

## **Illinois Head Coach Bill Cubit**

### *Opening statement:*

"A little disappointing, I thought our kids played really hard. There were a couple of things that kept on creeping up: for one, too many dropped passes, that took away the flow offensively. Defensively, after the first quarter and a half, I thought they played really well and gave us some turnovers. We still had a shot at the end and unfortunately we didn't get it done on special teams. I thought Northwestern did a good job - you can understand why they're 10-2 - they don't make many mistakes. They have good players and they're well coached."

### *On the senior night festivities...*

"It's tough leaving these seniors, mainly because of all the adversity that we've had to face here. It's been kind of non-stop for almost a year. The kids just kept on fighting, battling through all the changes and they even battled today. It's a real credit to those players, and especially those seniors. I thought they represented this class well and represented this university very well."

### *On his recent acceptance of a two-year contract...*

"Compared to what I was thrown into before, it gives you a lot more time. When you go in a week before the season, there are some things you can achieve in terms of practice and organization and other things that you can't, so it gives you the opportunity to sort of put a stamp on the program."

### *On his decision to accept the coaching offer ...*

"I've said many times, I love these kids. It's all about these kids. When the offer was presented to me, the bottom line was I asked myself 'why do you coach?' I coach because I love being around players like this. So for me it's a challenge, it's a big challenge. I'm looking forward to it."

### *On his concerns when he was named interim coach...*

"I was really concerned in the summer with the explosiveness of the offense. I thought Josh would be a very explosive guy, but that was my main concern and I know that's pretty prevalent out there with the people that came to watch us. I didn't think we would be the big, explosive team that we were before. Now, being a controlled passing offense, I never thought we would drop sixty balls. In the games that we needed it, we just couldn't. We had to play a little differently."

## **QB Wes Lunt**

*On the field conditions today...*

"They were as I expected. A little wet but other than that, I didn't play very well today. I feel bad just because I wanted to send the seniors out the right way."

*On the chance of making a bowl game...*

"Yeah I think it would be an odd feeling just because the magic number is six, so if we do make it, it would be a blessing. Another opportunity for the seniors to play is what we wanted to get accomplished today, and we didn't play well."

*On Coach Cubit's extended contract and what it means for this team...*

"I think it means a lot, just for stability. With so much going on in the program, to have him named as the head coach puts a little ease with the underclassmen."

*On why the players have bonded with Coach Cubit...*

"I think his passion for the game. He's been around a long time. He really cares about his players; he's hard on them but he pats them on the butt for a good job. That's how he is. He's a player's coach and we're lucky to have him for a few years."

## **OL Ted Karras**

*On the offensive issues...*

"It's the red zone, like it has been the whole year. Everyone is blasting me for the snap. It was my fault, but I took my first trip at center on Tuesday because I knew Joe would be iffy. I think we got down and we started moving the ball. Again, we shot ourselves in the foot and we can't do that. That has kind of been our M.O. all year and it's disappointing that we didn't get it done."

*On the program changing since his freshman year...*

"I think it changes quite a bit. I came in under Ron Zook and that whole staff left. I came back and we had a few offensive coordinator changes, then Coach Cubit showed up and we kind of got it rolling on offense. I'm glad he'll be able to provide some stability here for the next couple years...I'm just glad they locked it down."

## **RB Ke'Shawn Vaughn**

*On the standing ovation for Coach Cubit...*

"We stood up and congratulated Coach Cubit for coming back for two more years."

*On having Cubit back to help stabilize the team going forward...*

"We've fought through a lot this year. We have to keep our heads up high and keep fighting."

*On being a freshman and having Coach Cubit throughout the next two years...*

“I’m very excited. We don’t have to change too much. We don’t have to learn new plays from a new coach. He knows what a lot of us can do with our talents.”

Northwestern Head Coach Pat Fitzgerald Postgame Quotes  
Illinois 14, Northwestern 24  
Soldier Field // November 28, 2015 // Attendance: 33,514

*Opening statement:*

"Thanks everybody for being here today, actually I should say tonight, and happy Thanksgiving everybody. I'm really proud of our seniors. They've been through a ton over the last two years, and to finish today, our season, that really is on their shoulders. They've been the ones that have gotten our values back, reestablished our standards, and to go to 10 wins in the regular season is obviously very special.

I tip my hat to Bill; he's a great friend we've known each other for a long time, they've been through a lot and to see the way he's kept that program together is very impressive to say the least. Well deserving of that opportunity to lead that program and very happy for him and his family, most importantly for those young men down in Champaign, that's a tough thing to go through.

I'm just really really pleased with the way that we approached the game today. I thought we had a really great week coming off a huge win last week on the road. I thought the attitude and the approach of the guys was spot on from the minute we started our prep this week. They handled the holiday very well and came out ready to go today.

I'd like to thank Tim LeFevour and everyone here at Soldier Field. I'm very thankful for the opportunity to play in this historic venue. I was a born and raised Chicagoan; I was 10 years old when the Bears won the Super Bowl. To have the privilege to have a team I lead run out of the tunnel here at Soldier Field today was something I will never soon forget on a selfish standpoint. But thanks to Tim and everybody here at the Park District; the field was just in awesome shape, especially with all the rain we had in the last few days. A lot to be thankful for, a lot of room for improvement in our game, but obviously our defense is pretty special, so with that that, let's start with some questions."

*On whether this defense is the best he's every coached:*

"I think from a standpoint of our ability defensively to create big plays, absolutely. We have one more game to go so, statistically, I guess I'll take a look at that at the end of the year and reflect."

*On the depth of the team:*

"To me, I think, what jumps out is our depth. We've played more guys on defense; going down to Duke, in 112 degree heat on the field and playing 64 or 65 of the guys who traveled. I think that's not only an indication of our defense depth, but our team's depth, and then everybody. The coaches, the players buying in and understanding that this year was different. We are going to play you, we are not just going to stand here and say we are one play away, we are going to play you and give you that opportunity."

*Discussing the identity of the team:*

"We are a Chicago football team. We're kind of old school, '95 neck roll, four yards and a cloud of dust. To a lot of people, I think that's boring; I could care less what they think, I call it winning. That's who we are right now. I'd love to put up the Baylor numbers and I'd love to put up some of the numbers that these other teams are offensively, but they can't shake a stick at our defense. We know who we are and we have to play to who we are."

*On the seniors being a part of two 10-win seasons:*

"Well it's huge. It's a special legacy and now one more; huge opportunity in front of them - to be the only senior class to potentially to have two post-season victories would be a statement by that group."

## Northwestern Player Postgame Quotes

Illinois 14, Northwestern, 24

Soldier Field // November 28, 2015 // Attendance: 33,514

### **Northwestern QB Clayton Thorson**

*On Coach Fitzgerald's postgame address to the team*

"He's really proud of us. We've battled adversity all year, we get every team's best shot being a good football team, and we're just happy to be where we are right now. He just said 'keep playing, tips happen; things happen, just keep playing.'"

*On Northwestern's defensive line*

"You've got to go score, and you've got to score for them, to have any way to win. We had a pick 6 there, they only let up seven points, and we've got to play a little better, but it is nice having a big defense like that; knowing you don't have to force some things on third down, just live to play another down."

### **Northwestern SB Dan Vitale**

*On his 19-yard touchdown in the first quarter*

"I just couldn't believe I scored. I had to focus on that catch; it was going to be a tough one. Clayton put it exactly where it needed to be, far enough outside to where their guy couldn't undercut me, and luckily I kept my concentration and got in. We just moved forward from there, that's all I had to do."

*On what ten wins mean to the seniors on the team:*

"It's incredible. It says a lot about the guys and the maturity and the leadership that the group had. We've been through it all, we've been through great seasons, and we've been through two not-too-good seasons. I think the leadership and the qualities we developed really came to the forefront and we were able to do something incredible this season."

*On the legacy the team hopes to establish:*

"I think it puts us back on the map, that's for sure. Obviously, we want to keep that going the next couple of years, even though I won't be here anymore. It's just an incredible feeling for all of us. Obviously, we want to get that eleventh win and do something that's never been done here before."

### **Northwestern LB Anthony Walker Jr.**

*On being third in Northwestern single-season history in tackles for loss*

"It feels great but just to get the 10 wins for these seniors are much more important. To have the opportunity to go down as one of the best teams in Northwestern history is much more important."

*On delivering on a consistent basis on defense*

"We take that to heart. We want to be able to go out and handle what we can handle. That's going out there and, when we have the opportunity, getting the ball back and getting stops on defense."