

Eastern Washington at Washington Post-Game Quotes

Husky Stadium

Aug. 31, 2019

Washington Head Coach Chris Petersen

Opening Statement:

I thought that we had a really good start. It was really clean, for the most part, in terms of first-game jitters. There were a couple of things that we need to get cleaned up on offense. I am proud of our offensive line for allowing Jacob Eason to set his feet. I think our defense did a great job today, on the first few drives, they did an awesome job. It is hard to simulate the tackling that happens in a game, so we missed a few things there, but we will clean up those things. I thought it was really good to get out and get our first win.

What were your thoughts on the plays when Eason couldn't set his feet?

We will review the tapes on that. He is a pocket-passer, he likes to stay in the pocket and set his feet, that is his game. I think that he got out of the pocket one time, and I think he got hit and knocked down. That was good to have him feel that and come out clean. This will be a great tape to watch and learn from.

What did Richard Newton do that impressed you?

He has been impressive since he has been here. He is a hard runner and that is why he was in that Wildcat position, he showed that right away. He puts his head down and legs keeps churning. The big thing about the running back position is vision that comes with it. I am anxious to put the tape on. I know that he was pushing the power forward a lot of the time. As soon as I leave here, I am going to watch some tape because there is a lot of things that you miss on the field. The tape is never as good as you think it is and it is never as bad as you think it is.

What was the thought behind the play call on the 50-yard completion to Andre Baccellia?

That was nice play action. We had to options on that, Eason went to his second read option on that play. We had good play action of Andre Baccellia running down the seam and Jacob Eason threw a good ball. I think the next time, he would have to scramble on. It is nice to see the ball flying down the field.

What were your impressions of Jacob Eason's decision making and poise?

He was good. I think that our line did a nice job of getting him the ability to set his feet. It was a really good day one. I don't want to move on too fast, but I know the challenge is going to be a lot different next week. I think it was good for him to get hit a little bit today. He covered the gamete there today.

Was this a simplified version of the offense?

Yes. There is a lot of subtleties in terms of the ways that we call plays. There was not any one thing that we wanted to simplify, it is a lot. I think that there was a lot coming at Eastern Washington in terms of shifts in motion, different personalities, different tempos. In a lot of ways, it was not simple. I think in terms of how the offensive coaches call the game and how they draw up the game plan, everyone knew what was going on. That was a good start for game one.

How do you think the defense played as a unit?

I thought it was really good. There are a couple of things that I know Eastern beat us on. We were looking at a lot of offense in preparation for this one, we were looking at Eastern's offensive and Central's offense. There was a lot of offense thrown at these guys. I thought for the most part it was good. There are a few tackling things that we need to work on. We need to make our tackles a little cleaner.

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QB Jacob Eason

How did it feel to play?

You dream of things like this. The way we handled practice this week and got the game plan ready and got the small things ready day by day throughout camp, I think this team has done a great job focusing each day. We came out and played like we have been all camp long. It was fun to do, fun to be a part of, and super exciting for me.

What was it like to get the first long touchdown to (Andre) Baccellia?

That was fun. The play was called, and that's something we've been working on all week. You go out there and you do your job. The big plays like that look pretty, and it was exciting to be a part of that. The guys up front and our tight ends put a lot into this week and it showed up out there.

What did you think of the connection with Aaron Fuller?

That's a player making plays. He's got that in him and he's a great target to have. Even some of the things I saw shocked me. You know it's awesome to have guys like that to throw to.

What were your nerves like coming into this game?

I'm a little bit older now and I have some experience under my belt, so just coming into today I tried to focus and take it a play at a time. I try to do my job on each call and then take it from there. I just focused on doing my part, being the best quarterback I could each play, and the game took over from there.

How did the team react to losing Nick Harris?

We have a next man up mentality. It was scary because we all love [Nick Harris] so much but [Matteo Mele] did a great job stepping up. He took the opportunity and went with it. Matteo did a great job of staying calm and collected.

How important was that strong four touchdown start?

It was fun and it was awesome. We had our great game plan and we went out there and executed. The most important thing is that we were having fun doing it.

WR Aaron Fuller

What are your overall impressions of the offense?

It's great. We love to see the offense click. The [offensive line] was doing very well, running backs were running very hard, they're in their blocking and making explosive plays, and the connection we have with [Jacob Eason] is pretty impressive as well.

Is the one-handed catch something you work on practice?

To be honest [Coach Petersen] doesn't like us doing that so it's more of a game time thing. But everything just clicked because the O-line blocked their butts off and [Jacob Eason] put [the ball in] a great spot for me and I just felt the ball fall into my hand.

Did this first game hit differently than the others?

The last first game did hit differently than others, definitely at the beginning. The bus ride over was the last time I'll be doing that for the first time. It was pretty amazing. It wasn't too bad, but I know I'll reminisce about days like this a lot.

What can you say about the catches?

You know it was just natural instinct. I guess I kinda felt I was running out of room a little bit, it was more the throw than anything. I'm trying to stay hungry and humble.

CB Elijah Molden**How does it feel to play this year?**

It felt great, it felt like home. I stepped out on the turf and I was ready. But we were prepared and played well I think, There's some stuff to clean up for sure. One thing I think is we tackled pretty well. But still some stuff to clean up.

How did the run-stopping help you?

That really helps us out in the back end. So I tell all those guys like Levi (Onwuzurike), if you're on your stuff, it's going to make it easier for us back here and vice versa. So (I'm) very grateful for them.

How would you grade the game?

Since I haven't seen film, I go off of feeling. And I felt pretty good. There's definitely some stuff to clean up. But as a defense we tackled well which is pretty rare in college football. There are some rules and stuff that we can clean up. We feel good though.

How do you attribute you and Myles (Bryant) playing so fast today?

We prepare a lot and are similar in the way we prepare with film too. I think our positions allow us to play free like that, so when game time comes we can cut loose and let our instincts take over.

RB Salvon Ahmed**How is the passing game looking like you?**

It's great. We have to keep practicing and keep developing our relationship when the ball is in the air but right now it's off to a good start.

Was it a special feeling when you finally got into the endzone?

It really was, it was a good feeling to finally get in the endzone for a while, but I'm trying not to dwell in the pass and move forward.

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Eastern Washington Head Coach Aaron Best

How are you feeling about the overall game?

Humbled. Very humbled. That is a very good football team, they are nationally renowned for a reason. We didn't play our best football game today so I'm excited to see that unfold over the course of the year to be better. But I wish we could've given them a better game. I don't think we executed well. Jacob Eason is the real deal. I knew that when he was in ninth grade so that didn't surprise us at all. He'll make the Pac-12 unhappy for weeks to come.

Any bright spots or positive things you're taking away from this game?

There were some bright spots, a fourth down hold by our defense. We just didn't do enough consistent things right and well. To be in these games, to have a chance in these games, you have to do more right consistently. We have to get more pressure on the quarterback. Eason had too much time. They have an experienced offensive line.

How will you guys come back from this and move on to next week?

It starts with me, it always will. It also ends with me, so I have to do a better job of getting more out of this. There are no moral victories. I have never believed in them at Eastern and we are far from it. You lose whether it is by three or 30. Still feels the same way. We will look at the film and get better from it. In these games you have to be pretty darn good. You don't have to be perfect, but you have to be pretty darn good for long periods of time and we weren't able to sustain that today.

On the penalties against Eastern:

It's hard enough to get 10 yards, then 10 yards in a game on the road against a No. 13 team in the nation and then you add five more yards to that. We will certainly get over this. It will test our character and our 'team-hood'. But this is not the team we will be at the end of November.

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WR Andrew Boston

What were you seeing from their defense out there?

Like (Chris) Ojoh said, anytime you go into a game you are more worried about how well you guys can execute your game plan, offensively and defensively. I mean physically, surprisingly, it didn't feel too different going up a level. I know a lot of people might have that question. You know, we went out there today and saw a good team, and they sort of humbled us in our efforts. But, it wasn't much more of a jump I would say.

Did you see any bright spots today?

There were definitely some moments in the game. I mean, as an FCS team when you see things, like we're driving the ball, we're having long sustained drives, although sadly we were forced to kick a field goal. But, I mean, if you noticed we started that drive from the three-yard line, or something like that, so when you see things like that happen it's definitely a bright spot. That's something to keep our heads up and hold on to as we going onto our next game.

What did coach tell you guys after the game?

He always says it's never as good or bad as you thought it was. I think his main point was at the end of the day we came in here and got humbled by these guys. This is a great football team and a great program. We did come in confident. We're going to go into this next week confident and this next game we're going to play the same way we did coming into this one. We just can't let it affect us, and just put in a hard week of practice and let the chips fall where they may.

LB Chris Ojoh

How big of a challenge was it today to get anything going?

It was a big challenge, but, there was an aspect that we just needed to get things rolling. We needed to stay consistent. Overall, we just had to execute plays. And with the aspect of being a challenge, I didn't really think, we played a really good team, but at the same time we need to execute on our part.

When you play a team at this level does it get you more excited?

Yeah, it definitely gets me more juiced up. I always love to compete. It doesn't matter if we're anywhere. I always love to compete. Playing a good team like this, I had to bring my A game. I just wanted to show everybody what I could do.

How much do you think you've grown from your freshman year?

I've definitely grown mentally from the first game against Texas Tech to now. Mentally and physically, I keep trying to better my game every year. But, I've grown immensely. I've carried some stuff with me and I'm always trying to learn and grow.