

Stanford University Football Media Conference

Saturday September 17, 2016

David Shaw

Postgame

Stanford - 27, USC - 10

DAVID SHAW: First of all, a nice team win. I thought we played well, not exceptional, but we played well in all three phases. Special teams-wise, we knew Dory's a special football player, so kicking game-wise I thought we did a good job with the direction of our kicks. Got a chance to return one. Got a little nervous there for a second, but really good coverage on that. Besides that kicking game, I thought we were very good.

Defensively, we played hard. We played a lot of guys again, we'll continue to do that so we can be fresh at the end of the game, but our guys played hard, they played well. We have to continue.

I think we did pretty well on third down, but a couple of those late in the game, we had to get up the field on 3rd and down, 3rd and long, especially.

Offensively I thought up front we really gelled. We were looking for that improvement on the offensive line this week. I thought we got that. Guys played hard. They played physical. We knew they had some really good players up front, and we had to play smart and play hard and strain in the run game.

I thought passing game-wise, I thought Ryan Burns played well again. We missed two. You know, we missed two. We missed Christian McCaffrey on the touchdown pass. Another one we had Michael Rector behind Adoree', and he underthrew it a little bit. Besides that, he managed the game extremely well. Played pretty well outside of those two throws. Hopefully will continue to progress.

Gosh, Michael Rector I thought played a good game. I thought our receivers played smart, played well, and you can't run for this many yards without the receivers blocking. So I thought those guys did a good job. Of course they all want to make bigger plays in the passing game and a couple of them were there, we didn't make them. But I commend those guys for coming in and blocking the way that they did.

So Christian can have this kind of performance tonight. It was good to see Bryce get back out there again. You



know, he's explosive, he's fast, and multiple runs now and he's one shoe-string tackle away from running away from everybody.

So excited to continue that great one-two punch the rest of the year.

Q. What was going through your head when you saw Christian McCaffrey uncovered down the left side, totally alone by 15 yards?

DAVID SHAW: Touchdown. Touchdown. The thing is, that's one of those plays that we have three plays that kind of come off that that look pretty much the same, we ran it a week ago, and ran a couple plays that looked like that, and to sneak it to one of the backs and have Christian sneak out past the safety, and Michael Rector did a good job of tracking Adoree' into the middle of the field, which now Christian just has to beat the safety coming down to play the run, and they're not going to catch that guy at all.

Q. What did you think of Ryan Burns' play in this game, and was there any particular reason why Keller Chryst didn't play?

DAVID SHAW: No particular reason. We had a package of plays for Keller, and we didn't get to them. I feel bad about that, but that's just the way it happens sometimes. He'll continue to be in our thoughts as we move forward. Hopefully try to get him in each game. But the game dictates certain things.

Q. What about Burns?

DAVID SHAW: Burns, I thought, played well. I thought he played well. Outside of those two throws, the slightly underthrown ball, and seemed to be a little contact on the one with Rector. But if he threw that a little bit farther out there, Mike's behind him and then the touchdown and the double move with Christian out there as a receiver, it's just a beautiful route. Just overshot him a little bit by about 5 yards.

So outside of those two throws, I thought he played really well. I thought he played smart. Late in the game we threw a jump ball out there to Francis, and you hope the receiver protects the ball with the quarterback. That was one of those that was 3rd down and long with the score out of reach, just launch one down there and see if our guy can make a play.

Q. You've asked a lot of your quarterbacks before the snap. How would you say Ryan's doing in that regard so far?

DAVID SHAW: I think very well. He's doing very well. I wouldn't say exceptional right now. You know, for guys playing the second game for an extensive playing time, I thought he played well. I thought he was very good.

Couple times we probably didn't quite get to the right play. But our guys were good enough up front and they made it work. But I think he's improving and he's doing a good job.

Q. Are you especially happy with him on third down? I think he was 6 for his first 9. You put a lot of onus on him to run the ball, and he came through a couple times on pretty critical on third downs.

DAVID SHAW: Are you talking about Ryan?

Q. Ryan on third down.

DAVID SHAW: Yeah, that's one of our principle we've had here for years. It's a principle when we got Rich Gannon at the Oakland Raiders, Jon Gruden put in an unofficial rule that the quarterback's got to scramble or run for three to four first downs every single game. And I reminded Burns of that last week. He's an athlete. He's a big athlete. You've got to get us positive yards. If nobody's open, don't force the ball, tuck it away and run.

He's a big, physical kid, and he's hard to tackle, obviously. He's 6'5", 230-something, 240-something pounds. He's a big guy and we'll continue to do that with him.

Q. Coach, you seemed like you were channelling Muhammad Ali there with the rope-a-dope. When you kept wringing in the defense, it looks like you had ten in the box, and that's when the Michael Rector thing, the reverse happened, I believe?

DAVID SHAW: Absolutely. You run certain plays to set up other plays, right? We ran power, counter, power, power, power counter, power, power, and then upstairs in the box we just watched and see if they're chasing from the back side. We thought they were chasing, and right before we called that play, oh, hey, Michael's coming up now. I said stay wide and run fast. You know, great, brilliant coaching by me (laughing).

But, I mean, Mike's borderline world class speed now. We're talking upper 4.2, 4.3, 40-yard dash guy. He's explosive. When he gets to full speed, he's tough to catch. With all the speed we have on this team with Christian and Bryce Love, Michael Rector's the fastest guy on the team, and I think he showed that today.

Q. Coach, for years Stanford couldn't see USC with binoculars. Now they've beaten the Trojans three times in less than one calendar year. What's that say about this program and what's it mean to you?

DAVID SHAW: We don't use anyone but us to set our standards, right? USC's got a proud tradition and they've got a good football team. Now that football team is better than the one that everybody thought they saw against Alabama. Alabama played really well that game. This is a good Trojan football team. But we set our standard based on us. It doesn't matter that it's USC or UCLA, Notre Dame, whoever it is. Our standards are high. When we play well, we expect to win.

Q. You were just describing your offensive power, power, power counter, and Christian got 30 carries. Does he run bigger than he looks or is he bigger than I give him credit for?

DAVID SHAW: Oh, there's no question about it. He's 205 pounds now, something like that, six foot. But he runs like a guy that weighs 230. He's physical. But you don't see him get knocked down with just one guy. He gave a talk to the team this morning and reminded everybody, not just him, but for everybody, you don't let the first guy bring you down. You don't go down easy. He fights for yardage. He might get hit with a 2-yard gain, and you look up and it's a 5-yard gain because he fought for those three extra yards.

He's a big back in a not-big-back body. It goes with his training, goes with his mentality. He's just a tough guy to tackle. That 30 carries is good, you know. Doesn't necessarily need 30 carries every single game, especially now that Bryce is back. We'll continue to get Bryce some carries, and the quarterback will take some carries. You know, we'll continue to get Cameron Scarlett in the mix. He was in the mix a couple times today, we'll get him some carries. We don't need Christian to get necessarily 40 or anything like that. But somewhere between 25 and 35 is plenty.

Q. Bryce looked really comfortable running between the tackles today. Can you talk about his development as a complete back at this point?

DAVID SHAW: So we knew based on Bryce's film that we saw him his junior year, we were really excited. But with a guy, once again, like Christian, he's not a big guy, you want to see him. You've got to see him with your own eyes. So we sent Coach Lance Taylor out there, running backs coach to go see him. He called me from the school watching him. He said, Coach, he's not tall, but he's not little. This is not a little back. Very similar to Christian, this is a running back. This is not a little scatback that you run toss sweeps with. This guy runs downhill between tackles.

Just like Christian, you see him use his patience, he's got great vision, he's got great balance, and he knows when to hit it. When he hits it, he gets up to full speed. Like I said, there's two of those now. If he gets out of there, it's gone.

Q. Coach, can you tell me a little bit about your defense. You showed up kind of a bend-but-don't-break spirit. Maybe gave up the occasional big play and 300 yards but for the most part kept them out of the end zone?

DAVID SHAW: I don't like to say bend but don't break. We try not to give up the big play. I think we gave up a couple on third downs, in particular. But we want to be on the attack. We want to stop the run. I think they did a good job establishing the run early in the game. I think we bounced back. They came back in the third quarter. Established the run again, I think we bounced back again. Once we bounce back and do a better job against the run, we make a team one dimensional. Hopefully our pass rush and our coverage wins the game for us, and that's kind of what happened tonight.

Q. Do you speak about that drive that you gave up to open up the second half. The nine-play drive. You responded with a ten-play drive and your defense pitches a shutout the rest of the game. What's that say about the character of this team being a strong second-half club this early?

DAVID SHAW: We talk about being finishers. Of all the things that you want people to say about you, you want to say you're tough, you're smart, you're a good football team, you're fast, you're athletic. To me the biggest compliment is that you're a finisher. That you're going to play your best football in the fourth quarter. You're going to play your best football to close out the game. If you're behind, you play your best football to catch up and take the lead. If you have the lead, you play your best football to end the game.

That's the way we train. That's the way we think. That's the way our program is built to be a really good fourth-quarter team, and we did that today.

Q. Coach, how would you rate the performance of your offensive line in this game? How did they do on improving from what needed to be worked on from Kansas State?

DAVID SHAW: Without watching the film right now I want to say we played much better. Without watching the film, I'd hate to give a pure letter grade. It feels somewhere in the D-range, but I'm a pretty hard grader, so we'll see once we watch the film.

Bottom line I still think we can play better. I think they slipped off a couple tackles, and for us we want to play perfect up front. We talked about hitting our landmarks

and straining to finish every single block. For the most part we did that tonight. We have the kind of backs if we give those guys a crease, those 4-yard runs turn into really big plays.

Q. You guys ran the ball 47 times in this game, which is percentage is probably about 70%. And there were runs where McCaffrey wasn't touched for like ten, 15 yards. At what point during the game did you feel you had a clear advantage and complete control up front?

DAVID SHAW: I think our MO is pretty much set in stone. If we get a two-score lead in the second half, we're going to run it. We're going to be physical. We talk about intellectual brutality, we're trying to end the game with the ball in our hands.

I don't care about stats. I don't care what other people do. I don't care if other people are trying to run up the score. It's just football. We've got a two score lead. The way we play offense, the way we play defense, we're a tough team to beat. We tried to put pressure on the guys up front. Offensively and defensively on our team to end the game for us.

Q. Did USC bring out the best in Christian McCaffrey? I know he had a school record 461 yards against them in the Pac-12 Championship game, and today he led you guys in every single category. I know it's kind of par for the course for him to do that, but does USC bring out the best in him and does it ever cease to amaze you what he can do?

DAVID SHAW: Game day brings out the best in Christian McCaffrey. I wouldn't want to give anybody that much credit that he tries to play better against somebody else. He's got such a chip on his shoulder and such an internal drive, it doesn't matter who the other team is. When it's game day, he's excited and he can't wait to play.

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Christian McCaffrey

Postgame

Stanford - 27, USC - 10

Q. Wide open, ball's coming to you, do you have my gosh, I can't drop this or are you just excited you don't see anybody around you?

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY: Yeah, just catch and run. Burns made a good throw, so made my job easy just catching the end of it.

Q. Burns on third down has been really efficient through the first two games. Almost better in efficiency. Have you sensed that in the huddle that he's in complete command there?

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY: Definitely. We're very confident, first, second or third down knowing he'll get to the right checks, make the right reads and finishing with a completion. Guys doing a great job getting open on third down as well.

Q. Some of those designed runs, I think you had one early on a third down. You came out of the game and kind of plowed through a few guys. Did the running backs have a little banter with him when he has the run like that?

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY: We get excited. Anytime you see the quarterbacks shelling out for you and going into the trenches, you definitely get excited as a runner.

Q. From your perspective, how did the offensive line progress from Game 1 to today?

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY: They did a great job. Those nine, ten boxes up there, they're grinding them and getting their face across and doing everything they can to open up holes. So they did an unbelievable job, a huge progression from week one to week two.

Q. You were channelling Remound Wright I guess on the 1-yard plunge. What was going through your head there?

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY: Just get in the end zone, find a way. Those guys, they submarine on the D-line. The only option there was to jump and find the hole. Lucky to learn from Remound back in the day and kind of show off what he taught me today.

Q. Coach said you suggested don't let the first guy bring you down. How much pride do you take in



being a power runner in your position?

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY: A lot of pride. There's times, you know, Coach Shaw always harps on being the most complete back you can possibly be. Part of that comes from being able to make guys miss an open field and lowering your shoulder and getting two or three yards and falling forward. So being a complete back, there is a lot to it.

That's something us in the running back room, we work every single day. All of us pride ourselves on being efficient and making guys miss and falling forward and doing everything we can to get as many yards as possible.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY: You tell me. I don't know who is giving me credit or not. I know who I am. I'm 6-foot 205, that's my height and weight, so as far as big goes, there it is. But I like to get physical when I have to.

Q. The fact that Michael Rector and having Bryce love back, you have all these weapons that kind of help you out and open up space for you?

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY: Oh, it's huge. We've always had those guys. So just showing that we had so many weapons on the field, it gives your offense a lot of confidence. Also just up front, you can't harp how much those guys get us going enough, because nothing happens without them. Our O-line and our fullbacks do an unbelievable job setting everything up. Giving the quarterback time and opening up holes for us to run in.

Q. Christian, do you get any special satisfaction having a game where you grind out the yards as opposed to maybe breaking a few big runs. Obviously you're going to be satisfied either way, but is it a different satisfaction having a game like that?

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY: Definitely. There's definitely games you need to be grinding in the hole and you need to push in the trenches. And sometimes when the game's on the line, we're okay with getting five, five, five, 12, five, four yards a pop if that's what it takes to win. I mean, that's what they're giving us. But once again, I'm trying to do everything I can every single time I touch the ball.

Q. There is so much attention placed by UFC on stopping you and kind of controlling you after what happened in that title game. Does that give you a little bit of satisfaction now knowing that it didn't hold you back?

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY: It definitely gives me satisfaction, but again, I'm satisfied with the win and how our guys played and kept progressing. Even though we won though, there is still a lot of stuff we've got to fix. Lot of stuff we'll have to get back to the drawing board and correct. So it will be a big week of practice, facing a great UCLA team this week. So we'll celebrate this victory and get back to the drawing board tomorrow.

Q. With that said, when you came out of the back field for that touchdown, was there any surprise that they didn't cover you, or they just seemed like a blown coverage in there?

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY: I mean, yeah. I don't know when they were going to give me. I saw the safety roll down. It was my job to run by him. Burns threw a great ball and from there it's history.

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Clay Helton

Cameron Smith

Max Brown

Postgame

CLAY HELTON: Congratulations to Stanford on a very well-played game. I thought the tale of the tape was really in the first half in two phases. Really, third-down efficiency of what they were able to accomplish. They were 55 of 8 in the first half, compared to us being 0 for 4, and that led to ball control and really giving up a couple big plays. One, a wheel route, and the other an ability to get a big run there that's split by Christian McCaffrey.

The other thing was we had seven penalties in the first half. We had one in the second, that's seven penalties for 51 yards, really stopped drives. You look up and it's 17-3 at halftime.

Made some corrections at halftime. Really came out and I was very proud of the kids the way they competed all the way through the second half. I told them in the locker room, if they compete like that, we clean up the errors, they're going to be a good football team, a really good football team, I truly believe that.

We've got some work to do. Can't feel sorry for ourselves. We've got Utah here in five days, we get on a plane. So we've got to get back tonight and get back to work tomorrow. With that, I'll take any questions you've got.

Q. Coach, your teams two losses have come to Top 10 teams. How do you determine how your body of work is measured?

CLAY HELTON: We want to get better with each game. I saw some things that were improved upon in this football game, and that's the goal is to improve each and every week. We hope to face that team again. I really do. And I told the kids they've got to continue to work.

They took a giant leap forward in my mind the way they competed today. The adjustments they made at halftime. And this is going to become a good football team. We played two really good football teams in Alabama and Stanford in our losses. We've got to learn how to win those games and we will. But like I



said, we've got corrections we've got to fix and get ready for Utah. We don't have long.

Q. (Indiscernible) are those lack of concentration? What's going on?

CLAY HELTON: No, no, if you look at the wheel route, if you look at the wheel route you've got kid's eyes in the back field, sees the play action. He's responsible for the flat zone and he's got his eyes in the back field and a very fast person ran down the sideline in Christian and made a great play and finished it.

With the long run, I'll have to watch the tape on that. Usually it's a missed run fit when you have a long run. Then on the reverse, we were really, really playing the strong side of the formation really tight. We rolled down the strong safety there, and we're a pursuit football team. We get to the ball and they caught us with a nice play call with the reverse. Good job by David.

Q. What is your thought process on 4th and 6 with under 10 minutes left to play?

CLAY HELTON: I think we were on the 50-yard line toward midfield with an offense that has a very dangerous weapon. I thought it was important to pin them deep, which we did. We got it inside the 10-yard line, if I recall that right.

Q. What is this team's personality? What are you trying to do?

CLAY HELTON: Yeah, I look at the two runners today, I look at the two runners overall, and both averaged -- Justin averaged 4.5 yards a run, Rogers averages 5.7. We ended up having those seven penalties in the first half which creates 3rd and long situations which felt like they did a very nice job of being 3rd and 2, 3rd and 3, 3rd and 4. We're sitting there 3rd and 6 3rd and 8. I think that's the biggest thing is eliminating the errors that are killing us, and that's penalties in this football game.

Q. Do you run first team with this?

CLAY HELTON: If you have those errors, I think it's always hard to run the ball on 2nd and 10. You're going to mix one in on occasion, but you have to be able to eliminate those errors and stay. We talk about first out efficiency with our run-game, play action game, perimeter screen game. When we get away from that

because of 2nd and longs, it hurts us.

Q. Why is it so hard to get JuJu the ball, and can you win if he's not a bigger part of the offense going forward?

CLAY HELTON: Well, tonight I'll have to look at the tape, definitely. But there were times that we did, we tried a long pass down the boundary in a one-on-one situation. We tried the shot down the field in a one-on-one situation there.

But one of the things, I've been discredited before by only throwing to one guy, and now you get the ball spread around to different guys, tight ends tonight. Darreus continues to play well; Steven Mitchell played really well, so the ball is being spread around. You can never be right. You can try to throw to one guy or you can try to throw it to the guy that's open. And right now we're trying to throw to the guy that's open.

Q. Max, how frustrating is it? It seems like you guys were able to move the ball in spurts, but at the end of the day you only had ten points to show for it?

MAX BROWN: Yeah, it's tough. We're going to look at the film. We realize we did a lot of great things. Coach Helton mentioned the run game, passing game was there. At times we were just stabbing ourselves in the foot towards the end of drives. The name of the game is touchdowns, so we have to correct that and it's a big thing moving forward.

Q. How do you correct it? What do you do to correct them?

MAX BROWN: The obvious part is some of those offsides penalties early on in the game, and those are a matter of going out there and executing. I think at times I put it on my shoulders as far as making the play that's there, making the throw that's there. But I think give them credit, they're a great team, great defense, very sound defense. So they bent at times but didn't break.

Q. Max, what was the issue with the false starts with the offensive line?

MAX BROWN: Yeah, I think that's probably a question for Zach. They were saying at times maybe their defensive tackle was saying things and my mid cadence. Not totally sure to be honest, and that's why you saw us move to the silent cadence in the second half and end of the second quarter.

Q. Cam, was Christian all that you expected?

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, he ran hard. He was exactly what I expected.

Q. Cam, you said earlier in the week this is going to

be a huge game for you guys. So now how do you handle it?

CAMERON SMITH: Come back tomorrow and get better. That's all we can do. I think it's a good test for us. But we've just got to keep moving forward and get better.

Q. (Indiscernible) McCaffrey, obviously he's so good, and everybody knows that you guys key in on him, but he's going to still get his 200 offensive yards?

MAX BROWN: I think we had a couple missed assignments. But I think for the most part their offensive line they work for him. They move the ball pretty well. I think we tackled him and did an all right job. But there were some times where we missed it and he got loose.

Q. (Indiscernible) hit receivers in the end zone. What happened in there?

MAX BROWN: Yeah, those are tough, obviously. I think both situations there was some grabbing going on. Could have maybe gone a different way. That's just a matter, it's not even those two plays. It's a full body of work and making sure guys go out there and make the most of an opportunity. Execute when the plays are there. That's something we'll correct and get better at this week.