

University of Florida Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 29, 2025

Gainesville, Florida, USA

Jake Slaughter

Press Conference



Florida 40, Florida State 21

Q. What did it mean to be able to end a tough season on a high note like that against your rival?

JAKE SLAUGHTER: It meant everything to us. Our message all week was nothing else matters. As soon as we got here, we got back from Thanksgiving, 24 hours, this is everything that matters right now. Nothing else.

I think everybody did a great job. Our defense played their heart out. Jadan ran like somebody was trying to kill him all night. I think we played pretty well all around.

Q. Does this give you something to reflect on this season, to end like this against Florida State...

JAKE SLAUGHTER: No, absolutely it did. Big smile on my face.

Q. Jake, when you look back at the beginning of the season, the last month and a half, everything that Coach Gonzales was able to accomplish, what does it mean to you?

JAKE SLAUGHTER: It means the world to us. I think every player in the building has nothing but love and deep respect for Coach G. I've had the privilege of knowing him a long time. I got to play with his boy in high school. It's something that we were super excited for.

I never got to dump Gatorade on a coach, but we got him good.

Q. I figured you knew coming into the game he was on the cusp of a thousand yards. What did you realize he was hitting these big marks, if you knew during the game?

JAKE SLAUGHTER: Oh, it was like he got jumped on the sideline (laughter).

We knew going into the game he was right around a

hundred yards off or so. He had a tremendous first half. A great second half, too. It was like he was getting jumped on the sideline, everyone was so excited for him.

Q. When did you learn specifically it's the second all time in a game?

JAKE SLAUGHTER: Coach G let us know after the game. I had no idea.

Q. You mentioned the Gatorade bath. How did that go down? Who all doused him?

JAKE SLAUGHTER: Austin Barber organized it. I'd like to point that out. Old 58, he made sure. We had a lot of fun. I think anytime as an offensive lineman you run the ball like we did tonight, you take pride in games like this. It's a lot of fun. Great way to go out.

Q. Who dumped him officially?

JAKE SLAUGHTER: Austin and I, we tag-teamed it.

Q. What does it mean for this to be your final memory to go out like this?

JAKE SLAUGHTER: It means the world to me. This is all I ever wanted being a little kid, growing up in north central Florida. This is what I wanted forever.

Q. You're going to be moving on. What do you think the new coach will be inheriting?

JAKE SLAUGHTER: These guys won't have any quit in them. This entire group, no quit. I wish everybody could see the tape on a Tuesday afternoon team run, it's warfare in there. We're 3-8, who cares, we're going to go to war, and we're getting better right now.

I think that's important for people to know. There's no quit in this crew. Guys love each other and take care of each other.

Q. Jadan shouldered the load. What did you see in DJ's performance tonight?

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JAKE SLAUGHTER: I thought he was super efficient, got the ball out on time. Everything is connected, right? We spotted on the first drive, it was offensive line, it was quarterback, it was everybody. You know what I mean?

As soon as you start going 11 for 11, firing on all cylinders, that's when good offensive football happens. DJ did a great job all night.

Q. Did you sense early on that you guys could play with that kind of physicality throughout the game?

JAKE SLAUGHTER: Yeah, absolutely. It was good to know. You go in there and you're running the ball well, that's exactly what you want to feel.

Q. What can you say about the future of this offensive line, some of the guys that will be stepping up?

JAKE SLAUGHTER: I'm so excited for next year. Jason Zandamela is an absolute animal. I'm so excited for him to play. He's gotten better and better.

Guys like Rod are going to step up. Caden Jones, Bryce Lovett are going to continue to get better. They really improved. I'm trying to think about who else. There's so many young guys who made these big strides. I'm so excited for them.

Q. Who do you think fill Austin's shoes?

JAKE SLAUGHTER: That's hard to say. Caden Jones looked good. He took some reps at left the last few weeks. Could be him.

Q. You talk about Austin Barber quite a bit this year. What kind of impact has he had?

JAKE SLAUGHTER: I love that guy like a brother. He's a guy that we can bounce stuff off of each other. It's funny. We were arguing like old ladies Thursday practice because we had a difference of opinion on a concept and call. That's something you get only with a guy you have that type of relationship with. I'm so thankful I had Austin these last five years.

Q. Billy just showed us a folder that had what he wanted to say to you guys afterwards. Can you give us an idea of what he talked about? Moving forward for this program, what do you want to see?

JAKE SLAUGHTER: I think it's important to note the first thing that he talked about was what we discussed in chapel this morning, that was having a foundation in Christ, having

a strong foundation to build off of. I think that's so important for all ball players, young men in general. That's the type of guy Coach G is.

He talked about our plans going forward, detailed calendar for everybody. He was just so proud. He let us know little stat by stat, let us know about the rushing record, Jadan. It was just a special moment for me.

Thank y'all.

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