

Head Coach Scott Frost Quotes 11-25
NU Athletic Communications
Nebraska Football
Weekly Press Conference
Memorial Stadium (Lincoln, Neb.)
Monday, Nov. 25, 2019
Iowa

On if senior day adds some extra excitement to the game

“Yeah senior day was special for me. I think it’s special for all the guys the last time they get a chance to be out there. Hopefully in a game like this, playing a really good team, last game of the year, you don’t need any more juice. I think it’s just a special opportunity for guys to enjoy it one last time.”

On playing for bowl eligibility this week

“We want to approach every game the same. Obviously, I think anytime you’re at the end of the season, there’s always going to be big games and a little more riding on it. I don’t want our team to put any more emphasis on any one game than the other.”

On the mood of the team going into the game on Friday

“It’s good. I thought the mood was good all week. I said that before the game. I thought the enthusiasm really showed through on Saturday. The guys know how close they’ve been in a few games. They know how much they’ve improved. They’re having fun around each other. It’s a short week obviously, we had a walkthrough Sunday night and a practice this morning so a quick turnaround and guys are still a little tired. We’re going to get them ready and they’re going to be excited to play.”

On if guys being excited around each other is a change or something that has always been here

“No, I think it’s been building all along. Each team has its own personality. I think the relationship in the team... you really never have a strong relationship and trust with people until you’ve been through some shared experiences. Every team has to learn that on their own. We have some young guys that were just getting into the fold of that. For the most part, all of that has been pretty good all year. Maybe a little bit when you’re expected to do so much, then you stub your toe a few times and have some disappointments, maybe the pressure of all that is off of you and you can enjoy that a little more. There might be a little of that. Vast, vast majority of our team are the right kind of kids and kids doing things the right way and fighting for each other.”

On why there is limited media access this week and if it was his decision

“No, honestly it’s just a short week and it’s a big game for us so I just want our guys to be as focused as possible. It’s really no bigger than that.”

On what he liked from his defense against Maryland

“Well we held them to seven, held a team to seven on the road so that’s a start. I thought we did a better job getting pass rush, I thought the coverage was tighter. There weren’t really any breakdowns until the fourth quarter in run fits. People

were a lot more attentive to the detail and I saw a lot more enthusiasm, which goes a long way on defense.”

On how he thinks about losing streaks to teams

“Those are things I think about in the offseason. Honestly, I can’t get all caught up in that. As the program’s leader I have to be focused on what I can try to do to give it the best shot we possibly can this weekend. Iowa is probably no different. There’s a few teams that have been getting the better of Nebraska lately and that’s what we’re here to try and fix.”

On how he stressed Maryland having Luke McCaffrey and Adrian Martinez on the field at the same time

“I’m sure we’re giving some people some things to think about and look at with him out on the field. There’s a lot of options for us with him out on the field. Again, that was kind of a part decision, part reaction to where we were at skill positions. We knew [Kanawai] Noa probably wasn’t going to be 100 percent going into the game. We didn’t want to risk Luke too much. He’s a really good football player. He can run, he can throw, he can catch, he loves it, so he’s going to be a really good player for us around here for a long time and we thought it was smart to get a guy like that on the field.”

On having Iowa as the Black Friday game and what it will mean in the future

“I think if it hasn’t caught on it will. Obviously, we go two years without it, but we’ve got a lot of respect for their program. They’re consistent, they’re solid, they’re tough, they’re tough, they’re physical. I have a lot of respect for Coach (Kirk) Ferentz. He has been a good friend and acquaintance for a long time, and I think he does things the right way. We are playing a good team and we look forward to renewing that in a few years and having it be the last game of the year every year. With us sharing a border with them I think that makes sense. Again, rivalries are usually for fans. We need to focus on trying to accomplish our mission.”

On if he knew Coach Ferentz when he was at UNI

“Yeah, I knew him really well when I was in Ceder Falls (Iowa)”

On the size difference between Nebraska and Iowa player last season

“We can get a lot of things done but we can’t make guys taller. There was a size difference last year. We have to keep recruiting the type of kids that I think can be the most successful in the Big Ten. We have, hopefully, closed a gap somewhat in strength and conditioning. I think our guys are stronger and more physical, particularly on the D-line, than we were a year ago. That being said they ran it on us a bunch last year. They basically just wide zone a lot and got a bunch a movement and then we had trouble getting off the field. I am sure they are going to do the same thing and we need to try and do a better job this year.”

On the wide zone challenge from last season’s Iowa game

“Well, we can talk x’s and o’s I guess. When everyone gets running sideways, [as] defenders it is easier to get a little pushed upfield and if there is any crease that

opens up as everything is getting stretched to the sideline, then it opens up a seam for a running back.”

On Iowa defensive end A.J. Epenesa

“He just looks like a Sunday guy when you look at him on tape. That just will be a Steelers uniform. That is how he is built. That is how he plays. Obviously really good in pass rush, [and] really good in the run game, too. We know we have to account for him. He is probably going to be on one side of our line most of the day and it is going to be a big challenge for us.”

On Nebraska senior defensive lineman Khalil Davis

“I think he has gotten better, I think a lot of people have gotten better. That is good production particularly for someone who plays inside a lot. If you can start getting that kind of pass rush from an inside guy then that is a big asset. [I am] really pleased with him and his brother (Carlos Davis.) They have both been really solid for us all year. They are playing smarter now, not making any mistakes, there haven’t been any penalties. Both of them are really talented kids, so we are lucky to have coached them.”

On the senior class

“These seniors have been through a lot by now. They have been recruited by one staff, played for another staff, played for a whole new staff. It has certainly experienced some ups and downs. The guys that are still here out of this senior class have fought through a lot and we appreciate so much the effort they have given.”

On Adrian Martinez

“I think he is running more decisively than he was. I have said this a ton, the fingers get pointed at the quarterback and the coaching staff. I think Adrian just had to get used to that a little bit. Above anything else, he has been beat up all year and I talk about that stuff, but he is getting healthy again. I think that has helped him get more confident again. We all know what kind of player he is. So, I haven’t seen the stats on the last 10 quarters or whatever it is, but I know his game has been improving and he is playing at a pretty high level right now.”

On Adrian Martinez as an option runner

“We have spent quite a lot of time on that. There is an art to that. I had to learn it, everybody that runs it has to learn it. There is just a feeling and art to it. I am not sure that he was experiencing that when he first got here, but he is getting better and better.”

On toughness progression

“I want a tough team. And I don’t think you can win the Big Ten without a tough team consistently. The wuss comment, yeah I hope that is what I said was in regards to making sure that if it was cold in warmups that we went out and handled it the right way and I don’t think we did that in one other game this year. Most of the team did, but not everybody. Usually a big part of that is mindset.”

On Luke McCaffrey

"I want to clear that up. He is a quarterback and he's going to be a quarterback going forward. Right now we are just thin at skill positions. It's a credit to him and to Mario (Verduzco) and his room that he could have not practiced much and go out and play five different positions for us. Those guys have to know what everybody on the field does and it also speaks to his competitiveness and his athletic ability."

On the outlook for Kanawai Noa and Wan'Dale Robinson for the week

"Kanawai is done. He had to have a meniscus repair. So we won't have him this week."

On Lamar Jackson's maturity development

"We talked a lot about the defensive back group. We had some trouble with when our staff first got here just making sure they were doing things the right way and being good teammates. The guys that are still here from that group are doing everything we ask them. I love seeing them everyday. Lamar has a smile on his face all the time. He's improved in a lot of ways. Particularly in the way he will come up and hit now and try to play physical. I wish we had him for four years because I really appreciate what he has done and the progress he has made."

On running back Rahmir Johnson possibly playing a fifth game

"I think Rahmir is probably going to be on emergency duty only. We would like to try and save his year if we can."

On the wide receiver position

"We played some other guys Saturday. Darien Chase was supposed to play, he was a little nicked up Saturday. He's going to be fine. Chris Hickman got some play outside and at tight end. Obviously we played Luke. Hopefully we will get a couple other guys healthy again. Kanawai was a big piece of what we were doing. He's absolutely a delight to coach. He worked hard, did everything right. It was all about the team. We are sorry that his season ended when it did, but feel good about the guys that came in for him."

On place-kicker Matt Waldoch

"What I really want in a kicker is a guy that when I look him in the eye he is confident and when he gets his chance he takes advantage of it. Matt's been fun to have on the team since he has joined us from the club soccer team. I'm sure there is a lot of guys on the club soccer team that were excited for him. I met a few of them. They are great guys. Look, he got an opportunity and he made the most of it. He was lights out in every opportunity that he got and just that confidence that he shows gives me a lot of confidence in him."

On Kirk Ferentz being at Iowa for 20 years

"I think stability is huge. I think experience is huge. He's got a lot of both of that. It's been a long time that he has been building that program and nurturing that program and recruiting the type of kids he wants in that system and developing them. We are a long way from being in a place that long but obviously he has done a good job there. You know what you are going to get with Iowa and they are a physical team. They are disciplined. They are not going to give you anything easy. Play hard on defense and have really good scheme on offense. They are going to

make you earn it, and like I said I have a ton of respect for him and for the program he has built.”

On the kicking situation this season

“I don’t think I have the words for summing up the kicking situation. It’s been crazy. Someone told me that we have six different kickers that have scored a point for us this year. That has to be some kind of record. That’s probably like having to pitch six different pitchers in one inning. It’s probably not a good outcome if you have to.”

On if he plans to have Matt Waldoch stay with the team next year

“Yeah, I’ve already talked to Matt. We want him to be around next year as well. Hats off to the club soccer team for letting us borrow him.”

On Harrison Martin’s path to the team

“When we were having the issues, we were kind of putting out some feelers to find some guys. Matt and the soccer team kind of answered the bell right away. One of my teammates from college was coaching a local high school that I can’t talk about but was coaching a local high school, said he knew a kid that kicked well. We asked him to come out. He did a really good job from the first day. I didn’t know if we were going to get around to get him an opportunity or not, but when the game got in hand, I wanted to give him a chance to get on the field and make one.”

On how he likes to recruit kickers

“That’s an area in our game that has to improve. If we find the right guys, we’ll definitely sign him and have him here for four years. That being said, if there is a good kicker in the state of Nebraska, we’re going to try to get him here and give him an opportunity. Obviously, Kris Brown was here when I was here, but we also had Jessie Kosch, Bill LaFleur, Ted Retzlaff, and some local guys that did a great job for us. There’s been a great history for us in Nebraska. We have to get it fixed first then do what we can to get the right Nebraska kids in here who can do a good job.”

On how many moving pieces there were last week

“The guys are to the point of the season where they don’t even blink when we throw some new schemes at them. They know our offense, defense and their assignments. They know the nuts and bolts of it, and it becomes pretty easy. The travel roster was a mess last week. We were making decisions all week, and it changed about eight times, including the day before the game with people sick and not able to travel and guys being healthy and being able to travel. It was definitely a little bit of a moving puzzle last week. The guys responded well.”

On his message to the high school football kids playing for a state championship the next two days

“Just congratulations. State championships are a big deal everywhere. In Nebraska, everybody is watching. I never got to play in a state championship football game. We got beat in the semifinals twice. It’s a special deal. Probably one of the worst parts of working here for me is I can’t go to those things anymore. It counts as an evaluation. I used to love going to the state basketball tournament, state wrestling,

and the state football championships. Now, I have to watch them on TV like everybody else. It's a big deal. Congratulations to all of them."

On if he wants some of the players playing here in the next two days

"We want as many good players as we can get in here. The more local talent we can get, the better off."

On if he remembers his first interaction with Mohamed Barry

"Mo right away was one of the guys that stepped forward and stepped to the front. I think he came into my office shortly after I got hired just to talk about what he could do to help us get the thing right. He's the type of guy who is going to sell out and try to help his team."

On what the seniors' place in Nebraska history will be

"Every guy that I've ever played with or been around with that played here, loves Nebraska, loves Nebraska people, loves the university and loves the football program. It becomes your second family. These guys are all going to leave, and I hope they feel the same way. They've done a lot of the work that we needed to put in to get Nebraska football back where it should be. I'm grateful to them for it. We'll welcome them with open arms anytime they want to come back and be around."