

Capital One Orange Bowl: Florida State vs Michigan

Saturday, December 31, 2016



Jimbo Fisher
Dalvin Cook
Nyqwan Murray
Deondre Francois
DeMarcus Walker
Florida State Seminoles

JIMBO FISHER: First, I want to reiterate what a privilege it is to be a part of this Orange Bowl. I mean, the history of this game, the people who have played in this game, the coaches that have coached in this game, I mean, it's unbelievable when you go back and I was reading that program before the game, it makes you get queasy in your stomach. And I have been around some big-time ball a lot, but it makes you realize the history of what goes on here, and the hospitality, the way we were treated, the way they did things. And I told everybody, if we could play half as good as the guys that did our motorcade that gets us in and out all day, it wouldn't even have been a game.

Just everything about the Orange Bowl is first class. Everything they did was unbelievable.

Like to say a special thanks to our seniors, not just for what they did this year, but what they've done for four years. The fifth-year guys, I believe this is 58 or 59 wins, I can't remember. The four-year guys it's 47 wins, almost 12 a year in both records, and the history and to go undefeated against both rivals and win Orange Bowls, win Rose Bowls, win National Championships, that just doesn't happen.

But then the leadership they provided along with these guys, with Dalvin right here, keeping this team together at the beginning of the year when people kept asking us, what do we have to play for? This is what you've got to play for. To be able to make it an Orange Bowl. Even though you didn't win a National Championship, to make it to an Orange Bowl, to play a team like Michigan, to play in an environment like this, to play in an atmosphere like this. Like we said, any time you keep score, that's what you've got to play for. Any time we get in that mold, you ain't going to be around here very long, and that's just a tribute to these guys and the way they kept this young team together.

Also it's important I think to see how these young guys, for our young guys to see how to work, how to come back, how to not reach your goals, take some away, take coaching, take leadership of these seniors and juniors and take their game higher. Not get a chip on their shoulder and feel like it's something we've got to change. That's hard to do. And also how to handle this environment and this atmosphere, to be able not just to practice, to deal with it all week, to deal with the events and all that. It all goes with playing big-time athletics, and you've got to learn to be there and do that, and then playing a game like this and come out like this against an opponent like this, it's amazing.

As we know, nothing comes easy. Nothing comes easy in anything, and we can make it that way, I know that. Dadgum.

But sitting there watching that, the legacy these seniors left with the youth and the talent on this team, boy, the future looks good, and I can't be excited and take a couple days off. I'm going to be right back on them. We've got a chance to have a good football team for a while. I'm very proud of these guys, the character and quality they are, and I'm blessed to be their coach.

Questions?

Q. Jimbo, that kickoff when Keith fielded that kickoff, in that case do you want him to take a knee and get the ball out?

JIMBO FISHER: He hesitated, but at one-yard deep, we always bring it out. If he was three- or four-yards deep, he would have. He can hit it and I'm going to tell you Keith is a guy who I think is going to be a really, really good player. Now this guy is a really talented guy. He's a young freshman just coming along. Sometimes it takes something like it to get you over the hump and that was a big, big-time play.

Q. Coach Fisher, how much are you going to miss Dalvin, and if and when he leaves how much are you going to miss him?

JIMBO FISHER: I was real smart when those one-play drives and he makes three guys miss and they score, and that's great coaching and great play calling, you know. It is. But we all know what he does on the field. What I'm going to miss is this right here. What I'm

going to miss is watching him in practice talk to the young guys. What I'm going to miss is in the weight room in the summer when he's working hard or harder like DeMarcus and these guys. His work ethic and his demeanor and the way he's changed these guys, the meetings we had, and I would call and say, would you talk to so and so. We've got to get him to do right. Anything I ever ask him to do, and the effect he had on his teammates, is what I'm truly going to miss.

Q. You've been saying throughout the year big things were coming for Nyqwan in the future. Two touchdowns tonight including that big catch. Talk about what he did.

JIMBO FISHER: I've told him this all the time. He could be whatever he wants to be. He really can. I don't say that about a lot of guys. He has the ability to learn and do that and just keep the poise and composure and the work ethic which he's learning to do. He is really growing up and playing, and this guy made plays -- I mean you're talking about a 90-some-yard touchdown, you're making a catch over and the guy he made the play on is pretty well covered, it was a great throw, but he went up and just made a great play and it shows him what he can be, and I think hopefully what he can be in the future if he will put his nose to the grindstone and take lessons off 44 and 4 right here and keep that same attitude those guys had, he could be sitting with the same kind of things they had when it's all over with.

Q. Jimbo, I think of that play when Dalvin, I think it was a 71, 72-yard run, just the momentum -- it looked like Michigan was getting it back.

JIMBO FISHER: They did. It was a huge play and what we did, we had to counter it. And sometimes when you hit gap runs on, when they want to blitz on third down or if they get back in zone and you can account for everybody on that side of the field in gap runs, because they sometimes will play back and you hit a gap on a third and long and get him in space, that was as good as any protection we had and to get the ball in his hands somehow, some way, to me that was the play right there that turned the second half for us that got our momentum going. There was no doubt. We couldn't move it, because their defensive front was doing great. We made some mistakes in special teams. Noonie made a mistake. We knew that. He came back from that. The big one, too, was the clip we got. We would have had the ball then across midfield with eight minutes to go up 12 points. That changes everything, too, because you would've gotten some points there. We had a kickoff out of bounds. We had some things in special teams that got us, but that's like this team, we always say what? So what, now what, move on to the next play. So what, now what, go on to the next play and handle what you have to handle.

Q. Coach, can you talk about from the first time you saw Deondre in practice to what he just did his freshman year here at the Orange Bowl?

JIMBO FISHER: There's another guy who likes to grind. I always say you can tell talent -- we have talented players, and you're going to get talented players at Florida State and all the big programs. The difference is the guys that want to be coached, that want to be coached hard, and the ones that want to grind and spend time at the game when you're not around. It's like kids, how do your kids act when you're not watching. To me that's what character is. How do you work when the coach is not watching. This guy is a guy, I used to tell him don't go throw so much after practice but he spent time in the film room. He wanted to learn the game and not rely on his arm and his feet to be -- those were the gifts God gave him. What he's learned to do is manage the game with his mind and he still has an unbelievable ceiling to go where he can go, because he's intelligent, he grinds at it, he learns, he picks thing up and you know the toughness. That guy, you talk about a competitor now, he'll lay it on the line for his team, and I think that's one of the reason our team is so tough. When your quarterback is tough, your team is tough, and he is definitely that.

DEONDRE FRANCOIS: Can you repeat the question that you had for me, please?

Q. Just from your first day at Florida State's campus to completing your first season as the starting quarterback, how you feel it's gone?

DEONDRE FRANCOIS: It's gone tremendous. Just thank you, Lord, I'm here. I never imagined this. I'm just so thankful and blessed to have a coach like Coach Fisher who never let up on me, never gave up on me, always pushed me. Never let me throw a ball bad. Everything has to be perfect. That's the way it is. He's a perfectionist and he built me into a perfectionist. My first year at Florida State has been unbelievable. Through the ups and downs, my team always stuck behind me, Coach Fisher always pushed me and we just won the Orange Bowl, so I'm blessed.

Q. DeMarcus, two questions: First, when you were at Sandalwood High School, did you ever think that this was possible? And then Jalen Ramsey just tweeted 4 and 44 are the real goats with the goat emoji. What does that mean to you guys that somebody who had so much success in those jerseys saying something like that?

DEMARCUS WALKER: Coming out of high school I knew this was destiny because I had older guys like DeMarcus and Jameis and Darby, they took me under their wing when I first got here. Because I remember, I took a visit during recruiting one time going into my

sophomore year, but other than that. You could see what the coaches wanted from us and what the program was built on, and the whole Jalen tweet, you know, being the greatest, whatever you call it, you don't speak for it. You let the people speak for you, and then when you got people who speak for you, then you know it's real.

Q. Dalvin, can you just talk about how meaningful this game is to you, your last game in your hometown, and did anybody ever advise you not to play? Did you ever consider not playing in this game?

DALVIN COOK: I still haven't made my decision yet, so I'm going to still celebrate with my team for this night, but to be in this game it was a childhood dream growing up seeing previous guys playing in the Orange Bowl before me, it was always a childhood dream to be up here on this podium with these guys and this coach. I'm just blessed to be up here, and I'm just proud to be a part of this group. I'm just proud of everybody that was a part of it.

Q. Did you ever think about not playing in it?

DALVIN COOK: Not one bit. That whistle would blow, I was going to be out there.

Q. Dalvin, can you talk to me a little bit about how you were able to turn it on in this game? You were just a couple yards shy from breaking a record, and you did that tonight. How did you keep things going?

DALVIN COOK: Well, you know, it was going to be a game of patience, and we knew what type of defense we was going to face. It was one of the top defenses that we were going to face all year, and they imposed a different challenge to us. They was big, rangy, experienced guys, so Coach Fisher did a great job of knowing when to call plays and getting me in the right predicament to make them. And when he called my number, I just answered the bell for him, so that was all the game plan.

Q. Nyqwan, can you talk us through the touchdown catch and the emotions that you felt once you hauled it in?

NYQWAN MURRAY: Coach called the play and I went out there with a gut mindset to execute a play, and without Deondre's good throw and without the line I wouldn't have been able to make that catch, so I just thank them guys, and we won the Orange Bowl.

Q. Jimbo, I've got to ask you about the second quarter, you had a fourth and 1 in your own end, and Dalvin was getting on you to go for it. Did he talk you into it?

JIMBO FISHER: We were here to win the game. We're

going to play to win. We told them that, we're going to lay it all on the line. We had a chance, we're going to be aggressive in calls. We had a chance to win. If we didn't make an inch, we didn't deserve to win it.

Q. If this was a playoff, you still would have gone for it then?

JIMBO FISHER: We was here to win the game. Every game is certainly different.

Q. Dalvin, just with that 71-yard run, everybody was just looking at you in the stadium kind of in awe. What was that feeling like? What was that like running down the sideline there, and could you believe that you stepped out of bounds there?

DALVIN COOK: I actually think I didn't step out, but you know, it was third and 22 and it was a play Coach Fisher called that we called all year. I just feel like I could have took advantage of that moment because I just felt like guys didn't think I could break out at this point in time, and I got an open field with a couple of guys and made them miss, and the wide receivers made blocks downfield, and I just tried to go the distance and change the scoreboard for my team.

Q. Dalvin, we go back in 2009 when you played for the Miami Gardens Chargers, which is part of the Orange Bowl. Now years later, you went undefeated; how does it feel coming all the way back and playing on the big stage for the Orange Bowl and winning a championship?

DALVIN COOK: He asked me that question because he was my coach back in 2009. He was my head coach. Like I said, to be sitting up here and watching those games with all those guys in the stadium being a younger guy, a Miami kid, back at it, the opportunity on this podium on a bigger stage, it's nothing more that I want than this right here, unbelievable moment, and I'm just glad to be a part of it, man.

Q. DeMarcus, for this to cap your career at Florida State, what does this mean the way the season went, the way this team fought, to end your career as an Orange Bowl champion?

DEMARCUS WALKER: Well, it's really not about me. It's about this team, carrying us over, knowing what it takes to win and perfection. The preparation of going into every game next year, I feel like that was one of our weak points of the season, and hopefully they just learned from it, and what's amazing is back in 2012 they had an Orange Bowl win and they had some ups and downs that season, and look what they did next year. Hopefully they just learn from the season and just never make that mistake again next season.

Q. Dalvin, I'm sure NFL is on your mind. I just want to get your thoughts on the Jacksonville Jaguars.

DALVIN COOK: Repeat your question again.

Q. What are your thoughts on the Jacksonville Jaguars?

DALVIN COOK: They've got some of the greatest that played in our program on their Jalen, Telvin, Rashad, some of the greatest that ever came out of this program. I commend those guys for making plays at that team. I think it's a great organization, and they've got -- they're going to regroup and get some more guys in the draft to help their team.

Q. Deondre, can you talk about with so many guys coming back, you lose some great players, but you have a lot to look forward to. What are your expectations? What are you looking forward to next year?

DEONDRE FRANCOIS: Our expectations are high just like at the beginning of this season, they were high and continued to be high. The seniors and guys that we're losing, it's unfortunate, but that's the way the game goes, but we have a lot of young talent coming back, and this off-season will be very important through fourth quarter, spring ball, summer, everything will be very crucial, and we're just going to focus on details and continue to get better.

Q. Deondre, can you talk about just the offensive line and the offensive performance that you guys had, the journey that you guys had as far as starting the season off and how you guys ended the season, what you guys learned as far as what you guys gained as far as an offensive unit and especially the offensive line?

DEONDRE FRANCOIS: O-line did a tremendous job throughout the season. They've grown up, a lot of guys switching positions, getting in and out, and thanks to Coach Trickett for just always staying on top of them, coaching them hard along with Coach Fisher. I always believed in those five guys. Whatever they put out there, I always believed in them and they always believed in me. As an offense, we've just grown up tremendously. We've learned how to play and focus on details, learned how to finish drives. All the little things Coach Fisher harps on in practice, we tried to bring those things to the field, and I feel like we've done that.

Q. Deondre and Jimbo, what does it say about a guy like Noonie to go up and make that play in a spotlight like that against a cornerback like that?

DEONDRE FRANCOIS: Well, that's my little brother there. I've known Noonie since he was eight. For him to do that, he's been doing that all his life. Big players make big-time plays in big-time moments, and that was a big-time moment right there. As soon as that ball left my hand, I knew he was going to come down with it. I just knew in my heart he was going to come down with

it. That's just God blessed him with the ability to go up and make that catch. Coach Fisher making a great call in that situation, and we just executing it.

JIMBO FISHER: Well, we knew -- I said this before, you've heard me say it -- he can do and be anything he wants to be. Sometimes I love him, sometimes I want to choke him. I do. But at the same time, I do -- but truly understanding how to be detail oriented, because a receiver has to be so precise without the ball to allow the ball to get there, and as he's learning that, he can be a difference maker for this football team, because there's not a route he can't run, there's not a catch he can't make and there's not a thing he can't do. If he keeps growing, he's going to be a huge part of this team and it will make this team a different team if he continues to grow and do the things he's capable of doing.

Q. Coach Jimbo, there was a lot of comparisons when Deondre first got on campus to Jameis and would he be able to fill those shoes. What similarities does he have, but also what does he have that's totally different that you feel he takes advantage of defenses?

JIMBO FISHER: You know, I never like to compare players because I think it's truly unfair. It's like comparing your kids, know what I mean? They're all different in their own ways, what makes them great. But his uniqueness and his drive and his determination -- his arm talent is through the roof. His competitiveness -- and I'm going to tell you what, you talk about everybody has got arm -- we're in a combine world, okay. We're in a combine world. We want everybody to run, jump, throw, and do all these tests. I'm going to tell you what, when you get pads on and get his right in the mouth, all of that combine stuff goes right out the window. Then you find out who's a football player, know what I'm saying? The guy is a football player. And what I mean by that, the toughness, the competitiveness, the mental toughness, the grinding, physically, mentally, to keep -- and understanding how to win. There's a difference in playing well and even winning. What's his numbers today, 9 of 27? That's a -- no, it isn't. The throws he made, the moments he made them, when he made them, how he made them, that's championship football, know what I'm saying? That's why numbers don't tell the story of the kind of players they are, and what he has is true competitiveness, true heart, and true toughness. And it reflects because -- let me tell you what, you can throw a ball all you want. The object is to get the guys on the team to fall in and want to play for you. That's what a quarterback is. That's what he is. Jameis has those same qualities, but they do it differently. Different personalities. Jameis was louder, more vocal. He's not. But at times, he is with them, usually not with me.

He's a quieter demeanor with me and each guy has to be his own guy. Like each has its own personality like a child. Each quarterback has to do it in his own way. He has his own way, but they all those certain characteristics of toughness, competitiveness and affect the guys on the team in a positive way no matter what's going on, and the guys believe in him.

Q. Coach Fisher, earlier some of your comments about Dalvin were phrased in the past tense. Do you expect him to be here next year, and also what do you think would be in his best interest?

JIMBO FISHER: I don't know that, we'll get the information and let him enjoy the Orange Bowl. That's a decision -- our job is to get the proper information for him to make the proper choice and support him in anything he does, just like we'll always do. He's always part of this family. He'll never not be part of this family and we want the best for him. But I know one thing, if we get him, we'll be the luckiest team in the world. Whoever drafts him will be the luckiest team in the world. Somebody is going to be happy.

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Dalvin Cook

Jimbo Fisher

Florida State Seminoles: ESPN

People kept asking what you had to play for. This is what we got. You're keeping score, you're playing. That's what Florida State does.

Q. Dalvin, so many ups and downs in this game. Take us through that fourth quarter, what's going through your mind?

DALVIN COOK: Man, that's what I'm telling you about this team right here, man. Whatever we face, we battle back, and that's what Coach Fisher instilled in us, man. This team kept fighting and it showed in this game. We got down, but we kept fighting. We were never out of the fight. A young guy stepped up and made the play. That's who you'd never think, man and I'm so proud of this team the way we just kept battling back.

Q. 30-plus friends, family here to watch you. How great is this?

DALVIN COOK: Greatest feeling in the world, man. To do it in this stadium with my family and with the greatest coach in the world, it's the greatest feeling.

Q. You made the decision to play in this game while a lot of other first-round running back picks decided not to.

DALVIN COOK: Never thought about it, never questioned it.

Q. Coach, tell us about that.

JIMBO FISHER: You're playing, you're keeping score, he's going to play. Don't matter how he feels or what is going on.

Q. Fourth quarter got wild. Take us through the emotions back and forth.

JIMBO FISHER: We lost the line of scrimmage. We gave up -- we had the big punt return. What really set things up, up 12 at midfield, got backed up, then we got the targeting and then we couldn't block them. Their front is really good but our kids kept their poise. We had the big drive and then the two-minute drive and the kickoff return and we got the big drive. But kids just kept fighting. Situational football and we were able to pull it out.

Q. You told us when we met with you that you're as proud of this team as any team you've ever coached. Why is that?

JIMBO FISHER: : Because of what you just saw today.

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Alec Eberle

Florida State Seminoles: On Field
Interview

Q. Talk to us a little bit about those last five minutes. What were the emotions? What were you feeling?

ALEC EBERLE: Look, this year's team, we've had ups and downs and had games, we're down by one, down by two, up by one, up by two, either way it could go at the end. We were up, we lost the lead, we came back. Those boys never quit, and to watch a team do that, never give up, it's special. And I guarantee there's no team in this country like this team because they never quit out here.

Q. What does that tell you about your team that maybe everybody else --

ALEC EBERLE: This is just a game. Listen, guys, it's just a game. Next year it's going to be a team that's going to be hard to stop.