

Florida State University Football Media Conference

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Tallahassee, Florida, USA

Mike Norvell

Press Conference



Wake Forest 31, Florida State 21

MIKE NORVELL: Congratulations to Wake Forest. I'd say it was a hard-fought game, a game of swings. They did a nice job of coming in and being able to execute, doing the things necessary to win the game.

Disappointed. I thought our guys, especially there in the first half, really started almost pressing when we had a little bit of adversity that showed up, did a lot of uncharacteristic things, uncharacteristic mistakes showing up. Way too many penalties. Turnovers, balls were in jeopardy.

You look at the third down situations on both sides, they did a really good job in those critical down situations. I think they were 13 out of 21 of third and fourth downs. Obviously we were not as good, we were not able to extend drives. Untimely mistakes, negatives, which really hurt us from being able to establish the rhythm that we wanted to have.

There late, had to kind of push, really push the ball. I thought our guys did battle back. I thought they did show heart. I thought they were fighting through. We made some mistakes throughout that game that you just cannot have to beat a good team.

That's a good team. It's a very experienced team. It's one that doesn't beat themselves. They don't turn the ball over. They executed and made tough catches in critical situations. We lost our focus in times of adversity, which is something we've really made some very positive strides on you hear over the course of last year. Today that showed up.

There's a lot of things that we're going to have to do to continue to improve. But I still believe in the football team. I told them, I knew we would find ourselves in a position there in the fourth quarter to have an opportunity to go win the game. Ultimately we didn't make the plays necessary to be able to finish it.

Those guys absolutely responded throughout the game.

Just too many mistakes on our end to beat a good team.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. The last time we talked to you during the week was Wednesday. You didn't seem like you were thrilled with maybe the first couple days of practice, the execution. How did the week end? What did you see from the team?

MIKE NORVELL: I thought they did respond at the back part of the week. They worked hard. It's like I told them, it wasn't the effort, the effort was not the issue. I mean, what they're putting in, the finer details of the focus, the execution, the things that are critical to show up within the course of practice.

When you're playing a good team, one that is not going to beat themselves, one that has the experience they have, that's where you have to be at the greatest of details.

I don't question our team's want-to, right? We've got to make sure that we're consistent in those little things that can carry over to allow us to go play our best men.

We've seen really good examples of that, then tonight we saw that work against us. Like I said, it was one of the first times this year where I felt like we were just pressing. We had a play that didn't work, or they made a play, and everybody wants... With all the right intentions, operating outside of what they necessarily needed to do.

You might have caused a negative play or missed assignment or something that was definitely correctable. Our technique is not where it needs to be, you get a penalty. Those things are things that beat you. We have to be better in those moments.

I know our guys are going to respond to it. It's just so disappointing because I do know the work they're putting in. But in the moment you got to be able to apply the work.

Q. With Wake's success on third down, was there a common theme, something they were doing or you guys weren't doing consistently?

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MIKE NORVELL: They did a good job of mixing up the run and pass game. We knew that's something that they do. We got to win on-one-one matchups, in the run game and the passing game. There were times we had opportunities, but they did a good job of converting, were able to play ahead of the chains. They were in a lot of third-and-manageable situations.

That's where for us, every play matters. It's a good offense. It's one that it does challenge you, stresses you. But for us, we've got to have those impactful plays, which showed up in the third quarter. First part of the fourth, the third, we were able to play the way that I expected us to.

Still we just missed some real opportunities.

Q. Jared Verse came into this game hurt. He played a limited amount. He made an impact in the game. Talk about his performance.

MIKE NORVELL: I thought Jared did a great job, working in rehab. Didn't really practice much throughout the week. Got a little bit out of him there on Friday. Watched him move around. We knew if he was available, we didn't know he was going to play until pregame. Got out there, moving around, felt comfortable. Doctors, everybody felt comfortable with the opportunity.

We're going to be limited with him. As the game went on, you kind of let him gauge where he was. But, I mean, I thought he battled. He played extremely hard. He's a great player that has a great future in front of him as he continues to go.

I was definitely pleased with the work he put in to make himself available for today.

Q. You mentioned a few times there were times the first half where the team was pressing a bit. Does that come from a pressure or a ranking, 4-0 start?

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, I think success, everybody wants more. You start off, you have success, you have the good feelings of seeing it play out.

I say this, life's not a fairy tale, not always going to go this way. You're going to face things. The key to it is the response.

In the moment, we've done such a good job this year, when we've had a bad play, something has gone wrong, we've been able to flip the switch, get to the next one. Today I just felt it was a little bit of a different energy there on the sides. They want it so bad.

But you got to stay true to the things you do, how you prepare, stay true to the little things, the fundamentals, the techniques, the focus.

I thought we got distracted in some moments, whether it's it was Wake was doing, things we believe we needed to do to make the play, when ultimately we just got to go out there and continue to push, to trust our preparation, to go put it on display.

Q. What was your assessment of the offensive line's performance today?

MIKE NORVELL: It was kind of a mixed bag, to be honest with you. Too many penalties, the negatives that showed up. I mean, we had a couple drives that were good. We've been battling, you have some guys that are still relative newcomers to the program being asked to do a lot. We've had some injuries up front. We're really kind of testing into the depth.

But those guys are very capable. We've seen them play really well. Today there were some things that showed up that were uncharacteristic. That's why I said that earlier.

For all the positive strides, whether it's a movement, whether it's a different look or a (indiscernible), just trust your eyes and be able to go apply what you know to do in that moment.

I just thought, just felt we were a little shaken at times with the overall performance. But our guys, they battled. I definitely appreciate that group. I know that they're going to continue to improve.

Q. Did that offensive line and some of the struggles they had led to Jordan maybe pressing a little bit in the first half? He seemed to play much better in the second half.

MIKE NORVELL: No, I mean, it's everybody. You talk about the guys up front, Jordan, all. That's really what did show up, is everybody wants to make the play. If you trust all the training that you prepared, the play will come to you and you will be able to make the play in the moment.

But I thought Jordan responded really well in the second half, which is what he does. It shows the leader that he is. It shows the confidence that he does have in the guys around him.

I thought as an offense in general, there were times in the first half, when we started to get a drive, it would be a mistake here or a negative here. Got to overcome that.

We do, but we just got to do that within the core of what we do.

Q. You mentioned telling the team you wanted to still have a chance to play in the fourth quarter. How does scrapping and fighting on a day that may not have been your best game help the team have confidence for the rest of the season?

MIKE NORVELL: These guys, they believe. There's not a question in their belief. It's not a question in their approach to the work, of what they know that they can do.

I had no doubt throughout the course of the game that we were going to put ourselves in a position to go have a chance to win it. Unfortunately we did not make the plays necessary to do that.

I appreciate all the fans that came out today. I mean, there was great energy within the stadium. Really fueled off of them there in the second half. So grateful for that.

But these guys, they want it. We've seen the benefits of that in some really tough situations against some good people over the last four games what we're capable of.

Today we weren't able to be consistent enough in that to be able to achieve success. But, like I said, there's no question in how they were going to fight.

Q. Wake's offense puts up a lot of points against most everybody. You got a couple stops in the third and fourth quarter. Anything different than earlier in the game?

MIKE NORVELL: I thought we did a good job of being disruptive up front. We were able to get pressure on the quarterback. We were able to get pressure in the run game.

It wasn't any big picture adjustments to what we were doing. Guys competed hard. Ultimately there in the fourth quarter, we were in position to make a play or two, and their guys, a couple really good plays that they made. Contested catches. It's one of those things that we got to continue to fight, continue to believe through it.

There wasn't a wholesale change in what we were doing to get a stop. We were able to be more disruptive. Really kind of helped us through that third and early fourth.

Q. A couple of wide receiver questions. Mycah Pittman had a big game. Career high in yards and touchdowns. On the other side, A.T. Perry has been a problem. How did he play and how did you try to slow

him down?

MIKE NORVELL: Mycah is an extremely hard worker. He shows up every day at practice, whether it's catching the ball, obviously the blocking of what he does, just his competitive spirit.

I thought he was great on the sideline throughout the course of the game, his encouragement, his energy. He had a big punt return, which was something that we needed. I just love how he comes to work every day. It was good to see him make those plays. Really kind of helped spark us throughout. Excited about what Mycah's future is, just his continued growth.

Perry, I mean, he's a challenge. He's a big receiver, does a good job. They were able to create some separation throughout and do a good job conceptually. Obviously you've got to be able to maintain for long periods of time with some of those slow meshes. They did a nice job with him.

Like I said, I thought our guys there in the second half really rose to the challenge after that first drive, they responded. You got to give credit to Wake and how they played.

Q. As a play-caller and decision-maker, when you have a kicker that's struggling, when it's fourth-and-manageable, are you going for it in those spots, late in the game, late in the first half?

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, when it got to the long-yardage situations, the extreme long-yardage situations, if we were more manageable, knowing that we had to be able to get points... Both were in range. Obviously Ryan, missed opportunity today. I do believe in what he's capable of.

But on the flip side of it, you have to look at the time that's left on the clock, the opportunities of what that's going to provide. You got to get two scores. But it's all things that are taken into the thought process, throughout the equation.

Same thing, two-point play of theirs, decision, going for that in the third quarter, trying to be able to create opportunities to go win. That's where we didn't get the first one, we got the second one. It kind of changes a little bit of the dynamics. If you get the first one, being down 21... We're going to be aggressive to go win games.

I thought the response, making the second two-point conversion, got it back to a seven-point game. Unfortunately we weren't able to do enough there at the end to finish it up.

Q. The final 18-play drive that Wake Forest had, what kind of went into some of those back-breaking conversions they had? For the whole game, what were they doing on those particular downs?

MIKE NORVELL: They did a good job. Their backs ran hard. Their O-line fought. Their receivers made contested catches. We had a chance on one of the third downs. The guy goes over the top of the guy that makes a play. Those are those drives.

We got to rise up. I thought our guys were fighting hard with it. They did a really nice job executing, making the plays when it counted. That's ultimately what allowed them to go and score the last field goal. I was proud of our guys for holding them up, forcing them to have to kick the field goal.

Definitely a challenging drive. Like I said, it's a good offense. They've been doing good things. They've got a lot of experienced players up front, to the running backs, receivers. Obviously they know what they're trying to do.

I thought we did have some opportunities. Just didn't do a good enough job of being able to capitalize on those in the last drive.

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