

Florida State University Football Media Conference

Saturday, October 15, 2016

Jimbo Fisher

COACH FISHER: First of all, I'd like to say, Wake Forest -- like I said coming in, they're a very good football team. Outstanding deep football team. Offensively, they usually don't turn it over. We were able to create some turnovers today. Special teams, they did a great job. They're a veteran team. On defense especially, we knew going in it was going to be very tough. But we didn't play as well as we need.

Our defense was outstanding. My hat's off to our defense. They were outstanding. Played the run tremendously well. Pressured the quarterback, contested throws, created turnovers, created opportunities. When they put their back against the wall, they played their tails off. Can't ask enough. They're getting healthy. They're getting better. They're playing better. Playing with more confidence. Those young guys keep playing, keep adding more guys. Very, very happy with their progress and what they're doing now.

Offensively, we got yards, didn't finish drives. Had drives to finish, had a couple guys open the first time, had protection issues, not always offensive line, sometimes a back or a tight end or different things. Had throws we could have made and didn't finish drives.

I knew that was going to be a key going in because Wake stretches the game out. They get a couple first downs, let you run it, you never hit big plays because of the way they play defense. They play the big umbrella and a lot of things underneath. It milks the clock. If you don't score touchdowns in the red zone, it gets to be a very tight game. If you score some touchdowns, you win. Hopefully, we can score two or three more touchdowns right down there, we'd have been in great shape, the kind of game would have played out like I thought it was going to.

We've got to do a better job. Too much pressure on Deondre up front. He played pretty decent. Had one mistake right there, then had a fumble at the end, which he could have held on. Had a couple of guys come open, which happens. Missed some blocks and didn't do the things we need to do. At the end of the day, won a football game in a tight situation.

I'm very proud of our guys for that. A lot of young guys that fought through things and kept grinding. Two first downs at the end, two or three first downs at the end were very critical -- two or three, I couldn't remember. We ate a lot of clock up there. Defense played smart, and we managed to get out of the football game.

So good win. Got to heal up now. We're banged and bruised and have been for a while after last week's game and this week's game. Have a week to heal up, clean some things up, and coming down the stretch, we've got great football teams coming -- Clemson, NC State, Boston College, Syracuse, and Florida. It's going to be a heck of a run.

This league has turned into, like you say, this is a heck of a football league. There's a lot of good teams, a lot of good players. You have to play your "A" game every week and get healthy get ready to go.

Q. You mentioned you have to heal up. What about Bobo Wilson?

COACH FISHER: I don't know. Have to wait and see.

Q. Miami lost today. How much did that game take out of those two teams?

COACH FISHER: It does. Those games do. That wasn't it today. That was Wake Forest playing good on our part. I don't know about Miami-North Carolina. I can't speak for them. Those games do take it out of you. That's not an excuse. You've got to play them every week. It had nothing to do with our performance today. We had opportunities to make it, and we didn't make them. Wake made what happened today to us. In their case, I don't know.

Q. With that in mind, how good is it to get out of here with a win going into the bye week?

COACH FISHER: It's huge. I mean, it's huge. Every game in college football now, you see them. Everything's coming to the wire. There's good football players everywhere. There's good teams, good coaches. Guys are playing well. And the ability -- don't ever underestimate the ability to win football games. Don't ever underestimate the ability to win football games.

Q. It seems like Ermon Lane has really found a spot back there.

COACH FISHER: Actually, he's more natural on that side of the ball than he is on the offensive side of the ball. I don't mean to discredit. The guy is playing natural, making tackles, playing physical. Playing good football. You talk about timing it up just perfect.

Q. To follow up on that, you've had a lot of guys move positions over your career. Any guy that learned that fast, in just a few weeks?

COACH FISHER: Not quite like that. That's amazing. You talk about the way you spin down and coverage and leverage and two deep and three deep. People don't realize football today is not simple. Up front sometimes you can get a little simple, turn a guy loose. But in the secondary, man, you're a safety because you're required to make calls and checks, and you're leveraging.

I mean, the guy's done a tremendous job. I mean a tremendous job.

Q. When you recruited him, did you think he had --

COACH FISHER: Oh, yeah, I mean, a lot of those guys -- we like to recruit guys we think can swing both ways in that body type. There's no doubt I didn't think he couldn't, you know what I'm saying? We thought he was going to be a receiver, and ended up being a DB.

Q. Aside from Charleston Southern, it seems like the first half has kind of been a little sticking point for the team offensively.

COACH FISHER: You go back, the first half, Ole Miss, we did a little bit. We haven't had a three-and-out until today. Today is the first three-and-out. You at least want to change field position. Charleston Southern, we scored. What was the third game? Louisville, we moved it and scored the next two. Who was the fourth? South Florida did it.

North Carolina, we actually went down and had three field goals. You say you didn't score, but you kick three field goals and score nine points in the first quarter, it's still a good deal.

Last week at Miami, we missed the cut. If Dalvin hits the first third-and-one, it's a touchdown. It's a walk-in, and he just missed the cut. Second drive, we're moving it, and he dropped the ball on the empty play that set us back, and then we scored. This week, three-and-out. They busted our tail.

It's not you've got to finish drives, but it's just part of it. You've got to get better at it. Got to work on it. We script them, do everything, come out with energy. Got to play better. On defense, remember, they were starting slow, now they're starting good. We've just got to keep going. Just keep playing and coaching and doing what we're doing.

Q. I know last year you talked a little bit about the first half, it was guys trying to be too perfect, and then they got it in the second half. Is it still that, or is it something else?

COACH FISHER: No, it ain't that. We play well and play bad. It's good teams you're playing. We're playing some good people too. North Carolina, you kick three field goals, is it that bad? Miami, if you make a cut -- I mean, it's not drastic. It's just you've got to execute what you're doing. Do what we do.

Q. How encouraging was it after the game last week for your defense to come out and play as hard as they did?

COACH FISHER: They played great today. They did. Controlled the line of scrimmage. Getting them guys healthy up front is making a difference, our defense up front. Coming and playing like they can play. Very proud of that.

You talk about situations they got put in today, and, man, they played their tails off. Covered and everything.

Q. You were worried about the relief syndrome, and they didn't seem to show it.

COACH FISHER: No, they didn't. We didn't show relief syndrome either. Wake's got a very good defensive football team. You can say it all you want. And how they play, they stop you from creating big plays. You know what I'm saying? The way they play. They don't give up very many big plays. They make you execute. If you get to the red zone and kick field goals, then that's what you get in a dogfight with them.

Q. You said Travis was playing well, but the catches weren't there. How good was it to see?

COACH FISHER: Really good. Got moved around, got the ball to him, which he did. There were some balls that Deondre could have thrown to him the last couple of weeks, and just had two guys open and picked another guy, you know what I'm saying? But it was good. 13 [catches], that's great. I said he's been playing good football. I mean, he really has. Good to get him back.

Q. Playing good football, but what does it do for a player's confidence to have that validation?

COACH FISHER: Oh, no doubt. Any time you go get numbers, look at it, makes you feel good.

Makes you play good. Knowing you're doing it. It validates you. You hit the word right on the head. Kind of validates what coaches are telling you. Is he really saying that? Am I really doing it, or am I not? You're saying, why am I not getting the ball? That's why you got to keep believing.

That's his maturity. Instead of saying, no, I'm not, he just keeps doing what he's doing, and now the balls came to him.

Q. The defense is also some making big plays --

COACH FISHER: Sacks. Difference makers up front. Second and 12, second and 13 on the run, getting a loss. You know what I mean? Winning the sticks game, which is -- that's the name of the game. That's what we didn't do today. We got behind the sticks at times.

Actually, we moved the ball. We had 442 yards, but they had 252 and had sacks, created turnovers. It was great. One thing they're doing this year is creating turnovers. Now they're getting pressure on the quarterback.

Q. Josh Sweat the last couple weeks, looks like he started taking things up a notch?

COACH FISHER: He's healthy. When you get to clean that knee up and get a couple weeks. That makes a difference. And then his ankles. I mean, the power. He can create distance with the inside guys. Get [Brian] Burns in that mix and DeMarcus Walker. Then you got two or three guys going and get inside push along with outside pressure, it can find that thing and makes it better and better.

Q. Dalvin had to come out for a series. What kind of happened to him?

COACH FISHER: Got banged up inside. Got knocked -- football. I mean, that's the best way I can put it, you know what I mean? They made a good hit on him. He caught a ball coming inside. A D-lineman retraced back out -- there's a guy sometimes they catch you when you're not looking. Your eyes are going downfield, and you get caught coming back up with the big guys. Just got caught.

Q. The defense with the pressure they're generating up front, how big is that for the back end, for those younger guys to get confident?

COACH FISHER: It does, and you ain't got to cover forever. When you're getting pressure, I don't care what the DB is. Eventually somebody's going to get open. You know what I'm saying? They did a good job. Another thing our DBs did a good job of today. When they scrambled and both contained, staying on their guys and not contesting throws. One time in two-minute right there, we had a guy came off and traced the quarterback and stayed in coverage until he crossed the line of scrimmage. They're staying disciplined even when scrambles break out and still contesting those throws.

Q. Dontavious Jackson made his first career start. What did you think of his performance?

COACH FISHER: Good. I have to see it on film. I couldn't watch it in there, but he's making [plays]. He gets it. He knows the calls. He's a smart guy. Studies the game. He's not only a physical guy, but he's a smart -- very cerebral guy, very cerebral player.

Q. For Deondre, that one drive where he moved off for the touchdown to Auden Tate what were some things that were going on with that play calling?

COACH FISHER: We were getting protection. I don't mean that -- when he gets time, he's making throws. He made good tight throws, and he did for the most part the second half. Except for the one mistake he made on the boot play. The guy undercut us, and he made it. But his decision making on the day, even though he got hit, was good. And then when he got time to set his feet, he was hitting the guys we need to hit. Just got to keep going. Again, they did a good job.

Q. Was any of the pass protection stuff on him?

COACH FISHER: Before I say anything, let me look. It's not always -- I mean, you're talking about three things now. I know the first one, we had a tight end get beat. On the one we had in the corner of the end zone, we had a tight end and max slide it, bang, he had him, and come off.

There was another one. We had an inside guard one. We had a back on one. I mean, so you're talking about three different things. You're talking about offensive line, talking about backs, talking about receivers, I mean, tight ends, when you're talking about protection. So before I say that -- and I'm not criticizing our guys. We've got to pass protect better because, when he sets his feet, man, he can make throws, and he can make plays. It's really good. But we've got to look at it and see and make sure we're asking guys to do what they can do.

We slid some protection, which should have been pretty good. But I'm not -- we got through it, and we'll find out what happened. Like I say, we did all that and still threw for 319. Just think if we can protect the dog gone guy.

Q. You talk about winning football players, the tackle that Dalvin made --

COACH FISHER: Oh, yeah, right there, the heart right there to go make that play and hold off and miss a field goal. There's a perfect sign of what this team thinks. Not playing -- even though he wasn't playing his best at times when he was on offense, he still played hard. You can't say they didn't play -- because a guy missed a block, you say they don't -- there's a difference. That's not playing with good technique. Playing hard is when you're putting your strain. They did that. We've just got to strain with better technique.

For him to go get that play, you're right. I'm glad you brought that up. I apologize for forgetting that. That was a huge play in that football game. I mean, as big a play as there was. We get to push them back. They miss a field goal. That just tells you the heart. Talk about a guy who can run it, who's banged up, who's bruised, who has had some great games. Still had 100 yards. But at the same time, shows you what kind of team player he is.

Q. What would you say is the biggest thing you and your team have taken out of what's been a really tough stretch?

COACH FISHER: It's college football. Name me a team that ain't had a tough stretch. Everybody's played with their guts on the line and scratched and clawed for a win or two, and every play matters, and you've got to get better, and you've got to work at it every week. That's college football. I think it's going to be college football until the end of time. I think you're going to see more of this type of stuff throughout.

You've got to play. Whether you're young, old, you've got to get better every week. Everybody can play in this league. It's a really good league. I think this league is as good as anybody. I'll tell you. I know that sounds crazy, but I'm telling you now, it's good.

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**No.14 Florida State vs. RV Wake Forest
Saturday, Oct. 15th, 2016
Florida State Offensive Player Quotes**

Travis Rudolph, Jr., Wide Receiver

On the deep pass at the end of the half:

"We go over that every Thursday. We work on two-minute drill. We work on Hail Mary play. I just felt like I was not going to be in the position, the right position, it just landed right in my hands."

On the disappointment of falling just short on the deep ball at the end of the first half:

"It was really disappointing. I mean I really wanted to score and I saw Da'Vante Phillips right there but he was in front of me. I wanted to toss it to him but I knew that would be illegal so I took what I could get."

If his big receiving numbers are in showing how well he is playing:

"No, not at all. I feel as a receiver you've got to be good with the ball and without the ball. I feel like I was making some great blocks even when I wasn't getting the ball. That's more important to me...being an all-around receiver."

Deondre Francois, R-Fr., Quarterback

On what changed to open up the passing game:

"Wake Forest has a very stout defensive line, they started keying on Dalvin [Cook] so we had to open it up and throw it. Travis [Rudolph] ran some great routes and made some great catches."

On the importance of the off week before the game versus Clemson:

"Very important. It gives us a chance to heal up. It gives us a chance to correct these mistakes. It gives us a chance to catch-up on school work."

On what its like to have guys like Dalvin Cook and Travis Rudolph on offense with him:

"Those two guys have been playing here for a long time and know what it takes to win games. Those are the two leaders of our offense. When one thing is not going right they are quick to pick it up."

On the drive in the third quarter when he hot three straight passes culminating in a TD to Auden Tate:

"I was just seeing it well. Jimbo [Fisher] was calling it well. Just putting our offense in the right position to be successful and we started to dial it up...We just focused and executed."

Dalvin Cook, Jr., Running Back

On his two fumbles:

"On the first one, I just got my body, on both of them I got my body in some weird situations and Wake Forest they came in tough. I just got my body in some weird situations and some awkward ways and the ball came out."

On the Wake Forest defense

"It's been like that for two years in a row. They've been playing us tough so we knew what type of game it was (going to be). That's why we prepared for a game like this. We knew going in it was going to be a brawl. It was going to be a fight. That's just the type of team Wake Forest is. You hear Wake Forest and you kind of like shy away from them but you're going to have low scoring games like that."

On Francois' TD drive in the third quarter:

"As you see week-in and week-out with him, (he's) a tough guy man. Tough. Mentally strong. That's what you need out of a quarterback like Deondre. Out of a quarterback, period. He shows leadership and toughness every week."



No. 14 Florida State vs. North Carolina

Saturday, Oct. 15, 2016

Wake Forest Head Coach Dave Clawson

Opening Statement:

"I'll say the same thing to you that I told team: I thought we battled out butts off. I thought we physically competed; defense played their tails off. We just did too many things early to beat ourselves. The three turnovers - 10 of their points were a result of turnovers. The pick that led to a field goal, the snap over the head that led to the touchdown – right there in a lot of ways is the football game. Then the kickoff return that got called back. You play a team with the quality [of FSU], you cannot beat yourself. I think turnovers and special teams miscues really did us in. That was certainly right there – probably a 17-point swing in the game. The offense just struggled to get anything going consistently. We really struggled to block them, we really struggled to pass protect against them, we did not hold up as well as we needed to. We didn't make enough plays on the perimeter. I think other than Cortez (Lewis) we didn't pop any runs; the one run early on the third-and-20, and we didn't execute nearly as well as we needed to beat a team of this quality."

Seemed like you couldn't cash in on Florida State's turnovers:

"We had the ball how many times in the red zone and came up empty with touchdowns? We had the ball three or four times probably within their 30 and didn't have any touchdowns to show for it. That is frustrating. We couldn't run the ball against them. We didn't get movement. We didn't get push, and then we didn't get enough separation on the perimeter. Early, we had a lot of good six and seven-yard plays, but again, with the exception of Cortez, they covered us."

On the penalty on the start of Florida State's 96-yard drive:

"I don't know what to tell our players. He wasn't down, no whistle was blown...they said there is a natural conclusion to the play. I just don't know. That's tough. They didn't blow a whistle and his feet weren't down. So, when you saw the replay, his feet were never down, his legs were never down, he knees were never down. So, we have a football player that's playing to the whistle and he sees a back that's still on his feet and they felt, because progress was stopped, that was a penalty. I can see why they would say that, but I just don't know what to tell our players. What do you say? There is no whistle blown and his legs aren't down. The explanation was there is a natural conclusion to a play but our kids they go to the whistle. That was a tough one; that was a tough one two swallow."

What did Florida State do to get rolling?

"Then they made a few plays on the perimeter, we missed some tackles and they are a good offense. It's a matter of time with them. The whole game we held them down except that drive. We gave up a lot of yards, but we got off the field on third down and our defense gave our team every opportunity to win that football game."

Your Thoughts on the Francois to Rudolph combination?

"Francois, Rudolph, Wilson, Whitfield – you can keep going on and on. They've got a lot of weapons. They really do. It's hard to focus on (Dalvin) Cook so much because of how good they are on the perimeter. Cook had a good game; I thought we limited him a little bit. He didn't get those big breakout runs he got against us a year ago. But he's a heck of a player. I'm sure he had over 100 yards but it took a lot of carries to get it."



**No.14 Florida State vs. RV Wake Forest
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Florida State Defensive Player Quotes**

Senior Defensive End: DeMarcus Walker

On Ermon Lane:

"[Ermon] Lane knows what he's doing. He gave a good effort. He made the calls. He was where he was supposed to be. I'm pretty comfortable with Lane back there."

Junior Defensive Back: Ermon Lane:

On the defensive improvement:

"We put in work. These past couple weeks we were just versatile. We just tried to get on the same page, because earlier we didn't feel like we were on the same page."

On the defense staying consistent:

"We're going to leave that to Coach [Charles] Kelly, but we just have to do what we do. It's just another game, and we have to do our job. We have to continue to do us. The work ethic we are putting in is consistent and we never take a day off."

Sophomore Defensive End: Josh Sweat

Importance of setting the tone early:

"...especially when we set the tone early, like the Miami game you pass it on to each other and gives us an edge. We knew we couldn't let Wake Forest into the end zone. Best part of this game was being able to hold them out of our end zone. The three turnovers were what it was all about for us."