

University of Florida Football Media Conference

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Austin Barber

Press Conference



Q. What is the key -- you guys are making progress, Billy believes, and certainly you guys seem to be doing some things really well that you weren't doing as well, but the record's maybe not reflecting it the way you want. What's the key to kind of keeping everyone engaged and going in the same direction, because obviously frustrations can set in?

AUSTIN BARBER: I think this team does a very good job. You could be frustrated about the game, but we've got three games coming up, and I think the focus shifts to the next games.

Obviously it was a tough loss, and especially losing at home and things like that. But I think our guys are really close and we can really focus on the next game.

I think we're doing a really good job of looking at what happened last game and trying to go fix it. But I'm really happy how this team is gelling and how close we are, and I think that's really helping us.

Q. What's your expectation of Tiger Stadium? What have you seen on TV with games? What do you expect?

AUSTIN BARBER: You know the history of that. They say at night it's crazy. I've never played in Tiger Stadium. And I'm excited for it. I'm excited for the challenge. They have a lot of history. And I'm excited to play there, it's going to be fun.

Q. How do you sense the players are feeling about going back and so forth?

AUSTIN BARBER: We have a good group of guys there. I think they're excited to go play back in their hometown. I think they're just excited. Going back home, like, I played in Jacksonville, kind of the same feeling as them going back and playing in front of a bunch of their family and friends. I think -- I feel a lot of them will have a lot of people come and it's going to be cool.

Q. When you play in an environment like that, does the team get an us-against-the-world kind of attitude? And is that what you guys have to have this week?

AUSTIN BARBER: Of course, going into a hostile environment like that, they're going to have, I don't know how many people they hold, it's going to be 99 percent Tigers and 1 percent maybe, if that.

And I think it's just going to be, like you said, us against the world. And I agree with that statement. It's just going to be what we can do to build off our energy and with how many people they have there and how many people we have. We've just got to build off what we're bringing.

Q. (Indiscernible). How difficult is it seeing him his frustration of dealing with that re-aggravated injury throughout the season?

AUSTIN BARBER: Kingsley is a warrior. You see he comes out and plays on an injury like that. I think he does a good job of doing the things he has to do during the week to make it feel good.

I think just seeing how much of a competitor he is and seeing how much he wants to play for us and play for the team -- and I think he's doing a really good job of leading us in those type of situations because he's an older guy. We look up to him in those situations, and he does a very good job going out there and putting his body on the line for us.

Q. (Inaudible) practice or a game, how much have you seen him mentor Jake and some of the other young guys in the lineup?

AUSTIN BARBER: That's, like, Jake and them guys lean on him in that situation. He's played a lot of ball. Playing in all these stadiums. He's played in Tiger Stadium before and things like that.

He's doing a really good job of talking to the guys, talking to us, talking to the guys that's behind him and saying just be ready. Anytime is coming for anybody and I think he does a good job with that.

Q. (Indiscernible) stadium like this, you guys have played in some road games, and Billy just said continuity is great. You guys unfortunately haven't been able to have that on the offensive line because of injuries. What can you do as a line and what's going to be allowed in a hostile environment in terms of operational and communicating with each other during the game?

AUSTIN BARBER: I think having everybody that -- playing a few games with everybody that's been on there has been helping us a lot. I feel like during the week the communication and prep helps a lot and things like that.

And going into a stadium like that I think it's just doing it more and more and during practice, and going through and making sure we're on the same page in situations because obviously it's going to be loud. It's going to be rowdy.

And there's times where we're going to have to be on the same page when maybe we don't communicate the best. But we know what we're doing because we've done it during the week.

Q. Do you enjoy that? I remember watching you guys walk off at South Carolina and some fans were still there and talking. Do you enjoy that kind of hostile environment and hearing that?

AUSTIN BARBER: Yeah, of course, it's always fun to go somewhere else and hearing different people say different things about us. And I enjoy it. It kind of helps me out a little bit. There's fans chirping at us and it kind of gives me some motivation to play and things like that. I think it really helps.

Q. Do you find humor in it at all? Sometimes they're pretty funny?

AUSTIN BARBER: Some things that have been said to me are pretty funny. There's a few times, when we scored in away stadiums, there's some funny things said to me, and sometimes I'm laughing under my breath. I'm trying to be serious but they get me laughing.

Q. How do you evaluate -- how's that two-offensive-line coaching situation working in terms of your development and the development of the offensive line as a whole?

AUSTIN BARBER: I think the two offensive line coaches is huge. Coach Sale and Coach Stape, they mesh really well. And I think having two guys like that -- there's a lot of times where we get a lot more reps in practice that I feel

like not having two guys like that can do. And just having them two together and they say the same things, different voices, and I think that's really helped a lot.

And I love them two people to death, them two coaches to death. I'll do anything for them, and I know that I trust them 100 percent.

Q. What are you guys playing for at this point? I know bowl eligibility is still on the table, but is there some sense of "we like savoring this complete underdog, double digits, all that" for the next three games probably?

AUSTIN BARBER: I think we're playing for everybody in this building. People come in here every day and spend time and time, just standing in the building -- players do it, but other staff members do it, too.

I think just playing for them and playing for this team. I love this team. I love how we've gelled, we've meshed, like I've said before. But I think it's just playing for -- we've got three games left. I don't know -- you can't throw the season away. There's a lot of ball left. I'm excited.

Q. Do you feel like this offense, the confidence has grown and that you guys will be equipped for some shootouts that are probably likely these next few games against these offenses?

AUSTIN BARBER: Yeah, I trust this offense 100 percent. I trust people that are behind it. I trust the players that are behind it. I trust all of our skill guys. I trust Graham, I trust Montrell, Trevor, I trust the O line. There's no doubt in my mind that we'll be fine.

Q. And you're seeing Trey and Arlis, in particular those two, coming into the fold now to help. How much more explosive have you guys gotten, I guess, in the last month, let's say?

AUSTIN BARBER: I think you see what I'm seeing. They make plays. They make plays and they do a good job of that. And I know they bring some fire when they make plays like that. And it only gives us confidence that they're going to go out there, do it more.

You've seen it. You've seen Arlis and Trey explode in these recent games. And there's more for it, and I'm excited.

Q. In the substitution infraction in regulation, what's going through your head when you got 19, 18 guys on the field running back and forth like that?

AUSTIN BARBER: I don't really know how to answer that just because I'm playing in the game and things are flying around. I kind of think that's a question for Coach Napier.

Now, as a player, I think that control what you can control. I'm on the field running down and I don't know what's really going on in the sideline too much. I feel that's a question for Coach Napier.

Q. How would you evaluate where you guys are from a run-blocking standpoint as an offensive line?

AUSTIN BARBER: I think we've done a lot of good things. There's times where when we do it right, it looks pretty. And I think there's time we have to build on that, go back and watch some of our big runs, big explosive runs and see how we can continue to do that.

I trust our backs. I trust the O line that we can go out there and pop some runs like we have in the past. And I think it's just going out there, just looking at it and focusing on how to do it over and over again.

Q. Back to the fans chirping, anything stand out? Any places or phrases that we can print?

AUSTIN BARBER: They love to talk about my weight. Just as an O lineman obviously they love to talk about my weight. I think it's funny that they focus on that because they know that I'm supposed to be big. They know that.

And there's times where I see guys, fans out there, they love to talk about it. I think it's just the funniest thing in the world because I think my body looks pretty good for an O lineman, but they don't know that.

Q. They think you should be 30 pounds heavier?

AUSTIN BARBER: They think I should be 30 pounds lighter, the way they're talking to me.

Q. (Indiscernible) for an O lineman.

AUSTIN BARBER: They think I'm this chubby guy, but I think it's funny. I love it. It makes me laugh in the situations and times where it kind of helps me. Just gives me the fuel to the fire when we're playing in hostile environments like that. I think it's funny.

Q. Is it more profane or more clever, I guess?

AUSTIN BARBER: Nothing clever about it. They get after it.

Q. You're dealing with that animosity, what processes

do you guys have about avoiding animosity with the fan base, knowing they're just taking their frustrations out on you guys, fairly or not?

AUSTIN BARBER: Talking about others?

Q. When you hear the fans, how do you avoid letting that (indiscernible) us-against-the-world?

AUSTIN BARBER: Florida fans?

Q. When you hear the fan base (inaudible) how do you block out all that stuff?

AUSTIN BARBER: Just don't look at it. Obviously there's people who are going to talk good or bad about us regardless if we win or lose. But we know what we have in this building, and we know how much work we put in and how much effort and everything we do.

And it's just trust the guys that are in the building and trust the guys that are leading us, and don't worry about what anybody else is saying.

Q. Going back to that one thing, how much do you weigh, by the way?

AUSTIN BARBER: I'm fluctuating a little bit from 308, 310. I'm feeling good, moving around well.

Q. It seems like singing the alma mater after the game means something to you. What does it mean to you? It seems like you've rallied guys whether at home or on the road to stay and sing with you?

AUSTIN BARBER: There's so much history behind it and there's so much, like, people come and watch our games, home or away, you see all the fans. And I think it's a really good thing.

Regardless of the outcome of the game, you go out there and show that you're grateful for the fans that came and watched and grateful for all the people that traveled to the game. And I really put an emphasis on trying to go out there and sing it because history behind it and all the people that show up, day in, day out for us, come, spend their money, spend their time watch us play.

I think that us doing that after the game, kind of gives them a good feeling that we're still thinking about them even though the outcome of the game wasn't what we were looking for or was what we were looking for.

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