

# Nebraska vs. Illinois (Oct. 1, 2016)

## Illinois Head Coach Lovie Smith Postgame Quotes

### **Opening statement**

"We were pretty excited about going on the road and playing our first Big Ten road game. We knew this was a hostile environment to play in. I am proud of the way our team lost today, we got better as a football team. It's about wins, 'W' or 'L', at the end. We know we still have a loss but we made improvements in a lot of different areas. We played a lot of different guys. When you're coming off a bye week, you look at a few more different combinations, which we did. Offensively, we looked at different guys at the running back position, thought they did a good job and gave us something different. Both of them - Kendrick Foster and Reggie Corbin, also. We hung in there throughout. We led most of the game but it is about finishing strong, and we didn't do that. Defensively, we knew coming in that this was a productive offense, great quarterback and again our guys fought throughout. (I was) just not pleased the way we finished the football game. We were plus-two in the turnover ratio, that's a good thing but you have to be able to get them down and get our steal. But we were one score away from tying the game so that is a bad taste in our mouth.

"Carroll Phillips went down with a knee injury, don't know the extent of the injury but whenever you can't finish a game of course there is concern. It's another loss we realize that, so we will bounce back and get ready to play next week."

### **On the decision to punt on fourth down late in the game**

"There were three minutes left to go in the game with three timeouts. You stop them and get the ball back with over two minutes left to go and the clock stops every first down so there was no decision with that to make that call. A part of that was getting them stopped though."

### **On if he was worried the defense was tired when he decided to punt**

"I wouldn't have done that if I was worried about that. I thought that gave us the best chance to win under those circumstances."

### **On the feeling after this game**

"Well the feeling is that we played better. In the end it's OK if you win or if you lose and we lost. But where we are in our program, we wanted to see improvement. We put a better product on the football field today, simple as that. Not for 60 minutes though, that is the disappointing part."

### **On how the team did**

"I think as a football team we did OK. I have to watch the video. But we protected the football, it was good ball security on that side of the football. Our running game did some good things at times. Not good enough to win though."

### **On settling for field goals**

"There is nothing else to say besides that. We had plays to score touchdowns. When you settle for field goals especially on the road it hurts you later on. We had opportunities down there. We have to have more production. We had a 1st-and-4 one time and had a field goal, we just have to convert and get touchdowns. It's as simple as that."

### **On if the officials explained the spot in the fourth quarter that gave Nebraska a first down following a fourth-down play**

"They always explain. This is where we think the ball is. Again, the spots and calls don't affect the outcome of the game. We need to not let them get down there in that position. Going back to that long drive we had plenty of opportunities to get off that football field. Somebody has got to step up and make that play."