

University of Florida Football Media Conference

Friday, August 25, 2023
Gainesville, Florida, USA

Teradja Mitchell Press Conference



Q. You've faced Utah before. What was that first match-up like when you guys played them on the road?

TERADJA MITCHELL: Very talented, tough and physical team. I think they're one of the better programs in the country. Coach Whittingham does a tremendous job getting those guys ready for games week in and week out.

Q. What was the game plan for Cam Rising in that match-up, and what did you think about when you faced him?

TERADJA MITCHELL: First of all, he's a great decision maker, so just trying to -- back then, trying to give him different disguises, different shells, different defensive shells to give him different looks because he's a great decision maker. He's also good with his feet, so just trying to contain him, keep him in the pocket.

Q. How difficult is a match-up against a team like that given what they like to do with their tight ends? For linebackers, how big of a responsibility is it covering their tight ends?

TERADJA MITCHELL: It's very important. Like you said, they have a great tight end in Kuithe, so that's why it's important for us as linebackers to be able to cover them and be able to defeat blocks against them, as well. They have great blocking tight ends, as well.

Q. Cam has been injured, tore his ACL in the Rose Bowl last year, and they're kind of not sure if he'll play. What's been the defensive mindset trying to prepare for maybe three different quarterbacks?

TERADJA MITCHELL: I think Coach Armstrong has put together a great plan for us, regardless of what quarterback we get. We're just confident in our game plan. Our focus is on us and what we do as a defense regardless of who we get out there as a quarterback. Our job is just to go out there and perform the plan that's put forth.

Q. What's the excitement level now that you're finally here week one?

TERADJA MITCHELL: It's exciting. It's been a long off-season. We've been working every day, putting in the work. We're getting sick and tired of going against each other. It's finally time to go against another team, so the team is excited. We can't wait.

Q. What do you say with this team -- you're new to the whole program, but it's still in its early stages of the rebuild. Just the buy-in, a lot of talk about the family atmosphere and all that, how does that translate on game day?

TERADJA MITCHELL: Oh, it translates to everything. One thing you can say about this team, this team is hungry, and we're showing it the way we're working in practice every day. We're just going out there and attacking each day, and we can't wait to show the world what we can do.

Q. How determined are you and the rest of your teammates, do you think, to show that this year's defense is different based on what happened last year?

TERADJA MITCHELL: It means everything to us. Just watching the documentary the "Swamp Kings," it's a pride to putting on the uniform. We're just going to go out there and give it our all, and that's one thing you're going to see from this defense: We're going to give it our all.

Q. What did you take from the "Swamp Kings" documentary?

TERADJA MITCHELL: Like I said, there's a pride putting on that uniform. That's a standard that's been set, and it's important to us as current players to make sure we live up to that standard day in and day out.

Q. Which of you and your teammates watched it?

TERADJA MITCHELL: I think the whole team has watched

it. It's a very exciting documentary, just to see the history of Florida and all that's been done here in this program, it's important for us to restore the order and get back to that standard.

Q. After that came out what was the buzz around the locker room and the team each day? How much have guys been talking about it?

TERADJA MITCHELL: Like I said, the documentary has really just been motivating to the whole team. It's like, we can go harder, we can go even harder. There's another step to this thing. It's really been motivating for the guys.

Q. Did you have a chance to ask Brandon Spikes about it at all?

TERADJA MITCHELL: I have. I always ask him. Being that we both played for Coach Meyer, we always have those talks. He's been an inspiration to us, and having him around every day has been an energy booster for us.

Q. What was it like for you to -- obviously you've been around him for a couple months. What was it like to watch a documentary where it showed him as a player and what he was like?

TERADJA MITCHELL: Oh, it's just inspirational. That's what it comes down to at the end of the day. It's all inspirational, just seeing the Florida greats, seeing a linebacker great like that, seeing what he does and knowing that you have an opportunity to one day do the same things he's done. It's all been inspirational for us.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

TERADJA MITCHELL: I did. I did.

Q. Were you torn watching them beat Ohio State 41-14?

TERADJA MITCHELL: Definitely was torn there. Definitely was torn there.

Q. Did you even remember that game at all? You were a little guy.

TERADJA MITCHELL: I remember a little bit. I remember they played each other and Florida won, but I don't remember like the details, the final score and all that.

Q. As a Virginia Beach guy, did you hear stories of Percy Harvin or did you --

TERADJA MITCHELL: Yes, I grew up watching Percy

Harvin. My brother was his quarterback in high school.

Q. What's his name?

TERADJA MITCHELL: Terry Mitchell, Jr.

Q. Did you interact with Percy when you were young?

TERADJA MITCHELL: No, I was a little kid. I don't really remember much. I was like two or three years old.

Q. Would you recognize him? He's bald now. He had the long dreads back then.

TERADJA MITCHELL: Yeah, he's hard not to recognize. He's a Florida great. He's one of the greatest linebackers to play college football.

Q. Does he look better bald or with the hair?

TERADJA MITCHELL: He looks better either way.

Q. Coach Meyer mentioned in that documentary was he wanted to make Florida the toughest program. How would you compare what you've seen training-wise? Is it the same mentality, just the program and the off-season stuff you go through? Can you draw parallels between that and now?

TERADJA MITCHELL: Yeah, like I said, when Coach Napier came in, obviously I wasn't here for his first year, but the standard he set for this program is we're built on toughness, the way we practice, the way we train. It's definitely some comparisons there.

Q. Mat drills, puking?

TERADJA MITCHELL: Yeah, we've had some grueling workouts during the winter.

Q. What do you expect the level of physicality to be in this game? It seems to be this could be kind of an old-school kind of a "slobberknocker" as they used to call them?

TERADJA MITCHELL: Most definitely. Like I said, the way we practice, we practice on physicality. Everything we do is built on physicality and toughness, and being that Utah is another program that displays that as one of their core values, it's going to be a physical and aggressive game.

Q. What kind of momentum can this give you? I think looking at the schedule I might be missing a game. Florida State-LSU is obviously very high profile. This

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

might be the biggest lift of any team, flying 2,000 some miles, four dozen at least new players, a lot to prove. What kind of momentum can it give you and what kind of challenge is this game?

TERADJA MITCHELL: It's definitely going to give you a challenge, any away game, and Utah, seeing that they're undefeated in the past two years at home, it's a challenge for us as a defense, but it's also an opportunity for us as a team to take that next step as a program, and we're excited for that moment.

Q. Going back to the first time you played them, you guys won but it was a shootout. Are you looking forward to maybe trying to hold them to a little bit less points with a new defense this match-up?

TERADJA MITCHELL: Most definitely. That's going to be important for us as a defense. We obviously want to shut them out if we can. Obviously that's the goal for every team, every game you play. Like I said, we're just going to make sure we go out there and put our best foot forward and execute the game plan.

Q. Anything to the altitude or is that something you just get your second wind pretty soon and move on?

TERADJA MITCHELL: For me personally, I don't know how other players react with that, but at the end of the day you've got to go out there and play that game, so I kind of haven't even worried about the altitude. I'm just going to go out there and go as hard as I can every play.

Q. Who are some of the players who have caught your eye watching Utah on film? Any of their running backs or receivers?

TERADJA MITCHELL: They have two seasoned running backs in Bernard and Johnson. I think they're two great running backs, and their tight end Kuithe had a great game against Florida last year, so looking forward to playing against him, as well.

Q. How much confidence do you have in your depth, particularly your position group?

TERADJA MITCHELL: I have great confidence in my linebacker group, and that's because of the work we've put in. Your confidence comes from your preparation, and we've been preparing every day, watching extra film, getting extra reps after practice, whatever it may be, so I'm confident in this linebacker group.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

