

Popeyes Bahamas Bowl Postgame Press Conference 12-24-14

Central Michigan Head Coach Dan Enos

"I'd like to thank Popeyes. I'd like to thank the Bahamian people for their hospitality. Just an unbelievable bowl experience."

Have you ever been involved in anything like that?

"You know 2010 when we played at Navy we had a similar deal where we weren't down as much, but we were down 38-24 in the fourth quarter with under 3 minutes to go in the game. We came back and tied it and went for two in that situation. But no I've never been around anything like that because they really had a handle on the game. Not only were they beating us but they had had a handle on the game. As I told our team, in the first half we had the ball on the 12 yard line and threw an interception because we didn't have good protection and Cooper [Rush] had to throw it too soon. We had a guy open and we missed it. Just missed points. And then we had a fourth-and-one. I told our defense that if they had gotten a stop right there that it might have been a different game. We might not have to go for two to win it. But I told our guys, again, that they battled valiantly."

What does this near comeback say about your program and your kids?

"It's the Nassau City Miracle, almost. But hey, Dan Enos don't quit. Our team is never going to quit while I'm the head football coach. We've got blue collar guys. They work. They've got great character. Football mirrors life. There's adversity. There's ups and downs. You get your butt kicked and you got to bounce back. That's what these guys did. The battled back."

When did you start thinking about going for two?

"About three seconds before it happened. We sent the PAT field goal team out and then somebody said something about going for two and it clicked. I went 'Whoa. Good.' And then I looked at the players and said 'what do you got?' And they said 'Let's do it. Let's win the game.' We had Courtney Williams on one side and Jesse Kroll on the other side, and we've got little read routes that we run. Both of those guys are great fade runners and slant runners. Cooper had thrown seven touchdown passes already so he was pretty hot. We didn't want to go overtime because we had trouble stopping them all day. Titus [Davis] was hurt too. We just thought we had momentum and we were going to try and win the game."

How do you explain the second half performance compared to the first half?

"I challenged the players a little bit, but the players themselves challenged each other more at the point. We've got great senior leadership. Great senior leadership. And I just said a couple things. The players were really embarrassed about how they'd performed as well. I didn't need to say much, they know that. The seniors were most of the players that did the talking. Nobody was really yelling at each other or anything. It was more of a calm 'Hey we're a family. We believe in one another. Let's keep playing for each other. Let's have some pride in ourselves and this program. We are too good of a team to be here and allow this to happen to us. The score is zero to zero. Let's start over here and take it one play at a time.' That was basically the message from one player to another."

What can you say about the senior class?

"They've done a tremendous job. In Titus [Davis]'s first year we were 3-9. Now we've been bowl eligible three years in a row. We won a bowl and obviously lost today. They've really got this program on the right track, again. Stabilized with their efforts on the field and in the classroom. Our APR scores are

higher than they've ever been. Our GPA on the team is higher than it's ever been. And it's really due to the seniors, Courtney [Williams], Titus, Anthony Garland, Jarrett Chapman, Jason Wilson, Leterrius Walton, Michael Kinville, Deon Butler, Justin Cherocci and I could go on and on and on. Guys have done a phenomenal job of buying into what we're doing. They work hard every day We had community service events here on the island that were voluntary. I told them where we were going and we needed four or five guys to go. We had 55 guys sign up and not take a whole afternoon at Atlantis Resort to go to an orphanage and a kids' clinic here on the island – totally by volunteering. I think that speaks volumes about the character of our football team.”

What can you say about Titus Davis?

“Six catches, 143 yards, 4 touchdowns – that’s outstanding. Courtney [Williams] had two touchdowns. Between our two seniors we had six touchdowns today. Both of those guys brought tremendous leadership. Titus obviously gets more attention and accolades because he’s had more production. He’s just a super player, a tremendously hard worker and just an explosive player. And he loves to compete and Courtney does as well. Those two guys, Courtney and Titus, their leadership rubs off on the rest of the group. And I told the young guys today that they have a lot to live up to next year.”

Central Michigan WR Courtney Williams

Can you describe the final touchdown pass?

“That’s something that we do just about every pregame [practice] every Friday just before leaving out. And it’s something that Coach Enos tells us to keep in the back of our heads. We don’t actually practice it all the time, but we just make sure we know our routes and things like that. Then we just leave it up to fate and hope for something like that.”

What was your mindset going into the play?

“Whatever you can to get the ball into the end zone, that’s what we are trying to do.”

Central Michigan QB Cooper Rush

What was the strategy in the second half?

“We just kept grinding away, taking it one play at a time. From the huddle we just kept saying one play at a time. And next thing you know we look up and the score’s getting closer and closer and that’s when you know you’ve got a chance to win it.”

On the two-point conversion

“We’d had a lot of success. We just needed one more completion.”

How did the players approach the decision of going for two?

“We were sitting there in the huddle saying that we were going to win this game. We got lucking to be around. We kept hanging around and we had a chance to win it. We wanted to win right then and there.”

WKU Head Coach Jeff Brohm

Opening Remarks

“It was definitely an exciting football game for the fans – not so much for our side in the second half, but a lot of credit goes to the Central Michigan team. They did an outstanding job in the second half. They continued to fight and battle when they were down by a lot of points. I got to give a lot of credit to their players and their coaching staff. They just gave a tremendous effort, and they fought ‘til the very end. They easily could’ve won the game at the end. With that said, I’m happy for our guys. We won the game. And really that’s how the story of our season – all of our games have pretty much been like that. They’ve gone down to the wire. There have been a lot of twists and turns to all of our games. And definitely, there were a lot of twists and turns to this one. But I’m proud of our guys. They’ve worked hard all year. And in this game, the parity is so close that if you can just find a way to win – that’s what it’s all about. So our guys did that. I give a lot of credit to them, and to our staff, for just continuing to work hard, and to find a way to pull out the victory in this great bowl game – this bowl great destination that we were thrilled and excited to be a part of in the inaugural season of it. I tell you what – this is just a tremendous experience that our players had, that our coaches had, and we wouldn’t trade it for the world.”

What did you see on the last play of the game?

“What did I see on it? I saw a very good catch, a lot of laterals, and they scored the touchdown. The chances of that happening, as you guys know – I think the last one was the Stanford one that everyone knows about. This one may have been even better other than there wasn’t a band on the field. But they did a great job executing it. They kept lateralling it. Their players never gave up. And they found a way to score. So it was just a tremendous effort by them to find a way to make that play with one second on the clock.”

What can you say about your first year in Conference USA, coming away with a bowl win?

“Like I said, we’re thrilled and excited – first off, to be in Conference USA. It’s a tremendous conference with a lot of history and a lot of tradition. We couldn’t be prouder of the fact that we were able to represent this conference in a positive way. We were sitting at 3-5 at one point in our season, and to find a way to reel off five-straight victories is a testament to our players, our university and the leadership we have. But to get this first bowl victory for our school is big. We can build upon this. We have a young team. Hopefully our guys understand what it takes to win and to play at a high level. And in our conference, you have to play at a high level each week. The parity is close. There’s a lot of good football teams, and we couldn’t be happier to be at this bowl destination. And to be able to participate in Conference USA.”

DE Derik Overstreet

What did you see on the last play of the game?

“I was on the rush on that one, and I got to level the quarterback, but I guess I got to watch pass. He scrambled out of the pocket. So he threw the ball up, and I saw him go up in the crowd of traffic, and I thought the game was over. I thought the ball got dropped in. Then I see the ball come flying out, and I just take off down the field trying to catch whoever has it. I really didn’t think he was going to score. I thought somebody was going to tackle him. It was just a crazy play, really.”

What’s going on in your head during the 2-point conversion attempt

“Just to get a sack. I wanted to end the game really. But what really happened – they threw a quick pass, and I just had to hope for the best really.”

QB Brandon Doughty

What was the biggest difference in the second half?

“Well, you know, I thought we kind of got a little conservative and got relaxed on offense in the second half. They did a really good job of hitting our run game up, and it was just one of those grind-out halves. And we’ve got to fix that going into the future because we let a few go earlier in the season doing that. I’m just excited that we got the win.”

On leading NCAA in passing yards and TD throws.

“Well, like I said many times before, all the awards and being on top – it’s not just me out there. Football is a team sport, and I think our guys do a really good job of making me look good. It hasn’t really hit me that I got all that stuff, but I’m sure as the offseason comes – it’ll be cool to tell my friends when I get older.”

WR Willie McNeal

What does it mean to bring home a trophy your senior year?

“It means a lot, especially against them because they took the one the first time (The 2012 Little Caesars Bowl). It means a lot just to finish the season that strong. We had the playoff mentality, and this was actually the real championship. To win it, that means a lot.”