

University of Florida Football Media Conference

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Vernell Brown III

Press Conference



Florida 52, Campbell 3

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. (Stream started mid-sentence). You got three scores tonight. Are you ecstatic about that? Are you going to give it to Sumrall?

VERNELL BROWN III: No, man, it's just a blessing to take advantage of those opportunities. Obviously, I hadn't scored in a year. To come in a new year, reset, refocus, do you. I'm going out there, doing me. The opportunities are presenting themselves.

Q. What did you see on the first punt return? They almost had you a couple times.

VERNELL BROWN III: I almost don't count. I almost don't count, man (smiling).

Q. How did that play unfold?

VERNELL BROWN III: Yeah, as a ball carrier, I think a lot of stuff is just natural. I don't really think about making moves or I'm about to make this move. It's more reactive than anything.

I mean, obviously I scored the touchdown, but just credit to my blockers, man. That was amazing. Especially Bailey Stockton at the end holding up the punter. Getting a two for one. That's amazing. I'm grateful for those guys and appreciate them blocking for me.

Q. From where we sit, a punt return is as exciting as any play there is. From your perspective, what it does for the team, what is your take on it?

VERNELL BROWN III: I mean, yeah, it's just good, kind of get the crowd going, give us some momentum. Obviously put the ball back in defense hands, then go get another stop for us.

Q. How much of it is instinctive that you're seeing the

field and you're just anticipating openings out there?

VERNELL BROWN III: Yeah, like I say, I credit a lot to instincts, just having that feel for the game. I mean, I've been playing the game since I was five. Obviously the stadiums and the level has changed, but the game doesn't change. It's the same stuff I've been doing since I was five.

Q. Running to open space?

VERNELL BROWN III: Right, absolutely. Just let's get a touchdown, go score, find a way to score.

Q. Have you had two punt return touchdowns in a game before?

VERNELL BROWN III: Probably not. Yeah, probably not. Not that I can remember anyway.

Q. Dallas said after the first one he told you, You might be able to get another one. Do you remember that conversation? Was that a goal?

VERNELL BROWN III: Yeah, no, the whole sideline, man. Obviously Dallas said it. Go for another one. Third down, let's do it, go again. It happens.

Q. Can you walk us through the second one. What did you see? Did you get touched on that play?

VERNELL BROWN III: Good question. Good question. No, just reading the blocks, seeing the field, trusting my guys. I knew where the wall was going to be at. Just following the plan and executing.

Q. Did you think you were going to get a third return?

VERNELL BROWN III: I mean, I'm going for it. Anytime I get the ball in my hands, I think go score. If I get tackled, I get tackled.

Q. You finish with 119 punt return yards, second most in SEC history.



VERNELL BROWN III: Wow.

Q. What does that mean to you?

VERNELL BROWN III: It's a blessing. The opportunity, just taking advantage of opportunities and credit it to the work and my blocking.

Q. The logo on your shirt there is being defined as being in the zone. Did you feel you were in a zone tonight, that anytime you touched the ball, you knew you could score?

VERNELL BROWN III: Yeah, I mean, absolutely. I feel like that every time I touch the ball, right? Just having that confidence. I put in the work. I've been playing the game since I was five. Like I said, the game doesn't change. I know what I'm capable of doing. I know anytime I get the ball, I feel like I can score.

Q. Thoughts on Aaron's second game behind center, what you saw from him?

VERNELL BROWN III: Really great player, man. He's commanding the offense. He's doing his job. I appreciate him for giving me and the other guys opportunities, putting it in our hands.

I mean, all that we can ask for is the opportunities. Ask him to keep doing that, keep having the trust in us, we'll keep taking advantage of it.

Q. I assume you returned punts in high school.

VERNELL BROWN III: Yeah, yeah.

Q. To have the chance to get one in college, especially after last year, what kind of confidence does this give you?

VERNELL BROWN III: Yeah, I mean, like I said, the game doesn't change. The levels change. The person across from you may change. I mean, I think my approach is so inward focused that it doesn't matter who's in front of me, who I'm playing.

As far as punt return, I appreciate the coaches trusting me to not only return the ball but make good decisions in terms of fair catches, actually returning it. I appreciate that trust. Yeah, I mean, I'm confident.

Q. Back to Aaron. Came in as pretty much of an unknown over the entire country. Came into the locker room as an unknown. How much have you seen the confidence grow in him?

VERNELL BROWN III: Yeah, no, I mean, obviously going into a new situation for him, I mean, a lot of the world was unfamiliar with who he was. But watching film on him as he coming in, I was no stranger to the kind of player he was.

Just him coming and getting to know everybody, embracing the team, being that leader that you look for in a quarterback, it's amazing. I love that guy, man.

Q. You know your Gator history. Did you know another player had done that before in a game?

VERNELL BROWN III: We was talking about it. I was like I honestly thought it would be Brandon James. Do you know anybody else? No, I didn't know that.

Q. It was Jacquez Green. Like him, you guys both did it on back-to-back returns. How hard is that to do? You've already threatened the special teams unit once.

VERNELL BROWN III: I think it's as hard as you make it. At the end of the day they punt the ball, you either going to catch and return it or you're going to fair catch it. If you return it, you go for the end zone.

Q. On the hat trick, have you ever had three touchdowns in game before?

VERNELL BROWN III: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q. How did it feel to get in the end zone on offense?

VERNELL BROWN III: Yeah man, it's just amazing. Like I say, the coaches give me opportunities. Me taking advantage of them. Appreciate that trust. I'm excited.

Q. Do you remember Kadarius Toney?

VERNELL BROWN III: Of course.

Q. You're the first to score three since him, first punt return since him. What do you remember about him as a player?

VERNELL BROWN III: Electric. He was my favorite player when he was here. He was here around the time when my dad was working here. I got a pretty great look at him. He's one of the players whose highlights I still watch to this day. Great player, great company to be in.

Q. The 219 returning yards is the most in Florida Gators' history. Talk about what it means to be in the record books, how cool that feels.



VERNELL BROWN III: Yeah, I mean, you putting in the work to make plays. To be able to be in the record book and have something to look back on, hopefully one of the many things to look back on and say, Yeah, I did that.

Have your name cemented in the record books, amazing in the legacy to have my father, grandfather, other family members come before me and obviously do their job. Me to continue the legacy while setting a new standard hopefully for the ones that come behind me is a blessing.

Q. How was that high five celebration with Bailey?

VERNELL BROWN III: That chemistry, man. Bailey is my guy, man. Obviously seeing him. I was in flow state, he was in flow state. That chemistry was there. It was great.

Q. Did he say anything to you?

VERNELL BROWN III: We was both jumping around excited. I mean, nothing that I can remember.

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