

# Louisiana State University Football Media Conference

Monday, October 30, 2017

## Ed Orgeron

ED ORGERON: Good to see everybody. We had a very successful open week. Light practice on Tuesday. Pretty tough practice on Wednesday. Thursday we had the Tiger Bowl, let a lot of the young guys play. A lot of guys did very well. Breiden Fehoko had an excellent scrimmage. Dee Anderson had an excellent scrimmage. Both those guys showed out. I was very proud of them.

On to Alabama, very important game for the state of Louisiana. Very important game to our fans. Very important game to our alumni. Great tradition. Very important game to our football team.

Alabama is a very good team, as we all know. They're undefeated. On offense I think Brian Daboll has done a tremendous job. Been studying them for over a week now. Pose some problems with some great athletes. Spread offense. They run the ball well. Incorporate the RPO's, play-action shots. They can do deep at any time. They are very, very powerful.

The difference in their football team is the offensive line. The offensive line is very well-coached. They're big, they're strong, they're physical. Typical Alabama team. They're averaging 500 yards offense, 300 yards rushing, 200 yards passing, averaging 43 points per game.

Their top player is obviously Jalen Hurts. He runs the ball very well. Almost like a wildcat tailback back there that can throw the ball. He can beat you with his feet, his arm. Seems like he's gotten better. They're making better decisions with him this year with quarterback runs. That can cause problems with formations with the defense. Dave has worked very hard on those plays this week.

Calvin Ridley, great wide receiver, big play. 41 catches, over 500 yards. Damien Harris, good all around back, thick, big trunk, can make you miss. Bo Scarbrough, big, physical back. They have about four backs they can play. They just keep on rotating. They stay fresh. You can't tell the difference from one to another. They're very, very well-coached. Their offensive line, like I said, is big, physical. Led by Jonah Williams, No.



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On defense, great defensive line. They play fundamental football. They fit well. Their linebackers are in the right place. We're going to have to protect Danny. That's going to be the key in the game. This is a big man's game. Have to play great on the defensive line, the front seven. Got to protect Danny, find some spots to throw the football.

3-4 base. Defensive coordinator is Jeremy Pruitt. Five returning starters. They give up 236 yards per game, only 66 yards rushing, 170 passing. They're allowing only 9.8 points per game.

I think the biggest factor, turnover margin, plus 10. We're plus three right now. Their defense has forced four fumbles and 11 interceptions. On special teams their kickoff coverage is one of the best in the country, allowing 18.2 yards average per return. Punt coverage, one of the best in the country, three yards per return. Kickoff return, Henry Ruggs is very good. Averages almost 20 yards per return. Their field goal kicker is 13 out of 16 with a long of 42 yards.

We're looking forward to preparation this week. Today is Tell the Truth Monday. We have a little longer practice than we have been. All our guys were in last night Sunday at 10. They were home with their families. Everybody is at school, ready to go today. I know they're going to be pumped up for this game. We'll be ready to play Saturday night 7:00.

**Q. One of your assistants, Corey Raymond. Share some thoughts on things about him that we don't know, how he helps the program, recruiting.**

ED ORGERON: He recruits every defensive back we have. They love him. I think he has a great relationship with the players. Corey will go to a school and find out all the information that he needs, will find out the champion, recruit the champion very hard. DBU, when he goes there, he carries a big pedigree. He does a tremendous job of coaching.

He played at LSU. He's from Louisiana. He doesn't want to hear about another school. You can't talk about another school in front of Corey Raymond. He has a lot of pride from being from Louisiana, playing here, playing in the NFL.

I think he relies on experience on how he coaches those guys. He's very loyal to me. He's a good friend of mine. We were assistants together. I think he's a tremendous asset to our program.

**Q. Last week you called the 'Bama game a must win. Today you said it was very important.**

ED ORGERON: Last week I called...

**Q. Alabama game.**

ED ORGERON: I said the Ole Miss was a must win last week.

**Q. My mistake. Today you said the 'Bama game is very important. Why embrace that where some coaches will downplay how big a game is?**

ED ORGERON: Born and raised in Louisiana, how can you not know that (laughter)? I mean, this is the game. Everywhere I go, they talk about this. This is the game.

I'm not going to make it so huge to our players that they won't be ready to play. We're going to be ready to play. Obviously we got four games left on our schedule. This is the next one, so it's important.

I think this is huge for us in recruiting. I think this is huge because they have won the SEC, they have won national championships, they're on top of the world right now. This is the benchmark.

**Q. Is there much difference between Doball's offense and Kiffin's offense?**

ED ORGERON: A little bit different. Quarterback runs a little bit different. They still run the zone, the power, still run the inside zone, outside zone, the stretch.

They're doing more quarterback runs and reads with them right now. They're very difficult.

**Q. In the last six meetings, LSU has scored 17 points in these games. Shut out last year. How do you remedy that? Was Matt Canada brought in to win this game?**

ED ORGERON: One of the reasons I hired Matt because all the shifts and formations and stuff that I would think would give Alabama problems. I think he's done a tremendous job for us this year. Obviously he spent all week last week on his game plan. Obviously when he watch the film, he sees what he can do and what he can't do.

But it all starts with blocking those guys up front. I mean, you can have the best play called in the world, but if you can't block those guys up front, it's not going to work.

I think protection is going to be key for us. Be able to

run the ball in spots, be able to throw the ball and move the ball. Obviously scoring points against these guys is very tough.

I think he's going to do a very good job of managing the game and taking shots when he can.

**Q. Every year there's so much talk about the losing streak to Alabama. How much does that loom over this program? Is that something that's noticeable?**

ED ORGERON: It's not inside. Not inside. Not for us. We take it one game at a time. We focus in on the task at hand. But I realize that it's out there, obviously. I realize the pressure to beat Alabama as the head coach here. I realize that.

But as far as factoring in every day, in the office, no. But is it noticeable? On the outside, yes, not inside.

**Q. You were running a different offense last year against Alabama. From the sideline watching them up close, what did you learn, This does not work against these guys? What can you create at the quarterback position this week?**

ED ORGERON: Well, first of all, Danny has to be very, very patient. He has to make the right throws, the right decisions in a big game. This is his test. He knows it. But we got to protect him. I mean, now, there were some throws last year wide open, he didn't make them. He realized that. There were sometimes we didn't block very well for him.

I know we have a better plan this year. I think that the offense is working very hard to protect Danny and get the throws out that we can get and run the ball when we can.

**Q. On your intro presser when you got the job, you mentioned getting better on the D-line, O-line, to win games like this. How far away are you from being where you need to be?**

ED ORGERON: We a little ways away. Now, you look at Saahdig Charles and Ed Ingram. Those guys coming in starting as freshmen can be the type of offensive linemen that we need. I love all our guys, okay? But those are physical guys, have the physical stature that it takes to be able to block these guys. Are they ready to block these guys as freshmen? It's pretty hard. We need to continue getting guys like that.

On defense, we have Breiden Fehoko, Tyler Shelvin, 350 something pounds. Those are guys we brought in to play in the 3-4 defense to win in the SEC. But we need to continue to recruit better, get bigger and faster on the line of scrimmage. This is a big man's game. This is where the game is won.

**Q. You played a lot of spread teams this year. 'Bama likes to run downhill, in between the tackle.**

**How does it change how you play defensively?**

ED ORGERON: We need to be gap sound. We need to understand where our fits are. We need to beat blocks when we need to beat blocks. We need to stay home when we need to stay home. Our linebackers need to key in and diagnose. The biggest thing is we need to tackle. When we get to the point of attack, we need to make the plays.

**Q. I'm sure you know Jim McElwain got let go at Florida. Why do you think college coaching has become more volatile in the last few years? In the SEC, do you think that has something to do with the fact that Alabama has had so much success, and everyone is saying, You have to be on that level?**

ED ORGERON: I haven't thought about it that much, to be honest with you. I was on the road recruiting Friday. Was with my kids Saturday. I don't know when he got fired. Somebody told me that yesterday morning, today, whatever. I haven't paid much attention to it.

But I do understand this. Having a head job, a coaching position like this, in the SEC, is very valuable. You get paid to win. If you don't win, they'll get somebody else to do it. That's just the way it is. You understand this taking the job.

Whatever happened there, I'm not abreast of. I don't like to see anybody get fired. But I know it's part of the business.

**Q. D.J. Chark had a pretty good line the other day. Nobody on the team bets, we don't pay attention to lines. When you're a 21-point underdog, do you bring that up with the team, embracing being an underdog?**

ED ORGERON: It's the first I heard of it. Thanks for telling me.

That don't mean anything to us. I mean, it's way you play the game. I think Syracuse didn't listen to that when they played Clemson. It's just the way you play the game. You never can tell.

We're going in there with a mindset we're going to win the football game. Whether that happens or not, we have to execute and play very, very well. But we're getting on that plane to go win a football game. That's going to be our attitude.

**Q. Alabama's defense are relentless. They have incredible endurance. What are you and the Tigers going to do to keep up with that especially late in the game?**

ED ORGERON: We need to keep our guys fresh. We need to use different speeds on offense when we can. Need to be smart about it. But again, I think the whole key to Alabama is protecting the quarterback. If you can protect the quarterback, you got a chance. We can't let them get their cleats in the grass, get in the pass-rush mode. They become very tough.

**Q. You were talking about recruiting linemen. Rashard Lawrence is such a huge piece in this LSU versus Alabama battle from the part of the state he's in. What do you recall about his recruitment, how big it was to secure that?**

ED ORGERON: It was huge. Countless Saturdays on unofficial visits. Sunday morning, I remember watching film with him from 8 till 11. I said, Rashard, how do we stand?

He goes, I really like Alabama.

Sunday morning. I said, Thank you.

But you have to fight, fight it. North Louisiana. We have several commitments from north Louisiana now. We made a big push in north Louisiana. They've done a good job there.

Needed to battle. Came all the way down to the end. It actually came down between us and Ohio State. You just got to hang tough in there.

Listen, I was recruiting Raekwon Davis, I was recruiting Isaiah Buggs. They beat us on those guys. Those are the guys that we need to get, we need to beat them in recruiting.

**Q. What is it about Alabama as a D-line guy that they can reload so well?**

ED ORGERON: They do a good job of recruiting. They do a good job of evaluating. Give them credit. They do a good job.

We go after the same guys. I'm glad we got some of the guys we got. We beat them on a couple guys. They've beaten us.

Remember, this is his 11th year there. This is my first, okay?

**Q. This game, especially last year, you can see how one big play, one score, that can be the only score of the game to determine it. How much do you stress to the team on offense, defense, special teams that that one play, you have to take advantage of the opportunity?**

ED ORGERON: The first thing we talk to our team about against this team is execution, doing it right

every down. When you watch them play, you watch them block, you watch them run, it's all about great athletes being well-coached and execution.

It's the same for us. If you jump out of gap, just like playing in the NFL, the margin of error is like that. They're going to make a play. You stay in your gap, you're going to make the tackle. You press corner, you get beat, it's touchdown. You beat him, you may get an interception. That's the way this game goes.

**Q. Is this maybe the healthiest the team has been since the BYU game?**

ED ORGERON: Yeah, I would say so. I would say so, yeah. We're healthy. We're rested. The healthiest we've been in a while. We've had three SEC victories in a row, so our team is feeling confident about themselves right now.

**Q. Speaking of health, K.J., is he going to practice this week?**

ED ORGERON: K.J. is questionable.

**Q. Practice?**

ED ORGERON: K.J. is questionable.

**Q. Anybody else questionable?**

ED ORGERON: I think we're very healthy right now.

Have a great day, guys.