



Florida State Post-Game Press Conference Head Coach Mike Norvell

September 4, 2022



COACH NORVELL: What a finish. We talked to our team all week that this game could come down to one play, to one opportunity. And, you know, as you watch throughout the course of the game, I thought our guys put on display an incredible heart. You know, the passion which they played with, just the effort, the physicality, I thought we dominated the game for the majority of it. Obviously, there at the end, you know, we had some things that happened that we just can't have. But the one thing that happened on the last play is what we absolutely need.

It's determination. It's heart. It's a willingness that, even after a disappointing moment, our guys responded. Anybody that's around our program, they know they hear that word all the time, "respond." How do you respond when the challenges arise? And effort showed up, guy made a play there at the very end and gave us an opportunity to win that game.

We needed that game. It's big for our program. It's big for those kids that are in that locker room. It's big for everybody because we did have a great stage to put on display the identity of what I believe this team is made up of. And it's young men with character that love to work, that believe in each other, that believe in the process.

I would have liked to have probably finished that game a lot cleaner than what we did. But as I've said before, sometimes you need to go through what you need to, to prove you can get there.

And even in that moment, it came down to one play, and our guys rose to the occasion for that last play. So very proud of them. It will be a lot to grow from, from this game. A quality opponent, a lot of draft picks out there on that field. And our guys, they rose to the occasion there at the end to be able to finish it. Proud of our football team.

Q. On the second-to-the-last play, when [Mason] Taylor's first knee hits the ground, what explanation were you given by the officials why LSU should have been able to run an additional play?

COACH NORVELL: Well, they made a first down; so the clock would stop. But whenever it was stopped, it had to go to review. Obviously, that extends the period of time. So the play would start with a snap. So they were going to get that snap off. You know, it's just one of those things. There's human error that shows up in all. And I thought the officials did a phenomenal job throughout the course of the game in the communication, the way they operated.

That was one. It's a tough bang-bang call. And it's just all part of it.

Q. The range of emotions to go from the fumble to you want to tie and then the block. What was that like on the sideline for you guys?

COACH NORVELL: Oh, man, it's never good to have a disappointing play or a disappointing moment; but, ultimately, it's where you let your mind go.



Florida State Post-Game Press Conference Head Coach Mike Norvell

September 4, 2022



And even after the fumble, you know, just go play the next play. Go play the next play. Ultimately, they did a good job of executing. They ran a good two-minute drive. They were able to finish in the end zone. Go play the next play.

And special teams, unbelievable today. Two blocked kicks. I thought they -- obviously, two takeaways that were created in our punt coverage unit. I told the guys throughout the course of the week, you never know when that moment is going to show up. You better be in position to capitalize on it. And I think that's what that game just illustrated in all facets.

Q. Is that something you work on a lot?

COACH NORVELL: It's a little bit of both. I mean, yes, we have a scheme every week of where we believe that there might be a weakness or an opportunity. But that heart, desire, want-to, that's young men playing the way that they need to play here at Florida State. And I'm just grateful for those guys to rise up in that time.

Q. You said you needed a win. Can you imagine a point in the future when you look back at this night and say this was the start of something?

COACH NORVELL: I think that every experience you have is the start of something. I have a lot of confidence in this team. We're still in our growing process. We have an unbelievable foundation that's been set. There were games last year that helped really push us moving forward. I thought -- when you're sitting at the beginning of a season with a really bad record, the response that you show, and that's the start of something. That's where, even in those moments a year later that shows up. I mean, our guys, they don't doubt. They continue to play. And that's going to help them here at Florida State.

It's going to help this team as we continue to grow. It's going to help our program in the future. It's going to help them for the rest of their lives. And that's what brings joy. I'm having so much fun coaching this team because they embrace that. They embrace the work. They embrace the challenges.

So to say it's a starting point, no, we've been on a journey. There's been some real challenges on that journey, but you see guys that rise up to those challenges.

Q. Jordan [Travis], what do you say about his performance?

COACH NORVELL: That was one of the best defensive lines in the country. They've got some really good players all over the field. And I thought that Jordan's decision-making, the way that he located the ball, the command of the offense. There's some challenging moments there. He took a couple shots that probably don't feel real good. But you take the throat to Pokey [Wilson] there, that touchdown, that was incredible, a great catch, all those things. But somebody coming right down at you, that shows the heart, the belief, the willingness to step in.



Florida State Post-Game Press Conference Head Coach Mike Norvell

September 4, 2022



Bad things might happen after it, but he's a phenomenal young man. I'm so proud of the steps we've seen from him. He's a great leader for this team.

Q. Question about Pokey [Wilson] and competition.

COACH NORVELL: Those guys, they're growing. You look at the receiving corps today, they came up with so many big plays. We had some missed opportunities, but so many big plays. Third downs. Watching them work on the perimeter, Deuce [Spann] on the short reverse. Those things, those plays, are so impactful throughout the course of the game. And we have competition at receiver. We have guys that have great play-making ability.

And when they push themselves throughout each day of practice, when they push themselves through the offseason, they don't run and hide from the competition; they rise up. I think that's what you're seeing in the case with a lot of our guys. We don't know who's going to be there in the moment, but you have to be prepared for it.

It was great seeing Pokey [Wilson] play the way that he did and really had some impactful plays here tonight.

Q. (Off mic.)

COACH NORVELL: Yeah, absolutely. He's a redshirt freshman, a guy that has an incredible future in front of him. He's really doing a good job and playing more in the defensive backfield. He's just scratching the surface of where he's going to go. But in that time with that opportunity he was able to go out there and make the game-winning play. And that should really help him as he continues to grow.

But he's done everything we've asked him to do and I'm excited watching his career continue to develop.

Q. (Off mic.)

COACH NORVELL: Once I saw it get blocked, I was just watching the crossbar, making sure that it didn't -- but no. I mean, it speaks to what this program is about. I mean, you just never -- you are unconquered. That's it. Ultimately, at the very end, it's just -- anybody could just take a step on that last play and all right, here we go, we're going to overtime.

But they still had one. They still had one. And for our guys to believe it, I mean, you watch them throughout the course of the night. They kept pounding their hearts. We talked about that all week. And that's what's going to win games. That's what just won that game. It was heart; it was determination. It was the willingness to give a little bit more in the time of need.

Ultimately, we're going to go back and watch that film, and there's going to be a lot of things that will probably irritate me. But I'm excited about going back to work and getting those better. But you also



Florida State Post-Game Press Conference Head Coach Mike Norvell

September 4, 2022



saw some really good characteristics out of this team with the physicality, the toughness, the mindset of how they played.

Offensively, defensively, like I said, that D-line, for our O-line to go out there and be able to -- it was a grind to establish the run game. it was a grind to be able to do that. But I thought they did a really nice job. And guys just competed throughout.

Q. The play-caller, just a simple pick, that instance (off mic)?

COACH NORVELL: You go back and you look at something we ran earlier on a short yardage situation. The execution, could I have had a better play? Absolutely. If it scored, that would have been a really good play. I felt good about the moment. It's the first time in the last couple of years that that's happened to us. But it happened right there. So that's something I have to go back and look at and make sure that, hey, in those moments, we're going to be aggressive. But we've just got to make sure we don't put the ball in jeopardy there. And, ultimately, I call the plays; so it was on me.

Q. (Off mic.)

COACH NORVELL: I told him the other week he's built for this. He's not built for it just because of the athletic ability. He's built for it because -- you guys watched him practice. You watch the mindset; you watch the approach. He has to go and prove it every day. He's not always had the easiest journey, but he gets an opportunity to go out there. And I thought he played at an exceptional level. Even with that, there were still some missed opportunities. And for us to win a game like that, to come down to the last play, that's what we needed. Now we've got to go get better.

We've got a conference play starting up here in a little over a week, and we're going to enjoy this one. I promise you. But we've got to come and we've got to take those steps because we've seen flashes. We've seen flashes of what we're capable of. I like what I see from this team, but we've got to be more consistent and we've got to make sure we're continuing to execute better from start to finish.

Q. (Off mic.)

COACH NORVELL: As many as they bring, because I'm excited about that. I need to just take a moment and think of all of our Seminole family. All of our fans that were here, that was incredible. I told the guys, you go into a place that, a game, you go on the road and you go into a hostile environment. That was an unbelievable environment. I mean, it was incredible feeling the energy, the passion. The greatest fan base in college athletics. To hear them, to feel them, from when we landed yesterday and got to the hotel, I mean, got chills for the welcome that they had. They took over New Orleans. And obviously it was a great night for everybody and you better watch out.

Q. I'm sure you guys were confident during the week, but did you feel as the game went on, you got more confidence?



Florida State Post-Game Press Conference Head Coach Mike Norvell

September 4, 2022



COACH NORVELL: They have the experience. They know they've prepared. And I said throughout the week, I had a lot of confidence in what this could look like, what it could be. But you still have to go do it. And when you go out there and you have the experiences and you say, you see the benefits of the work and the labor and all the things that you go, that's where the confidence grows.

It's not because we hoped this would happen. It's because they worked for it to happen. And ultimately, there's still a lot of things we're going to have to clean up. And we have to continue to go to work for this team to take the steps necessary of where we need to go. But obviously tonight was a great moment.

Q. Going into the bye week, is that going to help things out a little bit going into this week having it off?

COACH NORVELL: I'm excited about having a few days to let guys heal up and really to reflect and to see these first two weeks after a really tough and challenging camp. We need to now take those steps. Because we've had great opportunities. We've been on the road. We've been at home. We've got to see some great examples of our guys and what they can do.

Now we've got to utilize every one of those days. Now, a couple of them we're going to take off and let these guys' bodies heal up, but for us, it's about that constant growth and what we're trying to do. I know our guys will do that as we get back to work next week. Thank you, everybody.