

No. 20 LSU 30, Tennessee 10
Nov. 18, 2017 | Knoxville, Tenn. | Neyland Stadium

LSU Head Coach Ed Orgeron Quick Quotes

Opening statement:

"I would like to give Coach Brady Hoke and his staff credit. I thought they had those guys ready to play. I'm sure it was a tough week for them, but the team came out and fought hard. We were expecting a battle. They had a nice crowd. This is a great place to play. I was proud of our team. At halftime, we told them they needed to go win the game, and we did that. It wasn't pretty and we didn't play our best ball, but we found a way to win. I was proud of our rush defense. We had a couple of 4th-down stops. I thought our defensive line played pretty good tonight. I was proud of our offense for grinding it out. We had over 200 yards rushing compared to their 38. The biggest thing for us was no turnovers. The two turnovers that Tennessee had on punt return was probably the difference in the game. I was disappointed in our field-goal kicking. It was a good road win. Now, we focus on Texas A&M, and we are going to finish hard in Tiger Stadium."

On his team scoring two touchdowns in the second half with the inclement weather:

"They got excited. I didn't know how they would react, but it charged them up. I am excited that they can go through adverse conditions like that. This was a tough game. Tennessee came to play."

On getting the running game going in the second half:

"We tried to open it up a little bit with some jet sweeps. We kept on grinding away and called the right plays. We finally started blocking. We knew they would be tough to run against up the middle, so we thought we tried to go outside and they stopped it. I give them credit for that."

On slow starts in the first half this season:

"It's execution. We feel like we have a good gameplan going, and then all of a sudden, we couldn't block up front today. Other games, it's been dropped balls or passes weren't on the money. It's been about execution."

LSU Running Back Darrel Williams

Opening statement:

"We just kept pounding the ball with me and Derrius, and we kept making plays."

On playing through the inclement weather:

"As a running back, that is our type of weather. That's what we want live for."

On getting the running game going in the second half:

"We just kept doing what we needed to do, and we just believed. It paid off in the end."

LSU Running Back Derrius Guice

On the locker room at halftime:

"That's what football is about. We could have made it an option. We could have all cried and moaned about it or just go out there and keep pushing and fighting. We all got together. We tried to huddle up and stay warm a little bit, but that didn't happen. We just jumped up, ran around and hoped we'd get warm and just go out there and go.

On needing 71 yards to get to 1,000 again:

"The weather conditions changed the whole game plan. Both teams had to run the ball a lot more. Tennessee, the way they were playing, they had about eight or nine in the box every time and safeties were about five yards deep. You just had to grind it out and get what you can.

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Tennessee Interim Head Coach Brady Hoke

Opening Statement:

“(I’m) disappointed for our seniors. (I’m) disappointed in the outcome of the football game. I thought as a team, they did a nice job throughout the week coming to work every day. The focus was good. Our philosophy, being our game plan, was giving our team the best chance to win. We had some early turnovers, which you don’t like to have any turnovers. We had a little difficulty in the punt game - with the ball, a left footed punter, wind and all of the things that are there. Callaway is, number one, one of the best kids you could ever want to coach. Number two, he is the guy that works harder than anyone else at his craft. I felt bad for him, but he bounced back, and that was the thing that was important. We needed to do a better job versus the run, and we didn’t accomplish that. Probably the decision that I made, going for the second fourth down with the field position that we had, but at the time in the game and where we were with some of the offensive linemen, with Jashon (Robertson), I thought we would give ourselves a chance to keep the possession going.”

On how hard it is to get the offensive line going even though the position has been decimated with injury:

“Yeah, you know, that’s something. The next man has to step up, and that’s an expectation, but obviously we have been hit pretty hard there this year at that position. I think it’s very similar to how a year ago the defensive line was, so that’s something. I give those kids credit. They are coming in every day and they are working. They want to be good and they want to do it right. They seem to do that every day.”

On the team’s attitude during the week:

“The way they came to practice and in their meeting demeanor, I know I mentioned all that earlier in the week, but that continued. I think the last time we talked was Wednesday. Thursday we had a really good day; Friday they were locked in. With the focus and the intensity of it, we have to continue to get that this week, playing our rival. I have to make sure we do that. But it surprised me, I think the biggest surprise for all of us was the weather.”

On whether they should have delayed the start of the third quarter because of the weather:

“I don’t think so. I think our kids embraced it when they came out. I wish we could’ve gotten something going, obviously. We got the ball. But I don’t think so, (LSU) had to play in the same stuff.”

On LSU’s trouble with the run game in the first quarter and why they had success later in the game:

“At some point they got away from the jets and the sweeps a little bit. I think the weather had something to do with that. I think that we got out-leveraged twice. One was on a long run that Williams had. We have to keep the edge and knock the run back inside. I thought for the most part we were doing a pretty good job with it. On a couple of third downs they went to the speed option, we call them “Read O’s,” and we couldn’t get off the field.”

On the momentum shift after the opening kickoff after halftime because of the weather:

“It was huge. We deferred for a reason, so we could get the ball at the start of the second half. We also put some thought into what the weather was going to be at that time. Do we want the wind going into the fourth quarter depending on what kind of game it was going to be? It was literally coming down so hard that I couldn’t see some of the guys on the field. It was coming right into you too. So I’m sure they had a big problem with it.”

On Callaway’s punt returns and the wind being a factor:

“I don’t think that’s any question. If you go to practice and see him work at catching punts, he worked all week on the jugs machine because of a left footed punter being different. He’s one of the hardest workers we have, in my opinion, in our program. I felt badly for him. The good thing is that he bounced back.”

On what he says to the team after a game like tonight:

“I point out the things they didn’t do well. I have to be honest with them. You appreciate the effort and the toughness you want to see from them, and you challenge them. Life is a competition. That was a competition. We have to compete again. We have to compete when we come back to practice, and we have to compete when we show up to play next Saturday. There are not secrets to it.”

On what held Will McBride out of the game:

“He wasn’t ready yet protocol wise.”

On if he has ever played in conditions like he experienced in this game:

“Maybe once in 1998 at Northwestern. There was rain like this.”

On communication operations between the coaches:

“I thought it went well. I kept close to see how it went. I think (Larry Scott and Mike Canales) are great football coaches, and they did a nice job. I think the communications with the players was good. I think Jarrett (Guarantano) and (Mike Canales) talking on the phone worked well. So I think overall it was pretty good.”

On why he slowed things down on offense:

“As we started the process on Sunday evening and then Monday, we wanted a game plan that would be best for us to beat LSU, and part of that was slowing it down and taking the air out of the ball a little bit and trying to lean on the defense a little bit. We thought that would be best for us. We wanted to get John Kelly 25 touches. I think John Kelly is a really good back. I wish we could block better for him at times, but I think he’s a very good football player.”

On how big of a role field position played in the game:

“Number one, we have to do a better job of stopping them on defense. That’s always part of it. We needed to eat some first downs. Trevor (Daniel) does a great job at punting the football, and we need to give him a better chance where we can back him up a little bit. Field position is huge. It was huge tonight, and it will be huge next Saturday.”

On Jarrett Guarantano’s performance in this game:

“He did a lot of the things we wanted him to do. A lot of those things were the little things like carrying out the fake so the backside player couldn’t slice as fast. He did that well I thought. All week we talked about the balls down the field give our guys a chance at least to go compete, and that happened. I would rather him not get hit, and he took a couple hits, but I think he has proven to all of us that he is a pretty tough kid.”

On if he approached the officials after the lights went out:

“No, they came over and said that we had a bank of lights out. I didn’t see it because it was raining so hard. Then they went to Coach Orgeron and asked him, and then asked me, and I said let’s play.”

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Tennessee Junior DL Kyle Phillips

On what does the team use as motivation now that there is no chance for bowl eligibility:

“If you are a competitor you are going to play hard whether you make a bowl game or not. I just believe that we as competitors are going to come to work next week and play hard and play with heart. No excuses.”

On LSU’s offense:

“We knew we had a real challenge ahead of us, especially with all the shifts LSU presents on offense. I think we had some very good talks about that during film study.”

On the team having more energy than usual on the sideline:

“I just think Coach Hoke definitely came in with a great mind set this week for us. I think we all bought into what he has been preaching to us about, playing for our seniors, and how we had two more opportunities. I think that was really important because we really care about each other as a team. These seniors have been here for four or five years and we want to end the season on a good note.”

Tennessee Senior TE Ethan Wolf

On Coach Hoke’s calls to go for it on fourth down:

“Obviously we want our coach to have faith in us as an offense. We were telling him in our heads, ‘Let’s go for it,’ and we’re never going to be disappointed in a coach telling us to go for it on fourth down. It just shows the trust he has in us. The ones we didn’t get are completely on us. When it comes to six inches and a yard, we have to get that.”

On playing in the weather conditions in the game:

"I can't say it's anything I've ever played in before, but it's not like we were the only ones dealing with it. LSU had to deal with it, and they managed to do well. It's just something we have to try and block out if we can. Obviously it's a little bit harder, but it's one for the record books I guess. I've never played in one of those."

On offensive coordinator Larry Scott being on the sideline instead of the booth:

"That was a big change for us to be able to go and ask him questions without having to get him on the headset or using technology to talk to him. It was good to be able to talk to him face-to-face and him understand what's going on. It was definitely a change, and it was a change that I liked. I don't think in my four years that my position coach has ever been on the field, so it was definitely a nice change to have."

Tennessee Senior LB Colton Jumper

On the impact the weather had:

"I don't ever remember playing a game like that. It was like a monsoon out there, but they're playing in it too. Whatever we have to deal with, they have to deal with it too. That's all you have to think about, and you can't let it affect you."

On the impact of the field position:

"Yeah, it was big. Field position is key. Whenever you get in a short field, they are looking to score. We don't look at that as a defense. Our job is to keep them out of the end zone and the points off the board. That does, in those conditions when they run the ball, give them a short field."

On the difference in the LSU run game in the second half:

"Different personnel. They are coming out in 23 personnel, 22 personnel, two tight ends, three running backs type deal, just loading the box. They do a good job of their shifts and their trades, and just kind of taking your eyes off of who you are supposed to be looking at. They got into more shifts and trades in the second half."

Tennessee RS-Senior DL Kendal Vickers

On waiting until the last second to line up:

“LSU does a bunch of shifts, trades, and motions, and depending on what that is, (it determines) where I line up. Jump (Colton Jumper) did a good job of telling me where to line up, and for the most part, I think we did a good job getting set and ready to go.”

On shutting them down early on and what changed:

“Yeah, we knew we wanted to come out with a certain type of energy. Everybody on the team (wanted) to help the offense, help the special teams and to go out there and get those three-and-outs on the first couple series of the game to get the momentum going. I don’t think we had the same energy going on. We caught some bad breaks, but that’s football, and you’ve got to be able to help your offense out in bad situations.”