Raiders preparing for pivotal game vs Mean Green

Kickoff set for 2:32 PM Saturday for Blackout

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COACH RICK STOCKSTILL: We have North Texas coming up this Saturday, and they are coming off an emotional win last week over ULL. They will come in here with a lot of confidence. We are both 2-1 in the conference along with three others, so it is a critical game. We'll have to play extremely well.

They are doing a great job of running the ball, and I think they are under-rated in passing the ball. They throw it 26 to 27 times a game, and have thrown it over 200 yards in five straight games. In the past couple of years, they had Lance Dunbar, who was their "bell cow" and he got the majority of the reps. Now they are pretty evenly balanced. They have two really good backs that can run, they are good in the screen game, and they have good speed. They'll use them more in the passing game than they did with Dunbar in the past.

(On how MT running backs did last week without Benny Cunningham): I thought all of those guys did a nice job, Jordan (Parker) ran hard and had some explosive runs, a couple of them over ten yards. Reggie Whatley and Drayton Calhoun also had some nice runs. Drayton ran better than his stats and was the victim of a missed block and a holding penalty. Jeremiah (Bryson) had some nice runs as well. All four of those guys have also improved in pass protection than what they were in previous games, and they will only continue to get better. I was pleased with the production of the running backs.

Even with the absence of Benny, we are still the same offense. Each game is going to be different, but we still want to be as balanced as we can in passing and throwing.

(On remaining "bowl eligible"): We are one of five or six teams that can still get the six wins needed to be eligible for two guaranteed bowl slots. Middle Tennessee and North Texas are two of those teams. This game is big to keep us in the hunt for the Sun Belt championship, and it's big to keep us in the mix for "bowl eligibility".

(On North Texas' advantage in having 11 days to prepare for this game instead of the normal seven days between games): It is a tremendous advantage. Anytime you have an open date this time of year, it gives your guys another six, seven or eight days to get healthy, to get some of those nicks and bruises healed, and it gives your coaches extra time to prepare. The players have more time to study film, to understand the game plan, so it's a tremendous advantage.

QB LOGAN KILGORE

(On WR Anthony Amos): I just have to get the ball to him, just give him a chance to make a play, and he's going to make it. He does a really good job; he's got great ball skills. And as long as we give him a fighting chance to make the play, he's going to do it more times than not.

(How is the running game progressing without Benny Cunningham?): Whether it's Drayton in there, or Jordan, or Reggie, they all bring something different to the table. They are eager, they are always willing to learn, they are always willing to ask about how to do things better, and I do my best to help them out, and Coach Brock does a great job of coaching those guys. Every game they get better. Every game they get better. In the Mississippi State game, they did some things well, and in these last five conference games I am excited about moving forward with those guys.

(On significance of the next five games): Starting with North Texas, it's big. It's going to be a Blackout crowd. It will be a big game for us to get some momentum, especially into the short turn-around time in the game with Western. Then we have a wild card game in South Alabama that we haven't played before. Then we have two more tough games with Troy and Arkansas State to finish up the season. I think this is a very important game to start the final push of the season.

(On rarely being sacked this season): Any quarterback will tell you that getting sacked does not really change their mindset in regard to your offensive line. Obviously a sack is better than a turnover. The offensive line has done a great job in giving me a lot of time to throw the ball. There are times when the defensive coverage will force a sack, and that is just the way the game goes. I have all the confidence in the world in all those guys up front.

DE OMAR McLENDON

(On teams who wear different jerseys several times a year): Personally, I think it's ridiculous what some teams are doing with their uniforms. Sometimes they don't even have their own school colors on them. It's crazy, but like Coach Stockstill said, it's great for recruiting, and the players like it. I know we are excited about the black uniforms that we will wear for our annual "Blackout Game" on Saturday. Bottom line is they aren't going to give us any points because we have them on.

(On bowl eligibility): We don't even talk about bowl eligibility. Our focus is to win the Sun Belt Conference. If we do that, everything else will take care of itself.

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