USC vs. Colorado Game Quotes
Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum
Oct. 13, 2018

Colorado Head Coach Mike MacIntyre
“First of all, USC is a very good team, very experienced, very athletic. We did a good job against the run. We gave up too many big plays against the pass. We made some fundamental errors. Our offense kept battling. Any time we got momentum we got a holding penalty. We couldn’t establish the run very well early. But a couple of those penalties hurt us. I thought the kids kept battling and fighting. I thought it was a physical game. I was pleased the way our front 7 played. We won the turnover battle and the penalty battle and you should have a chance to win the game. We kind of had a chance but just shot ourselves in the foot.”

On two-point conversion attempt
“We got totally screwed up on that and I’ll take the blame for that.”

On not using his timeouts at the end of the first half.
“They had just scored we were kind of on our heels. Last year, we had thrown a pick six at the end of the half. So we were a bit cautious so we didn’t have a turnover again. We got in an area where I thought we could throw a Hail Mary. We were a little cautious so we didn’t turn the ball over like last year.”

On CU’s defense
“I’ve got to do a better job with them. I’ve got to keep working and going and this is definitely disappointing. We didn’t play as well as we would like but USC had a lot to do with that. Here or there we could have made some plays and not had some called back that were our fault, it could’ve been a closer ending.”

On USC’s defense against CU’s short passing game
“They did a great job. They were breaking down hill and dropped 8 a lot. They were doing some things they hadn’t done. They had a week off and were interchanging out of the same personnel group. We started finding some stuff that would work, but it was too late.

“I thought the front 7 played well and physical. The secondary didn’t play as well as we would have liked but they’re going to have to.”

On JT Daniels
“He put the ball on the money and was able to hold it a few times. We were right there a few times but couldn’t make the play. (We) had (some) interference calls. They challenged us and had a good scheme. They had good rout runners and a kid who could make all the throws.”

Colorado QB Steven Montez
On USC’s defense
“I think they had us figured out. When we had some of the play calls and had some good calls, maybe we shot ourselves in the foot. It was a bunch of different penalties. We need to clean it up.”

“They took away our short passes and short intermediate game and we were having some trouble running the ball. They made us throw it outside. Once we got it going, we were making some positive plays.”

“They’re a damn good football team. They don’t play any games. They’re a good football team.”

“If he (Laviska Shenault) is hurt or healthy we’re going to run our offense. He’s probably the best player on our team but we have other good players on our team.”

On the late score
“It was important to give us a little bit of confidence. I still think we’ve got to get it going earlier. Getting it going in the second half is not cutting it. Especially playing good teams like USC and UW. You can’t come out in the first half and not play ball. We need to start a lot earlier. We have struggled in the first half. And a lot of that is on me.”

Colorado LB Nate Landman
“It’s always tough to deal with a loss after a promising first half of the season. The way we’ll take it is as a positive and a learning experience. They’re down (in the locker room), but they’re heads are up, looking forward to Washington.”

On some of the big plays CU defense gave up.
“It was more beating ourselves, be it technique or assignment. I know that they have some players but we have some players too.”

“We’re a second half team. Our coaches do a great job of learning what they do in the first half and giving us adjustments and I think they’ll continue to do a great job.”

Colorado LB Drew Lewis
“I feel like this team has grown a lot. Last year, people might keep their heads down and let negative energy seep into the week. But this team, we’re going to learn from our mistakes and get better.”

On CU not getting any points off USC’s early turnovers
“It’s always frustrating. I know they’re working their tails off. I can’t say anything negative about the offense, they’re working tails off, but those are the type of plays it would be good to get some points out of it to change the game. Otherwise it’s kind of like another turnover on downs.”

“We were stopping the run and we knew the shots were coming. They (the passes) fell for them today. It wasn’t our day.”
HEAD COACH CLAY HELTON

Opening Statement
“Glory to God and a bunch of great kids for getting a great victory at the Coliseum. Appreciate the fans for coming out and the support. It was a really good win for our team. It’s a win that allows us to control our destiny the rest of the way, it gives us first place and we have the opportunity now to move on to Utah and prepare for that game. I thought defensively it was a tremendous effort, I think any time you have 16 tackles for a loss in a game, it just felt like the defense was playing in that Colorado backfield all night. From a rush standpoint, we put a huge point of emphasis on putting pressure on the quarterback. Offensively we saw a lot of pressure tonight. I thought Mike Pittman had and unbelievable night as well as the rest of our receivers. They big play after big play and really got us some separation going in at halftime.”

On Palaie Gaoteote IV and Reuben Peters’ performances:
“I think the bye week helped develop some young kids who we knew they were going to have to help us. EA [Palaie Gaoteote] got his opportunity and was the leading tackler today. He came in and really got to the ball and played very instinctively. And the rest of our defense played that way as well. It was Reuben’s turn as well and he’s trained for this moment for a long time. He’s a kid who walked on here, earned a scholarship and played really well for us on special teams. He came in to finish the game off and did a really great job getting us in the right calls.”

On the defense without Cameron Smith:
“I was very proud of them. I thought we were playing in their backfield the entire night. Whether it was run game, pass game. Their quarterback had a night where he was having to get off his spot consistently and just interrupt his timing. Tremendous plan by Clancy (Pendergast) and the defensive staff. I credit Johnny Nansen and Kenechi Udeze for a great job with what they’re doing with that D-line.”

On JT Daniels’ development through the game:
“JT settled in nicely. He got fooled on the first pass. We knew we wanted to be aggressive in the ball game. We knew we were going to have to take shots. We kind of had a feeling they were going to try and pressure us, plus they played so much man coverage and adding safeties to the box, that we thought we were going to have to go up top. So it was a heavy shot game. We didn’t hit all of them, we missed a few in the second half, but when we were able to get them, our defense took over and did the job.”

On the defense’s improvement from week one to week seven:
“We knew coming in that our defense would have to help us if we wanted to win a Pac-12 title. I agree with Pittman — I think we’re making strides. It was neat to see the quarterback have a couple mistakes and then settle in. It wasn’t perfect, but he was putting the ball into the right people. We have some things to work on. But he settled in really nice and found the one-on-one matchups and he believed in his guys to make the plays, and that’s all you can ask for as a coach.”

On if the defense playing well helps offensive struggles:
“In the first quarter both defenses were doing their job. There were a couple three-and-outs for both teams early. And then we settled in and rattled off 21 points, a lot which were on explosive plays down the field. Tee recognized it offensively and said we were going to have to take some shots. We cut it loose and trusted out kids to make the plays and they did.”

On handling Colorado QB Steven Montez:
“He’s hard to contain. We came in saying we had to do a great job tackling on the perimeter. When you look at them in the first 20, 30 plays they’re a perimeter team. Our kids just tackled extremely well. Not a lot of missed tackles tonight. I think it was our best pursuit of the ball tonight. That’s what you have to do against guys like him. The first guy misses and the next guy has to be there to make the play.”

AJENE HARRIS, CB
On coming to USC from Crenshaw HS and getting the interception:
“It’s a blessing to come here. It’s always been my dream school, and to play with Helton and the guys is amazing. I got the pick and I was trying to find the ball and bring it over to coach.”
MICHAEL PITTMAN, JR., WR
On offensive takeaways from this game:
"I feel like the offense is taking steps as far as making those explosive plays. I feel like we showed some good things moving forward."

On if the defense playing well helps offensive struggles:
"Whenever they play well it makes me and the offense want to help them out. Help them carry the load and take some of that weight off of their shoulders and puts some points up. They played lights out today, and gave us chances to score points."

On what the matchup was like with Colorado’s defense:
"To my understanding Colorado has never beaten SC so that’s what fuels it. I’m not going to be the guy that lets them beat us."

On if this was a breakout game:
"I don’t like the term breakout. I feel like every game I become ready to make our plays. I feel like that’s what we did as a team, is made our plays. I feel like we still have room to work. But we’re showing signs of positivity and that we can make those plays. It’s a good boost for us."