

University of Florida Football Media Conference

Monday, November 20, 2023

Gainesville, Florida, USA

Ricky Pearsall

Press Conference



Q. (Indiscernible) your memories of Tim Tebow throughout your life or just retweet?

RICKY PEARSALL: I feel like I was really young when he first started playing here at Florida. I don't have too many memories of him playing ball, but just seeing his experiences that he went through and obviously his leadership and how close he is with his faith, it's really inspiring for a lot of athletes like myself.

Q. Last game in the Swamp, what's going through your head this week?

RICKY PEARSALL: It's been an emotional roller coaster for me, for sure. I'm just so grateful to obviously be a part of this university, this great university, and I'm super blessed to be in these shoes. And I'm going to make the most of it on Saturday.

But I just want to give all the thanks in the world to Gator Nation and everybody that's been part of this journey.

Q. How hard was it to see Graham go down and dealing with his injury now?

RICKY PEARSALL: It's super tough. Obviously I know the work he's put in and everything he's put into the game and the heart he plays with. So seeing him go down like that is extremely heartbreaking obviously for a wideout too.

I think he left everything out on the field. We've got some prayers and show love his way and make sure his head is up. And knowing the guy he is, he'll fight through that. And everything happens for a reason.

Q. (Inaudible) and has he said anything about the hit and the run that he made?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, he has. Obviously you could see his adrenaline was rushing so he didn't feel it at the point in contact in that moment in time. But as plays go by, he told me he was doing the handoff and he felt a little bit of that pain right there and the cracking of his bone. That's

when he knew and was, like, I'm going down now.

Q. Have you ever seen a blown shoulder like that before?

RICKY PEARSALL: No, he's noncontact in practice. I've never seen nothing like that before. But I guess that No. 15 has power.

Q. What about Max's performance in the fourth quarter, and how does that inspire confidence in him next week?

RICKY PEARSALL: I was actually just talking to him about it. I told him I was super proud of him for stepping up in a game like that. He's a super confident player. He's a baller. I think he's one of those guys -- I don't think the lights get too bright for him. He's ready at all times. I'm super proud of the way he performed. And I'm looking forward to obviously being a part of that with him.

Q. (Indiscernible) the offense, especially as a runner?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, he brings that energy, man. I think all the guys rally behind him because of the energy he gives off. He's a natural leader. He obviously has that running for himself. And then I think he has really good arm talent. I do, I think he has really good arm talent.

Q. Will you be texting him this week (indiscernible)?

RICKY PEARSALL: I already have. I told him, I woke up this morning and texted him: 1 is always open. That's first thing I did.

Q. (Indiscernible) biggest growth for him? He came in the last year in the spring, and even from fall camp until now, just as a passer and quarterback?

RICKY PEARSALL: I think he's gained a lot of confidence. I think that's first and foremost the thing that I noticed the most. He's one of those guys that's always come up to me, and he's super excited for any opportunity he gets, which I think is super healthy.

But, yeah, seeing him go through camp and all these practices and seeing the growth that he's had has been super impressive. Obviously, I think, the mental side is the thing that stands out to me most just because as a quarterback you've got to know everything.

And for a young guy to step in a system like this and be able to excel is super impressive for a young guy. I think that's probably the biggest thing.

Q. There's a lot of reasons for motivation this week. What tops the list? Is it bowl eligibility, senior day, nighttime in the Swamp, knocking Florida State out of its path?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, there's a lot of motivation that's going into this game for sure. But inside that locker room, I think there's just a fire burning for us, just because we need to get a win. It's about that time. It's due time to get a win for us and for the university and the program.

And I think there's not a better week to do it than this week especially against these guys. So I think we're all excited for that opportunity first and foremost with all the other things, all the extra things going on behind it.

Q. (Indiscernible) nothing seems better than the record says?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I heard you actually ask that question to Coach Napier earlier, but I definitely think so. I'm going to give a different answer. I really think we're better than our record says. But at the end of the day you've got to go out there on the football field and earn those wins.

So I don't think we did a good enough job obviously of doing that. Hopefully we can come together, rally back and do that this week.

Q. Close calls taking their toll a little bit in terms of frustrations with you personally?

RICKY PEARSALL: The close calls?

Q. Yeah, the close calls in these games. (Indiscernible). The other night seemed like it was a gut punch.

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, me personally, I don't think so. I think I've been through a lot in my life, adversity. And I don't think this is anything compared to that. So I think I'm built for adversity like that and being able to bounce back. And I think all the guys, too, as well.

It's a blessing to come out here and play this sport each and every day. And it's another opportunity this week, and we're playing the game we love at the end of the day.

Q. (Indiscernible) this team shown. What's it say about the players?

RICKY PEARSALL: I think just shows all the guys in the locker room and the culture we've built over this period of time. And I think it's also a little sneak peek of what we have moving forward as a football team.

And all the guys have morals and values in that locker room. I think that's really impressive. We just want to go out there and fight.

Q. Have multiple close calls made you have that attitude, we're due to get one go our way?

RICKY PEARSALL: For sure, we're definitely do. Like I said, this is a great week to be able to go out there and do that. But it's really hard when you're going out there and you're fighting your butt off and you don't get it your way. But that's just the reality of football. You've got to go out there and earn it.

Q. What was it like last year to have the kind of game you had against them? And does that inspire confidence, the fact that you kind of had those two touchdowns and so forth in those matchups?

RICKY PEARSALL: I feel it was a good confidence booster going into the summer, training. But I don't think just going into this game, just because it's a new opportunity. It's a new game. There's another 60 minutes I have to go out there do the same thing if not more. I've got a big chip on my shoulder this week, go out and get that game.

Q. (Indiscernible) doing this for individual awards. Thousand yards, what would that mean to you? It's been a long time.

RICKY PEARSALL: It's a goal I set for myself at the beginning of the season. It's right there, 52 yards away. But I'm more than a personal goal kind of guy. Obviously team goals override that for myself. I think the W is going to feel a lot better than any personal achievement to me personally, but I know within myself that I'm a thousand-yard guy. Whether I get it or not, I'm a thousand-yard guy.

Q. How many catches do you have?

RICKY PEARSALL: I'm not sure, 60 something.

Q. 64.

RICKY PEARSALL: 64.

Q. You had the 52 yards. Why was --

RICKY PEARSALL: I know the 52 yards. However many catches to get 52 yards.

Q. (Inaudible)?

RICKY PEARSALL: 52 sounds pretty good. But I think 150 sounds a little bit better. (Laughter).

Q. Senior Bowl before you. I know you got to hint at it last week you got the invite.

RICKY PEARSALL: For sure. I think it's going to be a really great opportunity. It's a great honor to be able to get that opportunity for myself and it's something it's another goal I had to go out there and earn. But I think it's going to be really good for myself just because I'm going to be out there and showing like how good I am in one-on-ones, creating separation, just more things to put on tape in front of people.

Q. How do you think the offense has been coming along? It's looking a little more dynamic and Max obviously going to bring a different element. You guys are averaging 33, four, points I think in the last six games after not getting close to that early on.

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I think the offense is extremely confident. I think we brought a new energy with our offense through our practices, and I think that's translated over to the games, and I think we're just sticking with that same mentality, is like every time we step on the field we're going down and we're scoring. Whatever it is, run game, pass game, doesn't matter, we're going to go down and score. Look into everybody's eyes when we go out there before the snap everyone is locked and it's like we'll go score this draft, just keeping that mentality each and every drive.

Q. You planned to be here Saturday for senior day?

RICKY PEARSALL: I've got some family coming out. Obviously my parents. Got two of my sisters coming out. I've got some friends coming out, too. It will be really good. I'm super excited. It's going to be very emotional for me.

Q. Emotional -- are you a cryer? How do you handle walking out seeing mom, dad, sisters and then not letting your --

RICKY PEARSALL: I can't tell you what's going to happen in that moment. But I'm vulnerable enough to say that I do cry. I'm an emotional passionate dude. So tears might come out. That just shows the passion and love I have for this game, and I know all the work I've put in playing football. I've been playing this game since I was seven years old. There's been a lot of work that's come to this, brought me to this very moment. So I think that's what brings that emotion, that passion for sure.

Q. Do the expectations fit for Florida?

RICKY PEARSALL: Definitely exceeded my expectation. I obviously knew this was a fantastic university obviously, knowing the University of Florida. But I think it's definitely exceeded my expectations just because all the love and support I've received here and I just felt like everybody's had my back ever since I got here, and I kind of can't thank Gator Nation enough, to be honest.

Q. Coach said he's going to have a decision, he'll let him announce it. Do you think he'll lean on you at all if you have to make a similar decision, if he does come back, what does that mean for this team?

RICKY PEARSALL: I think I could provide some guidance to that, just going through kind of the same thing that he was, but it ultimately comes down to his decision what he thinks is best for himself. That's it.

Q. When you came in, people expected big things. When Graham came in, people were like, oh, we don't know. When you heard they had gotten Graham Mertz, were you in you've got to show me something, how skeptical, how has it turned out?

RICKY PEARSALL: I saw all the stuff that was coming when Graham first got here. That shows the guy he is. He came in here and got to work right away. I think all the guys rallied behind him because it's, like, okay, we've got our quarterback.

And he's always been that confident guy. He studied his ass off in the film room and just works his butt off day in, day out. And I am extremely proud of him it's hard when you have people setting expectations for yourself. But his personal motivation, he's self-driven. I expect nothing less than him to come in here and have success.

Q. When you think of Billy as a play caller, there's been a lot of opinions about him being the OC this year, obviously, I think as of late you guys have been having a lot of success on offense. What do you think about his system and him kind of what he does with

the receivers and some of the stuff you guys do on offense?

RICKY PEARSALL: I think there's a fine line between coaching and players. At the end of the day, we've got to go out there and execute any play that's called. So obviously as an offense we've got to go out there execute anything that goes our way and that's what we can do as players.

Q. How do you like playing in his offense -- motions and reverses?

RICKY PEARSALL: His offense, I like it. Obviously about to touch the thousand-yard mark, so I'm pretty happy.

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