

# Florida State University Football Media Conference

Monday, October 13, 2025

Tallahassee, Florida, USA

## Mike Norvell

### Press Conference



MIKE NORVELL: Appreciate you being here today. Coming off this weekend, I know we had the postgame press conference, I know you talked to coordinators. Frustrated, disappointed. Outcome coming out of that game, expectation going in.

Going back and watching the film, there was plenty of opportunities. We had a lot of missed opportunities in that game.

Defensively I thought there was hesitation at times. I know we talked about it after the game just with at moments communication, eyes. There's times where I thought guys played a little hesitant, whether it was the thought of not missing or just not trying to have a negative play in the moment. We weren't as fast and reactive as what I've seen us play, the level I've seen us play.

Their quarterback did a good job of extending plays. We need to clean up things with regards to our rush lanes, being able to create pressure. That was obviously a big part of the game the other day that allowed for drives to extend, for big plays to occur.

We came back yesterday with a focus defensively of going out, playing fast, communicating fast, all things that we do. We need to be the aggressor. I thought there were too many slow reactions and hesitation when it comes to that.

Some of that, when you see guys in position, they have the opportunity to go make the play, we need to go make the play. There's times where there's too much communication going on. That's something that as coaches we can be better at, making sure guys have a full understanding and can cut it loose, play and react.

Offensively that was a good defense we went against, aggressive and attacking. I thought we were able to establish some things on the ground. There were some good moments there. I thought we were able to create some explosive plays. There's a few drives that we got to be better.

We got some injuries that showed up throughout the course of the game that tested our depth a little bit. We have to overcome those things. Some guys that you got in the game, you need to continue to progress to be ready for those opportunities.

We did have the turnover there in the second half, which was big, something I've hit on and harped on of having to get corrected. That has to occur. With those opportunities, give somebody a short field, losing a possession. When you look at the turnover, then a couple penalties, that really affected us there offensively. We got to clean that up.

But I thought for the most part, I mean, there was some good plays that were had. Obviously some things we can continue to build on. I thought Micah Danzy showed up and was extraordinary there the other day. He's shown some great flashes, had some disappointing moments. Really like what I'm seeing from him and his continued growth within the offense, the things he's showing capability to do. We'll build upon that.

Just big picture as a team, we've got to jump up and sprint forward. Anytime you have a stretch of games with losses or disappointing outcomes, I mean, you got to start with myself, look in the mirror, evaluate where are the things that are costing us, consistent things that have shown up.

In some areas it's a different issues, things that we've got to make sure when those moments, when they show up throughout the course of the contest, we're putting ourselves in the best position to be successful.

The identity of what we work towards and what we do in those key objectives that we know we have to accomplish, that's got to show up.

Unfortunately three straight losses, in conference, all come down to one possession on the scoreboard. We've done enough things to earn those losses. I don't feel as if this is a team that at any point has pulled back or not made the investments to prepare or to be ready.

But we have to as players, coaches, everybody, apply that in the game. It's got to show up to be victorious in those



challenging times. Those games are going to come down to a play here or there. We've got to go make 'em.

I know this is a team, we're pissed off where we are, what we've done. The only people that can go fix it are us. For all the things, anything that's going on beyond this building or anything that's going on outside of our control, we can't worry about that. We got to focus on the job that's at hand, our focus, just going to get better so that come Saturday night, 7:30 Pacific time, we'll be ready to go, play our best game.

I have a great deal of confidence that's what's going to occur, that's what we're going to do. But we got to go get it done.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. You guys had a couple chances in this game, also in the Virginia game, where you have a lead and the ball, don't get anything out of those possessions. Players have to make plays. Are there things you guys can do to help them in those situations?**

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, I think Gus does a great job in how he sequences thoughts throughout the course of the game of trying to understand what to expect, what might show up. I think everybody, there's times, whether it's a call, whether it's a decision, something that we expected somebody to do, at times it doesn't happen.

I think the opportunities and the calls, I mean, I like, I understand all parts of the sequencing of it. But there's times that guys will make a play, and sometimes the defense will have a good call against a certain look.

Yeah, we want to put our guys in the best position. Ultimately there's some drives that things don't go exactly like you want. For us, owning the football, being able to try to play ahead of the chains, obviously being aggressive in our mindset, those are critical.

I think when you look offensively, big picture, I think we've done a really good job of that throughout the course of the year. In some of these games where it's back and forth, we've played a couple of good high-scoring offenses, particularly Virginia and Pitt, when you're in those type of games, every possession does matter. We got to create the stops defensively, take advantage of possessions offensively.

I mean, yes, there's things that we can continue to build upon. But I think Gus has done a really good job. I think we've utilized our players. We have had a couple of those second-half possessions that we've come up short. Yeah,

we've got to continue to improve there.

**Q. You mentioned the ball security issues with three fumbles, different running backs. Is it something that's not translating over to what's being coached?**

MIKE NORVELL: It's not good enough. I mean, that's probably one of the more disappointing things just 'cause there is a year-long expectation of that emphasis. You can point to it, talk about it, you can even rep it. If it's not showing up in the game, that's on us.

There's three different running backs. We had a couple receivers put the ball on the ground. Whether they turned into turnovers or not, we have to be better there. If what we're emphasizing, how we're emphasizing it is not getting across, we need to look at new ways of getting that point through because it is costing us. It's cost us in critical situations.

Yes, we're evaluating all reasons why. There are some things that we'll continue to address in different ways this week to make sure that come Saturday night, that issue gets fixed.

**Q. You mentioned communication. Are you talking about communication in the sense of getting sub packages incorrectly or player communication or both?**

MIKE NORVELL: Both. There were a few instances where we had to be better as coaches, making sure that the urgency, the urgency of calls, urgency of personnel groups, urgency of getting guys where they need to be in those situations. We had a couple of those instances that showed up on Saturday. That can't happen. Those are things that we've got to be better at.

Then there's times that on the field where you see players - I say this - being hesitant with being delayed in their alignments or on-snap footwork or keys because of extra communication. Either it's not clear enough on the field or if there's a slight bit of confusion. That's on both. That's players, coaches. That's where we have to be able to look at that, be able to be cleaner.

The players have a responsibility of the execution of that sometimes. If they're not correct in the trigger or the thought, what needs to be done in a certain situation, that's something that we've got to get addressed through the week and they've got to own that so in the game we can get out there and play as fast as we need to be. Those are things that I'm looking at.

You have to answer the question, Why? Why is that

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

occurring? Too much information? Is it maybe an area where our eyes need to be better in translating what we're seeing or what we need to be able to communicate with the guys to the left, to the right, so you eliminate any of that doubt or hesitation and we're able to play as fast as we possibly can.

**Q. Tony yesterday said he thinks the guys are thinking too damn much. Is that something you agree with? How do you do that while still playing the defense that you want to play?**

MIKE NORVELL: Well, I mean, we want fast and physical. When you go against offenses that can present a lot of different options, obviously Pitt did a good job there on Saturday of utilizing the running back in the passing game, utilizing a lot of different formations, things that we've seen. At times this year we have done a great job of being able to have that balance.

You can't just sit there and be stationary. That's not the world of what offensive football is now. You have to be able to show different looks, make sure we're accounting and being able to adjust to things that can show up in a game.

You also want guys to be able to go out there and put all their talent on display, to be confident in the position they're supposed to be, whether it's coverage, leverages, where they're supposed to be fitting in the schemes, if it's a pressure, where it needs to hit.

I think that's something we all as coaches, offensively, defensively, if you feel there is not the immediate reaction, and there is hesitation with different looks or different things that guys are getting asked to do, there's times you got to tone it down and be complex in presentation but maybe more I'll say simplistic in what all you're asking a player to have to accomplish within the course of a certain game.

**Q. Some of the recent weeks, linebackers being isolated in coverage a few times. It's been costly. Are they physically capable of doing what you are asking them to do? Do you have to scale back? How do you avoid those things happening?**

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, I mean, you're aware of all matchups, where challenges can present themselves. You try to minimize those times of that exposure while also other things that you're trying to accomplish within different looks.

That's where you've got to have a plan to put your guys in the best position to be successful. At times we've been

able to do that at a very high level. We have had a few times where we've gotten beat in certain situations due to maybe a matchup, certain times that there's also some player responsibility of leverage and alignment and things that they can do what's being asked of them.

It all works together. There's times where you understand where the weakness of a call is. This is in every phase. It's not always a good answer, but it can be a best answer. You know where the weakness, vulnerability is, to be able to have a rally around that.

That's where you have to work to be able to attack in a variety of ways, but also understand some of the areas where you could be susceptible and try to clean that up and get that fixed.

**Q. You're a guy that puts a lot of internal pressure on yourself. Do you feel external pressure?**

MIKE NORVELL: I think the external is for my desire for this program. Well, I care about every past player that has come before, the past coaches, what it is to be a Florida State Seminole, the expectations of this program. There is nobody, and I can stand for it, there's nobody that wants it more than I want it, right, with everything that I have.

The internal is there, but it's also because of who, because of what that I get to represent. Being the head coach here, I want it all. I want this program to be seen, celebrated. I want us to win every damn game every day. I want all we do, how we represent it within the community, the development of these student-athletes.

That external, I want to that, too. I don't want to be at a place where there's not expectation, where there's not pride, where there's not people that I care about, that I want them to have the joy for what this program means. So that's the external I feel.

All the different opinions, that doesn't do anything to me. Like, what I care about is I know when it's good enough and I know when it's not. There's times that, hey, you put everything you have out there, and there's a time you get knocked down. If it's best on best, we come up a little short, then I can live with that. If there's times where I know we absolutely should have, could have, need to be better in whatever part of it, then that's what weighs on me. That's what we have to get fixed. That's what we have to improve upon.

I don't get caught up in the outside messaging. I know what this program means. I know what it stands for. I know my responsibility in that. That's where I put the pressure on myself, everybody within this program, for us



to show up and for it to look a certain way.

**Q. With all the injuries you had on offense in the second half, seemed like you went most of the second half just running the ball. What's the prognosis on having some of those guys back? How challenging is it to call an offense when you're that limited?**

MIKE NORVELL: We got down to I think it was six or seven key guys that have played for us. I think we were down four receivers. Randy wasn't able to go. Obviously Mike up front.

When you get into the depth of that, it's going to change certain things. It's still about trying to put our guys in the best position to be successful. Micahi rose up, did some good things. You saw Landen Thomas had a big play in the course of the game.

It's still about being able to mix and match how we're presenting things. That's where it gets a little bit tough when you're already into the depth, you have additional injuries, all that you can do.

I thought one of the things coming out of it is, man, some guys that got opportunities, they need to take a step, they need to show that they're ready and capable of a bigger load if it's put on them because it's what we need.

There were some good plays. We were able to throw the ball in certain situations in the second half. But there were also some missed opportunities, whether it was a communication, a guy knowing what he's supposed to do, being in the exact right spot of where he's supposed to be. That challenges everything.

I think as we continue to progress throughout the season and for those young guys to continue to work and emerge, I do have confidence in what they can be.

Yeah, I mean, there's no doubt, that was a difficult circumstance to have to work through there in the second half.

**Q. After the last game of last season, you said this was going to be an immediate quick fix. Through the first month of this season, seemed like you were prophetic about it. Conference championship, national championship, state championship is off the table. Is there time in the next six weeks to show this can be a quick immediate fix?**

MIKE NORVELL: Absolutely. It starts with this week. It starts with this game that's in front of us. We lost the last three games by one possession there on the scoreboard. I

thought there was plenty of opportunities for us to be successful. We didn't get the job done.

It comes down to all of us being able to take the steps necessary to go win. Still, like I said a week ago, I love coaching this team. That hasn't changed. I see this group of who they are, what they can do. There's going to be good and bad moments.

I've continually watched them fight. I've continually watched them work, pour into each other. We got a game on Saturday. My expectation is for it to be the best game that we played throughout the course of this season. When you go and do that, I've got a lot of confidence in what we can do on the road, conference opponent, all those things.

That's what has to show up. That shows up, we'll build from there. We'll be able to go and do all things I think this team is capable of.

I've been in this situation before. It's a very similar track in '22. Probably wasn't a whole lot of big expectations for us in that year. I don't know how many big expectations we had in front of us this year coming in.

You had a big win early. Beat LSU, all those things. Start off this season beating Alabama. We had a couple close losses that we had opportunities to win. This year same.

I don't like it. It doesn't make me happy in any regards. When you play good people, which last three opponents are all very capable football teams, if we don't play to the level that we're capable of, you're going to get beat. We got beat. It's about us fixing it. It's about us getting better.

But I believe in the potential of this team. We've shown what we can do. We've got to do that this Saturday. If we'll do that, then we'll build upon that for the rest of this year. I know what that can equal to, as well.

Yeah, I mean, every person in this building is fighting for that improvement and fighting for the result that we need and that we desire.

**Q. We saw two noble players went down in the Pitt game. What is the status of Duce Robinson and Stefon Thompson?**

MIKE NORVELL: Stefon, I'll share it now, he'll be out this week. He's hopeful not going to be too extended period of time. But he will be out this week. Hopefully with a bye week, a little bit of time after that, we'll be able to get him back sooner rather than later.





Duce coming off the game, unfortunate that he went down. I do think there is a good chance this week... We'll see how it progresses. Obviously the availability update Thursday night at 11 p.m., is that what time y'all are going to get that, awesome. We'll see how it progresses with Duce, how that goes. He was moving around yesterday. We'll kind of see how he goes with practice tomorrow, Wednesday, to see what his availability will be.

**Q. I know you believe in this team, the fight they have, their consistency. I'm not going to ask if you're worried about them quitting. Does pressure become too much at some point for them and you?**

MIKE NORVELL: Pressure... I can answer for myself. Hell, no. I've been through enough through my days that I've seen a lot. I love being at a place that there is pressure. I love being around people that embrace the opportunity.

I tell guys in recruiting, I tell guys when you're a coach that comes to work here, if you can't embrace expectation, when it doesn't look right, when it doesn't go right.

Look, I mean, I want that for, once again, who we represent. That's everything to me when it comes to this football team, these players, the work that they put in, their careers, all of it.

That's going to be life. You're going to have tough and challenging situations that show up. What you do in those moments, how you respond in those situations, that's going to define where your future goes.

I think we have the right guys in watching them. Also realize these guys are 18 to 22 years old. You'll see teams, we've been one of them over the last couple years in college football, there's been times where you get caught up, you get distracted.

Even with all the want to and the desire, you see guys that hesitate or are caught up in trying not to mess up. They're not putting their best out there because of the fear of failure or the fear of judgment, social media, all the things that are out there. It's not hard to get judged. Sometimes somebody has to work through how to manage that.

These guys have a great stage and a great platform of what they get to show themselves with and who they are, their skills and talents. That also comes with a lot of responsibility. As a coach, you try to help guide them through all experiences. That's what also makes it that much more rewarding when you're able to overcome.

I mean, I know we've talked about it a lot, I think back to

Jordan Travis' story, the pressure of being a starting quarterback at Florida State. At times when it doesn't go well, what that can look like, what that can feel like.

For all the pressure that was experienced at the front end, what that was able to mean to him on that journey when he was able to overcome it, when he was able to have the success. He'll be able to be a lifetime example for so many people because of his resilience throughout it.

No, that's a long answer to: No, I don't think the pressure's going to be too much.

**Q. On Saturday there was a heated conversation with Coach Knighton that fans saw. I'm not asking for specifics. How do you go about trying to uphold it not seeing it from a coach? Is that something you talk about afterwards?**

MIKE NORVELL: There's a lot of passion that goes into the job that we have. I've got it. I want our coaches to have it. But there's times, if something's not to the standard of what is expected, I'm not going to just sit back. It needs to look a certain way, be a certain way. Sometimes it can be on you. Sometimes it can be on somebody else.

We're in the moment, we're going to move forward. It's going to be the way that this program deserves it to be. So those things happen from time to time.

T Knight is an incredible coach, a great man, does a wonderful job with those players. We've had good conversation. I'm excited for what's ahead for him, for that D-line room, the things that we're going to be able to accomplish.

**Q. Pure curiosity. When your team is used to getting up at 6:30 in the morning east coast time, practicing at 8. A game at 10:30 their time, how do you adjust to the body clock?**

MIKE NORVELL: There's been a lot of thought of what do you do throughout the course of the week. Do we practice at different times... When you're dealing with 104 players, trying to work some of the logistical things that didn't quite fit for us this week.

Part of the dynamic, we're going to leave on Friday. Knowing that at least it was going to be a late game a little bit earlier in the year actually helped us to be able to make those plans.

Initially if it was going to be an earlier game, we were going to leave on Thursday night. Because of the late game, I

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

don't want guys going out there Thursday, sitting at the hotel all day Friday and Saturday.

I think we've got a great plan. We've done a lot of research. Conversation with guys that have played east coast to west coast, played late games, prime time games, just different things that they would do even in the course of the travel, when they got there. We're going to keep the guys up on Friday night a little bit later with our meetings that we do just to kind of hope it adjusts.

At the end of the day the circumstances that surround the game, we got to put ourselves in the best position to acclimate. When that things teed up, it's time to go play. We got a good plan from all the things that we've done. Once it's teed up, if it's not all ideal and perfect for what you want, go fix it with your play. You'll be able to control the things that we can control.

Now with the new age of college football, I guess this is the new normal. You're going to see these type of games, flying across the country. Time slot, we don't have a say in that. It's just all part of it.

Thank you, guys.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports