

# University of Florida Football Media Conference

Saturday, October 7, 2023

Gainesville, Florida, USA

## Shemar James

Press Conference



Florida 38, Vanderbilt 14

**Q. You guys have talked about generating more turnovers as a defense. Today, three fumbles, three prevented 4th down conversions. How important was that to get going as you get into the second half of the schedule?**

SHEMAR JAMES: That was a big change around in the game. We take pride in 3rd down stops and just getting turnover is generated as a defense.

**Q. Looks like here only 50 something rushing yards, like 58 rushing yards for Vanderbilt. None of their running backs were over 30 yards. Talk about seeing that from the run defense and really shutting down their run game.**

SHEMAR JAMES: Most definitely. That was amazing to see, just being a part of that, holding those running backs to the least amount of yards as possible. We still had that bad taste in our mouth from last week, and we just wanted to come out this week and execute.

**Q. Could you speak a little bit to that motivation from last week and just how you saw it applied during the week as you prepared for this game?**

SHEMAR JAMES: Most definitely. We were embarrassed. As a defense, as a team, as a unit in general, like it was embarrassing. That wasn't the Gator standard that we played to last week in Lexington, and we just wanted to get that bad taste out of our mouth this week and weeks after that, as well.

**Q. Coach Napier said he believes experiences like that can be healthy, though, that you guys can learn from that. Do you agree, and how do you feel about that?**

SHEMAR JAMES: Most definitely. We know how it feel to lose real bad, and we know how it feels to win. We don't want that feeling in our mouth anymore.

**Q. Shemar, would you talk about the practice week and feeling the momentum building up to have a good week on the field?**

SHEMAR JAMES: Yes, sir, most definitely. We came out Tuesday with our hair on fire. Like we was out there, turned up, ready to get to this game on Saturday, prepare each and every day, and like you said, last week's game was unacceptable, and we just wanted to make it right this week.

**Q. How do you translate this kind of an effort on the road because that seems like it's the big issue right now. You guys are 4-0 at home, 0-2 on the road. How do you take this mindset into next week?**

SHEMAR JAMES: Most definitely. Play every game like it's a home game. I guess that's how we'll take it. Going on the road, you just we're on the road. Our backs are against the wall; we only got us, just us. We just need to come out, start fast and finish fast.

**Q. Holding Vanderbilt to I think less than 60 yards rushing, how important was that to contain that and then force them to beat you through the air?**

SHEMAR JAMES: Yes, sir, that was most definitely important for us as a unit, as a defense. That's just our standard this year. Coach Armstrong tries to hold us to that standard each and every week.

**Q. You spoke about Coach Armstrong a little bit. How can you talk about the impact he's had on y'all. After that big play that Vandy had, they got inside the 10-yard line and then you guys held your ground. It never feels like you're truly out of it no matter what happens.**

SHEMAR JAMES: Yes, sir, one play, one drive, that's what he tells us. If we had a bad play, go on to the next; if we had a good one, go on to the next. It's a 60-minute game, and we've got to play every drive like it's our last.

**Q. Coach Napier said they tweaked practice a little bit this week. What were the changes to practice?**



SHEMAR JAMES: We were still going hard, so I wouldn't really notice. But I guess we took a little bit off our legs I would say and just -- when you take a little bit off our legs, you go harder each and every rep.

**Q. You're a young guy, but you had a lot of young guys in the game tonight. Can you talk about what you're seeing from some of those guys?**

SHEMAR JAMES: Yes, sir, our young guys, they're some ballers. They came in ready to work, and that's why they get to play on Saturday nights and Saturday evenings. We've got young guys like Bryce Thornton, Jordan Castell, T.J. Searcy. Those are some guys that play like veterans, as you guys see. They're a big impact on our team.

**Q. Can you talk about the sequence from Ja'Keem, giving up the 52-yard catch and then coming right back the next play, staying locked in and making that pass deflection on 4th down?**

SHEMAR JAMES: Most definitely. That's just Keem being who Keem is. He gave up that pass, but next play, next drive, know what I mean, and he didn't let him catch the next ball that he threw to him. That's why I respect Keem a lot.

**Q. How hard is that to do mentally as a defensive player?**

SHEMAR JAMES: Most definitely. That's very hard. You just got a ball caught on you, and it's kind of like the natural ability is just to hang your head, but he kept his chin high and just played until the drive was over.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

SHEMAR JAMES: Yes, sir, since I've known Arlis he's been making plays, and Eugene, as well, and those are just some playmakers that we have on our offense, and you should expect a lot more from them, as well.

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