

2012 Capital One Bowl Postgame Quotes

Nebraska vs. South Carolina

Jan. 2, 2012

Orlando, Florida

MODERATOR: We will begin with an opening statement from Coach Pelini.

COACH PELINI: I want to congratulate South Carolina on a well-played football game, and it was a tough game. We are disappointed obviously. Kids played hard. I told our kids in our locker room walk out of there with your head held high, and I am proud of their football team. I am proud of the season we had. Obviously we didn't finish the way we wanted, but it doesn't take away from where we are and where we're going and what we've accomplished, and somebody had to lose that game, and we had our opportunities. We had plenty of opportunities to -- and we didn't take advantage of them, and for that I give South Carolina credit, but we did a lot to help them, and it's a shame. You know, tough game. Tough loss. I thank the Capital One people, first-class people, first-class people, outstanding treatment. It was a great week, and great week for our team. I appreciate everybody associated with the Bowl game, and the class they showed, the hospitality they showed, the -- it couldn't have gone any better, except for obviously the result here at the game, but it doesn't take away from everything -- all the efforts they made on our behalf and I thank every one of them.

MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

At this time, we will open up to Q and A. We have a court reporter if you could wait for a microphone before you ask your question.

Q Bo, did you expect more from your team today in terms of how sharp they were, the penalties really got you late?

COACH PELINI: Especially in the second half. I said that, you know, -- I mean, how do you explain it? I don't think we had any in the first half, but in the second half, whether they got rattled, I don't know. I thought they were flinching out of some. I thought there were some things that should have been called, but we didn't handle it well.

Bottom line is we had our opportunities to -- you know, it should have been a different score when those penalties started coming up. If we take care of our business, you know, you can't give a good football team the amount of things we gave South Carolina today and not take advantage of as many opportunities we had to put points on the board and, you know. You watched the game.

Q Bo, what did you see or what explanation did you get on the play where Dennard and Jeffrey got ejected?

COACH PELINI: They said they both threw punches, and they have to throw them out.

Q Dave Myer, AP, only two turnovers in the game, pivotal 13 points in the first quarter, none after that, what transpired?

COACH PELINI: We had opportunities, and made some bone-headed plays. We had opportunities. Not to put them away, but get a couple score lead and put the ball on the ground, didn't execute, didn't execute. You're not going to win a football game like that.

Q Coach, obviously the play at the end of the first half was huge for South Carolina --

COACH PELINI: You think?

Q -- what happened on that from your perspective?

COACH PELINI: We didn't execute well. The guys didn't do what they were coached to do, period, end of story. We didn't execute the play, and they did. Good for them.

Q Did you sense after that Hail Mary that your team sort of deflated at all because the second half performance was so different from the first half in terms of discipline and other things?

COACH PELINI: You know, we came out in the first series of the second half and drove right down the field. We didn't execute in the red zone, and we missed a field goal. We stopped them a few times. We didn't execute offensively from that point forward. It was disappointing, we were still right there to take the football game, and eventually they made a few plays, and the game changed, and like I said, we had our chances. Even if we made the field goal, it's probably a different game. Whether I -- did our guys get deflated? I don't know. I don't think so. We kept playing hard. When you start jumping offsides and start putting yourself off schedule, I said it earlier in the week, I said you can't execute offensively like that. You have to -- you can't play off schedule. You can't start jumping offsides and doing things like that, and we were our own worst enemy. We were our own worst enemy in opportunities we didn't take advantage of in the first half. The penalties started creeping up in the second half.

Q Rex, from your standpoint, it looked like you guys had no problem moving the ball, but as Coach said, it didn't payoff in points several times. Is that the play of the offense, the younger guys on the offense, or did that not protect you at all?

REX BURKHEAD: When you get pushed back, we had a bunch of offside penalties. There were some tough situations. We got in the red zone plenty of times and couldn't finish it. It is tough when you have no minimum like that and just don't execute. We give the credit to South Carolina. They did a tremendous job and made changes at half time, but we beat ourselves in a lot of phases of the game.

Q Did you sense a sense of discouragement on your side and maybe a lift from theirs when that happened?

REX BURKHEAD: You hear the fans and feel that momentum, but at the same time you have to come out and play like you have been playing the whole game. You can't let it get to you. We didn't execute.

MODERATOR: Any other questions for Nebraska?

Q Your offensive line had actually a really strong first half; what did you like about what they did, at least in that first part of the game, and then what -- did South Carolina adjust somehow, or what changed and flipped maybe in that fourth quarter?

COACH PELINI: Well, like I said, we got off schedule. We cajoled a lot of scrimmage in the first half. We knocked them off the ball and executed well, plain and simple. I thought we played really well, but like I said, when you start getting the penalties, you take yourselves out of drives, and you can't play that

way, not against a defense like that, not against a front like that, you can play different when you start getting in situations like that.

Q Can you speak about Alshon Jeffrey, the two plays he made in the game were so big?

COACH PELINI: He's a good player.

Q Coach, talking about how proud you are of the players, how about the coaches that were filling in, any rolls in how they adjusted this week into this game?

COACH PELINI: I liked their plan. I thought we had a good plan. We just didn't -- we didn't get it done today.

Q What will you take away from this game?

REX BURKHEAD: Obviously a bad taste in my mouth now. Just learn from the mistakes we've made. It really stinks I've had the seniors go out this way. I looked up to a bunch of those guys. I will miss them dearly, but we'll have some guys stepping up next year. It hurts right now. You know, hopefully it gives us some motivation going into the off season.

Q Bo, when the mistakes were piling up like they were in the second half, is there anything you can do as a coach? Are you relying on your veterans to try to turn the tide? What has to change to get back on track when things aren't going your way like that?

COACH PELINI: Execute. You can't do it for them. I mean, I guess I don't know what you're saying. What do you mean what can you do? Take a magic wand or something? No, I mean, no, you just -- you got to talk to them on the side line. You tell them to, you know, relax and get focused and hope they go out and execute.

Q Could you sense it or am I making too big of a deal? Were the players down at all at that moment, I see Rex shaking his head.

COACH PELINI: We were right there in the game. They were right there. Up until, you know, even at 23:13, you're right there, especially at 16:13. You're right there to win the game. I'll say it straight out. Our football treatment feels we are better even after the game, feels we were a better football team than them. You have to earn it. It's a humbling game. You give them credit. They made plays, and I give all the credit to South Carolina, and you know, we're pretty good team too, but we just didn't execute in the times we needed to do it, and we made enough mistakes that we were our own worst enemy a lot of times, and you can't win football games like that.

MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.
