

# University of Florida Football Media Conference

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## Coach Billy Napier

### Press Conference



Texas A&M 33, Florida 20

BILLY NAPIER: I will tell you what I told the players. I think ultimately when we don't have success and we don't play quality football on Saturdays, it's my responsibility. Everything that happens within our organization from top to bottom is under my direction and control, and certainly I take full responsibility for that.

I do think players are young people; they come to the University of Florida; we provide structure, we provide routine, we teach football, we teach values, we teach way of life. But ultimately at some point it becomes about production.

We have not played -- two out of three weeks here, we have not played good enough football in many parts of our team at all.

Today obviously couldn't capture any momentum early. I think we struggled to stop them. I think we had multiple opportunities to get off the field, and we could not. The play count got way out of hand; it was like 53-18 at halftime. Time of possession was very distorted there, and I think maybe we had three real possessions there on the offense. We did have a possession right there right before the half, I think there was 40-something seconds left.

Did score the first possession of the second half, got it back to two scores, then we quickly -- two plays later we give up an explosive pass with a mental error in the secondary.

We couldn't run it, and they obviously rushed it effectively, and they beat us today. Give credit to their backup quarterback. I thought he played a good football game. They used his skill set, and he caused issues for our team today.

What questions do we have?

**Q. You take responsibility, but how do you explain the team coming out so flat for such a big game like this?**

BILLY NAPIER: Well, I don't necessarily think we were flat. I just don't think that we executed. I think we actually had -- we came right in after the running delay and had almost every single clip, and I think there was -- yeah, I think there's opportunities to make plays. I think there's mental errors. I think there's fundamental mistakes.

I do think that -- yeah, we just didn't have the ball. Then obviously they kept the ball. So it got out of control early there.

Look, we have to play complementary football. That's the type of team that we have. If we're out of whack in one area, it's certainly not good for our team.

**Q. Is there something you can pinpoint defensively at this point?**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah, I think we struggled getting lined up and executing basic calls, just to be quite honest. We got the guy dead to rights handful of times in the first couple drives of the game. His legs caused some issues for us. We lost contain one time. We missed the guy for a sack one time. Then we got a couple busts in the secondary.

We forced them to a field goal, but then here we go again, right.

I'll be able to tell you more Monday, but overall I would just tell you, not good defense. That's about as simple as I can put it.

**Q. Two defensive penalties also were pretty critical in keeping two touchdown drives alive. Does it get to the point where you have to bench guys over that? How do you fix the mental errors with regards to that?**

BILLY NAPIER: You're talking about the targeting and the holding penalty? Yeah, I'd be interested to see the video from the targeting. They told me he used the crown of his helmet. We'll see what that looks like. We'll obviously ask for interpretation on that.

Then the holding, the guy -- there's no doubt the guy ran a



wheel route, kind of a little bit of a tug on the jersey there on their sideline. So yeah, I think ultimately those players, they committed penalties.

**Q. Getting booed is part of the job, but it was pretty loud and pretty intense at the end of the first half and again leaving the field. What's that feel like for you, and do you think you deserve a chance to get this thing turned around?**

BILLY NAPIER: Well, I don't blame -- I have no excuse -- I have no negative comment about that. Ultimately when you play a certain way in this arena, you're going to be criticized.

This is one of those places where there's history and tradition and expectations. There's been a lot of really good football teams that played in that stadium in the past, and when you play ugly ball, and maybe it doesn't look quite like we all want it to, then hey, it comes with the territory.

I probably would have done the same thing, truth be known.

**Q. What gives you confidence that you're the right man for this job?**

BILLY NAPIER: Well, I think that ultimately we've worked extremely hard, and I think we've -- there's been a ton of progress made.

I think my frustrations are with how we've played two out of the last three weeks. That's where my frustration is.

I think we've done a lot of good in terms of behind the walls and just the organization as a whole. I truly believe that. I think most people that have familiarity with our program would say that.

We're not getting the result on the field right now that we want, but ultimately that's how you're judged to some degree in this arena, so it comes with the territory. We all understand that as coaches. So we have to play more competitive football. We have to play better quality football. That's my responsibility.

We've spent a lot of time -- we work extremely hard. We have good people. But this is a production business, and ultimately we've got to play better.

**Q. Coach, both sides of the line of scrimmage I think against the power four teams have struggled but specifically the offensive line. You've stated the importance of having two coaches. Have you guys**

**recruited and developed well enough to play this level of competition there?**

BILLY NAPIER: Well, I think if you watched the Miami game and the Texas A&M game, you would say no. So ultimately we've got to do something to fix it. That's about as simple as I can put it.

We have struggled to rush the ball, and we have struggled to protect the ball. I mean, protect the quarterback.

Now, is that group working hard? Do they have good intentions? Yes, I think so. But we certainly -- that's our responsibility. When it's not good enough, as coaches, it's our responsibility.

I do think there's an element of it -- there is an evaluation in the recruitment and developing part, developing some cohesion with that group, trying to build a veteran group, but we haven't played well enough up front on offense in the opener or today. That's about as blunt as I can be.

**Q. When you talk about the intention to get better and to prepare, are you starting to see things or have you seen things in the first three games that are uncharacteristic of what you might be seeing during the week, things that are being taught but then not being transferred on game day to the play?**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah. I mean, I think that's some of the frustration. I mean, we come right in during the lightning delay and watch the tape, and I mean, it is what it is. What's on that tape is who we are. I think we tell the players that, and I would tell the assistant coaches that. Our film is our resume, and ultimately we have to do a much better job.

**Q. What's your message when you see those things that are uncharacteristic on a continuous basis? Is there messaging that you've leaned on, or is it just something that continues to work itself out in your experience?**

BILLY NAPIER: Well, you know, they know. Players are very aware. I think ultimately it's not like they don't understand or are not aware. They completely understand and are aware that, hey, I didn't do what I was supposed to do at times, or maybe made a poor decision or used the wrong technique, whatever the case may be.

Look, I think my message to the team -- the number one thing that's critical for that group is that they stick together because ultimately that's what they'll have. 25 years from now, they're going to have those relationships with their teammates. It's critical, regardless of how negative it may



be and will be outside, it's important that they stick together, and really behind the walls, that's all they have.

We may not be able to control what people say about us on the outside, but we can control what we do on the inside and how we -- the words we speak, the actions that we take, our attitude, our effort, our approach, and that'll be the challenge. That'll be the challenge. Can they do that and can we improve, can we find ways to eliminate some of these issues and play better football going forward.

So that's what I told the players, and ultimately I think that's what's most important at this point.

**Q. With regard to some of those errors, is there anything that you can pinpoint with your process in practices, whatever the case maybe, that's led to some of the repeat issues, missed tackles and poor offensive line technique? Is there anything in the process that you see is kind of a fault?**

BILLY NAPIER: If I knew that, we probably wouldn't have the issues we have right now. Ultimately I'm trying to solve those problems. It's my responsibility to do that.

Yeah, that's what we're doing. We're in the process of trying to figure those things out.

**Q. The quarterback situation today, how do you feel like that played out, and do you regret not sticking with Graham after that touchdown drive he had in the third?**

BILLY NAPIER: No, I think ultimately we have a really talented young player, and we have a really talented veteran player that's experienced and has great command and knowledge of our system.

We ultimately made a commitment to rotate the players a certain progression, a certain way, regardless of the outcome, basically just to keep those guys in a good frame of mind relative to not looking over their shoulder. They have a really good relationship. They work really hard together to prepare together. It's incredible to see them interact throughout practice, meetings. Even when we told them in the meeting, hey, this is the approach we're going to take, they fully supported each other.

Yeah, I think we felt like it was in the best interest of the team to do it that way, and we did it, and I don't necessarily think that that was one of our -- that wasn't the reason that we got beat today. I think there were a lot of other things that contributed to that.

**Q. Over 300 yards on the ground. What did you see there and how disappointing was that from your**

**defense?**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah, it's disgusting. I mean, ultimately that's my fault. We need to do much better.

**Q. I know you're a process-oriented guy and you focus on the process, but when you zoom out and look at the macro in year three, what do you see?**

BILLY NAPIER: Not good enough. Not good enough against Miami, not good enough today. We've done a lot of good behind the scenes in terms of building infrastructure. We've got a great organization, but the quality of football in the opener and today, not up to standard.

I think we've played some good football at times and gotten beat, and maybe I'd have been able to stand up here and say, hey, we did a lot of good things, we're close, but that's not been the case. So that's the facts. We have to do much better.

**Q. Do you feel like you're making progress?**

BILLY NAPIER: I think that we've made progress in a lot of areas. I just don't think that the quality of that football out there is what I would like.

And look, again, we've got a lot of people taking ownership that are not in this room, and I think that's a good thing. But we've got to get it fixed.

**Q. I know there's not a lot of patience in this profession, but what is your sense where the patience is with you and this administration, and how important is it for you to be patient, stay the course during what's clearly a tough time for this program?**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah, I think the most important thing is that we make decisions with perspective. I think we've got to try to be objective. That's the biggest challenge in leadership, I think, is kind of trying to put your ego on the shelf a little bit and evaluate things objectively and try to make decisions that reflect that.

For me, all my decisions are about stewarding the people that have been entrusted to you, the players, your staff members. Ultimately that's how I try to view it. That's my responsibility to the players to do better for the players. That's probably what I struggle with the most when we don't play well is what are we -- what can I do to help those young people in that locker room, because I've seen them work their tails off since January. You just want the reward for the player, and I think that's what motivates me.



