



Tennessee Quotes

Head Coach Derek Dooley: ““It was a good start. I was really proud of how the team came out in the first quarter. I thought we were sharp and ready to play. I thought Matt (Simms) did a good job early. He was on and throwing. We had a good tempo. The defense was aggressive. The coverage was aggressive. So it was a good start and we got a good jump on them. Then in the second quarter we got kind of in a lull and kind of lost our rhythm offensively. We had a couple of penalties that hurt us. We had an offsides on the 1 (yard line). We had a true freshman in his first play in college football. It’s tough. We had a delay and Matt got a little out of rhythm worried about his checks. We missed some throws.

“The team did a good job in the last three minutes of the half, which is important. The last three minutes of the half and the last three minutes of the game are always big. The defense went out there and we were playing good field position football. We made the stop and then broke the run right before the half and that helped.

“I was real proud of how we came out in the third quarter, too. We weren’t relaxed or complacent. Overall, it was a good, solid win. I’ve been on the other side and it’s hard because you just don’t have the manpower. But we played 12 freshmen today, I think. So we’ll see how they did.”

Was there a concern in that early lull that the offense wouldn’t come out of it?

“You’re always concerned, but that’s part of the game. I was really pleased that it didn’t start out that way. I wasn’t as concerned once we got in it because we had shown we could play out of it. My biggest concern was the first quarter going into the game. We came out and looked like I wanted us to look, and I was pleased with that. I was really pleased we didn’t have a turnover. That was all I kept preaching: protect the ball and get the ball. That’s how these games can slip away from you.”

What are your thoughts on the offensive line and running backs after more than 300 yards rushing?

“The backs ran good. The line blocked well. They were packing them in and trying to stop the run, but we did a nice job up front. The runners ran hard and I think we just wore them down a little bit.”

Was this start to the season what you anticipated?

“They played the way I expected them to play because we had been practicing that way. It didn’t surprise me that they played that way, and that was good. We start big boy ball next week, as good as that win was. We were able to win the game. We obviously have a lot better players. But we didn’t mess it up. We played sound football. We protected the ball. When we didn’t get first downs, we played good field position. The defense was aggressive. We tackled well. Those are all the basics that you worry about in the first game, and I was pleased with that. We did muff a punt, and I’m concerned about where we are at punt returner.”

What were your emotions like today for your first game as Tennessee’s coach?

“The emotional part was the Vol Walk. That thing was unbelievable. You can describe it all you want. And you know what? There’s not a better example of how great these fans are than when we got off that bus. What they’ve been through the last couple of years and to see them when we got off that bus, it was unbelievable. Overwhelming. But when you got in the game, there wasn’t a lot of emotion except when we muffed a punt or got offsides. It was funny because Matt said, ‘I was more nervous before my first junior college game than I was here.’ Then I said, ‘I was more nervous my first Louisiana Tech game.’ That’s called experience, I guess.”

What were your impressions defensively of LeMarcus Thompson and Austin Johnson?

“Austin really did a good job coming in. He had a pick and a safety. He was active. LeMarcus was all over the field. The defense was flying around there pretty good. And they struggled to block us. I’ve been there when it’s a toughness matchup.”

Tauren Poole, RB:

“As long as we continue to work together, we expect a lot out of everyone on this team.”

“We started extremely slow and it showed on offense and we were lagging, but as you seen we finished strong and we have to continue to finish strong to win this league.”

ON STARTING SLOW

“We’re young. We have a lot of young guys who have to get used to the whole game atmosphere and the crowd noise and we have to get used to playing together. Like coach Dooley always says, it takes time and we will continue to move forward.”

ON OKU

“David kind of set the tone on the first touchdown and I’m proud of him and it shows how hard he has worked and how hard we worked as an offense and there is more to come.”

ON DOOLEY

“He was stoked, he was ecstatic, but he was kind of reserved with his [emotion], unlike us as we kind of showed it a lot more, but I’m glad he got a win as the head coach and he deserved it.

Denarius Moore, WR

ON THE THIRD QUARTER OFFENSE SPARK

“It was just something that we came in at halftime and noticing about what the defense was doing and us talking to the coaches about the game plan.”

ON TOUCHDOWN BLOCK

“It’s just a part of my job to do that as a wide receiver and we got to convince the wide receivers that we got to help in the run game and not just catch the ball.”

Austin Johnson, LB

ON PLAYING LINEBACKER

“The last time I played linebacker would be my senior year in high school in a real game and it felt good to be back out there and playing linebacker.”

ON REACTION

“Before the game I was really going over my playbook and trying to get all the stuff down I needed to get down and once I got out there it just kind of came to me and I was just able to play fast.”

ON MISSING THE SAFETY

“The d line had a great push and I was able to get through there and almost had a safety so it made me feel good and it made me feel like this is where I belong. It kind of helped me out throughout the rest of the game.”

ON THE SECOND HALF SAFETY

“I thought the first one was a safety, so I was kind of upset I didn’t get it. Just to have another opportunity when we back out there and they were on the two again, I was like, if I have another chance I’m definitely going to get it this time.”

ON THE INTERCEPTION

“I kind of just read the quarterback’s eyes and he kind of looked there all the way so I knew he was going to go there so I was able to be in the right spot and it was a good call by coach Wilcox.”



UT Martin Quotes

Head Coach Jason Simpson:

Opening Comments:

“First of all, you take your hat off to them. They came to play. They did a great job. They came out and hammered us a little bit. I was really impressed with their defense. They’re long, they’re athletic and they’re fast. They don’t just sit them there, they move them around. We didn’t compete as much on offense as I was hoping for. That was the biggest sticking point. On special teams we didn’t play very well. We didn’t handle the environment very well. A positive thing was I thought our defense hung around. I thought they tackled well at times. I thought we were physical; we just kind of wore out a little bit. This is disappointing, but we have to go back to work.”

On not capitalizing on Gerald Jones’ fumbled punt return in the first quarter:

“We needed something there to give us a little life. It’s one of those deals where you want to try to run the ball to set up the play-action. We couldn’t really run against them tonight. You try to get rid of the ball quick and then you compound some protection issues. If (UT-Martin quarterback) Derek (Carr) doesn’t play flawless then we don’t have a chance to hang with them there. That would’ve been nice. That was our only chance to change the field. Besides that we couldn’t dig out of that hole. It’s loud in that end zone.”

Jason McNair, RB:

On playing against Tennessee:

“They were a lot bigger, stronger and faster than we were. Our offensive line let them slip through a couple of times, but overall I thought they did a good job against an SEC school. It’s always my job to make the first guy miss, even if they do let them through.”

On matching up against the UT defense:

“There were a couple of plays that I felt if I could have made that one guy miss I could have come away with at least a 20 yard gain.”

Kendall Harper, SS:

On playing in Neyland Stadium:

“It was a great experience to come out here in front of 99,000 fans and get the opportunity to play football. It was a dream come true to have that opportunity. It didn’t go the way we wanted it to go, but we got the experience. We saw things we needed to work on against a great team, we just have to learn from it and move on.”

On a strong first half for the UT Martin defense:

“We came out with a lot of emotion and felt like we could play with them. We had a great scheme and a great plan. I give credit to our coaching staff for putting us in a position to make plays.”