

Vanderbilt University Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 23, 2019

Derek Mason

Post Game

Vanderbilt - 38, ETSU - 0

DEREK MASON: First of all, congratulations to East Tennessee State. I thought they came out and they were physical and they played with energy early in this ball game.

I was glad to see our defense keep ETSU off the board. I think that was important for these guys. I know we got off to a slow start with a long drive. But overall, you know, I thought once they got into a rhythm, I thought they played well.

Just watching us as a football team, I thought, special teams played solid in this ball game and excited to see that. We had some opportunities to get the ball to our play makers, and that's what you want to see from this football team.

We just need to continue to build off this one. We were able to put some points on the board. I think we still need to be better in some areas and there's a lot to clean up in this ball game.

But so excited for our seniors. Truly excited for those seniors who go out with a victory with their last football game here at Vanderbilt.

With that, I'll open it up for questions.

Q. There's been times this year where your defense has been weakened in the second half. Today, they only give up nine yards in the second half. What do you think led to that?

DEREK MASON: We told guys to get back to the middle. We told guys, you know, no matter what happens in this ball game, just settle back in, trust one another, do your job.

I think guys did their job. I thought we tackled better. That's what you have to do. Guys got off blocks. Guys got to the football. We were able to do a better job up front at making the ball go east and west and not really come downhill.

That's what we needed to see from this football team, especially given this defense, this young defense is still growing. With that, we needed to make sure that they



made a statement, and I thought they did in the second half.

Q. Coach, Quay was coming off a school record for rushing. Today was a season low for him. What did you do to contain him so well?

DEREK MASON: I thought it started up front with those guys using their hands, playing knock-back and controlling the line of scrimmage. I thought what it looked like for most of the day. I think there was that one series in there where when the ball got a little loose, they ran some power, ball came downhill. We didn't do a good job off the double-team of letting our backer fill it fast. So we leaked.

But in terms of the ball going side to side, I mean, he didn't have much opportunity to really get going or get loose, and that's what you want, man. You want to stop good backs from sticking their foot in the ground and being able to get their shoulders square.

Q. Pink obviously had a big day. They'd been targeted before. Was there anything different schematically with what you did. It looked he play actioned really well today. Do you see that translating to next week?

DEREK MASON: Yeah, we're going to do whatever we can to make sure Pink, Kalija, and this group of receivers gets the football. Rivalry week is coming, as we well know. All bets are off.

I mean, you've got to open up your play book. You've got to throw everything that you have into it, and that's what this week will be about. It will be about finding ways and opportunities, creative ways to get these guys the ball.

There's enough guys offensively for us to hopefully find creative opportunities to make sure that those guys touch it.

Pink had a great game today. Obviously, he was targeted. He had opportunities. Should have had a couple more catches, in my opinion. But when you look at it, we got more than enough to clean up so we'll clean it up.

Q. Were you pleased that you were able to get Ke'Shawn some carries and some productivity and

also get him off the field a little early.

DEREK MASON: Absolutely. I mean, I'm glad. We come out at halftime, we hadn't done much this year in the second half. To be able to score 17 points in the third quarter, that's what we needed.

We talked about that coming out of halftime, needing the opportunity to put points on the board. We got the ball first. And to see him touch it and go 75, that's exactly what you want to see. And, you know, shutting him down for the fourth quarter because, again, we know what we got coming.

Q. What has this senior class meant to you and to this program?

DEREK MASON: You know what? This senior group of guys has been terrific just in terms of their performance, their work ethic.

It's been a time of peaks and valleys for this group, but this group has always responded the right way. Any time we've needed them, they've always found an opportunity to stand up.

We miss Turner. Turner would have been a part of this group. We miss Turner, but I think these guys are close. They'll always remember their time here at Vanderbilt University.

They're true Vanderbilt men. When you look at their legacy and what they've done, whether you talk about on the field in terms of production or whether we're talking about foundations and their commitment to public service here in the Nashville area, these young men have truly stood the test of what a Vanderbilt man should be.

So with that, I salute them and congratulate them.

Q. Your upperclassmen should have a lot of confidence given their play next week and their record against them. Was it important for the younger guys to get a victory going into that for their confidence?

DEREK MASON: It's important for this football team to get a victory. It's important for this program to get a victory heading into this game. Tennessee is a good football team. They're well coached. They have momentum.

We needed to be able to have our own momentum headed into this ball game. It's one ball game, one fight, 60-minute ball game. Tennessee, like I said, they're going to bring their A-game. We've got to do is be able to match intensity, production, and everything else in this ball game that's going to be in Knoxville.

So we're going to get ready to head to Knoxville after Thanksgiving and play one heck of a ball game. So that's what we expect to see. We know they'll be ready. We have to be ready as well.

Q. Thanks, Coach.

DEREK MASON: Thank you.

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Ke'Shawn Vaughn

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Q. Ke', when you come out of the locker room like that and get a 75-yarder first carry, at what point in a play like that do you know that that's going to the house?

KE'SHAWN VAUGHN: I mean, halftime, we talked about that they flow heavy to the ball. So we knew that we had to cut up somewhere so we went outside zone, see the cut, take it. Went 75 yards.

Q. You played, looking a week ahead, you played the Tennessee game a little bit last year, left with an injury. Important that you're coming off a good game going into that one for you?

KE'SHAWN VAUGHN: Very important that as a team, we're coming off a big win. I felt this was something we needed going into a rivalry game. We're going to keep up here.

Q. Ke'Shawn, do you pay any attention to your alma mater in high school and what they're doing this year?

KE'SHAWN VAUGHN: Yes, I am. What are they, 13-0? Two more games to state. Hopefully they can be the best Pearl-Cohn team in history. So that's a good thing.