

Washington vs. Illinois Postgame Quotes
Alaska Airlines Field at Husky Stadium
October 25, 2025

Washington Head Coach Jedd Fisch

Opening Statement

I'll start by saying that we are bowl eligible. Always a great feeling to be able to be eligible to play in the postseason. Secondly, I think our guys really made a big effort today to honor people with cancer, to honor people that they've lost to cancer, honor Mia [Hamant] for the battle she's going through. Certainly wanted to make the Huskies for a cure game a really important game for our program, for our team, for our players, for our coaches, and I believe they did that, and they all acknowledged who they were playing for today. Thirdly, I'll just say that our team came out ready to go today. I really liked the way they answered the bell. They responded well from the last couple weeks or last week, I thought, once again, when you come out, you drive down the field, now you have to punch it in, we did that. We had six redzone opportunities, six touchdowns. So that was a good day. We took the ball away, which was awesome to see. That makes a huge difference. We protected the ball on offense, and when you're plus two, you usually win. So, certainly, I'm excited regarding that. It felt like all the guys played really well, and it was great to have Carver Willis and John Mills back. Certainly, it's a player's game and when you have two of your important starters that play next to one another on the same side of the line back, that's going to make a huge difference. And then it's great to get a win against a top 25 team who's a very good football team that won 10 games last year, who's now sitting here at 5-3. Coach Bielema does a fantastic job and always has. So really, really impressed with our team and how they played all four quarters.

Did you think some of those things you were able to do offensively today was because you had Carver Willis and John Mills back?

Yeah, I think there's certainly a lot of flexibility there. The first three games of the season, Carver and John got to play next to one another, and then for about a half or so, maybe even less, they did, and then that was it for the rest of the year. So now to have them back, you know, I hope that it continues to look like it did early on in the season and I think that that will continue to help us get to where we want to be.

Is there a point this week where you really felt like Demond had fully moved on [from his interceptions in the Michigan game] and you felt really good about where he was at mentally and all those things?

Yeah, I think that you guys [members of the media] don't move on as quickly as players and coaches do. I think that fans probably don't move on as quickly as players and coaches do. We really don't sit there and spend a lot of time talking about how we don't want to make sure we throw a slant for an interception. It's just playing another game. Just wake up and play another game. You have a 24 hour rule and you just move on and you just find ways to get better. I get it that it's an interesting thing to write or talk about, but I really believe that

he moved on the second we got on the airplane. He probably had a day where he wanted to think about it – and then we started preparing for the next team. And the beautiful thing is that you get an opportunity to play this game every Saturday, next week, we don't, which is good, that will be a great time for us to get healthy and continue to improve this week. We'll practice, then we'll take a couple days off, and then the coaches will go recruit. But we're just looking to get better every day, every week, and we understand there could be guys that play 19 years in the NFL, 20 years in the NFL that have four interception days, five interception days. It happens. So those guys, just like our guys are gonna just move on and get better the next week.

Zaydrius [Rainey-Sale] had the pass break-up and then made the hit to cause the interception. How impressive has he been just in the time he's been back from injury?

I think that he's getting better and better and better and he is excited. I love the fact that he didn't play in training camp and how good he's getting by only practicing in these shorter windows. You don't get all the meeting time and all the practices and all the walk throughs and yet he's still able to really be a huge impact player. I thought it was a great day for Xe'ree Alexander also with 12 tackles, I believe. Alex McLaughlin, 12 tackles – a huge hit on the sideline, I can't believe that that guy held onto that ball. What a great play by them, but Alex made a great play. But I think Zay is going to be a really, really, really good player. And each week we're going to see how much more we can get him. Based on our situation right now at linebacker, we have a three man rotation, and then hopefully by Wisconsin, we'll know one way or the other with that other, if we open the four man or not.

Washington Quarterback Demond Williams Jr.

How much did last week's performance weigh on you and motivate you for this week?

I try to flush it after; 24 hour rule and go out there and play my game and continue to trust God and trust his work.

What was working for you guys on third down today?

Execution, no pre snap penalties and continuing to harp on getting the ball out and I'm thankful for my protection today.

The play came in with the double pass for Denzel Boston? What were you thinking? What did you see?

We've been practicing that play and they gave us a different look than we wanted, and then we finally got the look, and we executed.

How did you describe Denzel Boston's day today?

He's a baller. Everybody knows that, and he continues to show it every week.

Can you describe that fourth quarter collision you had with that Illinois player?

I would say it's more down and distance. Situational football. I understand it was third and long and I was just trying to get the first down for my team.

Washington Wide Receiver Denzel Boston

Have you played quarterback recently?

No, actually, I played quarterback when I was younger for about six years. It felt natural to throw that. It was awesome. I heard I was the first one since (Michael) Penix Jr. or something like that.

How long have you guys been practicing that play?

Since last year.

What goes through your mind when you hear that play call knowing that it's on you to deliver that pass?

It's more about staying calm. I take a deep breath and let the play work out.

How would you describe your performance?

First, I want to give it all to God. I prayed to him, and I appreciate him for every opportunity he gives me. My job is to give the glory back to him. Not only that, today was all about playing for our cancer survivors and cancer patients and the people who have passed away. I'm not sure if you guys know, but Mia Hamant on our soccer team is going through a tough struggle with leukemia right now. We're trying to be there for her and support her. And also, shout out Crystal Scotta. She passed away when I was young, she was a big role model in my life when I was playing junior football, and she died of breast cancer, so rest in peace to her, and best of luck to Mia Hamant.

Washington Wide Receiver Dezmen Roebuck

Did you know that you guys hadn't scored in the first quarter in four weeks and you hadn't scored in the first quarter here since September 6th?

I did not know that.

You're a team of slow starts, and today it looked like you guys started and finished fast.

We came out and we did what we needed to do to get the W.

Did you guys talk about this at all with Coach Jedd Fish?

We know that, and we had a great week at practice and Coach has been preaching to do whatever it takes to get a W and move the ball down the field and that's what you could see.

Couple of touchdown catches for you today. Your highlight reel keeps piling up as a freshman.

I'm just grateful for every opportunity and to capitalize when the ball comes my way.

Talk to me a little bit about just the differences, the wind, the rain, the sun. You got everything today.

Coach Jedd Fisch likes to say that it's Dawg weather. It's my first time playing in the rain, playing when it's sunny during a day. It was sunny, it was raining. It was cold, but it was a blast.

Washington Safety Alex McLaughlin

What were some of those adjustments with the run defense?

We know that they like to go RPO and they're more of a passing offense, but we knew that we had to stop the run to make them one dimensional. We were playing gap sound and trusting our guys to do their job.

How have you seen your own real growth?

I feel like I'm a versatile football player, so I like them putting me in different types of spots to make plays and coach (Ryan) Walters always puts me in a position to make plays and I owe it to him.

When you are playing such an RPO heavy offense like that, I feel like you especially are frequently one of the key players in that. What do you look at pre-snap in terms of knowing that they're going to play both ways on that read in order to kind of limit that offense?

Being farther off the ball and seeing him holding the mashing point, I got to hold in those windows, because we'd rather have him hand the ball off than throw RPO right behind me. Holding on the windows and coming up and making a tackle.

Illinois Head Coach Bret Bielema

Opening statement

Well, first give credit to Washington I thought they obviously came in and executed their game plan. Offense, defense, bus teams did some good stuff. I'm disappointed for our football team, our fans. We did a lot of preparation during the bye week in this past week, to get to a better result than what we see today. I always go back to 'right before we can expect to win a game, you got to stop from losing it'. We did some self inflicted wounds today, offense, defensively, a little bit in a kicking game, that took away from our success and, it's my job as a head coach to get that corrected. It's especially a little bit frustrating when it's some of our older players, guys that have experienced what we expect here, so really, really big week in front of us, obviously, a Big Ten schedule to be at home in memorial stadium and have that going in our favor should be a positive. We got to get ourselves healthy. I know a couple of guys got banged up today. I think the guys did a good job of being resilient, trying to get back out there. I liked our offense, especially in the second half. We're moving along, had a good manageable third down. We're kind of in a four-down mode, and get the big penalty there that took away from anything, and that to come out of that with an interception, just very, very uncharacteristic of our offense and

what they do, but again, that was forced by an unforced error for us with the big penalties. So frustrated with the defense, especially, a third and 20. when we're kind of getting together there and feel like we could put ourselves in a good position and can't get off the field, or can't make them exchange the ball, right to a pun or a field goal, whatever was gonna play out there. extremely disappointed, but the week ahead is gonna be a big one, one that I know I'll be excited for and our players will be excited for. Got to get the right guys on the field to do the right thing.

We talked about some of those third and longs for weeks and weeks, why hasn't that been able to be fixed?

Yeah, obviously, I haven't given them the right answers. We'll sit down and evaluate. the part that we have to understand if we're playing zone coverage, then we have to be able to understand where those holes are and because they're finding them, and then when we play man coverage, when our eyes are away from the quarterback, to not be able to get him down when he took off on the scramble was very frustrating, especially for 20 yards.

Five, Big Ten games in, given up 40 points a game. I know those points are very difficult, but what do you need to be defensively and what do you want to be defensively?

Yeah, I think a little bit early down, but again, it just seems like every one of these games will go to a third and very manneable call, and we just can't come up with it. And, you know, it's something that you, I've talked about the protections, I talked about the coverages. I think we got a play to our player's strengths, probably a little bit better, but take away what they do well. I think that the first quarter, we obviously talked a lot about this quarterback and the very first or second play he takes off on a huge scramble. You have to stop them from doing the things they do well, and that was goal number one. We did the whole offense rant through number two, and unfortunately, we weren't able to retain that.

How do you guide Aaron (Henry Defensive Coordinator) through this?

Yeah, if I have to get more involved, I will. I think the part that I really struggle with is that it seems like we fix one thing, and something else shows up. I do know we cut a guy loose there at the end on the last drive there, where we got within striking distance and they marched it down. We had a very manageable third and 7, third and 8, and that's when they caught number 12 over the middle there, and he was just running scot free, and then I heard on the headset, I wasn't able to watch play yet, we just cut a guy loose. We were running Man free, and the guy that was covered him just stopped covering him, and it's just inexcusable. And something that we got to figure out why that happened, and then obviously, find out the answers. If he can't do it, then we got to find somebody else who can.

Illinois Quarterback Luke Altmyer

How is the feeling right now in the locker room?

Yeah, this morning this was a game where we clearly felt we were the winning team going into it, expected to win, at least I did. I can feel that energy from their whole group. So just difficult. Credit to those guys, they played well, scored 42 points, and some of the best corners that I've seen in this league in about three years being here, and they flew around. They played really fast, defensively, and played inspired, played like they wanted to win the game. Not saying we didn't, but it's hard to win on the road when two good teams come together and they make more plays than we do. Credit to Washington, good team. They're going to win a lot of games moving forward. I believe we are too. You have a lot of play for. They're a mature group. Again, knows how to pick themselves back up. I know I am, I'll tell you that, I'm gonna play well, I'm gonna play my hardest. And I know my teammates will as well.

How do you refocus?

You see you got four games left and you win all of them. We have a very similar season to last year, and that was a really, really cool season for these fans and for us. We're going to go, you know, do our best. Saturday's coming, Rutgers is going to show up in that stadium come Saturday, and we're not going to pout and mope and hang our heads and think we're not going to go 10 and two and make the playoffs, then the advantage goes to Rutgers in that moment. I got an older group and some guys that are going to be finishing up their last four games with this program, and so you're going to get their best. They're going to get my best. I'm just excited to keep getting better to play the game I love. That's going to naturally come out. I think success will come in suit.

How did you guys regroup and maybe get the momentum back, going down 14-3, and then eventually taking the lead?

Yeah, tell those guys that man, let's go do our job, let's go do a job that we showed up to do regardless. I mean, you go out there, there's 11 guys on defense, 11 guys on offense, and the goal is to score. I tell them every single time, lots of confidence, and let's go do our job. Let's go do a job that we showed up here to do. And so we did that, we took it one play at a time. You can get down on yourself, being down 14 to three, and playing from behind the whole game. But the goal is to go get seven points on a set drive, and we have a group that's confident that we can do it, starting with me and up front and out wide and everybody in between. We try to go do a job, do our job, and see what happens. Washington did a good job today, and in general, just with playing hard and physical. Not saying we didn't, but they matched it, and their ability showed up today, so credit to those guys.

Illinois Outside Linebacker Gabe Jacas

What's your perspective on the defense right now?

Not good enough. I take my responsibility for the set today, I didn't play my very best, and didn't play to my full capability and that starts with me, being the captain on this team. It wasn't good enough.

We talked about the third down and getting off the field on third down, what has continued to make that an issue for you guys?

I feel like the chemistry, us as a D-line, we've got to work on working well together, on third down getting off field. It's important getting on the field and getting the ball back to our offense. Credit to them, they took advantage. Very good team and we've got to work well as a D-line, and capitalize when our name is called.

There were high expectations for this defense. What's been the disconnect with that so far this year?

I don't know, to be honest. Maybe communication, owning our job. There's a lot of dudes not doing their jobs, even me. I've got to be better at doing my job. A team like that there's small room for error. They exemplified it and they showed that today.

Illinois Wide Receiver Collin Dixon

Did you sense in the second half, did Washington do anything different defensively in terms of aggression or how they covered you guys?

I'm not sure. You know, they did a good mix of things in the first half and I thought they threw a mix at us in the second half, so I don't know if they did anything different. I think they just executed well.

What was the vibe going down 14-3, but with a minute left to go on the half, make it 17-14, it felt like you guys kind of shifted?

Yeah, it was good, you know, we went down, we scored a couple times. No one ever flinched when we went down 14-3, no one flinched. We knew what we were capable of and just had to go out there and execute. Morale was good there.

What was the message in the locker room from Coach B after this?

Just go see what we did that we need to fix and then flush it because we have a team coming to our house next week that doesn't care about what we did today. They want to win. So we got to go and get back on track next week.