

Auburn Head Coach Gus Malzahn Comments
Auburn vs. Alabama
November 28, 2015

Opening Statement...

“First of all, our kids fought their guts out. I really appreciate their effort. Our fans were unbelievable. They helped us get to the fourth quarter, and they were there the whole time for us. We had opportunities in the fourth quarter. We talked all week about getting in the game and into the fourth quarter, and finding a way to win. We were right there and just didn’t make the plays to win the game, and they did. That’s a good football team. Things that really stand out to me offensively is that we were 3 for 15 on third downs. You aren’t going to beat many people at all when you are 3 for 15 on third downs. We had trouble running the football. They would have extra guys down and make us throw the ball on first and 10. We had a hard time at times throwing and catching the football in the passing game. Defensively, their running back is a very good player. Their offensive line is solid. They are a good team and when you play a good team you have to play well. We didn’t make the plays at the end. But I do appreciate our players’ effort and toughness. Like I said, they fought their guts out.”

On first half vs. second half carries...

“They put an extra guy down on first down. They dared us to throw it. Early on, when they did that, we got some yards. We had some trouble in the second half. That was really the biggest difference”

On changing the running game from previous years....

“It had something to do with it on first down. Like I said, when they roll an extra guy down, they have one extra guy you can’t block. That has a lot to do with it.”

On running the ball on third and three...

“We had the look we wanted. It was a similar look to last year when

we over threw one of the receivers. We thought we had a chance to score a touchdown, and didn't make the play. I don't feel bad about that. I feel like that was the right call, but we just didn't execute."

On the late hit call...

"It was close. It was right there on the edge. Their quarterback is a really good runner. I can't fault our guys. They gave a great effort."

On Alabama's momentum from the late hit...

"It was one of the key moments. I think they kicked a field goal right there and went up by two scores.

On Jason Smith's catch...

"We ran a similar play early on and we saw that he came open. I think we got a little pressure so we came back to it and talked about him running it down the middle of the field. He made a really great play and had great concentration on it."

On improvements after this game...

"Right now, we are hurting over this game. Offensively we need to get better. I know that, and we will.

On if he had thought about going for it on fourth and one in the third quarter...

"I thought about it, but we pinned them down right there inside the twenty and I felt like that was the right thing to do. They did put a drive together, but I felt like that was the right thing to do."

On the game turning into a game of field goals...

"Both teams were kicking field goals in the first half and we were down six so I felt pretty good. We missed an opportunity down near the end zone on a third-down and three and I think we missed a field goal. We were in a good spot and like I said, our goal was to get the game to the fourth quarter and find a way to win. We did that, we just were able to make the plays when we needed to."

On what made the offense a disappointment...

"It's a number of things."

On if it was unexpected...

"Yeah, we just haven't played consistently well on offense."

On if there was a chance Sean White could play...

"No. We decided we were going to go with Jeremy (Johnson). Sean isn't healthy and Jeremy had a good week of practice. Jeremy fought hard and he competed."

On what he thought about the defense against the run...

"I thought the defense did a good job. Like I said, they have a very good running game and he is a very talented young man."

On if there was a specific game plan defensively...

"I thought we had a good plan. Our plan was to try to keep away from the big plays and we did that for the most part."

On staff changes...

"I am not talking about any staff changes. I am talking about the fact that we are disappointed. We are disappointed that we didn't find a way to win at the end and that's what we are thinking about right now."

On how he views this 6-6 season...

"We finished 6-and-6 and we are going to a bowl. We have to get better and we are going to get better. That's how I view it."

On losing five straight SEC home games...

"We have got to correct it and we will correct it."

On what the team has to do to improve...

"There are a lot of different things in my mind that we have to work

on to get better and we will. This was our last regular season game and we will get a plan and get better. I guarantee that.”

Auburn Player Quotes vs. Alabama November 28, 2015

Defensive Back Stephen Roberts

On getting opportunity to start against Alabama...

“I’m very happy and very blessed to have the opportunity to be in a great game. It’s one of the biggest games ever, the Iron Bowl, it felt really good.”

On whether or not this was one of defense’s better performances...

“I think it was from a defensive standpoint. We had a great game plan that we executed really well for the most part. We just couldn’t pull through at the end. That just comes from getting better and working hard.”

Defensive Back Jonathan Jones

On the team getting better...

“I think we’re headed the right way, especially defensively. We’ve been getting better throughout the season, and hopefully the young guys take it over next year and keep it moving.”

On the defense’s better play...

“The defense has gotten better and the numbers speak for themselves. If you watch the game you can tell that we’ve gotten better as a unit throughout the season.”

Defensive Back Blake Countess

On Jake Coker surprising the defense with his speed...

“I don’t think it was surprising at all. We knew he was mobile. He’s a big guy and great things happen when you extend plays. When you get those opportunities to get him down you have to get him down. That’s on us as a defense. We have to make those plays.”

On his near interception...

“That’s one of those plays. I had to make that play and I didn’t and that’s on me. There are a few other plays, five to seven plays within the game that can change the game. That was one of those plays. That’s on me”

On Alabama running back Derrick Henry...

“That was our plan, to stop him, and he had a day. He’s a great back. I don’t think we did a good enough job, obviously, because he had 280 yards or whatever it was (271).”

On experiencing the Iron Bowl...

“It’s definitely a big rivalry. You could feel it. The atmosphere was great. I will never forget this.”

Kicker Daniel Carlson

On his performance...

“I missed one so that’s tough. I had a good streak going but it happens. Luckily it wasn’t the outcome of the game, but their kicker (Adam Griffith) does a great job too so definitely props to him. There were a few things I should’ve corrected. I have got to work on it and get ready for a bowl game now.”

On all the field goals in the first half...

“I was surprised with that. Both defenses were playing really well, making stops so we just need to capitalize on the field goals that we could. Unfortunately I missed one, but like I said it happens. We all will just come back and get ready for a bowl

game.”

On his missed field goal attempt...

“I expect a lot out of myself and it’s tough. Like I said, we will continue to move forward from here.”

Wide Receiver Ricardo Louis

On the offense...

“We’ve been inconsistent all year. That’s the main thing. Every part, especially on offense, we just haven’t been consistent.”

On Jason Smith’s catch and his catch against Georgia in 2013...

“As soon as it happened I was thinking about it. Everybody was like ‘Oh! Ricardo Louis 2.0!’ He just made a good play. I think his was probably better than mine. You know great focus. He did a good job of just reeling it in for the touchdown.”

Wide Receiver Jason Smith

On his catch...

“Coach put me in a position to make a play. He said just believe in us and we’re going to believe in you. All I had to do was keep facing and looking down there.”

On his concentration during the catch...

“Coach (Dameyune) Craig told me before the game ‘You’re going to make a play. Just stay focused and keep your head in the game. You might make a mistake, but stay focused.’”

On the catch in comparison to Ricardo Louis’ catch...

“As I was running I was like, ‘man no way.’ I couldn’t hear anything at first, until I got into the end zone. That was going through my mind.”

On the offense coming up short...

“Our coaches are the greatest coaches in college football, I think.”

Coach Malzahn has a good system and he says to us 'Believe in us and we'll believe in you.' We just did what we could and we played against a good team. They just came in and played a good game."

Quarterback Jeremy Johnson

On tonight's performance...

"We worked hard enough to win this game. We just didn't make the plays we needed to make. It wasn't a rhythm or a timing problem. We just didn't make the plays we need to make. They had a great defense. I have to give them credit. We just have to make plays from now on. We gave it our all. Unfortunately, we came up short. We fought to the end as a team. This team fought hard this game. All we can do now is get this next win for our seniors. "

On the tip pass to Jason Smith...

"Scoring that touchdown made us feel like we still had a chance. We just kept repeating that if we could keep it close in the fourth quarter, we could have a chance to win. They just stopped us. We didn't make the plays we need to make. "

On lessons learned from the season...

"Just continue to work hard, get tougher and keep fighting. I learned a lot about my character. I just leave everything in God's hands. It's life. I have to get myself ready for life. Going through what I went through this year, I feel like I am mentally ready for whatever comes my way."

On the upcoming bowl game...

"We are really trying to get our stride. We are really trying to get that bowl game win for the seniors; Send them out on a good note and get some momentum going for next year. A win in the bowl game is very important. I want to send the seniors out on a good note because they deserve it."

Linebacker Tré Williams

On tonight's game performance...

"I'm happy coach gave me the opportunity tonight. I took care of the opportunity. We tried to get the win. We tried to make the plays that we needed. Unfortunately, it ended in a loss."

On defense's overall performance...

"It really shows that we are really improving. Like I said last time, we really bought into Coach Muschamp and everything he says. This game we really had to lock in on everything. It's the rivalry game. He (Muschamp) harped on it a lot. We just had to come out and play."

On defensive game mistakes...

"I genuinely tried to make those plays. We came into the game thinking somebody is going to make that play. It just didn't happen today."

On performance against Derrick Henry...

"We played our game. We filled in the gaps and when we had a chance to we hit him. He is really a good player."