

Florida State University Football Media Conference

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Coach Mike Norvell

Press Conference



Florida State 41, Charleston Southern 7

MIKE NORVELL: First off, proud of our guys, been a tough last couple of weeks, tough season in general, but I was really proud of them for how they approached this week and the work that they poured in just from senior to freshman, there was a lot of investment to push to be better and obviously it's been one of those seasons where we faced plenty of adversity, but like I told them at the beginning of the week, we do always have choice in how we respond. What we're going to be willing to pour in, what we're willing to invest in others. The standard of how we want to play and what we want it to look like, with every player, I just want them to come out and be their best in the moment. Definitely pleased for the response we saw even throughout the course of the game, some good, some bad, some things that showed up, but I thought our guys were encouraging to each other. They picked each other up and then guys, whether it was a good play or bad play, I thought they maintained focus to go and make the most out of the next one.

We were able to play a lot of different guys. I thought we got some good experience for them and obviously that leads us into this last week. It's a huge week for us. I mean, immediately started taking about it in the locker room and this week means so much for our program. It means so much for our team and each individual that's in there and we want to make sure that we continue to push forward, to go be the absolute best we can be and, you know, go put a stamp on the end of this season with finishing up with the great performance here in a week from now. But for our guys, definitely proud of them and thought it was a good response from all the experiences we have had over the last couple of weeks.

Q. What went into the decision to start Luke tonight and I guess what did you take away from his performance?

MIKE NORVELL: I thought he's done a good job trying to -- you continue to work, whether through practice, obviously, you go out there and opportunities in the game,

an emphasis of trying to make sure we're protecting the ball, make sure we're creating the explosives and then your overall operation. It's been nothing -- as you go through it, it's not really been clean for either guy that's been playing quarterback to the standard of what we'd like but I thought Luke's done a good job of taking advantage of opportunities, some good plays and some bad plays but I love the mindset he's brought and I thought he showed a good response here today. Had a couple miss there early but really bounced back there before the end of the first half and obviously starting off the second half with a bang with a throw down the field to Ja' Khi and really relax and fall into the comfort of playing. Every experience is a big experience, Luke, Brock, both of those guys being as young as they are, I thought it was a good job for him and he lead us down to score a touchdown as well.

Q. What did you think about the defense? Obviously the third teamers gave up a late score but overall what did you think of it?

MIKE NORVELL: Overall I was pleased, the almost of triple objection like they do, it comes down to discipline, focus, communication. I thought our guys did a really solid job of that. There's some played you would like to have back or maybe that wasn't as good as it needed to be but to be able to go a majority of the game keeping them out of the end zone and not allowing points, it was really a good performance but those guys and I thought all three levels showed moments where they did really good things.

Q. Coach, you mentioned throughout the year the team sometimes lacking confidence. Can a game like today give you guys some of that, take the edge off going into a big game next week?

MIKE NORVELL: Oh, man, I think you have to take every experience and grow from it, whether it's a good result or sometimes even a challenging result. Sometimes the challenging results I think could give confidence if you will respond to them and if you can show the issues that have shown up, I'm aware of them, I understand how to correct it and I'm willing to go take that step, it's the belief in what you can overcome and obviously it's good to get out there and see guys upright, to see guys move with a little bit

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different step as we're starting to have success and so I think it difficult is something you can build upon, some of the positive elements we have been working in practice, showing up on the field, and guys performing in the moment.

Q. In hindsight you won by five touchdowns but it was only 3-0 and it's third and 11 and he hits Ja' Khi for a 12-yard gain in the middle of the field, kind of stood in the pocket. Was that when maybe he kind of clicked a little bit or you thought he kind of click and made some plays?

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, that was a big play and there's no question. You get in, first start, always going to be nerves, always going to be things you're working through but I thought that was a play for him that kind of sparked take a deep breath, go play the game. Trust your eyes, trust your feet, hold it in the pocket. There are times you're going to have to move. Ultimately that's a part of playing that position but I thought he really did some good things working through his progressions with his eyes, trusting his feet, in his drops, but that was definitely a big spark for him and ultimately kind of got us rolling.

Q. You talked about I guess was it the plan coming in to kind of not do the back and forth at quarterback but give Luke time and give extended time to Luke? And I guess what do you think the success after the weeks were, like you said, there may not have been a ton of it can do for him and his confidence going into one more game and then the offseason?

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, I think it's become. You'll see him kind of get in a rhythm and we were coming into it still open to the possibility of how much the quarterbacks would go back and forth, you know, but as we started getting rolling and kind of had in my mind I was going to try to get through three or four drives and just really see Luke as he started off what that would look like and as he got rolling and we put together touchdown drives, I thought it was something to just kind of let him continue to build upon the confidence he was showing and some of the things that where you saw him, the game was slowing down a little bit for him, just a route. Yes, I think all of those things will take a positive step going into this week and like I said earlier, I really like the fact that broke came in, even in his one drive tonight but he was able to go make some throws, lead us down, and finish in the end zone so it was good just being ready for his opportunity because there's been the back and forth and I thought he capitalized on what he had today.

Q. You've been giving the young skill players action over the last five, six weeks but it seems like today

they were making tougher catches, blocking a little bit better. Are you seeing them make that step?

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, they're putting a lot of work and that's one thing I am pleased with. I still see the continued investment. Regardless of the record, the feelings, especially those young guys, they're hungry to be difference-makers for this program. They're all at different places in their journey continuing to grow, continuing to mature, building confidence in what it is they're being asked to do and how they're being asked to do it but also just the physical and mental maturity that's agreeing with each rep that they get and I was really pleased to see those guys be able to go out there and execute in the moment and it was big for us because like I mentioned, a couple of young tight ends had big catches. Micahi Danzy, and I was so happy to see -- because that was basically the same play -- I can't remember, whatever Clemson, whatever game that was a few weeks back, but to see that response on that throw, it was really big for him. All the young receivers I thought got in, got some action. Elijah Moore, we're going to red-shirt him here so he did not play today and won't play next week but for all those guys that were able to get in there and get the work, I thought it was really positive.

Q. Coach, 175 rushing yards for you guys, six rushes over ten yards. With this season, when it's been so close to breaking out for you guys, just to get that game under your belt with the rushing yards, how big it is for them?

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, even in that there's still opportunities that we lift out there, but to be able to have success to see the backs, I thought we had some really good track runs where guys were right where they needed to be and able to create enough space to allow for the explosive. I thought the quarterbacks did a good job being able to control the edge for the most part. The offensive line and tight ends, they were battling. There are still plenty of things we have to get corrected even from today but I thought they were definitely fighting to make that to where we can have the balance and to be able to help us a little bit with the play action game.

Q. How do you -- when you're playing a over-matched team, how do you put into perspective the win for your players? I know you want them to enjoy it because it's been two months, really, since a win, but is it on to the next one? Do you let them enjoy it today? It's kind of a unique thing to win a game this week and then have Florida the next week. I want to celebrate the win.

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, you enjoy the experience that you just had and then our focus goes to what's ahead and it's a huge game for us. I absolutely want them to enjoy today.

Winning football games is hard and, yes, there's still good and bad that came out of today's content where we have to have an opportunity to go get better, but you enjoy the experience we came to win a game today and we were able to accomplish that and we'll enjoy that but just like I said in that locker room, everything between now and next Saturday after 7:00, it's going to be putting us in the best position to achieve success or, you know, has a potential to hold us back. I want everything from these players, coaches, everybody involved in the program to go fight for this next week and do everything in our power to finish this season the right way.

Q. Coach, you mentioned a little bit earlier about with so many moving parts around the coaching staff, how do you feel that operation was to do?

MIKE NORVELL: I thought the staff did a good job. Defensively I thought it was a very coordinated approach. I thought Randy did a nice job. We moved and changed into some dynamics of where we were, Randy was down on the field, we moved a couple coaches up in the box. I thought they communicated well. Everybody has to take on a little bit bigger role and our coaching staff, grateful for the work they're pouring in and just pleased to see that execute the way that they did, being there for our players.

Q. Ashlynd Barker in particular but guys have had opportunities to not finish plays. For him to do that and also you've got the fumble recovery on special teams, too, that's something this team has really lacked all year --

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, that was as big -- for us, we have to have those explosive plays and it's been something that we've been really good at the last few years and obviously this year it's been a challenge for us. On the punt, I thought it was awesome just seeing a freshman. We worked the drills, young, wide receiver, obviously God got great speed, something I'm excited about for what his future can be but to see him out there on a punt cover and to take a shot on the ball, get the ball out and for us to be able to recover it, that was huge. For Ash to be able to finish the interception, get a big return because those are things. We've had our moments, we've had our opportunities but we haven't finished. It was good to see guys step up and be able to make that play and obviously that was big for today's outcome and then obviously the expectation of what we're trying to do. Thank you, guys. Have a great day.

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