

Nebraska Football Weekly Press Conference
Nebraska vs. Southern Miss Game Week
Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2004

Jay Moore:

On last week's win over Western Illinois:

I think we came out with a lot of confidence, being able to get five turnovers. Our goal was originally three, but we got five. There's always that feeling of not knowing what we're capable of doing yet. But we have a lot more confidence knowing that we can get to the quarterback like we need to, and we can get a lot of turnovers like we did last year.

On his role on defense:

I feel like a starter, even though I'm not listed as number one. With the nickel we bring in and the rotation we have in the game with Benard (Thomas) and I, we're rotating every series. We basically both got equal plays. I look at myself as being a starter, too, that can come in in different situations and help out.

On Southern Miss. being the first real big test:

I know Western Illinois is a darn good football team, but Southern Miss is coming off a real good year last year, and they have some good returning players on that offense. I know their offensive line has some good returning talent and are going to give us a real good challenge. So, we're going to have to step it up this week an extra level in practice, because they're going to come in here ready and confident. It's their first game this year, so I know they're going to be ready to play some football.

On advantages of having played a game:

I think it is an advantage because we have the ability to see what we can do and see how we can handle different situations. I know throughout the game last Saturday, we had a lot of sudden changes. We feel confident that we can handle lots of different situations, whether it comes off turnover or special teams.

On the Southern Miss offense:

Offensively, I know they have a good quarterback coming back from last year. On their offensive line, they're returning a lot. I know their right tackle, which I'll be going against, was all-conference last year. Their quarterback lost his job, ended up coming back strong. We know they have the capabilities of being a really good football team, so we're really going to have to prepare this week.

On playing in his first game in quite some time:

It felt great, because I've been held out of the competition of a game for a while. I had a little bit of the jitters, but I wasn't as nervous as I thought I was going to be. I felt really excited to get out there. I had a lot of energy and my ankle felt good. I was just ready to get out there and hit some other guys besides our own team. It felt amazing to just get out there with our fans and be a part of that great defense we have here.

The last game I played in was the state Shrine game, but the last real game I played in was in high school in 2001, my senior year.

On the quickness of NU's offensive drives:

As long as they're putting points up on the board, that's fine by me. That takes a lot of pressure off of us, because we can apply a lot more pressure to the offense with some gambles and chances. Long drives, short drives, as long as we're putting points on the board, I'm happy.

On what goes through his mind when the defense is in a bad spot:

The main thing is applying pressure on the offensive line. Stopping that run, holding the line off our linebackers. Pushing back the line of scrimmage really stops the momentum and that clears it up for our linebackers to come up and make the play.

We were fortunate to get some turnovers when they got in there close. A fumble recovery, Coop's (Ira Cooper) pick. We applied the pressure right there. When they scored, we tried to apply more pressure, but sometimes things just don't work out.

On his concern over the special teams' problems:

I don't have much concern. I know this week during practice we'll get those kinks worked out.

Joe Dailey:

On evaluating his own performance last weekend:

I played pretty well in the first half. The second half, I got excited. Pre-snap beats started to change a little, so it made things a little difficult for me. Overall, I think I did well. It's just a matter of making adjustments during halftime.

On what he learned during the first game:

Practice is everything. Practice is where you develop your tempo, where you get everything done. We were in such great shape that it made everything so simple when we got out there.

On Coach Callahan's mailman analogy regarding Dailey:

I think he's absolutely right. Sometimes I want to go up top a lot, because I see it and I feel I can make that throw, but at the same time I've got to be conservative, follow the structure that's outlined, hit my check downs and let them (receivers) run with the ball.

On what he remembers about Southern Miss last year:

These guys are going to come at us from all angles, just like Western Illinois. We didn't know really what to expect from them, but we made adjustments. These guys will come at us from all angles. They have big guys up front, some fast guys at the linebacker position and some young guys at the defensive back position. What I took from last year is that these guys love to play and they're about speed. We're going to have to defend the speed.

I think they saw what happened in the second half (last week) and they'll try to give me different looks, but I promise to be well prepared for that.

To be honest, I totally forgot about (last year's game). I had to think back the other day about what it was like. It was in a hostile environment, so when they come down to our place this year it'll be a little different. I'm excited about it.

On the advantages of having already played a game:

We got all of the jitters out. They're going to come out fresh in an environment they haven't been in before. It's going to be something for them to come out and see all of the red in the crowd and see us coming out shifting, putting new motions in. It's going to be exciting for us and unique to watch how they handle it and adjust.

On the performance of the running backs last weekend:

It's expected of these guys. They were all highly ranked guys coming out of high school, and when you watch them in practice they make all these great plays. When they get out in the game, we expect them to do that. It's expected of all of us on offense.

On the Southern Miss linebackers:

I'm going to treat these guys like I treat everyone else. You have to watch these guys like you have to watch everyone else. They're going to be the ones that determine whether I throw the hot route or not. I'm going to approach this game like I approach every other game and practice, just be very focused and detail oriented.

On his reading of the Western Illinois defense:

I think it went well, actually. I followed my principles and everything well. I'm excited about this week, because it's going to enhance my knowledge of the game and allow me to see things better.

On his interceptions last weekend:

They're going to happen, bad balls, tipped balls. I'm not glad they happened, but they did. You learn from every mistake that you make.

On the completion percentage he aims for:

I aim to complete every pass I throw.

On center Kurt Mann's performance:

I didn't get sacked at all. I came away scott-free the other day, so I was excited to see that I didn't get touched.

On the amount of offense Nebraska used from its playbook vs. Western Illinois:

Very limited. There's so much more to it. It's very in-depth. A lot more goes into it, and you'll see that over the course of the season.

On his business-like demeanor:

I look at it the same way Coach Callahan and everyone else does. We've got to do a good job here in order to get where we want to go. You can't be too high or too low. You've got to be very focused, very driven. That's the way I approach this game, the way I approach everything I do in life.

We haven't even started yet. It's the very tip of the iceberg. We have a lot more to do, a lot more to attack.

Stewart Bradley:

On the defense's tackling performance:

I think that we did a pretty good job. I think we can definitely improve. It's hard coming from camp, where you have to tone down the full scrimmages. We missed a couple key tackles, but that will be cleaned up this week, I think.

On Ira Cooper's performance:

I was really impressed with Coop. He stepped in and made a lot of big plays. Things were going his way most of the night.

On the Southern Miss offense:

They have a really good quarterback coming back from last year. They had a big winning streak at the end of last season. He wasn't the quarterback that played against us, but he stepped in. He's experienced, he's a good quarterback. They have some good tight ends and a pretty good line coming back. So there's skill and speed pretty much all over the field. They're going to be a really good challenge for us.

On if the defense remembers how to defend the option:

We've gone over it in camp. We haven't worked on it a ton, but I think we'll be prepared.

Advantage of having already played a game:

I think when you play a game, some wrinkles come out that you need to work on, which is important. But I think also, in your first game, you have a little extra juice for the season opener. I don't know if its going to be a huge advantage for us, but we'll see how it plays out.

Brandon Koch:

On whether Southern Miss will offer a larger challenge than Western Illinois:

Absolutely. Southern Miss is definitely going to be a bigger challenge for us. They have a great defense. They do a lot of different things, have a lot of different fronts. It's going to be plenty for the offense to study and pick up this week.

On the importance of protecting Dailey:

We don't want Joe to get touched. That's our goal—no sacks, nothing like that. We want to keep Joe healthy. As linemen, that's a big responsibility for us and something we take very serious.

On differences in defensive fronts from last year to Saturday's game:

It was definitely different. In past years there were eight, nine guys stacked in the box. There were just so many people in a small area. In the game the offense allowed us to spread the defense out all over. That helps us out as an offense. It keeps the defense guessing and on its heels. We were passing and running the ball effectively, and that helps.

On Dailey's demeanor in the huddle:

Joe's real calm, actually. He'll talk to us if he thinks he needs to say anything extra. Joe's real calm and collected and keeps his focus. He does a good job.

On advantages of having already played a game:

I think it is an advantage. Once you get on the field, then you can look at it on tape. There are little things you definitely need to work on and things that show up that need to be addressed. Just getting a feel for the speed of the game is huge, too.

On the affect of motion on the defense:

In the game Saturday, there seemed to be a lot of confusion. They were having to shift and change their strength. They had plenty to talk about on the defensive side, I think. You feel like you kind of have an edge. They're worrying about where they're going to get lined up and positions they need to do. We're just reading what they do and are ready to fire off the ball.

On Greg Austin seeing action:

It's been good to see Greg get back out there. He had a tough road back and he's fought through it and done a great job. He had a good fall camp and got into a game and did a great job. I think it's tremendous what Greg did.

On how the offensive line grades its performance:

I'm not sure if Coach keeps track of those (pancake blocks) right now or not. We focus our grades more on technique and assignments and whether we finish.