

University of Florida Football Media Conference

Tuesday, July 29, 2025
Gainesville, Florida, USA

Ron Roberts

Press Conference



Q. What clicked down the stretch last year and how do you kind of continue that build on that, because November when you look at the sheer numbers, sacks, takeaways, et cetera, were significantly improved.

RON ROBERTS: Yeah. There's several things involved in that. One was probably I think anytime there's some changeover, there's staff getting on the same page. It's even, hey, guys' familiarity with the system, how we want things done, all of that. There's part of that, and then there was a thing, I think -- there was some things we changed practice wise to increase. But I think the big thing that came in which I thought -- there was a little confidence and a belief kind of maybe issue. You know what I mean? I think there was a multitude of things that really contributed to that, to the turnaround.

Q. What's the key to kind of build on that? You lost some keys obviously, obviously Cam, Shemar and some guys, but how do you build on that?

RON ROBERTS: We've been building on that since then. It doesn't ever stop. You go right there, you go into spring and you go into identity period in the weight room, off-season training, goes to spring ball and all that stuff. I think our guys have done a tremendous job with that as far as setting the standard of the work ethic, what's acceptable on a day-to-day basis, how you're supposed to go about your business, how do you handle every situation, and I think our guys have done a tremendous job of that in the off season, of preparing themselves to get ready.

I think our summer was outstanding. I really do. I'm real excited about this season, just like where we are as a standpoint right now as a football team, as a defense, as a staff continuity, all those things. I'm real excited about the season, looking forward to getting in fall camp.

Q. What kinds of strides have you seen from Jamari Lyons as he's been coming back from his injury last year, just throughout the off season program?

RON ROBERTS: Yeah. Pretty exciting to see. He says

he feels great, says he feels fine. We'll probably have to somewhere in there in fall camp because he's still rehabbing that thing. He says he feels great, and he looks outstanding. He's a heck of a player, and he was really coming along. He had a great fall camp, got to the injury. But he's a really good player and he'll be an impact football player.

Q. Losing Cam obviously at the nose guard, that leaves a little bit of a void. What are you looking for in that position and who are some of the guys you're looking at?

RON ROBERTS: There's several. Jamari, Michai Boireau, we got a freshman coming in there that takes a spot, Mbatchou. We have plenty of guys. We got about -- like our inside players we got about seven that can play. So it's going to come down to competition, healthy and who can do that and who becomes the impact players and who's going to turn it up a notch. But we got about seven competing and fighting for jobs. Our depth is a lot deeper. We lost some impact guys that had some experience and played and stuff, but our depth is -- we're a lot deeper in our depth chart, especially up front.

Q. You were at Baylor before Bett, but had you heard about him?

RON ROBERTS: Yeah, I recruited him.

Q. What in particular kind of stood out in terms of attracting him as a late transfer?

RON ROBERTS: Yeah. Again, he's a great attitude, work ethic, how he handles his business, wants to be successful in everything he does, tremendous work ethic on the field, all those intangible things that we're trying to look for, he had them coming in. So excited about he's had a really good summer. So, again, he's going to be an impact player, really expect him to have a high role come this fall.

Q. What have you seen out of Myles Graham and Aaron Chiles since last year. Just how confident are you that they're going to be able to step in that big position this year?

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RON ROBERTS: Obviously last year they're freshmen and they're afraid to talk and do all those things. So, no, they're leap years ahead of where they were. It's just a comfort level. And that's when you start seeing players turn it loose and make plays, and they really get to show their athletic ability. It's hard on defensive guys if they're questioning what they're doing, how they're getting lined up, you know what I mean? And that's it.

If you're doing that with multiple guys, it shows up on the field how you play. You play hesitant, you play slow, you don't pull the pin, and you miss some plays that are out there. But those two had an outstanding off season, outstanding summer.

Q. From a leadership standpoint, who are your go-to guys on your defensive unit?

RON ROBERTS: Well, the thing probably the best thing and you're trying to work for this situation is that we have multiple. I say go-to guys. Obviously if something was whatever issue or something I needed, Sapp would be probably the first one I'm going to. You know what I mean? I think the back room obviously in Jaden Robinson is deep. I think anything in the back end we got guys, whether it be Bryce or Jordan or Sharif.

At corner position we got Devin Moore; DD. Those guys, we got a bunch of leaders, which is exciting to see. And that's what you want. You don't want it to come down to two or three. You want more than that that are taking the reins and being able to lead your program anytime.

Q. A bunch of critics talk about Florida this year, yeah, but what about their linebackers. They don't know the depth of the young talent in that group, and I think obviously you do. And we're going to see it. We're seeing it now. How strong do you feel with those guys?

RON ROBERTS: Our linebacker room is about as deep as anybody in the country. I think we're sitting on, whatever, three, four guys that are NFL guys. You know what I mean? They're all going to have an opportunity. Where does that go? Depending how their career goes, but how well they produce and how well they perform and how well they stay healthy, whether they go in the second round or fourth, but those are all guys that are going to be high draft picks that are going to play extremely well. So we're extremely deep.

And then we got two freshmen came in that are exciting. They're going to have to fight their way to get in the lineup because what we have are pretty deep, but they're both

extremely athletic, can run and make plays. So we just gotta get them comfortable, and as we go through the season, put them in situations they can handle and have success.

Q. A lot of questions about the depth at nose, but last year there were times where you guys lined up T.J. Searcy at nose or right on the center. How creative can you get in different packages and stuff and playing some of your edge guys inside?

RON ROBERTS: It only goes to third down. There's no mystery there. Anybody that's ever watched us play. When it goes to third down, it's going to be packaged up with guys that can run, athletic and go rush the quarterback, contain him or keep him in the pocket. That's always going to be the package on third down.

We've kind of added some personnel groupings because I think we have seven guys inside and we gotta be able to get, hey, can we get -- gotta get them some other reps somewhere else. So can we get them outside, do those things. I would definitely not say we have a depth issue at nose guard.

Q. Referred to you as The Godfather.

RON ROBERTS: That's just because I'm gray, right?

Q. Mentor role. You have some young guys coming in, relative, 30-something guys. They have experience, obviously, and track records. But what do you see in them mentor role? What do you kind of try to do in that role? Looking at your track record, you were at some pretty obscure outposts early in your career. And did you have some -- who were your mentors? You following where I'm coming from, like trying to be a mentor and who kind of mentored you maybe to show you the way?

RON ROBERTS: It's just like, hey, how can you help, you know what I mean? That's the one thing I always try to say is the only advantage we have with being older is we've made mistakes and we hopefully have learned from them. I can tell you that before you do it.

That's the big advantage of having experience or having gray hair. You know what I mean? I've already screwed that up. Let me tell you, don't do that. Whether you're talking about players or coaches. That's all you want to do is help people move along the best they can and hopefully try to share and help people grow. Comes everybody's stage in their life, what's it about, it's really about how can I help somebody else get where they want to go.

Q. Who was that for you?

RON ROBERTS: It was several. No names, like Ken Elston, Bill Williams are the two biggest ones. Yeah.

Q. Building off of that, you do have three new position coaches on the defensive side. I know we asked you about it in spring. How are you seeing those guys continue to mesh with everyone? I know they have familiarity with the system, but maybe not as much familiarity with the University of Florida.

RON ROBERTS: Yeah. Obviously Deron was here before, Wilson. I think the thing that's helped more than anything probably is my familiarity with those guys when they came in. Had a relationship with Deron probably ten years, Bala probably five or six. He worked for two guys that had worked for me before. So I think there's a familiarity on that part. Not only system wise, but -- it helps tremendously with staff morale.

I'm enjoying myself right now in practice. I'm enjoying myself in the meeting room probably as much as I have in a while. I think that goes a long way, and I think it comes over to the players, too.

Q. How much does having experience on the defensive line and even like the physical maturity impact how you guys played in the SEC and how did you see that maybe even turn in the second half of last season in terms of guys getting older and more experienced?

RON ROBERTS: It starts up front because if you can't stop the run, you can't do those things. Part of that credit last year obviously went to Gerald Chatman, what he did as far as development of those guys, learning how to play blocks and strikes and doing the things we wanted to do and allowed us at times in the back half of the season to play light box and help us in the back end coverage wise and kind of put it on the big guys up front and do those things.

That's nice to be able to do that. We would like to be more aggressive and those type of things, but again, I think every year you gotta call it to where -- at the end of the day it's how are we winning. How are we going to win. Whether I gotta go after them every snap or we gotta high pressure, or is it, hey, we gotta play -- we can't afford to give up a big play, let's go, we gotta stop it. Let's go put it on them, put it on the guys up front and make them run the football.

Q. Miles was talking about LJ McCray and how much he has improved his numbers in the weight room and

things. What are you seeing from him and his ability to make that kind of year two jump when we know he's so highly touted? And what are kind of his skill set and thing you hope he brings?

RON ROBERTS: He's got a tremendous skill set. Very talented. Yeah, you can see the growth, potential what he did. He changed his body and all that stuff.

What I see on the field, I'm hoping, again, I think it's sometimes to this point you can jump ahead, and not trying to put pressure on a player. And you want to see them do it in the season and do that. But I would suspect and I'm hoping he has a break-out season and he's an impact player that we all think he can be. I think he can do that. I think he can do that.

Q. What we saw at the end of last season with Tyreek Sapp what you expect to see all season this year?

RON ROBERTS: Yeah. I mean he's an experienced vet. He's got a lot of experience on his papers. Again, one of the things, he's just such a high motor guy. His motor never stops. He's going to go full throttle no matter what you do. I don't care if it's Tuesday or Saturday, he's going. And really the biggest impact -- he's a great player. The biggest impact he can do is what he does by demanding it from other people in the room and making sure his voice is heard and they all need to match that and play at that level.

Q. Where has he made a jump from last year to this year? Is it in that regards?

RON ROBERTS: Probably in that. Being a little bit more outspoken, a little more vocal, yeah.

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