

Air Force at Utah State Post-Game Quotes

Utah State 49, Air Force 30

Utah State Head Coach Bronco Mendenhall

“One of the best parts of my night was just coming in here and listening to Will Holmes. He was talking about practice and talking about preparation and talking about his teammates. He’s mature, and he’s humble, and he’s realistic. He knows that he’s on a journey to become a football player. He’s just very transparent, and that’s refreshing. There is no player speak, that was authentic and genuine and real. We are teachers as coaches. We are demanding, but that’s how people grow and he’s becoming, right in front of our eyes, a really good football player. That’s so gratifying. Bryson Barnes, his composure, his presence, his demeanor. He’s older, but you can see him blossoming. I’m just talking about his countenance, not even production. You can sense it just starting to drip off of him. As a coach, it’s great when you win, but the personal stories along the way are awesome. D’Angelo Mayes was playing corner for us today because of an injury. He chose New Mexico when really nobody else wanted him. He qualified late as a scout team player. He got on the field there week six to run down on kickoffs and then transferred to Utah State, then he’s in the game tonight playing corner. There are so many sub-stories happening that are so fun and our team plays hard. We’re not perfect as a staff or as a program, but they play hard and they want to win. The crowd was electric; it was a fun environment. I sense the beginning of a lot of really cool things getting ready to happen here. Air Force is tough and their scheme is challenging, Coach Calhoun is sixth or seventh on the all-time wins list of active head coaches right now. That program and the kids that go there, I can’t say enough about them. The demand, the rigor, the academics, the training, then playing football as well. They’re remarkable. Every year when you play Air Force it’s a challenge, so I’m really proud of my staff.”

Utah State Graduate Quarterback Bryson Barnes

On what was working well for the offense

“There are a lot of things that go into touchdowns to begin with. There are so many moving parts, everybody has to be executing and everyone has to be on the same page. I feel like it all came to fruition on my run plays down in the low red zone. On two of them, I was untouched, so I really feel like that’s a lot of dudes working together, executing, and doing their job. I’m lucky to be carrying the ball there— it just happened to be me in that moment. When 11 guys are executing at the right moment, good things happen.”

On getting off to good offensive starts to start each half and scoring off of turnovers

I think it’s great anytime you can come out of a half or come out the first drive of the game and go put it in the end zone. It’s a great feeling and it’s a great momentum starter. On top of that, with the defensive turnovers creating momentum, getting touchdowns on first drives and getting more momentum, that really set the tone for the game and what we were going to be about for all four quarters.”

Utah State Sophomore Outside Linebacker William Holmes

On the importance of forcing a turnover on Air Force’s first offensive possession:

“We prepared so hard this week for this game. Probably the most that we’ve prepared in the first three games. It was just fun to be out there with my guys and be able to make plays out there.”

On how important it was to respond to last week’s loss with a win today:

“Last week’s game was tough. We were all kind of down after it but we turned it around. Coach Mendenhall is great with switching the narrative and switching the mindset for the team. Like I said, we practiced hard this week and we were very prepared out there today.”

On what the message from Coach Mendenhall to the team this week was:

“Just keep going. He really believed that we could have won (at Texas A&M), and we do, too. We had some mental mistakes out there, alignment issues, and we had a few plays that got away from us. But we prepared hard for that week, too. Coach Mendenhall is such a great coach. No other coach in the country prepares their team like he does, so I’m truly grateful for him and we’re going to keep it going.”

Air Force Head Coach Troy Calhoun

“When you look at it, we just had way too many mistakes. Credit to them, they played really well. We’ve got to get some guys to play like veterans. They deserve to be coached that way, in terms of the way we push our guys.”

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