

# Louisiana State University Football Media Conference

Monday, October 16, 2017

## Ed Orgeron

ED ORGERON: Welcome, everybody. What a great day for the Tiger family. Started off with a Tiger Walk. 2007 National Championship team was there. They brought a lot of energy to the football team. I'm glad that Coach Miles came to the football stadium. They had a great reception, which he deserved. What an honor it was to have him there.

I would like to thank our recruiting staff that's here, and this was a great recruiting weekend for us. We had a lot of our top players there. These girls worked relentlessly throughout the weekend, and they're here today, and I want to thank them. They're a valuable part of our program.

It was fun to be on that sideline with that football team. They showed leadership, true grit, determination, Coach, we got this. We're down 20-0, nobody blinked. We started making plays, we believed in each other.

Al at halftime Russell Gage came up to me and said, "Coach, we got this." They went out and did it. I was proud of them.

Some positives from the offense, obviously we made big plays when we needed to, Russell Gage's 70-yard run was fantastic. We strained to finish, which was one of our goals. Two-minute execution at the end of the first half, we scored a touchdown to make it 23-14, gave our team belief that we could do this thing.

On defense, third down defense we won 80% of the time, we finished the game, showed great grit and determination down 20-0. We held the quarterback to 2 of 13 for 6 yards in the second half. 64 total yards. You on gotta give Dave Aranda credit for the adjustments he made at halftime along with our defensive staff. I thought he was fantastic. He called the game with ice in his veins. One of the best coordinators and one of the best men I've been around.

Special teams played a big part in our win. All of our coaches participate in coaching the special teams, and they work tireless hours in getting it done. We're 5 of 5 on our kicks, we're great protection. Auburn had a



tremendous field goal push. 3 of 3 for PTD's, 2 for 2 of field goals, a 42 and a 36-yarder, which was fantastic.

We are down to punt at the 3 yard line, which led to a big stop and the game-winning field goal, playing field position the whole night. The 75-yard punt return was beautiful, great execution. Punt coverage, we held their return to 4 yards, and kickoff coverage, we held them to 19.5 yards for return.

Things we want to improve on, we can fix, on offense: Ball security, first down efficiency and missed assignments. Defense: Execution, eliminate mental errors, tackling, start faster and communicate better.

On special teams: The penalty cost us 27 yards of field position, and we lost 10 yards of field position on a punt.

We're going to prepare this week for a very good Ole Miss team. A little scouting report on Ole Miss, they're a spread offense, got one of the best quarterbacks that we're going to face in the country in Shea Patterson. He's a tremendous quarterback with a tremendous release. Probably the best group of receivers we've seen. They're very explosive on offense, fast-paced, up-tempo.

Their 4-3 on defense, they're going to attack, they're going to blitz. They have got players on special teams. This is going to be a special challenge for us, a road challenge. We know what this game means to all of us. This is a rivalry game. Our team is going to be ready, but it starts today at practice, 24-hour rule today. The good, bad, indifferent, we look at the Auburn game, put it to rest and press onward to Mississippi. Any questions?

**Q. You mentioned first down efficiency and how it needs to improve. Why is that lacking? Does it have anything to do with the inside run?**

ED ORGERON: Obviously we want to get our running game better inside the tackles, and we have some young guys there and sometimes they're going to miss assignments but those are one of the things we want to improve on the offense.

**Q. Coach, you went over to Oxford as an assistant coach here at LSU in 2015, and some fans had**



**some fun with you, and you just kind of laughed it off and was like, hey that's college football. Is that the approach you take?**

ED ORGERON: Yeah, no question. This game is not about me. Again, I will say this to you: I had a tremendous opportunity at Ole Miss. I didn't get it done, but the past is the past. This is way behind us. Me and my family have moved forward. I'm so happy to be an LSU Tiger. This is another an SEC game. It's LSU/Ole Miss. It means a lot, and it has nothing to do with me. This is about the team.

**Q. Is Justin the No. 2 quarterback now?**

ED ORGERON: Not really. We do have some plays that we can do. We can run with Justin, and we think he brings a different element to offense. He would be considered like -- to me like a Wildcat guy, put him in to do some of those type plays.

**Q. And we haven't seen Matt Luke yet at Ole Miss. Can you compare and contrast Matt Luke's Old Miss to what we're used to with Hugh Freeze?**

ED ORGERON: Same offense. They have those good players, and they did a good job recruiting out there. Same defense. Special teams have improved, so I think it's the same scheme without Coach Freeze being there.

**Q. Coach, over here. Couple times early in the season you talked about not taking silly penalties, taking too many of those. Couple of times Devin White had a shot at the quarterback on a blitz, and he ran him out-of-bounds, and he looked like he was extra careful about not making a mistake there. Is that something you think is --**

ED ORGERON: -- sinking in, yes. Thank you for noticing that. We talk about penalties. We have referees at each practice. The guys that have penalties, I think we had six penalties, or seven, they're going to run today, and they run a lot of guys throughout the practice.

Before we go out, each coach talks to his unit, and our goal is to have no penalties at all, and if it's close, we pull off. So that's what you're seeing.

**Q. Ed, Arden Key in that game, is that kind of what you were waiting to see from him?**

ED ORGERON: Yeah.

**Q. What did you see in him?**

ED ORGERON: He still has a ways to go. He knows that. He shouldn't have got that penalty. That was a big penalty right there, but that sack at the end, his pressures -- he's down to 253 pounds now as opposed to 270 something, making a difference. But you know what? You gotta practice football. That's the only way

to get better, and that's you're seeing. His attitude has been fantastic.

**Q. Do you think K.J. may practice this week? Malone?**

ED ORGERON: I don't think so.

**Q. Is he out?**

ED ORGERON: I think he's questionable for a questionable amount of time. (Chuckles.)

**Q. Ed, staying on the offensive line, when you watched the film what did you think of Saahdiq and Adrian in there?**

ED ORGERON: I think they did well. A lot of times at the point of attack they handled the physicality of the game. Their pass protection was good. But then, again, sometimes they made some mistakes, and those mistakes are when everything is moving fast, a guy lines up here and all of the sudden he's there, and I gotta go get the linebacker, I'm pulling, stuff like that.

We've got to make a change at the line of scrimmage, things that would -- a veteran line wouldn't make, I think those guys are making those mistakes, but they're getting better at it.

**Q. Coach, you have had time to watch the film. How would you assess Eric Monroe?**

ED ORGERON: Did well. He made some mistakes, obviously, but I thought as the game went on he gained more confidence, Corey did an excellent job of coaching him, the other players, John Battle was coaching him on the sideline, and I think the more he saw the formations, the more he knew the adjustments, the better he did as the game went on.

**Q. At different points in the season you've been in an underdog role, maybe this past week, other points a favorite. You're obviously going to be a favorite this weekend. Does the message to your team change at all this week?**

ED ORGERON: You know, we don't talk about it at all. We don't know who is the underdog who is not. Since the beginning of the season, we fight, scratch and claw every week, and this week is going to be the same thing.

They're going to understand that we're going into a hostile environment, these guys are going to play their very, very best, I know that. But we're going to be prepared for that, and I think the practice that we have this week, the work that we put in every day is going to show on Saturday. It's been showing for the last two weeks. That's what's most important for us.

**Q. Your other safety, Grant Delpit gives up a**

**touchdown, and then it seemed like he was everywhere after that. How well did he bounce back in that game?**

ED ORGERON: You gotta give it to him. It was a tough play. He was supposed to have some help over the top, and he didn't. That's a fake to the outside and go up, and he's supposed to have help over the top, but he shouldn't have bit on the outside fake, but that's a mistake a young guy is gonna make. We can't have those mistakes back there, but the thing we told our team is: Let's play the next play. What happened at the beginning of the season, we make a bad play, and it was lingering on two, three, plays, drives later or maybe we didn't forget it.

I think this team has learned how to forget the last play and move on to the next.

**Q. Coach, we know that LSU likes to bill themselves as DBU. In a game like this against a guy who is going to throw, throw, throw, how do you think your defensive backs are excited about that challenge?**

ED ORGERON: I will say this: I thought Donte Jackson and Kevin Toliver played their best game last week, and that's good to see.

They know the stakes are high for us as a football team. They know the stakes are high for them as individuals, especially going against the great receivers that Ole Miss has. I think they're going to be fired up, I think they're going to be challenged, and I think they're going to end up doing a great job.

**Q. Do you think that in a way the loss to Troy made the last two weeks possible? And if so could you elaborate on that?**

ED ORGERON: We used it as a turning point. I go back to several Mondays ago when we met with these 11 men in my office and we threw everything out on the table, just like you would throw as a family meeting. We said, "Tell the truth. What's going on?" We did. They went and talked to the team, and they were going to have a half hour team meeting; they had an hour team meeting, and you could see the difference in practice.

I think the true turn-around of our football team was on a Thursday, Duke Riley came, was M.V.P. last year, a guy that everybody respects, watched us practice, and he lit into the football team like I ain't never seen before!

About things that were going on, things that he observed, and things that we need to get better at, and since then our team has changed.

**Q. Going back to Donte for a second. The games before this past weekend hadn't received a lot of targets, not a lot of action. Obviously he talked about staying focused every play as if he were going to get targeted, but that's easier said than done. How difficult is it to be able to turn it on like that in a big moment?**

ED ORGERON: You gotta play every play, one play at a time. It's a cliché, you know what I'm saying, but at that position, we play man coverage almost every down. He's one on one; you cannot relax. But you know what? They threw some balls his way, especially in the last series, and he shined. I know he wanted to pick that thing off in the interception, but I know he will get it next time.

I'm pleased with -- he's one of the guys after the Troy game turned it up. He turned up his practice habits, he's been more vocal, more of a leadership role and it's showing on the field. His fellow teammates follow him, especially at the defensive backfield unit, and he's done a tremendous job leading those guys.

**Q. You're obviously doing something different than most teams, especially with not having a special teams coordinator. What do you credit the across-the-board improvement from a few weeks ago to now?**

ED ORGERON: First of all our special teams analysis -- analyst -- I always struggle with that word -- (Chuckles.) Greg McMahon. He's in the office at I believe 4:00 every morning, and he gets out of there about 10, and all he does is work on special teams. Every coach meets with him, including me -- he's the first guy I go see, because he's in the office first, I go drink coffee -- he has a nice little coffee machine in there so we drink coffee and we talk special teams, and we talk about the roster, and we talk about the personnel.

And then we have a recruiting special teams meeting every day at 1:30. He tells us what we're going to do. The guys take it to heart. They go install it in the meeting. We in the meeting, Greg is in the meeting, but he does not speak. He can't coach the players or the coaches in the meeting.

Our special teams -- our assistants do a great job of installing what he tells us to do. We go out on the field and we treat special teams like offense/defense, we work very hard on the fundamentals.

We had a little technique, very simple technique, Greg found something on film where we can double team somebody, and we used the technique that he brought from the NFL, and Corey taught it to our punt return unit, and we did it and we scored a touchdown.

The details of having somebody working on special teams all throughout the day and then giving each coach a specific unit -- I know those coaches take pride in it. It's like their own little group of that unit and they coach it with energy and our guys see it. Our guys have bought into special teams, especially the last two weeks, difference of the game.

**Q. Coach, on Donte, you talked about how teams are going at him now. Four consecutive plays he had a pass break up. Have you ever seen a DB get four in a row like that?**

ED ORGERON: No, not like that. I thought it was a tremendous job. He is a tremendous player, and we have a saying, big-time players make big-time plays in big-time games. He did it.

**Q. Coach, do you believe the crowd had an impact on the second half? Auburn was dropping passes, seemed like they may have been shaken up.**

ED ORGERON: No question, and I want to thank them. It was a difference. It was hard for them to get their singles off, they had a couple of penalties. It gave our guys energy, and you could see the sideline. One thing I want to talk about is guys like Tre'Davious White on the sideline, Rickey Jefferson, La'el Collins, Brandon LaFell, on the sideline, giving energy. The sideline was exactly what you would want in an LSU football team playing with passion.

**Q. Coach, we've heard you say LSU takes pride in bump coverage. How do you feel your corners match-up with the physical receivers Ole Miss has?**

ED ORGERON: I'll tell you that Saturday night about 11:30. This is going to be a challenge, now. They big, they physical, they can catch their ball. This is one of the top-10 quarterbacks in the country. This guy is going to play in the NFL, has a tremendous release. There are three receivers on this team that will be drafted in the top-three rounds. They're very talented. This is going to be a challenge for us.

**Q. Can you talk about Russell Gage, what he's done the last two weeks, and not only that on special teams downing the punt on the 3 yard line. Can you make an argument that if not your best he's one of your best players over the last two weeks?**

ED ORGERON: No question. He's made a difference on our football team, not only his play-making ability, his leadership, his confidence, what's he doing in the meeting rooms, what's he doing on the football field at practice, what he's saying at halftime. "Hey, we got this. We're going to do it. Give me the ball!"

The way he practices on special teams, the things that

he does when he doesn't have the ball in his hand, his blocking, his leadership has been phenomenal. In the last two weeks you could argue he has been our M.V.P., if we would have one.

**Q. After the way the kicking game went for a couple weeks, how much of a relief is it to not really have to worry about that, at least as much this week?**

ED ORGERON: Yeah. I'm proud of Connor Culp, I'm really proud of him. He went through some adversity, like we all do. He answered the bell. I felt like the first field goal he had it, because he has been kicking like that in practice. You could see his confidence level rise up. He's been saying things in the meeting with confidence.

So we're happy to see that. We still have a ways to go. We think we're punting the ball very well, field position we're protecting well, and now we're getting our return game. The punt return game is coming alive. We need to get our kickoff return game coming alive, but other than that, proud of him and proud of the protection that -- Jeff Grimes has done a tremendous job with our line in the protection.

**Q. You opened up mentioning Coach Miles. Probably not every coach in your shoes would be comfortable having his predecessor comeback this quickly, and probably not everybody in his shoes would be comfortable doing it. What do you think makes you two guys different in that respect?**

ED ORGERON: We've always had great relationship. I always wanted to come in LSU. He tried to hire me before I went to Tennessee. When I was at Ole Miss, he was very complimentary of the way my team played. We would go to Destin on trips. His family would be there, I remember, with our kids and like that. It's kinda like we've been friends. He hired me to come here. I didn't have a job. So I'm forever grateful of that. Then he moved me up to recruiting coordinator, and I've always had great relationship with him and always had respect for the job he did here, and that is never going to change.

**Q. You talk about a lot of things that you changed as a coach since you were at Ole Miss. Could you imagine if you didn't learn those things, if you didn't have that job would you be here today?**

ED ORGERON: No, no. It was a stepping stone. It was something I needed, and I'm grateful for that. I'm grateful for the mistakes that happened there. Hopefully I don't make 'em here.

I know I learned my strengths and weaknesses as a head coach. I learned how to hire guys that are good at what I'm not good at. We are doing that here. We've got some guys that are very strong in a lot of

areas that I need and I rely on them. Back then I wouldn't do that.

**Q. I know it's been ten years. Is there anybody there that you still talk to that's in administration or at the school at all? Any connection?**

ED ORGERON: No, you know, I used to stop at the Exxon and get a chicken-on-a-stick, and they were fantastic. I hope that cook is still there, and I can stop and say hello to her. That's about all I remember.

**Q. This is in Oxford?**

ED ORGERON: Yeah, chicken-on-a-stick. It was phenomenal.

**Q. Good chicken-on-a-stick?**

ED ORGERON: The best I ever had! Not better than Raising Cane's! (Laughter.)

**Q. John Battle: How close was John to playing? Where do you see him?**

ED ORGERON: I can see him practicing this week. I can see him being limited, but I can see him practicing.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach.

ED ORGERON: Thank you, guys.