



2012 Capital One Bowl Postgame Quotes

Nebraska vs. South Carolina

Jan. 2, 2012

Orlando, Florida

COACH SPURRIER: Wonderful win. We are proud of this team we got. Bunch of guys, we didn't play all that great at times and Nebraska didn't play that great either, but we made some good stops here and there, and our defense to shut them out 3-quarters. We got something going offensively. They were tough. They played extremely hard, but the fourth quarter, we won the fourth quarter today against them and had a couple touch downs and our defense was sensational. Great win for all Gamecocks. We're a happy bunch of guys. Like I told the guys, next year's team, they'll try to win 12 because 11 already happened. So we'll have some new goals next year. Connor had a super game running and throwing and so forth, and he's going to get better. He's going to get the ball out of his quicker. Right, Connor?

CONNOR SHAW: Right, sir.

COACH SPURRIER: Questions?

MODERATOR: Once again, if you wait for a microphone, and we'll open it up to Q and A.

Q Coach, I think these players will be expecting some rings. What kind of motivation was it for those guys?

COACH SPURRIER: I don't know how much motivation it was. We try not to talk about that. 11 wins we said, hey, if we are fortunate enough to beat these guys, we'll get rings for you guys. We saved 350 bucks out of their allotment from the Bowl so they can get rings. It will have big 'ole 11 on them, and it is neat this group of seniors to say, hey, I played on the best team ever from South Carolina. The record speaks for itself as the best team ever.

Q Connor, it seemed like Nebraska was dropping seven back on every play. Did that throw you out of your rhythm early? It seemed like you were having trouble picking up an open receiver?

CONNOR SHAW: It's a little bit of that, but I had to get the ball out of my hand like Coach said. Alshon had a spar force in the first half, and we carried on the second half and had a much better third and fourth quarter.

Q Coach, the sequence of events at the second quarter turned out to be big.

COACH SPURRIER: It did. It really did. We got the ball back with what, 37 seconds I think, and hit a couple passes, got where we were at mid field -- how far was that pass to Alshon? Fifty-one, that's close

to mid field, and you know, we put three out there and throw it up in the air and Connor made the play because they knew he was rolling out to the wide field. Everybody does it, so we did the same thing, told somebody to pull him up and tried to make sure the guy didn't throw the ball. If he didn't get a chance to throw it, obviously he can't hit it. Connor rolled out and dodged one or two guys and stumbled, and next thing I knew he got his feet and got a good throw on it, I don't know if the wind carried it right beyond one of their guys or what, I looked up and saw Alshon pluck it out of the air and then I think I he made an excellent dive into the end zone to go 3 or 4 yards. It obviously was a big play and got 16 to 13 and then they had the drive at the start of the second half and got no points down on the 8-yard line and they messed up and we threw them for some sacks, and they had a lot of penalties, very unlike Nebraska teams to have as many jumps and offsides as they had, but that was good for us, and then they missed the field goal and after that our defense really stymied them the rest of the day.

Q Steve, you mentioned winning the fourth quarter. How key was Kenny Miles for the plays he made in the fourth quarter?

COACH SPURRIER: Kenny had a good game, not a bunch of yards, had enough, 15 carries, 68 which was great Connor you ran 15 times, that's too many but the last one got to give Coach Elliot credit getting the unbalanced formation, third and sixth hopefully they'll be playing for the pass. And we told the receivers to run everybody out, and sure enough we got blocking out there, Buster, Anderson and I think our tight end Justice and Buster -- I don't know why that slipped my mind -- but they made good blocks, and Conner made it 20, 25 yards that really sealed the game and so forth, but the guys played hard. I know it wasn't a real pretty game. Somehow we ended up with 30 points for only 350 yards and not scoring on the 1 yard line one time. I think that's the first time all year we failed to score on the 1 yard line, but as it turned out, it did not cost us.

Q Steve, they scored in their first two possessions; how concerned were you at that point? What adjustments did you guys end up making to slow them down?

COACH SPURRIER: I thought we got to score with them if it's going to be one of these kind games but our defense I think we kept playing the same stuff, Coach Ward will have to tell you if we did anything different. The guys were in possession and played better, and we had some minus plays by Nebraska. That helped. They had penalties and sacks. And when you have a bunch of mine us plays, it's hard to go anywhere, and it was hopeful for us certainly, but it maybe caused our guys we were moving around a bit and they were trying to change plays and that stuff and their guys jumped quite a bit.

Q Connor, can you just talk about your season, you started as the starter and backup for the while and then you ended up in the starting quarterback in the game that made school history, sum up your season if you can.

CONNOR SHAW: It was special team effort today. Proud of our team, we had adversity. It is good to finish on a positive note in the 11thwin.

Q Steve, the kicking game had some issues today with the kickers and punters. Was there anything with the football, or did you guys have an off game?

COACH SPURRIER: Where do you live? Seriously.

Q South Carolina.

COACH SPURRIER: We've had issues with kicking game all year.

Q Coach Butler --

COACH SPURRIER: Coach Butler, the ball doesn't have enough area. Every time our punter shanks -- generally he's a great kid and does the best he can. You never see me yell at the punter when he kicks one of those 25-yarders. He does it in practice too. It is what it is. And when Jay kicked that one out of bounds, Jay what are you doing? I asked Coach Butler what is he doing, and he's demonstrating to Jay you're supposed to drive the ball, and I -- I said Coach Butler, do you realize you're on television right now acting like an idiot trying to demonstrate how to kick the ball?

Anyway, we've had issues all year, and I'm always worried some field game, field position will kill us, and the first half, they had the field position, but we hung in there and held them from a lot of points, and after that we were a little bit better. But we've had issues with that all year. Hopefully we can get better.

Q Connor, is there anything you can take from this game you can take to the next season?

A The momentum going into the next season after a big win, huge for our fans and program. Carry it into the off season and workouts.

COACH SPURRIER: One thing you got to worry about also you don't celebrate too long. We'll celebrate a little bit like you should and maybe by spring practice time we'll regroup and start to get next year's team ready to go. But according to the replay, Alshon, you didn't slug at that guy, did you?

ALSHON JEFFERY: No, sir.

COACH SPURRIER: He said you gave him a push. He's never swung at a guy since he's been here. I told that referee, that doesn't sound like him. You told the guy that called it he needs to be right. I may get in trouble. we'll have to wait to see the replay. Everybody will get a chance to see the replay.

Q This is for Alshon and Connor, if you can give your viewpoint of that play at the end of the first half, the scoring 51-yard play, and also what does it mean for you guys to see this program evolve under Coach Spurrier with an 11-game winning team?

ALSHON JEFFERY: We practice all the time. normally I tip it to someone. Coach Spurrier tell me if I got a chance to catch it, catch it and score, that's what I did. For the season, Coach Spurrier in the beginning six season and in camp he wrote the goals try to win 11 games and try to do things we did for the first time, so that's what we tried to do.

CONNOR SHAW: On the play before half, my job is to go on the edge and loft it up so our receivers can make a play, and that's what he did. He made had heck of job catching it, and going in the ends, that's why we come to South Carolina. There is a lot of first things to do here, and that's what we did this seasoning.

Q Steve, what does it say about this team for them to be able to have the 11-win year despite all the adversity earlier in the year?

COACH SPURRIER: Well, Marcus got hurt, that was -- that hurt us a little there, but Kenny Miles and Brandon Miles, Brandon had three big games this year, little sluggish, so Kenny played most of it, but Marcus should be full go next year, surgery coming along, and he should be ready to go. But when the guy gets hurt and something happens you plug in the next guy and go there. Connor was ready when his chance came. We knew that, so it wasn't like, hey, we're in trouble, we never were in a lot of trouble because we have a defense that can play. We got receivers, quarterbacks, we got ball players, so you keep playing the game and fortunately we won a bunch of close games, and today was a close game until about the fourth quarter there, so it was neat.

I will tell you it's neat for South Carolina to beat Nebraska in the fourth quarter, that says something we're different than maybe year's past and finish in the top ten and all that kind of stuff and have a defense that I think was fourth in the nation coming into this, gee, if you got a bunch of guys playing like that, you can win against anybody. Got a lot of them coming back and we're going to try to have a big year next year.

Q Connor, on that first drive in the fourth quarter were you guys able to go up ten points in the third down and team pass to Ace. Could you talk about that was a huge play in the game what you saw on that play and how big Ace was in terms of making those types of plays after Alshon left the game?

CONNOR SHAW: He was able to line up with the defensive back, and coaches did a good job callings the play and our offense line did a good job blocking, and I was able to throw it to him, and he made a great catch.

Q Alshon, have you ever been MVP and ejected in the same game, and just your feelings looking back on it?

ALSHON JEFFERY: Getting ejected that is something that happened in the moment. I've never been MVP. It's great to be voted MVP. It's great.

Q Coach Spurrier, you've had a lot of -- I saw you engaging with the fans and whatnot after the game, you did that quite a bit at Florida during your days there, do you find the college experience has been compared to other places you've coached more rewarding because you seem to be a college guy, if you will?

COACH SPURRIER: It is a team effort. It is a team effort. We're not much of a football team if we don't have 80,000 -- 83,000 Williams Price and about 20, 25,000 come down here, I mean, it's a team effort, and they're a big part of the big team, just like university officials, faculty, students, it's all part of it, so we try to include them, and they do their part, the band, the cheerleaders, all of them, and they're part of the big team, if you go downtown Orlando tonight, I imagine our Gamecock students will be smiling a lot more than those Nebraska students or cheerleaders or whoever, that's why the game is so important, it's important to so many people. It really is, and it's neat to win so many games this year for the Gamecock fans that have paid their dues like I said when I took the job and they have been so many of these bowl games and finally this year, we lost our last three finally this year they're going to be smiling driving back to Columbia or driving or wherever they're going and they'll be smiling tonight and I'll be smiling out there with them somewhere.

Q Coach, could you comment on how the offensive line plays? Were you all surprised with the changes how well they played?

COACH SPURRIER: Is that for me? Yeah, Kyle played pretty well in there, and I think about all of them went the distance, A.J. Cann, T.J. and Rokevious, Rokevious had a good game down on the goal line and Coach Elliot, Shawn Elliot called a bunch of those plays fourth down. He told Rokevious, you make sure you knock this guy backwards, and we'll make this thing, so I think Connor and our running backs we made a couple of those fourth downs over him and he also called the sweep play I think I mentioned earlier Coach Elliot said, just tell them to run with it they'll back up and maybe he will takeoff, and sure enough it happened pretty well like that.

MODERATOR: We have time for two more.

Q Connor, can you talk about what it's like to have a target like Alshon out on the field that you know will make a play and what changes and how you adjust when you lose him?

CONNOR SHAW: He had a great first half, and my job is to get the ball near him, I know he'll catch it. It's always good to have him out there. It was unfortunate in the second half, but that's the way the game goes sometimes.

Q This is for Steve and Alshon.

Coach, do you think -- you watched Alshon catch his last pass for the game, and Alshon was the last reception for the game, Cox for the second half?

COACH SPURRIER: I said it many, many times if we think our guys are first-round picks, they should go. And if they're not, they can improve their status for another year, we hope they will stay and play. It is up to Alshon and not up to me, and I think he'll do some diligent research and make smart decisions. Right, Alshon?

ALSHON JEFFERY: Yes, sir. I feel like coach said, we will sit down and talk about it. And my family will talk about it, but we will try to make the best decision.