

2011 Champs Sports Bowl Postgame Quotes

Florida State vs. Notre Dame

Dec. 29, 2010

Orlando, Florida

COACH FISHER: I am very proud to be the coach of this football team. I said this all year. This team has been through a lot. There was a lot that was put on the season went through a lot of trials and tribulations with injuries, tightly played games. and a lot of people doubted it, but I said all along this team has a special character about it. It always does. It competes. It fights. It loves each other. It stays together no matter what people say, no matter what they do. I've been on some great football teams and coached some great football teams. I have a bond and relationship with these guys. They are a true family, and it is a pleasure to be able to coach them. I was proud of way they competed in the game with all the circumstances, and it's great to have them for a long time.

MODERATOR: Open up for Q and A just find a microphone.

Q Coach, not a whole lot going right for a while there, looked like in the second half your best players started making plays like these two young men here?

COACH FISHER: It was, and the guys out front realized they could play. They had the jitters and making calls. Four of them to get it right, one to get it wrong and have it off. Once they realized they could do this and out there and relaxed and got the flow of the game and gave E.J. time to make plays make them go up and grab -- making plays, not just -- E.J. was making plays, everyone was making great catches. We were running. We were competing. Defense did great, they had picks in the red zone. They got us a little early with a couple returns on special teams, which we're not used to giving up. Once we got momentum of the game, our special teams took over again and kept them pinned back. We started working the field positions again, that was big. These guys competed and had well made plays.

Q For Rashad, your play in the second half, especially with the offense struggling really until the diving catch you had down near our sideline, I guess, did you feel like the game, I don't know if it slowed down, but you really started to take control it seems like in the second half?

RASHAD GREENE: Well, it was trying to make plays for my team, just doing it for my team. Just like Coach Fisher said when the line got settled and realized they could play, it was a lot more we could do and E.J. gave me a chance, and I made a play for the team. It is about family and team; that's why I do it.

Q Two things, first I wanted you to assess E.J.'s performance, especially down the stretch there and how close were you to making any change in the front considering the struggles ahead?

COACH FISHER: Weren't no changes to be made. Weren't nobody else to put in. They're all banged and bruised. You can't -- you got to have patience. You got to understand freshman go out there, they are not going to be perfect. We knew take time. The game was not out of reach, and I thought the second half E.J. did a great job of competing. He was banged and bruised and his leg hurt. E.J. is a competitor and winner. Our kids believe in him, and they believe in him. He knows if he gives the ball to Rashad and the receivers, and all the guys out there, they're going to make plays for him. And he knows the defense is going to hang in there while they are struggling. Marcus kept us in the ballgame and making plays. E.J. is winner and competitor. He's a guy you're proud to be the leader of your football team, the face of your organization. He's what -- you know, like I said, you want your kids grow up to be. I was

proud the way he competed in the game and played football the second half.

Q Jimbo, when Devonta had his fumble, you didn't get on to him. You put your arms around his shoulder. Did you expect early with all these young guys it might be a tough start?

COACH FISHER: I had to have patience. I knew I was going to have to have a lot of patience. And some of these guys know patience is not always my best virtue, and you guys do too.

When you're playing with young guys, going back why you do things, if you do things for the wrong reasons, that guy has as much heart as anybody out there, and he didn't do it on purpose. We knew he would have to carry the ball the rest of the game and win and block and make plays, so you're going to make a mistake, put your arm around him and tell him you love him. We are going to give it to you again, and that is going to play.

After the game, we won and happy, but I saw a tear come out of his eyes. He was crying he fumbled after the game was over. He forgot it during the game. That's what he stands for. I'll give it to him 100 times.

Q Coach, you guys scored twice in two minutes. How did that set the tone for the rest of the game?

COACH FISHER: Different times this year we haven't fed off each other in all three phase. In other words, sometimes when the defense was playing good, the offense didn't take over. When the offense was really kicking in, the defense may slip up just a hair, or a special team. And I thought what we did tonight when the home momentum changed, and college football is huge momentum, especially with young kids. When it changed, all three phases got together. We started covering the kicks, we were pinning them back, defense started making plays, getting turnovers. The offense was converting to touchdowns. We changed the momentum and played as a whole unit as well as we had during anytime of the year.

Q Lamarcus, just talk about the defense earlier having to keep them in the game, knowing it might be a slow start offensively with the all the guys out there?

LAMARCUS JOYNER: It goes back to what Coach Fisher says you have a team that loves and trusts in each other. It's not all about defense or offense. We play for each other and it goes back to Florida we know offense struggled a bit we're a family and love and trust in each other we make the plays it was rattled earlier but as we played for a unit then great things happen and you see the outcome, they stepped up a lot of young guys.

Q Coach, you keep talking about the youth of this team. So many young players making plays in the fourth quarter. What can this win do heading in the offseason and next season?

COACH FISHER: Just because you win this game, does it give you momentum? Yes, it does, but it doesn't mean you are going to win next year. We have to put the work in now. The new team's life just now starts. A team has a life expectancy of one year, we got a new team now. Now, what they have to do is go back from the experiences they got this year and learn from them and grow from them and constantly improve and understand here is the thing in our word for next year I can tell you besides attitude which it always will be is details, we have to be so detail oriented to understand the little things that make a difference in Championship caliber football teams. We were close, but there were details we left out. There sometimes young guys do. But now I think they understand hopefully, and what I'm

talking about what they can do and have belief in themselves, and we dealt with a lot of depth this year. Hopefully the details will be the difference and take us over the top next year.

Q Jimbo, on the same line, now that it's over, what did this season mean for Florida State Football and, and what did this do as far as capping it off?

COACH FISHER: People worried about you're not getting back. I think this season helped us get back as much as anything because it never faltered. You lost three games. You were two and three this. Team I said when we came out of the Wake Forest game, there was a lot of doubters in this room because I saw the look on your face when I said it. When they hit the practice field on Monday after we lost to Wake Forest and lost three games in a row, I said it, I knew we would have a good season because they hadn't changed one bit from when we played Oklahoma to when we were going to play Duke the next week, and I think they understood.

Part of growing as an organization is understanding and controlling all the things around the game, not the game, but the media the expectation the fan base, that's all part of growing up and understanding what you can control and what you can't control and what they have to do to stay focused and live in the moment. I think they learned that this year, and from that moment on, I think this thing will propel us if we had a super season.

Q Lamarcus, can you talk about the fourth quarter; you guys got the lead and the defense held them, didn't score again. They had the ball first and 10 on the 28th after the punt and penalty, and Terrance makes the interception, talk about how you guys stepped up?

LAMARCUS JOYNER: You have a guy like Terrance Brook who is a great player. Like Coach Fisher said, we have depth on this defense. And you have to know when the team is depending on you you have to step up and make a play. Terrance Brooks is a guy with a lot of confidence, told us we will end the game with the interception. We trust and love the guy and being there for him letting him know he can make a play coming off the bench and goes out there and makes the play, and that's great for this team. And like Coach Fisher say, we just plan for these things being their last game, and it's about that dash, the life expectancy of the team we wanted to end it right to have confidence going into years coming.

Q Lamarcus, continuing with the injuries to Greg and Xavier, it seemed like you were telling Terrance what to do. You always motioned to him. Could you talk about that?

LAMARCUS JOYNER: Like Coach Fisher said, it's about details, that's what we lacked early on in the season, communicating, we never communicating, and we promised each other we would communicate, and that would make us a better team by doing that. Guys do their job, and you need that. You need to know someone you love you want to push them and give them that edge. He was on me, and I was on him. We were on the same page, what can go wrong?

Q This is for the coach and the players. Down 14 nothing, even 14 to three after kind of squandering the 77 yard return by Marcus, what sparked the change? What turned it around?

COACH FISHER: Nothing. They were not kept competing. As an athlete, you play the next play; that's all you can control. There is nothing you have to look back and it's what I am expecting to do the next play. Even when you're failing, they were still trying just as hard as it was, we just weren't executing what we had to do. Nothing changed, except the execution of what we did. And once we made a few plays, we got the confidence and momentum in the game and the role of and what we did. Nothing changed how

we coached them and what we did. We had plays and made them and the confidence rolled, and we started making more of them.

Q Rashad and Marcus, did you get discouraged at all, or did the coaches keep that from happening?

RASHAD GREENE: I wouldn't say we were discouraged. Just like Coach Fisher said, we knew how we would play the game and stay focused and play hard as a team. Nothing changed. We had to execute and get detail and play hard like we had been doing all year.

LAMARCUS JOYNER: And I love the way Coach Fisher been acting this past week, he's been a little more patient with the team, I mean, letting the team have their swagger trusting the kids, I mean, you love coaches like that, you're going to play for your coach that loves you and treat you no different from how he treats his children, so we just play for Coach Fisher and we play for each other, that's a great feeling when you plan that way.

MODERATOR: We have time for two more questions.

Q Jim announced before the game your contract extended through 2016. Talk about what the university told you and how it makes you feel.

COACH FISHER: They are showing commitment, and that's great. Even when we had adversity, just like the players, just like you say when Devonta fumbled the ball, we knew he was a great player. This school understands the direction and infrastructure we set up in our program, what kind of kids we have. They see them every day and what we're capable of. They knew why we didn't have success and explain it. They see where we're going what we can do. And I appreciate the trust they have and what we're trying to do from our leadership from President Barron, and Mr. Stepsis and the Board of Trustees. They can see it, and that is what keeps that momentum going. It's easy when people make mistakes to doubt and change. It takes true people that can understand the future and understand what things are and why things are happening to develop a true championship program. Our world is go get someone else, go do something else, go get another player, go get another coach. Everything doesn't always workout that way. You find the guys with patience and understanding and can see the big picture often come out on top.

Q Rashad, is this the most healthy you felt off season since you got injured early in the year?

RASHAD GREENE: Being healthy like that really wasn't on my mind. I was focused to help the team win the game for the seniors for their last game to be a victory. It was not about health. I was going to leave it out there on the line regardless of whether my injuries were hacking me or not. I would give it all for the seniors and the coaches and for this family.