

Fresno State Postgame Quotes November 26, 2016

Interim head coach Eric Kiesau

On the outcome of the game today...

"It was tough, painful and I feel sick to my stomach. This really hurts to the core. I wanted to get this win for the seniors. It just didn't go our way tonight."

On the rain throughout the game...

"Rain does limit your offense a little bit because you are forced to run the ball more. The few times we did try to throw it, the ball was slipping out of their hands. I wouldn't use that as an excuse for the loss today because there are bigger issues than just the rain. We didn't execute in the second half and that's what it came down to."

"I was proud of our guys for staying fired up throughout the game despite the rain. The minutes in this game were so precious, especially to the seniors. They really enjoyed playing today, it just came down to execution."

On the season as a whole...

"It's been a rough one. I can't put into words what we've gone through day in and day out trying to get the players to stay motivated. We are here to develop kids and win games. This year we came up short and nothing went our way. We would battle back in certain games and there would be something that would happen to prevent us from finishing it out. It was a tough year."

On trick plays...

"We threw out a few trick plays today. We wanted the guys to have some fun during their last game."

On what he's going to take away from this season...

"The best thing that I'm taking away from this season are the relationships I've built with the players. Even during a hard time, they really took to the message we were trying to instill in this program. I went from being the new guy coming in to being placed into the head coaching role, they really bought in and brought great effort. Wins and losses aside, this is a team I will never forget. There are some really great guys on this team, especially the seniors. I'm so glad that our paths crossed."

Senior Defensive Back Stratton Brown

On his emotions now that his college football career has ended...

"I love football. Win or lose, I love my team. It is really emotional to think that I am never going to play with this team again. But like I said, win or lose, I love these guys."

On if he felt like he left everything he had on the field...

"I feel like I gave it my all and played my heart out every game."

On the close loss at home...

"Calls didn't go our way, and it sucks. I feel like we played good, and we played hard, it just wasn't good enough. What sucks is that it is my last game as a Bulldog, the last game with my boys. That is the hardest part."

On the Senior Day ceremonies...

"It was emotional, my mom was balling her eyes out and all that. I have been with these guys for three and a half years, and in a year or so, I will not get to see these guys on a day-to-day basis like I see them now. That's what is hard. I am not going to lose these relationships, but I will never have this environment again in my life."

On how he will remember this season...

"I will for sure remember all of the relationships. 1-11 wasn't how we wanted it to go. I know this team works so hard, and it didn't go our way, but we just have to learn from it."

On advice to the younger players...

"Work hard. All you can do is work hard and put your heart into it and let God take care of everything else."

On pinpointing how the season ended how it did...

"That is hard. There's a turning point in every game, and I feel like we just aren't making enough plays. I feel like the season didn't go downhill, it was every game that had its turning point. We weren't making plays, we didn't stop the passer or the runner, we didn't run well, or we didn't throw the ball well."

Junior Linebacker Robert Stanley

On his emotions regarding the season's end...

"It sucks. We really wanted this bad, for all the seniors especially. It sucks having them go out like that. All the hard work that everyone in the locker room has put in over summer, spring, fall camp, just sucks to have it end like this."

On another close game...

"No one on the team ever quit at any point of the game, in any of the games. I felt like we worked hard, we fought till the end, and the ball didn't bounce our way."

On what was going through his mind at the end of the game...

"It stinks, honestly. Especially for the seniors. That's what we wanted it for. That's what we were playing for. We just wanted it for them. It hurts."

On if he's optimistic for next season...

"Yeah, I feel like the best thing for me to do is to look ahead right now. Look forward instead of dwelling on the past."

On what it will take to bounce back...

“The thing Coach Kiesau has been preaching the last couple weeks is everyone all in. Everyone buying in to waking up every morning, weight lifting, going to class on time, being at meetings on time. Everyone just doing the right thing. Everything with effort, attitude, discipline, everyone doing the right thing. We just have to keep building on it.”

On the atmosphere in the locker room...

“A lot of emotions. Everyone just praising the seniors, thanking them for everything they’ve given to the program, thanking all the coaches, the training staff, everything they’ve done this season and the past seasons. Everything hit that it was the end, at least for the seniors. I feel like once they got to the locker room, that’s when the emotions just started flooding in, flooding out.”

Senior Wide Receiver Aaron Peck

On feelings after the last play...

“Just thinking, ‘How do we let that one get away?’ It’s just not how I wanted to leave or send the other seniors out. I was frustrated, didn’t want to talk to anybody, upset that the offense couldn’t get anything going in the second half. Rain or not, we can’t use that as an excuse. They executed and we just couldn’t get it done.”

On similar feelings throughout this season...

“Yes. We’ve had that feeling. It’s happened on multiple occasions. We get up early and then we just can’t seem to finish it out. You know how the season has gone.”

On why this team was not able to find a groove this season...

“I don’t know. It could be a number of things. To be real, I felt like every week our guys came out hard in every practice and work hard, continued to give effort in hopes of getting that win, we just couldn’t pull it off.”

On the difference in team from 2012 & 2013 to now...

“I don’t know how the younger guys feel about this team but I know that where we could be, where we used to be, and where we are now is a huge change. I don’t know why there was such a change in the past few years. I know the personnel have changed, but that’s not an excuse. We just couldn’t find a way to win this year.”

On what has changed from a few years ago...

“You try not to get caught up in that because your focus is on this year. Those years are in the past. We’re the 2016 Bulldogs. We just tried to focus on this year and what we could improve on week by week, so we never focused on the past.”

On feeling like Fresno State is a bad football team...

“Not at all. I feel like we have guys who are able to win games. We just haven’t been able to get it done and finish. We’ve been up early, feeling like this is how it is supposed to be, this is a good feeling, then we’ll come out in the second half and it’s like a whole different game. Again, I don’t know why, but it’s just been that way.”

On describing the season now that it is finished...

"It was a tough one. How does anyone describe a season like this, especially just being a player and being in it. It is difficult. These guys never really experience this. The guys you bring in are usually from winning high school programs. So just having a season like this is tough, but I still love our guys. I enjoyed the year, no matter wins or loses, so I can't say I regret anything."

On favorite memory playing Fresno State football...

"My best memory would be in 2013 when I started against Utah State in the Mountain West game after Harper got hurt and we won that one. That'd probably be my number one memory if I had to rank it."

On being proud of his career at Fresno State...

"Yeah. I mean I knew early on I wasn't going to see the field much with guys like Tae [Davonte Adams], [Josh] Harper, and [Isaiah] Burse. Being able to watch those guys and see how they attack the game and learn from that as I play. I would say I'm happy with my improvement and making myself a better player these past few seasons. I would say my career is something I would look back and be happy about and that I was able to progress."

On team reaction to the rain...

"We knew it was coming. We saw there was a 100 percent chance of rain. So we knew we had to make the plays outside that we knew we could make before the rain hits. We got some good throws out there from Zach [Kline] and a big play from KeeSean [Johnson]. We knew that once it started raining, it would be more of a running game. So Coach told us to focus on blocking, so we could run the ball."

On the potential of this team for next year...

"I can really only speak for the wide receivers because I know I'm the best. But KeeSean, Jamire [Jordan], Justin Allen, those guys could shock the world. Regardless of our record, I still feel like we have the best wide receivers in the Mountain West. Things haven't gone our way, but we definitely have playmakers on this team. I wouldn't be surprised to see them make an impact in this conference next year and the years to follow."