

# University of Florida Football Media Conference

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Gainesville, Florida, USA

## DJ Lagway

Press Conference



Florida - 45, Samford - 7

**Q. Good to meet you. Quite a debut there. Billy's talked about just the way you kind of rise to the occasion. What was your mindset going into the game, and how do you think you performed?**

DJ LAGWAY: My mindset was take advantage of the opportunity to go out there and compete with the heck of the players around me. I feel like the preparation that Coach O'Hara, Coach Napier, even Graham, helped me a lot making sure I was prepared. So that was good.

**Q. Of all those deep throws, which one stands out in your mind? Because there were several very good ones.**

DJ LAGWAY: I would say the one to Tank Hawkins. That's one of my best friends here. So it was a real moment to get our first touchdown together. That was pretty cool.

**Q. The touchdown you threw to Mizell, can you just walk me through that play? It kind of broke down a little bit and it looked like you were going to take off and run, but you kept your eyes downfield. Seemed like a lot of arm talent to get that ball off balance and get it out there.**

DJ LAGWAY: On that play, just trust my receiver. My man is better than their man. That's the biggest thing. We'd been working since January, so I have trust in Aidan among all my other receivers, so yeah.

**Q. You got to run out of the tunnel last week, but does it feel different running out when you're the starting quarterback? What were the two different feelings you had running out of the tunnel this week and last week?**

DJ LAGWAY: It was a big difference. I was like really nervous. So it was pretty cool to experience kind of both sides of it. It was fun, yeah.

**Q. Obviously there was just tremendous amount of hype in The Swamp today. I'm sure you heard the DJ Lagway chants midway through the game. What does that mean to you, all the excitement you generated among the Florida fan base? What does it mean to see that translate directly on the field as soon as you take over?**

DJ LAGWAY: First off, without God, none of that would have been possible, the performance I had. Without my O-linemen blocking for me, without the leaders and the veteran guys being there for me, telling me they got me whatever happens, good or bad. I felt like that was something big.

My receivers making plays. Defense, they played their butts off in the first half, even the whole game really. I feel like just the whole team aspect and the whole team effort came into play today.

**Q. Finished the day with 456 yards, top 10 all time for a single game performance for the Gators. Did it cross your mind at any point you were having a record breaking performance, or were you just locked into the task at hand?**

DJ LAGWAY: I was just locked into the task at hand. My coach is telling me one play at a time. That's what it is, just executing one play at a time. Just getting my guys involved, just getting everybody involved with the ball, that's the biggest thing.

**Q. The difference obviously, you kind of came in last week at the end, got a touchdown on one of your drives. You're starting this week. Does it take a while to really get used to what you've been practicing all week? Last week was only a small sample size. When did you really start feeling comfortable out there today? Or was it right from the start?**

DJ LAGWAY: I would say it's right from the start. I feel like Coach Napier prepared us. He got us prepared. I feel like it's every week. Even Miami, I feel like he prepared us a lot.

I just feel like everything they did, we knew what they were going to do before they did it. I feel like it's just preparation.

**Q. Sort of on that note, do you think getting that little bit of playing time last week, leading the team on the touchdown drive, how much did that help you feeling ready right from the get go today?**

DJ LAGWAY: That definitely helped with my confidence. I just wanted to feel how it felt to get tackled in college and just see how it is on the field with like the crowd noise, 90,000 in the stands. I never had that in high school. So I just wanted to see how that was.

After that first and second play, just the feeling, yeah, I can really do this, that was definitely a big confidence booster.

**Q. We talked about the touchdowns to Tank, to Aidan. Elijah obviously had the long catch. Really did a great job of getting the receivers involved. Was that something that you were going to try to -- during the week were thinking you really wanted to do, or it just sort of worked out that way?**

DJ LAGWAY: It just sort of worked out that way. I feel like I've got a great relationship with every guy. I know what they want, I know what they like, what routes they like the best. I think that just comes down to the relationship I have with those guys individually.

**Q. Coach Napier said multiple times the best thing for your development was Graham Mertz deciding to come back. I know it's only been eight months, but how involved was he today in helping you through what you were seeing out there?**

DJ LAGWAY: Graham is the best thing that could ever happen to me. Him being here, just learning from a veteran player himself, it's been amazing to learn and to see how to do things right. He's a true professional, and that's what I want to be when I get older.

**Q. DJ, take us through the first throw to Elijah on the out and up. You kind of had the defense moving really where you wanted them, so you had your pick of where you wanted to go. What kind of made you just take your time and let it go to Elijah early in the game like that?**

DJ LAGWAY: Just really following my rules, you know. Each play has rules to it, following progressions, and that was on the progression first, so you might as well take it.

**Q. What did you learn about yourself this week?**

DJ LAGWAY: What I learned about myself is that -- that's a great question. What I learned about myself is really just that I can adapt to anything. Just be ready for any opportunity that comes my way. I've never been put in a situation like this before, like where things could just flip like this, but it's a blessing.

I feel like I learned so much this week. It's been a lot of battle testing this week, and it's been good, though.

**Q. DJ, on that note, Billy told us that you've been dealing with an injury that held you back a little bit in practice. How difficult was that to go through wanting to get all the reps that you could but having to wait until you could get that green light?**

DJ LAGWAY: Yeah, that was really difficult. That definitely was messing with my mental a little bit. I had a little something going on before the Miami game with my shoulder. So it was just like just got to be ready for my opportunity, and I wasn't going to let a shoulder lose the opportunity.

So I just feel like I've got to stay getting healthy and continue to get better, and just working on my feet work and reps and stuff like that.

**Q. I know you said, I think during Under Armour week, that you coming in with the mindset to start, that that was your goal, and if it didn't work out that way, you would play whatever role. Now that you've gotten that opportunity, is that something you still want to keep chasing? Obviously the decision will be up to Coach, but how does that change your mindset now moving forward?**

DJ LAGWAY: I just want to do what's best for the team. Whatever the team needs me to do, that's what I'm going to do. If I got to carry the ball however many times to get wins in the column, that's what I've got to do.

**Q. It's been a whirlwind in here. You got to meet Emmitt Smith in January and so forth and have really been on campus for close to a year now. What have you done to try to stay grounded, and how has that development process been to kind of prepare you for this moment?**

DJ LAGWAY: It's just stay grounded. As a kid, I've always been taught what God gives, He can also take. I just definitely stay humble and give God all the glory because without Him I'm nothing. That's just the biggest thing with me. So I just give Him all the glory because I know that's where my source of power is coming from.



**Q. We talked about the fans cheering you on, but how is that locker room when you first came in and everyone is supporting you on such a great night?**

DJ LAGWAY: It's a blessing to have such a great supporting cast as my teammates around me. They see me at my lows. They see me at my highs. It's been great to see them rally behind me this week and see the leadership from the veteran guys that come around me and support me. It's been amazing.

**Q. Next week Texas A&M, a college you're probably very familiar with, right down the road, just what will that mean to go up and face a school you've probably seen play a hundred times?**

DJ LAGWAY: It's going to be fun. It's going to be a surreal moment. I'm just excited for that moment. It's going to be fun to put them in The Swamp. It's going to be fun.

**Q. Obviously there's a lot of hype, a lot going on around you right now, but it's easy to forget that you're just a true freshman that's just stepped foot onto campus a few months ago. How have you been able to take all this in so quickly and just apply everything you've learned onto the field and into the locker room right away?**

DJ LAGWAY: I would say my coaches. My coaches have been hard on me since day one. They've molded me, and they're going to continue to coach me hard.

That's what I love about Coach Napier and his staff. They're going to coach me hard and make sure I'm getting better each and every day. They're not going to let nothing little slip by, and that's what I love about them.

**Q. During your recruitment, you could have went anywhere in the country, and you decided to come here and stayed solid throughout your decision. Why were you so firm with Florida? What is it about Napier and his staff that made you want to be here?**

DJ LAGWAY: It really is two things. Coach Napier, of course, and the fan base. The fan base has shown me love since day one. I'm a Gator through and through.

Appreciate you. Go Gators.

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