



ARKANSAS RAZORBACKS

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

Arkansas Football Quote Sheet

Alabama 49, Arkansas 30

Oct. 8, 2016 \\ Fayetteville, Ark. \\ DWRRS

Arkansas Head Coach Bret Bielema

“Obviously we are very disappointed. I thought our guys put a lot into the preparation, not only our players, coaches, obviously our fans did, too. I’m disappointed for the fans to not give them the win today, but I thought there was enough things out there that we gave them. We just didn’t seem to come through. We spotted them two to three touchdowns, non-conventional touchdowns - with either the defense and special teams. Obviously that kickoff return that fumbled was huge, and then the ball that was lost out of Austin’s (Allen) hand when he was trying to go forward with the ball, that was a big one, as well. That’s 14 points.

And then arguably probably the last one there when we threw the ball in the end zone, that’s a 21-point swing. That seven points came off the board with a holding call that converted to three, and obviously that is too much to give up to the No. 1 team in the country.

Give a lot of credit to Alabama. Their team, their coaches, their players performed very, very well. We didn’t do enough to win.

Unfortunately I think we lost Dre (Greenlaw) for the season. He broke his foot. That inserted obviously Scoota (De’Jon Harris) in there, a freshman linebacker into a big game. He went out and competed. I know he’s got a lot of good things in front of him, very bright future.

Drew has some bruising that took place on that initial hit down there in the red zone when he tried to go after it and he just couldn’t go. Nothing is broke, all the X-rays are negative; he’s just really, really sore.

Other than that I think we got out of it pretty clean. I know Santos (Ramirez) tried to go but he was still a little bit gimpy, so we pulled him out of there.

I do think our guys competed, played a lot better defense second half. We gave up too many things the first half, just didn’t set the edge way we need today and a couple missed tackles. I thought our offense went out and competed for the most part the whole game and did some very positive things.

We’ve just got to get our minds right and get ourselves back and make sure we’re not self-inflicting wounds that we don’t need to.

With that, I’ll open it up to questions.”

Q. The holding call that brought back the touchdown, what did you see on that? You were pretty irate with the officials.

“Yeah, obviously we knew this game was going to -- they were very good up front. The question I had was just they threw the flag, and I looked at the umpire -- from my indication he watched the guard to guard, and that was a tackle, so I just wondered why he threw the flag. I was just trying to get information on that. I wanted to compliment him; he did a really nice job because he actually went beyond his job and called one of the tackles he shouldn’t be looking at. I just wanted to talk.”

Q. Brandon said the defense played better second half. That first half they had almost 400 yards. What do you think were the main issues, and talk about losing Dre.

“Yeah, two things. We can’t make excuses; next man in; next man up. We obviously, at certain positions, do not have a lot of depth. I think the biggest thing at halftime that we talked about was there was a variety of things in the first half where we lost the edge of our defense. They were able to run the ball around an edge on several different occasions and get some very, very quick yardage very easily without us getting the edge, so set the edge, and then there was a few examples of tackles that we just didn’t make. Guys weren’t using the technique. We talk about a five-step tackling system that they weren’t following through with, and I think the coaches had a good meeting with them at halftime, and obviously played a lot better, but we can’t spot them 400 yards.”



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Q. With all the buildup of this game and then kind of a letdown today, how do you get the guys' energy back up to play another big opponent?

"Yeah, I think to the outside world, that's probably a very easy question to ask, but if you're in the locker room with our guys, it's something never that never really comes up. They play very, very hard. They're locked in. They understand -- they had high expectations, and when you lose, you're going to have a high feeling of disappointment, so that's a good thing.

But we definitely don't have time to sit around and feel sorry for ourselves. We've got to put the pieces tomorrow and make our corrections.

Sundays are never good after a loss. They're just not a real fun day because coaches got to take ownership in how their kids performed, me as a head coach obviously, and then make some corrections and adjustments, and then change the personnel if we need to, change some schemes, and get ready to jump into Ole Miss."

Q. Austin was sacked six times, averaged two yards per carry today. Where do you go from here with the offensive line, and are you confident it can improve with such a rough schedule?

"Yeah, the stats obviously speak for themselves, but we had some huge negative-yard plays off of sacks that gave them a lot of positive yardage. I thought we actually moved the ball at times very, very well off the run game and throw game, but that always gets a little misleading.

But we definitely can't have a game where we get sacked six times and expect to win it, but it was kind of a result of getting down by a few scores."

Q. What did you think of Jalen Hurts and how much did he have to do with your defensive struggles?

"Well, yeah, he's a very talented player, and they did some things pulling a lot of bodies out in front of him. Again, they were able to get around our edges, not only with him but our running back a couple times in the first half, and I don't care who is running- the quarterback or running back, if they break down the edge of your defense, you're never going to have success."

Q. What makes Alabama so tough, and is it just talent, whenever you match up against them? What makes the Crimson Tide so tough?

"Well, I think you get to a certain level where you have a base pool of players that you know are developed in a way and recruited in a way that you know they have these certain talents. You have a lot of them, and you have coaches that are very, very good. That combination and the ability to roll people through and have the depth that you do, it's a very good position to be in, one we're going to strive to get to every day."

Q. Tonight there was some big plays that were given up on defense. What did you see that contributed to that, especially over the top, in the middle, at times there was wide open space?

"Yeah, there was one play that kind of came back to the middle. They ran a switch route in the boundary that the ball was caught over the middle, but it started on the outside. We didn't switch it off as a defender there.

There was another time, I believe, that they ran kind of a crack swing where they picked on our linebacker that should have been, would have been on the running back in the flat. Again, good concept by them, but we've got to react better over the top. I knew there was one other play down the middle where they had a run action that looked the exact same as a pass action and our safety locked into that and let a guy get through."

Q. You changed kickers with McFain. Was that something you planned to do all week?

"You know, I think Tuesday I basically kind of said who performs well today will get a chance, and (Adam) McFain was I believe 4 for 4 that day and Cole (Hedlund) was 3 for 4, and then we switched the next day and McFain had another good day and Cole struggled a little bit. So yeah, after Wednesday's practice, I knew that McFain was going to be our field goal man, and he actually I thought did a nice job today."

Q. Talk a little bit about Austin and the hits that he was taking; can you talk about his toughness because he kept getting back up and kept playing?

"He did. They were running some stuff, running two-man and some different things that if we didn't have the ability to throw the ball down the field the way they cut away, I knew the middle of the field was going to be open, and he saw a lot of those and took off running the ball, which I thought was really good. It's always good to have that on film, and I think some of our guys did some peel back blocks, did a nice job. It was a very physical game for all of those guys."



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Q. How did you think Frank (Ragnow) did after starting a really rough week?

“Yeah, he was amazing. He got in late Thursday, came over early Friday morning with Kurt, and I saw him about midday on Friday and was just amazed how good a spirits he was in. But I think it was nice for him. I was going back and forth with him and his mom quite a bit, and I think just to get him around our guys, she kind of referenced a second family now back here, I think was really good. We weren't necessarily going to play him unless we felt really good about his state of mind and where he was. You could tell he had watched every ounce of film that we had sent him. Really had no issues picking up what they were lining up in there, making the correct calls. I'll look at the film, but I thought he played fairly well, had a good game, and his maturity, and I know this will hurt afterwards, and I didn't have a chance to grab him before he walked off the field, but he's a very, very strong kid, an incredible football player, but obviously a really good person and a great talent.”

Q. Setting the edge idea, I know you mentioned it twice; kind of explain it a little bit more.

“Just old-school defensive thing. On every play you've got to have contain, cut-back, reverse. Containing the football is what we -- basically setting the edge. At different times it might be a defensive end, it might be a backer in support, it might be a DB in support, and what we don't want to do is set an edge but also widen it so that there's a gap up inside. There was a play where we did have the edge set, but a gap between two of our defenders, and that's a problem within itself, as well.

A little bit of that is attitude, but I think we have to make a special hard look at ourselves defensively. We're asking guys to do that that can't physically do it, and if that's the case, obviously we've got to change up the look.”

Q. I know the goal was to be 12-0, but you are 0-2; do you have to sort of redirect your goals now?

“You know, you always have goals. I think the season goals that our guys put forward were a 1-0 mentality was No. 1, and obviously there's no better definition of that than how you respond right now. We've got to take this game week with the idea that we could go 1-0 on Saturday, we've got to prepare the right way and set a mentality.

Our second team goal was to start faster and stronger. We didn't do that out there today, but I think obviously that will be a point of emphasis, for us to start fast in all three phases as we go forward.

Our third team goal was to blue vase it. I think this is the perfect time, no matter what life deals you, no matter what comes out, you've got to deal with what it is and you can't complain or gripe or second-guess. You've got to deal with it, and I think that probably is going to be what we have to do more than anything.

Obviously to win the SEC West after an 0-2 start, we're going to need help along the way, but I don't know if our guys were in that frame of mind as much as let's just take advantage of the opportunity that's in front of us. We're a 4-2 team that lost to the No. 1 team in the country and did enough things to make that happen, but got to correct the negatives for us to move forward on positives.”