

# Florida State University Football Media Conference

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Tallahassee, Florida, USA

## Mike Norvell

### Press Conference



Florida State - 49, Louisiana - 17

MIKE NORVELL: Just first off, really proud of our football team. You know, coming into this week, we really challenged ourselves. Could we continue to take the proper steps to go get better.

Being back at home was great. Appreciate the crowd, the atmosphere. Early kickoff. From the minute we got off the bus this morning with the legacy walk, it was a lot of energy. Grateful for our fan base.

So proud of our players. The way they've been working in practice, the way they've competed with each other, challenging themselves, trying to make themselves uncomfortable in the steps that are necessary to go out there and improve, we needed to start fast today. It was something that, you know, we talked about as a football team. I was so proud of our offense. Took the first drive, went down and got a score. Defense was able to create a stop. We just kind of built upon that throughout the first half.

I think we scored 35 in the first half. They were able to get the field goal late. But even in that sequence, we didn't want any points on the board. But to see our guys hold there before half, not allow them to get in the end zone, I was really proud of our team.

I think we went three quarters without them scoring -- without getting in the end zone. Defense was playing a lot of confidence. Those guys are flying around. It was great today to be able to play so many different young men that have been investing out there on the practice field, that were preparing for their moment. It was wonderful to see them compete

And just the energy. Even when some of our starters were not in, the energy of what they were giving to those guys that were out on the field, just a lot of good tape for us to continue to improve upon.

But, you know, as this game ends, now our focus goes to

what's ahead. Huge game Friday night for us, for our program. It's one that we've been preparing all year to be in the best position as we get to this week. I think our guys have taken some really good steps over the last four weeks coming out of the bye. I think we're playing great football, but we got to get better this week, and I trust that our players will have a wonderful focus and mentality as we jump into the week ahead.

So with that, I'll take questions.

**Q. Did you guys even have to remind the team to not look ahead to Florida this past week?**

MIKE NORVELL: No. I mean, the message is the same as what it always is. Be in control of you. We have a standard of how we want to play football here at Florida State, and that's our best. Doesn't matter what the opponent, who it is, when they show up.

Ultimately, we have a responsibility to go out there and to prepare, to work, to put everything we have with each game that we get. And that's the thing that's pleasing is you see a group of 18- to 22-year-olds that are taking hold of that. We've got to continue with it because there's plenty of distractions that can try to derail you. Sometimes success can be a distraction.

But ultimately, when you take ownership of your actions, the good, the bad, it gives you an opportunity to continue to ascend, and that's what we're trying to do here.

Do we ever bring it up? Of course. But, you know, it's brought up regardless of when you play or who you're playing. Go focus on the most important thing. If you'll do that, good things tend to happen.

**Q. This is kind of a twofold question. You mentioned being able to play a lot of younger players. One, how important is that to program building. Then, two, to be able to give guys like a Fabien Lovett, who came off an injury. Only played 20 or so snaps the last few weeks each game, how important is it for you to finish this season strong and be able to give starters rest?**

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MIKE NORVELL: Notice how he took advantage of the two-for-one? That was awesome. It was great to see young guys in there. To have an opportunity -- it forces the communication. It forces the line. Gives you a chance to showcase the fundamentals, the technique, the growth that is necessary. Every player on our team wants to play more. Some guys that start, some guys that don't play very much.

When you get an opportunity to step on that field, it really puts on display where you are. We've had some guys that have taken advantage of the reps that they've got.

Look at Pat Payton. At the beginning of the year, we knew that he had potential, right? But when he got thrust into action, he showcased the last year and a half of work he's put in, and he was ready for that moment.

We got guys that today got a chance to get into the game and show exactly where they are. And there's some good and there's some bad. But ultimately, if guys will make the most of that experience and be able to take the proper steps, it helps us immensely within the entire program just of that development because, you know, sometimes you think you will do something with an opportunity. But then you get to see good and bad, right, the areas you need to work and continue to push through that.

It's great. You get guys that -- that first group, you have a short week coming ahead. Those guys have played a lot of football, and you guys are out at practice. You know we work. We challenge them. We push. I think we do a great job of taking care of their bodies. They're playing fast at the end of the year.

When you can go and you have some starters only play half a game, it's a good thing on a short week. Guys, the investment they're making throughout the week at practice is definitely preparing them, and I know they'll be ready to go come Friday night.

**Q. The more weeks your team stacks like this, I think it's four weeks in a row, Jordan and a number of guys haven't had to play the fourth quarter maybe at all, what does it tell you about the team?**

MIKE NORVELL: They're taking care of the business that's at hand, and the level of their play is allowing multiple people to get those experiences. I'm proud of them. Ultimately, you set a standard for a week of what you want it to look like and what you want it to be.

That team has talented players on it. You sit there and you look at the way that the last few weeks have gone for us. We played some really good teams with good players that,

you know, ultimately, our guys are playing at a very high level. So when you see that growth, I appreciate that. I appreciate what our guys have done, and the opportunities that are ahead for us to continue to take those positive steps.

**Q. You mentioned getting a younger players in. Duffy got a few series. You also got Chip English on the last drive. How big was it to get those two guys into the game and some experience?**

MIKE NORVELL: We tried to be very smart with A.J. Obviously, right now, just anything could happen in any given week. So last week, I mentioned I tried to hold him. This week, provided a great opportunity for him to get in and play significant snaps.

Had his first TD pass here as a Florida State Seminole, which is something he'll remember. There's some really good things. He made a couple of good throw-away decisions that showed maturity. But also some things that we'll be able to coach off of film and continue to help him as he progresses.

But it's really neat. Then a guy like Gino English, we haven't mentioned his name yet this year. But Gino was in his senior year. He's done a remarkable job. And just the person that he is, the work that he puts in. I mean, I love that kid. Seeing him get a chance to go out there was pretty special.

**Q. I know normally, you want your players to enjoy it for a night, enjoy a win for the night. I'm sure you tell your coaches that too. With a short week and with who's coming Friday night, is it different tonight going home and starting early tomorrow? What changes with this game and this short week?**

MIKE NORVELL: I'll be watching film here in a very short period of time. But you do want to enjoy the experience. It's hard to win a college football game. Our players, they'll have the rest of the day off.

But I did tell them, every action that you have between now and Friday night is either helping you achieve to the level that you want to achieve, or it might hold you back. So let's make sure we're doing the things necessary to go play our best game come Friday.

Tomorrow, we'll have a little bit of a modified week. So we'll get in the weight room, we'll lift. We'll have a meeting tomorrow night. Tomorrow will be like a Monday for our coaching staff. We'll get our game plan and continue to roll with that.

But the work will get done, and we all have choices what we want to do with each moment, just like we do in he any given week. With it being a short week, there's going to be an absolute sense of urgency in our preparation. Just continuing to get better.

**Q. What's the key to running the ball successfully against the stacked box? Is it the patience and the vision of the ball carriers?**

MIKE NORVELL: I think our guys have done a nice job of taking what defense has given us too. We try to create angles. We try to make sure we're doing the things necessary to help all hands on deck to be in good position.

Our guys execute the game plan. We've seen -- you take the last three weeks, four weeks, I think we've seen every defensive front you can imagine; blitz, twist, all of it. Our guys like that challenge.

And for us, there's a physicality, a toughness that needs to be on display. And, you know, I think when you watch our players and the confidence that they're building through each experience, I mean, it's a fun thing. It's a fun thing to see and be a part of.

I think it's six weeks in a row rushing for over 200 yards. That's hard to do. But when you have a mindset, when you've got great leadership, Dillan Gibbons broke the rock here today on behalf of the O-line. Dillan, being an older lineman, kind of represented that unit.

But you look at how many different guys have played. You look at how many guys have been able to make that impact and the things, the challenges and adversity they've had to face.

On the flip side of it, go watch our receivers block. Go watch our quarterback, him do his part. Jordan had a couple great pulls today where, you know, he got an opportunity to get in space and did a great job running the football himself.

So when you do all of that and somebody does stack the box and you have a chance to push the ball down the field, you got to capitalize on those. The efficiency and the balance of this offense is something that we take great deal of pride in.

But those guys, it's important to make sure we get that established, and I think our running backs have done a remarkable job. It's good to see Tre Ward to get out there, have good plays. All the backs were able to do good things tonight. Just appreciate every position offensively that does their part, tight ends included, with that

physicality, that toughness.

**Q. Mike, congrats. You said that this next game is one you guys have been preparing for all year. What were you guys talking about internally with the team about this game during the off-season and everything?**

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, I've not mentioned their name at any point this year. But our first meeting, we talk about two games. I told you all that a few weeks ago. There's two games we talk about. Everything that you do, every practice, every rep, every game, every lesson, it prepares you for this one.

And I love being a part of this game. I love the opportunity that we get. I love who we represent in this game. And for us, it's about taking everything that we've done up to this point and being able to apply it throughout this week of work.

If you get distracted, if you don't bring your A game in this game, anything can happen. But that's something I'm proud of our team. As you watch this season, I think we've gotten better, and we're playing our best ball at the end of it, which is something we absolutely want to do and something we talk about on day one.

It sounds good on day one. The challenge is applying it. That's what we've done. We've got to maintain our focus and growth throughout this week if we want to put ourselves in position to achieve success.

**Q. Mike, it appeared that Mycah Pittman got banged up at the end of a touchdown drive in the first half. Wondering if you had any early word on how he was?**

MIKE NORVELL: Don't have updates on the guys right now that were banged up. We'll see what that's like. Obviously, it's a short week. Mycah, incredibly tough young man. He'd had some things he's had to play through throughout the year. We got him in a pretty good spot so we were very cautionary with him. We'll see where that progresses as the week goes on.

**Q. Coach, Brian Pensky mentioned he's texted a few times after wins, and you've texted him. Obviously, you're doing well. How great is it to see the soccer team doing well, having success on campus right now?**

MIKE NORVELL: That's what special about Florida State. It's not just one sport or one position or one role. We're in this together. We talk about one tribe. That's who we are. To see Brian come in and the success he's having year one, just so fired up for him. He's a class act individual.

When you bring all the coaches and all the sports, the different student-athletes, that's what's a joy about being at Florida State is because we all represent each other. There's good times and there's challenges.

When you know that you're locked arms with somebody that's there and that has your back, that's going to support you through it, it makes the experience so much better.

And, you know, I'm really proud of our women's soccer team. They're a remarkable group of young ladies. The passion they play with, it's awesome. Seeing how they finish games is something that everybody can learn from. I mean, you see our women's basketball team got off to a great start with Brooke. The new coaches in these positions, it's special for them.

We're all trying to do our part. I know that it's a wonderful place to be a part of with those relationships.

**Q. Coach, I know it's four straight wins for you guys. Neither of the four teams have been ranked, but what you guys have done to these teams, we just don't see all that common in FBS football right now. Just how good is this football team right now?**

MIKE NORVELL: We're playing well. And, you know, it's a team that's gotten better. It's a team that, like I said, has embraced work. All that we can control is what we do. Not who we play, not any other circumstances that might present themselves. When the ball gets put out there, what's it going to look like?

Our guys have learned a lot of lessons. We've been through a lot. Like I said, winning a college football game, it's hard. You go every single week and see teams that might be this ranking or this talented, and it doesn't always mean who's going to win the game.

But you've got to go put your best foot forward to go make the statement of what your identity is going to be. I challenge these guys about their identity. I challenge them about the legacy they'll leave. How is this team going to be remembered? The actions are only -- it goes with what you do.

Coming off of a tough stretch there in the middle of the season where, you know, we're a couple plays away and we have some sequences that don't go our way, it's easy to start pointing fingers, or it's easy to hang your head. Or you make the choice to get your butt up and go respond, to get better, to take ownership in that.

It's players, coaches, everybody involved. There's nothing

that we ask our players to do that we're not willing to do as a staff. We're all in this together. That passion, that relationship just, you know, the willingness to be humble and to go put the work first, and that's what these guys are doing. It's resulted in having great complementary wins. Our defense is doing remarkable job, special teams is showing up, and the offense is being good in what they're doing as well.

I'm proud of this team. I'm proud of the coaches. Got to have a great week ahead as we have our next challenge in front of us.

Thank you, guys.

