

Florida State University Football Media Conference

Saturday, October 27, 2018

Willie Taggart

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: First I'm since I've been here I felt like we had some guys that quit on our football team and that can't be tolerated. One thing you can't do, you can't quit. You quit, you don't play. So we've got to do a great job of making sure we've got the right guys and at every aspect of the game, offense, defense, special teams. Didn't play well at all and did all the things you can't do against a team like that. That's on me and our coaches and our players and everybody that's here and we've got to find a way to get that right.

Q. The worst home loss in program history. Do you still feel like your program is heading in the right direction?

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: I do. I think a lot goes with it. A lot of time -- changing our mentality and I think mentally we're a weak football team and we're not mentally strong yet and that's part of the culture to changing it to what you want. There's a lot of good things and a lot of progress has been made. Not as fast as we want in the win/loss column but it's being made. This game, we made too many mistakes and didn't play well when we needed to.

Q. What was your message to the team after the game?

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: Pretty much what I told you all in our opening statement there. Embarrassing. I was disappointed. We're going to find the guys that quit and we're going to find the guys that kept playing and make sure that we keep those guys in there. So there will be some changes come next week.

Q. The play was one thing but also got a couple guys kicked off for throwing punches. How do you handle that and what do you do about that as a program?

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: Discipline. We'll discipline. That's unacceptable. That's mentally weak. That's what losers do and that can't happen. That's got to change. Again, that's not acceptable. That can't happen.

Q. Despite the final score, it was a scoreless game after the first quarter. The issues early on --

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: It makes it real tough, against a team like Clemson, you can't make mistakes against that team. You have to take advantage of every opportunity that you have, and we had plenty and we didn't take advantage of it. We snapped the ball [over the head of the quarterback] when we had a nice drive going and all these penalties we had, just undisciplined and dropped balls.

Every aspect of it, everybody took part in making mistakes and against the No. 2 team in the country, you can't do that.

Q. Is this the most disappointing performance you've seen, considering the last few weeks you had made obvious progress and then take a step back, is that a surprise to you?

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: It is because we made so much progress. To be able to come in this game and then we get down and then just lose our cool, lose our -- whatever you want to call it. It was

surprising because I thought we got over that hump, and apparently we didn't. You know, again, when things didn't go our way, we didn't handle it well.

Again, that, more than anything, where we've got to get better as a football team is just handle adversity the right way.

Q. After seeing the gap between Florida State and Clemson, how long do you think it will take seasons-wise to get Florida State back to a place where it can compete in the ACC?

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: Personally I don't think it's going to take long. I think we've got some issues that we need to correct. I think we all know that, and get those corrected, I think you'll see a big change in our entire program. But I don't think it's that far away. We just got to keep track. We've got to keep climbing and keep working and keep recruiting and that's the only way you're going to get to where we all want us to be.

Q. The defense seemed like it was giving you guys every chance early on and then they kind of fell apart. Do you focus on -- as far as evaluating the defense, do you focus mostly on the early stages before it got out of hand?

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: I think you evaluate the entire football game. We're not going to make any excuses for anything. Our defense on the field, they have got to get off the field. No matter how many times you're out there, you've got to get off the field. When it comes to third down, you've got to get off the football field.

We're going to evaluate the entire game from the first to the fourth quarter how we played. We should be playing the same way we played in the first quarter, we should be playing the same way the fourth quarter, no matter what the score is. And that's the mentality we want with our football team that we don't necessarily have yet and we'll get there.

But again, we didn't play well enough, offense, defense, or special teams.

Q. You've been doing this for a while. When you feel like, I don't know how many times you felt like in your career a team quit or players on your team quit. How hard is it to turn that around to get them to not do that?

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: Well, part of it is those guys just can't play. That's a big part of it, and then you've got to find the winners. You know, find the winners on your team and make sure when you're out recruiting, make sure you're recruiting winners. That's really important. You can't just recruit off the Internet. You have to make sure you do your work and get the right kind of people here.

Q. A couple of injury questions. Do you have any update on Deondre, Brian and Dontavious?

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: I don't. I haven't talked to our trainer yet. I know Deondre went out. I think he hit his head on the ground or whatever.

Then who else did you ask me about?

Q. Dontavious and Brian.

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: I know Dontavious, he had a rib injury there. Haven't gotten the final results on him yet. And one more time.

Q. Brian Burns.

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: Brian's fine.

Q. You had 16 penalties for 134 yards. How disappointing is that, especially when they are just lining up penalties that you guys have continually had throughout the season?

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: Well, it's very disappointing. Again, we went backwards in this game. We wasn't back to what we were doing earlier in the year; things that we had improved on so much in the last few weeks. To get in this game and make those mistakes, again, is very disappointing.

Those things can't happen. Just a lot of guys took turns. Our young guys did it. Older guys did it. Sixteen penalties, that's just undisciplined. You can't win ballgames, I don't care who you're playing, with 16 penalties.

Q. Rushing yards, influenced by the bad snap and sacks. How tough does it make it when a team is able to remove one facet of your game?

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: It's tough when you're one-dimensional. I don't care what team you are or who you're going against. It's hard to play the game being one-dimensional.

When you're playing against a team like Clemson, you can't be one-dimensional. You have to have both going and we wasn't able to get either/or.

So that's very disappointing from that standpoint and frustrating.

Q. You talked about the players. How do you evaluate your coaches during the season? Obviously the players aren't totally responsible for what happened. Do you evaluate your coaches during the season or wait till after the season?

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: I think you're always evaluating coaches, like you evaluate the players each and every week, you evaluate the coaches, as well. Each coach is responsible for their guy. If their guy is not playing well, then that's on you as a coach. You've got to get them to play well. That's your job, to get them to play well. That's ultimately on the position coach to get a guy to do the things that we need him to do. That's what we have to get to as coaches and as players. If they can't do it, then we need to make sure that someone else is in there that can do it.

Q. Great weather, a lot of good recruits in today. After a game like this, how do you overcome this in recruiting?

HEAD COACH WILLIE TAGGART: I think these guys know why we recruited them. A lot of guys are here recruiting because we need them. They understand that. I don't think just this game is going to wipe out years of recruiting. Some of these kids, you've recruited for a long time and built relationships. One game is not going to just say, 'I don't want to be there.' I think a lot of guys that was here today know some our deficiencies, and I think that's why they are interested in Florida State.

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