

# University of Florida Football Media Conference

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## Billy Napier

### Press Conference



BILLY NAPIER: All right, ready to go? Okay, before we get to LSU I think it's important that we talk about Veteran's Day. Obviously this weekend is our opportunity to salute those who serve. I do think that in general this is a day to come together and pay tribute to a lot of the brave people who have selflessly served in our Armed Forces.

I think sometimes some of these freedoms we have, the way of life we have, we take for granted. Most of the time adults understand the importance, but I think we feel obligated to help educate our players. We'll have a speaker come in each day the week this week from each branch of our military.

I think ultimately, we need to show gratitude for their service. It's important for them to know what military life is like, acknowledge our veterans from the past. That level of sacrifice I think is very special. We need to continue to honor the men and women who serve in our military, who have served and who continue to serve.

There are values that need to be taught in terms of patriotism, empathy, gratitude. So today is an important day for a lot of reasons.

Certainly going to take advantage of this week. We look forward to this weekend. I do think LSU, as usual, has a good football team. I think they're talented. Had their ups and downs throughout the season. Coach Kelly runs a good program. They've overhauled the defensive staff. Certainly a veteran quarterback, although a first-time starter, has significant experience, has been in the program, been in the system with Nussmeier. Really unique kick returner and punt returner that can be a challenge.

Overall, the personnel that you would expect from an LSU team. So the combination of all this, we do anticipate getting healthier. Hopeful to get a handful of guys back this week. We had a lot of them that were close to being available this past Saturday that didn't quite turn around in time.

But in general, very important week. Excited to be back home. Look forward to the challenge here playing this LSU team.

What questions do we have?

**Q. Some of the guys on the injury list, had it been a championship game last week, would they have been -- could they have played if it was one of those nothing-to-lose situations?**

BILLY NAPIER: I don't think so. I think all those guys, Badger, Montrell, Damien, Devyn, DJ. I'm trying to think of some of the others. In general, I think they would have been game-time decisions if that were the case.

Even those guys that were listed that way, I think after watching pre-game they weren't ready to go. Big picture, we got a bunch of guys. They're doing everything humanly possible to play. I mean, that's one of the things I respect about the group.

We had a bunch of guys play banged up to be quite honest with you. In general I think I we gout out of that game and we're hopeful we get some of those guys back.

**Q. ... was saying he's never been around so many injuries in-game couple of games ago. Is this the most banged up roster you've had in seven seasons?**

BILLY NAPIER: I think we're just a little bit more aware of it because we get an injury report Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and 90 minutes before the game.

Look, your depth is always going to be challenged, and when you play in this league, and certainly with our non-conference schedule, we have played a very competitive schedule.

So I think we're more equipped probably than we have been. Just playing with threes in some spots. That's ultimately what I would say. Typically your twos are going to play at every position throughout the year. Very rarely does a starter play front to back the whole time.

You're always going to have a little bit of that. So when you get to your third, that's when you ultimately -- that's unique.

**Q. Do you have a fourth at quarterback?**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah. Clay is...

**Q. Did you consider at any point maybe just trying kicking the tires on him when the team was struggling the other day?**

BILLY NAPIER: I don't necessarily think -- no. No. I think ultimately, a lot of that I think we were very aware of what was happening. It wasn't necessarily Aidan as much as just in general. I think we can play better around him at times, and then it is what it is at that point.

You can only get so many people ready to play.

**Q. I know the season isn't over yet, but to this point what would you self-assess things like playcalling, offensive game planning from week to week from where you were...**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah, I'm not ready to do any of that. Focused on LSU right now.

**Q. On the quarterback situation, how important will that be this off season to fill out that unit with four guys?**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah.

**Q. You mentioned in the past, that is the number you want to be at scholarship-wise at that position.**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah. It's a position where we'll add players for sure. We're in the process of doing that. That can be a challenge when you have a really talented young player.

It's important. It's a big piece of the puzzle. We been grinding away on it for a long time.

**Q. How much of that, given the landscape of college sports, how much of that has to occur now during the season when you're trying to prepare for games? Are you at a point where you're looking for guys that have a future in the portal? How does that work?**

BILLY NAPIER: I think what you're describing there is definitely a piece of the puzzle here down the stretch. I think the combination of early signing period and the portal window, paired with November football and how

competitive and important these games are, that is one of the more challenging things about college football right now.

I think every coach has expressed that publically. We have extensive -- I mean, our personnel department is working around the clock. We have windows of time where we evaluate players every week.

Just this week, I'll be up here Wednesday night; be up here early Friday morning. Those are my two blocks of time each week. So those guys are grinding around the clock and then obviously the coaches as well and that gets funneled to me.

Two times a week we have blocks for evaluating the players. What you're describing, it becomes even more -- there is just more whatever you want to call it, rumors or anticipation. I think some of that starts it ramp up in November.

**Q. How much progress has DJ made in the 48 hours since the game, and do you anticipate him being able to practice more than individual drills starting today?**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah. Well, good thing is we worked him out this morning and felt good about what we saw. You know, so now, does that mean he's 100%? I don't necessarily -- soft tissue is a very subjective issue. I think it's day-to-day.

But we do anticipate him practicing today.

**Q. Follow up on Jacob's question: Are you spending more time evaluating like -- your two blocks, is that different than previous years?**

BILLY NAPIER: No. I think you've got to watch senior tape on guys. You have to get out in front of portal opportunities. And then obviously sometimes it's 26s that are pressing if that makes sense.

So just in general, I think the key is that you got the self-discipline to follow through every week, and you got to have a process. It's year-round. Our blocks of time are year-round at this point.

**Q. Went through a stretch in kind of late September, early October where the tight ends were really involved in the pass game. How do you get them involved in the late stretch?**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah, no, I'm with you. I think about that as well. I do think we need to be a little bit more intentional. I think sometimes it's structure on defense

where the matchups are. What are the fronts, the protections. Obviously the coverage is a big piece of that as well.

Definitely want to get those guys more involved. That's a big piece to the puzzle the next couple weeks.

**Q. Scott gave you the vote of confidence last week. Did you guys sit down and have conversations about where this is headed and maybe potentially -- I know you don't want to get into staff changes -- but things you want to see different or expect to see different moving forward?**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah, I think it'll be much like most years that I've been a head coach. I think we kind of back up and take a big picture look at the organization as a whole. You know, what areas are thriving? What areas need to be revamped?

Look there is an evolution to the game in terms of how you format the organization, job descriptions, work flows, and a big piece of that puzzle in the revenue share that begins on July 1st.

So just the front office component, making progress towards that. Then you're always going to evaluate the nuts and bolts, right, the coaching, the development piece. I think we've made a few changes each year. I think it'll be the same this year.

**Q. Did you expect that from Scott?**

BILLY NAPIER: You know, in-season, man, I'm grinding. I'm trying to get the most out of our players. What I would say is I think it's a reflection of our players. We don't get it done. We don't show signs of improvement. And look, let me say this: I am absolutely not satisfied with how we played. Now, we have done some good things. It's nowhere close to what it's got to be consistently for us to be a contender. That's ultimately what I'm spending my time on.

Any belief or hope or confidence in what we can become is due to the players and the way they performed the last five or six weeks. We need to continue to improve.

**Q. Does that alleviate back-of-mind thinking? I mean, you're human.**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah. I mean, I think for me, what I'm trying to do is I'm trying to do my best, man. I would say my obligation is to the players. I want to see them have success on the field, off the field. Ultimately when you're in the middle of the season you're trying to put that puzzle

together every week for the players.

That's all parts. That's motivating, leadership, strategy, you know, that's kind of directing the organization as a whole. So, yeah, I think for me, other things motivate me. Not necessarily worried about that much.

**Q. Where did you learn to kind of block out distractions? You seem like kind of different than a lot of the people in that respect.**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah, I mean, I think it's -- ultimately for me it's about purpose. I view coaching in that regard relative to, yeah, just I think it's stewardship. It's an obligation to do the best for your people, staff included. I think you have to model what you would want from the players.

I think consistency is important. Look, if we're all over the place and we're not motivated by external things and we are distracted and lack self-discipline and we're not everyday people, then I think ultimately we have to rub off on the players and we have to model what we would want from the players.

Now, we've done a good job of that at times. We've been very inconsistent. So yeah, we're getting closer is what I would say. I see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Obviously disappointed with Saturday's to some degree. I do think our group is trending in the right direction. We're not there yet.

**Q. How much did you spend Sunday going over that Texas tape? Anything else you gleaned in terms of the slow start? You got down 42-nothing.**

BILLY NAPIER: No, I think we combed it like never before. Ultimately for me, yeah, turned the ball over three times. Didn't defend them very well. Matchups were not good.

You know, we got to focus on the things that we can control: Our fundamentals, our communication, our leverage, tackling, our protection, decision making at quarterback.

That's what we got to focus on. That's ultimately what caused the problems.

**Q. Tackling you pointed out wasn't very good. I think on seven of their touchdowns five were guys not touched.**

BILLY NAPIER: Correct.

**Q. Is that blowing assignments on the back end? I mean can you put your finger on...**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah, no, I think, yeah, all of those were a little bit of some communication errors, some missed assignments, and I think just in general, on the perimeter we didn't tackle well. We missed tackles at inside backer, missed tackles in the secondary. I thought we played with the wrong leverage on a few occasions.

So, yeah, just in general, just basic fundamentals, tackling, leveraging, coverage. Some of those guys out there, they're playing different positions, but it is what it is.

**Q. The way they move guys around how much was eye discipline a problem in that game?**

BILLY NAPIER: That was a huge piece of the puzzle is the adjustments dealing with the motions. I think ultimately some of the issues were relative to that.

**Q. How much (indiscernible) play a factor against this LSU offense?**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah, you're a couple weeks ahead. I'm glad you're not coaching our team. I'm joking with you.

No, I think, yeah, just in general, I think the lesson here is what does winning football look like? I think when we've had point of attack wins we've had good gap integrity, communicated well, played with the right leverage in the secondary, tackled well, in the core, on the perimeter.

I think that's when we have had success playing defense. When we haven't done that is when we've had issues. I think to your point, I don't necessarily think that LSU -- I think it's a different structure.

So look, the trend of offensive football is to copy what has worked against you. We do that each week. I think that's big component. What do they have conceptually that that's very similar? We are going to make sure we practice them.

**Q. Any thoughts on Garrett Nussmeier? Had a stint here and then his father. Every cross paths with him?**

BILLY NAPIER: First of all, his dad is an incredible football coach. One of the best coaches I've ever been around. Just a great human being. Great family. I can remember when Nuss was running around the Alabama facility.

So, yeah, great high school player. I can remember evaluating him coming out. Incredibly productive, Scrappy coach's son that has a great feel for the game.

Waited his turn, which is respectable in my opinion. Now, obviously leading their team and has done a good job of that.

**Q. When it comes to recruiting, to what extent do you think uncertainty plays a role? What impact will it have now that you have this vote of confidence?**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah, it's definitely been one of the uphill battles that we faced to be quite honest. Probably the only one to be honest with you. I think ultimately we're hopeful over the next month or so that -- really 65 days I think before the winter acquisition period is over, whether that's high school or portal.

About 60 days or so where we'll be working extremely hard to add good players to the team. Yeah, it definitely helps.

**Q. Saw Jadan Baugh a couple times in Wildcat setups. He has some experience doing that. How much can that be a factor as you figure things out at quarterback still?**

BILLY NAPIER: Well, Jadan obviously did it a lot in high school. I think it's one of the more impressive things about him is his ability to manage that. KD is that way as well. He did the same thing in high school.

Look, it's a wrinkle. It worked Saturday. You know, obviously each week is a little bit different depending on who is available for the game. We got some of that built. Built some systems for that. Always available.

Look, it's something that's another punch list item on the DC list that makes us harder to defend.

**Q. KD is not on the injury report anymore. What is his availability like? What do you consider him? I know there are redshirt implications there.**

BILLY NAPIER: Yeah, no, he was the third back Saturday. So, yeah, he's very much in the mix as we're kind of seeing where Montrell is at. That's a good thing, because KD had a good spring. He was very productive in the scrimmages. Had a good training camp. Be good for him to be back out there.

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