

Saturday, November 16, 2019

Odell Haggins

Florida State - 49, Alabama State - 12

ODELL HAGGINS: Well, I tell you what, you know, our kids went out and fought. We made some mistakes, not proud of it, we're going to work on that tomorrow. But the one thing about it, this was a two-week thing for those kids. It was a very emotional time. It was a very emotional time. And I take my hat off to those young men. They fought. They could have gave in, but those young men fought. That Florida State pride, that's the key. And like I say, I told them in there in the locker room, I said, guys, we're going to correct those mistakes tomorrow. We're going to get after it tomorrow. And they said, Coach, we got you. We got your back, Coach. And again, it just, it's amazing. God put us in situations to help young men. We as college coaches must understand why we're doing this job. And I just want to thank my mother for instilling that into me. And I don't think I could have been able to do it if my mother didn't instill things like that in me. That's a statement I would like to make to the college coaches. We must instill a work ethic in these young men.

Q. I know some former players came back today as well. What does it mean to get Florida State back into a bowl game, now that you've done that twice now?

ODELL HAGGINS: Well, it means the world because sometimes you, selfishly you think about yourself. But when these young men come to Florida State they sign on the dotted line, they expect that. That's the expectation of Florida State University, to be in the top-5 every year and win National Championships. We didn't make it -- we probably, we won't be in a New Year's Day bowl, but we're going bowling. That's something we can build on as a university and we are going to build on it.

Q. Earlier this week, and I guess throughout the week, we saw a lot of current players on the team kind of tweet out their support of you and you potentially as a candidate for the vacancy. I know you're not thinking that far ahead, you're focused on the season, but just to see that your current players think that highly of you, what does that mean to you just as an individual?

ODELL HAGGINS: That's great that they think that way. But I'm going to say it again, my main concern, it's not about Odell. It's been mentoring these young men and coaching them to a successful season. That's what it's about. I don't want no attention on me. I want all of the attention on them, positive attention.

Q. You and President Thrasher met at midfield. What did he say to you? Did he give you a vote of confidence or just nice words?

ODELL HAGGINS: He said, Odell, nice work, keep up the great work. And I told him, I love you, we're Seminoles.

Q. I know you don't want the focus on you, but the fans were chanting your name at the end of the game. What was that like?

ODELL HAGGINS: That's awesome. That's awesome. The fans recognize you, that's awesome. That's that pride. And as I said before, we are a family at Florida State. I'll say that to the day I die, we're all family.

Q. I guess some of the things that the team had been doing like before the kickoff and some other things, that they're not doing anymore, were those strictly your decisions? Did you talk to anybody on the staff about making changes like that or?

ODELL HAGGINS: What are you talking about? What things are you talking about.

Q. Before kickoff earlier this season they were swaying with the music on the big screen.

ODELL HAGGINS: Well, I told our kids, you must earn certain things at Florida State University. I'm not going to give it to you as a head coach, I said we need to understand that, you must earn certain things. That's exactly what I told them.

Q. What do you want to focus on the most going into the bye week?

ODELL HAGGINS: You know what I'm going to focus on the most? Fundamentals. See, sometimes we look at all the touchdowns, the interceptions, how do you get those touchdowns and interceptions? By being fundamentally sound. Think about this, we're fundamentally sound, we'll get more. And we're going to get out there this week. We're going to practice hard. We're going to be fundamentally sound when we go into that game.

Q. You guys had a lot of guys out today with injuries. How did you see the younger guys and backups step up?

ODELL HAGGINS: Yeah, awesome, man. Going around to each meeting and I went around to each meeting and I would do that every day in the morning time, I would tell the guys, I said, you're at Florida State, so we expect you to go in there and play well, do your assignment. And the coaching staff did a very good job. You look at it, Cory Durden, he only played the first half and one series in the second half or two series in the second half and you saw young kids coming out there playing. That was awesome. But that's the expectation at Florida State. When you step on that field, you're a starter.

Q. You talked about the expectation for players when they come to Florida State to get bowl eligible. What was it like to see the guys celebrating the way they did to get back to this place after missing it last year?

ODELL HAGGINS: That was awesome. Think about it. Florida State, what? How many years in a row went to bowls? 36 years. And one year we don't go? That's the expectation at Florida State, be in the Top-5 and winning national championships. Nothing less.

Q. How cool was it Hamsah [Nasirildeen]'s interception return, that's a lot of effort by a kid that has really been kind of making plays all season for you guys.

ODELL HAGGINS: That was awesome. Hamsah works so hard and he's the type of kid, he wants to please you. And for that to happen for Hamsah, it was great. It was awesome.

Q. I wanted to ask about the kick return that [Isaiah] Bolden had. They had been pooching them the first three or four kicks. Did you guys talk to him about, hey, man, go run up and get that and go?

ODELL HAGGINS: Yes, we knew what they were trying to do, they were trying to keep the ball out of his hands. So we told him, I said, Isaiah, first, fake like you're going to be on the five yard line and when they get ready to kick it, run up and catch it and take it the distance. He almost got it out there, but he did exactly what we said.

Q. First I have to ask you, when is the last time they did the fight song, you sang that?

ODELL HAGGINS: Last Saturday. In the locker room.

Q. Before that when is the last time you sang it? When you were a player?

ODELL HAGGINS: No, we sang it last time we won here. But, no, I tell you what, that's something, that's tradition that we're going to keep, because that's important. You must understand what Florida State means to you. That fight song, actually, I like singing it with my daughter and she tries to sing it, and in different ways, but it's awesome. And the pride of this university, when those kids leave this university, fifth year senior, fourth year seniors, they're going to know that fight song and they're going to teach it to their kids and we're going to keep getting kids to come here, their kids to come here, so we're going to engrain that in them.

Q. Just getting Jordan Travis out there, how is he coming along, what does he give you being a dual-threat quarterback?

ODELL HAGGINS: Jordan gives you a lot. He's a kid that can throw the ball, he understands the game, and then he's just a humble kid. You know he's a very unselfish young man. He came to Florida State knowing that, hey, I probably will be on the third team, but that kid is going to be a leader for this team one day. That tells you something. Hey, it gives you another weapon.

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