

# University of Florida Football Media Conference

Monday, September 2, 2024  
Gainesville, Florida, USA

## Montrell Johnson Jr.

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. How did it feel after some time off, getting out there? Felt pretty healthy?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: Yeah, I feel 100%. Yes, sir.

**Q. No issues with the knee or anything at all?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: No. Nothing at all. I felt like I could play another game the next day.

**Q. Was that your first contact in a while?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: I got some contact throughout the week just to see how I feel before I go out there, yes, sir.

**Q. What is running through your mind initially when the knee starts bothering you?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: Throughout the game, it wasn't bothering me.

**Q. In camp.**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: When it first happened in camp, I was very wary. A lot of bad things going through my mind. I was thinking about being out for the season, stuff like that.

My mom kind of kept me levelheaded, saying everything is going to be all right, God has a plan for everything.

**Q. She drove up?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: Yeah, she drove up.

**Q. When you get the diagnosis from the doctors, how do you change your mindset to I'm not out for the season, I have to work to get back?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: My mindset was still kind of

messed up after they told me what it was 'cause I never missed a college game in my life. I was like, I don't want to miss practice, I don't want to miss something. I was like, Man, what am I going to do?

Mom was, The only thing you can do is go out there and work every day. It's going to pay off. You might come back early, you might not. You got to live with it.

**Q. How is that relationship with your mom? She drives up for every game?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: Every game, yes, sir.

**Q. What does it mean to have her in your corner?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: It's motivation, to be honest. Just to see how much she supports me, how much she loves me, makes me go out there and play hard every single game.

**Q. How tough was the loss to swallow?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: It was very tough. It was embarrassing. I don't even want to talk about it (smiling).

**Q. When do you get over something like that?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: The next week. Really today, practice. Go out there, make the corrections. Go over the plays we messed up. Kind of learn from our mistakes.

**Q. You obviously had the big run in the first half. It was hard for you to sustain drives. How surprising was that? What will it take to fix that?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: So I think the whole thing was just communication issues and execution issues. A lot of stuff was there. We just had to go out there and execute it.

I think we're going to be really, like, focusing on that throughout this whole entire week, executing the plays, communication. I think that's going to get us over the



hump.

**Q. You spent nine months getting ready for that game. You're looking for validation of everything you've done. How do you not question your confidence, being on the right path?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: I'd say it's only week one. I'd say we still have time. The message to the team has been just to respond. Boone came in there and talked to us in the locker room after the game. He told us it's only week one. It's not the end of the world. Go out there and fix our mistakes. Look back on this as motivation and use it throughout the whole entire season.

**Q. What are your thoughts on DJ, his readiness if he was to play this week?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: I learned that he's very mature. Coming on the field, talking to him throughout drives. He knows what is going on out there. He's very mature with his communication and stuff like that. He made me proud.

**Q. Fourth year in the offense now between the two schools. How do you feel like you have the entire grasp of what you guys are trying to do? Is it second nature? Do you still struggle with the communication or do you have total control of what's going on?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: I think the main thing I struggle with is just kind of knowing what everyone is doing, trying to help other players out. I know what I'm doing, so just trying to help other players out, make it easier for them so we can go out there and execute and play harder and faster.

**Q. That's something you focus on, learn what the guys on the perimeter's responsibility is? Does that help you in protection?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: Yes, sir, most definitely. When you looking at the defense, they can only cover so many guys, send so many guys. Helps me with pass pro, some guys that can potentially come and some that cannot.

**Q. Walk us through your touchdown run.**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: So they've been sending the field pressure the entire game. We kind of found out about that. We made an adjustment. We made a run to the boundary. Once I got around the corner, I knew it was a touchdown. There was no one there. I just had to outrun the other guy.

Yeah, I was looking to score, yeah.

**Q. Almost got a shoelace or something, did you feel that at all?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: I didn't feel that. I felt him, but I didn't feel it, if that makes sense. I knew he was coming, but he didn't touch me yet.

**Q. Some guys look at the scoreboard. Do you look up at all to see if he's close?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: I did that my freshman year at UO. It was delayed. I got tackled from the back. I'm not doing that ever again (smiling).

**Q. Did you watch the film yet?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: Yes, we have.

**Q. Jake Slaughter threw his hands up. Did you see Jake celebrating before you were even in yet?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: I didn't see it. I was still trying to make sure I got in there.

Jake does that a lot in practice. Every time I break free in practice, other running back, receiver breaks free, knowing those guys are behind you playing for you makes you play harder.

**Q. What are your thoughts about maybe the future of the younger guys?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: I think those guys, they're like sponges. They're ready to learn, ready to soak up knowledge. I commend them for that. Just coming to me whenever they got a problem. Me, I got to be the leader for them, be that influence for them.

**Q. Jacoby showed a little wiggle. Have you seen that before? Is that his thing, his MO?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: That's most definitely Jacoby's thing. He does that every practice, in spring, in fall camp. He does that every practice. That's his playing style. That's him.

**Q. As one of the leaders on the offense, how much of an urgency is there to get some things fixed? What is practice going to be like this week?**

MONTRELL JOHNSON JR.: There's a lot of urgency. I'm pitching on the small details. When you're not in, get

mental reps. No talking on the sideline. Everything got to be more structured. The leaders got to be more leaders on offense and defense. I think I'm going to press the issue this week.

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