

University of Florida Football Media Conference

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Ricky Pearsall

Press Conference



Florida 49, McNeese 7

Q. You and Graham, how are you feeling, the confidence level you're feeling with him, and how big was that 50-yarder for you?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I think it was really big for us. I think from the confidence standpoint, I think it's through the roof always. I have full trust in him. He has full trust in me. It's always good when we hit on a big play like that.

Q. Was McNeese playing you guys a certain way that was not allowing you guys to really attack much and then the run game just kind of dominated?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, they kind of came out in like a three-high look, so we just knew we were going to get the run game. That was kind of our plan initially anyway was just getting started with the run game, but from the passing standpoint, yeah, they were playing three high, so it was kind of hard to get some passes in there.

But when we got into 12 personnel sets, it opened it up a little bit more for us.

Q. The confidence level going from Utah, such a tough loss, to just running amok all over McNeese State, how important was it to build that confidence up, and how do you take that into the home game against Tennessee?

RICKY PEARSALL: For sure. I think our confidence level is always good. I think last week against Utah, we just kind of beat ourselves. I didn't really think it had anything to do with the talent of the guys. I think it was more about executing and eliminating penalties, and obviously I think we did a better job of that tonight. I think that's going to give us a good amount of momentum going into the next week. We've just got to prepare for Tennessee.

Q. I know you mentioned that establishing the run game was a key. Can you talk about what it did for the whole offense, specifically Montrell Johnson saw his

role increase significantly tonight. Just talk about his performance in the run game as a whole.

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, for sure. Well, we got guys like 2 and 7 who are extremely good and gifted athletes, so I think just getting the ball in their hands early, you can't go wrong with that. So just getting the running game going early I think helps the passing game.

Q. I know you said there was an emphasis on establishing the run today, but from a play-calling perspective, how much more confident are you guys getting now that game 2, you're used to Graham Mertz being in there. How confident are you guys from getting the play calling and running it effectively?

RICKY PEARSALL: I think we've a lot more confident. When you go out there and you execute plays better, I think that boosts your confidence automatically, but yeah.

Q. Just to see him, just his poise, learning from all the years that he's had under him, just his confidence, how contagious is that for an offense?

RICKY PEARSALL: I think very contagious. Personally for myself when maybe I'm not feeling as hyped for a game or something, I'll hear Graham in the background yelling for all the guys, and that just motivates me, motivates all the other guys too, as well.

Graham is a really experienced guy. Everybody in the room respects him for that, and I think all the guys pull for him.

Q. I hate to bring up the bad memory, but the pick last week, what happened on that play from your perspective, and what happened on the sideline afterwards between you two and how did you work that out?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I'd like to take responsibility in that just because it's me, but it was just timing purposes that we were off a little bit. They sent pressure, and I had an option route, and I needed to hurry up my route, and we just weren't on the same page during that rep. I turned in



and he had the ball already out, so he just got up on me, and I just had reflexes and put my hands up, and that's where the tip happened, and then from there, I was like, okay, now I've got to play defense, try to get the ball down. Obviously can't play defense.

Q. How did it feel to be able to build on some of the stuff you guys did last week and have the 50-yard touchdown tonight? What did you see on that play?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I think improvement throughout the week is the most important thing with the guys continuing to build the relationships, continuing to build the trust and get better execution through the plays.

Just repetition, just perfecting it in practice. That's it.

Q. How much emphasis was put on eliminating the mental mistakes this week and how satisfying is it that it seemed you had very, very few?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, we definitely harped on that throughout the week. I think that was probably the main key point that we were going through as a team is we can't shoot ourselves in the foot. You're not going to be able to beat these good teams if you just continue to shoot yourself in the foot, get penalties, have certain mistakes that are just going to set us back.

I think just emphasizing that throughout the week.

Q. It seems like you have more catch-and-run opportunities this year. Does that suit your game more?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I'd like to say it does. Obviously I like when I'm out there and I have a little bit of space and a little bit of freedom to make a move. I look forward to continuing to have that.

Q. Eugene Wilson got more of a chance today. What were your thoughts about him taking advantage of his opportunity tonight and what he was able to do?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, for sure. I think he's a very talented player, very unique. He's a very twitchy guy, so I think he's one of those guys where you've got to get the ball in his hands in space, so I think we were going out there and trying to do that. Get him going, because the young guys it's like, oh, they get in the Swamp and it's new to them, but I don't think the lights are too big for that kid. I think he's going to be a big player for us, big impact guy, so I'm excited for him.

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