

Florida State University Football Media Conference

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Tallahassee, Florida, USA

Mike Norvell

Press Conference



Clemson 29, Florida State 13

MIKE NORVELL: First off, thought it was a hard-fought game. Credit to Clemson. They did a good job making the plays when necessary and throughout the course of the game I thought. Obviously as we went through it, they were able to hit some explosive plays. They did a good job of negating our run game.

Offensively they did a good job of being able to work and eat up a lot of clock there in the fourth quarter to try to put the game away with a big run and obviously a couple of plays there on the perimeter.

Just disappointed in the result. Disappointed for our guys. I thought they played hard. I thought they did fight. We had our opportunities, but you know, it's absolute minimum expectation here, and we have to go and make -- we've got to get the job done.

We had mistakes that as we had momentum were good plays. We would have a good stop. We would have a penalty that extended a drive. We had a couple of negative plays there offensively that put us in way too many third and long situations.

We became just totally one-dimensional, and having to drop back, which obviously presented some challenges there for us in protection. But just disappointed that some of the easier things that we can control we did not do a good enough job with. We had some bad snaps. As I mentioned, some of the penalties. We had a couple of communication busts that when you're playing a good team, obviously it gets magnified that much more.

I thought our guys battled. I'm proud of some of the plays that we were able to make and some of the -- I thought blocking the extra points -- or I'm sorry -- blocking the field goals was something that was really impressive. Big stops in the moment.

We talk about owning the football, and we had the interception, but it was something that was a

miscommunication and what the receiver is doing. Obviously, Brock is trying to throw the ball on time, but that was a big play with a turnover there. Then I don't think we created a take-away, which is something that we continue to emphasize.

We had a few potential opportunities, but didn't finish the play. We've got to be better in that regards. Just like I told the team, we have to do the simple things better. That's coaching. That's players. That's all ownership for all of us as we try to continue to emphasize the fundamental approach and continuing to put ourselves in position.

Again, what's frustrating is there are guys that have played a lot of ball, and they're having some plays that are really costly in moments. It's not from a lack of want-to. It's not from a lack of their work, but just in the moment just unfortunate things that are happening that are hurting us overall as a team.

Like I said, we all have to get better. You are going into a bye week. We've got a lot of work to do, and so we'll be back in tomorrow, learn from mistakes, continue to self-eval of where we are.

I was proud of some of the young guys that you see that have stepped up and taken advantage of opportunities. We're going to continue to push opportunities because at the end of the day we left too many plays out there on the field that we've got to be better at.

So whatever that takes, whatever that's got to look like, we've got to get it done.

Q. What were your general thoughts on Brock's play, how he handled the offense, how command of it was he in, and just how they were playing for him?

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, I thought he did a very solid job. He put in a lot of work in his preparation. I appreciated his energy. He showed toughness throughout the course of the game. Made some really good plays.

Obviously there's a few just like in the course of all games that you would like to have back, but I mean, I felt his

presence was be really good. Very encouraging to the guys, even after a bad play.

We also have to make plays around him as well, and we've got to be able to get the run game going and established to take pressure off the quarterback and obviously take pressure off the offensive line there in some of those situations with the pass rush.

But I thought he did a good job, and we'll be able to go back and watch a lot more of the finer details and just areas of where we're going to continue to grow and get better.

Q. Can you take solace in what the red zone defense was on a night where you give up 500 yards of total offense?

MIKE NORVELL: This is an offense that's been playing at a pretty high level. I thought our guys -- there were some unnecessary big plays that we gave up. I did really like the way that they battled down in the red zone.

Obviously there are still plays that we've got to be able to finish on, but I thought it showed grit in how those guys were able to respond in challenging situations.

Q. You said that the tight end room had to be better earlier this week. Landon comes up and leads the team in receiving and Amaree makes the touchdown. What did you see from those young guys at the tight end role today?

MIKE NORVELL: A couple of guys tried to take advantage of the opportunity, and there's still a lot of areas where those guys have to grow in what they've got to do, but you saw them take positive steps.

Obviously there will be a lot of things in the run game that we get to continue to coach and understand and communication. Some of those things hurt us throughout the course of the night. So, I mean, it's a challenge to them to continue to make sure they're spending that time just to build their confidence there in the moment.

But, yeah, there were definitely some positives from that room that we'll be able to take and for all those guys to grow from.

Q. You've talked about kind of with those young guys wanting to see certain things in practice before you feel comfortable putting them in the games to be so how they handle that. With the spark some of those guys and Brock somewhat brought at times tonight, maybe are you thinking about using them earlier or

maybe not seeing if they can bring something earlier in the season?

MIKE NORVELL: Are you saying do I regret? Is that what you asked?

Q. (Off microphone).

MIKE NORVELL: There's a lot that goes into it. You can always -- I promise you, we want to do everything in our power to win a game. We're working our butt off to make sure that we're doing that.

And, yes, it's the balance of things that help you operate and making sure that we can -- we had some mistakes that showed up because of maybe not as experienced in communication or situations and things where we are going to have to be better.

Those guys are growing through it, but I'm glad that they did what they did with the opportunity they had tonight. Obviously we have to continue to grow them throughout practice.

Q. After SMU you said that you needed your team to have a better response, but you guys obviously were down 17-0 in the first quarter. What did you make of the slow start, and how come you think the guys came out so flat?

MIKE NORVELL: I don't think they came out flat. I don't think they came out flat. I don't think we executed as well as we needed to.

Obviously we gave up a couple of big plays. We had a turnover. I think our guys were excited for the opportunity to play. Obviously we didn't start the way we wanted to, but I wouldn't say that we came out flat. We just didn't get off to the start that we needed.

I thought our guys did fight and respond, and we have to be better in how we start games.

Q. Is there a way -- you look at Cade. He had 11 rushes. I think Brock had three real rushes and maybe only one of them was an actual called rush. Is there a way to get his legs more involved to try to help this running game get going in any way?

MIKE NORVELL: That's something we'll continue to evaluate. We did have that as a thought. There were certain looks that we wanted to be able to try to create that, but unfortunately we didn't get to that as much tonight.

We'll continue to evaluate all those things.



Q. I guess just with the running game struggles, is it a combination of several things, or have you isolated, or is it different things in different situations?

MIKE NORVELL: There are combinations at times. Like I say, there wasn't just one specific problem, but there's been times that we've had leverage issues. We've had obviously things in our technique. We've had track issues at times.

Obviously we have to give credit. They did a good job in a couple of pressures of forcing the TFL with corner cat I know on one that got us in that moment, but it's still gets to all three levels.

There are certain times where they're forcing -- I say force. They're adding an extra hat to a scheme that we might have that might force the ball out on the perimeter, and we have not been as good as we need to be whenever that ball does get into the perimeter to force teams to soften up on the edges.

So those are all things that we can -- it all benefits each other. If you can take advantage of playing a game horizontally whenever you have numbers, obviously it loosens the box, and it takes a little bit of pressure off those guys up front, but it's a lot of factors. Being able to create movement, create space. Sometimes that we're on the right guys, but if you don't create space, not a big area to run. Just too many no-gain or one-yard gain runs.

Q. So Clemson has scored at least 40 points in their last three games. How are you feeling right now about Florida State ruining that streak and the confidence that must give your team?

MIKE NORVELL: Obviously we're here to win the game. We did not perform well enough to do that. I thought our guys, they responded in challenging situations. I thought they fought throughout the game.

I was believing throughout it that we were going to find a way to make that next play, but unfortunately they did what they needed to do to get the win. But there were some good moments in the game and some good things that we could take from it individually, but also just situationally. We'll continue to work and be better.

Q. The time-out on defense near the end of the first half, I know you often -- pretty much always are valuing trying to steal that extra possession and get the ball back you do what you can with the one-minute drill. Is it just that is your mindset? Regardless of anything else, you're not going to change your

thinking on that based on how your team is performing in a given moment or a given season?

MIKE NORVELL: On trying to create extra possessions?

Q. (Off microphone).

MIKE NORVELL: Trying to maximize possessions. Obviously we knew we were going the ball there in the second half. If we can get an opportunity to get another possession, we get an opportunity to double up at the end of the first half, and the second half it's something we've been very successful at throughout the years. You know, you still have to push and fight to go win the game, and that's what we're trying to do.

We're trying to maximize every potential advantage or potential opportunity to do that, but unfortunately they were able to get down and go score there late. We weren't able to answer it there coming out of the second half.

Q. Considering Brock's last two starts and just the almost impossible situation he was put in with those two, how much can it help him moving forward? I know he didn't win. I know it was only 13 points, but he made some real plays in real moments, third down throws, fourth down throws, runs for first downs, to get him that confidence moving forward where he could be the guy in this program for a year or years to come.

MIKE NORVELL: Well, yeah, I think with each experience to see growth, to see improvement. He's very confident in what he does. Even in some of those challenging situations, after an interception where there was a miscommunication, there wasn't a sense of panic with him. It was ownership in both him and the receiver, and now let's go get it fixed and get better.

I think that he has a great demeanor about him. I'm proud of him for how he prepared and proud of Luke for how he prepared. There's even times going into it potentially getting him an opportunity throughout it. Obviously the game, how it played and the sequence, I elected not do that for this one.

I'm excited about that room. I think those guys -- you see Brock with now I guess it's his fourth game under his belt of experience, but I thought he did some better things than what he showed in his last start. I fully expect him to take some positive steps moving forward because he shows flashes of what he is capable of.

Q. Seven penalties tonight. You mentioned a little bit earlier. How much did that slow you guys down, and

what were some of the reasons for the penalties today?

MIKE NORVELL: It's disappointing. I don't know. The focus and emphasis on situational penalties on third downs, we signal it to them. We remind them. The first day it's one of the first things we talk about in fall camp of points of emphasis, and every day that we practice we emphasize that.

It's a lapse in focus, not intentional. Nobody ever wants to do that, but that's where we have to be better.

When you sit there and see that, when that shows up, it's extremely challenging. We had a couple of holding calls that put us in long yard situations. Had a couple of bad snaps. It's somebody that doesn't ever have those. We've had three bad snaps in the last couple of games, and I couldn't tell you how many we had in the last year and a half, two years.

Those are frustrating things that have showed up that we're still working every day to be better in those situations and to focus on those fundamentals, but it's got to show up in the game.

Q. With another off week ahead, just kind of what's the approach in terms of I'm sure guys are beat up, but also probably mentally fatigued over the first half of the season. What's the approach this week?

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, obviously there's going to be -- guys will get a few days off. We come back with a Friday game, so it's going to be a little shorter coming back that next week, but we've got to be able to rest the bodies.

We've lost a lot of guys this year with injuries to different line-ups and what that's looked like. We try to get guys back and healed up if possible and then continuing to grow and develop the guys that we have for our next game.

I guess, like I mentioned, there's a lot of evaluation of continuing to see what are the things that we've done that could bring spark, that could bring positive execution there in the moment and that can allow this team to put itself in a better position to go win games? That's what we absolutely have to get done.

It's disappointing in the outcomes that we've seen because I believe we're better. For whatever reason, those mistakes and obviously some guys take advantage of opportunities, and some guys have not.

As coaches it's our job to evaluate it and put our guys in the best position with the players that we have. I do

believe in those guys, and I believe in what they can do. We've got to do a better job as a staff in making sure that that shows up on game day.

They will get a little bit of time off. We have a lot of work in recruiting here with going out and seeing games here this week at the end of it, but it's going to be a big push on continuing to emphasis on fundamentals and the things that are hurting us in the course of these contests, and I want to get better at them.

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