

# Nebraska Post-Game Notes

## Nebraska vs. Wisconsin, 2012 Big Ten Championship, Dec. 1, 2012

- ▶ Tonight's loss dropped Nebraska to 2-5 all-time in conference championship games, including a 2-4 record in Big 12 title games and tonight's loss in the Big Ten Championship Game.
- ▶ The loss to Wisconsin evened the all-time series between the two schools at four wins apiece.
- ▶ Wisconsin's 42 first-half points were the most against Nebraska since Oklahoma scored an opponent-record 49 points in the first half on Nov. 1, 2008. Wisconsin's 70 points in the game tied for the second-most Nebraska has allowed in school history (also 70 at Kansas, Nov. 3, 2007).
- ▶ Nebraska will learn its bowl destination on Sunday. The Huskers' bowl trip will be their 49th all-time bowl appearance.
- ▶ Junior quarterback **Taylor Martinez** rushed for 140 yards on 19 carries in tonight's game, including a 76-yard touchdown run in the first quarter and an 11-yard TD run in the third quarter. Martinez's 76-yard touchdown run was his second-longest run of the season, trailing a career-long 92-yard TD run at UCLA. Martinez has four rushes this season of at least 50 yards, and nine career runs of 50 yards or more.
- ▶ Martinez's 100-yard rushing game was the 13th of his career, tying him for the eighth-most in Nebraska history. Martinez has five 100-yard rushing games this season, including two against Wisconsin (107 yards in first meeting).
- ▶ With his 140 rushing yards tonight, Martinez increased his season rushing total to 973, good for the fourth-most by a quarterback in a season. Martinez is 27 yards from recording the fourth 1,000-yard rushing season by a quarterback in NU history.
- ▶ Martinez increased his career rushing total to 2,812, moving him up from 13th to ninth on the NU career rushing list.
- ▶ Martinez became the ninth Husker to record 30 or more career rushing touchdowns in tonight's game. His 31 rushing touchdowns are eighth in school history.
- ▶ Martinez has rushed for 10 touchdowns this season, while passing for 21 scores. His 31 touchdowns this season tie for the most accounted for in a season in Nebraska history (Eric Crouch also accounted for 31 touchdowns in 2000)
- ▶ Martinez also completed 17-of-33 passes for 184 yards, giving him 324 yards of total offense to increase his season total offense mark to 3,640 yards of total offense, good for second on the Nebraska single-season list. Martinez trails only Joe Ganz's school record of 3,826 yards in 2008 and Martinez needs 187 yards in the bowl game to surpass Ganz.
- ▶ Senior I-back **Rex Burkhead** rushed 11 times for 61 yards in tonight's game. With his 61 yards, Burkhead increased his career rushing total to 3,189 yards, moving him into fifth place on the Nebraska career rushing list. In tonight's game Burkhead passed Calvin Jones who had 3,153 career rushing yards from 1991 to 1993.
- ▶ Nebraska rushed for 282 yards in tonight's game, marking Nebraska's 11th 200-yard rushing game in 13 contests.
- ▶ Senior place-kicker **Brett Maher** scored six points in tonight's game on a 32-yard field goal in the first quarter and three PATS. Maher increased his season scoring total to 111 points, moving him into the top 10 on the NU season scoring list. His 111 points this season rank eighth on the NU single-season list and are second among kickers (116 is kicker record, Kris Brown, 1997).
- ▶ Maher has 19 field goals this season to rank in a tie for second on the NU single-season list, trailing only Alex Henery's school-record 24 field goals in 2009.
- ▶ Senior tight end **Kyler Reed** caught two passes for 29 yards in tonight's game. With his totals tonight, Reed increased his career receiving total to 1,060 yards and his career receptions total to 66 to move into the top 10 on both career lists. Reed's 66 career receptions moved him to second in school history among tight ends.
- ▶ Wisconsin completed 8-of-10 passes to become just the third team in 13 games to complete better than 50 percent of their pass attempts against Nebraska.
- ▶ Wisconsin rushed for 539 yards, the most rushing yards against Nebraska in school history, bettering Oklahoma's 506 rushing yards against Nebraska on Nov. 24, 1956.
- ▶ Tonight's game captains were senior tight end **Ben Cotton**, senior I-back **Rex Burkhead**, senior linebacker **Will Compton** and senior safety **P.J. Smith**.

**December 1, 2012**



Wisconsin - 70  
Nebraska - 31

An interview with:

## **COACH PELINI**

THE MODERATOR: Coach, an opening statement?

COACH PELINI: I apologize to everybody associated with Nebraska football with how we coached, how we played, and it's not acceptable. I'll take any questions.

**Q. Bo, can you just sort of recap what happened with your defense tonight? Why Wisconsin was able to take you off guard with some plays? What went wrong?**

COACH PELINI: There was nothing taking us off guard. We practiced 99 percent of what they showed us today. For whatever reason we didn't execute. We didn't make tackles. We didn't make plays, obviously. We didn't coach it well enough.

**Q. You said you practiced 99 percent. What would you say that one percent is that you were not ready for?**

COACH PELINI: I don't know. Obviously we didn't play well enough. We came unglued. I wish I had the answer, but I don't.

**Q. This was a team that was really mature, a lot of veterans. You thought you were sort of past this point. What, I mean, I imagine shock has to be your first emotion?**

COACH PELINI: Shock doesn't even begin to -- shock doesn't even begin to explain that.

**Q. When did you feel like it was getting past the point of repair?**

COACH PELINI: I mean, it was like a leaking boat. It was one thing after another. One problem after another. You get one fixed and you

talk about it. There were some things that we corrected and it happened again. Like I said, I don't know if I've ever -- I've never been a part of a game like that as a coach.

Like I said, at the end of the day, it falls on me. It falls directly on my shoulders because I'm responsible for how those kids play.

**Q. You were able to keep pace with them offensively there for a little while, then things got out of hand late in the first half. Can you talk about what they did to take you out of some things that you were trying to run?**

COACH PELINI: Well, obviously the situation in the game. I don't know how we would have played offensively because it got out of hand.

**Q. Surprising that their speed seemed to get to you. I mean, they haven't been known as a fast team. Were you surprised by that?**

COACH PELINI: We played them early in the season. I feel like we had a pretty good idea of how fast they were. I don't know. To play the way we did, I don't have an answer for that, unfortunately.

**Q. You played Cam [Meredith] a lot, and he seemed to struggle. How much did Baker's absence hurt you on the line?**

COACH PELINI: Boy, the problems that happened out there went far, far beyond Baker Steinkuhler.

**Q. What were some of the problems? Just generally what were some of the things that didn't happen that you thought would? What did your defense not do right?**

COACH PELINI: Well, what do you do? What is defensive football? It's play your gaps. Handle your responsibility. Be where you're supposed to be and make tackles when you're there. We did none of the above. You have to have 11 guys on the same page doing the right things. I mean, it wasn't much different than, to a

large extent, than what happened at Ohio State.

I mean, some of those plays that we -- I wouldn't say, but a lot of those plays we saw tonight, we saw the first time around. We played these same plays in Lincoln, a lot of them, most of them.

**Q. If you could go back to the first quarter, what are some things that stick out in your mind that you'd do differently?**

COACH PELINI: I don't know. That seems like it was ten years ago.

**Q. I know you're having a hard time coming up with the words, but how do you explain it then? The end of your five, you think you have --**

COACH PELINI: You can try to put a big thing on it. It's on me. Put it on me.

**Q. Is it representative of the foundation of the program, or do you think it was a one-game blip?**

COACH PELINI: We just won six straight. We went 10-2 in the regular season. What do you think?

**Q. I'm asking you, Bo. Do you think it was an aberration or do you think it was indicative of the foundation of the program?**

COACH PELINI: It's not an indicative of the foundation of this program.

**Q. I know you said that a lot of the plays were very similar to the first meeting that you guys saw. But Wisconsin did get out on the edge a lot more in this game?**

COACH PELINI: Because we let them out on the edge. That's what happened. We didn't execute. We didn't turn the ball back the way we were supposed to turn the ball back. Falls on me. I obviously didn't coach it well enough.

**Q. Do you think the fact that Wisconsin kind of had this thing locked up three weeks ago --**

COACH PELINI: No, I don't want to put any excuses on it. It has nothing to do with it.

**Q. How do you gauge this season? I know you made no bones about the fact that the goal was to win the conference championship. How do you look at it now after this?**

COACH PELINI: We failed. We failed to win a championship. That was the goal coming in and didn't get it done. I apologize for it. I apologize to the football team. I apologize to the coaches, the fans, like I said, everybody associated with it. Because at the end of the day, it falls on me. I'm the one responsible for it. We didn't get it done.

**Q. That had to be a really, really tough post-game locker room. Did you get a chance to say anything to those guys or not?**

COACH PELINI: Yeah, absolutely.

**Q. Can you share some of that?**

COACH PELINI: That's private.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports**



## 2012 BIG TEN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME



Saturday, Dec. 1, 2012  
Lucas Oil Stadium • Indianapolis, Ind.

### NEBRASKA POSTGAME QUICK QUOTES

Senior P/K Brett Maher

*On Coach Pelini taking blame for loss:*

"I think that's classy of him. No matter who you talk to tonight will say that he's the last person any of us are going to blame. We have complete and total trust in him and have since we've got here. This game goes on everyone's shoulders.

*On when he felt the lead was insurmountable:*

"I don't know. They got off to a quick start. We had one offensive snap and were down 14-0. We fought back a little bit and then it just snowballed again and we couldn't come back from it the second time. I don't know if I could pinpoint a moment exactly but it seemed like it all happened pretty quick."

*On what to make of the remaining bowl game:*

"I guess we have a month to figure that out. We're still going to be close and practice and workout and love each other and keep fighting and try to go out with a better taste in our mouth.

Senior wide receiver Tim Marlowe:

*On how he felt about the result of the game:*

"It's pretty hard to swallow. We wanted to be that senior class that won a championship. It didn't work out the way we wanted it to."

*On when he felt the lead was insurmountable:*

"I don't know. It was all about snowballing. Missed tackles on defense and just letting one mistake lead to more. It just got out of control too fast.

*On whether or not the gameplan changed after falling behind 14-0:*

"It was still so early. We were only three minutes into the game so it didn't change too much. Taylor made that amazing run and we were right back into the game. It was 14-10 and we just couldn't get anything going from there.

Senior Tight End Ben Cotton:

*On when he felt the lead was insurmountable:*

"I'm proud to say this team never gave up. They played their tails off until the end of the game. That's one quality about this team that will never go away. That's the integrity of these guys – we're going to play from whistle to whistle whether we're up or we're down."



**December 1, 2012**



Wisconsin – 70  
Nebraska – 31

An interview with:

## **P.J. SMITH KYLER REED**

THE MODERATOR: We've got P.J. Smith and Kyler Reed. Questions?

**Q. P.J., it's probably tough to come up with the words, but how can you -- how would you sum up what went wrong on defense out there?**

P.J. SMITH: Everything. I mean, everything went wrong. It was a great game plan. Like I told Coach, I said, it wasn't your fault. I'll put this on the defense. We didn't step up. We didn't do what we were supposed to do. It was a great game plan; we just didn't finish the plays. There you have it.

**Q. Did they surprise you with anything that they did?**

KYLER REED: No, I mean, everything they did was practiced. It's just we've got to make the play, and we didn't. This type of defense, one player messes up, and they're going for a six, and that's exactly what happened tonight. It's frustrating. I don't put that on Coach. I put it on the defense. I put it on the secondary. You know what I mean? We didn't step up to play.

**Q. P.J., I understand that it's the way Bo's defense works and everybody's got to play their assignment. But if you saw a lot of these plays, which you did in September, what didn't you guys do specifically tonight that you did back then? What didn't you guys do tonight?**

P.J. SMITH: We didn't execute. Bottom line. No execution. We didn't tackle. Every time

they ran in for a big play, two guys hit them. Just broke the tackle and went for six. So, no execution, no tackling, lack of communication.

**Q. Did you feel -- I mean, was there some point in the game where you guys felt like you didn't feel like you had any confidence in stopping them?**

P.J. SMITH: No, we kept fighting. We said we just do the things Coach asks us to do and we could stop them. They didn't do anything special. It's just, I don't know. It's hard to explain.

**Q. Kyler, was there anything during the week of practice or in recent days that indicated something like this might happen?**

KYLER REED: No, I think we had a great week of practice. I won't speak for the defense, but on offense, I think we were flying around and making plays all week. So, no. This was the most confident I've ever come into a game. So I don't think it had anything to do with -- I think we were ready.

But obviously, we didn't execute like P.J. said. That's what it comes down to. We didn't do the little things right. We didn't make plays.

**Q. P.J., when you guys came off the field, coach was coming over and talking to you guys and asking questions. What were some of the things that he was asking you guys what kind of adjustments were you trying to make in between series?**

P.J. SMITH: He was just trying to figure out what happened. You know what I mean? Did we give a certain call to a certain person or something or what routes they ran or in the running game, did the guy sway back? How did they block it? We made adjustments; we just didn't step up to the challenge.

**Q. The bigger picture question for both of you, could overconfidence have been an issue? You guys had won six straight. They**

**were a 7-5 team?**

KYLER REED: No, I don't think we overlooked them, if that's what you're saying. I don't think you can be too confident. I mean, you can overlook a team, but I don't think we did. We talked about it all week how good of a team they were. It doesn't matter what their record was. They're well-coached on defense, and they play hard. They've got smart linebackers that fly around and make plays.

So, I mean, I don't think it was overconfidence. They made plays and they executed and we didn't is what it comes down to.

P.J. SMITH: No, we talked about it all week on defense. Like Kyler said, we know this is a really good team. They're going to give us their best shot. We knew it was going to be a dogfight and that we were going to get their best shot.

I don't know. It was a weird game today for some reason. We just didn't do nothing right on defense, nothing, nothing.

**Q. Kyler, with a month now to think about this, how do you guys salvage this loss and move on to a bowl game now?**

KYLER REED: We've had a lot of time to think about it. It's going to be our last game. We've got 29-something seniors or something like that. So no one wants to go out with a loss. We don't want to repeat last year. So basically you've just got to dig down deep and find the will to keep pushing. I mean, there is still something to play for. That's all you can really do is keep pushing.

P.J. SMITH: Push and get 11 wins. Take care of the bowl game and win that, and then you've got 11 wins. We came short of our goal and that's frustrating. But the season's not over yet. We have one more game to leave our mark some type of way. So it's about getting that 11th win. It's going to hurt us, but we're all men. Just got to fight through it and move on to the next game.

**Q. I know it's kind of a weird question, but you guys didn't do a walk through yesterday. You probably just got on site here today. Did you feel like once you got in that atmosphere that maybe you guys got nervous or the stage was too big or the footing was weird? Was there anything that was foreign or strange about playing on that field tonight?**

P.J. SMITH: That's not even the answer. It's a game of football. I don't know.

KYLER REED: I think it was a normal week. We had a walk through. We got here yesterday. We came in to see the stadium this morning. It was a typical week. We didn't practice Sunday or anything. We didn't do anything extra or more. We just did like a normal week for regular season games. We did the walk through before we left Friday, like we usually do, and it was a late game. We haven't had a late game for a while. But we've played in them before. So it was a typical thing. We saw a movie. It was normal, actually. Very normal. I don't think that really had anything to do with it.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports**



## 2012 BIG TEN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME



Saturday, Dec. 1, 2012  
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### NEBRASKA NOTES

- Junior quarterback Taylor Martinez moves to third on Nebraska's single-season passing yards list (2,667), putting up 184 yards tonight .
- Martinez's 76-yard touchdown run in the first quarter marked his third TD run of 70 or more yards this year (92 vs. UCLA; 71 vs. Michigan State).
- With two rushing touchdowns tonight, Martinez moved into a tie for first on the Cornhuskers' single season touchdown list with 31 (Eric Crouch-2000).
- With 140 yards on 19 carries tonight, Martinez moved into the Nebraska all-time top-10 in career rushing yards with 2,812 (ninth). He also moved to eighth on the career rushing touchdowns list with 31.
- Martinez made his 38<sup>th</sup> start at quarterback tonight, tying Eric Crouch (1998-2001) for most career starts by a QB.
- Senior placekicker Brett Maher hit a 32-yard field goal in the first quarter, tying for second on the Nebraska single-season list (19).
- Nebraska is 4-3 this season when losing the turnover battle (-3 tonight)
- The Badgers' 42 first-half points is the most given up by the Cornhuskers this season. The 539 yards rushing is the most ever allowed by a Nebraska team.

### WISCONSIN NOTES

- Wisconsin is the first Big Ten school to play in three consecutive Rose Bowl games since Michigan (1977-79).
- The Badgers are 9-0 in games played in Indiana under head coach Bret Bielema.
- Wisconsin finished with eight rushing touchdowns tonight, a new school record.
- Senior running back Montee Ball's 16-yard second quarter touchdown run set a new NCAA record for career rushing TDs with 74. He added two more to end the day at 76.
- With three touchdowns tonight, Ball tied the NCAA record for career multiple TD games with 25. It is the 15<sup>th</sup> time Ball has scored at least three TDs in a game.
- Ball finished the day with 202 yards, his 4th career 200+-yard rushing game and his second this season (Purdue).
- Redshirt freshman running back Melvin Gordon had a career-long 56-yard touchdown run to give the Badgers a 7-0 lead at 13:01 in the first quarter. He added a 60-yard run in the second quarter.
- Gordon finished the game with a career-best 216 yards on nine carries (24.0 ypc).
- Junior running back James White finished with four touchdowns (all rush), his fourth multiple-TD game this season and the 10<sup>th</sup> of his career. It is the second time he has run for four TDs (Austin Peay-2010).
- Wisconsin had three running backs go over 100 yards in a game for the first time in school history (Ball 21-202; White 15-109; Gordon 9-216). It is the first time in school history UW has had two 200-yard rushers.
- Senior cornerback Marcus Cromartie returned an interception for a touchdown in the first quarter for his first career INT. It was the first interception returned for a touchdown by the Badgers since Aaron Henry vs. Northwestern on Nov. 27, 2010 and the first defensive touchdown for UW this season.
- Senior cornerback Devin Smith tallied his fourth interception of the season with a pick in the third quarter.
- Junior linebacker Chris Borland's forced fumble in the second quarter was the 13<sup>th</sup> of his career, tying him with Purdue's Ryan Kerrigan for the Big Ten career record.
- The Badgers finished with 42 points in the first half, the most in a half since 49 vs. Northwestern in 2010.
- The Badgers' 70 points is a new Big Ten Championship Game record, topping their mark of 42 set last year.
- It is the most points scored by Wisconsin this year and the second time they have topped the 60-point mark (62- at Indiana).





## 2012 BIG TEN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME



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### WISCONSIN POSTGAME QUICK QUOTES

Wisconsin Head Coach Bret Bielema

*On going to the Rose Bowl...*

"It's okay to get there, but you need to win it. We're going out there on a mission to play a great team in Stanford. We know we have work to do. We played to win the game today to go to the Rose Bowl. We have unbelievable respect for Stanford, so we'll enjoy this and get ready for Pasadena."

*On the year Wisconsin has had...*

"We lost two heartbreakers to two good teams – Ohio State and Penn State. We knew they couldn't be here so we took advantage of the opportunity. Our team is resilient, full of character and we have a room full of men who really know how to persevere. "

Wisconsin running back Montee Ball

*On how they dominated the running game...*

"We kind of set our minds before the game that this is our game. The running backs were going to set the tempo. We've been practicing real hard so I'm really glad to see that."

*On whether there was a statement to be made for Wisconsin being in the Big Ten Championship Game...*

"Of course. We all felt like we had a big statement to make on a big stage. We just wanted to make sure that we executed."

*On whether this is the best performance he's seen while at Wisconsin...*

"Just to say, everything we've been through, all the close games we've lost, to play like we did today, it really says a lot about Wisconsin."

Wisconsin running back James White

*On whether there was a statement to be made...*

"Yea, definitely. A lot of people said we shouldn't have been in the game, but we knew we had an opportunity and we wanted to take advantage of it."

*On the play calling in the game...*

"We had to play an aggressive game and let it all out. Whatever coach called, we we're going to try and execute."

Wisconsin linebacker Chris Borland

*On what the goal was for the defense coming into the game:*

“We had to stop number three [Martinez]. He runs the ball really well. Excluding that second drive, we did a pretty good job the majority of the game.”

*On when he knew this game would be controlled by the Badgers:*

That was a great first drive and they never stayed down. We have a lot of confidence in those guys. They’ve been through a lot. Today’s performance was just incredible.”

**December 1, 2012**



Wisconsin - 70  
Nebraska - 31

An interview with:

**COACH BIELEMA  
CHRIS BORLAND  
MONTEE BALL  
JAMES WHITE**

THE MODERATOR: Coach, an opening statement, and then questions for all four of the fellas up here.

COACH BIELEMA: First, give credit to Nebraska, a very good football team that earned the right to be here as well as us. Knew our guys were up for the challenge last Sunday. To be through what we've gone through as a group of men, the way they kind of responded on Sunday.

Tuesday's practice, I knew we had a chance. Wednesday and Thursday I knew we had a really good chance. And after that first quarter, first half today, I knew we had an excellent chance. That's because of these guys, these three guys here. 71 other guys we brought with us. We left 40 back in Madison. I got a group of men that only know one thing, and that's how to work, how to have faith. Their determination to get here and the resiliency of this group gave us the championship. So thank you very much, and open it up for questions.

**Q. Montee, last year you were playing in this game. You couldn't have foreseen all the off the field struggles and some of the early struggles this season on the field. Could you talk a little bit about what it means to you to get back here and get another shot at the Rose Bowl, and just in the context of all the struggles that you've gone through?**

MONTEE BALL: Yeah, I've been through a lot. But I just make sure to keep focusing and keep playing with my teammates. I read something that Coach B. said, make sure not to show it throughout this team. I didn't want to be a distraction or anything like that. So I just stuck with the formula. I believe we all did. I'm just really glad and fortunate to be on this team.

**Q. Three Rose Bowls now, is this one any sweeter?**

CHRIS BORLAND: I think in a way it is. We've been through a lot this year. Had five really tough losses. We felt we could have won, and this kind of validated everything we went through this season. Overcame some obstacles, to come out on top in the end means a lot to us.

JAMES WHITE: Yeah, for sure, with all the adversity we've faced this season, it's a culmination of what we've been through. It's great to win the Big Ten and get another shot at the Rose Bowl.

MONTEE BALL: Yeah, we had our backs against the wall, and we knew it as a team. We needed to focus on our plan, block everyone out and keep fighting.

COACH BIELEMA: To have three Big Ten Championships says it all. It makes this one very special.

**Q. It seemed you went into your bag of tricks. Where did those plays come from?**

COACH BIELEMA: It was a mixed bag. Matt [Offensive Coordinator Matt Canada] kept talking about having an indoor game, being able to execute certain things. There were probably a couple we haven't used yet either that will remain a little secret. James really wanted to be recruited as a quarterback all year long and finally had that opportunity to show up out there today and just a lot of different things.

But our kids have a little bit of fun with it, but it was still the meat and potatoes that got us where we were.



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**Wisconsin - 12 01 12**

**Q. Coach, Bo Pelini said you guys didn't do a lot different tonight than you did in the first meeting, and Curt [Phillips] was telling the Big Ten Network the same thing. Was it really that similar of a game plan, and kind of second, where was this Wisconsin team all year?**

COACH BIELEMA: I think offensively it didn't change with Curt, but the run game for sure. Weren't a lot of different things. We hit some rounds and different gadgets that were new. But we stuck to the success of what makes us good. We don't deviate. We've got a plan that we stick to. We talked about working together as a group, offense, defense, special teams. Where we've been all year, we've been on the cusp of it. We played a four quarter game, just didn't have it.

I knew we had a chance this week. We were healthy for the first time in a long time at all positions, and that was a big part of the game.

**Q. Coach, Melvin [Gordon] had 216 yards on nine carries. Can you talk about his performance today?**

COACH BIELEMA: I think Melvin would be the first to tell you he might be the player that's grown the most in our program from game one to where we are today. I was going through yardage totals at the end of the game. And number 28 here said just don't go past me. I don't know what Montee ended up with, but he's on the verge of breaking Montee's record. But it speaks volumes about it.

These guys compete on a daily basis. Montee's great. James is great, and Melvin's getting the hang of things, and it's really fun to think about the future.

**Q. For Montee and James, did it feel like you were playing for a different team tonight the way the offense was producing? Second, what do you think allowed the offense to be so incredibly effective tonight?**

MONTEE BALL: Honestly, it's just the energy, the energy that we had in the locker room going out on to the field and the sideline. We missed the second half last time we met with this team. We made sure to focus on building this game into a four quarter game, and I believe we did. That was the difference right there. Just everyone was focused on the plan and kept the energy up.

JAMES WHITE: Just like Montee said, you never know which play is going to matter. Every play is a big play. Everybody pushed through each play and helped us push us through this game.

**Q. Coach, can you talk about Montee's perseverance throughout the season and culminating in what you were able to accomplish tonight?**

COACH BIELEMA: I think it speaks volumes about who he is individually. But as a collective group, I think when Montee made the decision to come back and spoke up last year in the Rose Bowl locker room, we all knew we wanted to get back to Pasadena. He expressed a desire to stay for his senior year and make that happen. When he did that, I think it spoke volumes to all the people around him. I don't want to steal words from James and all the other running backs and offensive linemen, they wanted to see Montee have success. Hopefully this performance propels him to the top of the Doak Walker, because he's a guy that deserves it in every way. I think it's a true indicator of what kind of man we have. We all know he's a good player, but he's an incredible human being.

**Q. It's going to get lost in the offensive fireworks tonight, but can you touch on the way your defense played in the first half, especially except for the Juan Martinez run, but Cro's [Marcus Cromartie] interception and all the other big plays they made?**

COACH BIELEMA: Yeah, I think our defensive coaches have been unbelievable all year with the game plan. We don't make a lot of calls. We just stick to a plan. We had a third-down plan, but on first and second down we had something that we wanted to execute and play well. Coach Partridge had two new defensive coaches out of four -- for us to play the way we did. Also, just personnel-wise - Darius Hillary goes out, Devin Smith goes. We have Peniel Jean in there, and a number of guys playing in different positions that hadn't practiced that way all week. We were very deep upfront. That makes us play well. And Chris and the linebacker corps is as good as I've been around in coaching, and they're getting coached very, very well, which leads to great plays.

**Q. Chris, is that something you used as**

**motivation going into this?**

CHRIS BORLAND: We were very candid about that. Our five losses, as far as being third in our division, it's important to play by the rules off the field too. We ran a clean program and I'm proud of that too. We took it as motivation. We're better than a five-loss team, and today we showed it.

**Q. Montee, I know you felt like you had unfinished business after losing the Rose Bowl last year. How important will this game be for you?**

MONTEE BALL: Well, for me, that was one of the main factors coming back. I felt like there was a lot of unfinished business I can prove and also for this team. Speaking for the entire team, we have something to prove. We'll take these weeks serious, as always. Really focus on all the small things and play a full four-quarter game against a great team in Pasadena.

**Q. Coach, all the things that this team has gone through was there ever a point in the season where you were worried you were getting to the point where it was just too much to handle? Was there a point you felt they weren't going to be able to endure it?**

COACH BIELEMA: I know you're going to think I'm crazy. But after some of those games Saturday night you're sitting on the plane ride home, somewhere on the road, and then I come in on Sunday and just see the guys that we have the great fortune of coaching and see the look in their eyes, the passion. They hurt when you're supposed to hurt.

But they also know the one element we all share in this world is time. If we spent one day worrying about ourselves or what's happened, we'd never have a chance to move forward. Our guys are pretty quick to move on. I can't tell you how excited I was on Sunday and Monday, a lot of guys up watching film. They were excited, energetic. They knew what we could do. And in this locker room today was off the charts.

I get it. I understand. I don't have a normal locker room. I've got a group of men that is uncommon in the way they go about their business.

**Q. What do you think of Melvin and the way he played?**

MONTEE BALL: I was waiting for the day he was going to excel and show what he was

capable of doing. And I'm sure the coaches are extremely excited for the future because this player is going to be very, very good. Like I said, it's really pleasing to me to see him grow and watch him really do some great things out there. So it's all good.

**Q. Coach, did Nebraska surprise you at all that it wasn't a little bit more competitive?**

COACH BIELEMA: I think they're competitive. I'd like to give credit to their defense. They really kept the ball. Obviously, the Martinez play early on showed how special he is. We thought we had a sack for loss there, and he's able to make a few people miss.

Give credit to them. They were a very good team, but we executed and played well today. I know it's easy to say that when you're looking at the score. But defensively and offensively and on special teams, we just played extremely well today.

**Q. This is for Ball. Just what was Nebraska doing or not doing that just allowed you to get loose and really run?**

MONTEE BALL: Well, just like Coach B. said, let's give credit to them because they earned the spot to be here as much as we did. But really it was what we were doing. We focused on what we were doing and made sure to execute the game plan. The offensive linemen did a great job of creating some big, huge holes for us. They made it very easy for us, and we didn't want to let them down. So we hit it full speed, and had to make plays in the back end, and I believe we did.

**Q. Chris, you've missed two games, but you came back facing a zone read team led by Taylor Martinez. How important was the preparation this week and how impressed were you with your defense staying disciplined? It seemed like after the big runs, he never felt comfortable in the pocket again?**

CHRIS BORLAND: I think it goes without saying, preparation is the most important part. The week leading up to this game, I thought we had one of the best weeks of preparation on defense. And they've got a lot of weapons. Obviously, Taylor showed it on that run two other times, and they got it to their backs.

Really proud of the defensive effort from the D-line, to the linebackers, to the secondary.

It's one of our best we've put forth all year in the first half, especially.

THE MODERATOR: Chris, James, Montee, you can go back to the locker room. Anything left for Coach Bielema?

**Q. I know Matt Canada has been criticized this year, but how much credit does he deserve for what happened tonight?**

COACH BIELEMA: He obviously came up with a game plan. The reason I hired him, I've been impressed with his creativity ever since I've known him. You've got to understand now I lost six coaches out of nine, four on offense. To put that room together and to grind it out the way we have all year in unwavering faith, it's a group of guys that take a lot of pride in how they work and how they coach our players.

I think our players needed to know -- I lost some coaches that our players really liked. Any time you have that when you're dealing with a young man as great as the kids are, there is always apprehension that's as good as the guy before you. I've done that in my coaching career when I've gone on to different jobs and replaced coaches that are very popular and win our kids over. Guys have had to feel comfortable. I give a lot of credit to Matt Canada, but all of my offensive coaches overall.

**Q. Coming into this game, you guys were the underdogs. You came out and beat this Nebraska team by 39 points. So what's it mean for your team to relish that underdog role?**

COACH BIELEMA: It does -- make no bones about it, we love when people say you can't. We heard it from a lot of different people. Lot of talking heads. Lot of people when you're bumping into them in all the interview things, you just quietly store it away. Kind of walk softly and carry a big stick. When you have a chance to take a swing, take it hard. I knew our kids were going to come out and prove some things very, very well today.

**Q. I'm not sure if you play favorites and the season is not over. But where's this team rank of all the teams you've ever had?**

COACH BIELEMA: I told them this last night. I've had teams that have been ranked higher, won more games. I don't know if I've enjoyed coaching a team as much as these guys because we've gone through some pretty high

peaks and low valleys. They're the same guys every day.

I love coaching guys that are the same people every day. It's the ones that are up-and-down that you get frustrated with. I knew the kind of room I had. That's why today isn't a big shock to me.

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