

# University of Florida Football Media Conference

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Gainesville, Florida, USA

## Teradja Mitchell

Press Conference



Florida State - 24, Florida - 15

**Q. What's kind of the mood around the team considering everything you guys went through this season and where you're at as a group?**

TERADJA MITCHELL: Obviously we're disappointed. We didn't have the season we wanted to have. We put in a lot of work at times, and when it was needed, we didn't execute. That's one thing I can say about this team. We didn't sugarcoat anything this season. We took it for what it was, and we didn't execute in the moments we needed to.

But looking at the positive side, guys understand we have to restore order. Florida is a prestigious program, and we understand that we have to put a better product on the field. That was my message to the younger guys right after the game, that this next off-season, we've got to get things going and restore order.

I would say the overall mood of the team is we're disappointed right now but we're excited for the future.

**Q. The defense obviously played at a very high level until late in the first half. You held them scoreless. What changed in the second half? What adjustments did FSU make, or what was different about the second half defensively for you guys, do you think?**

TERADJA MITCHELL: I think second half they started to establish the run and kind of get their offense going a little bit. I think they had a little over 100 yards. I'm not sure. We just didn't execute in those moments when we needed to. We didn't fit our gaps right in that time and things of that nature. That's what led to the loss.

**Q. Teradja, you've got a unique perspective. You come from a program that had a lot of winning and kind of a one-year thing here. You got to observe a young team go through some struggles. From that perspective, where do you see the building blocks? Where do you see the positive signs for the future that**

**maybe the record wouldn't indicate?**

TERADJA MITCHELL: Like I said, I have a unique perspective. I've seen both ends of the stick now, and I would say this program is not too far off.

Coming from Ohio State, the things that Coach Napier implemented for this program, the way the practices are, the workouts are, this program is inevitable. I think it's just a matter of when, when this program is going to get back to where it has been.

Like I said, I'm excited for the future, and I think the guys are buying into what Coach Napier is putting forth. It's obviously a rebuilding process, and it's going to take time, but also the guys understand there's a sense of urgency.

**Q. Teradja, what's next for you?**

TERADJA MITCHELL: I haven't really thought much about it, but the goal is to obviously start training and try out for an NFL team and see what's next. Just take it one day at a time. I haven't made any real decisions, but that's my plan.

**Q. Back to that note when you were answering Zach's question, is there anything that you can point to specifically maybe that Florida does or has or anything culture-wise that you think is similar or shows you that, hey, this team is close, like you said, to what Ohio State is?**

TERADJA MITCHELL: Regardless of what the outside people think, Florida practices are like big boy practices. We practice physical. We're hitting. We're hitting, and we're going after it.

Like I said, just the mentality that Coach Napier is trying to implement in the program, like being tough, playing tough. When teams play us, they're going to play a tough team. A team that we aren't going to quit. We're going to keep going forward. I see that.

As the guys keep buying into it, it's going to eventually show on the field for them.

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**Q. There was quite a handful of penalties that started to rack up in the second half. Do you think there was an increased amount of frustration from the team as FSU started to get a rhythm going? How were you guys trying to counter that?**

TERADJA MITCHELL: I think that's a great question. I think it all comes down to, like I said, execution. We have to execute. We have to be disciplined. At times we failed to be disciplined. We failed to execute.

That goes back to what I was saying. We have to continue to buy into what the coaches implement in practice, and we have to execute in those moments.

**Q. You kind of addressed it a little bit, but after the safety, though, what was kind of the vibe going? When did you feel it start slipping away?**

TERADJA MITCHELL: Right after that safety, we understood. We've been in those games before where we were up and playing well, and then we dropped in that performance. After that safety, the message for the team was let's keep going. Let's try to get this win. Obviously we didn't come out with that, and that's frustrating for us as players.

That shows the resilience of this team. Even after we take these losses, the team is still in a positive mindset, understand that -- see the bigger picture of everything. Even obviously we didn't do well this season, but the guys are still ready and eager for next year.

**Q. When you see some of the young guys contributing on defense, what's your vision for things this year and beyond?**

TERADJA MITCHELL: It's exciting to see those guys. They're getting those reps. They're scarring now. They're taking those losses as young players. Eventually as they grow into the program, they're not going to want to feel that feeling anymore. They're going to work a little bit harder, watch a little bit more film.

Like I said, I'm excited to see these younger guys as they grow into their college football careers.

**Q. Obviously for FSU with Travis being out and Rodemaker getting his first start of the season, is the defense -- what did you guys kind of expect that they were going to show offensively? Did it kind of play out that way during the game?**

TERADJA MITCHELL: Like I said, we lost our quarterback

too. We knew that, for us, we have to rally around Max and make sure the supporting pieces stepped up and executed to help Max out.

We thought the same thing for Florida State, that they were going to utilize their other key players, their receivers, their tight ends, their running backs, and try to work the game around the quarterback to help him. So we knew we were going to get like quick, easy throws, and they were going to try to get their quarterback in rhythm.

**Q. Obviously Benson, their running back, got some good runs in the second half. How tough -- especially in the first half you guys had the ball a lot of the half, second half they got the ball a little bit more. How tough was that to handle defensively as he got going?**

TERADJA MITCHELL: It was definitely tough for us, especially since our coaches put together adjustments for us to make at halftime, and like I said, we didn't execute those adjustments. Like I said, that's where the frustration comes in. But we understand as a defense we've got to do better. Simple as that, we've got to do better.

**Q. 17-15, fourth quarter. There you got them, I think it was a third and 15 situation, quarterback takes off. Now it's a race between the quarterback and the two guys that are trying to keep him from getting a first down. Of course they call the targeting call on that one. I don't know what your opinion on that particular play was, but you see these guys working so hard, and then of course it all evaporates with one play because you lose a guy. How different did that become at that particular moment?**

TERADJA MITCHELL: It was definitely a tough moment. I think it was a tough call. As a defensive player, you're fighting and you're scratching to make sure the offensive player doesn't get the first down. It's unfortunate that was the call. Obviously that's momentum that takes away from us as a defense, but it was a tough call. Tough call.

**Q. Do you have to play with a swivel because one false move and the next thing you know the officials are going to check to see if you were targeting somebody?**

TERADJA MITCHELL: Yeah, at the end of the day, football is a game of inches. Small errors that we make sometimes, and it's unfortunate. But that's the way the game is, and I understand they're trying to keep players safe. But in those moments, it's a game of inches.

Obviously you don't want the offensive player to get the first down, but targeting is targeting.

