

Florida State University Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 23, 2017



Jimbo Fisher

NC State - 27, Florida State - 21

JIMBO FISHER: First I'd like to say congratulations to North Carolina State. I thought they competed very well in the game. Got a very nice football team, did things they had to do to win in critical moments of the game and played well.

Our guys played well at times essentially, didn't -- just offense, defense, just couldn't -- when defense would get going, offense couldn't finish off a drive; offense would get going, defense couldn't get the next stop. Just mixed up in some things.

I thought our special teams really played well today. We had a nice kickoff return, got a nice punt block, punted the well extremely well. Unfortunately missed one field goal but we hit four out of five. I wish we hadn't had to kick that many, but we'll talk about that in second. Made some nice kicks there.

Was a big time when we did miss it because it would have tied the game, and then we give up the score, but at the same time they were always one play ahead. We didn't make the plays we needed to make. And like I say, got to do a better job.

There at the end we had a chance to get down there and have a shot and disappointed we dropped the ball and got a -- missed a block on a 3rd down and got some guys open, had a chance to make some plays.

I thought the young quarterback James for the first game going out there and playing, hit some nice big plays, made some nice throws, put his team in position, made one real nice touchdown throw on the first one. Some of the other ones they covered, did some things.

We ran the ball well at times and other times we didn't. We didn't finish drives in the red zone. That's another big key. Usually we score a lot of touchdowns, but we were five out of six, but we only scored one touchdown; got to finish that.

Turned it over, had a critical one but we got it back with the points, and not a bad job for the first time going out there doing that. Some of our young guys did that, had some -- didn't get a couple signals, had to call a couple time-outs which I thought were costly in the game and

was not with the quarterback, and I thought he did a nice job in that regard.

One of them he let the shot clock run down, but for your first game only having one of those is pretty good. Guys just didn't line up where they were supposed to line up. But there was a lot of good still there, but there was still plenty of bad, and we've got to get that cleaned up.

Still have a chance to have a nice football team. It's been done around here before, this kind of start. And we've just got to line up and go play and don't hang your heads now. Get ready to get work and get ready to go play Wake Forest and win a game on the road hopefully and play a real good team and line up and play next week, and we'll go.

Questions?

Q. You mentioned the red zone offense; how frustrating did it get?

JIMBO FISHER: I didn't get frustrated. You wanted to go. We had some opportunities and they're a good run defense, they played good, and you've got young guys, and when we lost Tate down there it bothered us just a little bit because that's our big guy that we like to go to in there, but we have other guys that can make plays, too. We had a chance on a little bubble right there, if we make a block, we're going to walk in; we just missed it. We're inches off; we had a couple drops.

One of them before the half was a tough situation, the two-minute drive before the half. That was kind of where we were right there, that was a heck of a drive by us to get back, and James and our players to get back within one score after the 17-7, two minutes before the half. That was an excellent drive. Disappointing one of those ones after we got the safety and we're 12 yards out of a field goal range, we weren't in the red zone then, but we just didn't get -- we had 3rd and 6 and we had to jump offsides. We had four of those. We had four critical motion plays, which we didn't have any in the loudest stadium in America up in the first game and did a nice job in that regard. But those motions were critical.

But we had a critical facemask, we had a critical late hit on a 3rd down or it was going to be 3rd and long, and

we had a late hit, they got a 1st down. We had a targeting on a trick play would have been 2nd or 3rd and long, and they picked up a couple 3rd and longs, too. They hit a couple 3rd and 9's, 3rd and 10's and got converted. They made the plays. In that regard we've got to get better.

Q. You lost a couple early games last year. You guys came back. Is that what you're telling your guys?

JIMBO FISHER: Yeah, telling my guys line up and play. Hang your head up and line up and play next week. Got to get ready to play against Wake Forest and play and play one game at a time, play one season -- again, both games, we had chances in both football games. We've got to clean up the little things which we have. We've had two long layoffs, but that's not an excuse. That's playing time in practice, too. You can look at it two different ways.

Q. Do you have to reevaluate your goals?

JIMBO FISHER: No, you line up and play. Your goals are already set. You don't play -- now you play for what the next game is. I mean, goals are set before the season. Once that goes, then you play. Then you see what happens. There ain't no set and worry about what I'm going to get or where I'm going to be. What you need to find out is what kind of team you're going to be and line up and play next week and play. Goals are set before the season, then you move on.

Q. When you talk about what kind of team this wants to be; this is the first time since you've been here this team has started off 0-2. What is that conversation like? None of these guys have ever experienced this.

JIMBO FISHER: That's what I just told you. I just told you we're going to play next week. There is no panic. But there's an urgency. You've got to correct some things and get better. I mean, there's no -- I mean, we're going to line up and play next week. Whether we're 1-1 or 0-2, we've got to play one week at a time, one game at a time. That's all we can control, and that's what the conversation is about.

Q. With three minutes left, no time-outs, you decided to kick one rather than onside. Can you explain that?

JIMBO FISHER: Well, because if you get a stop, you kick it right there and take a chance and don't get it back -- we had the 3rd and 8 and gave up the run. We was going to get it back with a minute and a half. If you do it right there, why take the chance; you still have confidence in your defense, you pin it back and then you'd be pinned all the way back on the 2-yard line with maybe no time, and the odds of getting an onside kick aren't that great, and still with three minutes to go, I

think it was the smart thing to do with who we had on defense, and we had, what, 3rd and 8 and had a run -- 3rd and 7 or 8, something like that, and they popped a run.

Q. Did you ask the referees whether No. 11 started his flip before he got to the goal line and why didn't they --

JIMBO FISHER: No, I didn't see that. I didn't see that. If that's what happened, that's what happened. I don't know. I didn't see that.

Q. Have you seen a targeting before with someone's arms?

JIMBO FISHER: No, they called it, they said it was, they reviewed it, so I guess it is. I didn't know that was targeting. I'm not agreeing, disagreeing. I thought he was just trying to swing at the ball. We have guys that do that at our -- all the time. I've said that for two years and they don't call that. But I don't -- I'd have to get an interpretation of that.

Q. Do you know what's with Auden, the severity of the injury?

JIMBO FISHER: It was his shoulder, and I don't think it's something that -- I think he's got to get better and get ready to play. I think he'll come back pretty quickly from what I understand.

Q. Defensively you played really well for long stretches but then there would be a breakdown here or there?

JIMBO FISHER: Exactly right, on 3rd down, that's what I said. We didn't make the plays, any of the plays. When it was offense we'd do that and then not finish a drive or defense get a 3rd and 8 and give it up or go for three drives and all of a sudden offense get momentum, not playing together, you're not feeding off each other enough, and that was -- we had some good things defensively, but there's some things that we need to clean up. It was disappointing.

Q. Is that a product of not having played in 21 days?

JIMBO FISHER: I don't know that. I mean, hey, that's what we had to do, so we do it. That ain't an excuse. We've got to line up and play. There was nothing to that.

Q. What can you say about (indiscernible)?

JIMBO FISHER: He was playing great. He's a big guy. Auden does so much for us because he's such an intelligent player, not only physically intelligent but mentally intelligent, and his ability to line up in different spots and allow us to move other guys to where they can do things and you can move him around and play different, get match-ups and do things, blocking

schemes, whatever it may be, and it is, he's a huge part. Like I said, I've been so happy with him, and you've heard me say so in camp. I've been as pleased with him as anybody we have, and it was a shame we lost him.

Q. You talk about playing safety football; James seemed like the fumble --

JIMBO FISHER: He did, he had one time on the clock where we let it run down. He didn't see the clock. But for the most part, I thought the guy did a heck of a job, got the ball down the field, made big plays at times. We'll evaluate the film and look at all the little details, but game management, his presence, his poise, the moment didn't seem to overwhelm him. He'd come off and he could communicate what was going on and why it was going on and what he was doing. I thought he did a heck of a job.

Q. It seemed like Chubb was constantly there and he kept getting back up.

JIMBO FISHER: Oh, he did. He kept playing and competing. I told you, he's a competitor now. He's a competitor. They've got a really good front and a good defense, and he did a really nice job.

Q. How do you feel your offensive line performed?

JIMBO FISHER: I'd have to watch and see. There was a couple of things it looked like they broke down, but we had some nice runs and they had nice protection a lot of times. We'll look. There was one we got a sack right before the half, Chubb, you get him one-on-one, he's going to get one or so. There was one late on the -- we had the throw-back to the tailback that we had a big play that that was a mistake. I mean, we should never have gotten beaten on that play there on the protection. That was there. Trying to think. There was one late on a guy got through that shouldn't have. As a matter of fact, that last 3rd and 6 I think, that came up -- we had a guy just got beat in there. But they're a good front. For the most part I thought they played pretty good, but we'll look at the film and evaluate.

Q. They used a number of trick or innovative plays; did that throw off your defense?

JIMBO FISHER: We knew exactly -- there was nothing we hadn't seen. But they did -- right there before half, we was in man coverage and the guy who had him jumped up and gave up the vertical. We were straight man coverage, and he should never have come up. I mean, he's got to stay on his guy. We had one early, a little stutter route on a little halfback pass, but then after that for the most part I thought we played them pretty well.

Q. What's the update on Matthew Thompson?

JIMBO FISHER: I don't know, he had something with

his lower back. They'll evaluate and see.

Q. How would you assess the way your linebackers played?

JIMBO FISHER: Again, it's hard to say until you look at the film. There was guys making plays and did some -- but I don't -- I can't answer that until I look at the film.

Q. Special teams seemed improved pretty much across the board.

JIMBO FISHER: We worked our tails off. We punted it well, we punted live, we put blocks on. We got a great blocked punt at the right time, and that was huge. And then not coming back -- we had the big drop right there because we had the guy wide open, he drops the ball right there and going to turn around and make a 1st down or get down and score. There was plenty of opportunities, and our special teams -- our kicker had a couple nice kick returns. Punt returns, I thought Tarvarus did a nice job. We punted the ball. We averaged about 47 yards a punt. I thought he did a nice job punting the ball. Ricky, I mean, we had the one missed field goal, which was a critical miss, but at the same time, he's four out of five and made some really good kicks. I thought we got a lot better in those regards. We worked very hard on them, and had good results.

Q. Was the game plan going in to run the ball more, or did the game dictate --

JIMBO FISHER: Once we got behind at the half -- we were running the ball, running the ball really well. We had 100 yards rushing, but you get the sacks off, we had about 140, and the first couple, we had a couple dink throws and got on 3rd down, but then we ran the ball really well. But we hit two big plays in the third quarter. We had a play action we was going to have to come back and they busted a punt, we got a post read, we hit it, and we had a go read and we hit it, and then we ran it, and then all of a sudden in the fourth quarter we were still running the ball and then we got behind.

We had the two-score game, when they got the two-score game with seven minutes, you couldn't run the ball. You could mix in a run or two and we had a couple of them -- a couple of them runs that we throw those bubble screens, those are runs, and you pick -- you throw it out there and make five yards, that's still a run in our mind. I mean, how you do that.

If they're going to bunch the box and we hit Noony and Auden with a couple of those, and one of them made 18 yards. Remember Auden down the sideline? Something else. In your run reads, those are like RPOs in what you're doing in regard to how they play the box.

I thought we ran the ball pretty decent for the most part.

Q. The first couple drives you guys didn't get anything going, got behind from the beginning.

JIMBO FISHER: Well, that's where your experience on defense and stuff has got to stand up. Hopefully we could have stood up and I was hoping we'd get a couple stops, but they got 10-0 but then we come right back and make it 10-7, and then the critical ones, like I said, with three minutes to go, we're going to miss a field goal and make it 10-10, and then they scored to make it 17-7, but then we drove right back down in two-minute and got it to 17-10, got to a one-score game, then they get a stop and then we hit the post route down to the 3, get 17-13, but then we gave up a couple of 3rd downs on that late hit. We got it to 20-13, we get down again, throw a go route to George, 20-16. We just couldn't finish that drive. Then it went to 27-16, I think, then we got them pinned back 27-18, and then we had the throw back that we thought we had, and they get a protection, and they just kept matching on offense. They did enough to keep it out.

Q. Obviously losing Deondre and a couple other players banged up now, are you reassessing what you have as a team?

JIMBO FISHER: No, I think we still have a very good team. I've got to do a better job coaching. We've got to coach them better, we've got to get them in position to do it. We're a play away or two here or there. But listen, you can say that every week, and when you win that's what it gets down to. We've got to find a way to find those inches and battle back, and anytime you're behind, you line up and play.

Q. With all the stuff you guys have been through, obviously quarterback gets hurt and the canceled game, the hurricane, do you have to be more of a motivator and a psychologist now?

JIMBO FISHER: No doubt. I mean, all those different situations, when you practice that long. But like I said, some of your hardest practicing and your hardest coaching was done during that three weeks because when players don't see a game to practice for, it's like your pounding them again in camp. It's like you just went through camp, you came out to play, and then all of a sudden you've got to go back through camp. We had to be tough on them because you practice, you can't let them bad habits; know what I'm saying? And they didn't do that; we pressed them hard. But that's all part of coaching. Coaching is always being part of psychology and just getting guys to understand what the importance is. Like I say, you control what happens, just line up and play.

Q. Talk about James' performance.

JIMBO FISHER: I thought he did a great job in the game for a young guy making throws and decisions he made for the most part taking care of the ball, I definitely do. I thought he prepared himself very well.

Q. What progress have you seen from George just this season alone?

JIMBO FISHER: Well, just health first of all. It's the first time he's been healthy since he's been here. He was never healthy, and like I said before, it was nothing he did, it was just some guys get hurt, and then George is a very hard worker and a really hard learner -- excuse me, hard worker and learns very well. Very conscientious young man, is going to be a really good player.

Q. If he can stay healthy, what do you think he does for this offense?

JIMBO FISHER: Oh, big time. He creates plays, he can block, he can run with the ball after a catch. He had a real nice kickoff returns and things he does. George is a talented guy and a really great special teams player, too.

Q. Do you feel like Tate's injury changed the momentum of the game?

JIMBO FISHER: It did because how we had certain plays set up and having to move guys around to other positions. It definitely affected us. But you know, that's ball. That's just part of football. You have to adjust, and we had plans for it, know what I'm saying? We had a plan if that happens, this happens. We talk that out all the time. But he's a big part of it. But we've got other players.



No. 12/11 Florida State vs. NC State
Saturday, Sept. 23, 2017
NC State Head Coach Dave Doeren

Opening Statement

"I'm really proud of our coaching staff and our players that came on this trip. The way they prepared there was no doubt that we could win the football game. Only 13 percent of the people who walk into this stadium leave a winner. You have to be elite to be able to do that. It takes elite concentration with their crowd noise. It's a four quarter battle; Florida State is never going to quit playing. They are very well-coached and I have so much respect for Jimbo and his staff. They have great talent. Our players came here with a dream three and four years ago and most of those guys that are out there and that was to help me and our staff elevate our program and be competitive and be a contender in this conference. Today was a great step in the right direction for all of us that way. I chose to get into this profession because I like helping people reach their dreams and being a part of that process and that's what today was. Just to see the euphoria in their faces in that locker room and feel how much they want into that journey, that's why I coach and I loved every second of that and I'm so proud of those guys."

Can you talk about your offense today?

"We didn't have a ton of yards. We were able to stay on the field on some third downs more than Alabama did (against Florida State) the week before which was pretty important from a defensive standpoint; helping those guys have some correction time on the sideline. I think we wore them down over time. We were able to run the football when we needed to in the fourth quarter and get us that key first down at the end. I thought we ran the ball well near the goal line when they're packing it in and they got a bunch of big studs down there and we were able to get in on fourth down. As we continue to take care of the ball, I think the only mishap was the safety, the botched snap down there which made it more interesting than it should have been. But that's how it goes sometimes."

Talk about your quarterback Ryan Finley

"Ryan's playing the same way he has the last three games. He's managing the offense, he's giving his receivers a chance, he's not making mistakes with the ball and hurting our team. Very accurate. Throws catchable balls. Very intelligent. He's having a heck of a year right now. We've just got to keep him upright and let him keep doing it."

On Florida State's quarterback James Blackman

"For a true freshman, he played well. He threw some good deep balls. Even made a couple of plays on his feet. We had no idea if he could run or not from the film we had. He's going to be a good player for them. I thought we hit him a lot. We had some big hits on him that affected him but he was pretty accurate. He didn't throw the ball to us. For a true freshman in his first college start he was pretty impressive."

What went into game planning for Blackman?

"A lot of what-ifs. A lot of what-ifs. We were basing it on the fact that Jimbo would run his offense the way he always has. Other than running the quarterback, which he didn't do, it was pretty much the same offense we've seen from him."

On your team making plays...

"Steph Louis – that catch he had on third down – that was like a Dennis Rodman rebound going up and snatching the ball out of the air with two hands. That was big time. Our kicker made the kicks today. That's what you've got to do in a game like this. You've got to make the plays – I call it make the layups. Some of those were big time plays. (Bradley) Chubb's forced fumble was a big-time play. Just an incredible play by a senior."

On the fourth quarter drive by the offense

"It gave the defense some cushion and made their offense have to be in pass-mode which helps you pass rush-wise. Youi don't have to sit there; they may run the football here and you can turn it loose a little more. I thought we brought some great pressures. We have a great safety blitz on fourth down. We missed the tackle but forced him (Blackman) to throw an errant throw. We just kept mixing it up. It was a long day. Our two corners had to play every snap. That was challenging against the speed they have."



**No. 12/11 Florida State vs. NC State
Saturday, Sept. 23, 2017
FSU Offensive Player Quotes**

Junior running back Jacques Patrick

On NC State's end zone run defense:

"They had a good game plan and they blitzed a lot. We had a young quarterback. He actually played a really good game. I'm really proud of him. But they were throwing a lot of different blitzes to try to get the ball out of his hands quick. They had a really good game plan."

On FSU's 0-2 start and the team goals moving forward:

"We know we're a great team. This doesn't define who we are. We're going to go out there and practice the same and get better prepared. Things just didn't go our way today. We just want to go back out there and do what we have to do."

On if this team start has lowered the expectations of the team moving forward:

"You can't hang your head on any situation in life. Unfortunately, that's how life goes. But at the end of the day, things are going to get better and that's how we see it. We are going to go to work. We're going to keep playing hard. We're going to try to win out. That's our goal to try to win out."

On Blackman's first start:

"He showed a lot of poise. He never got flustered as a true Freshman in his first start. It was very intriguing and something you can build off of. I'm really proud of him and the way that he came out and stepped up for our team."

Redshirt Sophomore George Campbell

On how the receiver's performed:

"I feel like it's not just about me and my role. As a receiver, as a whole, as long as we're going, the offense is going as well."

On Auden Tate exiting the game due to injury:

"It was nothing big and nothing we can't handle. At the same time, coach Fisher always tells us, 'Next man up'. If someone goes down it's the next man up so at the end of the day if your number is called you have to be ready to go out there. Just like what James (Blackman) just did."

On if the wide receiver's will be able to step up if Auden Tate misses time:

"Most definitely. We have a surplus of receivers and we're all good. We are all going out to execute and compete. If Tate is out for a while, we will be able to step up and make those plays."

On the expectations from special teams moving forward:

"It's about execution. Nothing crazy. We beat ourselves in the Alabama game. It's about execution on special teams and making sure we step up and make the plays. We have to make sure we block the right person and make the right reads coming off kickoff and kick returns. There's nothing special to it. Just making sure that we execute everything on special teams."

On Aguayo's and Tyler's confidence after the Special Teams performance:

"It helps them build up their confidence. They're both good kickers and they both make phenomenal kicks. Like I said, we are going to go back next week, do the same thing, execute, make sure we are doing everything right, and they're going to keep kicking the ball."



No. 12/11 Florida State vs. NC State
Saturday, Sept. 23, 2017
FSU Defense/ Special Teams Player Quotes

Sophomore kicker Ricky Aguayo

On how the team feels about the game:

"We're obviously down that we lost this game, but it's just a matter of moving forward and learning from our mistakes. We have Wake Forest next week who is a really good team. In Winston-Salem it can get pretty loud. I haven't played there, but I've heard from my brother. We've just got to move on and fix our mistakes."

On being iced at the end of the first half and if it made you upset:

"Not really, that's the kind of stuff I do in Madden, but having that done to me gave me more time to focus in on my technical swing. And I had that one on the second timeout and I was able to hit it, so it gave me confidence."

Sophomore Defensive End Brian Burns

On the penalties:

"The penalties we definitely caused ourselves."

On being off for three weeks:

"I wouldn't say we were affected. I feel like we were ready coming into this game. I just felt like we didn't execute the way we should have and had mental errors. Our discipline wasn't where it should have been."

On what positives there are to take away:

"I preach the word positivity. Even when Deondre got hurt we stayed positive. That's all you really can do. We have nine more games, it's just one game. We have to keep pushing."

Junior Defensive End Josh Sweat

On if it was frustrating that the defense couldn't hold them long enough:

"It's not really frustrating. We fell short in a lot of situations and they capitalized, on us being in the wrong place, missing tackles. We gave up way too many third downs and we could have stopped them, and forced three and out. It was just a big sting for me. Too many penalties. We can't win with that many penalties."