



POSTGAME QUOTES

K-State 35, Iowa State 42 | Nov. 25, 2023

CHRIS KLIEMAN, KANSAS STATE HEAD COACH

Opening statement...

"To end the way we did for the seniors. They've put so much into this program. They've put so much into their time here. They've invested so much and I can't thank those guys enough, those seniors, for investing back in myself, our staff, that came in here and like I told the nine six-year seniors they all sat where you guys were at in December of 2018. Not knowing what to expect, not knowing what they were going to get. And they stuck with it. They hung with me, they came back for the sixth year. And I know they're disappointed that we didn't get to where we wanted to go. But the body of work for those guys has been so impressive and it's hard to win college games and we were not good enough on defense tonight. It was a very, very poor performance on defense. Yep, the footings was hard. It was difficult. But we can't give up big plays like we gave up and that was the difference tonight. We run 102 plays, they run 35 and we have it for 42 minutes, they have it for 17 and a half. Shouldn't lose a football game like that. But we did because we did not tackle and we did not make plays across the board on defense and it's a shame because I was so hoping for those seniors that they had the opportunity to win. So we talked about was this one's going to hurt. We don't have a lot of things this week and then we are going to play in a really good bowl game. And we've got to be able to reset in another week. Once we find out who we play and then get them back together and find a way to play a really really talented team whoever we play and have a lot of fun with this group."

On lack of defense...

"I've never seen in my five years here and I'm frustrated, I'm angry. I've got a lot of different emotions. You know we just, we weren't good enough and we've got to get better. We have to get better."

On whether being eliminated from contention for the championship game had any effect...

"We didn't even talk about that, you know, I'm sure they knew in the back of their mind. But you know, as we all sat here for three weeks, you know, with Baylor we knew that the chances of us probably getting there weren't the greatest and the kids had talked about that and all the tiebreakers and stuff and I'm like guys, you just got to beat Baylor and take care of that. We were able to do that. And then, you know one team lost but we knew that we were stacked against us against KU but, you know, we played our tail off and found a way to beat a really good KU team and come from behind. We had good practices this week that I thought we were ready to play and I would still contend we were ready to play. We didn't make any plays on defense and we'll watch the film and see what happened."

On Iowa State's explosiveness...

"Guys in 2021 they had the first play of the game with Breece Hall for a touchdown, and it was probably a similar deal. And they run the ball and find ways to get extra guys to the point of attack as well as anybody does in college football that we play and when you have that you're gonna be in a lot of one-on-one situations and we didn't make one-on-one plays."

WILL HOWARD, SENIOR QUARTERBACK

On 102 plays with 35 points...

"I mean coming into it, like me riding the bus over here, I had no idea what type of game this was going to be, honestly. I didn't know if I was gonna be able to grip the ball at all coming out, and thankfully it was more packed snow so gripping on the ball wasn't really a problem at all. Which, thank goodness because I like to throw the ball so that was good. I think we did some good things offensively, but, obviously, not enough to get the job done. It sucks because I wanted to be able to send a senior class out the right way."

On the game turning differently offensively with the weather conditions...

"I knew it was gonna be bad. Being in Manhattan, Kansas, you never know what the weather's gonna be like no matter the forecast, it could have been a ton of snow, be no snow. But obviously, we were prepared for it. We knew that it was a very big possibility. So yeah, I thought we did a really good job handling the conditions and I thought it was honestly more of an advantage for the offense just in terms of the footing because the ball wasn't too wet."





On how close the last play was to working...

"It was close. It was kind of just an ad lib. You know, I just saw Phil [Phillip Brooks] in the back of the endzone, and wanted to give him a shot. But their DB [defensive back] made a good play and closed on it so, good for them."

On throwing that ball better than anticipated...

"100%. I had no idea what it's gonna look like, like I said. I was pretty satisfied with how we were able to throw the ball."

BEN SINNOTT, JUNIOR TIGHT END

On the most frustrating thing about the loss...

"I mean, I think just the loss. We knew we had a good game plan. We knew that we could really do good things against them. So, just how everything worked out in a couple of miscues, it's just really frustrating. And just not being able to win for all the guys leaving. It was just really frustrating."

On not being in the game for the last drive...

"It was probably one of the most frustrating points in my career. I was cramping. I couldn't walk, I could barely stand up. And to not be there and not be able to help my team, help Will [Howard], help the guys around me. It's super frustrating and it's just very disappointing because that's a moment that I need to be in and just feel like I let some people down."

On good memories with Will and the emotions between the two after that loss...

"We hugged and I love that guy so much. I would do anything for him. He's one of my best friends ever. It's definitely gonna be a relationship that I hold for the rest of my life. He's just an unbelievable kid, an unbelievable warrior and fighter. I'm just really honored to be as close as I am with him."

HAYDEN GILLUM, SENIOR OFFENSIVE LINE

On the loss...

"Losing is always tough but, you know, I think it's just kind of the end of an era and a season, that's the hardest pill to swallow but at the end of the day, I'm just grateful. I've had a lot of opportunities here and made a ton of incredible memories. So it's never easy but the sun will come up tomorrow."

On the conditions of the game...

"It was like nothing I've ever played on but it was fun. What a way to go out. I don't think I've ever played a snow game so it was cool. It was a memory that I'll have forever. I wish we could have came out the other side of it."

On the conversation in the locker room...

"Really the same message all year. We just had to keep chopping. We know that they're a tough team, they were gonna play the full game. I think they had two turnovers in the first half and that was really big and contributed to a lot of it. We knew we had to continue to take care of the ball and be efficient. Know that they played a tough game credit to them, and they beat us."

On preparing for the bowl game...

"I think first things first is kind of get past this one, you know, go through the regular process. I got one more month here, so what impact can I leave on the rest of the guys around me. I'm grateful that we get to go to a bowl, it's gonna be a blast, it's always a fun time. I think as leaders and upperclassmen we have a big responsibilities. Those guys really set the tone for us when they won the Texas bowl a few years back. I think it really creates a lot of momentum going into the next year. So really just keep pouring into these guys and enjoying every moment."





AUSTIN MOORE, SENIOR LINEBACKER

On the most frustrating part about the defense...

"How I played honestly, the mistakes that I made and how the tackling and everything like that and as a whole, just mistakes. I take responsibility for that because I'm the leader on this team. And it was unacceptable."

On the explosive plays Iowa State had...

"It was you know, both lack of execution and bad tackling. I think a lot of times were in place and we just didn't make tackles, I didn't make tackles, the lack of execution on the third down play. I need to stay outside and keep my leverages, things like that, lack of execution, lack of tackling."

On emotions during senior day...

"Just thinking about my journey here and how grateful I am for everyone. How grateful I am for my teammates, coaches, fans. Grateful for all you guys in here that have supported me too. So just really grateful for a lot of things."

On his plans for next year...

"I'm still not 100% sure what I'm gonna do. I still have a lot of thinking and talk to my family some more and think about that. But no matter what, you know, I know I'm so grateful for everything that I've had so far here at K-State."

MATT CAMPBELL, IOWA STATE HEAD COACH

Opening statement...

"I think it [this game] kind of describes the season right? I'd love to see what everybody was saying on Twitter before the game. Everybody's counted us out since May. Our kids keep responding. Team above self. I would say this 2023 team kind of realigned us. The way our football program's meant to be. Character, humility, and honestly, love. Those three things, I know it sounds corny, but that's really when we've been at our best here. The leadership, the coaching staff, and our kids have been nothing short of exceptional. What they just did was really powerful and they did it together. They did as a team and so I couldn't be prouder of them and excited because I think the future is really bright. But I think the reality also is, the precedent we got a chance to go get our eighth win, our fourth bowl victory here in the history of the school. So a lot of things to play for and those things are really powerful."

On Abu Sama III's performance as a true freshman...

"There was a guy named Breece Hall here and David Montgomery, that were pretty good. Breece Hall was pretty good as a true freshman. This guy's [Sama III] pretty good. He's gotten better every week. I think that's the thing, he's powerful, and he's special. I thought he was obviously exceptional tonight. I think the last time we were here, maybe a guy [Hall] ran the first play for a touchdown. This guy [Sama] is pretty special. I think he'll only get better. The great thing is you got Carson [Hansen] and you got some great guys around him that are only going to continue to improve too. Just really proud of his effort."

On his team's response...

"I think that's just the character of our entire team. How about Jaylin Noel, just a goofy situation and on the punt return that happened, all those kids responded. Jaylin's third and fifteen play is one of the best football plays I've ever seen. I think just how our kids have responded, has been what we've done since the start of the season, right? What we did after the Ohio game, what we did after everybody kind of was all over us. Our kids just respond and that has been the makeup of this program when we've been at our best. It takes great leadership, it takes kids believing in each other, and it takes a coaching staff believing in each other. That's really what was fun about tonight is it wasn't perfect, but our kids were able to respond."

On reestablishing this season...

"We weren't real far off and if you look at last season and some of the scores, it wasn't the football it was more of the foundational things that we just needed to realign ourselves with. Again, there's a pathway here and there's a lot of great teams that have come before us that taught us what it meant to play great football here at Iowa State and do





special things. I think we just had to realign ourselves to some of those things I just talked about things like character and humility and the ability to just get better one day at a time. This group has done a great job of that."

ROCCO BECHT, FRESHMAN QUARTERBACK

On what it was like out there...

"It was fun. I was telling the guys before the game just go out there have fun, have precision, and have detail. We had a great week of practice going into week 12 so we knew what we were going to come out and do today. We just had to stay resilient through the whole game. The defense was able to give us the ball back in certain situations. So props to them."

On Abu Sama III performance...

"I've already been asked about ten questions about him already. He was due for another big game. There were some bumps and bruises throughout the season, where he couldn't quit. So, I'm proud of him. He had a great week of practice as well. He's been preparing well and asking questions. As a young cat like that, he's just gonna get better every single week and we're proud that he's on our team."

On overcoming adversity this season...

"That game [vs. Ohio] and all of our losses I felt like we had something that we were able to look at and get better from. That was the emphasis of the season. We hit a lot of adversity but this team was resilient, and we came back from a lot of it, especially as a young team. I feel like this season is huge for us to build on and going into next season."

GERRY VAUGHN, SENIOR LINEBACKER

On what it was like out there...

"I think it was just all about us being gap-sound and communicating. Wrapping up and tackling, just doing those basic standard things that we usually do in practice."

On his role as captain this season...

"I will say we [the captains] led the pack, but in order for this all to work, all the younger guys and everybody else has to follow. Props to them for following us and believing in what we did and what we said so I think that's the biggest thing."

On the goals going into this year...

"I would say just being ready for your moments. That was one of the biggest things we talked about in the offseason was being ready for your moments when the time comes. You never know when that's going to come. That was the one big thing I would say."

