

Eastern Michigan at Washington Postgame Quotes
Alaska Airlines Field at Husky Stadium
September 7, 2024

Washington Head Coach Jedd Fisch

Opening Statement

"Good afternoon. Awesome environment out there today and can't wait to continue to see how this environment continues to build when the students come back. I think it'll be awesome. Excited about the way our defense played again. Two games in a row without letting up a touchdown. That's impressive. We put them in a bad spot early with the blocked punt and for them to bow up and stop it was big. Guy makes a 57 yarder, hats off to him. Heck of a kick. Second longest kick in Husky stadium so that was a boot. And a kick at the end that they made to make it nine. Offensively we need to continue to work on getting a good opening drive out of the way. The three and out wasn't very much fun today. The second drive when we start on the three is a little more challenging, got to the 40 before we punted. I think the third drive we had to punt it away as well. Need better by me, need better by the players execution wise but it starts with me on that. After that I think we got in a great rhythm. We scored four touchdowns in a row or something to that effect. We had a field goal and five scoring drives in a row. I was disappointed about the field goal. Spoke to Jonah about that on second and one, it should not have been a bounce there, should have kept that inside. That was not a time on fourth and two that I wanted to go for it. Demond did a great job, then he had a welcome to college football moment. Demond doesn't need to lower his shoulder. Even though he did, he didn't get tackled but he winds up fumbling the ball a yard and a half later. Learned from that and came right back. Did a great job when he came out for the next drive. Big time third and ten throw to Rashid. That was a beautiful ball down the sideline to seal the game, but we need to be better. Too many penalties, too many special teams plays that weren't very good. Can't have a bad snap on an extra point. Can't have a blocked punt. We need to be better there. We are happy we came out on top. I quickly saw some scores out there and seems like there had some good games out there and some pretty tough football games all around out there. We're excited for the win and now it's apple cup week.

How quickly did you make the decision to go for it on fourth and one from your own 30?

I felt that we needed to do it. When we were a yard short I said "we're going for this," then I said "Am I really going for this?" and then I said "I'm going for this!" and then they took a timeout and I said "Steve, are you cool with me going for this?" and he was awesome. Sometimes the head coach and play caller need to also game manage. I checked with him and asked if he was cool with me doing this and he had the greatest answer of any defensive coach I've ever been around and it was "it's our job to stop them no matter where they get the ball." When you have that kind of confidence within each other and within the program and the trust that he has on us and us on him and the defense. We went for it, had a big play. We felt good about the play and it really gave us the momentum we wanted.

Why do you think you guys have had these slow starts in these first two games and what did you do to get out of that funk?

We had a slow start to the first three games last year. I remember coach Carol said that when we were in Seattle, you don't win the game in the first, second, or third quarter, you win in the fourth quarter. Our job is to make sure that we continue to improve each quarter. Some of it comes down to, we gotta get off the field quicker. We gotta get more possessions in the first quarter. We got to convert on third down. I'm not exactly sure why we didn't. We gotta get better and that's on me, starts with me. Maybe we'll look at some other ways to get going a little quicker but I'm not going to get overly wrapped up in it because if I talk about it all the time with the team, we'd all start fast right. What does that mean? We just gotta finish strong, that's my thing. I think we've done that.

Zach Durfee was questionable on the big 10 injury list. Did you ever think he wasn't going to play today?

I was concerned how much he could play. He wasn't able to practice very much this week so we had to see how much we could get him rested and better to be able to play.

Denzel Boston's first two games.

Really happy for Denzel, I think he's coming into his own. I'm going to continue to challenge him. We've had really good wide receivers at different places that coach Cummings and I have been at together and then other places that I've been at with other people. Coach Cummings does a phenomenal job with the wide receivers. He's developed some really good ones the past couple of years. He's doing a really good job with the development and watching Denzel roll.

Can you talk a little bit about using six offensive lineman. Did it have anything to do with Quentin being out or was it new schemes?

No it had everything to do with Quentin being out. We lost an extremely good blocking tight end for at least this week, if not a couple more weeks. Not exactly sure when he'll get back but that's a critical loss. He's a really good football player who brings great value in the running game and in pass protection, so we feel that's one of the things we can do to keep some of our schemes going but just bringing Zach Henning into that role.

Washington Edge Zach Durfee

The Big 10 availability list, you were listed as questionable today. Should you be questionable every week now?

"I hope not, I really don't know how to answer that. Yeah, I hope not. I was just battling a little thing and I'm all good now."

What was the key for you guys to get to the quarterback?

"Coach Belichick calls a great defense, so honestly it's just really doing our job. Just doing our job and trusting in his game plan."

You guys appeared to struggle against the run early in the game and it kind of settled down. What was the difference?

I think we just had to settle into the game a little bit. We kind of got caught off guard honestly. I don't think we were playing our best ball and we adjusted and figured it out.

Coach Fisch said you were a little rusty last week. Describe your play, how do you feel right now.

I'm definitely growing in the game. Getting more snaps. I still think I feel a little rusty. We have practice, more games so I should just keep getting better. We do a great job of practicing hard during the week. We're a team that's gonna stay on the rise through competition all the time. I feel decent about where I'm at but I'm not satisfied.

How did it feel to get that first sack today?

Felt pretty good, I was pretty hyped.

Can you describe how this belichick defense plays to your strengths

I think it plays to everybody's strengths. We do a great job of putting people in a position where they are good. All 11 guys trust in what we're gonna do. Obviously we have some mess ups but we're growing with it. If we continue to grow we'll just get better and better. It allows a lot of guys to play fast.

Washington Quarterback Will Rogers

Did you guys get sorted out after that first quarter?

Just some self inflicted stuff with the first drive. I missed a read, I thought they kind of confused me on the coverage on third down. They dropped nine, which is the exact opposite of what we expected on that down and distance. The second drive we weren't on the same page about a shallow route where I thought he was gonna keep on running and he sat down. It's just little things like that that we have to get corrected. I felt like the first time we really made an explosive play, that kind of kicked the door down for everyone on offense.

What was going through your mind that was on fourth and one that ended up going to Giles. What did you like about that look?

We tried to quick snap them and they called timeout. We had a runplay planned initially. I think Coach Fisch called a good play for that scenario. It's a good call if it works but it is fourth and one. I thought it was a great call and we executed it really well and that Giles was great after the catch.

21/26, four touchdowns, no interceptions is about as efficient you can get. Can you describe how you think you performed and how that ball is feeling coming off your hand.

It's feeling good I just think theres things I have to clean up. The first third down as Giles is sitting in zone coverage and would be a first down if I make the right read. There was another play last week with a similar situation where I could have done the same thing. Playing

quarterback and taking care of the ball, ultimately distributing the ball to the playmakers. If I can do that and try and get better each week and see where we can take this thing.

Thoughts on Denzel Boston has done his first two weeks

I think he's been great. Obviously he had a great spring for us, great camp, but to see him come out there in game scenarios and make plays. The best thing about Denzel is he is always hungry about the next one. He had two touchdowns in the fourth quarter and he was saying we should be up more than this. That's the thing I love about Denzel. We gotta keep going as an offense, we gotta come back to work.

Touchdown pass to DeGraaf. Can you take us through that play?

It's a play we thought we would have coming in to the week. Any time we can get Decker on a linebacker we feel good about it. We're out there after practice on Tuesday working that one specific play for about 30 minutes. It's pretty cool to see that come to fruition after all the work we put in to that specific play.

Jeremiah Hunter didn't have any catches in the first game. Five catches today and a touchdown. How important was it to get him incorporated today.

I think he's really good. Big, physical, can do a lot after the catch. It was in our game plan to try and get him going early. I think if he, Giles, and Denzel can all play at a high level we'll be pretty explosive in the passing game.

What extra dimension does he bring to this offense.

He's big and physical. Really good at 50/50 balls. I thought we were gonna hit one today but we were a couple inches out of bounds. We'll hit it. That's a play we'll come back to. I have no doubt he'll make that play.

When you're trailing and your coach says you're gonna go for it, does it build up any extra good will.

I think it's pretty cool and shows he has the confidence in us to get a yard. I think if it's fourth and one anywhere on the field. It's kind of a mindset play, a mentality that we're gonna get a yard on fourth and one. It's cool he shows the confidence in us to do that.

Were you surprised on the call to go for it.

I wasn't surprised to go for it but by the play action. It's one of my favorite plays because it's a shift then motion then play action. It's a lot for the defense but it's simple and easy for us. Anytime you can get the ball to Giles, he's elite with the ball in his hands.

Eastern Michigan Head Coach Chris Creighton

Coach, an opening Statement on today's contest against the Huskies?

Well we certainly were not going to bow down. We're going to fight. We believe in ourselves, and we really believed that we can get it done today. So, it's a hurt locker room. It's the first time that we've experienced a young season. Obviously it's the first time we've experienced a loss.

We didn't do enough to win, didn't capitalize on some opportunities early, moving the ball, got deep into the red zone, didn't score touchdowns which obviously you have to do. Didn't take the ball away until late, and then our turnover was really costly because obviously it was after a huge gain. Our third down efficiency offensively wasn't good enough. They had a tough time protecting the passer. It didn't go the way we wanted it to, but I think we're going to learn a lot from this. I still really like and believe in our team and what we are capable of. So this was a huge test that we are going to get better from.

Coach with three guys, three defensive players starting defensive backs that were ruled out for this game, just wondering if you had to change of your defensive plan to get ready for this game :

So we had a couple starters that were out. That had really a week to prepare. We feel as so that we have some good depth, and so no, we did not change a ton.

With so many young guys to fill those voids and other spots around the field, seems like a good opportunity for those guys to grow and develop against a really good team. Just wondering how did this feel for using young players?:

"I think for... it's a young season, for all of us. We're definitely going to learn from it, and get better. There were a lot of positives that happened. Again, we had our chances throughout the first half, but we didn't make the plays and take advantage of the opportunities in the end. So, I think everybody who played, everybody on the trip, everybody is going to get better from it.

There was only, like you said, one turnover from Cole [Snyder] on that one run. Washington ended up putting up points. What was the biggest difference between your team's execution from the early goings to pretty much from that fumble on?

Yeah. I think we got into third and longs, and it didn't feel as we protected and I think versus man... I have to see the film, but you know there were several times where we probably didn't get the separation versus man that I would have liked to. I think that's probably two of the main issues.

Jesús Gómez; three field goals. Two of them were for 50 and 57. What's it like just obviously having him around for now for his third season? Nailing fifty plus yarders is nothing new for you, but for him to have the consistency and to bring it into Washington and set the school record, what's that like from your perspective?

Honestly? Not surprised. He's super talented. He's made of the right stuff, and he got his opportunities today and he nailed them. He was banged up for most of the offseason, and I think our plan, kudos to our training staff, our special teams coaches, and Jesús obviously. We were really wise with how we handled his kicking the entire offseason all the way into the spring through the summer and in camp. It feels really good right now, and obviously confident and had a monster game today.

What are some immediate takeaways that you want your team to just obviously you just have to like see the film and obviously get into specifics, but there's a long trip between

now and getting back home. There's going to be a lot on your players minds, what do you want them to think about or immediately take away from an experience like this?

We just lost the game, disappointed feeling for sure. I told them about the 1972 Miami Dolphins. That was a long time ago. I mean going through a season undefeated at any level is super super rare, and so you better figure out how to deal with not having a great day and losing. Losing on a day, or a game doesn't make you a loser. We've got winners in there. We didn't score as many points as they did, so we lost the game. There are plenty of things that we are really pleased with, that we can build on, and I think people are going to be really excited about. Seeing that, you know, getting better. I think it's September 7th, we're going to be playing football through late-December. That's a long time right? So it certainly stings right now, and it should. This was an amazing opportunity to fly out in a charter plane more than halfway across the country, to an awesome program and setting, and game day environment. We came here to win the game. Again, it's enormously disappointing, but we're definitely going to learn and grow from it.