

Gildan New Mexico Bowl:

New Mexico vs UTSA

Saturday, December 17, 2016

Frank Wilson

Jarveon Williams

Michael Egwuagu

UTSA Roadrunners



I'm going backwards here. The preparation throughout the week, the New Mexico Bowl and Gildan is outstanding. They went above and beyond to extend themselves to our university, our young men, and make this an experience they would enjoy for a lifetime.

We did. It was first class. We enjoyed it to the fullest.

Q. Michael and Jarveon, can you tell us where this game was lost? You out-gained them on the ground, through the air, and defensively stat-wise.

MICHAEL EGWUAGU: It's one of those things where it's one play here or there. I feel that we played a good game for the most part.

Just like coach said, our best wasn't good enough. We've got things to correct.

COACH WILSON: I'd like to chime in on that. The difference in the game was opportunities were far and few. When either team was able to get in striking distance to score, it was a premium. Unfortunately it was times we had to kick three. Fortunately we did make those three even against the gusting winds and climate. We were able to capitalize.

If we're able to score touchdowns there, you could see a different outcome. You have to attribute our opponent for us not scoring touchdowns down in there. But you like to think that those opportunities down there, of course we were four-of-four in the red zone, that you can convert those into six and seven points as opposed to three.

We had one series that was uncanny of us, that we had three back-to-back-to-back penalties. That's not the trademark of our program. We're better than that, more disciplined than that. For a moment, we weren't ourselves.

We rebounded from that. That's the good thing. We came back. Even in that series, we got three out of it. But you would like to think that we can get touchdowns down in that area.

Q. Coach Wilson, how did the weather, the cold and the wind affect your passing game today? Looked like there might have been some catchable balls out there.

New Mexico - 23, San Antonio - 20

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by San Antonio. We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Coach, obviously a tough loss. What did you tell your team in the locker room following the game?

COACH WILSON: Yeah, I told them to hold their heads up high and to recognize they had nothing to be ashamed of, that they gave a valiant effort against a very quality football team.

Today unfortunately our best wasn't good enough. I thank the seniors for their leadership and getting us to the point where we are right now. I challenged the youth of our team, our juniors, sophomores and freshmen to take us to the next steps that we'd like to be in as a program.

It was tough. It was tough because you want it so bad for these guys to my right and to my left, and to the other seniors, to all of the kids of this program. You wanted them to have that moment, to capture and to reach out and achieve a bowl championship.

They did make history. We're very fortunate to get to this bowl game. What an experience it was. Learned a lot from it. But here is what you saw: resiliency, you saw a team that refused to quit, that did what they did best, and that was fight all the way until the last whistle of the game.

Q. Coach, obviously a disappointing outcome for you. For the first bowl experience for the program, what was this week like with the New Mexico Bowl as your first one?

COACH WILSON: This part is a little bitter right now. The game itself, it was phenomenal. The enthusiasm, the excitement from the fans, the bands, the support was everything that you could ever ask for in a bowl game atmosphere.

COACH WILSON: I think at times there were individuals who caught the ball well, and there were other times certainly that we had drops. Off the top, I'm going to say three or four critical ones that we usually make that we did not.

I watched us in pregame and I watched the quarterbacks throw the ball against the wind, with the wind. It did not disturb us then. We caught the ball very efficiently. So going into the game, I didn't think it would be a concern for us because we had shown the ability to do so.

Unfortunately, we did not. Was the weather a part of it? Whether it was physically or mentally, I guess. I'd like to think that it would not be because we played so well in so many other parts of the game.

But, you know, not sure.

Q. Frank, speaking about specific penalties, what about the illegal substitution penalty? What did the referees explain to you?

COACH WILSON: We disagreed on it. I was trying to get them to understand that Kerry did not come out of the game, come from the sideline, he was already in the game. He ran halfway, went back, then came out.

In his mind, he thought our intent was to deceive, which wasn't the case at all, but probably more so that the intent or thought was that he came from the sideline.

I assured him that he was in the prior play, that it was totally legal. He explained to me, Well, it was confusing.

So I asked the question, So you were confused? It wasn't illegal, you were confused?

His rebuttal to me was, It's illegal.

You are not illegal if you are already in the game. You can go from the field to the sideline to the field and back any time you want to. In my opinion, it was a legal play, and should not have been called.

Q. This is for all three of you. Talk about what it was like to come out and see so many people from San Antonio and what you think it means going forward that on a nationally televised game the UTSA sideline was almost full of fans.

JARVEON WILLIAMS: It was amazing just being able to look up in the stands and see all the blue and orange, everybody traveling, coming out to support us for our first bowl game appearance. Just really gives you a great appreciation for this program and the

direction it's headed in. I couldn't be any more proud of our fans. I'm thankful they traveled all this way to come watch us.

MICHAEL EGWUAGU: Yeah, I think it's a testament to the program, a testament to these fans. It shows that they're dedicated, diehard fans. We really do have support in Roadrunner Nation.

COACH WILSON: For me, the fourth quarter came and you began to hear the chants. You looked up, you saw the sea of orange and our family engaged in the game, not a person sitting down.

It swelled my heart. I was very humbled, thankful and appreciative of our fans. They never sat down. We were able to mount a comeback because we drew energy from them.

Even in defeat, finishing second, we lined up in front of our band to sing the alma mater. They sung it with us verbatim, word for word, with their heads held high. I said to our players that they should hold their heads high because they had nothing to be ashamed of.

Even last night, you go to the pep rally in Old Town, just watch the city of San Antonio and Roadrunner Nation take over, take over. Constant feeds on your phone of orange and blue, orange ties from newscaster to politician to everyday people. Just fell in love with this program and gave us a moment that we'll have for a lifetime. Very appreciative.

Q. Michael, can you walk us through those final moments after the game. You were down on a knee, obviously upset. Your teammates are coming up and comforting you.

MICHAEL EGWUAGU: Upset, yes. But I think more so it's just surreal. It's surreal that I've been here for four years, when this program was a little baby. To see it grow into where it is now...

I had my teammates come around me and embrace me. It was a bitter feeling. But, man, I'm just happy to have been a Roadrunner, seriously. It's probably the single most pivotal point in my life, the single most thing that has impacted my life.

These are family members. These are coaches. These are brothers that I've met and made for life.

Q. You talked about the weather, but what about the altitude? Did that really play a factor for you guys in this game?

JARVEON WILLIAMS: In my opinion, it didn't really play a factor in the game. Mouth might have been a little dry. As long as you stayed hydrated, hydrated

properly, that wasn't an issue. I didn't think it was that big of a deal.

MICHAEL EGWUAGU: Yeah, I agree with Jarveon. If you stay hydrated, it's all right.

COACH WILSON: We prefaced coming into this game being weatherproof. Whatever the weather may be, it would be UTSA weather. How you see these guys is how they played the game. They embraced the climate, they lived in the moment. It didn't deter us.

We finished second today, period. The weather didn't determine the outcome of the game because we were prepared for it mentally and physically, whatever may happen.

Q. Jarveon, you guys out-rushed the number one rushing team in the nation today. Considering the outcome of the game, do you take some pride in that or does that make you feel worse?

JARVEON WILLIAMS: I mean, we've always had a good rushing attack, in my opinion. Today we just didn't come out on top. We didn't make enough plays to win. I'm very confident and very proud to say that I've been a part of this offense that's worked so hard and established an identity as a physical football team, physical, downhill football team. They're going to continue to build on that.

COACH WILSON: You know what, they had two thousand-yard rushers on their team. We had two guys right at 800 yards.

It was interesting. As we lined up, people waiting on the rushing attacks, which would be more pivotal in the outcome of the game. Certainly they are a force to be reckoned with schematically in the things that they do, well-coached, do what they do very well.

I wouldn't trade our two for anyone. I thought they played outstanding today. I was not surprised by the productivity of our offensive line or our backs.

Q. Frank, Jevonte Domond wasn't here with your team today. Could you explain the circumstances why that happened, how much you feel like your team missed him not being there, and how I guess Darryl was a starter in there at that position, how he did?

COACH WILSON: I think Reed Darragh stepped in and played extremely well for us. We had some unspecified team rules, policies that were not adhered to, so Jevonte was not able to play today. As we did throughout the remainder of the year, we didn't flinch. The next man went up. He didn't give up a sack. He handled his position. He manned his area. He was

very productive because of the preparation that was put in.

It was no different than him getting injured the first play of the game in our mindset. But with this program, we're going to continue to run it in a manner that does not allow us to compromise the integrity of what we do, by no means, by anyone, because no one will ever be bigger than the team.

However minute it may seem, we're going to adhere to that, and it's going to allow us to be a program to be reckoned with in the future because of it, because of the consistency of how we do things around here.

Q. Coach and Michael, fourth quarter you guys scored a three, you have the tackle for a loss. They pull off the 34-yard pass play. How big an effect was that on you defensively?

MICHAEL EGWUAGU: I think anytime you have an explosive play, it affects the drive, for sure. But the good thing about my defense is we always step up and play the next play just like it's the next play.

Unfortunately today, our best wasn't good enough. We came out second.

COACH WILSON: I think when you look at a team that leads the nation in rushing at about 360 a game, they're held well under 100 of that, that defense played well, did a very good job, an admirable job in holding this opponent.

They're a good team. They're a very good football team. So for them to get an explosive play was not unrealistic to us. We wanted to limit it. We wanted to be in position to make plays. I thought we did that for the most part.

But they're a quality team. They're well-coached. That happens. In the midst of the game, plays like that happen.

I thought we responded after it. Was it a big play for them? Of course, it was. But we still had other opportunities where we could have gone and played better at times.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.