

2023 ACC Football Championship Game: Louisville vs Florida State

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Bank of America Stadium

Louisville Cardinals

Jeff Brohm

Press Conference



challenge, and I'm looking forward to getting on the field and taking on such a great opponent.

Q. Tomorrow there's supposed to be a lot of rain in this area. Is your running game built for the rain? What are you going to do with the elements?

JEFF BROHM: Well, we hate to say we've not been as good in the elements as I would like to be in my past, so I think we've worked all week with a wet ball and having to handle that, make sure that we try not to do too many silly things.

Taking care of the football, running the ball, trying to get somewhat safe and easy completions is always important to make sure we call and have ready to go. I think sometimes the game plan will change slightly if it's a situation that needs it.

We had a rainy game at Pittsburgh, and it wasn't a good day for us, had turnovers and miscues, and our whole team didn't play as well as it should. It's taking care of the football will be vital, and I don't think we could have worked any more than we have to this point, but we've got to go out during the game and do that.

Q. Florida State seems like maybe their quarterback situation may be in flux. How do you approach that?

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think that Tate, their backup, has come in and done a really good job. He's played a lot of football. He's got a football pedigree and background. He played last year against Louisville and won, and he's done a really good job.

I'm sure the high net, they'll have capable guys that can come in and step in and play, but we're anticipating seeing Tate, and we prepared for him, and a little bit more the unknown, but you never know. I just think you have to be prepared for a couple different styles, whether it's a guy that likes to throw the ball a lot or whether it's a guy that's going to run the zone read and the power read and get on the edges and make some plays with his feet. So we have to be prepared for both of them.

JEFF BROHM: We're definitely excited to be here. I think it's a great opportunity for our football team to play in a game of this caliber. Our guys have worked really hard to get to this point, and we've had some tough football games that have gone our way, a few that haven't, but they've given us great effort all year, and we couldn't be more excited to play a great opponent in Florida State that's undefeated, ranked No. 4 in the country, and they've played a lot of really good football.

We know it's a talented football team. They're well-coached. They've got a lot of really good players at every position, and we're going to have to play well in order to win, but that's what drives us to hopefully come out prepared and play as well as we can and challenge ourselves to raise our level of play and match the level of play that we'll see from Florida State.

But to play in this atmosphere and this championship game, I think it's great for our guys and our team, and we can't wait to get out here tomorrow night.

Q. (Inaudible.)

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think we've tried not to talk about it a whole lot. I think we want to treat this like a normal week of practice, normal preparation for a really good team that we have to come ready to play, and a game that means something.

I think we just challenge our guys every week to improve and correct our mistakes and try to have our best week -- excuse me, have our best performance to date, and that's individually, as a unit, as a team, and that's what we'll try to do here.

I think it'll be a great measuring stick because this is a really good football team, but I think our guys are up for the

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Q. As a follow-up to that, if Brock Glenn does play, how much would that change or affect your game plan?

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think anytime there's a new quarterback, it does affect and change slightly, and we'll base it on what we think his strengths and weaknesses are, so other than making sure we're aware of that plan, I think we've just got to go into it expecting Tate to play and then adjusting if he doesn't.

I think we've worked towards it this week, and hopefully we're prepared for it.

Q. Since this is the ACC Championship game, a big game and everything, how are you going to keep your guys grounded and focused on the task at hand?

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think for us, we need to go out there and cut it loose. I think Florida State, of course they want to win the game to get to the playoff, and for us, we're the underdog. We need to go out there, and pressure is on them, and we need to just go out there and cut it loose.

I think we've worked really hard this week. We understand that with that said, we have to play our best football and we have to improve on some mistakes we made last week and the losses we've had this year, make sure those things don't happen. But we've got to make plays, and both sides of the ball got to be aggressive in their approach, find ways to make some difference-making plays, and then I think our special teams has to find a way to gain an edge, which we have not been as sharp in that as recently as I would have liked, but worked at it hard. So I think tomorrow night will be the night to see how far we've come in our preparation.

Q. This season has been really special for you guys. What have you learned about yourself as a coach, and what have you learned about your team?

JEFF BROHM: I think our guys have done a great job of really just staying grounded, working hard, understanding that each week is a new challenge, and we kind of talk amongst ourselves about how it's a one-game season for us, and we're going to do everything in our power to win that game. That includes myself, our coaches and our players.

You lay it all in the week during the week of practice. You practice hard. You make sure you look in the mirror at night before you go to bed and have I done everything I can to help prepare for this, and then you do it the next day and then you do it the next day, and then when you take the field, hopefully you have the confidence to go out there and play your best and cut it loose, and that's what we're

trying to do.

I tell them after every game, whether you win or lose, you've got to do it again. Sometimes after you win the expectations are higher, so it makes it even harder, but when you lose, you've got to still stay hungry, and you can't lose confidence in yourself. You've got to say, you know what, I'm not going to make those mistakes again. Let's figure out a way to not have that happen.

I just think you just grind away each week at it, and as soon as you start looking at any other game as a player or coach other than the one ahead of you, you're going to do things that are a detriment to winning that game.

Of course this game is easy because we know we've got to put the work in, which I think we have to this point. We know we're going to have to play really solid, fundamental good football throughout the game, win a lot of the small little battles you have to when you play really good teams in order to win, but that's why you roll the ball out there and take off, because you never know once you step on the field.

I think our guys are looking forward to playing a team of this caliber.

Q. You spoke about this after the last game on the teleconference that you need some fixes for the defense. It's been a week; are you pleased with the fixes that you guys have been able to put in place?

JEFF BROHM: Well, we've had some really good games on defense. I think the last three weeks have not been our best. I think you have to just kind of circle the wagons and look at what's worked for you and what hasn't and what mistakes you made and what were the calls and how can we as coaches put them in a better position to succeed.

We worked hard at it. There has to be a fine line. I think we had some success early on because we were aggressive in our approach. We were trying to get sacks; we were trying to put pressure on the quarterback, and then a few times we had gotten burnt because of it, so I think it just has to be that perfect combination of, hey, do you want to go down being extra aggressive, or do you want to go down being extra conservative.

I just think -- I wish I had a perfect answer for it, but right now we're this far into the season. We practice a lot of things to make sure we have ammunition.

I think we like the plan that we have to this point going into the game, but you've got to be able to adjust, and I think -- depending on how the game goes, we have to stick with

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the plan or be able to adjust slightly if things go south early so that we can kind of change the momentum, and I think that's what's important is making sure that we have the answers when those problems come up.

Q. As a follow-up, how have you balanced between practices being physical and intense and walking through some things especially because of how the way the last game ended?

JEFF BROHM: I think we've had some really good practices. We go probably good-on-good as much as anybody throughout the season. Of course as you get later in the season, then some wear and tear happens, we do pull back on that slightly, so we have pulled back on it slightly. We did want to make sure for this championship game we get as many guys as healthy as we can to it so they can go out there and play.

I think that we've tried to balance that pretty well, and I think we're about as fresh as we can be coming into this game.

Q. Like a lot of teams, Florida State rotates a lot of their defensive line. Seems like it's probably on the higher end of teams that do that. When you're preparing for a team like that, one that rotates that much, do you get down to the specifics of different guys' talents and skills and the ways they play, or is it just whoever is in front of you blocking?

JEFF BROHM: Well, they've got a good system down, and they run it well, and they have the guys to do it, so I give them a lot of credit. They've got some really good athletes that can run, that have length, that are quick, that are powerful.

They don't do a whole lot of different things. They're going to line up with four-down linemen and linebackers and press you on the outside, whether it's one high or two high, and come after you. I think they do a really good job of they allow their players to challenge routes, get in front of receivers, don't give up any easy completions, make you earn it. So you have to have a good plan, and you've got to execute, and they're going to create havoc with their speed and their athleticism, so you have to try to find a way to negate that a little bit if you can.

So yes, whether it's protection or whether it's balance or whether it's running the ball at it or whether it's finding ways to get big plays, that's the dilemma, so they've done a really good job. They've held people to I think under 30 points in every game, and their defense has been really good.

So we have our hands full.

Q. You mentioned earlier having the game plan sometimes be a little more aggressive with your pass rush. When you're playing a team that's going to have one way or another a relatively inexperienced quarterback, does trying to get them off schedule and behind the chains become a bigger priority for you?

JEFF BROHM: Well, it's a priority, and it always will be. We've gotten burned on it here in the recent past, so you've just got to make sure you're very calculated in how you approach that. But to that question, every game getting pressure on the quarterback, getting his jersey dirty, making him feel the push and the heat coming at him is very important, and at the same time stopping the run and making sure they don't get big plays in the running game is very important.

These guys can run the ball. They've got really good running backs. They've got good tight ends and big receivers.

That's the challenge is you take away one, they're going to try to do the other.

But without question, affecting the quarterback is very important.

Q. Obviously it's not easy to get here; this is year four for Mike and they're just starting to peak. How were you able to put Louisville in this position in year one? What was the process like to put your imprint on this program and get to this point?

JEFF BROHM: Well, in my head I don't think there's a secret formula to it. I've been fortunate to be able to play the game and coach the game and have some experience coming back home to University of Louisville, so I feel good that I thought we were prepared to take on that challenge.

I thought we had some hungry guys already on the team that wanted to be coached. They wanted to play at a high level, they wanted to try to win big games. We tried to mix that with a combination of other guys that could help our team improve depth-wise and talent-wise.

All we try to do is provide a great environment for these guys to want to work, to want to put in the time. They understand that we're there to help them, so myself and our coaches, we want to spend extra time with our players. We're going to make sure that as much football as they want to do, that's what we're going to do. I just think our guys have spent a lot of time working to improve, to get better.



When we play games, whether we win or lose, I think we identify the problems we make, starting with myself and the mistakes I made first, then we go to our coaches and we work it down to our team, and they go to work on it. They listen, we try to improve upon it, try not to have it happen again, and then we just go cut it loose.

But these guys have had fun working. I think they enjoy playing football at the University of Louisville. They enjoy the competition and some of the success we've had to this point. That's why I think they're going to cherish this opportunity in this game because we know we're playing a really talented team that hasn't been defeated and they've won some big games, but it's going to be a great measuring stick for us.

Q. Going off of that, when you were picking guys from the portal or evaluating the talent that was brought back, what did you see from these guys that allowed you guys to feel like you could get to this point this season?

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think I've learned a lot as a coach. My father coached me growing up in certain sports, still coaches a little bit. We used to tease him; he was always great because his teams would win the league, whether it was optimus baseball or optimus baseball because when he had his draft, he would draft the best players no matter what anybody about them, their attitude, their work ethic, and he'd piece it together.

So for us, I've always taken that, and when we go try to improve our team, we're going to try to get the best players we can. Without question we want to know their character and their makeup and their work ethic, but sometimes what you hear about somebody isn't always true. You've got to get to know them, and there's a lot of good in everybody, and a lot of people want a second chance or they want another opportunity to prove themselves.

We just try to bring out the best in everybody we bring in. We create an equitable, fair environment where they're all going to get a chance to go out on the field. If you can prove to us you can play, we're going to put you on the field, whether you're a starter or backup or third team.

These guys have gelled together very well. They get along. They work hard. We've been very unselfish in my opinion because we have run the ball and the receivers haven't probably seen the ball as much as they would like, and they usually get upset, but they don't. They work really hard, and they understand as long as we're winning, that's the goal.

I just think you try to do whatever is best for the team but be as honest with them as you can along the way, and if you do that, they'll respond and they'll play hard and they'll play well.

Q. You played in the Big Ten Championship game last year. Is there anything you can take from preparation for that game into this game, and is there anything you would change in your preparation?

JEFF BROHM: Well, I would have probably just left at halftime of last year's game. We were right there with them and it felt really good, and then the second half didn't go the way we wanted.

You know what, when you play in those games, you just kind of have to prepare, have an aggressive approach, build confidence that your guys can go out there and play and win and then go cut it loose.

I just think last year if I look back on it, we were right in it, and then we gave up a couple big plays and turned the ball over, and then it kind of went the other direction.

I just think you've got to -- how can we eliminate those small mistakes and concentrate on those small details, try not to give them the other team something easy, make them earn everything they get, and I think if you do that, you have a chance to win.

So I just think that being the more disciplined team, concentrate on those small things, taking care of the football, but yet being aggressive in our approach is the style we have to play, and I just think our guys got to be locked in, they've got to be focused, they've got to be dialed in that we don't make critical mistakes, and if we have one or two that happen to go the other direction, we've got to rebound quickly, and that's what we try to preach, and hopefully we can carry it out.

Q. There have been different times during this season where individual players who had good games here (indiscernible). Getting Louisville to this game regardless of what happens tomorrow in year one, where do you feel like the bar is being set now for you and the program?

JEFF BROHM: Well, it's being set higher, without question. The fever blisters I get in my mouth and the gout that I get in my foot or elbow because of stress, that's going to continue to be there.

That's why you play the game is you want to try to find a way to win at a high level. It's got to mean something to you, and I knew coming back it's going to mean something



to me, and it better because if not, there's going to be a lot of people telling me about it. I knew I was going to have to put the work in. I was going to have to be committed to once the season starts and we get into preparation, we've got to do everything we can to win. Our coaches are going to have to do the same thing. We're going to have to have guys that really wanted to be committed to finding a way to win no matter what was going on.

So I think we've got a good nucleus of that going on right now. There's a lot of people on our staff that have ties to the university, whether they've lived there, played there, coached there, went to school there, so it means something to them, as well, and then you carry that down to your players. You want guys that if you want to win, we're going to have to put the work in. It doesn't just happen. There's no easy way to do it, there's no shortcut, and you explain that to them.

I just think since I got there last December, you put the work in, you have time to put extra work in, you'd be surprised how many guys spend that extra time working to get it done, and you have to do that. I mean, you can't put in a normal day if you want to win at a high level. You've got to put in extra work.

If myself, our staff, our players are all doing it, then that's 120 to 150 people that are doing extra work, and that adds up, and that's what it takes to win.

I just think every year you learn from mistakes you've made, why didn't we win this game, what made us not play as well. It's got to be written down, it's got to be studied, it's got to be filed away, you've got to try to improve upon it that year, but the next year in the off-season you've got to make sure that we find ways not to do it again.

Once this season is fully over, then we're going to have to go to work on next year. Build our team, work on how can we get better, how can we improve, and I'm not a big guy that says we're going to do the same things we did last year. No, it changes. This game evolves every year. You have to be able to change. You have to be able to adapt. You've got to study other great teams across the country and college and the NFL and why are they playing or how are they winning so many games with less than maybe the other team, and you've got to piece that together.

I just think it requires a lot of work. You've got to be willing to put it in, and then you've still got to go out and play and execute, so there's a lot of things that go into it, and there's not a perfect science to it, but I just think you have to put the work in to have a chance, and then you hope that you go out there and play well.

Q. The fever blisters and the gout and stuff, did that happen at Purdue and Western Kentucky?

JEFF BROHM: You know what, it didn't happen as much when I was a player, but it's happened more since I was a coach. Just like everybody gets stressed, you take a pill, hopefully don't get the fever blisters, had to get some medicine to get over some of the other stuff I had, but it didn't take long. I just thought it was old aiming.

But some of the things they look at the symptoms, like don't do that, don't do that, one stress I guess maybe it is stress, I don't know.

But that's part of it, so I'm not complaining one bit. That's what you sign up for.

I just think you have to take the game serious. I have to. If we don't win, it has to bother me, and it does. It has to really eat at me.

You know what, I like for it to bother me and our coaches, too.

Then I like for it to bother the players a little bit, as well.

Now, there comes a point where you've got to get over it in a couple days and build your confidence back up as a coach and as a player, but you have to go through that hurtful process when you're not winning, and it has to drive you to want to do more.

I don't know, to me that's how I've always been as a player and as a coach, and I can at least sleep better at night knowing we've tried really hard to win.

Q. Every conference around the country there's perceptions of different conferences and what they're like, and now that you've been in the league, I know you haven't played everybody, but what are your thoughts and perceptions after a season?

JEFF BROHM: Yeah, I think this is a great football conference. I think there's more parity in this conference than any conference I've been around from top to bottom. I think Florida State is as good as any team in the country right now, and they've proven it with big wins and really good play with a lot of different guys.

We've had tough games pretty much every week, just a lot of teams beating each other. To me it's felt that there's great parity.

There's good skill players in this league, good speed, good athleticism, and a lot of fun places to play. I've enjoyed it

to this point, but it's very competitive, and if you don't play your best, you're not going to win on any given week, but without question, there's a lot of really talented teams. Florida State, Clemson, NC State, North Carolina, and all the others are really good opponents.

I think it'll stay that way, and it's been a lot of fun to play in.

Q. You mentioned a loss bothering you. I would imagine you couldn't come up with a loss that could bother you more than the Kentucky one. Do you think that game gave them any extra fire or spark for this week, not that they needed it for the championship game?

JEFF BROHM: Well, I think we're all disappointed, and it hurt all of us, which is good, because man, we had our chances. It wasn't like it was a really bad game. We just made some costly mistakes.

You just think, man, if I would have done better on these things, it would have been a different day. I just think you identify those, you try to improve on them. We know going into this game that we've got to play really well. I think we've got to come out ready to play, and we've got to match their intensity and their desire to win and win early.

We've got to do all those small things correctly and keep the game close as long as we can. But that's what we want to try to do. We want to try to have our best performance, and if you don't challenge yourself to have your best performance every week, then you're wasting time.

Individually we need to try to do our best, as a unit, as a team we need to, and we need to take advantage of this opportunity and a great study and a championship game and prove our worth.

Q. What's the importance of teamwork and having an unselfish team?

JEFF BROHM: Well, it's vital, teamwork and unselfish play, and I think your best teams will have that. When guys know they've got to do their part but yet someone else is going to shine that day, that it's still great, I think your team will play its best. I think Florida State has exemplified that. They've had multiple people come in, step in and make plays for them. We've done that to a certain degree.

I just think that any team sport you have to have a lot of really talented players that are willing to work together and really don't care who gets the credit, and that's normally your best team. I just think the leadership skills from our

players have been really good to this point, and they don't care who gets the credit, they just want to win, so we've got to go out there and figure out a way to win.

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