

# University of Florida Football Media Conference

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Gainesville, Florida, USA

## Chimere Dike

### Press Conference



#### Q. How do you feel about Senior Day?

CHIMERE DIKE: It's obviously bittersweet. I'm grateful to be able to have the experience of being a Florida Gator, come out with the guys that we've been working really hard with this season and through some adversity, but it's obviously a big game as well.

I'm excited, and I think I've played enough college football for everyone, so I'm ready for the next step. I'm definitely going to cherish this one Saturday.

#### Q. What lift did DJ provide?

CHIMERE DIKE: You saw it. Just the way that he carries himself, the moxie he plays with, the maturity for a young age. I think other people feed off of that. I think we played well around him, especially defensively.

They played a great game in my opinion. They were on the field I think 93 snaps and continued to battle, continued to fight and got the job done. He played a great game as well.

**Q. Is there something unique about just how unflappable he is? He'll make a throw maybe that was picked off or goes off a guy's hands, and it's like he is just making a great throw. Like the 34-yarder where he just dropped it in there. It looked kind of shaky at that point. (Indiscernible).**

CHIMERE DIKE: Honestly in my opinion I think that's partly God-given. You just have it or you don't, and he just has that "it" factor. I think he was raised the right way, and he understands the context of the game.

You're going to have good plays and bad plays. There's plays I could do better every single game. There's good plays that I make every single game as well. I think that goes for everyone. Being able to flush it and move on is very important, and he has that at a young age.

#### Q. What about the maturity in his preparation? He is

**probably limited, right, and to be able to have that kind of performance when he knew maybe wasn't 100%.**

CHIMERE DIKE: I think Coach Napier did a great job having a game plan and making it one that he was comfortable with and kind of fit what we needed to do obviously offensively, but also with his ability.

We were able to go out there and execute it. All of our coaches do a great job of making sure that we're prepared and understanding of our responsibility. It's just our job to go out and execute it.

**Q. How much energy are some of the younger players providing on offense, like DJ, Baugh, and Mizell? When you look at that, what does that say about the future of the program as well?**

CHIMERE DIKE: Yeah, I think it's amazing. Those guys obviously have been making a lot of really big plays for us. J. Baugh had the 55-yard touchdown. DJ has been playing great. Aidan has been adding really good things to the receiver room. I think for the future of the program that's huge.

When you have young players that get experience and win games like that, going into the future being able to learn from that and carry that forward is huge. One of my goals to end the season is to just help those guys take that next step the best I can and obviously win football games.

**Q. This could be 78 degrees today here. What's the temperature going to be up in Madison?**

CHIMERE DIKE: I'm not sure, but it's pretty cold. I think this my mom was saying it was getting in the low 40s a week or two ago. So it's probably getting to the high 30s.

It's definitely a little bit different. I'm not used to playing in November when the weather is still nice, but I'm definitely enjoying it. I can avoid another winter. This is my second winter in a row of avoiding, so I'm getting spoiled.

**Q. Will your family be here for Senior Day?**



CHIMERE DIKE: Yeah, they'll be here. My parents will both be here.

**Q. That's a whole different dynamic in this transfer portal. How do you think you will look at Florida in 10 or 20 years? Like in your college football career you played mostly Wisconsin, but then having a Senior Day here. What's it going to be like?**

CHIMERE DIKE: I'm a forever indebted to the University of Florida. Coach Napier gave me an opportunity to come here. Being able to play at a university like this with the history it does in this conference and for these fans, that's a blessing.

Even though it was only a year, this place has forever impacted my life. I'm proud to be a Gator. This is a place I'll cherish regardless.

Obviously I had a lot of really good times at Wisconsin and memories and people that I took away. So I've been blessed. I'm very thankful for all the games and people I've met throughout the way.

**Q. Do you see that Wisconsin fired its offensive coordinator?**

CHIMERE DIKE: I did see that, yes, sir.

**Q. Was there a close relationship with him?**

CHIMERE DIKE: No, I don't talk to him too much, but I'm wishing him all the best. Obviously all those guys over there too.

**Q. What did you think of Billy's Griddy?**

CHIMERE DIKE: I thought it could use some work, if I'm being honest. I loved it at the same time. It was exactly what we needed.

Our team has been through a lot of adversity and been knocking at the door in some of those big games. To be able to get over that hump, he's been a steady leader throughout. He hasn't wavered in the way that he has pushed us and to allow us to grow. That was one that felt good.

Even though it was a bad Griddy, it was a good Griddy too?

**Q. Do you enjoy seeing him with his hair down like that given everything?**

CHIMERE DIKE: Yeah, I think you always enjoy it. We

work extremely hard and do those things day in and day out to have that payout with guys that you care about and guys that you go to war with every weekend. It's a lot of fun.

**Q. He said you guys were asking for him to do that?**

CHIMERE DIKE: Yeah, we wanted the Griddy.

**Q. Did you think he was going to do it?**

CHIMERE DIKE: I did, yeah. Coach can be a fun guy, so...

**Q. He said it got a six out of ten. What would you have given it?**

CHIMERE DIKE: I think that's a fair grade. Could have used improvement, but if you look at the context, it was ten out of ten.

**Q. His ability to stay the course that you just touched upon, what's it mean to the players to be able to kind of validate what he's doing with a win like that beating a ranked team? It had been a while. The Swamp was really energized in a way that it hadn't been in a while too.**

CHIMERE DIKE: I think it just speaks of his leadership. A lot of people would waiver in that situation. He never did.

I think our team has grown from that. Because we saw him never waiver, we never did either. Obviously we have a lot of things we have to clean up and improve still, but I think that we're seeing the progress that we want.

This program is going in the direction that it wants to. I'm just proud that I can be a part of it, and I want to impact as much as I can.

**Q. As the game progressed, could you feel the electricity that you could feel even in the press box? Did you feel that down on the field too that it was growing in that stadium?**

CHIMERE DIKE: Yeah, The Swamp was rocking. It was rocking. I've played in I want to say like 55 college football games, and that one was one of the ones I'll remember the rest of my life.

**Q. Do you have a punt return TD in you?**

CHIMERE DIKE: I hope so. I muffed one in the fourth. Just not disciplined feet. I'm going to get that cleaned up and Coach Houston works so hard for us. His scheme

every single week is so detailed, and our guys bust our butts.

I'm just thankful to be a part of that unit, play for him. We're looking to get one of these the last couple of weeks. That's the goal.

**Q. Have you ever had one in college?**

CHIMERE DIKE: No, I should have had a kickoff return touchdown against -- in Arizona against Oklahoma State, but I got tripped up, so no, I've never had one. No punt return touchdown yet.

**Q. You have to get one here.**

CHIMERE DIKE: It would be awesome. The guys on the unit, Taylor Spierto, Derek Wingo, Baby J, the list goes on, but those guys bust their butt every week for me trying to get pressure, hold-ups. You watch the Tennessee game, the fourth quarter punt return, if you just watch DD on that play, it speaks volumes to the kind of teammate he is.

To get one with that group would be really fun, but as long as we're getting the win, that's all that matters.

**Q. I know you said you played enough college football games, but if this team were to secure bowl eligibility, what would be your motivation to want to participate in that game one last time?**

CHIMERE DIKE: I think my motivation is like what I said before. It's this program has given me so much. I want to make as big of an impact as I can on it.

Obviously we have stuff ahead of us that we have to get done first, but I haven't really thought about not playing in that game, so...

**Q. Are you an emotional celebrator? Are you a crier?**

CHIMERE DIKE: I'm not a big crier. I will cry if I get really, really emotional, but yeah, I was more just elated, so...

**Q. Will your folks be eyes bawling?**

CHIMERE DIKE: My mom might a little bit, but I don't know. It's hard to say. I think that I won't cry before the game. Maybe after the game, but my mom will probably cry before the game.

**Q. What are your thoughts about Graham being out there, and what kind of ovation would you want to see him receive given everything that's gone through?**

CHIMERE DIKE: I think he deserves the biggest one (laughing). He's given everything he has to this program. The leadership he's shown to DJ and the rest of our team this year has been really impactful.

I think he played really good football when he was given the opportunity at the University of Florida.

**Q. How involved is he still with DJ as you all are preparing for games now?**

CHIMERE DIKE: Yeah, Graham is in every single meeting, which shows to his character. He doesn't have to do that. He could have just gone to rehab and kind of checked out, but he wants to be involved. He wants to impact it, and he is.

I think DJ benefits from it just having a veteran player. Obviously your coaches have a lot of knowledge, but a guy that's been in your shoes really recently. I think that him and Graham have a really good relationship and connection that they both have really benefit from.

**Q. Billy said he is really looking for some maturity out of this team this week. What's that kind of mean in your eyes?**

CHIMERE DIKE: I think it's the understanding that we have to continue to work and continue to get better. I think that we fought through adversity, negative adversity, really well this season. I think that when positive things happen, they can be distractions as well.

I think that the way that we've handled our past situation speaks to the kind of way that we like to approach it, and that's to go back to work.

Ole Miss obviously is a really good opponent and being able to prepare for them and put in the work every single day so we can go out on Saturday and we're with prepared. I think that's what he means.

**Q. You've already talked about what Graham means to this team with his leadership and what he's done for everyone, but just considering everything that you two have been through together, what's it going to mean to go out with him one last time on Senior Day?**

CHIMERE DIKE: It will be special. That guy has impacted my life as much as anybody besides my parents. My relationship with him is obviously really good off the field. Obviously on the field we've been able to grow together and learn a lot.

So I'm very thankful. It will be definitely really special to go

out with him and the rest of the guys with him. I'm thankful to be able to play with all these guys on this team.

**Q. You had a hamstring injury in the spring, right? Were you surprised given that you have been through similar circumstances that DJ was able to be out there less than two weeks after he got injured?**

CHIMERE DIKE: I wouldn't say necessarily surprised, but it's definitely a testament to how much hard work he put in in the training room and how much our training staff invested in him to be able to be back out there. It was huge for our football team. No, not necessarily.

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