

ULM WARHAWK FOOTBALL



POST-GAME QUOTES: ULM 63, TULANE 10 (FINAL)

Head Coach Todd Berry

Opening Statement...

"I was anxious for this game. I think any time you play an in-state game; there are some rivalries just because they are inherent. These kids have all grown up together, at least a good portion have. We played three really difficult opponents early on, so you always wonder about how you're going to handle all the situations that you're put into. I was pleased with the way we came out today. I think we have a pretty good football team, and we proved that today. I thought we proved it the last three weeks. When you have an opportunity to put some points up and for all the groups to come, I thought we did a pretty good job on that. They convinced me today that we're okay and we're ready for conference play now. We have another one of the road, but that seems like the way we do it, and we're okay with that."

On Kolton Browning's play...

"I think one of the things that most of this football team has had a chance to do is grow together the last couple of years. CJ (Curtis Johnson) is going through the same thing right now. They have a young football team. They're playing the best players, and they're young. There's going to be mistakes and they're questioning if they can play at this level, and you just have to ride out the storm like we did a couple of years ago. Colton understands our offense. He's difficult to fool from a defensive perspective, and our players trust him. He did a great job today. I did not recruit him, our offensive coordinator Steve Farmer did. It took a little time to adapt, we came out of spring practice thinking this could get interesting, but he's a great competitor, and he certainly has developed more than I thought he would've at this point in time."

On the the defense's play today...

"I thought they played well, and we wanted to see it. We've played three exceptional offensive football teams, and they put up some numbers and points on us. We've continued to grow up and mature, and the defense responded well today, especially coming out and establishing themselves. We're still a little bit soft in some coverage, and that's stuff we have to continue to work on. We created some turnovers, and that's nice. I was pleased."

On playing Middle Tennessee next week...

"Our guys know what they're getting into at Middle. These guys have played against them the last couple of years. This is a good conference."

On the evolution of the Sun Belt Conference over the last five years...

"I think the overall talent level has changed; the coaches have really done a great job. I think everybody has grown their program. We're not any different than what we were a couple years ago, our system isn't any different. We've just grown up and matured. Sometimes at what people perceive to be the smaller conferences you play with a lot of younger players; right now we've had a chance to grow these guys up. We don't have a lot of seniors right now, so we're going to get to play with this team another year. After that you have to think about what you want to do, you have a junior class coming in. Part of the issue when we came to ULM, from an academic standpoint, a social standpoint was attrition. We've been able to retain our players and mature together. That is fundamental to having a winning football team."

On having a second chance at being a Head Coach...

"Sometimes you don't get that chance; I'm certainly cognizant of that fact. I'm very blessed along those lines. Unfortunately for a lot of guys regardless of what their situation was, when you have a one-A job that doesn't go well, it takes a while to get that washed off of you. I'm very appreciative that I have that opportunity. The nice thing about being a head coach, instead of a position coach, is you have 105 guys. I like spending time with them, and I have 105 of them instead of eight or nine."

On playing in the Superdome...

"I don't attribute much too dropped passes, the wind? We went inside this week. There's some uniqueness to playing inside. Until you've done it, it doesn't sound like that big of a deal, but it is. I thought we handled it fine."

On playing three close games before this game...

"It was fun to win a game and not have to worry. What was fun was being able to play them guys today that we haven't been able to because of how tight the games have been. They got into the game. They didn't play great all the time, but the fact they were playing showed and they were loving life. I'm really proud of our starters for giving those kids that opportunity. There are a lot of these guys that I think can play, but I do know it for sure. I can see it in practice, but when you get underneath the lights it's different. There are questions if a guy is emotionally ready to play, like McNeal. It's been hard to stick him in the game because they've been so tight. We couldn't afford to miss a snap. We got him in, and he had a nice touchdown run at the end. That gives us a little more depth at running back where we've already got some depth. I'm excited about that. It's a long season, any time we can give guys a rest is good. We have twelve straight, we don't have a bye, so we need one of those games. One where guys don't have to physically exert themselves the whole game."

On the ability to return to the Superdome for the New Orleans Bowl...

"We'll take it one game at a time. We've done a great job just focusing on being 1-0. We've never been to a bowl, and it's too early to say that yet. We're going to fight really hard to be 1-0 at the end of this week. I like this team; I have a lot of confidence in them. They have earned that from me."

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QB Kolton Browning

On making it look easy out there...

"You know, we knew we had some good matchups this week, we took advantage of them, our receivers did a great job for me today, and our O-Line did a great job with their protection, and we just took advantage of it."

On being comfortable in the offense after three years...

"Yes sir, having three years of experience, going to these bigger places and getting experience, but also, just the speed of the game slowing down for me a lot, and just the maturity of learning the system and getting to know the plays better, and you know, when to slide protection or when to cut routes down to try and get to him [the receiver] quicker to make sure we can make a play."

On what he's learned about ULM so far...

"We don't stop playing, regardless of who we're playing, what the score is, we've shown that; we've come back in some big games a couple of times, and also, right there, it didn't matter what the score was, we just wanted to keep scoring as much as we could, keep producing on offense, and we did that today."

On being a left-handed QB vs. defenses...

"On offense, it does kind of make you adjust to defenses a little bit, on defense, I don't think it really affects you, you just get prepared the same way with any other quarterback."

On making a statement win today...

"We don't really believe in moral victories, we thought we should've won that game [the Baylor game] instead of being 1-2 and just came up short that week, but we moved on the next day and got over it, you can't dwell on a loss, and we moved on the next day and did a great job preparing for this time and we came out here and showed it today."

On preparation for this week possibly being easier than previous weeks...

"We prepared for this team just like we have any other team, we go in every week with the same mentality, we want to be 1-0 at the end of every week, we want to make sure that we are preparing the same way every week no matter who we are playing, whether it be Auburn or Tulane or whoever we are playing."

On playing Middle Tennessee next week...

"It's going to be a big game, there's a lot of competition in this league, and any team can win it, we are going to prepare for Middle Tennessee just like we would any other week, and we are going to go out there with the game plan that the coaches present for us, and execute it to the best of our ability."

On possibility of playing in the New Orleans Bowl...

"If we can keep this mentality that we have right now, and we can keep producing how are doing it; we keep being 1-0 at the end of each week then at the end of the season we're going to be where we want to be, so that's what we are shooting for and that's what we hope happens."

On early success and getting out to an early lead in this game...

"Just the offensive line did a great job of holding up, our protection up front; they did some twists and some different things up front, our offensive line did a great job, and a lot of the receivers kept running great routes and getting open for me and making big plays."

RB JYRUSS EDWARDS

On running game today...

"We came in, we had to correct a lot of things from last week so, those guys up front, they blocked for us really well, opened up holes allowing us to drive the ball down the field, I mean, holes just opened up."

On this game being a good tune-up for conference play next week...

"Tulane's a good team, despite the scoreboard, we played a really good, well-coached football team, of course it was good preparation for the Sun Belt Conference, I mean, it was a good game."

On preparing for this game any different than previous games this season...

"We prepare different for every game every week, each time it's a different defensive scheme so, every week you have to come out, watch film, and learn; this time we cleaned up a lot of things, so we came out and executed much better (than last week)."

On making it look easy today and playing fast and furious...

"That's our tempo, we're a big tempo team, all of the credit really goes to the coaches, they put us in position to go out there and make plays and

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all we have to do is go out there and make them; they watched film, they told what we had to do, and we came out here and executed."

On Tulane being an easy team to beat...

"Tulane's a good team, we knew we had to come out fast and keep hitting them, keep hitting them in and out, in and out with a fast tempo, and it worked out perfectly."

On the early success in this game and jumping out to a big, early lead...

"That's our tempo, that's what we do, if you watched any of the other games, we came out fast, we scored first in each game that we've played so far, so we'd like to continue what we've been doing so far, and keep hopping on teams."

On if the team should be 4-0 now...

"We should be 4-0, we tried to be 4-0, that's we came out here today and executed the way we did; we let a lot of games slip through our fingers, and we obviously didn't want that to happen today, so we come out today with a chip on our shoulder looking to prove who we are."

Tulane Head Coach Curtis Johnson

Opening Statement...

"It was another tough day for us. It's not much fun going into the third game with a third different quarterback. I thought [DJ Ponder] did as well as he could do probably under the circumstances. He really hadn't had any reps throughout the whole time. We just have to do a better job running the football. Our defense didn't play as well. I thought we did good in spots."

On running game...

"We just have to figure out the guys that can run. We play nine guys. I don't know if we're really sure on who's the right players. Each guy will make a mistake here or there. We're playing a bunch of guys that haven't played much football. You get behind so you keep running it. You really can't keep running it, so now they force you to throw it. We just have to start quicker and then sustain a little bit of running attack."

On getting more with return of Orleans Darkwa...

"After a while, they kind of jumped on us. We began to start getting one dimensional again because we still wanted to win the game."

On ULM's passing in first half...

"They got it going a little bit, they stayed ahead in the change so they got you in the guessing game a little bit. Again I thought the quarterback was outstanding. These young kids, they play pretty decent in the back end. They gave up a couple of big ones. [Lorenzo] Doss had a god pick, so did [Zach] Davis. They just gave up too much, and we have to get them playing with a little bit more veteran like attitude."

On where program is at...

"We're in a little bit of a struggle. It's going to go as far as the quarterback goes. That's what this offense is about, what this team is about. Right now, our first two are hurt. DJ [Ponder] played as well as he could. We can't run all our offense. I think it takes a little bit of getting used to. The rushing attack we have to get better, and we will. Defensively, we are playing an awful lot of young guys. I think they will continue to fight. We will get better."

On Ryan Griffin...

"Whenever you have a shoulder injury, it's the strength. The doctor probably won't release him until he gets his strength. If he's in danger of getting hurt, I don't want to pay him. Right now, we don't know. Hopefully he's back next week and he can help us out."

On secondary giving up big plays...

"It was a big factor in the game; that's one thing we haven't done in a while. We hadn't given up very many big plays. It's just the youth that's back there. When you get a guy like that quarterback, he is a very veteran-like quarterback, he's done it to everybody that they've played. He's made big plays. They just have to keep their eyes and continue to cover. I think that will come with time."

On keeping morale high...

"You just have to be enthusiastic at practice. The coaches, we have to do a good job on keeping the troops rallied. Just get it going and on with the next game. We have a 24 hour rule: after 24 hours it's over with and we have to move on to Louisiana Lafayette."

On simplifying offense for DJ Ponder...

"It was pretty simple. It was a lot of hit screens, a lot of quick throws. We didn't expand, there wasn't any motion, there weren't very many shifts. We just had to do what we felt he could do with the limited time to prepare."

On ULM picking on any one player...

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"Everyone has been picking up the freshmen. We have two of them so wherever the freshmen are, I just think that they're going to go after them. [Lorenzo] Doss made a play, they threw it at Doss a couple of times. He made a play, he got the big pick. When you have freshmen, the first thing I look at on the roster, you look at freshmen or rookies, and when you see them, you kind of go at them a little bit."

On missing key defensive player affecting season...

"You have two leaders and two experienced guys that are no longer with us. We can't say 'if this' 'if that,' it is what it is. We didn't have [Orleans] Darkwa, we didn't have several guys. We just have to man and continue to fight and continue to get through this. And just continue to play football."

On advice to fan base...

"I think the program is headed in the right direction. Right now, we lost five or six good players that meant a lot to the football team. I think we'll get going pretty soon. We just have to get our guys back and just start playing better."

On problem with defense...

"I think the secondary are outstanding athletes. We don't get very much pressure with a four man lineup. I don't know if anybody does anymore. You start bringing pressure from the lineups and there isn't enough experience back there."

On DJ's mindset on sidelines...

"DJ is an emotional player, but I think DJ's whole thing was he wanted to play well, he wanted to look good, he wanted to get it in there good. This was his opportunity to shine. I thought he did some good things."

On DJ's performance...

"I thought he did as well as he possibly could do taking limited reps the whole training camp. And then you're thrust into a game like this where you know you're going to have to score x amount of points. They're a scoring machine. We have to get our rhythm and hit our stride a little bit."

On hitting stride in fourth quarter...

"I see a better team that getting to be more like us than a lot of the fan base because I'm with them every day, I see the style of practice, I see the enthusiasm, I see the running, I see the hustling. It's just going to take a couple of more key players to come and just make this thing fit right. Maybe Ryan Griffin will come back. Maybe we'll get some help from some other guys. I thought the receivers played well. I thought [Ryan] Grant played well, I thought [Justyn] Shackleford played well. Doss got the pick, Darion Monroe got nine tackles and this kid's a freshman and [Jordan] Batiste played well."

On offensive line...

"We simplified it to about eight running plays, we may have to go to five. That's hard to do, that may be what we have to do."

On having three quarterbacks...

"He plays every game and touches the ball every play. Now you're on your third quarterback, he doesn't have the number of reps the first string guy has."