

University of Florida Football Media Conference

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Press Conference



Q. What does it feel like to be the first Florida athlete to sign a deal with Gatorade?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: Actually to break it down, I don't even know how I got connected with those guys. I wasn't worried about anything like that. They just told me we might have a deal, a smaller deal with Gatorade. I'm like, Gatorade? That's crazy.

You know, they told me about it, and I guess I made history being one of the first -- I didn't even know I was one of the first, but it definitely feels good because it opened up doors for every other athlete that goes here.

We're blessed.

Q. Have you been drinking Gatorade your whole life?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: Pretty much, yeah.

Q. Not as a baby.

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: No, not as a baby, no.

Q. Obviously everybody has a storyline. Last year was your first start against Georgia. The last two minutes of that first half didn't go so well. Where do you see yourself now in year two of you being a quarterback compared to where you were a year ago when y'all played this game?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: I feel like I've made huge leaps of improvement. There's still a ways to go. But just thinking about it, I was actually talking about it the other day, time does fly. Seemed like yesterday it was my first start against Georgia. I feel like we were doing pretty good until those last couple minutes of the game.

But I feel like I made improvements as a player, as a person, so I'm thankful that I even got the opportunity to start in that game. It was fun, just being on that field with my teammates. It was definitely a huge blessing. I was thankful for that.

Q. The defense had, I think, four or five first-round draft picks. How overwhelming was the talent on the field and dealing with that quality of a defense for your first start?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: It was pretty crazy. Just thinking about it, that was one of the things -- watching those guys all year, just seeing what they were doing, seeing how they were stopping offenses from scoring, I'm like, oh, those guys are pretty good. Coach Kirby Smart, he's doing his thing.

But it's all part of the game. You're going to have some great plays, you're going to have some not-so-great plays, but you've just got to go out there and play your game.

Q. How did you process that game emotionally, the big moment you had, and it just didn't go as you had hoped and then you got injured?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: Before the game, I'm not going to lie, I had a lot of jitters. I was in my head a lot. I was a little nervous. First career start against the No. 1 defense, so of course I was thinking a lot.

I feel like I was doing pretty good until those last few minutes of the first half.

But just processing it and thinking about it, it's taught me a lot about football itself and how to manage the game and how to take control of the game.

It is what it is now.

Q. Afterwards what did you take from it? Managing your emotions better, managing the moment better?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: Managing everything, the emotions, the moment, the game itself, just managing everything and letting it come to you instead of just trying to force everything.

Q. How did you take advantage of the bye week do you think? What did you do and how did you

improve?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: Definitely watching a little bit more film, resting up, not getting banged up on the field. But just using that week as more of a mental week. I was just getting ready for this game coming up.

Q. How do you approach your mental game to make sure in a similar environment the jitters aren't there this time?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: Just take what the game gives me. I've started a few games this year, so that's one huge comparison I can make to that. Just letting the game come to me.

Q. Did you think about the Georgia game during the off-season?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: Last year I thought about it a lot because I didn't really showcase what I wanted to showcase. It kind of created a narrative that I wasn't ready.

I thought about it a little bit during the off-season, but ever since then, everybody is going to have a game like that every once in a while. Just can't let it affect you.

Q. You talked about the jitters last year; how long did it take you to get rid of the jitters in the game, or did you ever get rid of the jitters during the game last year?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: I think they were flowing up and down. I would make a big play, and they'd kind of drop. Then I'd hear the crowd screaming and they would kind of rise back up. I think that was just being part of the moment and being a little anxious and being young and not experienced.

Q. How does for example playing in Neyland with 100,000-some people, how does that helped you prepare for a game like this, because that was a game obviously with all the people screaming at you. If you were going to be nervous that was a game you were going to be?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: I didn't necessarily think about it like that, that that one prepared me for this one.

But like I said, just letting the game come to me, not really worrying about what everybody else is thinking, not really worrying about what everybody else was saying, because that game was a pretty wild game.

Now that I think about it, I feel like that one was setting us up for that one.

Q. What do you and the Gators need to do this week to have a shot at upsetting this team?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: Just stay focused, keep the main thing the main thing. That's doing your assignment, focusing on what you've got to do, and just focusing on the win.

Q. I asked Tyreek, No. 1 defending national champs, that doesn't come around all the time. How do you view that opportunity?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: To think about it, it's pretty wild. Congrats to those guys for doing their thing last year. Congrats to them for doing their thing this year, keeping that No. 1 spot.

But if you get too caught up into that type of stuff, then it'll deter you from the main thing, take your mind off of what you want to accomplish.

We're not really thinking about them being ranked, us being unranked or what the history has been like before. We're just trying to be in a moment and just be in Jacksonville and doing what we have to do.

Q. What would it mean to win this game, though, for the season and how it could turn things around?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: It would mean a lot just to even win. Every win is a big win for us. This one is an SEC game, so SEC win would be great for us. Just being in Jacksonville and winning that game would be a big win for us.

We're just looking forward to playing ball.

Q. Did you follow the Florida-Georgia rivalry growing up or do you have any thoughts about what it means?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: No, not necessarily. I didn't really follow it much until I got here. Just being there and just watching Kyle Trask do what he did when we played them and then watching some of the greats like Brandon Spikes, the hit he had against them, just seeing some of that stuff, it kind of puts me in that feeling.

Q. Could the underdog thing be a motivation now in terms of you guys are 22-point underdogs? Could that permeate through the team or through you as the leader?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: 22 points? I didn't even hear about that until now. We haven't really been thinking about being the underdog because we've pretty much been the underdog all season. A lot of people have been counting us out, doubting us. But that just comes with the territory.

We know what we have to do to get back to the top spot. We're going to try to do that. We're not necessarily thinking about being the underdog.

Q. That number seemed to surprise you.

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: It did. That's crazy.

Q. How much lead time did you know you were going to be starting last year? Was it the whole year or were you told Wednesday, Thursday? How much head start did you have?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: If I remember correctly, it might have been like a day or two before the game. They pulled Emory and I in the office and told us that they were going to go with me, and I had to be ready for it. That whole week we both were preparing to be the starter. We didn't know what was going to happen. But they finalized it like a day or two before the game.

Q. Do you still get jitters before games?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: Earlier in the season I did. I feel like that comes with everybody, every game. It's the moment. It's a big moment. You always want to perform to the best of your ability, so I feel like everybody gets jitters. But I try to limit those as much as possible, just stay out of my own head.

Q. Do you have a pregame routine or do anything in particular to kind of zone in or anything like that?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: Not really. I listen to music every once in a while.

Randy, I call him before every game. We talk on the phone. We pray. But that's probably the main thing is just talking on the phone to Randy and just praying.

Q. Talk about how this team has been so close to maybe getting to where they could be undefeated. You guys were in a lot of games but some didn't go your way. How close is it that you guys know you can just make a few plays here and you guys can be where you want to be?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: It's definitely close, like you said. That's just doing your assignment. There's multiple

times on the film where you can see it isn't one guy not doing what he's supposed to do, including myself. Not looking at the signals correctly, missing motions and shifts and stuff, just stuff like that. But just knowing that minor things like that could potentially change how the season is going is definitely kind of crazy to think about.

But everything happens for a reason, so we can't just dwell on that right now.

Q. As far as the work with the receivers goes, you said you really wanted to work on getting on the same page, not missing opportunities there.

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: I feel like the work with the receivers is going pretty well. That's just chemistry and just understanding what we both want. Those guys want the ball. I want to get them the ball. It's just understanding like the spots to be open on the field and understanding the coverages behind it.

Q. You were asked about the talent on Georgia's defense last year and some of the guys that were drafted. What have you seen in terms of the changes on the defense, talent filling in at certain spots and if there are any differences between now and a year ago?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: You know, not much has changed for them. Of course they have older guys there, so that's probably the biggest thing right there, just the age difference.

But not much has changed. Georgia, they're great at recruiting. They know how to get guys and put them in the right spots. Their coach trusts them to be in the right spot, so just looking at the film, there's not much of a difference. They're a pretty good team, same team as last year.

Q. What do you feel about this rivalry as a player? Would you want it to stay in Georgia, or would the thought of playing at Georgia excite you? How do you feel about the future of it?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: Honestly, that's a great question. I've thought about that before the season. It's pretty cool being in Jacksonville seeing the stadium split half and half.

But I feel like if it was to be put at the universities, at the schools, I feel like you might give one team an advantage over the other. That's just food for thought.

Q. How much did you consider Georgia as a recruit and how much did Kirby recruit you?



ANTHONY RICHARDSON: I decommitted from here and I picked up the offer maybe three days later. I didn't necessarily consider Georgia as much. I didn't see myself a fit for the offense. I didn't really consider them as much.

But it was definitely a thought. Just getting any offer, you're like, whoa, maybe I should there, maybe I should go there. But actually thinking about it and putting yourself in that situation, I didn't really see myself as a fit for the offense.

Q. Too much of a Gator?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: Yeah.

Q. Who pays better, Gatorade or GatorGuard?

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: I don't even know.

Q. You're on both payrolls.

ANTHONY RICHARDSON: Hey, I don't know.

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