

January 1, 2014



Michigan State – 24
Stanford – 20

A Postgame Interview With:

**STANFORD HEAD COACH DAVID SHAW
TYLER GAFFNEY
SHAYNE SKOV**

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. Coach, if you wouldn't mind making a quick opening statement.

DAVID SHAW: Thank you. First of all, I told the guys, we had one heck of a year, and got beat today. They played better. They made more plays. That's the bottom line. You know that every time you suit up, it's about who makes the most plays and who scores the most points.

Secondly I want to say what I said in the locker room, which is our group of seniors, it's the most accomplished group of football players to ever go through Stanford University. Regardless of today's outcome, that's just the truth. That's a fact. When you talk about the best teams of the BCS era, you have to mention Stanford University. You have to. Four straight BCS games, 11 games, four straight years. It's rare, rare company. But all the credit today goes to Coach Dantonio and his staff and his players. They played a great game. They slowed us down on offense. They made enough plays on their offensive side and beat us by four points.

Q. On the 4th-and-3 play in the fourth quarter, was that an audible that Kevin ran out of that? What exactly happened on that play?

DAVID SHAW: That was a play call. That was a play call. They played it well.

Q. And what about the 4th-and-1 with Hewitt? That was not an audible, either?

DAVID SHAW: No, it was a play call. It looked initially like we were going to get the push, and then we got stopped up front.

Q. How would you describe Michigan State's defense? Obviously statistically everybody knew coming into the game they were fantastic, but what's your impression from going against them with your own team?

DAVID SHAW: They're good at what they do, and they're going to give you opportunities to make big plays, and we made a couple and we didn't make a couple. But it's a nine-man front. There's a whole bunch of guys in there, there's a lot of slants and twists and pinches and sometimes Gaffney snuck out a couple, made a couple of great runs and a couple of them he didn't have an opportunity. They're that good up front. But to beat a team like that, you've got to hit more than a couple deep balls, because it's one-on-one outside, there's a lot of contact on some of those. We've talked about not worrying about officials and making plays, we got a couple and didn't make a couple other ones.

Q. I wonder if you could just discuss in general the last few minutes the field goal that was a botch, right, that wasn't a call fake?

DAVID SHAW: Oh, definitely not.

Q. And obviously going through the field goal, that worked out, you got the ball back. But was there enough urgency on that last possession of yours?

DAVID SHAW: Yeah, there was enough urgency, we just didn't get a 1st down.

Q. I assume those 4th downs, that's your strength, that's why you wanted to run the ball there?

DAVID SHAW: Absolutely, because when I don't do that everybody goes crazy, we should have done this, we should have done that, so I don't worry about any of that stuff. I'm going to put

the ball in the hands of our guys and put it on the offensive line, we're going to go for it on 4th down in that situation, because we'll put it back on our defense. We'll go for a field goal down by four, because we put it on our defense to get the ball back, and that's what they did. I think our coaches did a phenomenal job. We got beat today by a really good football team.

Q. Did Connor Cook do anything today that you had not anticipated, and can you describe how you thought he played?

DAVID SHAW: I thought he played well. I thought we were able to get to him like we had hoped. We got a couple sacks. We pressured him a couple times, forced him into a couple bad throws, picked off two of them, and one of them could have been and wasn't. I thought we played extremely well there.

They made a few more plays than we could afford to give them with the downfield pass and then one that we got hemmed up catching the ball and then breaks out. Part of the strengths of our defense is not giving up those big plays, and we gave up too many today.

Q. When you got the pick six, did you feel that it was obviously a huge -- I don't know if I'd call it a momentum shift, but it seemed to be a big play in the game. Did you feel that you had Cook rattled at that point in the game?

DAVID SHAW: I think he's played too well in the last nine games of the season to think that we're going to rattle him. He's made some bad plays before, but just like today, he bounces back. He's a tough kid. He's a big kid, he's a better athlete than you think. But we got that pick six and we got up by two scores, and that's one of our hallmarks, we get up by two scores and we'll run the ball and we'll attack you. But then to give up a score right at the end of the first half makes it tough, makes it right back to a one score game. If we can keep that two-score lead, we have a chance to win it.

Q. Evaluating your team and Michigan State's, how similar would you evaluate them, the style of play?

DAVID SHAW: The style of play is very similar. Two teams that play great defense, that run the ball and try to make big plays in the passing game. One has got to win, one has got to lose, and we didn't make enough plays for us to be on the right side.

Q. Was Ty Montgomery unavailable after that kickoff return?

DAVID SHAW: Yes, yes, he was injured. I don't know how bad. We'll get an MRI. It didn't look like there was a lot of ligament damage, but there was enough for us not to put him back in. We'll see what it's like in the next week or so.

Q. Was Murphy injured early or was he out for the rest when Michigan State scored on that drive?

DAVID SHAW: We just gave him a break. We feel good about our guys that are second teamers. We can roll guys in there, give guys a blow so they can come back in and be fresh.

Q. Tyler, can you describe the Michigan State defense and what they were doing to thwart you? You had the long run, but did they do anything that you hadn't expected?

TYLER GAFFNEY: Not at all. They play with the safeties about six, seven yards in the box. They have nine in the box. They leave their cornerbacks out there for one-on-one coverage, and like coach said, maybe a couple more deep balls would have been helpful in the run game, but just it came down to they played well. They made adjustments after the first couple runs, first couple drives of the series, and we didn't respond like we needed to.

Q. Tyler, was this the best defense you've faced personally this year in terms of what you had to go against?

TYLER GAFFNEY: In terms of that, definitely. They play within their own. I knew they played team defense where they were all rallying to the ball. I knew they don't stray away from their job. But when you get out there and you see how cluttered everything is and how much problems they cause, we needed to make some adjustments, and we failed at that and didn't score.

Q. Shayne, did you feel at any point during that game that you were getting to their quarterback at all, rattling him? I know Coach Shaw said you can't, but can you guys feel like maybe you were getting to him a little bit?

SHAYNE SKOV: I don't think so. He's got a lot of poise, especially in the pocket he's able to extend plays and find open guys. Look at the stats

and what he did during the game, my hat goes off to him. He did a great job. We tried to get him after, but at the same time I think he remained calm and made plays when he needed to.

Q. Can you talk about the two missed interceptions at defense? What was your message after that? You guys still managed to make plays to keep your team in the game.

SHAYNE SKOV: I think we dropped them, but at the same time we realized that if we keep bringing pressure and getting in his face and forcing him to make difficult throws, we're going to get some back our way. We got another one with Jordan that unfortunately they called back, but we just realize that if we kept going, kept getting after him we were going to get opportunities to make big plays. We got some and we missed some. That's the nature of football.

I mean, I think we're incredibly proud of the way we played today.

Q. Tyler, on the 4th-down play where you were stopped, what happened on that play? You talked a little bit about how they -- that specific play, what exactly happened?

TYLER GAFFNEY: Yeah, you know, their front, like coach alluded to, their front just gets -- they get in the backfield right away, and that immediately disrupts the run, leaves myself no space to figure something out, and you end up -- they're big and they're strong, so when I lower a shoulder I'm not getting too much.

Q. (No microphone.)

TYLER GAFFNEY: You know, we take pride in that. 4th and 1 is what we preach on, what we do, what Stanford football is all about. You have to give it to Michigan State for stuffing that because everybody in the building knew exactly what was coming, a run was coming up the middle, and it was a test of wills, and they got the better of us.

Q. Tyler, were your offensive linemen getting frustrated by this? Was there a frustration level that you sensed in the huddle after a while, you didn't have a lot of room to run because they were in the backfield?

TYLER GAFFNEY: You know, you can't help but be a little frustrated, but we kept our composure. We kept grinding. There was glimpses of being successful, there was glimpses of establishing I'd almost say dominance, and then

we reverted back. It's tough when you can't really get a rhythm in the game. Like I said, we take our hats off to them. They played strong and they played well.

Q. Tyler, can you talk about what they did specifically in the second half that was different? Obviously you had some big runs in the first half.

TYLER GAFFNEY: I think in the first half just -- we took advantage of they were -- they left maybe a small gash where they don't normally stray away from their job. They all play each gap, they don't stray away from that, and we took advantage of that. In the second half they made some good adjustments. Everywhere I looked there was a green defender, and that's what they do, and that's what they pride themselves on, and they did it well.

Q. Shayne, you've been on both sides of this, what Michigan State is going through now, and this side tonight. Can you talk about the significance of the Rose Bowl in your career and being on both sides of that coin?

SHAYNE SKOV: I mean, yeah. I think that you play all year and you fight all season to get to these moments, to have these opportunities. It takes a lot of hard work and a lot of effort out of the 100 some odd guys on our team and the 20 some odd people on our staff. You play the game to get these opportunities and have these games, so to lose is incredibly difficult, and to win at the same time is exhilarating. There's no greater high than achieving that kind of level as a team. So it's difficult. We're happy with the way we played, but it definitely hurts. It's not easy to lose.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, guys, so much. Congratulations, again, on a great season.

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