

Temple Head Coach Matt Rhule
Temple Owls vs. UConn Huskies
11-28-2015

Opening Statement:

"I'm really proud of our guys. It was a tremendous effort. DB Tavon Young went down and couldn't play, but DBs Artrel Foster and Nate Hairston stepped up as did so many other guys. We held an opponent out of the end zone for the second straight week and were able to force seven three-and-outs. Offensively, we were good on third and fourth down. I'm just really proud of our kids. As a team, we talked about how perseverance conquers has been the story of this team over the last three years. It's really the motto of Temple University. We tried to be conservative tonight and play for field position. I thought everyone stepped up tonight."

On playing for the American Athletic Conference championship next week:

"I was proud of our guys that we won this game because this was a championship for us. To win the East is a big deal for us as well as having the chance to be in the first ever championship game. As I just told the guys, the rewards are great but what I want to see is for us to play great in big moments. I want to see us answer the call in big moments and I thought we did that tonight. UConn beat Houston last week and I thought we came out ready to play tonight. You want to win championships, but you also want to have a championship culture and that's what we saw tonight from our guys."

On the depth at wide receiver:

"I think we have a lot of good players. We have thrown the ball to WR Ventell Bryant but throughout the year he got banged up. We feel WR Romond Deloatch is one of the best fade runners down in the red zone. I thought he caught the first one, but we came right back to it which was a great play call. We have a lot of wide receivers and we have a lot of confidence in them. Even TEs Kip Patton and Colin Thompson make big plays for us. We just have a lot of guys that we know can make plays."

On WR Brandon Shippen emerging the last few weeks:

"I'm extremely proud of him. He's a guy we really challenged going into the offseason. Sometimes we probably even pushed him to the limit because we thought he had a chance to be a really good player. What's great about him is that he's played great on special teams all year. He's very unselfish and he's blocked for us and done so many things. He separated his shoulder last week and came back to play this week, and that's really a credit to who he is. He made some really big plays for us in the first half to flip the field."

On what's going through his mind after the win:

"If I'm being honest, it's about how I need to get the schedule ready for tomorrow because we have another game. This is the first time I've ever been in the situation where you don't know if you have another game or not. We're going to get started on Monday. As I said to the team though, I'm really proud of the way they played. More than any of the awards or records, I'm really proud of the way they played. We will go play Houston and see what happens, but I'm just really proud of our kids. They're a special group."

On the defense's performance:

"I thought a lot of guys stepped up, and we were able to play a lot of guys. UConn threw a lot of stuff at us, and that's a credit to Defensive Coordinator Phil Snow. If you watch him work every day, you'll see he has prepared for thing the other team doesn't even do. He's done this for so long that he just knows what the other team is going to do. UConn came out with some wildcat and our defense practices that every week. We were able to react to it and that's also a credit to our older guys who were able to get us in the checks for the crazy formations we saw. They didn't give up big plays. That was a big play by DB Sean Chandler down the field. UConn was getting into their two minute drill and he really saved that drive. I thought a lot of guys stepped up and made plays. We reacted well to what UConn did offensively. We've played well for a long time now on defense"

On playing Houston next week:

"I really don't have anything to say yet to be honest with you. Head coach Tom Herman and I played golf over the summer and stay in touch over the year. I have a lot of respect for him and the team. They're really good on defense. Everyone is going to talk about QB Greg Ward Jr., who's really a special player, but they are really special on defense as well. We will go back and see where they're at since we haven't studied them yet, and then we will go through our normal week. After that, we will go down to Houston and see what we can do."

On the overturned touchdown by WR Romond Deloatch:

"The referees on the field don't get an explanation. I asked what they saw and he said he didn't know. It's the guy up in the booth and they said he didn't complete the catch. That didn't feel right to me, but I didn't see it. I'm sure that guy did his job and did it well. We were ultimately able to come back and score the next play."

On getting to this point of the season:

"I would really credit the seniors, but we also have a really good junior class. We have a lot of high character kids. You're going to lose sometimes. It stinks, but you're just going to lose. It's what you do when you lose that defines who you are. I thought our kids have done handled that well."

On DB Tavon Young and WR John Christopher being on the field for the final snap:

"I just wanted to make sure those guys got to play today. I mean who's meant more to our team this year than them? We put them out there for the final play so that they would be able to say they played today on senior day."

On reports of him interviewing with Missouri:

"You guys know me; I'm not going to talk about anything. This program is about these kids. Anyone who throws my names in things, it's really a credit to the players and administration so I won't talk about jobs."

On the play of the offensive line:

"We ran a bunch of plays to the left behind OL Dion Dawkins and Shahbaz Ahmed. I thought OL Brendan McGowan did a great job tonight. He looked like he got banged up there but he just kept fighting. I thought the offensive line, including our tight ends, did a great job. Those guys just kept pushing, and when there was nothing there our backs were able to get up inside. It was a really nice group effort by those guys."

On if DB Tavon Young will be available next week:

"We thought he was going to be available this week, but we got to the warm-ups and he didn't look full speed. We have so much confidence in our other players that we knew they would play well. I would expect him to play next week, and if not then those other guys will keep playing."

Temple LB Tyler Matakevich
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On winning the division championship tonight:

"This is an amazing feeling; I don't think it's really hit me yet. Once you see that trophy finally in your hands, there's no greater feeling than that but you can't be satisfied yet. We didn't work hard all year just to get there - we want to win. We'll enjoy this tonight but we have the conference championship next week."

On your thoughts about playing Houston:

"I'm excited; I can't wait to play them. They got us last year because they were a more physical team. We lost last year but we will see what will happen this year."

On the defense bouncing back from a rough three game stretch:

"We just went back to our basics. As weird as it sounds, that's all we did. We focused on the little details and it clearly showed out there tonight."

Temple RB Jahad Thomas
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On how you felt when the clock hit zero:

"Wow, we are going to the championship. Just the feeling of being the underdog team and being in a slump my first two years going 2-10 and 6-6, it's definitely tough not being able to go to a bowl game. Now just having the success we've had, it's great to see our team win."

On getting the victory tonight:

"We had no doubt in our mind. We knew that they were a great opponent but we always focus on us. We always control what we can control and just go out there to do what we have to do. Most of the time when we execute our plan, we are very successful."

On celebrating the championship:

"It was great. Going out there and playing at a high level and being able to do some of the things that I've done for my team each and every day is great."

Temple QB P.J. Walker
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On getting the win tonight:

"We went out there and had fun but at the same time played our hardest. We played hard for these seniors so that they could enjoy this victory. We were out there having fun and enjoying the moment."

On what was going through your mind when the clock hit zero:

"What a wonderful accomplishment it is. To win 10 games at a Division-I level is so hard. At this program, we have established something great and I feel like we have another opportunity to make stuff happen."

On how a trip to Houston sounds:

"It sounds like a great trip, we love playing on the road. We are going to go out there, play fast, physical and the best that we can."

UConn Head Coach Bob Diaco
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Opening Statement:

“Credit to Temple. They are a strong team, they had a strong year, they are a veteran team, and they are a well-coached team. Congratulations to Temple on representing our half of the conference in the championship game next weekend. Hats off to them and the season they put together. It was poor performance for us on offense tonight and our defense was exposed too much. We just can’t play football like that because we will have no chance to win. It’s 2015, you need yards and points and if not it’s just too hard to beat a quality opponent. It’s a shame we couldn’t end up with the interception when it was 13-0. A beautiful play was made and whatever the misfortune was there negated the play.”

On offensive struggles:

“We couldn’t run it or block. There were guys roaring through the backfield. We had off-target passing. It was just abysmal.”

On rebounding after tough loss:

“We need to correct the mistakes, communicate those mistakes and the corrections of those mistakes to the players, and then go out and practice and try to improve.”

On Temple’s defense:

“I need to go back and watch the tape to say specifically what they were doing. It looked like a lot of open edges and guys in the backfield off the edges, so we need to figure out a way to get that secured.”

On Temple LB Tyler Matakevich:

“He is an excellent player. He’s gutsy, hardnosed, and sees the game. I’m sure he is a great teammate and his teammates love him. I’m sure he’s a selfless guy that works hard, studies tape, and busts his butt. He makes all the plays and I’m sure he has all the intangibles like leadership. He has the production to back it up in the games as well. He is just awesome and an excellent player.”

UConn QB Tim Boyle
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On moving forward from this loss:

"We just have to go back and watch the film and continue to get better. Today's performance was not an effort problem, it was execution problem which is correctable. But we lost the game and we are not happy, we just got to go back and fix it."

On LB Luke Carrezola's performance:

"Luke is a special kid. He is going to be a great player down the road. I will be watching him on Sunday's one day. He reminds me of J.J Watt a little bit; his physical attributes and the way he can just play fullback and learn the offense in three days."

On the team getting into a rhythm, is it hard to do with so many changes in the backfield:

"We practiced all week with Luke so that was not a problem. The major problem was the team's ability to execute."

On the bowl game coming up, how important is it that the team is not ending the season with tonight's performance:

"If we are blessed enough to have another game, then we will all leave it on the field. The team is positive and we will do whatever it takes to give it our all for the seniors and the coaching staff."

UConn LB Luke Carrezola
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On the team's performance tonight:

"I thought we were playing well as a defense. During the first half we only gave up 10 points. It was 13 point game for three and half quarters. At the end they put on a big run, which really hurt us at the end of the game."

On the team moving forward after this tough loss to Temple:

"It means a lot to the team. In practice we will have to start going at it again, keep getting better, and continue to work on improving."

On QB Tim Boyle's comments about you learning the offense over the last three days, was that coaches decision to add you to the offense or was that your decision:

"A little bit of both. They asked me and I wanted to do whatever to help the team be successful."

On playing both offense and defense, are you tired:

"I'm okay right now, a little hurt but I'm okay!"

On you playing a different position this week:

"It was definitely different, but I'm willing to do whatever to help out the team. Whenever they call me over, I just work as hard as possible to help the offense out."

WR Noel Thomas
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On tonight's performance:

"As you can tell, they were way more prepared than us. We didn't play as well as we should have. "

On Temple's effort and if you guys a little hungover from your victory in Houston:

"They were the better team tonight."

On you team's quarterback situation and if you find it difficult with all the changes:

"Bryant Shirreffs does things, like extending plays. That's one thing that Tim Boyle and Garrett Anderson do not do as well but we knew the quarterback situation so it was no excuse."

On the team lining up in the wildcat on offense, were you hoping to get a throw out of it:

"It could have happened."