

Florida State University Football Media Conference

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Coach Mike Norvell

Press Conference



Florida State 39, Virginia Tech 17

MIKE NORVELL: Start off, first off, proud of our players. They came out 22-nothing, lead in the first quarter. Second quarter, you had some adversity that you struck in a couple different ways.

You know, had some drives extended due to penalties, had a few drives stall out there offensively. We talk all the time about our response. Coming out in the second half we wanted to -- talked about finishing strong and obviously the opening kickoff of the second half did not go the way we wanted, but you saw the tremendous response from our football team.

Two plays later, big run by Trey. Obviously just the guys, the determination, the belief, defense doesn't give up a point in the second half. I was really proud of them for that.

It's a team coming in off their best game. You could see identity of what they're trying to do. Present some challenge with their quarterback. You know, I thought our guys did a really good job there in the second half.

We were better in our third down, fourth down situations. Still really good in the red zone situations, you know, forcing the field goal there early.

You know, offensively I think we scored every time we had the ball down there, something we need to continue. There were some negative plays, things we'll have to get better at, but I was really proud of our guys for their response and being able to finish.

And what an incredible crowd, a sellout crowd. It was awesome being back at home. Hopeful we can continue that again for next week with another sellout. I know there is very limited tickets, so hopefully we can put together a streak when it comes to that.

But really excited about our just our fan base, being at home, letting our guys go out there and play at a high level. You know, just like I said, proud of our players. Trey had

a big day. You know, it was good to get him rolling. Obviously we didn't have a ton of offensive snaps. I think 61 snaps. That's going to happen when you have the explosive runs.

But I did think we played with better tempo throughout, and definitely excited about the continued steps that I'm seeing from this team.

Q. Obviously Trey gave you a great day, but in general, the running attack, Jordan also getting involved in it, just how pleased were you coming out of the bye?

MIKE NORVELL: It was good. We talked about wanting to be able to establish the ground game. We take what teams give us, and there were some opportunities that were created. I thought our backs ran really hard. I thought the O-line created some good seams for them to run through.

I tell you, there were some unbelievable blocks. Keon Coleman had a couple great touchdown springing blocks on that. It's one thing to see a great player, which he is, and just talk about what he does, catching the ball, but that block that he had on the long touchdown was just awesome.

So proud of him for that. But being able to play without the ball, and I think we had a lot of guys that were really doing a good job there. It takes all 11. Jordan, you know, got an opportunity to pull the ball. He had some space there. I thought he did a great job managing the game and the things we asked him to do.

Didn't turn the ball over offensively. That's something that we really harp on and know the importance of that. Our guys have been doing a nice job with it and something we're going to have to continue.

Q. Trey, it's taken him a while to get going. How did he handle that the last few weeks? The way the run game wasn't performing, did he get frustrated?

MIKE NORVELL: No, Trey is incredible. I mean, in all



things. Even in the Clemson game we didn't have the success in the run game, but he impacted that game and he did it as a pass receiver.

He had three big plays in the game catching the ball out of the backfield. He's going to do whatever is necessary to help this team win. We've got a lot of guys that are like that.

So he maintains focus on improvement. I loved it. He trusted his speed. He saw a couple seams and he hit it. When he gets in the open field it's a lot of speed and power running down the field. Proud of him for that. Great player and just a great teammate and young man.

Q. Coach, what is it about Trey that makes him so special?

MIKE NORVELL: He's got the combination of all the things you want. He's big, he's powerful. Obviously he'll run tough in between the tackles, but also has homerun hitting speed out when he gets out there on the edge.

I think he's improved his game as a pass receiver, which we've seen already this season, in his willingness to the dirty work as a blocker, too.

Talk about a total back, I mean, there are a lot of guys situational. He can really do it all. He embraces that in his work ethic and the things he does. And he's unselfish, which when you have a humble and unselfish player, he's there when another back is in there, whether it's Rodney, LT, whoever it is, he's the one that's there cheering them on louder than anybody.

He's just what we want our program to be built like and he's a great leader for that.

Q. Two questions about Johnny. First off, him getting in the end zone twice, two big catches to get the ball rolling. How is he after that? Do we know at all?

MIKE NORVELL: No. We'll see. Obviously wasn't able to come back. We'll see what that looks like as we move forward to this week. Man, what a great start to the game. Johnny has been really good for us this year.

Coming into the game I think he was over 300 yards receiving. Being able to see him do that was big, but made a couple really good plays.

It was good to see Destyn catch a big ball there that we needed. We had a couple missed opportunities, things we have to continue to get better at, but I thought Jordan really did a nice job of operating, and even some of the times

when might have got a little bit of pressure, he stayed patient and didn't try to force things.

You know, I think that was a great response from him, which helped push our offense.

Q. Coach, talk a little bit about the offensive line rotation.

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, well, a little bit shorthanded. Bless Harris was not able to play today, but you saw Darius Washington getting the start at tackle. We knew rob Scott would be in practice this week. Probably wasn't ready for whatever it would be, 60, 80 plays, but we know we wanted to get him in. It was good to see him get in there and get some productive work.

Obviously Meech and K.J. being able to get work there at the guard spot, I like the growth with our offensive line. Going to be great when we get all eight of them going, but good seeing some young guys get in there and some good plays there late.

Got a really good group and guys that are growing, being developing, working hard in practice, but it's good to see the depth that has been developed and created, and I think we're seeing that across the board.

Good to see them get back out. Be able to work a little bit of rotation there at safety. Conrad Hussey made some really big plays, true freshman. Blake Nicholson got in there as a true freshman. I was really proud of those guys coming off the guy week, being able to make a positive impact for us.

You know, thought it was a good game for that.

Q. You mentioned a couple players that were out. You got Ja'Khi Douglas and Kentron back. What kind of impact do they make being back today?

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, just continue to add to the playmaking ability of what we have. Obviously those guys, it's been a challenging first month of the season for them. Getting them back in it and just building that confidence of all the things they can do, I think it's going to continue to grow with time.

I love the depth that we have there at that position. I think we have some great playmakers, guys that just like today when Johnny went down, obviously you saw Kentron, Hykeem Williams, really those guys stepping up. I don't know if it showed up in pass receptions, but it's going to. Those guys are going to be great players and continue to work and develop.

Q. You talked about the adversity of the second quarter. Seemed like there was some frustration from defensive players, particularly saw some from you. How do you think they handled...

MIKE NORVELL: My frustration?

Q. How do you think...

MIKE NORVELL: Because I was frustrated.

Q. How do you think they handled the adversity of how things played out and how big was halftime for recentering?

MIKE NORVELL: I've got to do a better job in some of those situations. I was frustrated and there is some -- obviously we'll go back and watch film and learn and teach.

Some of the things that showed up, I mean, I want an explanation, and so I voiced an opinion. I got to do a better job of making sure even in voicing that opinion that as a leader of this football team, I have to make sure our guys are staying focused on things they can control.

There are times that I'm going to voice my opinion. I'm going to state exactly what I believe and what I saw. You know, we'll see what it says come Monday on some of those thoughts. You know, it's all part of it.

Our guys, they always talk about having each other's back. We got to have our players' back and they have to have mine sometimes. We can all continue to grow and be better. I love coaching this team. I love their response. I know you all hear me say that a million times that's what it was today. That's what I was proud of.

We talk about wanting to start fast. We've not been as good as we needed to be. That first quarter was a great fast start. Now, second quarter wasn't as good as it needed to be. Provides opportunity for continued growth, but to see the defense pitch a shutout and have some big plays there offensively in the second half, that was a heck of a way to finish.

A lot of good things to be able to build upon. This is coming off a team that just played their best game in Virginia Tech. They've got some good players. They got guys on the defensive front. It was good. It was a good test for us, and proud of our guys.

Q. In that second quarter, you guys could not have been more dominant in the first quarter, did you sense any of what you saw at BC in the second quarter, or...

MIKE NORVELL: There were some penalties that extended drives with the interception that was overturned that would've been a huge play in the game.

We had couple other things that showed up. We had -- one of our drives offensively we had a penalty that negated what would've been a conversion. Obviously all things that we can be better at, we can continue. But I didn't feel like -- our guys were playing with an edge.

It wasn't some of the things we saw earlier early in the season, you know, there wasn't a comfort level. They were playing hard. They were playing fast. We had the pick there, 22-nothing. It's about to go a whole other way.

But he landed on him, so something we have to continue to teach the best way we can teach and go from there.

Q. This wasn't the question I was going to ask, but was the explanation that he landed on him? Was that the penalty?

MIKE NORVELL: (Smiling.)

Q. Okay. Here is the question I was going to ask. Getting that kind of production out of Jared, obviously been very good all year. Two monster plays.

MIKE NORVELL: Absolutely.

Q. What's it like it see him do that and impact the game like that?

MIKE NORVELL: Jared has been probably in the last two games coming into this one probably been as good as he's been since he's been here. It's one thing you get caught up on -- you know, stats sometimes will lie to you and sometimes they're good and sometimes they're not as good.

But I thought he played these last two games as good as he's played. Today, you know, just continuing to build upon that and the production showed up, two sacks. Obviously huge plays in the game.

Great energy for our defense. Big plays, big situations, so very proud of him for staying the course. There are things from today's game he'll still grow and learn and get better from a because that's the mindset he brings.

I think we've seen that from a lot of guys. Our defensive front is doing a lot of great things, and you see the depth. Josh Farmer is playing at a high level. Fabien, you see him getting back into form. Dennis Briggs is out there

making good plays.

Braden Fiske, Malcolm Ray, Gilber Edmond flashed a couple times today. You know, really kind of challenging him to take that next step. I thought he did.

Obviously Byron and then Pat has been coming off this Boston College game, I think he responded. Clemson played great, and I saw him do some really good things here today. Just shoutout to our defensive line for the work they're putting in, obviously the production they're having.

Q. I know that the time you spend on special teams, I guess what was the issue or what VT did or didn't do on the kickoff return?

MIKE NORVELL: Obviously some mistakes on our end. We had bad leverage, didn't set the edge where we wanted to. They're on it and ran a field return. It's something that we practice for and actually expected, but couple guys took wrong leverage angles and got pinned and just created too much space.

So we spend a lot of time, take a lot of pride in our coverage units. For that to happen, we will get it fixed. But that obviously was a huge play, and I'm grateful for all the -- all players in helping bounce back and have that kickoff team's back and being able to finish that game.

Q. You are mentioned earlier that the young guys getting in there. I think Coach Fuller said during the week they wanted to force Blake and Conrad in the game. Is that kind of within the mindset of like what maybe they can do for you towards the end of the season?

MIKE NORVELL: More what they can do for us now. We think -- we're not going to put somebody on the field if we don't think they can help us win football games today. This is not a feel-good, oh -- no, you got to go earn it. We got really good players that are growing and developing that have yet to get on the field but are going to have incredible careers here.

Those guys have shown, whether in practice, whether continued growth, opportunities they're getting out there on the field that they are deserving, and as they continue to produce and grow they'll get more.

But I'm excited about this class that we just brought in. Really excited about that group. Got a lot of great players. Like I said, some of them that are not even playing very much right now or at all, but have incredible futures. That's all part of that growth.

Some are put in a position to help us right now, so they're playing more.

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