

# Florida State University Football Media Conference

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## Head Coach Mike Norvell

### Press Conference



MIKE NORVELL: Appreciate everybody being here. As I mentioned after the game I was disappointed coming off of Saturday. Coming back watching the film, you know, it was a game that we had our opportunities. We had moments. We needed to be able to make a run with some of those times that showed up.

I thought we did a good job defensively at times of being able to disrupt the quarterback. Obviously didn't do a good enough job of stopping the run. Had some missed fits that allowed bigger seams than what we needed and what we expected, but you have to give credit. Brock ran hard. He hit open spaces.

I thought we did a good job being able to limit the big play defensively from an offense that's had a lot of them. I thought our guys battled in coverage, really contained the receivers for the most part throughout the game. Their quarterback is a really good player, was able to extend plays with his legs.

We had a couple of critical mistakes, which we touched on there after the game with penalties and a couple of those on us as a staff where we've got to be aware of -- have a better sense of awareness. As I said after the game, it's inexcusable for us on our part.

Then we had a couple of the long yardage third downs that extended drives. I think you look defensively that was probably the biggest thing. The glaring issue was just the conversion downs, third downs, and then allowing -- on fourth downs were areas of opportunities for us to get off the field. With that extended drives. We played 84 snaps. Time of possession. All those things kind of build upon themselves.

We weren't able to create any takeaways throughout the course of the game. Obviously that is what it was.

Offensively we needed a fast start. Came out the first couple of drives and were unable to do that. I was really pleased. I thought Luke did a good job being able to extend plays there. Brock as well. Even times where he

had to scramble. I thought they did a good job of their movements of keeping plays alive.

Obviously Luke's first drive being able to get down and get in the end zone was big. As you go through the course of the game we had some missed opportunities, some poor communication, things I touched on after the game. They were confirmed there.

As you go back and you look and evaluate, some of that is atmosphere noise, communication with the young quarterback, to offensive line on certain checks. Then just certain things we just have to be better in applying the communication that's being made.

In that game there was a couple of opportunities where we had the ball on the plus side of the field with conversions, a couple of shots, a couple of opportunities there on third and fourth downs that we have to convert on in those situations to be able to make that run because I thought it was a close game. Our guys played hard throughout it. It's just we have to make those plays in a rivalry game.

Like I said, the penalties, we had a few of those that really put us in more challenging situations. Obviously we have to be able to be better on offense.

Special teams was mixed. Our guys did a good job in what they had to do, but didn't really play as big of a role there in that contest as it has in others.

With that being said, our focus goes into this week. As I challenged players, coaches, everybody involved, our focus this week is to go get it done with the opportunity that's in front of us. There's been a lot of work that's gone into it, a lot of push.

Some young guys getting new opportunities, guys that are fighting for more opportunities and what they get to do. It's still about ultimately the performance of what we do and going to make sure that it shows up on Saturday. That's the challenge. That's the expectation.

We have to go get better, and we have to improve. Wherever guys are, whether they're older guys that have



been here for a while or whether it's new guys that are getting their first real experience, we've got to show improvement, and we have to go get it done on the field. That's what I want to see from every member of this program, and that's going to be the expectation.

**Q. Offensively over the course of the season the personnel has changed a lot, different quarterbacks. As you said, you've been playing a lot of the younger guys. Are the problems offensively consistently the same problems in terms of execution, or is it a matter of finding new things that might work? Where are you at as you evaluate the season on offense?**

MIKE NORVELL: Obviously it's not been very good at all. We've had our issues. There have been multiple issues. Lack of running game consistently throughout the course of the year. I think we've started to be able to have some improvement there.

We've had seven different starting offensive line groups in eight games. That's not the continuity there. Some of that due to injury. Some of that due to performance. We've got to be better in that regards, but it does present some challenges when it comes to communication, when it comes to just overall continuity of execution.

But we've played multiple linemen before, and I think that that's something that we've seen some positive steps there or certain elements of the run game.

We've had issues with drops throughout the course of the year that have limited some explosive plays, but limited rhythm, being able to have that burst in the passing game that's necessary. We've looked at different elements of things that we can do with the different personnel and trying to put guys in the best position to be successful, but there have been multiple issues of things that have shown up at inopportune times. We've hit explosive plays and had penalties that negated the explosive plays.

It's really been a challenging year in a variety of different ways of what we've experienced offensively, and with younger guys coming in some of it is young guys -- mistakes that have showed up that they just need the reps. They need the looks. They've got to go out there and sometimes learn through the fire of what they're going through.

You know, we have seen some growth from some of those guys that have lacked experience that are getting in-game reps and planning on continuing to see that and working to put those guys in the best position that we can for them to go and achieve success.

**Q. Two parts but about the same thing. Jake Rizy started at left guard. How did he do in that game? Andre Otto sliding behind Mo, is that a hope of pushing Mo with the recent snap issues that he continues to have?**

MIKE NORVELL: I thought Rizy, early the first couple of drives, getting acclimated to it. There were a few plays that he had to work through, but I thought overall big picture I thought he did some good things. That was a good defensive front that we faced. He held his own throughout it.

I think with Andre being able to -- he has a lot of versatility in his game. Him and Rizy both have got work at the center position. But, yeah, everybody is being pushed right now. We have to be better.

Obviously with issues that have shown up there with snaps and just overall performance, we've got to make sure that everybody is pushing themselves, and we're pushing this offense just to go out there and be the best that we can be. So, yeah, everybody is getting that.

**Q. Do you have a sense with some of the issues that have been presented on offense during the evaluation process maybe things that you guys miscalculated on? More so just learning moving forward to not make some other mistakes in upcoming offseason?**

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, obviously you go through every game and you try to identify the issues that show up in that specific game. Was it personnel issue? Was it maybe a schematic issue where you can be better? When you go to big picture, coming off the bye week there a few weeks ago when you look at a big picture approach to what were some of the continuing issues that showed up?

Some of it is probably evaluation of ultimate strengths of what we perceive that we were or what we executed in the moments. Some of it is personnel issues. Are we putting guys in the best position at what they do, what we thought they would be in the moment?

Then obviously how can you help guys grow and you'll be better or maybe possibly move them to a different position to kind of showcase their skills and talents.

Yeah, it's an every year thing. Even in years where you have success, sometimes you identify maybe a player or a position or a scheme that might have fit or might not have been as good as what you anticipated going in, and then you adapt and adjust through it.

I've done it long enough, especially on that side of the ball,

where it is usually a work in progress to pinpoint and identify things throughout the course of the year. We have not done a very good job offensively as a big picture of being able to do that and to execute the way we need to.

**Q. You mentioned earlier, but Miami averaged over 7 yards a rush. Was it something they were doing schematically that gave you guys trouble, or were they just more physical than you guys in the line of scrimmage?**

MIKE NORVELL: No, I mean, we probably had four plays where they hit the A-gap where we had an absolute misfit. There were two where we had everything clogged up. The transfer running back bounced it outside. We missed two tackles on the perimeter. That allowed bigger plays.

I thought our guys battled inside. The product is the product. People, they did a good job. They rushed for over 200 yards against us, and those are our issues that we have to correct, but it's unfortunate to see that happen.

They don't do a whole lot schematically. They changed and did a few things out of a different personnel group. We have to be better.

**Q. You mentioned it earlier. Some miscommunication between the O-line and the quarterbacks. Is there a challenging element to it when you have had you said seven different O-linemen start the game or O-line units start the game and three different quarterbacks? How do you kind of work on that moving forward with these few games, especially starting this week with North Carolina?**

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, it's one of those things. You emphasize communication. Obviously being on the road, that atmosphere, a lot of excitement in the moment, but for us you've got to go see. Whether it's a check from the quarterback or whether it's communication up front, guys making sure that -- if it's an offensive linemen, you have five guys next to each other. You can't have four executing a call and then one not.

Or making sure that as we're out there on the field if there's a check or something that we're doing that we're not communicating that clearly throughout -- and I mean, it's all levels. It's coaches, players. We have to make sure that we all understand the importance of it, and we try to create that throughout the course of the week of practice, but in the moment things moving fast.

Those are missed opportunities, and there were a handful of plays that come out of that game where you have ten guys operating and you see the space, you see the

potential, but we have to do a better job of making sure that especially you have young quarterbacks that are working in that situation and trying to be as clear as possible and then you have some different combinations there up front.

Just guys being locked in on the importance of that communication in the moments so we can go out there and execute properly.

**Q. Obviously with four games still left in the season, you have to concentrate on these four games in this season starting with this one, but once December hits, once that Sunday after the last game of the season hits, it basically becomes free agency in this sport now. You can overturn a roster and make a lot of drastic changes right after a season ends. How much of your focus right now is just on North Carolina? How much do you have to think about 2025 and making sure obviously a season like this doesn't happen again?**

MIKE NORVELL: You always have to balance it both because with recruiting, with everything that we're doing, making sure that we have a plan for moving forward to be better. Obviously this is going to be a critical offseason for us.

There's a lot of work that has been going on throughout the course of the year preparing for what next year and the future is, but for the players that I get to coach and the guys that we have, I mean, I have to give them everything that I have making sure that we're focused on being the best we can be here this week and then as well as the program to make sure that everything we're doing is preparing for what is ahead too.

I mean, there is definitely a balance when it comes to it. For these players it's all about going to win this game and doing everything in our power to make sure that we achieve that and then come the next week it will be the same focus for the next week, for the next four leading up to it.

Come December we have a plan. During the bye week we spent a good portion of time with personnel, our evaluation of where we are, what are the things that we need to do, what are the positions of need? What does that look like for us to be able to take a big step to where what's necessary?

You've mentioned the turnover within rosters. I'm really excited about a lot of our young players that we have. I'm excited about the development I've seen from them throughout the course of the year and I also know that we

have positions where we're going to -- we have a need, and we need to go and add elite level players to that position to come in here and complement what we have here on the roster currently.

So we've spent a lot of time with it already throughout the course of the year, but there is definitely a two-fold thought. For us we have to do everything in our power for this week.

**Q. You mentioned it a little bit after the game on Saturday about guys never pulling back, but in a season like you have right now, how difficult is it to keep guys motivated, to keep the focus on this game just with all the outside noise and the losing streak and things like that?**

MIKE NORVELL: We play the game. We coach the game. You do everything in your power to go be your best in the game. The record doesn't define that. We are where we are. Nobody wants to be where we are with our record, but we get an opportunity to get better.

You get an opportunity to go and take a positive step for you in your career with what you want to do, with what you want to be, what you want it to look like.

We all have a responsibility to go be our best. I've challenged the team. I've challenged the coaches. All of us. There is an expectation for our best to show up with our attitude, our effort, with all the things that we're doing.

I've been pleased with the team in that aspect of it. I mean, we're all pissed off for where we're sitting right now, and nobody wants to be -- to have the record that we have. Nobody wants to have played the way we've played throughout the course of the year overall big picture, but we still get the choice of what we're going to do with that.

I believe in the guys that we have. I believe in the way that we operate. Obviously the foundational elements of this program is to go get better being the best that we can be, and we've got to be willing to put that out there regardless of the circumstances that we're facing and what it looks like in the moment. If not, then it's not real.

If you are only going to show up when it's good for you, then you won't be showing up for very long.

**Q. What is your messaging to recruits who might have concerns about the record this season? Has it changed at all since the start of the year?**

MIKE NORVELL: Obviously you go into the season, and it's been a bad year record-wise, performance-wise at

times. Just looking at what we've gone through, it still goes back to every guy that we're going after we see them as an addition to this team to help make this team better.

Obviously you could look at record. You can look at performance, and you could see that as something that could potentially push away some players and then some guys they see the opportunity to come in and be a difference and to be a difference-maker in what we're doing and where we're going.

It's still about finding the right guys. It's still about finding guys that can come in. You look three years ago. I mean, that's what we found because our record sucked then, but we had to find guys that wanted to come in and be the difference-maker here at Florida State to help get our program back to doing something great.

The guys that were here that had talent that just needed to grow and to be able to go out there and play at a high level, they had to do that too. We were able to find the right combination of recruits that came in that became stars for this football team.

They made their mark, and they didn't come here because the record was good. They came here because they saw the opportunity to go be a difference-maker. Then we were able to win whatever it was, 19 straight games, win a conference championship, and a lot of those guys now starting as rookies in the National Football League.

I mean, we've seen that story play out, and this year it's been extremely disappointing that we have not played better when we've had opportunities. We've had our times to be much better than what we've shown, but the right guys are going to show up, and the right guys are going to be a part of getting this program back to where it deserves to be and where we all expect it to be.

Those are the ones I'm looking for. The right ones will say yes, and then we'll come in here and work our butt off. It's going to be a big great story to see.

**Q. Almost like a follow-up to that. You mentioned being excited about the young guys you have now. We saw against Miami BJ, Lawayne, Elijah kind of sharing the field at the same time. Is there an avenue for those guys to play more and feature more in these next four games and kind of start building that future you're excited for now?**

MIKE NORVELL: I think, once again, anybody that goes on the field, they have to earn those opportunities to get on the field. I thought last week all three guys that you mentioned really had good weeks in practice and

preparation. They've earned opportunities to get out there.

Now, in the game there was good and there was some bad. Guys had opportunities in the game to make plays, to go out there and operate and execute. Some of them got first experiences, and they realized the importance of some of the finer details of things that we need to do and where we can be better.

Now we have to grow from that, apply that this week. With the next opportunity you have to go capitalize on it.

I'm definitely very excited about the young group, the young guys that we have. Some positions there's been probably a bigger door of opportunity to walk through. We've got guys that right now, I mean, I look at our defensive back group, and I think our defensive backs have played well for the most part throughout the course of this year in the corner position, all of that.

When you see guys like Cai Bates, Charles Lester, those guys are getting exponentially better within the course of practice. Ricky Knight. I'm really excited about that group. They haven't maybe had as many opportunities just because of how we played with guys that are in front of them, but they're continuing to work. They're continuing to push.

I'm excited about that young class that we have and just the positive steps I'm seeing from them in practice day in and day out and really excited about where that's going to take them here as we move forward within the program.

**Q. I know you've operated both ways throughout your career in terms of being the primary play caller or not being the primary play caller. As you look going forward and you see a team that's got a lot of issues, is that something you'll look at in terms of you dividing your time to all the areas you need to divide your time, or do you feel like you need to keep that role long-term?**

MIKE NORVELL: For us and for me specifically it's what's best for this football team. I'll always evaluate each role. Everybody's role and what we have and what it needs to be, hasn't been very good offensively this year.

Throughout my career I've had a lot of years of being a play caller, and they've historically been really good. You look at it, and you try to see, Well, what are the issues? Why are there the issues? You look at how are things that we can all do to be better? If it means that my time can be served better for this football team and program doing other tasks in that, then I'll always evaluate those things.

I'm not so stuck on just doing a thing a certain way. I'll always evaluate that. Just like as it comes into this week, whatever we've got to do this week to help this football team put itself in a position to go win this game, that's what I care about.

When we get to the end of the season, I'm going to re-evaluate all aspects of it and say, you know, what is best for this team moving forward to go win the next game? That will always be something that I evaluate.

I've done it as a play caller. I've done it as not. Kind of different scopes. That's not something for me that I just sit there -- it's not an ego thing to say, Well, I call the plays. I just want to win. Ultimately that's what can I do to help this team be the best that we can be?

**Q. I know it's not the most common thing. We've seen a few places elsewhere of midseason coach, coordinator changes. Is that something you have to consider in a season like, this or is that more we need to get through it and address it in December when it's over?**

MIKE NORVELL: Like I said, my number one focus is doing everything for these players to go win this week. What are we doing for that? I'm watching all aspects of our program. I'm watching how our players work. I'm watching how our players -- the effort that they give, the intent which they bring. I'm watching our coaches and all things that we're doing.

That's my primary focus is that these guys are getting every opportunity to go be successful come Saturday. As you get through the year, if I see something changing in that regard and I feel like it is the best for our team to make a change in any area, then I've got to be willing to do that.

That is part of the job, but I do believe in the opportunity that's ahead and what we can do and all of our focus is going to be going into this week and hoping these players go put themselves in the best position to be successful.

**Q. How did you think looking back on the film the two quarterbacks played? I know you probably won't now comment on what the plan is moving forward, but can you see a scenario where in these next four games they both get plenty of reps to kind of evaluate what you have going in 2025?**

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, I think that you -- I've been pleased, especially for the situation these guys have been put in. I've been pleased with a lot of elements of their game that I have seen.

Luke has played in the last two games. I think he's learned a lot even in the last two outings of things, of areas of real strengths and then obviously areas that he's going to get better throughout. I've been really proud of him.

Brock and the Clemson game had some really good moments of what he was able to do in response. Same thing there in these last couple of games, but we're still working through a lot of just being a young quarterback.

For those guys with every rep that they get I'm seeing growth. I'm seeing application. I see the potential of what it can be, but they get to go out there, and they get to continue to pour in that work.

We've got to do our job as coaches and everybody surrounding them to help them be successful in those moments, but I am proud of the work that they are investing and definitely excited about what their future is going to be.

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