

Nebraska vs. Maryland (Nov. 19, 2016)

Nebraska Head Coach Mike Riley Quotes

Opening Statement

"Hello. I appreciate you all being here. Well, we are glad to win. It was a little different kind of game than we are used to. We jumped out pretty hot early and got a nice lead, and I think it was a good game for us, except the second half got a little sloppy. But I am really proud of Ryker [Fyfe]. I thought he played with a lot of poise and made a lot of plays. I have always thought he was a good quarterback, I told you guys that many times. So when we needed him today, he was able to help this team get our ninth win of the year, which is also exciting. And then Spencer Lindsay stepped in. Drew [Brown] got hurt, so Spencer stepped in on senior day and it was fitting that he would get an opportunity and to do a good job on this day, it was pretty special. And then we had just a great weekend with Jack Johnson joining our team from Norfolk. Anyway, we are glad to win. A lot of good football today. Like I said, sometimes the games like that disintegrate a little bit in the second half, which it looked like to me. But I am still really proud of our team for the win and it puts us in position to still go after our 10th win."

On the timetable of senior quarterback Ryker Fyfe knowing he would play

"We were a little more worried where Tommy [Armstrong Jr.] would be earlier in the week than we were a week ago, frankly. We thought that a week ago with the concussion protocol you could at least kind of look forward and say 'If this goes like this, then he will be OK to play,' so we kind of went through that progression thinking that he might be able to play. This week with a hamstring, you can't do that. So we stretched it out and frankly I kept it kind of quiet for a day or two. I thought it might help us a hair if they had to not be sure if it was going to be Tommy [Armstrong Jr.] or Ryker [Fyfe], who are different styles of quarterbacks. So by Thursday it looked pretty much like Ryker [Fyfe] was going to play. We can still take a guy right out the Saturday morning though and see, but frankly the hamstring is hard to do that with because you don't know until you run and then when you run you might hurt yourself some more. So it is a tough one. We will see where he goes this week."

On if he enjoyed seeing senior quarterback Ryker Fyfe having success in the first half

"Really, really excited for him. And Dirk [Chatelain, Omaha World-Herald], I promise I am not surprised at all. The guy has some special qualities that are real important to quarterbacking. He has got a nice release, he has obviously got poise, he has got good vision, he put a lot of balls in nice location for guys to make some plays today. He missed a couple more by just a hair that could have been really exciting for the big picture. I am really proud of him. I think it is really difficult for a guy like that has moved up, has that confidence, and not get to the point where you are not getting to play much your senior year. I am thinking that he won't, and we won't, and Grand Island won't ever forget this game."

On the emotions of the seniors and how they played

"This group of seniors, I suppose everybody across the country on senior day says the same thing, but when you make a transition like this and you are fortunate enough to land with a group of guys like this. We are very, very thankful for that. My disappointment is that I only got to be around these guys for a couple of years and we will try to carry on with the rest of their group going forward and continue to make this better and better, but I don't think that we rebound from a year ago and be able to have a year like this without a really good bunch of older guys in the program. I believe that is true, so this group is pretty special. They are very close to one another and they have a lot of pride in their own teammates and frankly just plain old-fashioned friendships within this group. You can see it. So they are pretty close-knit. They had been bonded together through many different circumstances including one tragic one in the summertime. So that part will never be forgotten."

On the special teams

"The specialist part of it Caleb [Lightbourn] had a couple rough spots right away for whatever reason today. We didn't transition very well and then probably because of that we got a fake punt converted on us so there you have it."

On if Westerkamp's reaction to Senior Day was surprising

"No, it didn't. Emotional, loves it, engaged totally. Just getting to know Westy for a couple years, that did not surprise me. He cares a ton and he wears it on his sleeve which is pretty fun."

Is Ryker Fyfe's confident by nature?

"Yes, I would. There is not ever a cockiness about it, not anything you would say 'hey, tone it down a little bit,' but I don't think he ever doubted that he could do something like that."

On the seniors stepping up today

"I thought it's one of those things. I've seen it before where the change of the routine, the emotion of senior day is disruptive in the thought process of those guys. It gets them out of the rhythm that they have done for a long time playing in the game, just some pre-game type stuff. All the change, all the family, everything changes. They don't respond as well. This group seemed to take it up, all those guys that were seniors were really, really engaged and playing in the game, and it looked like we didn't have to worry about any of that today."

On going undefeated at home

"We're excited to do that. The fans here are the best in the world so to be able to play and win games in front of them is obviously a big goal of ours as a coaching staff and as a team, so it was great to be able to do that. We always appreciate their involvement because they're always a factor here, there's no doubt about it. That has to be pretty intimidating at different times, and it probably can feel pretty overwhelming. So we're all kind of in this together."

On facing Maryland's Max Bortenschlager at quarterback

"We were kind of going through all of the scenarios going in and our Coach Brian Stewart had just coached for them a few years ago, knew a little bit more about personnel background for them so I would have to say that no we weren't surprised. We didn't know how it was going to unfold but we were kind of talking about many different possible scenarios."

On the rush defense

"Probably the key in the game, that was probably their most impressive statistic out there that they had had the biggest impact with their team was their running offense and what we did in that part today. Gosh, if we don't give up that screen pass play we really have an unbelievably good statistical game defensively. It was good anyways, but it would've been unbelievable without that play."

On Tommy Armstrong's chances to play at Iowa

"I'm optimistic that we'll have Tommy back, but I'm not sure. I suppose on a short week we're going to have to find out as soon as we can and what that means. I'm guessing Ryker might get the early works still."

On starting place-kicker Drew Brown

"He got dinged a little bit. I shouldn't say a little bit. He got dinged. You know how those things are now, we'll go through a protocol, how he does so that's the only word I have."

On senior walk-on Tanner Zlab playing in his first career game

"He's on the books, forever more. As a matter of fact, we tried to make sure guys that were seniors that had been in the program and had not been in a game. We tried everything we could to make sure we got them all some minutes in the end and Tanner made a play. He'll be in the records for a tackle."

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