

# University of Florida Football Media Conference

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## Tyreek Sapp

Press Conference



**Q. Billy talked about the challenge but also the opportunity. How do you guys view that as players going against No. 1 team that's kind of owned this series a bit for several years?**

TYREAK SAPP: Well, we view it as a great opportunity, a big opportunity because we know it's a game that we're going to all have to come together as a team and execute on all phases of the game.

We have to come together, especially as a defense, and we're ready for the challenge. We know it's going to be very, very challenging. We know they're going to bring they lunchbox, and we are too, so we're just very looking forward to that.

We're going to work this week, work on everything we need to work on, dial up everything, make sure everything is crisp, everything is sound. Just looking forward to heading to Jacksonville on Saturday, going out there executing, having fun playing ball.

**Q. What gives you hope that you guys -- you guys have had some high points. You played well at Tennessee; you beat Utah; had some other moments. What do you guys kind of dig in on to say, hey, we can compete with these guys?**

TYREAK SAPP: We're just a few plays away. Just a few plays away. We know all this hard work we're putting in, it's not for nothing, but we're just a few plays away. We feel like we're so close, we just feel like there's something there we're missing and there's a reason we can't break that barrier. I feel like we are going to figure it out this week.

We are going to work towards breaking that barrier this week on trying to find the recipe for us to have success in those big-time games in those close moments. We're just working on that, trying to see the analytics and do the best that we do, not just our defensive staff, but as players to see what's the problem and what we need to get fixed.

**Q. Tyreek, how frustrating is it to know that you are just a few plays away from being 7-0, and how encouraging is it to know that if you can make up for those mistakes that you can be so much better?**

TYREAK SAPP: Yes, sir, it's frustrating, but it gives you hope, as well, because you also understand that it takes a lot of work to get those things done, and you understand where we have come from and we see what we have done over the past this season.

We see that there's hope in there. We see that we can put something -- it's just another step that we can take just to break that barrier, and we understand we can take that step if we just focus a little harder, work a little harder and put a little bit more focus into it and put a little bit more emphasis on certain things.

**Q. It all works together, but what would be the number one thing in your mind that you would like to fix on defense, 3rd down defense, run defense, sacks?**

TYREAK SAPP: Just 3rd down and affect the quarterback really. 3rd down and affecting the quarterback, taking some of the heat off our DBs, because our DBs over the past this season, they had off in coverage. Our linebackers as well have done an exceptional job.

I feel like we can just up front as rushing four, I feel like we should affect -- we can affect the quarterback more, just be more precise in our rushes and understand who we're actually up against.

**Q. How would you rate their offensive line?**

TYREAK SAPP: Great. Good offensive line. Got some good guys, got some older guys, big, big guys, can move., just what you would see in one of those top-notch SEC offensive lines. They prepare, and we're going to prepare, as well.

**Q. You're a 22-point underdog. What does that do psychologically for a team?**

TYREAK SAPP: It gets you -- it riles up because you feel

like it's kind of disrespect because we both put in -- not put in the same work, but we both put on our cleats the same and we understand that -- we understand that, yes, this team we've got a chance, too.

We've always got to fight, the fight is punching these games, and just feel like we can just take over this game and just be successful in all phases if we just all come together and execute, and we understand that.

They are, but we are too.

**Q. Billy mentioned you went over some of the things that might have been contributing to the struggles.**

TYREAK SAPP: Yes, correctness of things, trying to get some things worked up. Not going overboard, but really just getting after it, especially early on in the week at practice getting after it with each other, just kind of staying on the edge. Because it is bye week, so you want to take advantage of those days where you can bang and take advantage of those days where you can lay off, too, and kind of just get those mental reps.

**Q. How similar was it to a regular week in terms of the physicality --**

TYREAK SAPP: Maybe the first three days we got after it a little bit, but as the week died down, toned it down we slowed it down and toned it down and it got more mental.

**Q. You guys pressured the quarterback some. What do you think has been holding you guys back consistency-wise?**

TYREAK SAPP: I just feel like up front we can just be a little bit more effective rushing up front. Got some great guys. Just being more effective, because a lot of the times we get pressures where we're just about there. The thing is there's a difference between sacks and pressures like seconds, inches between.

It's a difference between that sack and that pressure. You just want to try to get more of those sacks and try to just affect the QB more get their off of their game and get their off of their throwing.

**Q. Is it stunning to you that the defense hasn't been a little consistent given the talent on that side of the ball?**

TYREAK SAPP: Yes. Yes, I feel like we're a very, very talented defense. We just have to bring it all together, and we all understand that it's going to take work and it's going to take time, but at this point it's a matter of time, and that

time is coming up and time is ticking. We've just got to take advantage of it, take a look at this moment, and we've seize it put our best foot forward as a defense, as a team.

**Q. What has Fentrell Miller meant to the defense?**

TYREAK SAPP: Fentrell Miller, I call him "General." He's our center ground. He is going to make sure everybody is centered, make sure everybody is ready to play. He's going to make sure you're ready to go, and then he's kind of like I call him he kind of like the LeBron Effect. He not only plays well himself, he affects everybody. Plays well on the field. He's a very infectious guy.

I don't care who you are, you step on the field with Fentrell, you're most likely going to put your best foot forward because you understand that you are on the field with a guy that got you covered, and you're going to feel comfortable playing with him.

**Q. How much of the inconsistency on defense do you think is between the ears and how much of it is physical would you say?**

TYREAK SAPP: I feel like it's probably about 80 percent between the ears, about 20 percent physical. It's just us, we've got to see things better. We've got to understand situations, be situational aware where we are on the field, and how can we take advantage of the game on that part of the field.

So just taking advantage of that and then beating teams on 3rd down. We getting teams on 3rd and long, we got to take advantage of those. Those are the downs that we have to live for. We have to live on 3rd down. We have to take advantage of that more. I feel like if we take advantage of that more, we can have more production and then it gives the offense a chance to score more points and put us in a better situation.

**Q. What are your thoughts on playing in this game and just the stadium being split and kind of being part of that atmosphere?**

TYREAK SAPP: My first rodeo, baby. Man, it's crazy. I'm stoked. I'm ready to go. I know it's going to be crazy, but I'm all for it. I'm all for everything. Like this is an environment I live for. All through high school I thought about this and just big moments and big time games like this.

I understand what it takes and I've seen guys do it. That's why I'm so ready. Like I've seen guys do it. I know guys that have done it. I just want to go out there and put my best foot forward and really just seize that moment, live

there, just be there. I want to be in Jacksonville that whole day. I'm there.

**Q. That note, playing the No. 1 team, defending national champion, it's very rare. What does that mean to you?**

TYREAK SAPP: It means a lot. It means a lot. It means that I feel like because it means a lot because we understand that we can be potentially dangerous, like we're very dangerous. We can go out there and actually compete, and not just compete but actually be a football game. It's going to be a fight.

**Q. Did you grow up disliking any particular teams more than others?**

TYREAK SAPP: Not really. Not really. I was always like -- about this game I was always in the neutral zone because I knew it was going to be one or the other and whoever won that game would probably end up going to the playoffs. That was the main thing.

**Q. You said you've looked forward to this game since high school?**

TYREAK SAPP: Yes, since high school. Because I've got guys that I've grew up, went to high school with that have played in this game, and it's always been an electric game. It's going to be a tough game, a hard-fought game, and guys are going to come out ready to fight. It's going to be a fight.

**Q. How do you feel about this rivalry moving to a home and home as a player?**

TYREAK SAPP: It really doesn't matter to me because either way, your field is going to still be the same. Everything is going to still be the same. Field is going to still be 100 yards. It doesn't matter, but I understand the tradition of it being in Jacksonville, as well, which I like that. Head up to Jacksonville. Play ball, man.

**Q. You were committed for a few years before, so you were really building this up for a while. It wasn't like you just committed last second.**

TYREAK SAPP: Man, when I committed, I kind of committed blindly, honestly, then I did my research on the back end, then I looked at this school and I seen, oh, this school does produce guys up front and they can have and they do have dominant dudes that go to the league. Yeah, Florida Gator.

**Q. You haven't been to Jacksonville then? You**

**haven't been to that stadium?**

TYREAK SAPP: No.

**Q. What have you heard about the environment and the stadium --**

TYREAK SAPP: I haven't heard much. I know it's crazy though understand that environment. That environment put me in a place in a state of mind where I feel like I'm happy. The serenity, I'm home.

**Q. Would you have visited this game as a recruit if you could've?**

TYREAK SAPP: Yes, for sure, most definitely.

**Q. Stetson Bennett, the guy you're going to be trying to tackle, what do you see in him, because it seems like he doesn't make a lot of mistakes and he's a pretty cerebral guy.**

TYREAK SAPP: Yes, very sharp guy, very sharp quarterback. I can see that he has a very well understanding of the game and he can be very, very dangerous for the defense all because in between the ears he can slice you up.

He's an opportunistic guy, opportunistic guy with his legs, but he is dangerous with his legs, as well, and very opportunistic. Has a great arm, can sit back there and throw, even though being a short guy, even though being a shorter quarterback, he can sit back there and throw, so I just know he can be dangerous, but we're going to find ways to affect him to get him off his game.

**Q. What have you maybe learned to this point in the season about trying to defend against a mobile quarterback like him and how you can kind of impact the game and how he can?**

TYREAK SAPP: You've got to keep him in the pocket. You've got to make him throw from the pocket. You can't let him out of there. You've got to keep him contained, and you have to make him move, as well, but you have to keep him contained in that pocket. You've got to keep him in that bubble and you've got to make him really analyze the defense and try to slice him.

You've got to make him work. You can't let everybody else do the work for him. You can't make it easy for him on the back end, either. You've got to make the quarterback work. Pressure, you've got to pressure, you've got to sack him, you've got to put him in bad situations to get him off his game.

**Q. What's been an issue in terms of mobile quarterbacks, and what can you guys do to fix it do you think?**

TYREAK SAPP: Just try to keep them more contained because as we've seen with Tennessee's Hendon Hooker he can sit back there, he can tuck and run it. He's not just a guy that can just take it and run, he's very, very effective with the ball in his hands obviously in the open field, so just trying to contain those guys and get them on the ground as quickly as possible. Don't let those QB runs or those scrambles out of the pocket, let those be explosive. We've got to contain them and not let them be explosive plays.

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