

# Florida State University Football Media Conference

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Tallahassee, Florida, USA

## Mike Norvell

### Press Conference



Florida State 41, Syracuse 3

MIKE NORVELL: First off, just really proud of our football team. Come out, early start today. To be able to play 60 minutes...

Start talking about our defense, that was a great performance. I thought they battled throughout, made the plays that were necessary, were able to create some takeaways. Just really played at a high level.

That was an offense that had a lot of variations to what they could do. I thought we were able to contain the run game, did good things in third down situations. I really thought our guys played hard and physical. That's something we've been challenging them with, is to put together that complete game.

Defensively I thought we were able to do that. A couple plays here and there that we'll be able to improve upon. That was big. I thought our special teams unit really did respond well. Obviously the punt returns by Keon, all 10 guys were there around him, did a wonderful job.

I thought our guys in our coverage units being able to flip the field, all those different things, I was proud of about how those guys did.

Offensively there were some moments we weren't as efficient as we needed to. Great in the red zone this year, had a couple opportunities. I've got to be better. I told the offense, it's on me. We'll be better when we're in there because we've done a great job throughout the course of the season. There can't be a time we get down there and don't score.

Offensively on the ball, right? Didn't have a turnover. That was one of the big keys to today. That was the defense that created 12 of 'em. We knew if we could come out on the positive end of the turnover margin, we'd put ourselves in a good position.

The offense kept playing, hammering away at it. I thought

they did a nice job in their response. Got the chance to play a lot of different players. It was good seeing guys get in there and make the most of their opportunities.

All in all, it was a good team win. For us to be able to continue to take positive steps for ultimately where we're trying to get to, just that continued improvement.

I do want to say, great for a 12:00 kickoff. Our fan base, back-to-back sellout for this week. Three straight home games. For everybody coming in, obviously the energy, the excitement, something that our team really fuels off of, from this morning at the Legacy Walk. I thought the Marching Chiefs were awesome. Want to thank everybody for coming out and really appreciate the support.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Keon has had really good performances since he's been here. Did you get a chance that he took his game to another level today?**

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, it's how he prepares. You never know what it's always going to look like. But you have to be ready for your opportunity. I thought he did a really nice job with that.

Special teams obviously, offensively, had some big plays, some great catches. I told him he had a couple of missed opportunities where it could have possibly even been better.

I love the way he works, man. He really is a very unselfish player. Today the ball got to him, he tried to capitalize on that. Guys around him doing a good job. It will never be okay just to show up because somebody else is doing it. It's always about us. It's about going out there and being the best we can be. Obviously I thought that Keon played at an extremely high level today.

But you watch him work in practice, I thought he had a great week in practice, how he attacked each rep.

**Q. With your team now 6-0 at the halfway point of the season, how do you keep them focused week to week?**



MIKE NORVELL: I mean, I want us to be better. I am grateful to be 6-0. I am so proud of this team for doing the things that were necessary to get to this point because you get one shot at it. One shot at each game. One shot at each play. Ultimately there have been plenty of moments in games where things haven't gone exactly how we wanted to. We get a chance to showcase our response.

You have to learn from it. We can't make the same mistakes over and over and over again. Those are the things, it's not about the teams we're playing. All due respect to who we play. That was a talented team. Obviously got into some tough situations.

Our guys, it's about us, about how we continue to push, to improve, making sure that that needs to be our ultimate focus. Next week we'll have another very talented team that is going to present all the challenges that they bring.

For us, it's about making sure that our details, our fundamentals, our communication, making the most of the opportunity when the play comes to you. That is our focus. So it's not just about what the record says. Ultimately, I mean, I want to be better than what that record says with how we play.

**Q. Keon's catch in the first quarter, highlight reel play of the season. Does it surprise you any more? Are you saying anything to yourself when he catches it or on to the next play? Do you watch the replay?**

MIKE NORVELL: I say, Wow. Then I call the next play quickly (smiling).

No, I mean, we've got a lot of great play-makers. When you see them put themselves in good positions. That was as good of a catch as you're going to see. He goes to the next play.

I'm sure when you get a break, look back at it, probably see it a few times. Ultimately that's what makes great players great, is they expect to make the great plays when opportunities present themselves.

Yeah, no, I definitely appreciated it.

**Q. With Jordan, there were times on the field where he seems visibly frustrated. I assume you like that, you want him to be invested, it's a positive. Seems like he's been more visibly frustrated than he has. Is that because he knows this offense can be better?**

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, I mean, he's the ultimate competitor. He expects perfection out of himself. There's

some guys that get frustrated that can be bad for your team. There's some guys, if it's not directed...

For him, like he wants to be everything to the elite level, which it should be. That's how it should be for another great football player.

To hear him on the sideline, to hear the ownership. I told him, I didn't like some of the things I did. I didn't like some of the calls I made. You know what, get better. I'll yell at myself. That's part of it, right?

He can continue to bring that energy because even though you see maybe a visibly upset guy, it's encouraging to our team when a guy comes over, if it's him or something that he sees, he's taking ownership of it. Hey, we'll be better in this. I'll do this.

There's times you see players get visibly upset. If it becomes a negative, it can definitely pull down your team. He is an unbelievable leader for our guys. I'm glad that he wants to be perfect. I'm going to continue to push him to be his best. But it still comes down to the response.

A couple times he got hit today. That defense, you're going to see a lot of pressure, a lot of different looks, different things that can challenge an offense. The touchdown pass to Keon was pretty remarkable. To be able to stand in there, he took a good shot on that one.

He's a complete quarterback. He's continuing to get better. Did good things with his legs when he needed to today. There's still plenty of plays we'll all be able to get better from.

**Q. You mentioned that Syracuse presents so many different looks offensively, different formations. How do you think the defense fared in communication today?**

MIKE NORVELL: I thought it was much better today. We've really been putting a lot of time and emphasis in our communication, trusting our eyes. There's still a couple plays, we can clean it up even to another level.

I thought our guys did an outstanding job. Really did a good job of trying to keep everything in front, force them to have to earn it.

**Q. Having the '93 team back today, what do they mean to this program?**

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, there's so many great players that have come through this program, so many great teams. For that one, they broke through. They were the

first national championship team, what they did, how they did it.

What I love about that group, I was a fan. I remember that 1993 national championship license plate was up on my wall. I get to represent these guys that were here last night, be around our team. It's such a great responsibility.

It's not just the jersey numbers they wore. When you get to understand the men, when you see them together and the relationships, you see how much they care, that is what is special about being a Florida State Seminole.

Those guys, they were here, they were part of our walk last night. Just to see them embrace each other, it's special. I'm forever grateful for that group. Really close with a bunch of 'em. They're always welcome back.

As I told 'em last night, they did something that is forever remembered and celebrated because they were able to break through and bring that first national championship here to Florida State.

Who they are off the field, it tells you why they were able to accomplish it on the field.

**Q. The defense limited Garrett Shrader to negative 10 yards today. Did it help that you guys had experience against players in this game?**

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, it's been crazy just how many duel threat running quarterbacks we've played. It's good to see us getting better in that.

But, yeah, I've got so much respect for Garrett Shrader. I think he's tough. He runs physical. We knew we had to disrupt him. I've seen it work both ways. I mean, if he gets in a rhythm, he gets going, he can really make you pay.

I told him after the game, I mean, he's one of those quarterbacks when I watch, I see a real guy. Wish him the best all the rest of the season.

I was proud of our defense how they responded, were able to execute the plan we had in place. I thought our safeties came up and did a good job in our run fits. Two guys broke the rock today. I thought absolutely needed a defensive representative, and Shyheim had a great game in just what he did, how he played. Obviously Keon (smiling). Speaks for itself.

**Q. The touchdown that Hykeem Williams had, for him to get rewarded, how important is it to see that freshman kind of buy in?**

MIKE NORVELL: Man, he is absolutely ascending. He's had to go through it. One of the benefits. He got here in January, whether it's tour duty, spring practice, he learned quickly the shape that's necessary, some of the commitments and sacrifices of what it takes.

That's one of the best young men, like the character of him, who he is. His smile, his approach, the joy that he has for teammates. You see that selflessness as a blocker. I was excited because you got to see him with the ball in his hands in open spaces. Took it to a whole new gear, which I was exciting for us to see.

The last month you've seen some positive strides from him. He's building in his confidence. As a true freshman, helping us in special teams, obviously continuing to prepare for his opportunities. I thought that was a great, great play. Great plays even when he didn't have the ball in his hands.

**Q. Going back to the 1993 team being in the stadium, do you think there was added pressure to perform? What was the mindset behind that?**

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, you got to come perform every day. Like, I'm grateful for everybody that we represent. To have that team here, we want to play well every day. Pressure is going to be what you make of it. There are expectations here. There's expectations that we have as a program that we want to play our best every time we step on that field, expectations that we improve, we get better.

If it's only about who is there with you, in front of you, it's not real. We respect every player that's ever come through this program. We respect obviously who and what we represent in our fan base, this wonderful university.

If you're going to say there's pressure, it's every day. If you don't like that, don't come to Florida State because this is truly a special place.

**Q. It seemed like a few times earlier this season when other teams got sustained drives, the defense had a hard time stopping it. Today it seemed like they did a better job.**

MIKE NORVELL: They absolutely responded throughout the course of today. It was really just play the next play. Nobody wants to give up a play. Nobody wants something bad to happen. But you go to the next play, trust your technique, your fundamentals.

One of the things we talk about is every play is its own play. You have to learn lessons from experience. When you get in that moment, it's time for best, going out there

and being able to execute. I thought they did a great job with that today.

One of our better performances. I was really proud of them.

**Q. We talked about Keon as a receiver. What makes him special as a returner?**

MIKE NORVELL: He's a play-maker. Not something he's done before he got here. You say play-making ability. He's got confidence, he believes in what he can do. That was a big I'd say question mark coming into the season of who is going to assume that role. He's embraced that. You saw last weekend a 30-yard return, this weekend a 70-yard return. Find his way into the end zone, it was really close.

He is such a special young man. He's continuing to work to be better in that. The confidence is growing throughout the course of the season. Real weapon for us. Proud of him for the work he's doing there.

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