

University of Florida Football Media Conference

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Ricky Pearsall

Press Conference



Q. What's the excitement level, getting to week one and all the work you guys have put in?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, through the roof really. All the guys are super excited. We know we've put in a lot of work, so we're just excited to actually go against somebody else rather than each other.

Q. Probably no team has a bigger lift week one than going cross country, playing a really good team, a lot of new pieces, expectations at least outside aren't huge. What do you see as the challenge and also the opportunity?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, they're a really good team, so that's the challenge itself, but it's just another opportunity for us to go out there, and it's our first opportunity, so we're all excited. We have a lot of energy coming behind us, so we're just getting ready to go out there and play the best of our game.

Q. I think you're one of the only guys who's played at Rice-Eccles. What's that environment like?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, their fans do a really good job of making a hostile environment. They're loud. They're a really disciplined team. They actually haven't lost in the last two years at home.

We know that, but we're getting ready to break that. We're excited.

Q. Is there any big deal playing out west with the altitude or is that overblown?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I'm getting this question a lot actually. I didn't really notice it too much to be honest. I just didn't go out there and play football for myself. But there is a little bit of an adjustment factor, but we're preparing for it each and every day.

Q. What do you do, drink a lot of water or something like that?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I mean, just do daily stuff. Just drinking a lot of water. I feel like when you're out there you've got your adrenaline and don't really notice it too much. Just playing football. I feel like in any environment we should thrive, especially being in this heat.

Q. How would you compare the crowd and the atmosphere there to what you've seen in the SEC?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I mean, I think they're two different ballgames, I think, but I think they still put on a good environment, a good hostile environment, but there's just nothing like the Swamp or the SEC. I think we're all going to be ready. It's not going to be too crazy of a difference.

Q. How would you say, self-assessment, that you have progressed from last year to this year? What's gotten better in your game?

RICKY PEARSALL: Just those fine details that I need to work on being a receiver, being very helpful to the quarterback, being friendly to him, no matter what.

I tell Graham all the time, Bro, I'm going to run my routes as friendly as possible for you so I'm always open, find those holes in the zones and just continue to develop my mental side.

There's obviously some aspects of my physical game that I've been working on, just finding my routes, but mostly mental side, and being a quarterback out there as a receiver.

Q. How catchable a ball does Graham throw?

RICKY PEARSALL: Very catchable. He throws the ball really well, and he puts a little heat on it, too, which I like. Get the ball out there quicker and get it into my hands so I can run with it. He throws a really friendly ball.

Q. How do you feel y'all's chemistry is? I know you hooked up on a long pass in the last scrimmage.

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I think our chemistry is really good. We've developed a lot of trust over this past off-season training. We get extra catches before and after each practice, so we go through that at practice, and obviously we're throwing a lot of balls and going through all of our plays and our script and developing that trust, but then we get that extra work. Any things that we miss maybe in practice or some extra stuff that we want to work on.

We've come a long ways for sure.

Q. I don't know if he's expressed this to you in talking about his time at Wisconsin, but he's said to us that he feels like here he plays a lot more free in this offense. How have you seen that from a receiver standpoint?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, for sure, I think so, too. I think our system is just QB friendly. I think it runs through the quarterback. It gives him a lot of freedom to make his own checks and his own reads depending on what the defense is doing.

As a receiving corps we want to be as beneficial to the quarterback as possible, so whatever he's seeing, we've got to see it, too, and be on the same page. I think he has a lot of freedom in that factor, and he's a smart kid. He's very experienced, so he sees the field very well.

Q. He didn't make a lot of those checks and reads at Wisconsin. Do you feel like he's excited about doing that? Do you think he'll thrive in it?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I think he's really excited. He keeps telling me each and every day how excited he is and how good this system is to him, and Napier has a lot of trust in him, so he's given him that freedom to do that, so I'm excited for him as much as myself.

Q. What benefits have you seen from the changes you made to your body, to your training?

RICKY PEARSALL: I just feel better. I just feel better running routes and just running in general. I leaned up a little bit, gained a little bit more muscle, according to my body composition results.

But I just feel better. I think just increasing each and every day of whatever it is physically. I just feel better overall.

Q. You're going to be targeted by a lot of defenses, obviously, because you're a veteran guy. Who's going to take some of the heat off of you in the receiving corps?

RICKY PEARSALL: I think all around we have a really good receiver corps if I'm being honest. I'll bet on any of my guys in that receiving corps. I think everybody has their own talents and own key things that they're really good at and excel at.

But we also have a variety of receivers, too, that are really good at several different things, so whoever is on the field, to be honest.

Q. How have you seen the freshmen develop, in particular Jean, Mizell and Eugene Wilson?

RICKY PEARSALL: I think they took tremendous strides in these practices that we've had. It's funny because I'll tell them one thing, maybe give them a pointer, and they'll come up to me and be like, hey, coach me up on this route, and I'll tell them, and then they'll go out there and perform it. I think that's really difficult for a young guy just because everything when you come in is kind of moving fast at you. And then not only that, they have to put that inside their body and make it a movement.

I think that's really difficult for some people, but for them, they're just doing it naturally, and I think that's what's impressed me the most about them moving in these practices.

Q. Eugene was able to run that single digit, switched to three. What do you feel like you saw from him in fall camp enabled him to get that single digit number?

RICKY PEARSALL: No, he definitely deserves it, I'll say that. He definitely deserves it. He's a really quick dude. He's quick. I'm excited for him as much as you guys are excited for him.

He's just a playmaker. It kind of looks easy for him when he's out there. He snags the ball very naturally. Obviously has really good routes. He's really quick in and out of his routes, any type of routes, so I think that's really important as a receiver. But he's taken tremendous strides. I'm really excited for him.

Q. What was that moment like in the last scrimmage where he had that long touchdown pass because from what I heard there was some buzz in the stadium after he made that play.

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, it was actually a little sweep. It's just a little pitch in front of the quarterback and he took it over the sideline, and like I said, it just looked easy. It looked like he was jogging, but he ended up scoring and taking off, breaking a few tackles and then just took off down the sideline. Just looked easy for him.

Q. Is that kind of a glimpse of maybe what he can do this year?

RICKY PEARSALL: Oh, yeah, for sure. He's very talented. He's an explosive receiver. Anytime he's got the ball in his hands, he's got a chance to take it all the way. I think that's one thing you guys should be looking forward to.

Q. The receiver position, is that different? Is it something you noticed has changed and how can that benefit the offense?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I think it can benefit the offense in many ways. I feel like whenever you -- especially the young guys. I told Coach Napier, I was like, you did a really good job recruiting because each receiver does different things really well. I think that's really important when you put them all on the same field, they've all got different threats.

But you've got guys that are vertical speed, guys that are really quick, guys that are really polished in routes. I think we can kill them, the DBs, in multiple ways.

Q. You mentioned at SEC media days that you're anticipating playing a bit more outside. Do you feel like at this point in your career you're a combination of those things?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, for sure. I look at myself as a very versatile receiver, so wherever they have me, I've got to excel. Whatever opportunity they give me at that moment in time, I've got to make a play.

It doesn't matter where I'm at on the field, as long as I'm on the field.

Q. What are the biggest changes and differences in this program heading into Utah this week compared to a year ago?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, man, I think we've taken tremendous strides over these training sessions and these practices. We've gotten closer as a team.

I feel like anybody that comes to our practices and watches our practices notices definitely a difference. We just bring a lot more energy, physicality. We're just all excited, and what's important and what stands out to me the most is we truly believe. We truly believe in each other and the coaches and the system, and that's going to go a long ways for us.

Q. Did you watch "Swamp Kings"?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I watched a little bit. I'm actually on episode 3.

Q. Has it been kind of a history lesson for you?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, for sure.

Q. Tell us some highlights.

RICKY PEARSALL: All kinds of things. I know they were training that hard. It's crazy.

It just made me sit back and really think, it's a blessing to be here at the University of Florida, all the history that comes with it and all the success that they had before. They set that standard.

We're trying to live up to that standard each and every day.

Q. Are you almost too close to it to realize what the potential of the program really is or what it can be?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, for sure. I feel like each and every day I come into this building and see University of Florida on the building that I walk into, that just speaks volumes itself right there. But it's funny, when I was watching the "Swamp Kings" I saw young Coach Billy G, and I was like, oh look at Coach.

Q. Have you picked his brain at all about his time during that run?

RICKY PEARSALL: Oh, yeah, for sure. I'm always asking questions. Well, right when I got here, I asked him who's the best receiver you ever coached, and like I asked, what is he good at, what did he do, and he always tells us -- I mean, he talked about all kinds of receivers. He talked about Van Jefferson, Kadarius Toney, all those guys. Then he was just telling me all about how the first rounders, they do certain ways. They do certain things certain ways, like the way they come in the building each and every day with some sort of energy, the way they do their work each and every day, and I just try to take notes on everything he talks about. If it's with the system or if it's how guys do certain things.

Q. Did he have any Percy stories?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, man. I've heard all about Percy. Each and every place I go, just because I wear No. 1, I'm hearing all kinds of things about him, just how talented he was, and I actually saw a video of Urban Meyer saying he's the best player he's ever seen. I had to watch

my Percy film, and I've heard a lot of stories about him, just how dangerous he is with the ball in his hands.

Q. Teradja said that kind of documentary can be motivating to a team. Do you buy that? Do you think it can pump you guys up?

RICKY PEARSALL: For sure. I think the entire time I was watching it I had goosebumps, just watching that show and just seeing how they did it and the success they had with the ways they was doing it. We just want to build off of that. We can use that as motivation.

They won the championship, so we want to do that, too, as well. Just take as much notes as possible.

Q. Have you ever met Percy?

RICKY PEARSALL: I have not. I have not.

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