

Florida State University Football Media Conference

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Mike Norvelle

Press Conference



MIKE NORVELL: First off, exciting day. Every year you get to signing day, it is a celebration for the young men that have made the choice to come and join our program, join our family. You've got an incredible group. Thought we were able to address a lot of needs.

Have some really good balance in what we were able to do positionally, and really taking where our team is right now and really building it to be the best it could possibly be with the season -- this next season as well as for years to come with the talent that we've been able to bring in and the quality of the young men.

I want to start off just thanking everybody here at Florida State that's been involved in this process, and it takes so many to be able to present and showcase the vision and the opportunity for the student athletes.

You know, our staff, our recruiting department, they work tirelessly to make sure that we're building the relationships, making those connections, being able to answer -- answer questions and to be able to connect with these young men in just a variety of different ways to show them the path of what the experience here, part of the 'Nole family is going to be all about. Get to our strength, conditioning, athletic training, academics, compliance, everybody involved. I mean, it takes a complete team effort, and so just grateful for all those individuals and the work that they put in.

To the young then that are joining the program, I mean, this is a special group. Very talented individuals. Elite-level game changers for our program. But the best quality about these 22 young men we get to announce right now are the hearts, the minds, the passion, the work ethic, the relationships.

It's a special group when it comes to that coupled with the great ability and potential that they have and the impact they are going to make on the field.

I do believe this is a group that is definitely a special, is special in regards to their play-making ability. You're going to see a lot of versatility among positions of what guys can

do; the variety of things that they can bring to our program and we were able to hit on a lot of our top choices.

You go through a year and a half, I think it was five positions that we were able to get the No. 1 guy that we saw -- and we felt that was the best fit for us, you know, here at Florida State, and it had a lot of hard battles that we had to work, but you know, it all paid off here today and excited about the group that's coming in.

Q. Being able to bring in not only play-makers but experienced play-makers, particularly at tight end, how exciting is that?

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, when you look at the versatility, the explosiveness, the experience that Kyle and Jaheim bring to our program, I mean, it was huge. We've got two guys that will be leaving the program at that position, and you know, when you look at both Kyle and Jaheim, they are so different in their skill set but both play-makers in what they do.

They came in on an official visit together and it was exciting to see just the dynamic of who those guys are and all the similarities, but then when you see them on the field, I mean, both can be absolute impact game-changing type players for us.

So to be able to have fun with those different personnel packages and when you look at Jaheim, I think he's one of the most explosive players in college football and with what we do and how we can move him around in different positions that he can play, it's going to be fun.

Kyle gives you that 6-7, 250-pound tight end. He can stretch the field. He wins the one-on-one matchups. You know, it's a guy that we targeted when he went into the portal. You watch his film.

But the first conversation is what sold me on him -- because you could watch the film. First conversation, after he got in the portal, talked to him that night and I asked him, "What are you looking for?"

"Coach, I'm looking for a culture where I can come in, be



around a great group of guys where I can make an impact, and help change the team or help take the team to the next level by what I can bring into that locker room."

From that moment -- because a lot of guys that are transferring, there's a real I-focused perspective, and for him, and all the guys that we are bringing in, there is a lot of excitement and joy for the team that we're going to be able to put together. We have got great plays. You see the play-makers that we have on our team currently and adding these guys to that, but e-mail excited about the teammates and what they are going to bring to the locker room, yes, the experience but also just the dynamic in each of those rooms of how that's going to help push us because we have some great young tight ends, too.

And that was one of the things, both Kyle and Jaheim, they came out to practice and saw the talent and ability of had some of the young guys, and we get to have all of that competition and really for these guys to be able to come in with the experience they have, I think that's going to make a big difference in helping those young guys continue to come along.

Q. Can you speak on the recruitment of Brock Glenn, navigating him committing elsewhere and then getting him at the end, and why you want him at the quarterback position?

MIKE NORVELL: I think he's the total package, unbelievable talent. I've known of him and known him for a long time.

It was a hard choice for Brock in December. He had a lot of people that were coming after him. He took multiple official visits. You know, I was very confident in the relationship that was built, but just like a lot of -- a lot of new kids that go through the process, they want to see some of the things that you've talked about, and some of the things that you've presented. And you know, just to be able to see themselves in that situation, and the schools that he committed to has had a lot of success at his position, and just overall as a team.

But I always -- I always believe that if we would just stay consistent, continue to build a relationship, respect him for the decision that he made early but also as things went along that I thought we could have a great chance to get into the position that we were in and you know just midway through the season I started to see that excitement, that joy.

He fits us, and I mean, he's just a great player. Excited about what he brings, and you know, it was huge for us to get him to be the quarterback of this class.

Q. Kind of the opposite, Hykeem Williams commits to you guys the beginning of the season and until the bitter end was fielding interest from other schools trying to flip him, you guys were able to hold on. What skill set is he going to bring to the table, and what does it say that he stayed true to his commitment here?

MIKE NORVELL: He's such a unique young man and player. His size, speed, combination for somebody that's a senior in high school, it's ridiculous, and he is remarkable with the potential that he has and the things that he's done, I think that he's just, you know, unlimited potential to what he can accomplish.

But when you get to know the young man and you get to know the spirit, the joy, the relationships, I mean, that's what puts him into a whole other hemisphere. He is just such a quality, quality person. You know, we talk all the time about fit: And the biggest, strongest, fastest, best fit for Florida State, Hykeem Williams. Wow. It was pretty special.

And even today, you get to watch his signing ceremony and he goes back to his middle school because of the impact that those relationships and all those people, not many 18-year-olds think in that grand of a thought process but he is -- he cares about people and he's just so excited about being a Seminole, and I'm really looking forward to coaching that one.

Q. You've got a really solid group of offensive linemen, some in high school and some in the transfer portal. What was the message to them, first off when you were recruiting them, either transfer, high school, and secondly, the guy I like a lot, Quindarius Jones, talk about him a little bit and just what you like so much about him.

MIKE NORVELL: Start with the offensive line. That's been one of the biggest transformations within our program in that group and we've put a lot of focus on that. Obviously Alex has done a great job leading and coaching and developing the offensive line, but we have some guys that are exhausting eligibility. We have had a couple guys that just are looking for other opportunities to be able to get on the field and our talent base has risen to a high level.

And these guys that are coming in, you look at Lucas Simmons, that was our top -- that was our No. 1. To see the prototype offensive tackle, size, speed, or quickness, twitch, length, I mean, all of it.

But once again, much like Hykeem, not a better -- you're

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

not going to find a better young man, and to be able to get him to commit this summer, he's held through and true throughout the process, you know, so excited about what his future is going to be here.

Today we added Andre 'Otto, who I think is -- I think he's a special talent. To see a young man with his size, he's still just so much that is in front of him, he's got a world of potential. I love all that he can bring. I think his position, flexibility, is going to be elite, the things he can do. He's so smart. It's going to be a fun young man to watch come into the program and as he continues to grow and develop and then obviously being able to add -- I want to make sure I'm right on who I can talk about.

But to be able to add Casey, golly, what an experienced, experienced player. Captain there as his previous institution. He's played so much ball. He plays the game the way it's supposed to be played. And his versatility of what he can do, just along the offensive front, I truly believe is special.

Then, you know, obviously Jeremiah, the other day, actually we had two -- I can talk about both of them -- Jeremiah was -- that's a special get. He is a young man with a wonderful spirit. Came out on official visit, loved it, sees the vision, sees the plan. Kind of excited about the challenge, and you know, the opportunity that's here. But really, really think that's going to be a fun one to watch here as we continue to build.

And then obviously Keiondre, that happened there yesterday. You talk about size, power, strength. I mean, when you look at these guys that have come in, they all have their own unique role in what they bring, which coupled with the guys that we have here and the opportunity for that growth, I mean, that's a position that's going to be a strength for us, and it needs to be.

I've got to give a shout-out to those offensive linemen we have on our roster, we have got real guys, and the way that they individually even just would reach out to guys that we were going after. And I'm in a home visit and I said -- the kids are telling me about our players, and the impact that they are having. Like just explaining what the opportunity is, what the development is, what the culture in that room is, and that's special to me. Excited about that.

You talked about Q. He can do it all. I mean, he's -- we're going to start him off, I think he's got a great opportunity. He can play outside. I think he can play corner. I think he's got the ability. He came to camp and he's got that length, he's got that ability, he's played both sides of the ball. He's rolling some things -- because he's had to do so much, but he can be there -- I think he can play probably

five or six different positions in a defense. He's got great length.

Great closing and play-making ability. He's going to be one that we're going to give him a start at a position, but that could go a lot of different ways and just a wonderful young man to add to the program.

Q. So much has changed in signing days over the last several years. Now there's two signing days and you've got the transfers. When you put out a list of all the guys you've signed, do you see them as one group?

MIKE NORVELL: Absolutely. It's about putting together a team. We're building a team. And you know, I think people get caught up -- well, it's just -- just acquire talent. Biggest, strongest, fastest, best fit for Florida State. That's what we have to do.

Because when that comes together with the most talented young men that we get, right, you see the results. I mean, we are the only team in the country, yards per play, offense and defense in the Top-10, the only one. That means that we are getting guys that come in here that fit what we're doing on both sides of the ball, and they are able to showcase all that they can do.

Now, I don't know coming in or going out where, what -- how they were perceived but I knew what we -- I knew what we were getting because it was also guys that their work ethic, right, who they are, their relationships, they compete with each other, and that's where you look at this class, I mean, whether it's a transfer or whether it's a high school signee, they are Seminoles. They are coming in to be a part of this team, and they all serve us a certain place.

Last year, we took a lot of transfer receivers. This year, we're not taking one barring something crazy happening. Like we don't need to. Like we have 18 -- but we signed -- high school, be ready to watch them. When you sit there and you look at Hykeem, you look at Dre, you look at Goldie, the potential that those guys have, those are impact players.

So I'm excited about how we have been able to get the roster -- it is putting together a team. You kind of touched on that with the tight ends earlier. You try to find how you can continue to build this for it to be the best team here moving forward for this next season and for the years to come.

Q. The linebacker duo, Blake and DeMarco, how excited are you add them to Omar as a young group?

MIKE NORVELL: It's just a great duo. I mean, for Blake, that was one of those guys you talk about. There was nobody -- nobody that we had that we thought was a better fit for us than him. I just absolutely love what he's bringing to this program. His size, speed, athleticism, versatility. I mean, he's remarkable, and his senior year and the things he's done in his high school career is special.

He is, you know, just a remarkable young -- I think he'll be one that comes in and has a chance to make an impact early. He's a guy that really fits all those skill sets. He's got some -- really just focus in on a couple positions, and I think you're going to see some great strides that he takes.

DeMarco, who is actually here on campus and going through the process of being ready for Bowl prep, I mean, you see a football player, he's 6-2, 215 pounds, can run. He has a knack for playing this game, and I love the mentality which he brings. He's no-nonsense.

He's going to come to work and everybody you talk to about him, whether playing -- the coaches he played for, the teachers that he had, the teams that he played against, just a great deal of respect, and he was the right fit for us and just excited about his future here as well.

Q. When you talk about building a complete roster, I guess what kind of balancing act are you facing as a coach, you have early signing period to try to fill things out but you still have current players who are maybe deciding whether to go pro or not or deciding what their options are. How are you always trying to balance that out?

MIKE NORVELL: It's one heck of a spreadsheet. There's a lot, a lot of moving pieces and whether it's guys coming in, guys going out, whether it's exhausting eligibility, whether it's, you know, guys that have gone in looking for new opportunities, guys going to the NFL, whatever that role is, you know, it also opens the door for other guys to come in to be able to keep a balance within your roster so that you have a chance to go out there and be the best that we can be.

I think we have done a really good job at that. I think there will be some positions we continue to evaluate to see if we can find the right fit to come in but ultimately, I think we hit -- we hit on the areas that we needed to, like the non-negotiables, that's what we were able to accomplish already at this point. There were still a couple more things that could happen that could be a lot of fun.

Q. We talked about the offensive line the first time earlier but your defensive line, Odell obviously does a

great job developing and putting guys out there but you have some really talented guys. I think Keith Sampson jumps out to me, and Darrell you're adding from the transfer portal. Talk about replenishing that defensive line.

MIKE NORVELL: Well, you sit there and you look at that group, and K.J., Defensive Player of the Year there in North Carolina, and just was such a great, great young man. His explosiveness, his versatility, play-making ability, is remarkable. Definitely excited about having him.

You look at being able to get a couple transfers there up front. Jaden Jones, yeah, he's one that probably not a whole lot of people are talking about right now but is elite in measurables, athleticism. Unfortunately he had an injury this year that limited his opportunities on the field, but I believe in that young man and I'm excited to see him. He's doing a great job for his rehab, and we are excited to get him here in January for what he's going to bring to the program.

But I think that can be a guy that not a whole lot of people are pinpointing him, but might be one that jumps out and becomes just a really, really special player here as he continues to go.

You talk about Darrell Jackson, playing against him, young man that's coming back home. It's one of those things that, you know, unfortunately things happen in life where you have challenges and circumstances. Darrell being able to come home and support family, and to be here and play for Florida State, it's exciting.

Had to compete against him last year, so I know the challenge that he can provide opposing offenses, but also you see the opportunity for growth and development. And that's something that he's excited about, you know, being -- being back home but also being a part of this program and helping us take the next step.

Then LaMont "Boots" Green, just a legacy, legacy kid. I told him through the process, I love his dad, and LaMont is remarkable, remarkable, remarkable. But this was all about Boots. And you see a young man with such -- I mean, just drive, determination, whether it's in the classroom or on the field, practice, whatever it is. I mean, he is going to push to be his best.

And you know, to -- I think he was the first commitment in this year's class and to see him from beginning to end, he was born to be a Seminoles and he worked his butt off to put himself in a position to be able to live out -- live out this dream. Just an explosive, explosive player coming off the edge and great first step. He's going to be a guy that fits



well into what we're trying to do as we attack on the edges and excited -- excited about that group that's coming in.

Q. Some people are concerned that as your program is getting better and you bring in talented kids, particularly transfers, that it might cause some of the existing players to feel like they are being passed over or that the competition; that they might want to transfer. What would you say to a fan that concerned themselves with that?

MIKE NORVELL: What I would say about this team is they love to compete. They compete with each other. I know I say that all the time. Our best recruiters are our current players when these guys get on campus.

I remember a year ago, you know, Maurice Smith was starting center coming out. We bring in Lyles. Ray Smith hosted him, like that -- like he's the one that is selling him: You need to get here. "The coaches are telling me, they are bringing you in to try to take this job."

But when you have real guys, when you have guys that have that spirit and that drive, and they just -- they are going to do all that they can; it pushes them to get better. And we are trying -- like we are working to something special, and I know it's coming.

And it's fun because you see guys that embrace, embrace that but also they care about -- I mean, the one commitment I make to our players when it comes to recruiting, I'm going to do everything in my power to make sure I'm bringing somebody in that locker room that's like-minded. Because I'll try -- I have real conversations with guys when they are here, and it is -- you know and our players have real conversations.

And there's been times that our players will sit there and whether it's high school players coming in, if it's a weekend experience and they don't get a good vibe on it, I want that information.

There's been guys that have gone in the transfer portal, players on this team were teammates of and friends with: "Coach, I don't know if he fits. Really talented, but I don't know if he fits what we're doing here."

Like when you have players taking that type of ownership, that's where it gets fun, because they know how we work and they know how we care, know how we -- the bonds that are being built, and you know, they know how they are going to be showcased. And this is -- I say it all the time, this is a program that's built for play-makers.

So we are going to get the best play-makers, right, that we

can possibly get to come impact this team and win games and be the best that we can possibly be.

Two-for-one, for sure. Go ahead.

Q. I'm showing some restraint here. I'm trying to finish the year strong. Following up on that sort of, how selective did you have to be this year in terms of, you know, looking for the right guys in the portal especially, there's so many players in the portal now, and you have a limited number of spots, like how selective were you in that process?

MIKE NORVELL: With the portal or taking high school -- give me a little bit more.

Q. Looking at the portal, I would imagine because of the season you guys had and the success you've had with transfers there may be a lot of players in the portal were interested in Florida State and how different was that compared to maybe a year ago or two years ago in terms of --

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, the interest, high school and -- and college, I mean, transfers, is at an elite level because not only do they see success with our record, and you know, what our team is doing, but they watch how we play. They see the explosiveness offensively. They see the explosiveness defensively. They see the impacts in special teams.

So when you can showcase that and they -- they understand the opportunity that they have to come be a part of it, like it -- there's a lot of excitement, and you know, one of the hardest things to do as a coach, especially with all the time and the hours and building those relationships, you know, sometimes you have to have the willingness to say no.

Because there's certain times you can take somebody and it would feel good and it would probably look good and you would be able to sell, like, you know, whatever -- whatever things surrounding the recruitment you could celebrate.

But if it doesn't -- if it doesn't make us a better team, if it doesn't fit a very specific need, I think that's one thing that I've tried to, we've tried to do as a staff, is to pinpoint those guys. When you invest that time and you get around it, those are the ones and if that's not going to -- if it doesn't fit, if it's not -- then we know what the next step is.

So you try to build upon those players of, you know, Plan A, Plan B, Plan C, but it doesn't always mean high school to high school or high school to college, and then within -- with the course of a season, guys getting projected as top

draft picks. You have things that are always constantly developing, guys that go out, they are staying. It's something that's always a constant ebb and flow to it.

But just making sure you get the right guys to help this team, and where we are, but really, where we're going.

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