

Raiders, Trojans set for another key battle

MT to honor 16 seniors

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COACH RICK STOCKSTILL:

This game Saturday is Senior Day. We don't have a large number of seniors, but the ones we do have mean a tremendous amount to me, just the guys that have sacrificed in the four years they have been here, and everything they have meant to me personally, this university and this football program. I am extremely proud of them, and for them to be able to go out now and say that they went to three bowls in four years is a tremendous accomplishment for them.



This is a big game for us, and I know that I have said that every week here lately, but we have put ourselves in position with two weekends to go. We are still in the hunt for the Sun Belt Conference championship, and that is our main goal.

Troy is an excellent football team. They have to win this game to be bowl-eligible, so they have a lot to play for, but we have a lot to play for in our quest for the championship. Troy is very explosive on offense, and they have good skill players and a seasoned quarterback. We've got to do a good job of eliminating the big play and we have to supply pressure on the quarterback with our guys up front.

Defensively, they look about the same as they always do. They've got a lot of junior college guys up front and in the secondary. They are very athletic.

(On combating the best passing game in the Sun Belt): Losing Jared Singletary a few weeks ago, and losing Kenneth Gilstrap this past weekend, has depleted our secondary a little bit. You just go to the next guy. Some of these guys will play more on Saturday than they ever have played in a game before. The other guys around them have to raise their level of play and get more pressure on the quarterback. Coach (David) Bibee and Coach (Steve) Ellis will have them ready to play.

QUARTERBACK LOGAN KILGORE

On a potential offensive shootout with Troy: "Every week we know we have to score one more point than who we're playing. This week, we've got faith in our defense. Offensively, we're just

looking to execute our game plan and continue to get better on our side of the ball."

On not thinking about the losing streak to Troy: "I think last year it was because I had never played against them. I probably said that every team's different, and I'll say that again this year because they haven't played these 11 guys on offense. They played some other team. Every year is different. Obviously they've done a good job. There have been some close games there. I think that last year, we hurt ourselves. It was an interesting game down there. We missed some field goals. I remember not being able to convert on 4th and short in the red zone. We've had close games with a lot of different teams, and this game right here is huge. It's bigger than South Alabama just because it's the next game. We have to win this game to give ourselves a chance at our first goal, a conference championship."

On which team has more to play for on Saturday: "We've been there. Two years ago, in 2010, we went down to FIU and had to win to 'play on' so to speak. Once again, I think that winning this game gives them a chance at a bowl. Obviously, if they don't win, they have no chance. I still think that they're going to come out and give great effort. I'd say that whether or not they were bowl-eligible. Those guys always come ready to play. We have great respect for them. For us, we're not looking at we're already bowl-eligible so let's just coast. Our first goal is to win the conference championship, and what comes after that will take care of itself."

On how a win over Troy leads to playing for a conference championship next week: "That's how I look at it. That's how I looked at South Alabama. I said if we don't beat South Alabama we're not going to win the conference championship. If we don't beat Troy, we're not going to win the conference championship. It's a huge game. It's a Sun Belt game late in the year. I think all that external stuff has a lot less impact than the fact if we do win this game it obviously puts us in a position to achieve our goal of a conference championship. That's pretty much what we're focused on. All the bowl stuff will take care of itself."

On his game against Troy last season: "As a quarterback, you take responsibility for whatever happens on the field good or bad. Obviously it looks great in the stat sheet, but I remember some plays. Particularly we got a turnover deep in their territory. On third and one and fourth and one it was a quarterback run and I wasn't able to get that one yard. You can't sit back and say 'I threw for whatever yards and touchdowns'. At the end of the day, I didn't get the win and that's my responsibility. I'm just going to go out there this week, just like any other day, and hopefully do what it takes to get that win."

DEFENSIVE END OMAR MCLENDON

On his best memory of the 2009 season: "The senior leadership from Brandon Perry, Chris McCoy, Patrick Honeycutt, and Danny Carmichael. Those guys were true leaders on the team. That's what helped us be so successful. They didn't just play. They were leaders on and off the field. I believe that senior leadership helped us stay focused throughout the season. It was a rough season still, even though we won 10 games. There was still adversity, but we overcame it because of that leadership."

On getting MT bowl-eligible in 3 out of 4 seasons: "You always want to end on a great note. For me being a senior, I want these young guys to be able to experience what I experienced my freshman year. Just the confidence level that I gained from my freshman year was amazing,

because I knew with how successful we were, we could continue to be that successful and that our program was growing."

On what the defensive line has to do against Troy on Saturday: "I wouldn't say we have to do more. Guys are going to step up. Like Coach said last week, you never know when your chance is. You have to play every practice like you're a starter and you have to be ready and be prepared. The defensive line will step up, just like the secondary would step up if we have injuries on the front line. As much as Troy throws the ball, we're going to have to step-up with our front and get pressure on the quarterback."

On the losing streak to Troy: "I can't make sense of the losing streak. I just believe it's the mentality you take into the game. They're another team. They bleed like we bleed. They breathe the same air we breathe. But we're a new team, they're a new team. That confidence level we have will help us be successful in this game, as well as the leadership on this team."

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