

Louisiana State University Football Media Conference

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Ed Orgeron

COACH ORGERON: Welcome, good to see everybody on Competition Tuesday. Hope you had a good day off yesterday.

Coming off a good team win versus BYU. We're very pleased with our preparation going into the game by our coaches and our players, and a very focused group the whole week.

The whole trip down there, you can just tell before the game that they were ready to play and for that, we're pleased. They are believing in the preparation and the hard work. I've got to thank Tommy Moffitt for the great job he did with our guys over the summer and into camp. They were in good shape. We came out of the game pretty healthy.

We were very physical and we have got to thank him. We are bigger and stronger and faster because of the job that Tommy Moffitt and his excellent strength staff did.

We are proud we started five true freshmen and played 17 freshmen and they did pretty well. This is a fantastic freshman group, and we are going to continue to play those guys and we are going to continue to grow with them.

Some positives from our offense: First thing is about the ball. Zero turnovers and zero sacks. Very proud of that. Great job by the offensive line, Coach Grimes, good job by Mike Canada calling the game, the protections, and us protecting the football.

As you know we had 41 minutes and 54 seconds time of possession. We only punted one time. Danny Etling we thought played fantastic in managing the game. His passes were on the money. He had great decisions. He was 14 out of 17 for 171 yards. We ran the ball for almost 300 yards. It was a physical football game. We took what they gave us.

Wide receivers caught the ball well. We had seven different players catch a pass and run the football. I think it's the first time in a long time that LSU has done that. We are very proud of our playaction game.



Things we want to improve on and need to improve on obviously as you all know is red zone efficiency. We made some mistakes down there, and we have many different plays we need to call, and we are going to work on that very hard this week, and we want to eliminate the penalties that we had, especially the beginning of the game.

On defense, again, another great job and preparation by our coaching staff, led by Dave Aranda, who is one of the best in the business. An outstanding performance by the defense, started four true freshmen, 97 total yards of offense, minus five rushing, a shutout. Just a tremendous job by the defense.

And we're going to continue to improve. Had a lot of guys play well but everybody fit. We had all 11 doing their job most of the time. That's what we're most proud of.

The things that we must improve on defense, the communication, and we want to create more turnovers. Turnovers on special teams, positive with substitution, our goal was to put 11 men on the field and fight like Tigers and we did that.

We had a 32-yard punt return by DJ Chark, and that was a nice play in the ballgame. Set us up in great field position. We stopped the fake punt, we were fourth and one, had a punt save; our guys did a great job, great situational awareness there.

The blocking on kickoff return was outstanding. Darryl caught the ball, and obviously it should have been Clyde's ball. We would like to see what Clyde would have done with it; outstanding freshman. We are going to get better at that this week.

Our field goal protection was good. They had -- blocked kick, No. 90, that 6-9 guy; Jeff worked very hard on our guys and didn't allow any penetration.

Most improved, kickoffs. We want our kickoffs into the end zone. Our kickoffs were not what they are supposed to be. We are going to open up a competition for who is going to kickoff this week. We are going to make some changes there.

Kickoff coverage, lane assignments, we are going to make some changes on the personnel we had on kickoff. We were not happy with the kickoff, and we were not happy with our assignments. We are going to improve on that area and we don't want to have any penalties on the special teams.

The challenge this week is to press on. Press on towards Chattanooga we are coming off a good win. We are coming off a team that's coming into our house, and we need to focus totally on them. We are looking forward to playing in Tiger Stadium, our first home game.

I want to encourage the fans to get their tickets now. Sold-out crowd would be great for our young team. They come here expecting a sold out crowd for Tiger Stadium. I know we are going to get it. I know that the Tiger Walk is going to be fantastic with the former players there. I just can't wait to walk into that stadium with our new team on Saturday night.

Onto Chattanooga as we know, they lost to Jacksonville State 27-13. That's the film we've been studying. Tom Arth is their coach. He was a backup to Peyton Manning in the NFL. He's a very good coach. He has very good schemes. We are studying them right now and especially his offensive schemes.

On offense, they are multiple. We have seen a spread, we have seen pro style. It was mainly spread versus Jacksonville State. We don't know with a we're going to get. We're ready. Justin Rascati, it's his first season at Chattanooga. He was an OC at Tennessee Tech and obviously we've been studying his film, too, not knowing what we are going to get, but I do believe we are going to be prepared.

They have four returning starters. They had 300 yards versus Jacksonville State, scored 13 points. Their top players are Richardre Bagley, running back; Joseph Parker, wide receiver; and Nick Tiano, a big, big quarterback. He had 23 passes for 218 yards, touchdown, two interceptions with Jackson State and can also can run the ball.

On defense, we are expecting a 3-4 defense to give us multiple looks. They had six returning starters for 2016 and gave up 366 yards to Jacksonville State and 27 points versus Jacksonville State. Their top players are Toban Mossah (ph) at linebacker; Tae Davis, linebacker; and Isaiah Mack, D-Line.

On special teams, their kickoff, they are averaging 19.2 yards on the kickoff return and net point average is 37.5. Their field specialist, Victor Ulmo, was two-on two on field goals.

Solid football team. It not going to be about them. It's going to be about us. Today is Competition Tuesday. We focus on our preparation. We are looking forward to getting out there, being out in the heat and the sun. It's a beautiful day in south Louisiana. We are excited about going to practice today.

Any questions?

Q. You complimented your offensive line. Can you share any grades, like with specific guys, and also, the guys that missed the game with suspension, do they go right back to where they were or is there any lingering effect on deciding when those guys play?

COACH ORGERON: Yeah, we thought our guys graded out pretty good. Most of them graded out in the high 90s, which is awesome.

We had a couple guys make some mistakes. We knew the young guys were going to make mistake. I thought the young guys played fantastic for their first game. The older guys helped them out, helped them out on the sideline, helped them making their calls can stuff. I thought offensive line played great. Obviously there's some things that Jeff wants to fix, but you know what, we had a mixed bag unit all camp, and Jeff did a great job of keeping those guys healthy. They played and they stayed healthy. Of guys that didn't play this week are going to work their way back, we are not going to make that decision right now. That could go all the way up to game time.

Q. Derrius carried the ball 20 times in the first half, 13 in the first quarter. Was that by design or a bit too much? What was ideal for you for him?

COACH ORGERON: You know, I think any time you get over 25, it's too much because we have three or four backs that can run the football. We don't want to wear them out. But I do believe it was what they was giving us.

We wanted to give Derrius the first play on the fly sweep. We thought that was a very good play and something that could gain some yardage. I don't think that you're going to see Derrius carrying the ball over 25 times or 30 times in a game every game. We don't want to wear him out.

Q. Talking about the difference between being the interim head coach and the permanent head coach, you said you coached the same on the outside but you were going to feel different on the inside. What was the difference like leading LSU into the season opener?

COACH ORGERON: It was great. Just focusing on the preparation but Saturday morning I woke up, I was a

little nervous for the first time. I wanted the team to play well. I knew we had a new offense, new special teams. There was a lot of new working parts that were going on during the game.

So those things are important to me. First time that Matt calling games; I'm on the headset with him. We're doing the game time communication with him. We've got a lot of things going on. We've got a lot of new freshmen playing and we don't know what's going to happen, what BYU is going to do to us. So there's a lot of anxiety inside but didn't show it all at all. Remained calm.

I believe the team gives you confidence, when you see the way they prepare and you see them right before a game. I knew we were ready to play and I knew we were going to play well.

Q. After you watched film, what did you think of your freshmen on defense Chaisson, Taylor, some of those guys who started and played a lot?

COACH ORGERON: Recruit, recruit, recruit. We're glad we have them. They are exactly what we thought about in recruiting. The thing that I was really impressed with the most was their mental outlook on the game. The game was not too big for them at all. They were running around ready to go. They didn't have a deer in the headlights look at all. They were ready to go. They played like vets.

I thought they graded out very well. Brennan (ph) starting out with that play, Thompson (ph), L'Lavon did his assignments exactly like we wanted. Corey went in there and played a great job on nickel. Dell (ph) did a fantastic job.

Q. On punts you had said Donte Jackson would be there. The reason for the switch and will that be the case going forward?

COACH ORGERON: Yeah, we felt that ball security for our first game, ball security was of utmost importance and we thought that he had the best ball security out there. We did it. It's his first time doing it in the game but we knew he was going to catch the football. We knew we had better ball security skills and that's why we did it.

Q. Will that be the case going forward?

COACH ORGERON: We'll see. We always want Donte -- Donte is a game-breaker, you know what I'm saying. We just have to get him comfortable catching the ball the way we want him to, and once he does that, ear going to be in good shape.

Q. A lot of talk about the young guys on defense but the sixth-year senior, Corey Thompson, coming

out with a couple of sacks. What kind of value does he bring to that side of the ball?

COACH ORGERON: Speed. And Corey is very strong. He's strong, he's strong at the point of attack. We ran a little stunt where we looped him across the center, changed direction, reached out to grab the quarterback, very strong and quick.

You know, he and K'Lavon, good off the edge, when we get Arden back on that team, we're going to have what we call a Cheetah team. We're going to have a very good pass rush system.

Corey does a good job. He did a very good job with taking care of his pass rush responsibility. He did a good job on the first play. They ran a power (ph) he made the leverage, came across and made the play. Uses his hands well.

He has to stay healthy. That's the one thing with Corey. He's faced a lot of adversity through injuries which it's not his fault. We feel if he can stay healthy, he can have an outstanding season.

Q. You mentioned when you get Arden back, is he still waiting to be cleared --

COACH ORGERON: Yeah, he's still waiting to be cleared for contact. We're going to do a little bit more with him today. I want to see what he can do. He will get a little more contact today as far as repetitions. I don't know if he's full speed yet but we are bringing him along in increments. He is not ready to play and he has not been cleared to play for a game yet.

Q. Talk a little bit more, if you would, about the pregame, leading the team down the hill, leading them into the stadium. The first game is always a little special, and why was it important to you to want to add the former players coming down the hill with you?

COACH ORGERON: Look, I grew up watching LSU Football. Just being around those guys and seeing them play in Tiger Stadium; I think it gives us all motivation. It gives us a sense of family. At Miami, we brought back all the players. They were always there.

At USC, Marcus Allen would be on my side. All the great players would come back. They would be in the dressing room. I remember playing against Notre Dame, we are going down the tunnel, Ron Yuri (ph) is screaming in the tunnel. I just remember Jerome Brown and them calling -- inaudible -- before the game.

I think that's a great tradition that LSU can have, and we brought all the guys back. They are going to be back again. Our guys love having them around. We brought some of the greats back. Derrick brought

Tommy Casanova, all the great ones back, and they talked to the team. I just think it gives us strength and unity and makes them feel important because they have led the program (ph). ^

Q. Could you address a couple things? You've split out JD Moore and Foster a lot at receiver. Can you tell us why and how they did, and Frank Herron, what's his status?

COACH ORGERON: Well, here's the deal: That's all Matt's stuff, and he wants to create mismatches. We put these guys in a position where we call the f-position and they can do a variety of things. The f-position could be a tight end. It could be a wide receiver. It depends on the play.

And we put those guys out there to create mismatches, or create another hole in the line of scrimmage to get the safety out of the box. That's why he does it.

Frank Herron, obviously Frank Herron did not play last week. Frank Herron is going to be on a week-to-week basis. He's not ready to play right now and he's not cleared to play and I don't know when he's going to play.

Q. Obviously you want to always respect your opponent going against Chattanooga, but is this one of those games where you could try to play those freshmen a little bit more, especially in Tiger Stadium?

COACH ORGERON: Here is the challenge of this week, okay, is focusing on the task at hand. Get our team ready, get our team ready for a battle, and we've all been in these games where you can overlook the opponent and it turns out to be a battle. So we are not planning anything but a battle.

Obviously if things go the way we want them to, and in any game, just like you saw last week; we put in the freshmen. We will play the freshmen but only when it's time. We are not going into the game saying, we are not playing this guy, we are not playing this guy. We are going in guns loaded to win the football game, whatever it takes.

Q. You mentioned earlier that you thought that any time you get over 25 carries, it's a little too much. Is that a conversation that you have had with Derrius? Have you guys talked about what an appropriate workload looks like for him this year?

COACH ORGERON: Hey, he won 70. That won't be a good conversation. But we talk about it, Matt and I, Tommy and I, rotating guys, and I'm not saying he'll never get over 25. There might be a game we need him to get more. But we do not want to wear him out. That's why we're using the recruiting and we want to

rotate our backs. Tommy has done a tremendous job. I have all the faith in Clyde. I have all the faith in Darrell. Nick Brossette is coming along. We have a couple guys getting healthy, so we want to rotate our backs. We don't want him to carry the whole load.

Q. Obviously we're not sure how much your personal philosophy towards accountability and discipline has to do with these players, and I understand if you don't want to get into that, but I was curious if you could describe, what is your philosophy on accountability and discipline, flexible versus strict, and what in your lifetime in football led you to believe that the way you do it now is the right way?

COACH ORGERON: Well, obviously we have team rules. We have team rules. That's it. We have team rules. If you break the team rule, you pay a price. That's it.

We bring guys in. We counsel them. We talk to them. We give them help in a lot of areas that they need help. We are there for them. But once they cross the line, they have to face a penalty. That's what we do.

Q. Tough to improve off of 14-of-17 but where is there room for improvement for Danny?

COACH ORGERON: Well, we want to hit the long ball. We want to be consistent and hit the long ball. His play-action pass was great. Obviously there's going to be a rush. It's going to come. He's going to have to avoid the rush, make decisions. He's going to get hit. He didn't get hit at all. He's going to have to shake it off and make a play.

The competition, as we grow, is going to get stiffer. I think the thing with Danny is we all have confidence in him. But everybody is waiting to see him win the big game. And let me say this correctly: He'll never win the big game by himself. We'll do it as a team.

But until he does that, I think that's going to be his mark, and he knows that.

Q. You mentioned that Cheetah that you all would run. We saw a little bit of that with just two defensive linemen. We didn't see a lot of that last year from Dave. Is that just because you have more of that -- talk about that team.

COACH ORGERON: You know, last year we had Lewis Neal that could play four-technique and he could play six-technique. So we didn't have to sub when we went to three and four and over. Now we don't have a guy that can do that; that is strong enough to play inside and is quick enough to play the quarterback.

So we have to make a substitution. Now we have more

outside linebackers so we can do that. I think Dave has done a good job of using our personnel. We need to be careful what we do on third down because a lot of times you want to put all fast guys in there, and we've done that and sometimes you move a defensive end to defensive tackle and he gets stymied by a big guard because he's just not used to playing in there.

So we are very careful what we do. But certain situations, we are going to put four fast guys in there and let them go.

Q. How much agency does Etling have between choosing pass/run at the line of scrimmage?

COACH ORGERON: Every play. Every play he has a choice. Every play he has a choice of where to run the ball what to do, to check the pass -- everything.

Q. The opponent didn't dictate it this week but last year was a lot more nickel. Corey Thompson is consistently one of the 11 best guys on the field. How do you look at that going forward?

COACH ORGERON: Yeah, we're still anticipating a lot more nickel this year. That's just the way the league is. We've rarely seen 21 personnel. I think we've played 75 to 80 percent nickel last year and we're probably going to do the same this year on first down.

Q. Quick on Myles Brennan, I know he got a few snaps in and there may be more opportunities for him down the road. Can you just maybe give us your evaluation of him and your eagerness to see more?

COACH ORGERON: Been excellent all camp. There was some scrimmages out there that he was one of the best on the field. But he wasn't ready and he's still a young man growing up and we want to let him grow into the offense.

His first time -- think about this: He's walking -- taking a snap for the Tigers and that was a big deal for him but I thought he handled that well. I thought the dump (ph) pass to 22, he read the linebacker perfect, you could see him, he read the linebacker dumped -- dumped it to 22, first down. He's smart. He knows his read. He can throw the football. He has a grasp for the offense right now. He's learning. He's going to grow. Hopefully we can get him a lot of experience this year. But we have to see how the game goes.

Q. Towards the back end of last year, Dee Anderson was making some catches and some plays. Looked like he was going to emerge as one of your new wide outs. What's held him back?

COACH ORGERON: He's been out with an injury all camp. He has not practiced yet. He has not practiced one time in camp. He has been out with an injury all

camp, and I don't know if he's going to be back this week.

Q. The same question but a different player. Instead, Sci Martin, we haven't seen him. Is he in the same boat?

COACH ORGERON: Sci Martin will be practicing today. I do believe he's practicing today. He should be practicing today.