

Louisiana State University Football Media Conference

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Head Coach Ed Orgeron

Weekday Press Conference

ED ORGERON: All right, Guys. Tell-the-truth Monday. We spent all day yesterday analyzing the film and the truth is we gotta coach better, gotta start with me, gotta prepare our team better, gotta coach our coaches better. We gotta execute better, and we gotta make better in-game adjustments during the game, during halftime. Could have had a better plan on both sides of the football first game. One of the things that we're going to do today is we're going to talk about substance lineman assignment, get back to fundamentals, get back to playing the LSU standard of performance which was not there Saturday night. And I take all responsibility. But we're going to get it fixed and get it going. I believe in this coaching staff. I believe in this team. I know they're hurting today, but I know that we're going to come back and have a great practice.

On defense, you know, they had 383 yards after the catch. Obviously that's tackling, that's assignments to any guys running free. We gotta work on our coverage. We had some mistakes in our coverage in leverage and technique and assignments. Some of the positives, we had five sacks. We caused four turnovers and we scored on defense. That was very positive. I thought the pressure on the quarterback was there at times, could get better. On offense, we gotta protect the quarterback better. We gave up seven sacks. Some of that was scheme, some of that was technique. And we gotta protect the quarterback better, and then we gotta make better decisions in the pocket. We had some guys open, we didn't hit them. Could have set up in the pocket and made the decisions. I think that's going to come with more experience and with Myles. We gotta eliminate the drops. We had too many drops, especially in the beginning of the game we had some critical drops that hurt our drives, and we gotta run the ball better. On special teams, I thought we played very well on special teams, 49.5 yards per punt, five inside the 20, two for two in field goals. Seven kicks and all touchbacks. I'm looking forward to today. I'm looking forward to seeing the team. I'm looking forward to coaches identifying the things that we can do better, coming up with solutions and have a great day of practice.



Onto Vanderbilt, Derek Mason has done an outstanding job. He's an outstanding coach. I have a lot of respect for him. He was an outstanding defensive coach at Stanford. I know Derek very well. Kenechi Udeze is on that staff. They have a defensive line playing very well, and I thought they played pretty darn good against -- their defense played pretty good against Texas A&M. We're plus two in the turnover ratio. They're plus one. They have what we call a pro spread on offense, four returning starters. Only had 12 points against A&M. Ken Seals is their quarterback. Amir Abdur-Rahman is a long and ranging receiver, pretty good athlete. On defense, I think what their strong point is right now. They have an excellent defensive line in Dale. Dale is one of the top players that we see. He had seven tackles, two tackles for loss, one sack, quarterback hurry against Texas A&M and Andre Mimms, defensive end. I think their defensive line is very good at Vanderbilt. But this is going to be about us, about this week, about us getting back on the winning track and about playing the LSU standard performance. Any questions?

Q. Good afternoon. Can you give us an update on Derek Stingley and Glen Logan, and to whatever degree you can, what happened with Derek on Friday?

ED ORGERON: Yeah. I think Derek is going to be back. I talked to Jack. We're waiting for all the medical exams to clear. But I expect him back as early as maybe tomorrow. I'm not sure. Glen Logan will not be available for this week and he will be available for Missouri.

Q. Coach, good morning. Taking a look at the running back rotation, how do you think that worked out, and is it -- I know you want to work all three guys in, but is it kind of a debate to get a guy warm and get him going in the game?

ED ORGERON: Yeah. You know, that's what we want to do. Obviously Chris is our lead back right now, in our opinion, but Tyrion and John -- I thought John did some good stuff on short yardage. You would think that Chris and Tyrion would be there with short yardage, but Kevin played with short yardage. He had some good runs. So I'm pleased with our backs. I think we need to run the football more, get them more carries and give them more touches out of the back field. They didn't catch the ball enough out of the back field.



Q. You mentioned about on Saturday that maybe you guys would need to play more zone. I know you said Derek Stingley may be back here. After watching the tape, what prevented some of those in-game adjustments there, and do you expect any changes against Vanderbilt there?

ED ORGERON: Yeah. You know, all those are Bo's decisions. We talked about it. And they were hitting us on some pick routes, some over routes. Some of it was scheme. Some of it there was some kind of adjustments that we can do, not necessarily play zone, but you can do some adjustments in man and passing guys off, not passing guys off. We may do that, may not do that at all. It depends. You know, having Derek not there really hurt us, obviously, but I'm glad that he's healthy. His safety is of foremost importance to us, so I'm glad that he's healthy and he's okay, number one. Jay Ward was out for practice two weeks. We didn't even know he could play. He played a lot of snaps. I thought he did a fairly good job, but obviously was a little rusty there. So I think there's some combination of things. We were short on corners. Not having Derek hurt us. We had a game plan that we were going to play man and man them up, and we thought we could man up with the receivers. We should have made a couple of more adjustments during the game.

Q. You were talking a little bit about pass rush, Ali Gaye seemed to step in well in that regard. You liked his range, but do you anticipate that kind of performance from him in his first SEC game?

ED ORGERON: We have seen it in practice, and Ali came and just started making improvements every day, and I remember during the COVID he didn't go home at all. He stayed here and learned and studied and worked out on his own. And we just saw at camp, he just kept on coming and coming and coming. And I didn't know he was going to have that type of game. I thought he had an excellent game. He beat that tackle pretty good. He had a lot of pressures, some batted balls. He's tall. He played the run very well. I think he's going to have an excellent year for us.

Q. You mentioned on Saturday how after the game the next couple of days were going to be pretty important for you guys in terms of leadership and trying to move on to the next game. I'm wondering if you can kind of take us inside those meetings yesterday and today and just kind of how the team is responding after your first loss really in two years?

ED ORGERON: Yeah. First of all, stick together, don't panic and believe in each other, number one. That comes

from me. We're not going to change anything drastic, but you know what, we gotta tighten up on some stuff. We gotta play with more energy. We gotta play with more desire. We gotta make plays. We gotta coach better. All those things that slip up on you when you're winning. Hey, the championship is over. This is a new season, new team, and we new that. Now definitely we know that. Hopefully our guys can start from day one today, focus that one game at a time with Vanderbilt. Here's my job, to get this team as well as we possibly can, and to play to the LSU standard performance, and obviously Saturday night was a big disappointment to me and everybody else, and I understand that.

Q. To kind of bounce off that, it's your first post-game week with Bo. What has he been like the past 48 hours?

ED ORGERON: Fantastic. He's the first guy to come see me in my dressing room. First guy. He said, Coach, I should have done a better job. And he was hurting just like everybody else. And we went over the film, and he saw the things that he did well, saw the things that we must and will improve. He's been fantastic today. He's eager. He's an outstanding coach. He's hurting just like everybody else.

Q. Coach, the offense found their rhythm in the second half but Terrace Marshall seemed like he picked up the pace that he was from last season. Is there an ongoing connection him and Brennan will be able to maintain this season?

ED ORGERON: Yeah. I hope so. I like the long ball. I thought Brennan threw the long ball very well. He missed a couple down the pipe there, but I thought he threw the long ball very well. That catch that Terrace made was outstanding. The skinny post was really good. One of Steve's strengths is taking shots, and one of Myles's strengths is his arm strength, throwing the football. But Terrace is an excellent receiver. Now, he dropped the ball or two. He made some mistakes on the screen one time. He was supposed to block out. He had a mental error. So I know he knows that he can do better, but hopefully those guys can have a big-time connection throughout the year.

Q. I was looking at the depth chart, and in the secondary, it's mostly sophomores or less. Is this maybe something that kind of, again, we have to get used to with the roster that this year's team has?

ED ORGERON: Yeah. You know what happens is our corners are three-and-out here. Most of our guys go three-and-out. We have a lot of young guys. A lot of young guys played for the first time. And there was a lot of

one-on-one situations. You gotta give credit. Mississippi State's receivers came to play. Their quarterback was on fire. Coach had a great scheme, put our guys in some difficult situations; and sometimes they did and sometimes they didn't, and when they didn't, it was touchdown. You know, one of the things that we gotta get better is on third down. Third down and 20 and they get a first down on us. We gotta stop them. There were some third downs where they made some touchdowns on us. So those young guys, they're going to grow up, but that's who we have. We believe in those guys. Cordale Flott had an excellent camp. He did some good things in the game, did some things he's gotta improve on. I think you're going to see a better Jay Ward now that he's healthy and practicing.

Q. I gather you don't have to do much motivating to the kids this week. It seems like everybody is now doubting them, you know, talking about last year is a one-year kind of flash-in-the-pan. What do you say to the kids when they come into practice today, because everybody now is saying LSU is going to be down this year, their defense is not up to par right now. What is that going to be like for you?

ED ORGERON: Block out the noise. My Twitter machine is off. I hate to say it, John, I don't get Fox 8 Baton Rouge. I ain't watching you no more. Hey, I just gotta focus in on the task at hand. Look, the game's over. The season last year is over. Whether they say one year, whatever. That don't bother me. I don't care. This is about our football team. And you know what, it's kind of good to batten down the hatches a little bit, tighten it down, turn the Twitter machine off and really focus in on beating Vanderbilt, and that's all we can do right now. And that's going to be the focus of our football team. The one thing I want our team to understand, and I told them in the locker room, when you win, I'll give you the credit; when we don't win, I'll take it, but it's my job to fix it. And I guarantee you this week we're going to start fixing it.

Q. Coach, fans are not permitted to attend Vanderbilt home games this year because of COVID, only team in the conference. Have you mentioned that to your team that this stadium is going to be completely empty, and do you have any concerns that'll take away the edge of the game?

ED ORGERON: No. You know, obviously, Adam, I'd love to have fans in there. I love to have Tiger Stadium full. I think it would have been a big-time advantage for us. I want to praise the fans that were there. They got loud at the end. I could hear them. I'm sure the Vanderbilt fans are disappointed that they can't go. But you know what, that's what we gotta deal with. I have not talked to the team yet, even about last week's game. But during the

week I will talk to them about there will be no fans there. But we gotta create our own energy. Mississippi State created their energy, we gotta create our own energy.

Q. After the game, Myles said that they were dropping back and taking away his quick throws and taking away his leans, and as part of that, too, on the hand-off, he never kept. What can you do to adjust there to make that work better?

ED ORGERON: Yeah. First of all, I think Myles is exactly right. They were dropping in the short windows. They figured that we were going to throw them all short, easy throws to be able to get him comfortable. So I thought they had a really good scheme on defense. Now, we gotta make better adjustments. I mean, we gotta spread 'em out, make better adjustments, especially when we're looking we stop at the line of scrimmage and we look over and we know defense is better, we gotta make better adjustments right there, number one. I think he needs to get rid of the ball a little bit quicker. A little bit hesitant in the pocket. Stay in the pocket a little bit more, have better pocket presence and make better decisions. I think it's a combination of both.

Q. Some of your new guys, how do you think they played, Arik Gilbert and Jabril Cox?

ED ORGERON: I thought they played great. Arik made some mistakes. He dropped the first one. I talked to him yesterday. He was nervous. But that play he made in the end zone was phone natural and we gotta target him more. I thought Jabril Cox, for the most part, had a very productive game, getting that interception for the touchdown, running around making plays, very active, but again, assignment wise, gap responsibility wise, there's some things he could get better at. I thought both of those guys played pretty good. I thought Eli Ricks did some good things, getting the pick, he played some good things, but there's some things he's gotta get better at, typical first game.

Q. You talked about wanting the running backs to touch the ball more. Are you pleased, though, overall with the kind of rotation you went with? Is there anyone who maybe from when you go back and look at the film kind of shine a little more to make you say he needs to get more carries than some of the other guys?

ED ORGERON: Yeah. Not yet. Chris had a good game. John had a good game. Tyrion is a really good back. There are some things that all three of them do. We feel that I just think we need to get the running game going more. I like to run more first down. Let's get some positive

yards; let's get in the second and 4, second and 3, where we can make some good decisions. But you know, they were running Soni; they were blitzing that guy through. We gotta get a better plan, and we gotta pick these guys up. There was too much penetration.

Q. If we could have heard you and Coach Pelini are both similar, your fiery nature. If we could have been a fly on the wall listening to him in the last few days in team meetings and coaches' meetings, what's he been like compared to you? I'm sure you all are similar. And Ali Gaye, his ceiling. Performed very well on Saturday. A lot of people thought he was raw when you signed him, but he looked outstanding on Saturday.

ED ORGERON: Yeah. Bo gave great speeches on Friday night. He handles the defense. He's very emotional. You know, he's been a head coach. He knows how to talk to the football team. He had the guys motivated. He's been very, I want to say not apologetic, not humble, but just, hey, you know what, I could have done better, Coach. Very loyal, hurt, you know, hurting that he didn't do better, hurting that the defense didn't do better, just like we all are. But I told him, hey, put it on me, we're going to get it fixed. Now, Ali Gaye, Ali was raw when he came here. I gotta give Bill Busch credit. He recruited him just like he recruited Joe Burrow, and he believed he could play. Bill Johnson went and watched him. I think it was one of Bill's first days. It might have been like 20 degrees up there or 10 degrees. It was cold as heck, but Bill came back and said, Ali runs well, let's take him, and Ali's scheme is work hard. I think he is going to be a high pick, first, second, third round pick. He's going to play in the NFL. He's got the size. Hopefully he stays for two years, don't get too good.

Q. So you said that y'all have to create your own energy, especially with the loss of fans at the Vanderbilt game this week. Do you think this loss, having it be such a hurt to this team, such a letdown after the great season we had this year, do you think this will kind of put a fire under this team to create their own energy to kind of build them up for this game coming up this weekend?

ED ORGERON: Hey, can I get you to talk to my team today? I love it. Nice job. It should. It puts a fire in me. I guaran-damn-tee you that. And we're going to have a fire. This is a big game for us. And we're going to take it one at a time. And we're going to play with some fire and energy, and that energy was not there for some reason. For some reason or another, it wasn't there, and that's up to me to get that done. I'm going to have to take my mask off a little bit more to scream. I felt like I was a little bit muffled in my

mask there.

Q. What's Myles's mental makeup been just the past couple of days after he watched the film and had time to digest it?

ED ORGERON: Going to get better. See where he made mistakes. That's Myles. Myles is humble. He made some good throws, though, but he was inconsistent. And obviously we gotta protect it. When Myles feels a little pressure, he wants to scramble outside, he's gotta sit in there. But, you know, sometimes he can't. He's trying to avoid -- so I think it all comes to the protection first, easy throws where he can make decisions, put our play makers in space, let them make plays, throw them the ball and take shots. And once we get that rhythm, we're going to be fine.

Q. Coach, if Derek comes back today or tomorrow or Wednesday, do you think he'll be able to play him or does his illness make you more cautious than a regular injury or something?

ED ORGERON: I'm hoping he can play then. Obviously he makes a difference on our team. We need that. It's a position we need. We're very short there, but we're always going to put his health first. I'm going to listen to the doctors. I'm going to talk to his mamma and daddy. If the doctors say he can play and Derek says he can play and momma and daddy says it's okay, he's going to play. If not, he won't. But I expect him to play. I expect him maybe to be back in practice as early as tomorrow. But we'll see.

Q. Coach, of the things that went wrong Saturday, which one surprised you the most?

ED ORGERON: The yards passing, yards after the catch. I've seen it. I've seen outstanding defense in camp, and you know, we had pressure on the quarterback, but the bust, you know, the wheel route going 75 yards down the field, the crossing routes, us playing behind the crossing routes. The third down, those things really surprised me, because we were excellent in camp against all of that. So I was really surprised that they gained that many yards on us.

Q. You were talking about Myles a couple of times there. With his time in the pocket and decisions, is it working through the levels of the open receivers? It seems like this was something that Joe Burrow went through as well. Is it the offense here? I mean, could you tell us a little bit about maybe some of the decisions that he's working through whenever he's in the pocket?

ED ORGERON: Well, Myles knows what he's looking at. There's no question. Okay. But it's a matter of making a decision, making a decision. And what Joe did is made a decision quick and let go of the ball quick. I think he has to let go of the ball quicker. I think he has to learn how to avoid the rush instead of going outside, stepping up in the pocket like Drew Brees does, be patient and let his receivers come open. And when he does see a receiver open, pull the trigger, pull the trigger and throw the ball, just like any great quarterback would.

Q. Obviously Saturday the passing yards were an outlier, but I was just curious if you or anybody on the staff in talking about it had been in a game quite like that where you put up 400 yards, you create four turnovers. You get a defensive score, time in possession. So many things that you point to and say you have to do these things well to win, you did, but you didn't. Can you or anybody on the staff remember a time where you went through a game like that here or elsewhere?

ED ORGERON: We were talking about that today. No. I haven't seen it. Haven't seen it. And it was the breakdown of the passing game on defense. That's what it was, and one-on-ones and missed assignments, and they had a good scheme, but we should have made some better adjustments throughout there. And we all know having Derek not there really hurt us. Derek is a force. He's a great player. And our guys not being healthy -- I'm not making any excuses for them, but that really hurt us, and that gives me hope for this football team. I think that when we get Derek back and we get our guys healthy, we're going to be fine.

Q. Obviously, for years the battle with LSU was getting to a more pass-heavy balanced offense and you guys have obviously done it but it seemed like Saturday in the second half there was a bit of a movement to try to run the ball more, it seemed like. So I guess what is that balance and what is the philosophy now at LSU?

ED ORGERON: Yeah. We want to be 50/50. We're close to it. I think there was 46/38 something like that. We're very close to it, but we came out second half, we needed to establish the line of scrimmage, and you can't drop back and pass every time and not run, especially with the three great running backs that we have and the fourth one, I think, Kevonte Bradford. But we have to run the ball. We have to be 50/50. Last year we ran the ball very well. We had one running play last year. We had inside zone. But you know what, Clyde made everybody miss, they went and make plays. And this is a different year. Not to say

that we don't have that running back, but we have to find things this year that this team does well.

Q. I guess I'll get in one Vanderbilt question to kind of close this thing off. I guess, you know, they took Texas A&M to pretty great lengths on Saturday. I was just curious what the early scouting report has been on them and just kind of how you guys are preparing for that game because they really weren't on your schedule to prepare for.

ED ORGERON: Well, first of all, Coach Mason is an excellent defensive guy. I've known him for a while. I used to study his stuff at Stanford. Kenechi Udeze, who coached the defensive line with me, who played defensive line, is now coaching their defensive line, and those guys are playing lights out. They're playing great technique. They're playing great defense. They have two of the best defensive linemen. One of them is one of the best linemen in the conference. They can rush the passer. So I think that's their strength.

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