

University of Notre Dame Football Media Conference

Saturday, October 5, 2019

Scot Loeffler

Postgame



Q. You guys were able to stay on the field. Do you see a silver lining?

SCOT LOEFFLER: There were some positives, and we were better on third down, so we could stay on the field. When you stay on the field, we can help our defense. There was a few missed opportunities on third down to keep the drives alive. We need to find a way on fourth and short to be able to sneak the ball. That's something we need to work on.

But there were some positives. You saw some light in terms of some consistency of staying on the field. We're struggling with the ability to make the play to score. It's quite evident.

But to their credit, this is arguably, hands down -- I was talking to Brian Kelly before the game and Mike Elston -- this might be their best defense they've had in a long time. I said that earlier in the week. I think they've done a great job recruiting. I think there's not a hole on their defense. They're long. They're athletic. They're different. And they'll be a top five team. They're a good football team. Great football team, in my opinion.

Q. How about the decision about Grant and his performance today?

SCOT LOEFFLER: We decided that grant was going to get an opportunity to play. He deserves it. I thought he had a very good week of practice. He did some good things out there today. There was a couple times we had some missed opportunities, but there were some things that he did today that were positive.

Q. Was there anything in the game that allowed you to kind of choke the running game a little bit?

SCOT LOEFFLER: No. We ran some zone read with them. To say that there was major play selection differences, there wasn't.

Q. Did you find something for long term with Grant?

SCOT LOEFFLER: We'll find out. I'll never make a comment about a quarterback, good, bad, or indifferent, right after the game. We'll decide where we're going to go with that in the near future. We've got two guys on scholarship right now, and I know we're going to need them both.

Q. Grant's ability to make plays, extended plays, maybe when there's nothing really there, is that something that your offense needs at this point?

SCOT LOEFFLER: We need a lot of things right now, but to answer your question, I think both quarterbacks have the ability to get out of jail. There's some things we need to work on on both sides of the ball -- tackling, some base fundamental things.

Again, the positives about today, I thought there was zero quit. I thought both sides of the ball, including special teams, tried very hard. The positive was, I don't believe -- I think the only interception was the big bend -- we're not turning over the ball. We just need to become more consistent. We need to find ways to make plays to get in the end zone. That's a problem right now for us. We need to keep going down that path and find ways to get in the end zone.

Q. Is this progress a result of the effort and execution?

SCOT LOEFFLER: I don't know that. It felt like that. We'll have to watch the tape. It felt that way, it did, but I'll be able to comment on that after watching the tape. I don't want to say something that's not true.

Q. How do you think Davon and Bryson performed without Andrew?

SCOT LOEFFLER: This foot thing with Andrew is frustrating. Came out in practice, tweaked it again. Hobbled around practice. It's a very frustrating deal for us and Andrew Claire. I think Davon Jones and Denley did a very good job.

We don't want to just play two running backs, we want to play five, but we don't have that right now. So those guys being able to carry the ball for roughly 42 times and against that defense, we've got to give them major credit in terms of effort, but we want to get to the point where we can roll four and five of those running backs in the game. That will be in the near future.

Q. Sotolongo seemed like he was really active?

SCOT LOEFFLER: I'm sorry?

Q. Sotolongo.

SCOT LOEFFLER: Yeah, he played well.

Q. You didn't have Jerry or Sam Neverov today.



When do you expect these or two back?

SCOT LOEFFLER: I don't know. We'll comment on that whenever we have more information.

Q. Any idea whether Andrew will be back in next week?

SCOT LOEFFLER: I don't know. There's times when we feel like we're over the top with it, and we thought we were over the top with the bye week, and next thing you know he tweaked it early in the week. We sent him to the doctor on Thursday to get more medication for him, and he's struggling right now. He's struggling to keep that foot healthy.

Q. What do you guys need to work on going into the following weeks?

SCOT LOEFFLER: We're going to look at the tape. We're going to look at the pluses and minuses and our negatives, and what we're going to do is in the next 56 days try to improve as much as we can. As much as I don't want to say this, we're going to get on schedule here. There's some positive that's going on in our program right now, and we've got a long way to go, but there's some things that we're doing -- we're having little mini battles right now that we're winning inside.

It's sure as heck not great execution, but we're winning some battles on some things that we need to win some battles on before we're ready to win consistently.

Q. You mentioned needing to find ways to score. The first three drives were three and out, but after that you moved the ball consistently and you had the ball on your side of the field on those drives deep in the red zone. How encouraging is that when you could move the ball?

SCOT LOEFFLER: Yeah, it was great. Mike Elston and Brian Kelly commented we did some unique things that it's very hard to defend. What we need to continue to do to come up with creative ways to move the ball and find ways to get in the end zone. We're struggling with it right now. We have missed opportunities. As coaches and players, we've got to continue to find a way to get in the end zone.

I think there's some things we do that are creative in how to move the ball. I think the biggest thing now is finding ways to get in the end zone.

Q. In the secondary, you've got two freshmen, two sophomores.

SCOT LOEFFLER: I looked out there, and I was thinking, goodness, gracious, those poor young kids, and they were playing against some veteran real dudes.

Q. Do you think there could be a turning point at

some point in the future?

SCOT LOEFFLER: Absolutely. My goodness gracious, this is six weeks we've been through. It's been a hard six weeks. We've learned a lot. We've just got to have a great, positive, resilient, persistent attitude the next few weeks and try to improve as much as we possibly can and find a way to win a few ball games, period, end. That's what we need to do. And keep winning little mini battles.

With time and great recruiting and all that, we'll get to where we want to be.