

Florida State University Football Media Conference

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Mike Norvell

Press Conference



MIKE NORVELL: It was good. I thought it was a good spring game -- or showcase, sorry. Good spring showcase. I really enjoyed getting a chance to have our fans back in Doak Campbell. It was a really good atmosphere. Great to see a lot of our players.

We had 20 guys that was the first time they got a chance to go out. Obviously some newcomers that are still going through the process of rehabilitation from off-season injuries.

Really excited about the work and the competitiveness I'm seeing from this team. I thought today really showed some flashes on both sides, good things that showed up. Some young guys that got a chance to get out there and showcase a variety of different talents and areas that they've grown in their game. So older veterans, you put on at a high level.

So I thought it was a good day. There was times where the defense had great sequences of getting stops, and then offense responded and was able to create some explosives and move the ball down the field.

I just thought it was a competitive day, and I think we're continuing to get better. So I like what I saw.

Q. You've talked about Kentron having a really good spring, but to see him do it on that stage in the stadium, how good was that? You seemed to be really excited about one of his blocks as well as the catches.

MIKE NORVELL: Kentron, he's made big plays in big games, so he's done that. What I like is the consistency I'm seeing from that. We knew when he got here that he was very talented, kind of a unique situation. He only played one year of high school football, really had to come into his own.

And you see just the development, the growth, and it's a great job by him putting in the work. Great job by Coach Dugans in the overall development of him. But you can see he's a well-rounded player too.

With Johnny not going today, I was excited to see where Kentron would go with that moment, and he definitely did not disappoint. It wasn't just with the ball in his hands. I think it was Rodney, one of Rodney's touchdowns -- I believe it was Rodney. He's 30 years down the field with a big block that helped spring the touchdown.

So I love seeing that type of effort and just growth from all individuals, but I think he's really setting himself up to have a good season and excited what he's going to be able to do to continue to impact this team.

Q. Rodney Hill had a couple scores today. What did you see from him, and where have you kind of seen the most growth from him this spring?

MIKE NORVELL: Just confidence. Understanding where to be. Obviously the finer details of how to do it, and he's letting his play making ability take over.

I was really happy he caught on the touchdown catch -- Rodney's hard on himself. He really -- he approaches the game the way it should be approached, and he wants to be great. He wants every play to be great.

Actually in Thursday's practice there was a play at the end of practice where he missed an opportunity, and he let a pass kind of get away from him in a big moment, and he was really upset about it afterwards. I talked to him that night, and he said, Coach, I just have to make that play. It was the same play that he came back today and was able to make an over the shoulder really nice touchdown catch with it.

That's what you want to see. He's very young, a redshirt freshman. He's still got a lot in front of him. But when you approach each rep the way he does and you take the ownership -- I mean, it's not all going to be perfect. I mean, there's going to be good and bad that shows up throughout the journey.

But he's a really remarkable young man, and I'm just excited about what his future's going to hold. He's showing that he's going to be able to help us at a very high level,

which we fully expected coming into this year.

Q. Kalen DeLoach had two takeaways, possibly could have been for scores if it was live action. What did you see from him today and just generally this entire spring?

MIKE NORVELL: Kalen is one of those guys he's got to be one of those heartbeats for us. He's been here since we came through the door as a coaching staff. Probably as much growth from a young man from that first day to where he is now, just -- in all things. His attitude, his approach. If he's not exceptional on a day, it really shows up. Like if he's not bringing that type of intensity -- because that's just who he is.

I thought it was great today to see him get a couple takeaways, to be able to -- both in good situations, one on interception, one when the ball got to the ground. Just being around the ball, being active, being physical.

I think he's put himself in position to have a really good year upcoming, and we need him to because he definitely is somebody that the team can feed off of. Obviously his energy and explosiveness, just a really good playmaker.

Q. What did you think of the performance of the four quarterbacks and especially Brock doing, it in front of the biggest audience he's ever dealt with?

MIKE NORVELL: I think it was good. I think there was good, and there were some plays that are very teachable moments for all four of them. I thought they did a good job of responding.

Brock had a series where he missed a couple throws early. I was glad to see him come back at the end and have that touchdown drive, you know, not to let it go the other way.

Even A.J., there was a series that I thought he was just a little hesitant in some of the decision-making, and to be able to come back, I thought he had a really good drive at the end as well.

I'm really pleased with the growth in that room. There's a lot of competition. I think Tate has done a great job continuing to push to take another step. I know I've talked about it all year.

And Jordan, he's really working to improve. Today it was not perfect, and there was things that he knows in a moment of where it could be better and things that he knows where he can even be more efficient. Like the throw to Kentron, the rhythm and timing on that, it was beautiful. I got to stand right behind it. He couldn't have

placed the ball even better. It was right before Tron even came out of his break that the ball was in the air.

It's what you want to see. That type of control, command, and confidence is something that's going to be big for us. All those guys are pushing for it.

Q. Going into the spring, you talked about the word better and these guys getting better each and every day. Was today another step in the right direction of seeing these guys do that?

MIKE NORVELL: I think so. Defensively, our defensive front, we want that to be a forcing unit. You saw some great opportunities where they were making things really challenging to be able to run the ball in some spots. You see guys that are flying around.

The way they were attacking and being able to create some pressure was really good. We have some newcomers there on the offensive line, some guys that are experienced. Trying to hold -- Maurice and Darius didn't get a whole lot of work today, and obviously Rob's out. So we have a lot of new faces that were working with the offensive line.

Great film. Great opportunity for those guys to see, to learn, to continue to push the efficiency and execution for us. But I think we've improved. We're going to have to have an unbelievable summer. We're going to have to have a great fall camp. But I've got a lot of confidence that this team will continue to invest for what they're capable of doing. It's just continuing to get better.

Q. You guys had the spring showcase today. Then you have one more practice Monday. Was that like just your plan? What do you want to get out of this showcase to take to Monday's practice?

MIKE NORVELL: Ideally, I'd love to do that every year. It's so many years in my coaching career coming up, you would have the spring game, spring showcase in our situation, but you would have that opportunity. Then coaches get on the road, and it's just all the things with recruiting. So you would really miss out on a chance to go through and really get some of those finer details of teaching.

Then just getting back on the field and having that fundamental approach with special teams. We'll be able to go through some variations of look and preparation of things that you might see, some things that maybe offensively our defense wasn't -- maybe didn't get to see as much of or want to continue to work or vice versa. Offensively getting at different defensive looks.

We do a lot, so it's a lot of -- not a ton that we really need to work that much extra on, but it is about the finer details. And anything that has been maybe a reoccurring issue in spring, to kind of clean that up and help guys understand the expectation for when they're out there.

It's player led opportunities in the summer and what they can do. The great thing is with some of the rule changes and what we're able to do with meetings and being around our guys, it definitely helps so much.

Q. Looking at the bigger picture, you knew a lot about this team coming into spring. A lot of guys played a lot of football for you the last three years. Did you learn anything about this team this spring?

MIKE NORVELL: I thought they worked. I know they -- it's one thing -- we have to have an edge. I mean, it's critical. It's absolutely critical. That's what this team is built on. It's built on that edge of work, of toughness, of physicality, of going out and getting better.

When people don't think you're worth a crap, it's not hard to have an edge. When people start telling you that they think you're pretty good, you've got to maintain that focus and that drive of self-improvement and blocking out all the things you -- all the things you didn't listen to a year ago, you talk about, well, you don't need to listen to them now.

It's truly about leaving the field every day or leaving the weight room or the classroom and saying did I give my best, and did I get better? If you can achieve that, you've got a chance.

I think this team, it is more player led than any team that we've had, and that's what it should be. I want to be coach inspired. I want our coaches to make sure that we're teaching and we're inspiring these guys, we're pushing them and showing them all the things that they can do. But I want the players to have the ownership of taking the reins and making sure that the standard is showing up on a daily basis.

Q. Your uniforms were unveiled towards the end of the showcase. Reactions seemed pretty positive on Twitter, which is hard to do universally.

MIKE NORVELL: Yes!

Q. How much input did you have in that? What's that mean for the program to have that step forward?

MIKE NORVELL: It's great. It is something that we definitely discussed. Jason is remarkable in our

partnership with Nike and just the collaboration with our athletic department. We worked together through it.

I love the traditional look that it shows, but also with the representing the Seminole tribe and keeping that a part of what we're doing and making sure it still has a strong place in the uniform but still getting back to that classic Florida State that's so well appreciated.

I think it's a great looking uniform. I think they've done a wonderful job. Excited to see our guys wearing it here this fall.

Q. It's not really related to the game today, but the portal calendar, I guess, opens back up again now for a couple weeks. Is that something -- do you like the fact that where it falls now on the calendar? How does it change your guys' approach? Do you have to have new exit meetings again to make sure everybody is on the same page?

MIKE NORVELL: We'll have exit meetings and being able to -- that's been something the last few years is to try to have. We'll have that practice and also have meetings surrounding that with position coaches.

Next week or the following week, I'll have all my head coach exit meetings with each player. I think it's always good to get an understanding of where guys are, the things that continue to be improved on, and be able to go from there. It's always great to get the feedback of the players' perspective and then just our perspective for them as well.

The day and age with the transfer portal and opportunities, I'm sure it will be interesting across the country. But it's -- I like where we are, and I like this group that we have. It will be good conversations for us to have as individuals and as a team.

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