



ARKANSAS RAZORBACKS

1 National Championship (1964) • 4 SEC West Division Titles • 55 All-Americans • 43 All-SEC First Team Selections

Arkansas Football Quote Sheet

Arkansas 21, La Tech 20

Sept. 3, 2016 \\ Fayetteville, Ark. \\ DWRRS

BRET BIELEMA

Opening Statement:

I'll tell you what, I know everybody would have, including myself at the beginning of the day, would have liked to come out of here with a larger margin of victory, but first and foremost, LA Tech, I think coming into this game, I knew they were going to be a good football team, very well-coached, got a lot of good players.

Offensively I think that 5 and 1 and that quarterback came in and did a nice job. They got rid of the ball quickly. Couldn't get really a lot of pressure on the quarterback.

Defensively did a lot of really good things. They tackled very well on defense. Several times I thought we were going to kind of break one of those plays for a long run; didn't happen.

Special teams I thought was a push. We did some good things, they did some good things, created some field position at times, but overall we did enough things to have failure.

I don't know if my first three years here we would have won that football game, A, from the way I called it, to B, the way that we rallied there at the end and were able to pull it out. A lot of times we were in that same exact situation and came away with a defeat.

Tomorrow we'll have a huge learning opportunity for me as a head coach, all of our staff and all of our players. They'll take this as an opportunity to get a lot better, especially things that take away from us winning. That's the biggest thing. There were enough things, it's a huge self-destruction in the red zone, penalties in the red zone.

Austin Allen's numbers were fairly good except for obviously the two turnovers. Very first turnover, I think just trying to force something in on 3rd down, make something happen, but the second one had a route breakdown with one of our more experienced receivers and caused that situation to come about.

We've got to have our good players play well. We've got to have a consistent growth with our new players that are playing for the first time, and I really do like the way they responded in the second half, especially the fourth quarter defensively, and then offensively to have that thing pull out.

Injury-wise I don't really know a lot at this point. Obviously K-Rich, J-Red, Austin Cantrell, all those guys went out at different points during the course of the game. Have not got an update on that. Will hopefully tomorrow or Monday at the earliest.

Q. What happened at the start of the third quarter and the whole third quarter?

BRET BIELEMA: Yeah, I think the very first play, which was a negative play, they weren't playing -- the D-end wasn't playing that way in the first half and came back to it and he raced up the field and that caused it. I believe we had a breakdown of protection on the second play, and then 3rd down just obviously didn't execute the way we needed to.

Again, Toby did a nice job as the punt man, bailed us out of a little bit of a situation. We do have a very good punter that I think was a big play in the game today several times. And again, bad things happened; we didn't dwell on it, went out, and in the end they came through.



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Q. All of them were successful, but could you speak to those three, and then the run game, they held you to 106. What particularly was happening that maybe you didn't get the push you wanted?

BRET BIELEMA: I think at the end of the day, we'll probably look back at it and probably wish we had run it a little bit more, especially with the way we were running. I thought Rawleigh didn't have very many negative plays. He was a play away from breaking it. Kody came in and did some nice stuff, and I thought Devwah with those first leg in the fourth quarter probably should have ran it a little bit more, and we'll definitely look at that and analyze it as we look at it.

4th down, you really do make a 4th down call with the expectation to have success. One of the things we did, we made a purchase of an analytics package that is kind of new to college football. It started about three years ago. Coach Ash, who I hired, his son is involved with it, and something I really looked at during the out of season. Probably one of the more enjoyable off-seasons studies I've had, and it really takes you deep into 4th down, use of the clock, end-of-game scenarios, end of half, and I was even last night looking at it in my hotel, first thing this morning. It really made me look at when 4th down should be called in the game and why you would do it.

Obviously that last one there's no book on that last one, that was just a pure gut feel. I looked at my offensive line, they had great eyes. Dan felt really good about the call. Kody played fullback and had run that play several times in the past. Actually hadn't repped it all -- I don't know if we repped it one time up until the game time. I just had a feeling we were going to have a nice push. They were lining up in the defense we wanted to run it against, and obviously that sealed the game.

Q. What did you think of Austin's game overall for his first start? He had the picks, but he had that big touchdown pass.

BRET BIELEMA: He did. I think it was a classic probably first start. I really liked his preparation. We always meet with the quarterbacks, the last group we meet with, me and Dan, and then I held him in there afterwards. I've known Austin Allen as long as I've been in town. I met him I think two days after I got on the job and loved demeanor loved his approach. I think he's got a perfect quarterback mentality. I think he's got a demeanor that really allows a guy to get a little bit of frustration but still have success.

He threw the first 3rd down play was a pick, and to rebound from that and to play the way that he did and still have the numbers, he made a nice -- I'll tell you the best play of the day in my opinion, there were three different scenarios. The one was Austin stayed alive in the pocket, Elephant walked out of it, threw it to Keon, Keon made a nice play. Colton Jackson, nobody is even going to read about it, talk about it, made a saving tackle on that interception down the sideline. He flew out of there as fast as any man has run out of Conway to get out there and make that tackle.

And then I think just the perseverance of our offensive line to come together there at the end and give us a 1st down, two of them when we needed it to win the game, was big.

Q. I just wanted to ask you about the pass pro with that O-line. Looked like Tech was getting some pressure on you, hitting Austin a few times. Just what did you make of it overall?

BRET BIELEMA: Well, I think first, A, give a lot of credit to them. They were bringing pressures that we hadn't seen before, as you should do in an opener. Brought some guys off the edges we hadn't seen, we had to make adjustments. Did a really did a nice job offensively at halftime making that -- obviously we started off bad, but they brought some things that we hadn't seen, and we got that shored up.

I think the other thing is we forget Hjalte Froholdt is playing his first game at guard as an offensive player in his career. Played a little bit in high school, but to have him in there, to have Colton Jackson, to have Jake in there at right guard and just to have those guys in there play as well as they did, I think it's a positive step in the right direction.



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Q. What's happening on the kickoffs? Is it just bad technique to not get the ball that deep, or is it called that way?

BRET BIELEMA: Well, obviously he hit -- I think one out of his four were good hits. One of the things that he's really struggled with is just playing in front of the crowd and playing in that moment. We've got to get him to do that, otherwise I might have the freshman get a shot at it.

There was -- the wind did swirl on us a little bit today. When we went out there in pregame warmups it had gone both directions. By the time we came out for the coin toss, the first half had flipped, and when we went into halftime, came back out, we wanted to kick the direction we did with the wind, and by the time we had called it on the field, it had actually flipped back, so just kind of one of those days.

Q. The go-ahead touchdown from Austin to Sprinkle, how much, if any, thought did you give on 4th down to kicking a field goal?

BRET BIELEMA: On 3rd down, the play was in a situation where I kind of thought -- I gave them an idea of a play that we had run, and then they came back and ran a little flip screen underneath to Sprinkle, and then it was 4th and 3 and it was kind of in a position, the two-point play was, and that's all I said. I said, let's run a two-point, and Dan had a page of six, I think, different two-point plays. We went with that one. Very creative name and kids were very excited about it, and obviously it prevailed. Big, big play in the game. Obviously the execution, the call. First off, the call, the execution, and then obviously the catch.

Q. I'm curious what's the play that's called, and also just what you thought of the defense overall?

BRET BIELEMA: It's called Oh my gosh. When it starts happening, everyone is going, oh, my gosh. My wife said it worked for her. Oh, my gosh. I think that's what it was. Dan gets very creative with the two-point conversions. Some of them I can't even spell. We just put OMG.

You know, first elusive guys, you know, K-Rich is a vital part of what we're doing, so we're down a couple guys there, and for what they had, they were going huddle-up, or hurry at a point. Kind of knew they would. They did that a year ago against Mississippi State out of the gate. I thought it was great, great teaching for us, especially going into TCU next week. But up front we're deep. We've got a lot of guys that got the Dabo experience. I thought Randy Ramsey came in and did some stuff. Some also went in there and did some things.

Some of those guys that were out there for the first time experiencing college football I think really did some good things. Excited about that. You see Dre make that play, I think he's going to continue to make good plays. We already knew about obviously the way those other guys would play, but I thought Santos Ramirez, as well, did some good stuff.

We missed some tackles. When we didn't make tackles, they moved the ball, and that's obviously a big, big part of their success.

Q. Can you speak on freshman Devwah Whaley? I know somebody said his shoulder was hurting. Can you speak on why he didn't get as many carries as we thought he would?

BRET BIELEMA: Yeah, I don't know anything to that effect. No one told me his shoulder was hurting. He'd had a shoulder injury, but it had really been good all this week. When you're in a situation as tight as that game was, you have two experienced guys with Rawleigh and Kody Walker, you just -- A, two things. If you put him in there and things don't work, you can make a player that age set back in his career multiple games. He goes in there and the game is on the line, having already put a ball on the ground or anything, and I don't have any reason to think that's going to happen, but you'd rather just go with guys have been there a little bit and continue to work him into practice, get him where he needs to be.



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Q. How do you feel about the team moving forward? You've obviously got a tough road game next week, but big sense of relief, sometimes teams do well off that.

BRET BIELEMA: Well, there's going to be half the teams in college football lose today or lose this week. That's the simple math of college football. Half win, half lose. We won, and we won by one, but in the record books for the rest of time, it'll say a W, and you've got to learn to appreciate those. Learn, big time, learn, learn, learn, understand why it was close, why we had failure in the first half, why things happened in a certain way, but again, I don't know if this football team the last three years wins that game. I really don't. I think that this team and the scars that they've had in the past propelled them to victory today, and whether it's right in everybody's eyes, it's right in my eyes, and I'm going to -- believe me, it's not going to be a great Sunday to come over here and watch film. People are going to hear it and they're going to have to learn from it. People are going to have to take ownership in it, starting with myself, and we'll go from there.

Q. You mentioned Keon Hatcher earlier. It seemed like there's a comfort level with your quarterback --

BRET BIELEMA: I think two things: He made some exceptional effort plays, kept alive on the one drive when Austin almost fell down, and then that huge play that really allowed us to go for the 4th down play when he kept his knee within a half centimeter of going down on the ground. A lot of guys just go down there. I think Keon is one of those seniors -- I've felt this way the last two weeks, every year, the ones that I've been a part of, when we do something special or move beyond where other people think we may be, it's a couple seniors that play above expectations.

Keon has waited a long time for his senior year. I think our quarterback does look for him, especially as the day grew old. I think him and 80 both have a comfort level with our quarterback, and Kody Hollister is going to have to learn to catch the ball. You don't many reps as a wide receiver if it bounces off your hand. He's a great kid that's got a great testimonial and a tremendous man of faith, and I know he'll lean on that.

I thought J-Red played really good when he was in there, but we've got to make it happen even much more.

Then I think Dominique Reed, he's just kind of been in and out the last two weeks so we didn't know coming into this game if he was going to be there. So I think now going into TCU you know going he's to be there. He has a skill set that is really fun to watch.

And then two new guys; McClure didn't get in there, and then River Warnock, two guys that are actually walk-on players but guys that will factor into our game plan in the future.

Q. Could you say what the body parts were for J-Red, K-Rich, Cantrell and --

BRET BIELEMA: Yeah, I don't know. I know Cantrell was off the hit that he had there that obviously saved a touchdown. I don't know what J-Red's is, and I don't know what K-Rich's is at this point.

And in game days, I hope you understand where I'm coming from. Literally they come over and they tell you whether he's going to return or he's out, and all three of those guys were out. There wasn't going to be any coming back. After this, about an hour from now, I'm going to have a TV show before.

Q. With Rhodes over there and trying to tighten things up, it looked a little scary early but they seemed to get better. How did you see it?

BRET BIELEMA: Yeah, obviously, again, I'll give credit to LA Tech. They did a lot of really good things as far as throwing and catching the ball. I thought the freshman quarterback came in here and threw it around. Again, I knew 5 was really good on film. I thought he was probably one of the better players that -- he's just a very special player, and they found him on several times.

They had a good scheme. I thought Skip had a really nice plan coming in here. I knew he was a good football coach. I knew he'd attack our weaknesses or try to take advantage of certain looks, but they lined up -- again, the only thing that you're always worried about is tackling, and I think that showed his face a little bit. We had a 3rd down play there at the end, if we would have made the tackle, it would have been off the field on a couple different occasions.

We'll really take that and I think apply. They've got to wrap and not cut tackle, which they've just got to get game reps at.



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Q. With Austin, he didn't get hit obviously in fall camp and he got sacked four times got hit quite a few times. They had picks. How was he on the sidelines? Did you ever see him get rattled?

BRET BIELEMA: No. Again, I think you've got to give a lot of credit to him. I think his demeanor for a quarterback, I kept him after just to -- like I said, I had a conversation with him that as long as I've been in this business, you can kind of almost -- when you're around the quarterback, as it gets closer and closer to game time tell how they're going to handle things. I didn't know about D.A. three, four years ago when that first opportunity came. I knew that certain things really bothered him, and it took him a while to battle out of those holes sometimes, but Austin I think kind of listens, learns, forgets, and his long-term memory keeps alive in the back of his brain. I would doubt that he has the same mistake over and over very much as a quarterback. I think the players -- a lot of things that happened today that weren't his fault. I'm not trying to -- he did a lot of really good things. He had enough issues today.

And I think Dan, now there's a little bit of give and take. Dan is back, first time playing with Austin, and at the end of the day, we were putting some things on there that maybe had him process too much, and that's when I kind of just said, hey, let's eliminate the choice for him or let's not give him the option, let's control the game from our sideline.

I think a lot of learning from our coaches to our players will take place this week, as well.

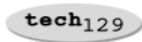
Q. When the quarterback was in the pocket today, it seemed like there wasn't as much pressure as normal coming off from our front line on defense. What are you going to work on taking that to TCU next week?

BRET BIELEMA: I think first thing is they got rid of the ball really quick. They did not want him to get pressure. The ball is out of his hand in less than three seconds. Unless somebody just whiffs, you're not going to get there very often, so they were getting the ball out. So then what we started to do was talk about getting our hands up. And when you get your hands up, you're not going forward, so a little bit double-edged sword. They had not shown much of that with their quarterback from a year ago, but the quarterback from a year ago is kind of a little more mature guy, and it's part of the evolution. It's hard playing a very, very good football team. This team has won nine games two years in a row and had a lot of players drafted a year ago.

Skip is a good coach, man. He's going to be a good coach for a long time, whether he's there, wherever he's at. He came in with a good plan. I love it. I think it's a chess game. Like you said, we would have loved to probably come out with a couple more points, but on the flipside, this must be exactly what the doctor ordered.

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Arkansas Offense

Arkansas tight end Jeremy Sprinkle on starting as tight end:

I feel like it went well. There are still some things I have to get better at. I will be working on them and fixing them in practice this week, but overall I feel that it went pretty good.

Arkansas tight end Jeremy Sprinkle on touchdown:

That is a play that we have been working on. Basically I fake blocked and dragged to the left and then Austin did what he needed to do and put them ball in my hands.

Arkansas quarterback Austin Allen on game today:

We've got to get better. We played a heck of a team out there. Their offense was solid and they knew what they were doing and they were a sound defense. We have just got to get better.

Arkansas quarterback Austin Allen on touchdown to Jeremy Sprinkle:

Right when they called it, it reminded me of my high school state championship game. That was the first thing that went through my mind. Looking back at the replay I missed the defender by about an inch. The ball bounced our way today and we got the win.

Arkansas quarterback Austin Allen on success of fourth downs:

We stress third down and fourth down a lot. We practice that every single day in practice. Keeping drives alive is big for us. Our success in fourth downs was good.

Arkansas quarterback Austin Allen on offensive line:

I truly feel like they played great today. I feel like they played hard when we needed them most. We relied on them up front and because of that we got a game winning drive.

Arkansas running back Raleigh Williams III on game:

Last year we set our goals to finish strong, to finish those close games, and to beat teams that can finish in those close situations. I believe today that we did what we set out to do.

Arkansas running back Raleigh Williams III on comeback from injury:

It definitely is a good feeling to come out and play the way that we did as a team. Personally just being able to contribute to help my team win - that is what I came here to do. I came to be a piece of the puzzle and whether that is a big piece or a little piece and I just appreciate it for what it is. I am very thankful to have the opportunity.

Arkansas wide receiver Keon Hatcher on coming back:

It feels so good to be back. Being back here with my teammates and just being able to play the game again makes me very thankful. I am looking forward to next week working hard day-by-day.



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Arkansas wide receiver Drew Morgan on game:

Louisiana Tech was not going to give us an easy game today. They were well prepared and I thought we had a good preparation. We knew they were going to give it to us and we learned early. That is what we wanted and a win is a win in our books.

Arkansas wide receiver Drew Morgan on all fourth downs:

It is a lot of confidence Coach B has in us and our offensive line. He asks us what we want to do and we have confidence and he does as well and that is why we were successful.

Arkansas Defense

Senior middle linebacker Brooks Ellis on the defense:

The game was nerve-wracking, but a win is a win. We were happy to get the win and we have to learn from the mistakes we made in order to move on to TCU.

Ellis on the changes that need to occur:

We have to be in good position, get our hands up, and get our hands on the ball in order to disrupt the offense. The tackling could always be better. We need to work on our judgement to adjust to the speed of the opposing team's offense as well as work to be more proactive in approaching the tackle.

Louisiana Tech Head Coach Skip Holtz

Louisiana Tech Head Coach Skip Holtz Opening Statement:

I compliment Arkansas in this football game, for them to come back and be able to put together a drive, I think they only attempted two passes in that final drive. We missed a field goal which I thought was a big momentum swing. It kept it to a one score game, and they took the ball down and pretty much ran the ball, ate up a lot of time and took the go-ahead win. This is a really good program. I have great respect for Bret Bielema. He's a phenomenal football coach and he's done a great job. But I certainly don't want the pain and the hurt of a loss to take away from how proud I am of those guys in that locker room. The way that they were able to come out here and compete, this is a team who lost seven players to NFL camps. We are very young; we were looking for some guys to step up. We were 123rd out of 127 in experience returning. For those guys to go out there and compete the way that they did, the physical nature that they did, the attitude, the effort, I'm just really proud of them. We have a lot of positive things to build on, but I don't think this is a game where we wanted to be close. We were close at Kansas State, Mississippi State, and here. We don't want to be close, we want to win. As much as when you believe and you work that hard to put into it, it's tough. That was a hell of a football game, two hard fought teams competing their tails off on the field. We just ran out of time.

Skip Holtz on Louisiana Tech Defensive play:

I thought they played inspiring, hard-nosed football for the type of football Arkansas plays. They line up and try to impose their will on you. I felt like our defense played really well in the third quarter primarily. I thought they came out at halftime and had some energy and some passion and I thought the defense played a heck of a game. They did a nice job against a stout, hard-nosed football team.

Skip Holtz on going for it on fourth late in game: 4th and 20:

No, I had three timeouts left. Let's punt it. It's a four-minute offense and we've practiced that. You have three or four downs. It's a shame he got as close which gave them a chance to go for it. I had enough confidence in our defense.



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Skip Holtz on meeting with dad before halftime:

He said "You're in a heck of a ballgame. If you lose it you'll be the second Holtz to lose in this stadium" That was his advice.

Skip Holtz on being back in Fayetteville:

Yeah I have the opportunity to go a couple years ago when I was at USF. We went to Notre Dame where I spent a lot of time as a player and a coach. It's neat to go home. I grew up on that field. I grew up calling the hogs. I grew up in the player athletic dorm. Like I said I grew up in this stadium to a large extent. It's good to be back. The people of Arkansas have always been phenomenal. I went from 7th grade through High School here. I've got some lifelong friends that it was great to see being back here. Like I said it was a great honor for my father to be honored at halftime for all of the success he was able to have here, but no I couldn't stay out at halftime. This wasn't a camera, high school reunion party. This was about a football game. I wish at some point in the offseason I could come up and spend a little time. This is a special place and has a special place in my heart for all of the time here.