



## AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP POSTGAME PRESS CONFERENCE QUOTES

**UCF 62, MEMPHIS 55**  
Saturday, December 2, 2017  
Spectrum Stadium; Orlando, Florida

### UCF HEAD COACH SCOTT FROST

#### Opening Statement

"I don't have words to put it...if I can find the words. First thing, Memphis is a really good football team. They are well coached...their quarterback and that receiver are special. They're the second highest scoring offense in the country for a reason. We are the highest for a reason, and my hat is off to them. It's a shame anyone had to lose that game. I said it before what these guys have done is not just improbable; it's impossible in two years to get where they are and it's a special group."

#### On McKenzie Milton, Tre'Quan Smith, Shaquem Griffin, Tre Neal:

"Kenzie...we had to go get him from Hawaii. I can't believe how much he's grown up, since he's been here. He's like a son or little brother to me.

"Tre'Quan was a great player before I got here and we're just using him. He's got a lot of good football ahead of him. He's one of the best team mates I've ever seen. Some of the things he does in practice to sacrifice and get better for the team I'll be a fan of his as long as he's playing, and I think it will be a long time.

"Eighteen over there has some of the most courage and the biggest heart I've ever seen. He's going to make a lot of money playing this game, I can't wait to watch him. Tre, Nice catch. He is one of several guys that we thought the defense might take a step back this year after losing a bunch of other guys. I want guys like him on his watch. These guys are special to me."

#### Coach Frost on the last two weeks:

"I think I said the same things over and over, so I apologize. This has hard, because these guys; they've been playing at a little bit of a disadvantage. We had that hurricane and we didn't get to play Georgia Tech. I have a lot of respect for that program and these guys would have liked to play that game, but it wasn't the right decision. We basically had a 17-day stretch where we didn't play a football game and we had to come back out and play again against a really good team. Then, we played 12 straight weeks and even that last game, not this one, but the one before, we had an away game and had to come back and get ready in six days. That's hard. There's a reason a team doesn't go undefeated. It is reasons like that, we are tired. It's hard to be at your best every week. These guys just keep answering the bell."

#### Coach Frost on his team:

"It's unbelievable the spirit and the heart they have. Me having meetings with all these guys when I got here, and you know Shaquem [Griffin]. I remember talking to him and I asked him it was a rough year last year, but what should the record have been. He talks real fast and he said we should have won seven, eight or nine games, man. Most of this really has to do with the spirit that these guys have. They believed even when it wasn't working. All we did was show them a reason to believe more. What these guys have done is special."

#### On halftime adjustments

"Listen, the only the only time we got stopped the first half, we stopped ourselves. We fumbled and this kid hasn't made any bad decisions all year. So, he's probably due for one and their kids made plays and I was a little worried the same thing was happening in reverse from the first game; that we were getting down there and turning it over in the red zone. That's how we won the last game.

"This team is resilient and we've been through lighting delays, and hurricanes, and missed games...12-straight weeks of games. These guys have answered the call and risen to the challenge every time when they have had the opportunity to and came back out and put some points up and it was enough."

#### On if he has coached his final game at UCF:

"I'm going to talk to the team first. The hard thing about all this is, they should give me time after the season to make decisions and they don't. These things happen at the wrong time. The one thing I wasn't going to do is sacrifice my commitment to this team. I've made game plans I've been coaching and doing the best that I can for these guys then decisions land on you and they're hard decisions. I love this community, I love UCF, I love Orlando and no matter what I do I'm probably going to retire here. I don't think I'm going to sell houses or anything if I leave. This university, Dr. Hitt, Danny White, UCF, Orlando; just an unbelievable place with unbelievable potential and you're seeing it this year with these guys. This place has given me more than I've given this place."

#### On what was it like to hoist the trophy, your emotions there?

"Yeah I will remember that for a long time, I couldn't see anything because of the confetti but that's not my trophy, that's their trophy. It's a proud moment for me, but I wanted to get that trophy in these guys hands as fast as I could."

#### On if he has told the team about his future:

"No, I haven't talked to them yet and I will."

**DEFENSIVE BACK TRE NEAL****On the final play**

"We were in man coverage and just tried to pressure them and my dude blocked so I just zoned off and I saw the ball come to me, so I just jumped and grabbed it. I mean nothing really else to it. Those guys got to the quarterback and made him panic and I just had to execute like I could."

**QUARTERBACK MCKENZIE MILTON****On halftime adjustments**

"Yeah, kind of like coach said, we kind of got a little slumped there towards the end of the half. We had solid drives going. I think [Dredrick] Snelson fumbled once, and I threw two picks in the red zone. You know, red zone turn overs can be a killer in games like this sometimes. We were able to weather the storm. We came out guns blazing in the second half. There was one play that got a little greedy, but it is what it is. The defense picked us up; and we were able to get the win, so I'm grateful for that."

**LINEBACKER SHAQUEM GRIFFIN**

"Being able to play. It's kind of cool to be able to play football again. I mean, all jokes aside, it's amazing when you have teammates like ours and coaches like ours. They put you in this situation where you can't give up no matter what. You need to do good for yourself and be the best person that you can be. I'm just grateful and I'm so thankful for everything that came our way. I'm so thankful to have guys like this. I mean...I love them with all my heart. There's nothing that I could say or do. I would not change this for nothing in the world. I'm just enjoying it. It finally hit me. I've been asked questions, 'has it hit you yet about being undefeated; has it hit you yet that you're on this team'. I think it hit me today, when we won that game, I just let it all go and the opportunity felt amazing."

**On his conversation with his mom:**

"I mean I usually do that every game. That gives me a time to actually get with my family for the game. I mean...when my brother was here that's all we did. We talk while playing, but he's not here for me to do that, so before the game I always talk to my mom and family and say a prayer before each game. I think that's the good luck charm for me. To be able to still get that prayer with my family and still have that person that's going to be with me every single step of the way, from home games to away games, just being there together."

**WIDE RECEIVER TRE'QUAN SMITH**

"From my perspective it means a lot because I get to go out there and play one more game with my brothers. The team is never going to be the same as this year. We just have to advantage and play with the people we love one more time. I'm thankful for the opportunity that we get to play one more game before everyone separates and goes on their different ways."

## **MEMPHIS HEAD COACH MIKE NORVELL**

### **Opening Statement:**

"Congratulations to UCF, and this incredible group of young men they have. It was a wonderful battle back and forth, two great football teams. We expected it to be a 60-minute battle, but it went just a little bit longer than that. So proud of our team. They showed the heart they have and displayed all year long. We were down early, came back. You had so many emotional swings throughout that game. To come back at the end - you were down 14 points in the fourth quarter - to be able to tie it up to go into overtime. We had a couple missed opportunities - things that you can't have when you're playing a great team. You turn the ball over a few times. We didn't score in the red zone, a couple missed kicks. Different things that show up that, when you come down to one score game, it's tough. But I love our football team; I love the young men that are sitting in that room. They're hurting. It's a hard time whenever you put so much into a game, and into a season, to come up just a little short. We've got a great season, and we've had a great run to represent the West Division. To play a team that is to the quality and caliber of (UCF). We're honored to be able to play in this game. I wish we were able to make a couple more plays to end up on the right side of it. It was a wonderful game to be a part of.

### **On defensive play early in the game...**

"The situations there towards the end of each half, we had some critical stops and we were able to get a couple of takeaways. Those are those plays to allow us to put ourselves a good position. When you're down 14 in the fourth quarter, you got to make sure that you get some stops. Our defense came up big. We had the chance to move the ball there late, we got down into field goal range and had a critical penalty. Penalties hurt us today. We had 14 penalties, which we can't have. It really showed up big in some critical times. We have the two top offenses in the country; that's what you saw today and both did not disappoint in how they played. Both defenses came up with critical stops at critical moments. It was an impressive battle. I'm proud of our guys. Defensively, we lost a couple safeties there at the end of the first half. John Cook and Josh Perry both went out, so we had to try and adapt and adjust a little bit. Our guys played their hearts out, and I'm really proud of them.

### **On holding UCF to three points in the fourth quarter...**

"It's what this football team has done all year. They've responded when it was necessary. We went down and we missed opportunity were in the red zone, having a negative play that put us in a long field goal range. We missed the field goal, and they were able to go down and get points. We knew we needed a stop. Our guys rose to the challenge and they were able to go down and get a big touchdown from our guy Tony Pollard. We got it to a one score game. Those guys just keep playing and just shows the heart and character that they have. We've pushed all year long for this opportunity. We've got a phenomenal group of young men. That heart is what showed up. They're a resilient group and they made a lot of good plays today."

### **On WR Sean Dykes performance today...**

"I thought Sean did a nice job today. We got some play action shots to him and he made the most of his opportunity with 161 yards receiving, which was big for us. If you look at (UCF), they're dynamic at corner. It's a great challenge to be able to throw and run it, but we were able to get some good matchups. I thought Sean showed up really well. He's had a really good season. It's good to see that progression as the season goes and that confidence that he was displaying."

### **On the game being an emotional rollercoaster...**

"If you're not emotional about that then check the pulse, because this football team is incredible. They put so much into it and we knew it was no secret that this was going to be a one-possession game. This was going to be something we had to play really well to actually beat them, and we battled. You see the swings and we didn't get the start we wanted. We tried to be very aggressive. We were down 10 and we responded by taking the lead at halftime. They had a great third quarter. Our guys responded once again, getting it into overtime. At the end of the day, they were able to make one more play than we did. What a game."

### **On what this game means for Memphis Football...**

"I think it's showing the progression. When I took the job a couple years ago, the culture had changed. We had to show that we had to maintain and continue to build. I think about this football team and the young men that have come in. We've got a great group of seniors; it's the winningest group of seniors to ever come through our program. They played at an exceptionally high level. We've had 13 guys that have come in during that two-year period of time that have become starters for us. That group has come together cohesively and played at such a high level. Whenever you have change there is a lot of uncertainty. The young man sitting to my left, he came in and replaced a first round draft pick quarterback and has come in and continued the tradition of what Memphis Football is all about. That's what makes me so proud. You see the passion, the energy, and the resiliency that our football team shows that. We take pride in that. We take pride in who we represent - that great community there in Memphis that supports our program. Even though we didn't end up on the winning side of it, you saw the impression of where we're going."

### **On the injuries Memphis suffered during the game...**

"We had a couple injuries. Josh Perry and John Cook both went down so we actually had to move another corner to safety. We had to make adjustments because it's a position we are thin at. We have a bunch of freshmen that are playing there, but at the end of the day, our guys went out there and continued to compete. We have two true freshmen corners - one of them got thrown in at safety. We got Tito, who is a newcomer for us. Just to see all those guys out there playing and giving everything they had for this football team was special for me to see, but that was a special group we played against."

### **On how the offensive game plan changed from last time Memphis played UCF...**

"We knew we had to have some balance. We had the time of possession, we had the play count, and we were able to keep UCF limited for most of the game. Obviously going into overtime, they got a couple more snaps. Our guys knew we had to have balance. We couldn't get into a drop back game because they have some talented pass rushers, and that showed up there late. I was really proud of the o-line because that's a defense that has played extremely well all year long. The only two offenses that have had any success against them were South Florida with their great quarterback last week and what our guys did today. It was great to see, but I wish we had a couple more."

### **On Riley Ferguson and Anthony Miller's performances...**

"Incredible. Two warriors. They are two of the best young men I've ever been around. The way they prepare during the week; you see a lot of great plays they make on the field, but what they do Sunday to Friday to prepare themselves at a high level. Two fine young men. As good of players as they are and the performances they've had; they are better people. They're going to have extremely bright careers when they're finished with this season, but they're going to be wonderful representatives of our program and what we stand for."

## **MEMPHIS QB RILEY FERGUSON**

### **On Memphis's attitude while down for 34 minutes...**

"Nobody on the sideline was panicking at all. We've been in this situation. Coach tells all the time we've literally seen every situation you could possibly be in. We were down 14 and we weren't really worried about it. We knew we had to go score quick, and that's what we did. Our defense came out and got another stop for us and we went out and scored again."

**On where he derives his confidence on the field from...**

"It just comes from practice and repetition. Every day at practice, we go out and compete against everyone who we're going against, and if that means us staying after practice and getting a couple throws, then that's what it's going to take. That's what we've done since I've been here."

**On what the final couple plays were like...**

"On fourth down, we threw the out route. That was just a man throw; we knew we had Anthony (Miller) wide open and we got the completion with the great catch by him. On the last play, I followed my reads when the safety came down but I guess the linebacker dropped out and picked it off. It was a great play by him."

**On if it hurts because they were so close...**

"Of course it hurts. We went out there and gave it our all. We left it all on the field and it hurts. If it doesn't hurt then, like Coach said, you need to check yourself because you shouldn't be playing football."

**On Anthony Miller's performance and role on the team...**

"Man, he's everything. He gets us going; he's one of the best players on our team, but he's also one of the hardest workers on our team so everybody respects him. People can look up to him and he carves the way for everybody. We just follow him and all the other seniors try to do the same thing as well."

#AmericanPow6r#