



FLORIDA A&M RATTLERS

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Willie Simmons Postgame Press Conference (Central Florida)

Opening statement:

Coach: "Obviously, tough game. Whenever you play a ranked team of this caliber, arguably the top team in the state of Florida right now, I think they're the second highest rated team in the state right now. There's a reason they lost one regular season game in two years. They're a very good football team. They play with great tempo on offense, give you a face on defense. Tough challenge for this football team. We knew coming into it that we would have to play a sound football game and we didn't. We didn't give ourselves a chance from the beginning, really allowed too many missed assignments, too many mental errors, too many untimely penalties to try and compete with a team of this caliber. Good thing about it, it's on film now. We get to go back to the drawing board. We get to look at it, evaluate where we are as a football team, as individuals, and we got two weeks before we hit the field again to get better from the mistakes we made today. If this team is anything like I know we're capable of being, we'll come back. We're a resilient group. These guys will learn from the mistakes tonight. I feel bad for the next team who has to take the field against this Rattler football team."

On future games this season...

Coach: "The next 10 games will be the same level of competition. In our case, in two weeks, lower level competition. I don't think we'll be overmatched as we were tonight at any point in the rest of the season. Hopefully our guys will go out and play loose, play relaxed. I think we were a little uptight tonight, some guys pressing a little bit trying to do too much. That gets you in trouble. That gets you in trouble in regular games let alone games against a nationally ranked FBS opponent. Hopefully the jitters are out. We finally have played a game. Guys really know what it's like. Some freshman played tonight, had their first college experience. Again, there's some takeaways. When you lost a game like this, there's a negative feeling around. But, there's a lot of positives to take away from this game. We'll take those positives, we'll learn from them, and we'll come back stronger, better than we were tonight. I still think this football team has a chance of being very special if we continue to get better every day and focus on the little things."

On defense...

Coach: "When you aren't getting first downs on offense, it really puts our defense in a tough position. Those guys are competing, playing hard. They're an up-tempo offense and they predicate themselves on being able to control the tempo, get your defensive lineman tired, make you run sideline to sideline. When our guys are fresh I think we perform pretty well when we play assignment football. We got ourselves in trouble when we got out of gap a couple times. But, when we were fresh and played normal downs with normal tempo, I thought our guys on the defensive side performed extremely well. We're going to be a good group on that side of the ball. Just have to clean some things up but, I really feel we'll be a special defense this year. We just have to do a better job offensively of getting first downs. Our motto is "get first downs" and we had eight tonight. That's not enough to keep our defense off the field. Keeps those guys in stressful situations when they're playing close to 100 snaps against a high tempo offense."

On what to tell the team after loss...

"It's about what we do moving forward. We're either going to get better, or we're going to get worse. One thing's for sure, we're not going to stay the same. Now, we have it on film. These guys get a chance to rest a little bit but when we

come back and watch the film, we'll see how much better we can be. We'll see that the score is not necessarily indicative of what kind of team we are. We left a lot of plays on the field on offense. We left a ton of opportunities out there on the field on defense and even on special teams. We can be a lot better. We will be a lot better. I think now the message that we talk about focuses on little things, they get to see it on film now against one of the best teams in America. When you make those mistakes against a really really good team, the result is: you get shut out. When you play sound football against quality competition that we'll see the rest of the season, the same level of competition, I think we have a chance again to achieve all of our goals on the football field."

Terry Jefferson Postgame Press Conference (Central Florida)

On tonight's game...

Terry: "Obviously, we knew coming into this game that Central Florida was a tough opponent for us, being that they're nationally ranked in the FBS rankings poles. We came out, I feel like we made a lot of mistakes that I feel like we can correct on the field. We have to get back in the film room. We had a lot of missed opportunities. A lot of missed interceptions. A lot of missed tackles. It's all about going back to the drawing board and fixing and making those corrections that we need to make when we get back."

On what he said to his teammates on the sideline...

Terry: "Like coach preached to us pregame, just keep our poise. We knew coming in this game that they were going to make big plays. We knew we were going to make big plays. We knew we can't get too high, we can't get too low when it comes to those plays being made. We just have to make sure that we stay locked in, listen to our coaches and read our keys. Fundamental techniques, make the play that presents itself to us."

On the takeaway...

Terry: "There's a lot of things to be learned in a loss. Get back to the drawing board. Even if the score was flipped, even if we were to win the game 60 something to nothing, there's still a lot of things to be learned. It's the little things that count, we have to make sure we execute those little things and get back and get ready for the next opponent."

On missing players, and what it will be like having them back in upcoming weeks...

"We know we were handicapped by the number of guys that we traveled up here with. We know there was a lot of crucial guys who missed this game, a lot of guys that probably could've helped us turn this game around the way we wanted it to be. Unfortunately, those guys weren't able to make it. Younger guys had to step up. We had about five or six true freshmen come out to play against an opponent like this. We know we need our key guys, we always need our brothers. We always stick together through thick and thin. Going forward, we have a bye week. Ready to recover, get in the film room, and get ready for our next opponent."