

# Notre Dame University Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 5, 2015

## Coach Strong

COACH STRONG: We talked about on defense containing their quarterback and not allowing him to throw and he had all day to throw the football and they were able to execute on some big plays.

But we have to get better. We have to improve. We are just a better football team than what we showed, and I just keep saying, that we've just got to keep believing in it and our players have to keep believing in it because we can't go out and not execute and not complete a game, just play a complete game, offense, defense and even in the kicking game. Just wasn't sharp. Wasn't able to punt the ball and ended up punting the ball out of bounds. And you look at the young players on the field, Malik end up playing good.

And the kicking game -- the thing they were able to do is get the pressure running games inside. We have two young guys on the offensive line -- inaudible -- getting pressure on our quarterback. So you know, we still got to get better, got to get ready for the next one and just have to improve.

### **Q. Can you talk about deciding to go with Tyrone the second half --**

COACH STRONG: He came out and think he got the wind knocked out of him, just run Tyrone the second half.

### **Q. You lost a lot of starters on defense to draft picks and knew that might be a struggle. Is your offense in a worse place than it was last year against Arkansas?**

COACH STRONG: I think we just have to do a better job of protecting the quarterback. We played against a really good front tonight against Notre Dame. Can't take away anything from them. They did a great job. The defense had a lot of players coming back and they played well. It was just tough that we were not able to block them but got to give us a little more time to throw the ball.

### **Q. Inaudible.**

COACH STRONG: It was a throw with a run and I think it was good enough to throw. Trying to get the ball on the outside of the perimeter.



### **Q. How would you assess Tyrone's performance?**

COACH STRONG: Didn't really have a chance to completely watch because I'm sitting there trying to do things right -- indiscernible -- got pissed off at the offense, just couldn't move the ball. But we had to protect Tyrone, protect him -- along the middle there to build -- we've got to give the guy a chance to play the ball.

And I've said this, the worst thing we can do is get him to third down and we got him to third down tonight and allowed them to just tee off. And when they got to third down, they just teed off and were able to get the pressure.

### **Q. Not a whole lot of film -- what are your impressions?**

COACH STRONG: No, we saw the Bowl game last year where he played very well. But you look at it, and our main thing was making sure we contain him and not allowing him to run with the ball. Just gave him too much time to throw it and they have really off-center receivers. You look at Carlisle, you look at brown, Robinson, they have some guys that they line up outside and they can beat you. When you allow them the time and he can find them, which he did, he was able to make that throw.

The thing about it, when you try to bring pressure on it, he can beat you in his legs because he can make a guy miss and now he's off and running. When you try to back off in the coverage, you try to get him the proper drops -- and the proper drops, which allowed the receivers to get open behind him.

### **Q. People think the offense might change into a speeded up version of last year. Is this the offense that you wanted to see?**

COACH STRONG: I've said this: In order for us to win this game, we have to play a great defense in order to run the ball and we have to run the ball downhill and we didn't do that tonight. That's the only way you're going to be able to win is you have to run the football and you have to protect your quarterback which we didn't do and you have to control the clock and you have to win special teams which we didn't do.

We have to run the football on offense and that's what

we didn't do. We didn't run the football and then to have over 200 yards rushing -- the thing that happens to you, you can't run the ball, you have no chance.

**Q. I know you've only coached one game but do you worry your program is going backwards?**

COACH STRONG: We're not going backwards. Early in the season. We just have to somehow get the thing moving forward.

**Q. With the offensive line in the condition that it's in right now, how much can you keep doing what you're doing offensively and how much will you have to change over next couple weeks to keep up?**

COACH STRONG: You know what we've got to do is we have to relax and guys need to just go execute and then we have to get them in the right place and that didn't happen always. And when you realize what your weaknesses are, then you can't go out there and thinking, hey, that this is going to work. We've just got to get a package, get a package, put in place and let's go run with it.

**Q. Moving forward, will you see Heard --**

COACH STRONG: He's going to get time. I think he played, what, two series in the first half and we got down 17. He got tired and he's going to continue to play and the line is going to continue to get better but everyone has to get better.

**Q. You talked about being frustrated with the defense. How much higher were your expectations of them and how disappointed were you?**

COACH STRONG: Well, you had to control the line of scrimmage, and the thing you want to do is just make sure that you stop the run and we didn't do a great job of stopping the run. If you can't stop the run, then you don't stop the pass, you're going to have issue. You always want to try to make a team one-dimensional which we didn't do.

It's about making sure we can control the game on defense. We gave up some big plays early and once we gave up big plays, we were not able to capitalize on offense, and then the issues started happening to us.

**Q. When you say you stuck with Tyrone -- is that because you didn't want to expose Jerrod?**

COACH STRONG: Not so much you didn't want to expose Jerrod. Just felt like Tyrone could make the throws and get us back in the game. But we didn't protect him so we weren't able to make those throws.

**Q. You and Coach Watson have been together for awhile. Is this the kind of game, especially after the last three, do you have to go back and make**

**sure you're on the same page, especially with the offense?**

COACH STRONG: Well, just our whole team, not only on offense, we've all got to make sure, the coaching staff, that we are on the same page and we have to start doing things the right way with technique and fundamentals and we can go out and we just don't get embarrassed.

**Q. After all the optimism heading into the season, how big of a shock was this performance to you?**

COACH STRONG: Well, it's always a shock and you go get embarrassed. You would have figured out we would have came out and played much better than we did. And you can't take anything away from Notre Dame. But you can still look at it at the end of the day at 38-3 and I think we are a better football team than that.

All right. Thank you.