

Atlantic Coast Conference Football Kickoff

Wednesday, July 15, 2026

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Florida State Seminoles

Coach Mike Norvell

Ashton Daniels

Ja'Bril Rawls

Duce Robinson

Press Conference



Ashton Daniels, coming in, joining the program in January, tremendous leader, somebody that is truly all about the work, great skill set, ability. Has done a wonderful job in his short time here in Tallahassee representing this football program.

We got an exciting team, a team that I think is a very talented roster. As I mentioned earlier, it's a great combination of guys that have been here, last year we had 19 true freshmen that played 4-0 or more games. Young team, guys that got throne into the fire and had to learn on their road as we went through the highs and the lows. A year ago you lose five games by one score, there's a lot of lessons to be learned. It's about taking the lessons, the application of that moving forward to go be the best that we can be.

We understand the expectation. There's no person or place that has higher expectations than we have being part of this program, making sure we're doing things the right way, the Florida State way, competing for championships, in all things that we do.

That is our expectation as we go into this season with a very talented roster and a great coaching staff that we've been able to assemble.

You've seen the continuity within the staff when you look at Coach White coming into his second year as the defensive coordinator. Really excited about the personnel; excited about the staff under his leadership on that side of the ball. Really taking another step in our performance to what we're going to do defensively.

Offensively Coach Harris going into his second year within the program, and as our offensive coordinator has done an outstanding job putting his mark within the program as well as continuing to help develop the young men we have.

Obviously, the addition of Adam Scheier as our special teams coordinator, somebody that is extremely innovative, somebody that is going to put our guys in great positions to win in that third of the game.

MIKE NORVELL: Appreciate everybody being here. Definitely excited for the season that's ahead, the opportunity that's in front of our football team. Grateful for the work our players have been putting in this off-season.

Coming off disappointing results from a year ago, but excited about the core of this football team, the guys that have returned, some of the young players that have continued to emerge, decisions from guys to return that had other opportunities.

The choice that they made to come be difference makers and leaders within this program.

Definitely excited about the newcomers that have joined our football team, the way they've really come in and embraced the culture. Really having a mindset to leave their mark, to be able to pour everything they have in representing this incredible football program, institution, our wonderful fan base.

Honored to be here today with three great young men that will speak on behalf of our football team, guys that have truly been through the journey. Ja'Bril Rawls, a guy that I think is going to be one of the best corners in all of college football, a guy that has been at Florida State coming out of high school. Has had his ups and downs dealing with injuries, but truly has emerged as a great player, and just a wonderful representative of what it is to be a Seminole.

Duce Robinson, I think one of the best receivers in all of college football. His choice to forego going to the NFL, to come back and leave his mark here, truly just to go and help lead this football team, be the best player that he can be.



It's an exciting team, one that understands all that's in front of us. We have a great opportunity, a great platform. Obviously these guys are excited to get out on the field here in this next month and prepare for it here in fall camp; ready to kick off in week zero of this college football season.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions.

Q. You called this an exciting team. How do you capitalize on the conflation of talent in what feels like a strike-now season?

MIKE NORVELL: When you look at our roster, I think in all phases, starting in the trenches of the guys up front, four of our top six defensive linemen have returned. Some guys that have great talent and ability. Be able to bring in a couple of newcomers that I think are going to be very dynamic.

You know, great leadership at the linebacker position, you know, guys that have been through it. Whether it's the transfers that have come in that have joined very productive, talented players, as well as you look in the defensive backfield. I think we have got some great play-makers in that position, and guys with versatile skill sets that will allow us to do a lot of different things.

And then offensively starting up front, we were able to bring in a good group of transfers that have joined that bring experience, coupled with the guys that we have that have continued to grow and develop as well as just an outstanding group of skill players with the receiver position, led by Duce, guys like Micahi Danzy, Jayvan Boggs, and some really impressive newcomers that have joined the program. I really love our running back room, running back and tight end room and the versatility, what we're going to be able to do. That is surrounded with the quarterback that can truly make it happen.

We want to be versatile, attack. We understand with the talent that we have, I'm not going to put any limits to what this football team can accomplish and what we can do.

The time is now; the time is today. The willingness to show up, be the best that we can be. If that's what we'll continue to do, I got a lot of confidence in the results showing up.

Q. FSU fans aren't just asking for wins, they're asking for consistency and championships. You've obviously won one. What makes this team different and why should FSU fans be excited about this upcoming season?

MIKE NORVELL: I love the mentality of this group.

Obviously you see throughout the journey just the margin between victory and defeat, it's a very thin line. But it's about the mentality, about the response. It's about the work that you're willing to put in, not getting caught up in all the other things that can surround you on the journey that we find ourselves on.

But this football team, yes, they are talented. What I love is their work, their camaraderie, the sacrifices that they're willing to make, the way that they challenge themselves on a daily basis.

We have won, as you mentioned. We went through a stretch where we won 19 straight games. There were still a lot of close games, one-score games. The ebb and flow of what shows up. It's the way that that team came together, the mentality they brought, how they responded throughout that journey that really set them apart.

I've seen that within this team. This is a group from the players that returned to the guys that came in, we were looking for the right type of guys, guys that were going to represent our program and perform and execute at a level that is going to make our fan base proud in all things that we're doing.

This is a team that I do believe will rise to the occasion from the coaching staff to the players, everybody involved in the program, to go make sure we're doing things to the level of our expectation and that Florida State standard.

Q. You often talk about you know the expectation, you know what it looks like, you've seen it done, but four out of the last six years at Florida State have been losing seasons. What can you say to this fan base to make them believe that you can bring Florida State back to its traditional winning ways?

MIKE NORVELL: In reality, the words don't matter, it's about the action. That's our focus. I could stand up here, you could say a lot of things, but it's still about what's going to show up. That's what I believe in.

As we came into the program six years ago, there were some challenges that we faced. Those first two years, for all the different circumstances that showed up, we stayed focused on our path and the growth, the improvement, making sure we were ready for the moment. We had players that bought into that.

As you get into '22, '23 season, a couple of the best stretches that Florida State has had, 19-straight wins, being able to put ourselves in that position was something that had to be worked for. It wasn't just because we talked about it; it was about what was done.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Yes, the last two years as college football has changed, continuing to evolve, we have to be better. This past season we showed glimpses of playing at a very high level. Big wins, some great moments, but also had some disappointing results in some close games and opportunities we did not capitalize on.

It's not about me giving a great speech, trying to say things. It's about showing up and being willing to do. That's the focus of this coaching, this football team, that's my focus, is pouring everything I have into them, into this staff, into the opportunity we have in the '26 season.

As I said, I know what it looks like because we've done it. I know the steps. I know what we need to do to get back to that level. I'm very confident what's it's going to be.

Q. A couple days ago you made a pretty good hire in Tom Herman. How important was it to you to land a guy like him as you go out there and prepare for the season knowing he has head coaching experience, a proven winner?

MIKE NORVELL: Being able to have the opportunity for Tom to come and join the program is something I'm excited about. He came in the spring, was able to come out to practice, visit with staff. Obviously had to compete against him years ago when he was at Houston, I was at Memphis; we have a long relationship.

For how things all transpired, we were able to visit a little bit this summer. We found a role and opportunity that I think he can make a great impact in helping support this staff, being able to add a new perspective to things that he's done, to be able to help assist the guys within our football team just to go and achieve at a very high level.

Q. Last year you stepped back into the CEO role by nature with Gus as the play-caller. Now you're back as the primary play-caller. What did you learn last year being able to observe from the high-level view that you can apply to this year?

MIKE NORVELL: Yeah, I mean, I've been fortunate, going into my 11th year I guess of being a head coach. For me, most those years were as a play-caller. As college football emerged, the different aspects of personnel, being able to step back, kind of focus and address needs that I felt within the team, having a guy I trusted, was great.

And to be able to see -- you know, it wasn't unfamiliar. I had a long-lasting relationship with Gus. Was grateful for the work he did. But for me, every year's a learning process. Every year you're continuing to grow and mold,

develop things for the guys that you have, putting them in the best position.

I've been fortunate throughout my career to be able to do that as a high level, being a play-caller, coach, growing up on the offensive side of the ball.

I'm excited about the group of players I get to work with every single day, the play making ability they have and the positions we're going to be able to put them in.

Q. Transfer portal, obviously you've gone there for the quarterback these last few seasons. What did you see in Ashton Daniels and why it's important to reach into the portal?

MIKE NORVELL: I think Ashton is a guy that can really do it all. As we talk about experiences, Ashton has a great deal of experience throughout his college career. He's been put in a lot of different situations that he's had to work through. You see somebody that's just continued to grow.

As I did my research getting to know him, the coaches I worked with, the people around him, so many incredible qualities of the young man, the talent, the ability.

When he joined the program in January, the words then become secondary because you see it in his actions, just the passion that he has for who he gets to work with. You know, he's not somebody that comes in having to wave the towel and give a speech, but when he talks, people listen just because of all the things they see from him.

As I even watched him through 15 practices in spring ball, his continued growth. He's progressed and I think has an incredible ceiling in front of him; a guy that's a natural play-maker, can extend plays, live in the pocket, make all the different throws; a guy that has a wonderful understanding of offensive football being in a bunch of different systems. Incredible smart and an incredible worker, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Ashton Daniels.

Q. What was it about Florida State that made it feel like the right program and fit for you?

ASHTON DANIELS: Yeah, I think it really just came down to the people in the program. Obviously speaking with Coach Norvell, Coach Tucker, Coach Malzahn at the time, then obviously knowing Duce and a couple of the guys previous to me making that decision, just having conversations with them, you just know they're the right type of people. You know they're the type of people you want to surround yourself with every single day.



That meant so much to me.

I'm a relationship guy, a people person. Obviously coming on my official visit, seeing how Tallahassee was, obviously Doak Campbell, the environment, community, culture within the locker room, it was a no-brainer for me.

Q. How are you preparing yourself to get ready to play one of the loudest stadiums in college football?

ASHTON DANIELS: Yeah, I mean, I've had a lot of experience playing in a lot of different places that were very, very loud. I think we're going to go into each and every week with a great plan, whether that be signals, whether it be any type of communication. We're going to go into that week having a great plan.

I confide in that, I confide in our team, in our coaching staff, and we're going to be prepared for this.

Q. Coming out of Buford, you played for one of the most prestigious high school programs of all. Leadership and winning, how have you taken those attributes and poured it into the locker room here at Florida State?

ASHTON DANIELS: Yeah, when it comes to the quarterback position, I think those are two things that are very, very important. When things get hard, they're going to look to me as a leader. I know that. I own up to that every single day.

I know my actions on and off the field, in the locker room, in the community, everyone's going to see that. They're going to feed off that, and that's how they're going to know me as a person.

Just surrounding myself with winners I think is the biggest thing when it comes to winning. If you have a bunch of guys that will do anything to go out there and get the job done and get a win, you're going to win games.

I think that's what we have here at Florida State. Everybody in the program is a winner. They want to win. I think that's so important, especially to feed to the young guys, the new guys, who come into a program, don't know the ropes of things, how things go.

Those are two such important things that determine a winner and determine success in football.

Q. Ashton, On3 recently released an ACC quarterback top ranking and left you off the list. Do you take that critique at bulletin board material?

ASHTON DANIELS: It's such a hard thing to handle because obviously you see that kind of stuff every single day. That's social media nowadays. It's football. It's how the world is.

I think what separates the best players from the worst is how they handle that kind of stuff. If you sit there and you look at it and you sulk about it, you're not going to get anywhere from it.

Obviously I saw that, but I don't care. People can say whatever they want to. I don't care. What's going to show, like Coach said, is the actions on the field.

Obviously using that kind of like you said, as bulletin board material, that's in the back of my mind. I want to win every single day. I want to show up to the facility, give my best every single day, and that's what I'm focused on.

Q. This is your third school in three years. That's becoming a more common thing. When you think about what you're seeing that's different inside the program, outside of not having the 6'6" receiver, what is different?

ASHTON DANIELS: Yeah, I think kind of like I mentioned earlier, just the people. We have a team that I want to say over 50% is newcomers. The chemistry that we have right now from winter workouts to the spring to summer in the short time we've been together is like no other team I've been on.

Seriously, like we meshed so well together. You got guys on your team that will die for their brothers. I think that's so important.

When things get hard, when you have those games where it comes down to one play, one drive, that's what you count on, is your teammates. Who can I trust on my team? You look to your left and right and you know you can get the job done.

That's the biggest thing. We have a bunch of guys that love each other, they love football, they love Florida State. Those three things combined right there, we can do anything with that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. You and Ja'Bril can switch spots and we'll take questions.

Q. What stands out to you about the transfers in the secretary this season?

JA'BRIL RAWLS: What stands out to me is their work



ethic, how they came in ready to compete at the start. I feel like that's one thing that really stood out to me.

Q. Defensive coordinator Tony White, just what you like about his scheming, his style? How would you describe his defense? What do you like about his leadership?

JA'BRIL RAWLS: His defense lets us be able to play fast, let us have our eyes on the quarterback. I feel like it makes us feel more comfortable out there, playing more freely.

What was the second question?

Q. What you like about his leadership style.

JA'BRIL RAWLS: I love his leadership style. He just brings a lot to the table. He lifts his guys up every single day, makes sure he gets the best out of us every single day.

Q. What is one thing or one lesson you've learned from any of your coaches that helps define your football career?

JA'BRIL RAWLS: I would say one lesson that I learned from Coach Norvell, just being my best every single day, giving my best every single day no matter how I feel, no matter if I don't feel the best.

Just making sure that I can be the best version of myself every single day, make sure I take that one step every single day.

Q. You go from being a guy that was impactful but young, out there figuring it out on the fly, to now being the elder statesman in the room. How have you kind of ingratiated yourself into that leadership role? Is it a verbal thing or a lead by example and trust the guys to follow along?

JA'BRIL RAWLS: I would say more so leading my example, having the guys come along as well. Last year I kind of was just going along with the flow. I wasn't as vocal and everything like that.

Once I got the hang of it, knew that I could be one of the ones, man, I just felt like just me being able to lead by an example every day, how I come in, just showing the younger guys how to be the best version of themselves every day, I feel like that was it.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Duce.

Q. You're hosting a pickle ball classic for the Special Olympics. What went into that decision and why is it important to you?

DUCE ROBINSON: I always felt a special kinship to the Special Olympics. Ever since high school, a lot of our managers had been a part of the Special Olympics. I just know how much sports means to them, you know what I mean? And seeing that, growing up around that, just made me really close to it.

Then I love pickle ball. I know a lot of people love pickle ball. It made sense. People would want to show up, compete a little bit, have some fun, while also being able to give to something bigger than themselves.

Through that, I want to give all the donations to the Special Olympics and hopefully bring some smiles to people's faces.

Q. You had a chance to get evaluated by the NFL. What were maybe one or two things that you took away that you're going to try to improve?

DUCE ROBINSON: Yeah, that's a great question.

A couple things that they had said, they would love to see me improve my game upon, they would love to see that I can play a couple more positions, play all over the field.

A lot of times last year I would be outside in the boundary. This year they want to be able to see me all over the field, which is one of the great things about Coach Norvell and Coach Harris' offense, is they put their play-makers in positions to win, no matter where it might be.

So I'm really looking forward to being a part of that offense.

Then to go along with that, just being able to run a little bit more of the route tree. Last year I was running a lot of the same routes, so just being able to show that I can be a complete receiver in myself, be successful at the next level, that's one of the main reasons I came back.

Q. How have you seen Danzy and Boggs improve and develop?

DUCE ROBINSON: Those dudes, they have ceilings about as high as I've ever seen. Danzy is going into his second true year of being a receiver. He's still figuring it out on the fly. I don't think a lot of people realize that about last year.

Last year was his first year playing receiver, right? He had the year he had with that being the first time he's ever done

it before.

Seeing his route tree expand, seeing him clean up his footwork, seeing him clean up his releases, he's going to be very, very dangerous.

Then Boggs, just being able to become a little bit more comfortable in the system, getting a year under his belt. Obviously he was able to play in some big games last year, have some big moments. But you've seen a lot of his maturity grow like up in his mind, the way he's mentally processing the game, the way he's carrying himself, the way he's even leading, speaking up throughout the room, it's been really impressive to watch.

So I'm really excited to see those two guys grow. I'm really excited to see our entire room, though. We have some young guys who have come in, started to kill it, especially throughout the spring. We have a couple more guys, couple more sophomores, guys who are going to be redshirt freshmen and sophomores, who are going to kill it.

Ultimately as a room, I think we have a very, very talented room. I'm really excited to see what they do when fall comes around.

Q. You've experienced different schools, then being at the same school with a different quarterback. The nature of change and how you've been able to adjust to all the change in your career.

DUCE ROBINSON: Yeah, I mean, I think human life is about change, right? We get into a routine, then that routine gets broken. We have to adjust. We have to adapt. We have to make the best with what we have, right?

Like you said, this is going to be my fourth quarterback in four years. Ashton is among the best. Ashton has been absolutely fantastic with everything he's done since the very first day he's shown up. I knew Ashton way before. We had started to form a friendship. Ever since he's shown up on campus, that dude has been every single thing you would want in a quarterback.

Obviously on the field he's one of the most athletic guys we have on the team and his arm talent is through the roof. But then off the field, like his leadership ability, the way he connects with the guys, the way he carries himself, like the way he does absolutely everything, is exactly how you want your quarterback to be.

I'm super excited to see what he's going to do. I'm really excited about the energy around the team. It just feels different. There's a buzz, there's an excitement, there's

just a buy-in throughout the guys. You can feel it. Every single day the guys are excited to come to work.

The closer we get to camp, to season, it just continues to grow and grow and grow. I personally can't wait to see what that is going to look like when camp comes around, and ultimately what that is going to look like when season hits.

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