

Camping World Kickoff: Florida State vs LSU

Monday, September 4, 2023

Orlando, Florida, USA

Camping World Stadium

Florida State Seminoles

Coach Mike Norvell

Keon Coleman

Jordan Travis

Press Conference



Florida State 45, LSU 24

COACH MIKE NORVELL: Everybody good? Just start off, so proud of our team. There's been a lot of build up and excitement about this game, this opportunity. Talked all the way through fall camp and even through the off-season, summer workouts, all of it, the mindset and the approach, these guys, what they bring to work every day. They have done a remarkable job in building relationships, just the way that they compete with each other. You know, I told them before the day, they are built for a time like this, this stage, two Top-10 teams in the country. Wasn't real pleased with some of the things that showed up in the first half. I thought we made some foolish mistakes at times and that happens.

You have to play this game with emotion and I want an emotional team but I want it to be controlled. I want to make sure that we are disciplined and we are continuing to focus on the little things, and I told the guys at halftime, both sides did a remarkable job in how they responded to that. But just that second half, that was a glimpse, a glimpse of where -- what I think this team can do and where I think it can go.

But there's a lot of things that we are going to have to clean up after. I appreciate them. Obviously there's excitement in the locker room but that's one game and it was a first step and it was a big step. You get a chance to be on this stage, you want to go play well.

I don't think we played our best game but I thought that second half, you know, we were able to really finish the way that we wanted to, and you know, I'm proud of them for the way that they continued to battle, the way they showed the resilience and who they are.

I would be remiss to not -- and that atmosphere, our crowd, our band's unbelievable job. That was an electric atmosphere that we got to play in, and great to be here in our home state and to see such a wonderful turnout, and just the energy in that game. It had a championship-type feel to it, and you know, I thought it was just a great experience for our players and all that are a part of the program.

Q. Mike, you mentioned the second half. What type of statement do you feel like this team made, particularly with what you were able to do in the second half?

COACH MIKE NORVELL: I mean, I thought that -- to be honest, I'm not really worried about the statements they make. I just want to go see them play to their capability. I told the offense at halftime, I said, you will score every drive in the second half if you just go out there and focus on the little things, focus on the details.

I'm glad that they went out and executed that. I mean, they did a wonderful job. Third down, Jordan was awesome. They were 9 or 14 or something like that on third downs. Obviously the fourth down conversion was huge. But just really proud of the way they battled throughout.

Defensively what a great second half that they had, creating the takeaway, obviously being able to get stops and get pressure on the quarterback. And then I love the way that we finished being able to run the football. It shows your training, it shows your toughness, and it shows your desire and your will to finish. That's what we want to be and that's what we want to be known for.

But really it's more for us than so much what the outside -- but I'm definitely glad that everybody got to see a glimpse of the identity of this team and now we get to go get better.

Q. When I look at the stats, the thing that jumps out to me is the efficiency of this offense tonight, 4-for-4 in the red zone, 69 percent on third down, Jordan was 74 percent. Can you talk a little bit about that?

COACH MIKE NORVELL: We have got really, really good,



good football players, and they compete hard in practice. If you ask any one of them, they are going to look back to the things that they could have been better, and that's what makes them pretty good. They approach every day as if it's a game.

It's something we're going to have to continue to do. We're going to have to clean up some of the inefficiencies we have, but we have great plays, a wonderful staff that do a great job teaching fundamentals. You see the development within all the positions that we have. It's really impressive.

I told our guys, just need to go out there and just be them. They don't have to put it on for anybody else or to get caught up in the moment. Let's just go out there and just play the way we know we're capable of playing, and I thought they did an exceptional job with that.

Q. Keon, what are you most grateful for after a monster first game like this at Florida State?

KEON COLEMAN: Well, really just being thankful for the opportunity; Coach saying yes to me, coming to a new school after the transfer portal, and believing in me. I'm grateful for my teammates, getting to show them the hard work that we have been putting in the whole summer is paying off and getting to show a glimpse of what I can do, and not only me, just what our whole receiver room and the rest of the team can do.

COACH MIKE NORVELL: I'm grateful for you saying yes, too. (Laughter).

Q. Jordan, it felt like there was a moment -- was there a moment before the first drive of recentering yourself? There was a before and after.

JORDAN TRAVIS: Yeah, I have to come out faster than that. I started slow. I don't know if it's first-game jitters or what it was, but I had to settle myself in. It's easy when I have great teammates around me to push me and tell me they have my back no matter what.

I had a great defense, too, and that keeps us in the game the entire time. Turnovers, stuff like that, they have my back. Guys like Keon, Johnny, making big-time plays and making my job easy. Offensive line steps up and they stepped up every single time. They stepped that up second half and made it easy for me. I'm grateful for them.

COACH MIKE NORVELL: I definitely want to give a shout-out to our O-line as well. That's a group that knows how to rush the passer, and they have got some dynamic players. And I thought even when we gave up some

pressure early, I thought those guys responded really well, and I'm proud of the O-Line and the way they were able to balance against some talented guys.

Q. Playing against your home state, was there any extra motivation for you?

KEON COLEMAN: I'm going to be honest, I don't really think so. I mean, I took it as a game, I get to go out and just do what the Lord has blessed me to do, just play football and be able to have fun with it and take every game as its own and just go out there and try to get the W.

But it added a little salt to the wound. That's my home state. A lot of my family are fans of them, but I ain't so much of a fan of them. I'm a Seminole now.

Q. Obviously when you got here four years ago, this was a rebuilding project and didn't necessarily happen overnight, but to have a night like this, a Top-10 showdown like this, a win like this, does it feel like somewhat validation for the work you put in?

COACH MIKE NORVELL: I'm grateful for our players, our administration, and the people I get to work with every day. I knew it was going to be a process. We stayed true to the process and stayed true to continuing to work to get better. There were things we did well, things we have to get better at. But the same thing as we continued to grow our team with young players, we all had to go through it.

I told our team, sometimes you have to go through what you need to prove you can get through. And we had to go through some really tough and challenging moments. But then we needed to be able to prove to ourselves that we can overcome and we can rise up. And the things that we talk about that they really -- they are real. They are substance. You can sit there and watch a glimpse of who we are, but you don't get to see the work, the work that these guys put in.

I'm not just talking about on the field or in the weight room; the work they put in in the classroom, the work they put in in every area to try to push themselves to be their best. You get one opportunity, and I'm grateful for who I get to do it with.

And I represent the greatest institution in the country. I've got a tremendous responsibility in what it needs to look like. Everybody wants to win, but it matters at Florida State what it looks like. And I appreciate that standard and I appreciate the support that we get and that we are going to continue to push and go improve to get better.

Q. You talked about the atmosphere, Top-10 teams,

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just the drama of the game. How good is it to be talking about football instead of the conference realignment and TV contracts?

COACH MIKE NORVELL: We enjoy playing the game and the guys enjoy preparing for the game and how they continue to grow and get better. And like I said, that was a special night. We played this game a year ago in the Superdome, and it was a wonderful showing from our Florida State family when we were there.

And, tonight, it was just special. I love seeing our guys get to celebrate afterwards, everybody down with the Marching Chiefs. It was really a cool opportunity that we were able to have.

Q. The matchups and your ability to find the guys and make plays, did it feel like you were going to be able to exploit it once you and got going?

JORDAN TRAVIS: Just knew it was a matter of time. Just had to get locked in and stay focused and keep the main thing the main thing. But once again it starts up front. If the offensive line doesn't protect and give me time, I can't make throws down the field. So shout-out to them and shout-out to all the receivers making plays.

We started off slow with a couple drops in the first half. I've got to put the ball higher on the throws to make it easier for the receiver. But yeah, they make my job easy. Like I said before, they make it easy. It's fun out there, and it's fun winning football games.

Q. How much did it resonate in the locker room, Brian Kelly's comments that we are going to beat the heck out of Florida State. How much attention do you pay to stuff like that? (Laughter)

KEON COLEMAN: Can you ask that again? I ain't even hear what you said.

Q. How much did affect you, Brian Kelly's comments? He definitively said, "We are going to beat Florida State" last week.

KEON COLEMAN: Where he say that at? (Laughter) I don't recall. I didn't see anything at all.

COACH MIKE NORVELL: Good to be able to play the game.

JORDAN TRAVIS: Heck, yeah.

Q. You already had the big freak on the other side, but going to Keon and what he can do to DBs, and how

effortless he can make some things look?

JORDAN TRAVIS: He's a really special player and a special teammate. I always talk about the person before the player. He's a great teammate to have in the locker room. It's always good vibes with him. He puts a smile on your face every single day when you walk in there. He always has energy, and you love playing with guys like that and playing for guys like that because he's just a great person.

He's a great athlete, a great player, and he works so hard. I mean, it all comes from the off-season, how hard he works. I'm so proud of him and I envisioned all this last night, everything, him making big plays. And Johnny did that, and Jaheim, all these new guys came in and gelled very well with this locker room. I'm so grateful for them for being great people and great teammates.

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