

USF vs. ECU Quotes

Oct. 8, 2016

USF Quotes

Head Coach Willie Taggart

Comments on the game:

"It was a great win. It wasn't necessarily pretty at times but a great win for our ball club, great win for our alumni that are back here for homecoming. It's great for our guys to go out and perform and get everyone a victory that we wanted. I thought the ballgame showed a lot of courage in our football team, how we let East Carolina get back in it and our guys came back and made a play when we needed a play, and that was great to see out of our football team, out there playing as bad as we did throughout the game."

On how concerning the penalties were:

"Very concerning. Very concerning. It was a sloppy game, especially offensively. We were in the red zone, get those penalties that got us behind the sticks. We were just sloppy all over. We have to get those corrected if we want to be the team we say we want to be, but it was sloppy all over."

On Ronnie Hoggins not playing in the second half:

"Early in the game he did something with his calf. His calf started bothering him and it didn't feel right, so we put another defensive back in for him. I think Ronnie will be fine, but at the time it was something that was bothering him."

On Johnny Ward stepping in for Hoggins:

"I thought the old man did great. We call Johnny the old man of the group because he's the oldest, and I thought he did great. That's two weeks in a row where he's come in and made plays for us. I love Johnny to death. You want to know the character of our football team look at a guy like Johnny Ward. He played a lot of football for us here, had his position taken, and he easily could have went into a shell, but he didn't. He's ready when his time is called and he goes out and takes care of business. I really appreciate the work he does for us."

On the Quinton to Rodney connection at the end of the game:

"They came into the game saying they weren't going to let us get the deep ball. They had the defensive backs playing far back and every time we tried to take one, those guys were back there, we kept running the ball out of that formation and really we set that one up for it and Quinton did a great job of throwing the ball on time and giving Rodney the opportunity to run after the catch. That's great. Especially for a guy like Rodney, whenever you get him the ball where he can run with it great things happen for us."

On whether playing a close game at the end was good for the team:

"I think it's good for our football team. It's kind of like I said at the beginning, it shows a lot of character out of our football team. Our team has shown now that they can find a way to win a lot of different ways. Up at Syracuse, we were down 17 early and found a way to come back and win that ball game. Then at the ballgame last week, it was back and forth and we found a way to win that one. And this game here, we played so bad, and talking to the guys at halftime, I told them we really can't let this team stay in this ball game. We let them get back in it late, but I thought it showed a lot of character in our team, it showed a lot of growth with our football team, not wavering just because things started to turn the other way, but getting excited about the opportunity to go out and make something happen, and our guys did that."

On D'Ernest Johnson:

"I'm running out of things to say about the kid. He does it all for us. He's awesome. I'm glad he's on our football team. The kid just loves to play football. I think D'Ernest is our best football player on this team. He's that guy. He finds a way to get into the end zone. Maybe we need to change his name to 'TD'."

On the defensive performance overall:

"We held them to 22 points. I'll take that. We got a turnover there (from Nigel Harris). Again, we have to do a better job on first down. I think our football team isn't good on first down, which out of all the other downs looks easy. We have to get off the field in those third down situations. We're in the right positions to give up little plays we shouldn't give up. The thing I like about our defense is they bend but don't break. They move the ball but they didn't get into the end zone every time they got down there. That's something we always talk about on the defensive side of the ball, especially nowadays in college football of spread and up tempo, teams are going to get a lot of yardage on you defensively."

On Mitchell Wilcox:

"Mitch played well. He made some plays for us. To be the only tight end that played in that ballgame, I thought he played well. I thought he made some bonehead mistakes, had some penalties in there that we just can't have, but overall I thought he played well for us."

On the two point conversion stop:

"We didn't bring any pressure on the play. The defensive end did a good job not letting the quarterback just run out. We had a feeling that they were just going to sprint out of the pocket and run past everybody in that situation. I talked to Vincent (Jackson) about not allowing the quarterback to sprint out and our guys played coverage and did a good job of making him have to throw it there."

On Marlon Mack's fumble:

"To be honest with you I didn't say anything to Marlon. I think Marlon was pretty upset with himself. I think he knew he let his football team down. Marlon is one of those guys who you don't have to say much to him. He knew he let his team down, he knew how important that is to us, holding the ball."

On playing well despite key injuries:

"It's good. We said that from the beginning. It's probably the most depth we've had since I've been here. It's great that our guys come in and there's no let down. I think our guys take pride in their position groups when they're playing. We constantly talk to our guys about taking advantage of opportunities. They don't come often but when they do you have to be ready for it, and I see that guys are taking that to heart. We have that mentality, next man up, where we're not going to blame anyone or make any excuses, it's on us to do something."

On Mitchell Wilcox having four kick returns:

"I had an idea they were going to kick it short, not kick it far every time, not necessarily to Mitchell. We have to work on his juke, get Marlon to show him how to juke a little bit and get us some more yards there."

On the targeting call on Rodney Adams:

"My man Rodney. He got up. He ate it up. He took that hit like a champ. I was really impressed with Rodney Adams there, getting off the ground and ready to play."

USF Players

Quarterback Quinton Flowers

On the big play with Rodney Adams and how that changed the momentum:

"It was a designed play where we get the backs to come up. We had a chance with Rodney Adams one-on-one, Rodney did a move, he spun around and I give him the chance. Rodney just came through with a catch."

On making big plays against ECU two years in a row:

"Going into the game I went and told him that we have to step it up. We went out and did what we supposed to and did the responsibility."

On what makes this team so good running the ball, reaching 200 yards for another game, extending your national leading streak:

"Just knowing what we are supposed to do and when we are supposed to do it. Me, being the quarterback, I know I have the chance to be somebody. We had some guys getting tired, so I gave Mack a break and I did what I did with my legs. Being in this offense, you have a lot of different type of guys who can run the football. "

On his block on the late touchdown:

"I'm always personally willing to help everybody. If they are coming back my way, I will turn myself into a blocker. It all started from the bowl game. I saw Marlon Mack bouncing back my way and I had a chance to block for him. Ever since then, whenever he bounces back ,and he sees me in front, I just block for him."

On being focused with whatever the defense gives you:

"All week we felt like they were going to give us one-on-one pressure. They did. We got fast guys outside, so we went quick game and went with what they gave us."

On being 5-1 and the possibility of being bowl eligible next week:

"It's a great feeling. Everybody on this team knows we have something ahead of us. We take it just one game at a time. Everyday. We always just worry about the next team in front of us and we don't worry about teams down the line."

Running Back Marlon Mack

On him and Quinton working together and getting things done

"We talk every night and we stay together. We just tell each other to fight through it. Don't get down on each other and that's what we do, fight to the last whistle."

On his fumble:

"We all just let it go and I let it go and went on with doing what I had to do."

On taking a shot at another score in the final seconds:

"I was some what surprised, but coach calls it and we got out there and do what we're told."

On stretching the lead after being in such a tight game:

"It was a good thing because we believe in ourselves and when it finally happened, that's when everything started rolling and everything started clicking, so that was a good thing."

Wide Receiver Rodney Adams

On making big plays against ECU two years in a row:

"I just needed to step up when the plays needed to be made. I did and I helped the team and I'm just happy about that"

On the amount of offensive penalties today:

"No, I wasn't concerned. It's something our team works on practice. It's a sudden change, things weren't going our way and we just had to rally with each other and get the job done"

On answering after ECU tallied two quick scores:

"It's always good to answer back with a positive, you have to have a strong team to answer back as well and that's what we are. We keep coming together as a brotherhood to get the job done."

Defensive Back Nate Godwin:

On the struggle of stopping ECU first down:

"I'm not sure, when we came out, they gassed us a little bit... Miscommunication, a lot of plays they just gassed us. The first half we were able to keep them out of the endzone and hold them to field goals. I think we played pretty solid."

On covering the bubble:

"We played it pretty well, you have to be cautious with the bubble, you got the bubble and the bubble-and-go, it depends on the coverage, certain guys take the bubble, some guys have to stay on the bubble-and-go. I think we handled it pretty well. On most plays you just have to get round them, one guy to take the block and one to make the tackle."

On "embracing the suck":

"Yeah, we held them to six, and the next thing I know it's 22-24, they're going for the 2-point conversion. So yeah, definitely, we had to stick together. I'm proud of our guys though, on the sideline, nobody had their head down, everybody's motivated, let's go out and score. I think it was a good game for us, because we got to bounce back."

On the 2-point conversion stop and the interception:

"It was kind of a crazy turn of events... We weren't sure if they were going to throw him a fade or not, so we talked about things, calmed it down, and we were able to stop them. And the pick was all from film study. We knew they wanted to get the ball to 7, so we pressed the corner, Deatrick made a great play on the ball."

ECU Quotes

Head Coach Scottie Montgomery

On the factors of coming up short when trying to comeback in the second half:

"A little bit of speed. Our guys were where they were supposed to be, sometimes our defense guys, we had two people there to make the play. Some quick moves, they scored on us and losing Colby early in the game hurt us in coverage in the end. That was a huge play in the game. Losing your quarterback there again makes it tough but Gardner came in and did a good job. Some of our boys really battled. It really hurts. Our guys are starting to play better football now. Special teams, we fix a lot of things, we worked hard on that. I think we are starting to make a turn for the good. Even though the outcome wasn't what we wanted, it felt like we had that game there with the momentum before the big pass. We've got to do a quick turn around because we have a quick week with the Navy game. A tough few games for us, but our guys are playing hard."

On his opinion on the targeting call:

"I'm very disappointed that we lost a kid for a game. When we are coaching him to lower his target and use the shoulder. You coach a kid to do that and then that happens. He even asked questions as to why, and as a coach you have to be able to give him those answers. The call was made and I respect the call. It went upstairs, it went to re-play. Unfortunately, we're not on the right side this time."

On Gardner coming in for Nelson:

"I thought he had a better chance of being successful this week because he had a week of practice and he also knew his personnel better.. He did a really good job for us coming in. We

missed some opportunities early with Phil. It really shocked us. We missed Zay two or three times down the field that would have been walkin's. He took a couple shots again, so in the end we decided to go with Gardner and he came in and made some of those plays.

On their run game:

"We worked really hard this week on the running game and getting the ball back to the line of scrimmage. I didn't like us being so lateral the week before. We also worked personnel in the run game. It was very very helpful. This was one of those game where we knew we had to be in there tight or be above at the end and then make a play and we were right where we needed to be until they got a one-on-one matchup that they like. We probably saw it four or five series in a row and our corner was on top of a post and his athleticism just ran away from us."

On the red zone score to get within two points of USF:

"It was a big score. A big time job and Deondre Farrier took care of the football, he really worked on it. It wasn't really about scoring, it was about maintaining possession of the football and as long as we got it into the red zone. We didn't do a very good job in the first half of getting it into the red zone. We had to get into the red zone, so we figured if we got into it, it would turn into points."

On having to score field goals instead of touchdowns:

"When they stopped us in the strike zone in the 30 to 35 area, you love to get some big plays there. They made some plays on us. We didn't make a couple plays down there. We had a ball that hit us in the facemask, and you can't ask Gardner to throw any better than that. Those were big plays of the game."

ECU Players

Quarterback Gardner Minschew:

On USF's late interception:

"They had a great coverage call play with two guys on Isaiah and that was kind of our primary and they did a good job covering everybody else, so that's tough."

On gathering information on USF's defense while waiting on the sideline:

"There was a couple of things, that play where we had Farrier on down the sideline, we had ran earlier, had a good look at that. And just a few other things that I've always learned from Philip, he's done a great job helping me and teaching me through this whole season."

On how things have changed in the last 2 weeks:

"My preparation is the same. I've been ready all year, it's just a lot more weight on your shoulders, pressure to perform for your teammates. I feel the more reps I get the better, I'll be, and the more trust the guys will have in me."

Wide Receiver James Summers

How tough the loss is:

"It's real tough, just like you said, we battled back. They came out, scored on that last play, tried to get our offense going again, but we just got in a slump."

On running the ball:

"Yeah, we haven't been running the ball well, we really worked on zone read this week, so we hit it up. The play with one linebacker in the box, and we wanted to take advantage of that, and that's what we did. We ran the ball downhill."

On Gardner Minshew's performance:

"He played composed; he knows this offense better than anybody in my view, he really knows what he's doing. He tried his best."

On the scoring drive to tighten the game up:

"We had to come back, to make a statement. The defense just made a statement right before, so we wanted to come back and try to punch it in. And that's what we did, we ran the ball down their throats, and punched it in."

On the losing stretch of games:

"As you see it's one play, sometimes it's just one play, and the last three games it's been one play for us, so as long as we turn it around and get that play back, we should be fine."

Wide receiver Zay Jones:

On the team's performance

"Yeah, we didn't execute as a team, it's getting redundant and deja vu. But nothing the coaches have done, I want to make that clear, because the coaches have a great scheme for us, and they put us in great position, we just haven't executed. The offense especially. We just have to execute."

On Gardner's performance:

"I believe Gardner did a great job, it's tough being a backup quarterback to come in there in the heat of the moment. You haven't had the timing the first string quarterback has had. I feel like he did an excellent job, I need to help him out more. Offense tried to do what they can with what we have."

On where they're at as a team?:

"You know, you never want to be pessimistic, you always want to be optimistic and that's kind of my mindset to try to get these guys with positive energy. It's college football, things happen all the time. You hate you take these losses, but you can never say that you're out of it, you're done. Because the ultimate goal is to win a championship. And it's still possible, whenever it's possible I'm going to keep fighting, I know that."

On the tough breaks the past few weeks:

“I think our special teams have really cleaned up the errors that they made in the past, but we’re struggling to put it all together. You’ve got to understand we’re facing great teams, it’s not like we’re going out here and playing high school football teams. These are well coached teams, they’re D1 athletes as well.”