

Florida State University Football Media Conference

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Tallahassee, Florida, USA

Mike Norvell

Press Conference



Florida State 66, Southern Miss 13

MIKE NORVELL: First off, just proud of our team. Coming off a short week, off of a very emotional game Sunday night. We talked a lot about our response. I know that's a word we say a lot around this program. I truly believe that indicates the identity of who you are, what you're about, what you want to accomplish.

I thought our guys came out tonight. There were some plays we left out there, no question. There will be a lot of things we're going to get to do to continue to work, be more efficient, to be able to execute better. But our guys came out, they played with passion, they played with effort, they played with physicality.

I thought to be able to do that, I think Southern Miss football team is going to have a good year. They're very well-coached. They did some good things. But I like our guys' mindset. This was a really good week of work for what they invested.

Ultimately you got to go do it. I thought they did a great job tonight. Some big plays on both sides of the ball. It's good to see even not on the cleanest night that we had, some situations, especially like throwing the football, had some missed opportunities, some dropped passes, things that we got to get cleaned up, but I thought our guys responded really well. Just proud of what they did.

It was a great atmosphere tonight. So good to be back at home. Last week in Orlando was truly special, but there's nothing like playing Saturday night in Doak Campbell Stadium. It's remarkable.

You felt it throughout the course of the game. Just thank you to our students for coming out. Sold-out student section. You felt them. Grateful for our entire fan base, just how they showed up and showed out. It was really a great atmosphere for our home opener.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What does it say about the explosiveness and also depth of your team that you could look a little not as efficient in the first half but still put up 66 points?

MIKE NORVELL: What we did a good job of is we owned the ball. We didn't turn the football over. That was big. I tell our guys all the time, Just give yourself one more play.

You look at our cash down conversions, I think we're close to 50%. You can look at the third downs. We were four of 12. But the fourth downs, we were four of five. Those are still conversions. That's where our guys believed that.

There's some things we didn't force or some things we had to respond to. Jordan made a couple remarkable plays on a few of 'em. They played the next play. I think that's great evidence for our team that if you continue to do that, if we can own want football, we got great play-makers. I think we know that.

It was great to see a variety of different guys to show up. Darion Williamson with the big touchdown catch. He's been battling injury. He's shown flashes throughout his career of what he can be. That was a big play, a big play for him.

Obviously the guys, Deuce span had a big play. Keon, that was a remarkable performance, unbelievable athletic play. But it's great to see the guys that are surrounding him that have continued to grow, continuing to develop.

Johnny, he had to come out a little bit there early in the game. Some rough opportunities there. He's going to continue to respond and continue to grow. He's a special player.

Same thing in the run game. We were able to stay after it, really kind of put the game away there in the second half, being able to establish the run, have some big plays and some big runs.

Q. Some of those fourth down decisions weren't automatic decisions. That has to go to the confidence you have in that offense, probably that quarterback?

MIKE NORVELL: Absolutely. It's confidence I have in our defense, too. I mean, this is a team. I tell the team all the time there's going to be times that we're going to have to have each other's backs. Obviously I've got a lot of confidence or I wouldn't do it going for it in those fourth down situations. We were able to convert 80% of them.

If you don't, defense has to have the back of the offense. Those are opportunities in our response that are necessary. I think this team, something we talk very openly about, we start in fall camp, we train those situations. I think our guys are growing in their confidence and what we can do just throughout that.

Q. You were able to get a bunch of true freshmen on the field. How important is it to get that?

MIKE NORVELL: Absolutely. It's great to be able to have the opportunity to do that, to see guys in the moment, with what their responsibility is, what their assignment is, how comfortable they are, communication, and overall the execution.

We've got a really talented young group. I'm excited about where their future is. But those games, it points out the good and it also at times can point out areas that need to be improved upon as we go through the season.

I am fully expecting that a bunch of our true freshmen are going to be great contributors throughout the course of this year.

Be able to have some opportunities there for them to see it and learn from it I think is huge. It definitely played out as good as it could when it came to that. We tried to play just about everybody at some point tonight, which is great experience.

Those guys, they work their butts off in practice. Some guys got on the field for the first time. It was pretty special to see.

Q. Jarrian Jones had the pick-six in the third quarter. How big was that?

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, it's huge. Jarrian has really developed so well in this program. His growth mentally, physically, emotionally, all things. He's played a lot of football for us. There's no doubt he's playing his best ball now. He was dealing with an injury there in fall camp, missed a little bit of time. Was a little bit limited last week in the LSU game, but still did some good things.

To see him be able to execute in that moment, to get the pick-six, it was huge. He actually broke the rock there for

us after the game because I thought that was a special play and a great moment for him, kind of was the finish we wanted with that first group.

Q. I'm sure in situations like this you hopefully see a complete defensive performance. Some of the skill position guys they have on that team, especially the first-time guys on defense, what they did tonight?

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, I thought they played exceptional. We talked about stopping the run. That's a big offensive line. Running back is a really talented young man. We knew we had to get to him early. We had to try to stop him before he could get started. I thought we executed at a really good plan with Coach Fuller and the defensive staff. Guys went out and they committed to it.

We were what I was hopeful that we would be. Our guys played at a very high level. I thought they were great on the cash downs, third and fourth downs. They were remarkable. First defense, I don't know if they gave up a conversion. Really impressive performance.

Q. For the guys to come out the way they did tonight, after a short week, what does it take about the maturity of this team?

MIKE NORVELL: That's what we have to be. We talked about it. You can have age and experience, but maturity is a choice that you have to make. What do you want it to look like, what do you want to be, what do you want to invest?

We were tired. Early in the week, coaching staff, all of us, it was a fast turnaround. When it came out to Tuesday's practice, Wednesday's practice, the output was there. It wasn't always the cleanest, as I told you guys on Wednesday, but it wasn't for a lack of want to.

To see guys invest in that work just to get better, because that is the objective here. Every day we got to come out and be better than what we've been. I thought that there were some definite strides we took throughout this week. It does show the maturity, the want to, the belief and willingness to sacrifice to go get better.

Q. Obviously the opponent is different, but did you see anything from Trey different tonight and this week compared to last week?

MIKE NORVELL: No, I mean, Trey is a great back. I'm glad he's got a little bit of space tonight. Last week, especially in the second half, I thought he had some really good runs. It was something we were hopeful to see. He's a great player. Definitely ran with a purpose.

I thought even last week, even though the numbers weren't maybe as good, I thought he ran hard. Especially in the second half had a couple really big runs for us last week, but tonight I don't know what he ended up going for, but almost nine yards a carry. It was a good night for him.

Q. With the on-side kick in the second quarter, a little bit unexpected, was that something you were planning all week or a feel thing?

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, we're going to be aggressive. If we see something that we think we have an opportunity to capitalize on, I told the staff kind of the circumstances of the situation we were going to do it this morning. I told the team. We got what we knew we could potentially could. We went out there and executed the plan.

I thought that was a great job by our guys. Had an opportunity to recover it, but great kick by Ryan. I thought that was a big part of it. Two long drives, even though I don't think in that drive I don't believe we scored, but the time of possession, the plays, really getting a chance to wear them down a little bit. I thought it set up well.

Q. Obviously it's early in the season, do you think this is the most talented team you've ever coached?

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, we're a very talented team. Talent will take you so far. It's got to go, and I want to be the most disciplined, best team in being able to utilize their fundamentals, execution, their response. We're two weeks into it. I'm very proud of what I've seen in two weeks.

I like this team. I liked this team in fall camp from the work they did in the summer. I liked the investment they put into the relationships.

It's a long journey ahead. All that we can control is today. I thought they handled today. But I'm excited about the talent and ability we have. We just got to continue to grow and get better, overall operation. I believe they'll do that.

Q. Brock Glenn's first career play, what does it say about him to come in and not force a ball?

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, I told him to just trust his eyes. Same thing I tell all of our quarterbacks. Trust your eyes, trust your feet. He went through his progression. Had a little bit of a mistake by one of the other positions that were out there. He trusted his feet. Pretty good seeing him get out there and scamper down the field.

I really like being able to get that experience for Brock. A.J. was able to get in. Obviously Tate had two really good

drives. Markeston Douglas made a couple guys miss. It's pretty impressive seeing 280 pounds run that fast down the field. Markeston is a guy that's continuing to grow, continuing to work. You see the talent in that tight end room. Kyle had a real good play. A lot of competition in that room and definitely a bright future.

Thank you, guys.

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