

University of Florida Football Media Conference

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Coach Billy Napier

Press Conference



COACH NAPIER: I think that having a chance to look at it a little bit closer, a lot of times, in this game, especially when it's really competitive, a lot of your battles are not really against the competition to some degree.

We've got a group here that I think is totally committed to the cause. It's a coachable group. I think we've got a group of players that are really intentional about trying to be great teammates and do their best at their role relative to the team.

And I think when you're totally committed to a cause, when you get into battle and there is adversity, I think that's reflected.

One thing I can say about our team that impressed me was that -- although we got down to 14-0 in that game and there were a lot of ups and downs -- they continued to stick together and battle.

I think listening to our accountability group earlier today, we're still chasing that complete game. I think we're still looking for all parts of our team to play at the high level that they have played at at times. And ultimately that's the focus down the stretch.

It's important that we keep an attitude, a mindset, try to be -- I think teachability, in particular, is an attitude, it's a mindset.

I think that no matter how much you know or think you know, you've got to make sure that you can learn from every single situation. And I think we've been through some experiences. It's important that if we can keep this mindset, that we can take adversity and turn it into our advantage. And I think for our team, in particular, we have to create that attitude and that mindset towards some of the things that we've been through.

So I do think that, after being around our team yesterday and listening to some of our key leaders, I do think that this group is in a good place. I know that may be hard for other people to understand. But we have a group that I respect,

and I think they respect each other.

We can do things better. There's no question. There's a dozen plays in this game that we just played, if we just get six of them right, we probably would come out on the other side of that thing.

So much like I said after the game, one of the great things about this game is that it requires hard work, sacrifice, investment, courage to go to the stadium every week and put yourself out there. There's no guarantee the result that you want, and that requires some courage to do.

But I also think there's good days and bad days. We've been on the other side of a game like that in the past. That's what makes it a special game.

Our team has turned the page. We play LSU in Baton Rouge. Death Valley is obviously one of the better venues of all college sports, having played there a couple different times, and -- as a competitor.

And I think for our players, it's a challenge that you look forward to and a memory and an experience that you sign up for.

I think LSU's got a terrific football team, loaded with offensive skill. Quarterback's dynamic, not only as a passer, but his ability to run.

And then you look at the defense, they continue to get better. I think about four, five weeks ago they made some changes, and I think that's helped them.

Obviously Coach Kelly is a heck of a football coach and has had significant success along the way. So ton of respect. I think the approach with the players, I think, practice, the preparation, we're still searching that complete game. And ultimately that's what the focus will be on, and it's going to require that.

What questions have we got?

Q. (Indiscernible) everyone in the building? I'm curious about your staff and analysts in year two, how

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you evaluate their output and performance in helping the onfield product on Saturdays?

COACH NAPIER: I think much like everything we do, I think there's some good and some bad. I think we adjust each year. I think when the season's over, you go back, you quality control. Sometimes you know mid-season, even in the offseason, I think you have an idea where you're going to make adjustments relative to what's required to get us where we want to go.

I think all those things are end-of-year approaches. Now's not the time to do that. You may be taking notes along the way. But I think from a process standpoint, we try to continue to get better.

Part of your job as a leader is to coach the people that work for you, to some degree, areas where we can get better at our process. And I think we've done that for the most part since we've been here. Changes and how you evolve and your infrastructure, your workflows, I think all those things are typically done when the year's over.

Q. And as far as the fans are concerned, they expressed some disappointment at times during the game. I don't know if you hear it or get caught up, but what would your message to the fan base be at this point?

COACH NAPIER: What are you talking about specifically?

Q. Just about the performance and where you guys are as a program, what would your message be to the fan base?

COACH NAPIER: I think we handed it off on like third-and-13 with a backup quarterback. We got some boos for that. I think the national average is for third-and-13 are like under 15 percent or something like that, not to mention you've got a guy that was sitting over there with his helmet in his hand 30 seconds ago, runs out there on the short side of the field. So I think that was the right decision for the team.

Q. (Indiscernible) the substitution infraction late in regulation, you said you were going to dig in and maybe get some answers on that. What did you find out and how can you improve that process moving forward?

COACH NAPIER: I think ultimately we made a mistake there. And every part of our organization is ultimately my responsibility. So I think it's something that we can do better. It's my job to get it done better.

Q. You made it sound like a player is in charge of or at least vocalizing. Is that mis-spoke? Is it coaches, analysts? Who actually is responsible for calling out whatever the call is to get the kicking unit on the field?

COACH NAPIER: It's not a player's decision. For anyone to equate that or write that or think that, I think, would be inaccurate.

Ultimately, a player -- one of the players is in charge of that unit, much like the quarterback when the offense takes the field. He calls the play and sets the cadence and we can take the field. That's always a coaching decision.

Q. Consistency's been a real problem. How do you coach consistency, or is that just something that has to come with experience?

COACH NAPIER: I talked to the team a little bit yesterday. I think when you study elite teams, the teams that have had significant success, one of the things that is a common factor is continuity. Teams that have played together, players that have played together -- and ultimately parts of our team have that element, but I don't think that we have a veteran team. I think we're gaining valuable experience as we speak.

So consistency is one of the things we're seeking. You're 100 percent right. I just said it earlier. I think if we could take the best performances of some of the position groups, some of the units and put all those together, that's what we're trying to get accomplished.

At this point in the year, your depth becomes important as you get a handful of players banged up. We had some players that were playing Saturday that this was their first significant experience in their career.

So continuity is important. And I think a veteran team, ultimately, I think that allows you to have an elite team and a team that can play with consistency.

Q. Is that the answer to maybe a couple of the areas that are struggling, whether it's the O line, some breakdowns in the secondary? Is it consistency? Obviously the performance (inaudible) elevate a little bit. What are the solutions, I guess, in areas like those?

COACH NAPIER: I thought offensively in the game I thought that we're just a little bit off. The attention to detail, I thought, in particular third-and-medium is the area where I'd like to have a few back in terms of decision-making, screen execution, protection.

I thought we had about five or six plays that were in that third-and-medium range that ultimately could have been a difference maker. You do a couple of those right you score 50 points, you make it a nonfactor.

We gave them seven. I think defensively we need to clean up, we had quite a few mental errors in the game. It's been a long time since that was the case. And I thought we didn't tackle well.

Look, I think their personnel contributes to that a little bit as well. So offensively a little more detail, a few more throws you'd like to have back and then I think some decisions.

But overall we're close. Look, nobody wants to talk about special teams. But if you take away a PAT and a field goal, we're probably sitting here saying that's the best performance of the year.

If you just evaluate the four core, I thought we did a nice job. We created some significant returns in the game. We covered kicks. So we are getting better in the return game. I think we're doing a good job of winning more one-on-ones. And we've got some returnable kicks. I think we controlled the vertical field position in the game.

Q. (Indiscernible) progress and it's not showing up in the win and loss column as much as you like, what is kind of the message to keep everyone engaged? And you say everyone is, but it can get frustrating for some people. That's always a challenge.

COACH NAPIER: I mean, I think, look, you've got to remain process oriented independent of the result. It's easy to do when you win. But it's hard to do that and keep perspective when you lose. So trying to remain objective.

And look, I go back to no one's more educated or more informed than the players and the staff. I mean, I think it's important for everyone to understand. No one cares. No one is more committed or worked harder or invested more time or effort or energy than that crew.

I observe them every day. And I think it's going to benefit us in the end.

Q. You were talking a second ago about special teams. Another field goal with only 10 players on the field. How does that keep happening?

COACH NAPIER: What player are you talking about?

Q. Arkansas's 37-yard field goal in the second quarter.

COACH NAPIER: Our field goal block team is what you're

saying. Yes, so we had a player injured on the possession, the play right before, and ultimately that's what contributed to that. The backup wasn't quite on the same page. That's what happened.

Q. (Indiscernible) every one of those has an individual explanation, but I think what frustrates fans -- you're hearing it I'm sure -- why do these things keep happening nine games into the season. Like somebody says, what the hell's going on, what do we tell them?

COACH NAPIER: Well, I think, look, we can do it better. It's pretty simple. Get 11 out there. Pretty simple.

Q. How much are you following that situation? How could it affect your preparation, (indiscernible) potentially two quarterbacks.

COACH NAPIER: I think Nussmeier obviously has been a very productive player as well. I think if you really dig into the tape, when he's been given opportunities, he's done a nice job moving their team.

So I think we'll prepare for both. They're definitely different players, but they're both very capable. And I think ultimately they do a nice job distributing the ball to the skill they have.

This group of receivers, the backs, the tight end, and I think the offensive line. That's one of the best offenses if not the best offense in the entire country at this point. Appreciate the question about LSU.

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