

University of Florida Football Media Conference

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Chimere Dike

Press Conference



Q. First Florida/Georgia game. You were part of the Paul Bunyan Axe and so forth and everything. What are you learning about the rivalry?

CHIMERE DIKE: Kind of like Tennessee, B. Spikes in the summer, we had a Georgia day where some of the new guys came in, the transfers and the freshmen. He kind of gave us a feel for it.

Just being a college football fan you definitely know about this game. My cousin, unfortunately, went to Georgia. She has a great education. She's doing great, but she has told me about this game as well, just growing up.

Obviously it means a lot to our fans and our university, so I'm excited to be able to play.

Q. DJ, his presence, what stands out just about the way he just kind of conducts himself during the game, handles himself? He seems pretty fearless.

CHIMERE DIKE: For me it's the poise to be able to be 19 and be able to play like even the Tennessee game. Obviously big fourth quarter down the stretch and stepped up in those moments. I think it just shows the kind of competitor he is. Then just the way he approaches every single day in the building is also really impressive to me.

Q. Just his ability to attack down field and willingness is pretty rare. It's a declarative statement, but what you do think about it?

CHIMERE DIKE: When you can make some of the throws he makes, I would be confident too. He's a really special player. I'm excited to continue to see him grow and take steps each and every single week.

Q. What do you think are the biggest challenges on Saturday?

CHIMERE DIKE: Georgia is a really good football team. I think it's just being able to execute our game plan. Obviously we're still early in prep, but they're a

well-coached football team. They're really athletic. They know how to win.

We're going to have to have a good game. We're going to have to execute. It's going to be a battle, but I'm excited, and I think as a competitor that's a challenge that you want.

Q. A lot of guys described the first bye week as fun, competitive. Was that taken to another level when maybe considering the schedule the rest of the way and what is at stake here for bowl eligibility, and stuff like that?

CHIMERE DIKE: We had a lot of competitive good-on-good stuff. I think the first bye week was really good for our team. I think we were able to find kind of our identity a lot during that time.

Obviously we have a lot of really good teams, and we have a really good team this week. So I think that we definitely took advantage and competed and tried to take steps forward.

Q. How do you feel like this year has gone for you so far, just what you have shown? You have better stats than you did last year.

CHIMERE DIKE: I feel like I've been playing good football. My focus is just on executing as much as I can. I feel like I've been able to go out there and do different things, but our coaches do a great job preparing me. I have great teammates around me. It's really easy for me. I just go out there on Saturdays and have a great attention to detail and play as hard as I can.

Q. I know Graham was part of that pitch, but what did Florida sell you on being able to showcase you in this offense, and do you feel like that's come to fruition?

CHIMERE DIKE: Yeah, definitely. I think it was somewhere I felt I could make an impact on the field and off the field. I felt like I could be a guy that could make an impact in the locker room and our receiver room with a lot of really young talented players. That's something that I take really seriously as well.

Then on the field obviously kind of a way they've utilized me is the way I envisioned. As well it's a great university, so it was a pretty easy sell.

Q. Obviously you've been a crucial cog in the Florida offense at this point, but you've also established yourself as probably the top return man on the field. What do you think has allowed you to find your role here and just settle in both as a weapon on two different ends of the field if that makes sense?

CHIMERE DIKE: Yeah, I think when you get to somewhere new, you just want to work extremely hard. I think I wanted to prove to the guys how much I cared. I came in winter workouts and worked as hard as I can. Spring practice, just continued to improve, listened to all the coaching points.

They put me where they need me. I've blessed to be able to represent this university.

Q. What do you think a rivalry win would do for this program right now?

CHIMERE DIKE: Rivalry wins are huge obviously, especially against a team like Georgia with their success and the level of talent, how well-coached they are. I think that every single win in a game in the SEC is huge, but I definitely think this is a big one this Saturday. We understand that.

Our approach is the same. Just continue to take it one day at a time and be as immersed in the game plan as we can.

Q. You said you spoke to a couple of teammates about what this game means.

CHIMERE DIKE: I spoke to B. Spikes, and obviously the guys have talked about it too. That's just throughout like regular talk. We haven't necessarily sat down and been, like, you know, what importance. I think that if you are a college football fan, you know the importance. It's one of those rivalries.

Q. How is B. Spikes, by the way?

CHIMERE DIKE: He's been good. I haven't gotten a chance to really talk to him, but I think he's doing all right.

Q. What are you seeing from Trey behind the scenes and if he starts playing like the guy we're expecting before he got hurt, what can that do to elevate the offense?

CHIMERE DIKE: I mean, I've said it before. Trey is special. He's got an extreme ability to hit his top speed quick. He's a dynamic playmaker. He is continuing to work, and he's the same guy every single day in the facility. Just continuing to make plays.

I'm excited that whenever he's involved and he's making plays that we're definitely have a key to our offense that can really help us.

Q. I don't know how much film work you've done, but anything that stands out about Georgia's defense on film and how Kirby coaches them and so forth and the challenge of being able to move the ball against them?

CHIMERE DIKE: You see it by the results that they have that they're a very good defense, and obviously through the past couple of years they've been very, very, very good. I think they have a lot of athletic people up front. Their secondary is disciplined. They're really physical. They have a lot of really good players back there.

They're a disciplined defense as well. So I think that when you have a lot of talented players and you're well-coached, it makes for a good defense. I think as a competitor, like I said, you want that. You don't want to go against somebody who is not prepared, who is not disciplined. I'm excited for the challenge.

Q. Coach Miles mentioned your top speed five times since you have been here. How much do you think that's helped your game? I think you only started returning punts last year at Wisconsin. How much has that top end speed and agility kind of helped you there as well?

CHIMERE DIKE: Coach Miles has done a great job of pouring into us. Even during in-season lifting I feel like I've been able to maintain my weight and my strength as well.

I think that the faster you can be, especially in a conference like the SEC where I think speed is more at the forefront, I think it's important. I think it's definitely helped me.

Q. Did it surprise you at all, just seeing the numbers when you first got here?

CHIMERE DIKE: I feel like I've been fast for a while, if I'm being honest (laughing).

Q. What kind of physical kind of marvel is Jadan?

CHIMERE DIKE: Oh, Jadan Baugh? I remember the first time you really get a look at running backs is in

scrimmages or spring games. They're running the ball, but it's kind of like thud. It's not the same. That spring game I was, like, Oh.

I've been around some good backs. My senior year at Wisconsin it was Jonathan Taylor. I went to every home game because I was an hour away from Wisconsin. I got to see him every single week.

I saw Braelon Allen, Chez Mellusi, Isaac Guerendo, who just had 100 yards for the 49ers. He has that special ability to get the ball in his hands too. Like Coach Napier was saying, he is a great kid. He has high character, and I think the sky is the limit for him.

Q. Do you think the open week maybe helped DJ in terms of playing experience and stuff, but another week to get a lot of reps with the receivers and so forth and how can that translate on Saturday?

CHIMERE DIKE: Yeah, I think it was huge for everyone, especially some of the younger guys being able to work, but DJ took advantage of it having a great week at practice. I think the more reps you can get, the more comfortable you can be come Saturday.

I think it was huge for him. Obviously I think he's very well-prepared even before the open day as you could see, but I think that it's just huge for our team to continue to take every single week and get better.

Q. Did you guys split the teams up again?

CHIMERE DIKE: Yeah, we split. It was good. It was good. I love the feeling of the competition. Not that practices aren't competitive, but when you see that score on the scoreboard and there's something on the line, it gets the juices flowing a little bit more. We had fun with it.

Q. How many gassers did you have to run?

CHIMERE DIKE: One. I ran one of the days. One of the days I won; one of the days I lost. It was two come-from-behind victories, which was huge.

Q. As teams start to look at the film and respect DJ's deep ball, how much do you think that will open things up underneath for you guys?

CHIMERE DIKE: Yeah, I think that when you can make teams defend the run, can you make them defend the short pass, medium pass, and the long ball, it spreads them out. I think that if we're able to have success in all those areas, it will be definitely a lot tougher to defend us.

Q. Two come-from-behinds. Did DJ direct any of them?

CHIMERE DIKE: The first day it was DJ's team, and the second day Aidan Warner went and turned up in four-minute drill. You know, it's one D and two O, so it's good competition. Our defense is playing at a really high level. It's good to be out there and go against those guys because they make us better.

Q. How is Graham doing?

CHIMERE DIKE: Graham is doing good. I was able to spend a lot of time with him on Sunday. I think that the way he's handling it is amazing. He's handling it better than I would.

His character is something that as his friend, I'm really proud of him for. I think that when you are presented with a challenge, you kind of have two ways to go about it. You can sulk, or you can kind of attack it and grow from it. He's definitely doing the latter. I'm excited to see kind of the success that he has going forward.

Q. How important is it for him to have you in his ear as one of his best friends?

CHIMERE DIKE: I hope I can be there for him during this time. I think that we're extremely close. We can talk about stuff that maybe we can't talk about with other people. Whenever he needs me, I want to be somebody that's there for him.

He's done an amazing job of still being in the locker room and being a guy who DJ can lean on, a guy who the rest of our team can lean on because obviously he's a big part and a huge leader of our team.

Q. Before the surgery he made a point to tell us that he is going to have a pro day, which is kind of a tight timeline, but what would that mean for you to catch passes for him on his pro day when he comes back from this?

CHIMERE DIKE: That would be amazing. A guy that you went through all these experiences with, the ups and downs, to be able to go out on pro day and obviously we have a lot of stuff to take care of before then, but that would be a really cool experience.

Hopefully he's able to be back by then. That would be a really special day.

Q. Could it be an underappreciated aspect, his influence on DJ these eight, nine months?

CHIMERE DIKE: Yeah. I mean, I think that any time as a young guy -- at least speaking for myself, when I had players that I thought did it the right way and I was able to learn from them, I think back to my time at Wisconsin. I had three senior receivers in the room that I was playing with. Danny Davis, Kenderic Pryor, and Jack Dunn. All those guys, I took something from their game and just from how they approached it.

I think that when you have a guy like Graham who obviously is an extremely talented quarterback, but also somebody who knows the game, super smart, and is a leader. Kind of does things the right way in my opinion.

A guy like DJ, who is super talented and young and being able to learn from him is something that he can take with his career and obviously kind of put his own spin on it, but I think that is very valuable.

Q. Are there any receivers specifically that you have kind of taken under your wing?

CHIMERE DIKE: Yeah. I try to be somebody who any of the young guys can lean on. Guys like Tank, TJ, a lot of the younger guys I try to be able to share different things with them. DeBraun Hampton, like all those guys. I try to be somebody who they can come to talk to, but also just as a leader by example and how detailed I am in my preparation and the way I practice, things like that.

Q. You mentioned all those talented running backs at Wisconsin that you got to watch. Is there anything in Jadan's game that you have seen from a guy like Jonathan Taylor or one of the other guys you mentioned?

CHIMERE DIKE: He is different. He has very good size obviously, but his lateral movement and he is patient, but he is not too patient, which is -- for him to be a freshman and have that. I saw Braelon kind of develop that where he had the patience, but he would also run downhill.

I feel like Jadan had that since spring, which is really impressive. I think that that's something that kind of shows the kind of player that he is.

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