

December 6, 2014



Alabama – 42
Missouri - 13

An Interview With:

GARY PINKEL

THE MODERATOR: We're ready to begin with Coach Pinkel. We'll ask Coach just for his general thoughts on the game and then take your questions.

COACH PINKEL: First of all, Alabama played very well. They're a great football team. Congratulations to them.

I thought that -- we made a run at it in the third quarter, when we got a touchdown and a field goal. Then they answered with a 65-yard drive, and we went out and punted, and then they got a 90-yard drive. So they responded really like you want a football team to do.

So I'm disappointed how we played, and I've got to do a better job.

Q. Gary, what was your view of the play with Shane, and did you get some sort of --

COACH PINKEL: Up top our coaches said that -- I think he had the crown of the head. That's what I was told. Our coaches upstairs saw it, and they agreed with it. So that's what it was.

We've had personal fouls in these games, penalties. We've had them the last three or four weeks also, and you get in big games like this, and it's not very good. I mean, it's not -- I'm responsible for that. We had other penalties in the game that hurt us, and you play a good team like this, you do those kinds of things, you're going to pay for it, and we did.

Q. Coach, just how important was it losing Shane Ray that early in the football game? What did it do to your defense?

COACH PINKEL: Well, Matt Hoch went out too in the first half. He didn't play either. But that's what you have other players for. They'll go in and play, and just no excuses. That didn't affect a lot of the play that we had. We just didn't play very well.

Q. Coach, there's a perception that there's a gap between the East and the West in terms of ability. You've been in this game twice now in a row. You've lost this game twice in a row. Is that perception reality? I know it's cyclical, but how big is the gap?

COACH PINKEL: I like being in the league, and I like -- and certainly I play whatever our schedule is every year, and I think it's a great league. That's my answer.

Q. Gary, the way Alabama was able to kind of shut down your running game and force you to just throw it, was that something you were a little concerned about coming in, that they might have the kind of defense that could really --

COACH PINKEL: We expected to do a little better, but I have to give them credit. They're a very good run defense, and they do a good job. So I think -- I give them credit. I wish we could have run the ball better, but we didn't.

Q. Gary, it's still a raw feeling after a game, but I just wonder, are you able to have some context on the season? It wasn't necessarily a season where people would have expected you to be here, but the game ends up being, numerically anyway, a hard loss.

COACH PINKEL: This is not the time really. This is -- I'm really disappointed how we played. We played a great football team. You play a great football team, you've got to play well.

They're going to make plays, and you've got to make plays.

I'm responsible for how my team plays. Having penalties, having a turnover, I'm just very disappointed.

Q. Obviously, a very big game for Jimmie Hunt. Did you expect to get him this involved in the game plan?

COACH PINKEL: Maty made some plays too. Some of those, he went outside the pocket and found him down feel. Jimmie certainly made great catches. Maty can do that. He had a good rush, and it put a little pressure on us without question. And Jimmie made some big plays, like he did in the fourth quarter last game. So he's done some really good things this year.

Q. Coach, is there any one thing you can point to that's kind of turned things around in the fourth quarter that caused that letdown?

COACH PINKEL: Well, I think that -- like I said a moment ago, we scored 10 points. They came back, got a 65-yard drive, I believe, and we went out, and I think we got one first down, punted to the 10 yard line, and they went and backed it up with two back-to-back touchdowns.

So the lead that we had -- we had it down to eight points, I believe it was. I might be off a point here or there. And they answered. They did what they had to do. If we could have gotten a stop, could have gotten good field position, if -- all the ifs you could have. But those two, to me, those were two statement drives from their standpoint.

Q. Coach, what would a conference championship have meant this evening? What's next going forward for this team?

COACH PINKEL: We'll keep working hard. We'll get up and brush the dirt off and get back to work, like we always do. It's not the end of the world, but certainly -- you know, I've been -- coached in four Championships and haven't won one, so I'm responsible for that.

Q. Coach, you got it down to 21-13. What do you feel like happened from that point?

COACH PINKEL: Yeah, I just went through that whole thing. We had an eight-point game, and they came back and answered with a 65-yard drive, and I think we got a first down and punted down to the 10 yard line, I believe. So

those are two statement drives. They came right back, bam, touchdown, 90-yard drive, touchdown. So that's what good teams do, and we didn't do a very good job.

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