runs very well behind his pads. Tackling him, the first guy can't miss, we can't miss a bunch of tackles and that is what we did last year. He was able to break some tackles and extend runs. We've got to do a better job of tackling, and get a lot of hats on the ball. He was involved in their passing game a lot more than he has been in previous games. Some of the touches that he had been getting from the backfield were coming from passes last week. I think he had over 150 total yards of offense, so he is a very good running back and a very capable receiver coming out of the backfield.

STOCKSTILL ON BOTH TEAMS BEING BETTER THAN THEIR RECORDS: Western Kentucky is better than their 0-4 record, and we are better than our 1-3 record. I really believe that. In three of our four games, it has come down to the final drive of the game. We've been in every game we've played except Georgia Tech, but in that last drive we are doing something that is preventing us from scoring. Prior to the Memphis game, we had nine possessions inside the 30-yard line when we hadn't scored, whether it was a missed a field goal, a turnover, or a stop on downs. Those are things that you can't do. We did better against Memphis, but we still had two occasions when we got down there and didn't score. Defensively, we were averaging giving up 12 big plays a game prior to Memphis. Against them, we cut it to seven, but that is still three or four more than you'd like to give up.

STOCKSTILL ON ALAN GENDREAU: He kicked pretty well last week in practice, and he's kicked consistently this week in practice. He made that field goal last week and did a good job kicking off. He's gained some confidence now, and hopefully he is out of his funk.

PLAYER QUOTES

QUARTERBACK LOGAN KILGORE

On Blackout Night: I'm extremely excited. The only time I wore the black jersey I had sweat pants on with it on the sidelines. So it'll be great to wear it over pads this time. I think it looks good in the crowd and may give some guys extra motivation. But I don't think it will change the outcome of the game either way.

On confidence after beating Memphis: I think the entire team came out of Purdue and Troy with a lot of confidence. We played at a high level but just made a few costly mistakes. We definitely faced some adversity, but to stick together and overcome that gives a team a lot of confidence.

On having 3 late potential game winning drives: There really isn't a big difference between the three. At Purdue there were 50 some seconds and we drove it down to get a field goal opportunity. We got it close and even had a shot at the end zone with Malcolm (Beyah). At Troy we got into a 4th and 5 situation and at that point your just trying to make a play. But we were close again. Against Memphis we were deep in our own territory. D.D. [Kyles] made a couple big plays to get us to mid-field, and at that point we knew we could take a couple shots at the end zone.

On finishing the Memphis game: I think everything is cured with winning. I think the team is excited with our game plans and what the coaches are putting us in and now we've got to execute it.

On different wide receivers getting the ball: The beauty of our offense is we have a lot of self-less guys and I think that benefits our scheme. We don't line up and say this guy's getting all the touches. We just take what the defense gives us. And the guys need to step up when their number is called.

On short yardage situations: Short yardage comes down to all eleven guys doing their job. I know I could do a better job with carrying out my fakes and I think everyone thinks they can do a better job at executing. That's the bottom line. We have to execute better.

On Western's record: I knew by watching film that Memphis was better than its record, and they proved that Saturday. Western could've beaten Kentucky and probably should have, they outplayed Kentucky. We're not going to underestimate them at all. They're a very good team and we're going to have to bring our best game in order to come out on top.

On midweek game: It's exciting to have a mid-week game. I think the atmosphere on campus is heightened when we have a mid-week game. We're the only game in the state Thursday night and I'm excited to see the support that we get.

SAFETY ERIC RUSSELL

On rivalry: The rivalry means a lot. I know there have been a lot of games between these two schools, so we know the rivalry is big. So we're looking forward to playing hard and getting another win.

On the black jerseys: Last year was my first year experiencing the Blackout event, so we're looking forward to it again. It's going to be on ESPNU and a lot of guys are getting excited and we'll be ready to play.

On team's confidence: Every game we've played, we've had a lot of confidence. We always thought we were a good team. If a couple plays were different we could be 3-1 right now, so we're very confident and looking forward to Thursday's game.

On stopping Rainey: He's a really good runner. He's a little guy, but he's hard to tackle so we've got to get people to the ball and attack.

On return last year against Western: Last year the guys just executed to help me spring that one for a touchdown. Last year was my first year and it took a little bit to get comfortable in the system, and learn where the holes would be and when they would open up.

On playing more defense this year: It's been different this year, but it's not that tough. The coaches get us in good shape for situations like this. So it's not that difficult, but it is asking a little bit more of me this year.