

Louisiana State University Football Media Conference

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Ed Orgeron

ED ORGERON: All right, guys, what a great day for the Tigers. Very proud of our staff, the way we recruited, short time to get a top-5 recruiting class for the LSU Tigers. Obviously we lost some guys at the end we're disappointed in, but we feel like we have a great recruiting class and we went out with a specific need, to get middle linebackers, but the best middle linebacker in the country, Jacob Phillips, Tyler Taylor and Patrick Queen and we felt there were three middle linebackers we needed on our football team. We feel like we got the best pass rusher in the country, K'Lavon Chaisson. Very excited about our defensive front in Tyler Shelvin, the best player in Louisiana and number two defensive tackle in the country. Excited about Kary Vincent, the number two corner back in the country, along with Jontre Kirklin. We feel like we've got two of the best free safeties in the country along with Todd Harris, so DB and Corey have done a tremendous job. We put our defense on the board today.

We feel we have an excellent start, an excellent foundation with this recruiting class. Very excited about the way Jeff Grimes recruited four excellent offensive linemen, most pleased with the two quarterbacks that we got, Myles Brennan, Lowell Narcisse, both different quarterbacks, but both great quarterbacks. Lowell Narcisse is one of the best players in LSU and in the south, Myles Brennan in our opinion is one of the best players and a drop-back quarterback.

We're pleased with Clyde Edwards-Helaire, our running back, very pleased with our receivers. Racey McMath is a big, tall receiver. Mannie Netherly is already in town. We're excited about them boys here. We went out and evaluated and these guys worked hard to close at the end and excited about our class. Any questions?

Q. Coach, you talked about the middle linebackers you went after in this class, three of them. With some of the guys you have coming back, how do you see that playing out? Are these guys that could make impacts right away?

ED ORGERON: No question we have to have guys that can come in and play early. All these guys will be



with us in June. Dave is going to put them in football school very early June. Those guys will be studying their playbook and getting in good shape, but we think they will be physically ready to go. We have to get them mentally ready to go, three great guys, excited to have them.

Q. You talked about the four and five-star guys. You got couple three-star guys, like Racey McMath. Y'all are known for putting those guys and developing them in the NFL. Talk about those guys who may not be as heralded, but --

ED ORGERON: Doesn't matter if you come in five star, four star, three star, two star with us. Everybody is going to start the same. Everybody is going to develop. Everybody is at different stages. We're excited about Racey McMath. We went out and evaluated this class and chose this class and a lot of these guys came to camp. I remember looking at Racey McMath when he was a sophomore. We think he's going to be an excellent player for us.

Q. Coach, you had a coaching change four games into the year and sometimes that can make a recruiting class collapse. What kind of effort did it take to finish in the top five?

ED ORGERON: First of all, it's the power of LSU. But our whole objective when I became interim head coach was to win enough games to get the job. We were recruiting but we didn't really start recruiting until I became full time coach. We are excited with our recruiting staff, within the department, our football staff the way we pulled together to get most of the good players in the country.

Q. Coach, you were the first person to offer Caleb on a scholarship. He had not played much football at that point. What did you see then and how far has he come to be a five-star prospect?

ED ORGERON: To be able to bend, turn, outstanding pass rusher, he was long and lean and I think that was beneficial for us to get him to camp early. We were the first to offer him and I think that's one of the last things I had in the conversation with him before he went to the airport.

Q. Coach, you talked about the quarterbacks, you've got guys that have two -- Brandon Harris has a year of experience and two more. How do

you see them meshing and fitting in with this team?

ED ORGERON: Well, Aranda is going to do a tremendous job of opening up the quarterback competition like he said he's going to do, everybody is starting with a clean slate. Obviously Danny has done a tremendous job for us. We have some very talented quarterbacks on our roster. We're going to see what type of offense we need to run with the quarterback that can run it, and obviously we know that Myles is a pro style quarterback and Lowell is a dual threat quarterback. We think both of them will have success at LSU.

Q. Ed, negative recruiting is something that happens all the time. Were you surprised at the comments that Mathis made yesterday and the indirect comments that Wilson made today referring to Pete? There is no doubt he's a great coach, but about his recruiting?

ED ORGERON: We got the guys we want and we are happy to have the guys we want. The guys we didn't want we'll play against them. Pete Jenkins is a great coach and that's all I'll say about that.

Q. Coach, how much influence do you think playing linebacker in Dave Aranda's scheme had on getting these prospects that you were so sought after?

ED ORGERON: We went back to his early days in coaching in Wisconsin, all the guys he developed, walk-on guys that became drafted and you look at the development of our linebackers, Kendell Beckwith got better, Duke Riley was the MVP of our team. We saw this in Dave's recruiting. He's a smart man and he does a tremendous job of recruiting.

Q. Ed, y'all had the advantage, you were on the staff and a lot of the coaches were on the staff but still there are a lot of defections when there is a coaching change. How did you guys do such a good job of hanging on to most everyone?

ED ORGERON: First we had relationships with these guys and our guys did a tremendous job. We had a Monday night pow wow. We called them every week. I think most of the recruits were looking for the staff to stay the same and me to be the head football coach and when I became the head football coach it was more or less a celebration when I went into most of these homes, so it was a good thing.

Q. Can you talk about the importance of these young guys in the secondary coming in in this class? You had to replace Tre' White and Jamal Adams. How big of a responsibility will they have first day they step on campus?

ED ORGERON: The good thing is JaCoby Stevens and Grant Delpit are mid-year graduates. They are working

out with our football team. They will get 15 great days of spring ball. Kary Vincent is a very good player. Jontre is also a very good player. And those guys are going to be here in June. They're going to compete. Corey is going to do a tremendous job of developing these young men like he always has.

Q. How hard is it and kind of what were your thoughts on Dennis Johnson and Austin Thomas going out on the road for the first time ever in December and being able to come away with guys like Phillips and Chaisson?

ED ORGERON: Thank you for saying that and first of all we think the world of Dennis Johnson and Austin Thomas. Austin Thomas went into Nashville, Tennessee and recruited two five-star athletes, Jacob Phillips and Ja'Coby Stevens, he was able to go on the road for us for the first time and did a tremendous job. We also sent Austin Thomas to our top recruits. He did just a tremendous job in the home. Dennis Johnson is an up-and-coming coach. He did a tremendous job of recruiting K'Lavon Chaisson and he was close to some of the other great players. The guys love him in the home. The coaches love him and the players love him and he's a fantastic coach.

Q. You talk about putting a fence around the state of LSU, but a few got away this year.

ED ORGERON: We have work to do. I said we're going to get the best players in the state of LSU to come here. We missed out on some guys and obviously we have work to do and that's in our primary area. Those are some of the things we need to get fixed.

Q. (No microphone.)

ED ORGERON: You have to build relationships, get on 'em early, getting them to camp and get in there and make sure we're doing the right things to keep 'em in LSU. I also think the more we win games and the more we win championships the more they want to come here.

Q. 23 guys does that give you room to athletic director a graduate transfer if that fits your scheme?

ED ORGERON: Sure, we are looking for a couple guys that are going to be eligible. We may sign a guy in a week or two and also if we don't use those guys that adds to next year's class. Gives us flexibility.

Q. Seeing some of the comments Narcisse has made seems like he as a chip on his shoulder to prove he can get it done. The injuries he's had, what do you see from him in the future?

ED ORGERON: Well, first of all, he's been doing a lot of rehab. He has a great mind-set. We're glad to have

him. We fought to the end to get him, and it wasn't easy to get him. We are glad he's here. I feel like he is one of the top LSU players that stayed home which is important to us. I feel he's going to compete at a high level and be a very good quarterback for us.

Q. Mannie Netherly and Kary Vincent, are they going to participate in spring ball -- I'm sorry, Mannie, is he going to participate in spring ball and run track?

ED ORGERON: Right now he's going to be participating in spring ball. That I know of.

Q. Obviously running back becomes a major priority for next year's class and your staff, you said when you first got the job, after Signing Day you may have everything finalized, is that still your plan?

ED ORGERON: First of all, we think we have the Heisman Trophy candidate coming back in Derrius Guice and we happen to have him and obviously next year we're going to have to go out and get the best running back in the country, maybe one or two. I think our staff has done a tremendous job. We're always going to evaluate what's best for LSU and make those decisions when we feel like we need to.

Q. To piggyback on what you were saying about work to do, building relationships, how much is northeast LSU and that Monroe area going to be circled for you going forward?

ED ORGERON: Yeah, and we went in there and got Rashard Lawrence last year. It's not like we've been losing players out of Monroe. It's not like we didn't go there and try this year. It's not like it was a poor job of recruiting, in my opinion.

Sometimes guys are going to choose to go other places, but hopefully we can get the next best player until northeast LSU and we're going to give it all we got.

Q. I'm not sure when we are going to see you again, so what do you anticipate spring being like, your first spring as head coach. This recruiting class and these guys are going to be part of that.

ED ORGERON: Number one, we're looking forward to coming back Monday and starting some football. It's the first time our offensive staff will have an offensive meeting. It's the first time they will do any installation under my candidate. We're excited about that. We're excited about the things we're going to do different with Dave Aranda. I know he's in his second year, and he has a lot of stuff he wants to get in. So those are the things we're going to look forward to.

Next thing is our off-season conditioning program with

Tommy Moffitt. Our guys have done a tremendous job with that. Then going into our fourth quarter program we're going to change some things around and do some things that are more competitive. So those things are up-and-coming now. In spring ball we're going to continue to practice the way we have been with high energy, get better at the fundamentals, make it highly competitive. There's going to be a new situation, a new offense there. I think it's going to be exciting. I can't wait to get to work with our guys.

Q. (No microphone.)

ED ORGERON: This is LSU. Always will be LSU.

Q. You've seen other teams in the SEC, nearly half their class were early enrollees. You guys had six in this class. How much would you like to expand the early enrollee program?

ED ORGERON: As much as we can. It all depends on how many guys graduate early. This year we only had seven slots so it depends on early graduation, depends on your roster the way it is. This year we filled it up as much as we could, as close as we can and hopefully we have more next year. But it depends on graduating seniors.

Q. On the flip side of the fence around LSU, how do you think your experience having worked from the east coast to the west coast affected your outlook as far as making sure you don't overlook opportunities across the country to fill gaps in the roster?

ED ORGERON: Well, you know, I think looking at our recruiting area it's going to be LSU, then Houston. I think it's a primary area for us in Texas. There's a lot of people -- it's our largest alumni base, Houston. There's a lot of LSU people in Houston, obviously it's a great area to recruit. We're the first SEC school this way on I-10. We are close there. A lot of guys want to come to school here. Then we're going to head to Mississippi, Alabama, Atlanta, go down there to Florida. Those are going to be our recruiting bases, always been. In a school -- if a player from California is really interested he has to show real interest for us to go out there. We're not going to waste our time. So our recruiting is mainly going to be in Louisiana and in the south.