



POSTGAME PRESS CONFERENCE

Florida vs. Texas A&M

October 11, 2025

College Station, Texas

QUESTIONS FOR COACH MIKE ELKO

COACH ELKO: “What I told the guys in the locker room was this: I thought that was as complete a team complementary win as we’ve had from the standpoint of we didn’t really start particularly well on defense. They go right down the field offensively. We answer. We start really hot, right offensively, get ourselves a lead, which allows the defense to kind of settle in. They make some adjustments.

Our offense starts sputtering a little bit. Defense steps up and starts making a bunch of plays. I challenged the guys at halftime on defense to go out and get us two turnovers. I said, two turnovers will win us the game in the second half. And we were able to go out there and cause two fumbles and recover them both. I think that’s the next step for us on defense, and that was huge I thought.

And then I was just really proud of our offense in terms of how we grinded through. That’s a really good defense. It’s not easy to move the ball on them, and we just kept pounding.

And then for us to be able to run the ball effectively the way we did to milk the clock in the fourth quarter and really suck the air out of the game, that’s not easy to do in this conference. So it’s a great win. It’s a great win against a really quality opponent. I think this win will age well as the year goes on.

And now it’s on to the next. Now we’ve got to become road warriors and go on the road for three straight, starting with a really talented Arkansas team next week. And I’m sure they’ll be fired up for the return of Coach [Bobby] Petrino back into Fayetteville. That’s a tough place to play. So we have to get ready and go out and try to be 1-0 again next week.

From there, we’ll open it up to questions.”

Q. Mike, was there any adjustments or changes that you can tell us about from the defensive side after they scored on two of their first three possessions? And y’all pretty much shut them down after that.

COACH ELKO: “Yeah, they were doing a little bit more in the RPO game maybe than we had anticipated. We were able to tweak some things with our looks and then how we were presenting some different things. I think that helped us.

I think the first drive, we just didn’t execute particularly well. We really got on our heels, didn’t handle things really well.

The second drive, they made a lot of plays. They got in some one-on-one situations and made some really good throws and catches. And so we had to try to find some ways to change and alter the windows a little bit in the RPO game. I think we were able to do that.”



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Q. You mentioned that Florida did well on their defense, and they have good defense, too, but how much would you say that losing Le'Veon [Moss] affected the offense tonight?

COACH ELKO: "It is what it is. I love Le'Veon. Hopefully he's okay, but we've got to be able to play.

And that's SEC football. This team has not -- have they given up 34 points to anybody? I don't think so, right? That's what I thought.

It's hard to say that scoring the most points that that defense has allowed is a rough night."

Q. Coach, obviously your best performance of the season came down to penalties, only 3 for 30. Can you just talk about your performance as a team and the discipline you guys showed tonight.

COACH ELKO: "Yeah, obviously it's been a work in progress. It's going to continue to be a work in progress. It certainly helps us when we don't go backwards. It makes the game easier to play for sure.

I thought we did a good job tonight. We've got to continue to do it that way."

Q. Monday when we talked to you, you said you thought that Florida was going to be the best team that you guys are going to face this year. Do you still believe that after tonight?

COACH ELKO: "Yes. It's a really, really talented football team. That's a really talented football team. I don't know what they did to the scheduling gods to draw the schedule that they did. I said that to Coach [Billy] Napier pregame.

They play a gauntlet of a schedule. It's four straight top-ten teams that they've played, three of them on the road. That's hard. It's really hard.

I think that is a really talented team. I told you guys I thought DJ [Lagway] was playing really well. That certainly showed tonight until we were able to kind of start affecting them with the rush.

They're a good football team. We're a good football team. They're a good football team. It was a really good SEC football game."

Q. You talk about how good their defense is. What was working for you guys offensively the first three drives, three touchdowns?

COACH ELKO: "Yeah. I mean, obviously, we hit the big, explosive play. That was really good. On the first play of the game, that's a good start. I thought Marcel [Reed] was in a really good rhythm delivering the ball really well. I thought we were able to kind of get the ball to the guys we wanted to get the ball to.



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And then they made some adjustments, and they started really putting a lot of brackets on KC [Concepcion] and Mario [Craver] and made it challenging to get those guys the ball. I think that's maybe kind of some of the stallouts came from.

There were some boxes where we hoped we could run the ball a little bit better, and we weren't able to get it going the way we wanted to. And that's because their D-line is good. But we just kept grinding and kept grinding away to go get a win."

Q. And you touched on it, but I guess no update yet on Le'Veon Moss?

COACH ELKO: "No update yet."

Q. How excited is this team about the future of Jamarion Morrow?

COACH ELKO: "Really excited. I think anybody that knows me knows that by nature I'm not the most optimistic human on the planet. So some of the remarks that we've tried to make about him to let people know we have a lot of confidence in him, in his talent, his ability. But he's also an extremely competitive kid.

We didn't hesitate to -- you know, we're giving him the ball in the fourth quarter of the game where we've got to get first downs because he's running behind his pads and he's spinning off tackles and he's leaning forward. And he's just a competitive kid.

We're going to continue to try to find ways. We've got a really deep backfield. We were able to get EJ Smith out there at the end of the game and try to run through the formative offense with him, because he's a little bit bigger back. His ball security is good.

It's a really talented group. It's hard to get them all the ball as much as you want to, but we try."

Q. Rueben [Owens II] hasn't scored in quite a while. Is there any sort of message within the team trying to get such a talented back like him in the end zone?

COACH ELKO: "No, no. We just called the game and felt like that was the right play to call, and we were able to score. You're not really thinking about who you're trying to get touchdowns for in a game like that. You're just trying to get touchdowns."

Q. In what ways have you seen your defense grow, especially in the second half, from the last three games?

COACH ELKO: "We're pressuring the quarterback a lot. I think that's where it all starts from. If you look at some of the things that the front did, stopping the run tonight, I think that's three straight now against the SEC opponents where we've held them under 100 yards rushing.



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That will win you football games.

And there were times where we were stopping the runs without extra bodies. And if we can do that, that obviously makes things a lot better for us. And so it was a credit to those guys.

I thought our safeties tackled better tonight. That helps, too.

And so I think Jaden [Baugh] is a really talented back. He's a big, physical kid. To hold him to 65 yards and 3.6 a carry, the way we played the game specifically is a really good thing."

Q. With what Florida means to the Smith family, cool symmetry to have him close out the game this year and this year?

COACH ELKO: "Yeah, for sure. Wasn't on purpose by any sense of the imagination. We have confidence in EJ [Smith] regardless of who we're playing.

But I'm sure for him and the family, it's a really good thing for him to be out there down the stretch and kind of grinding the game away."

Q. You had mentioned a couple weeks ago you kind of split the season into quarters. You guys are at the end of the second quarter, I guess, per se. When you guys were starting this three-game home stretch, did you talk to your team about taking care of business at home and what that could do for your season?

COACH ELKO: "Yeah. I think what we talked about, honestly, was the middle. What I told them was this, after we got done with the Notre Dame game, that was our third game. And I said, seasons get defined in the middle.

And there's a middle in every part of your year. There's a middle of the offseason when you're like, nothing good is going on and you're in the middle, right? There's a middle of fall camp when nothing good is going on and you're just in the middle.

Same thing in the season. What I told them was, how you handle the middle will define you. There's a lot of teams that can come out and have a lot of energy for three games. The teams that can handle the six-game stretch through the middle, those are the teams that separate themselves.

And so we're halfway there. We've done the things that we were supposed to do for half of that. There's still another three games. And obviously, they're going to step laterally in difficulty with us having to go on the road now and play some really quality opponents."

Q. Coach, I was wondering if you'd could talk a little bit about the performance of the offensive line. No sacks, one pressure, no tackles for loss. That's a pretty clean sheet.



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COACH ELKO: “Yeah. I didn't know that. That's not on our stat sheet. But, yeah, that's -- we're starting to come into our own on the offensive line. And you're starting to really hear it on Tuesdays in practice.

Tuesdays in practice are starting to get really physical. I think our O-line is getting into their groove. I think our D-line is getting into their groove, and we're starting to kind of play like a physical SEC football team needs to play.

Those kids are doing a really good job. Marcel [Reed] was really clean most of the night. We talk a lot about how much of that matters, keeping your quarterback from getting hits, keeping your quarterback from taking the wear and tear. He sits in some really clean pockets to deliver the football.”

Q. I know there's a lot of football left to be played, but what can you --

COACH ELKO: “There sure is.”

Q. What can you say about your team to be one of the few undefeated teams across the country now at this point in the season?

COACH ELKO: “That it doesn't mean anything if we don't finish. It's been the word of the offseason. It's the only thing that we've talked about.

We're really excited with where we are, but we're nowhere yet. So we're in this journey. We're focused one week at a time, one game at a time. And we're focused on finishing every opportunity that we have, and that's focusing now on the Arkansas team. And that's really all we're talking about.”

Q. Coach, can you talk about just Theo [Melin Ohrstrom] and Nate's [Boerkircher] performance tonight and what that tight end really does for this offense.

COACH ELKO: “Yeah, and I would even add Amari [Daniels]. It was nice to see Amari get a couple catches. I think we had eight targets to our wide receivers tonight -- or eight catches by our wide -- or excuse me, eight catches by our tight ends tonight.

Again, as this becomes a long season and Mario [Craver] and KC [Concepcion] start gaining more and more attention and how people are going to handle them, other people are going to have to step up and make plays.

Got to get Marcel [Reed] consistently going through all the progressions to all the different parts of the route tree.

But you're going to see Theo [Melin Ohrstrom] get involved. You're going to see Amari [Niblack] get involved. You're going to see Ashton [Bethel-Roman] get involved, Terry



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[Bussey] get involved.

We're going to have to be able to spread the ball around if they're just going to identify two guys and double them most of the night."

Q. And then 2-33 in your last three-game stretch on third-down conversions. Obviously you know -- I'm sorry, I have to. Obviously, you enjoy third down. Just how much of an emphasis has this been, not just throughout this stretch but the whole season?

COACH ELKO: "Yeah, it's funny. We don't emphasize it any more or less week to week. We're obviously in a really good rhythm.

I think we are pressuring the quarterback really well. Some of that is on them. I think sometimes we put too much emphasis on scheme and what we're calling or what we're doing. Or some of it is just our guys are just winning. We're trying to put them in positions where they can get some one-on-ones that are favorable to them.

But at the end of the day, they're just winning. And it's really hard to sit in that pocket right now on third down. And again, I think the distance was right for most of the night again.

And it's a challenge. It's just a challenge with the way we're rushing the passer.

And so we've got to continue to keep people off schedule. We've got to continue to bring that rush every week. You're one week away from it all going away. But, obviously, it's been a pretty good stretch for us."

Q. Coach, you touched on this a little bit. But there's so many positives here. 6-0. But your defense, you mentioned that three games in a row holding them under 100 yards rushing, the third down. What are you most impressed about today?

COACH ELKO: "Yeah, the thing that I'm most impressed about today is how we played as a team. I think that is the thing that stood out to me the most. That's the first time in a game where we had the swings like that.

We had the games where -- offensively, we played well at Notre Dame; defensively, we didn't. And offense kind of carried us.

The last two weeks, until the fourth quarter at Mississippi State, it was kind of more the defense carrying us.

Today we kind of responded to the game and the way that the game was playing. And so we needed the offense to make plays early to settle the defense down, and they did it. We needed the defense to make plays to pick the offense up, and they did it.



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And so what I'm most proud of is the way they played the game together tonight. That's learning how to win. That's learning how to step up to the moment and the occasion. And, obviously, we've got to continue to play like that."

Q. So this is now the tenth game in a row where y'all have seen over 100,000 folks at Kyle Field. What's the message to the 12th Man in Bryan/College Station tonight as they're consistently showing out for your team?

COACH ELKO: "Thank you. And I said this in the press conference when I got hired. I've said this after every game that we haven't gotten it done for them in Kyle Field.

We are a million percent committed to building them the program that they deserve. They're the most passionate fan base in the country. They're the best fan base in the country. They show up and support us week in and week out. And there's not anybody in this building who doesn't sincerely appreciate that or feel that we owe them when we go out there and play and play at a level that befits that support.

So we're very appreciative to them. We appreciate everything they do. And, hopefully, we'll get back here in October and November with some really good stuff on the line the next time we're back here."

Q. You mentioned players just winning. How much easier does it make it for you guys as a staff when you have a player like Cashius Howell who is just winning constantly right now?

COACH ELKO: "Yeah, it makes it really easy. And I think -- you know, I do think we try to do some creative things with him. And our D-line coaches do a really good job each week of formulating a strong rush plan where we have answers. If they start chipping them, like, we just try to create ways to make sure that they can't just focus on him.

But, yeah, it helps when you have a difference-maker like that on the edge, for sure.

And then what you see is you then see Dealyn Evans get isolated. And so Dealyn Evans is isolated at the end of the game in the must-pass situation. And that's just really hard because they're giving so much attention to Cashius.

So, yeah, he's a difference-maker."



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QUESTIONS FOR ALBERT REGIS, MARCEL REED, AND TAUREAN YORK

Q. Albert, you guys have now basically shut down three SEC running games in a row, holding them under 100 yards. What's been the secret sauce since conference play started?

ALBERT REGIS: "The secret is there is no secret. You want to stop the run game, you've got to be physical. You've got to recreate the line of scrimmage every game, every play. That's really all it is.

You shut down the run game, as a head coach, you've seen your offensive line get knocked back instead of going forward, I mean, you're going to lose faith in the run game. And that's no disrespect to any team we played. That's just how the game goes.

So there is no secret. We just want to be the more physical, dominant team."

Q. What was the conversation after Florida's second touchdown drive, and maybe some of the things you saw that changed in the way that y'all were playing on the field?

ALBERT REGIS: "Just keeping each other's heads up. Most teams would probably disrespect, bat an eye, or do something crazy, but just keep each other's heads up. A little adversity, ain't nothing wrong with it. I'm big on my faith. Everybody in the Bible went through some adversity, but the ones who stayed true to it always have great -- they reap the great rewards. The ones who didn't, well, we know how that went for them. We just kept each other's heads up and stayed positive."

Q. And what is it about the way you guys are playing on third down right now that y'all have been having so much success?

ALBERT REGIS: "The same way we're playing on first and second. That's all it is. Like to the fans, it's probably like oh, they crank it up a notch. Like, nah. We just want to be the more physical, dominant team. And third down, we know we can get in a position where we can rush the passer. I mean, there's not many teams who are going to block us, truthfully."

Q. Over the last three games, especially in the second half, in what ways has the defense grown that you've seen?

ALBERT REGIS: "I believe that we're just getting settled into our rhythm. Coach Elko said that we're practicing harder, communicating at a way better level. And every drive, we just try and do better and do better. Like, regardless of what happened the last drive, it's a clean slate.

I mean, it's all happening in practice. The practice habits are changing, and then come Saturday, the game habits change."



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Q. I know early in the season, there was a lot of talk about how the offense had grown and how they had won some games. Does it feel like the defense has won the games the last three weeks?

ALBERT REGIS: “No. I mean, if offense would have never scored and the other team scored, then we lose. So, everybody has their hand in the pot. I mean, it's offense, defense, special teams. We all win the game. So, I wouldn't say that's the case.”

Q. Albert, three penalties for 30 yards. Your guys' best performance as far as discipline goes. What did you see from your group that allowed you guys to be so focused and to not make those steps this week?

ALBERT REGIS: “The Cabo fund. That's all it is. The Cabo fund. That's the best answer I can give you.

No, all jokes aside, though, it's just penalties, they hurt. That's momentum-killers. Since the game of football, every time a team has committed a penalty, I mean, it either leads to something good -- it's always something good for the opposing team. Whenever we have penalties, it always ends in them scoring, whether a field goal or a touchdown. So the best way to eliminate that is not having penalties.”

Q. After taking care of business at home the way you guys did, what are going to be the challenges of playing on the road for three straight games?

ALBERT REGIS: “Obviously not having that home energy and bringing your own energy is going to be very crucial and important.

But at the end of the day, the game is just the same. Who's going to play harder, faster, more dominant for 60 minutes? That's what it boils down to.”

Q. Albert, last week, some of your teammates were saying that y'all's ability to wear opposing teams down is the reason that y'all have so much success in the second half. What do you attribute that to?

ALBERT REGIS: “Our practice habits. I mean, practice, all the seniors in practice, we be out there struggling sometimes. We practice extremely fast, extremely hard. We wear ourselves out in practice, so when we get to the end of practice, I mean, it's all instinct. What you put in the well, that's what's going to come out when things get hard.

So we force ourselves to still make the right calls, still communicate, still run to the ball, play hard. And then come Saturday, y'all see what we do when that happens.”



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Q. I believe this is the best six-game start in your career here. How much fun are you having with this group?

ALBERT REGIS: “Man, too much fun. Too much fun. Best way I'm going to celebrate, go home, kick it with my fiancée, my daughter, and my brothers-in-law, and probably going to play the Switch, play some Mario Kart. I'm lying. I might fall asleep before we even get to the Switch. But the quality time, that's how I'm going to celebrate. But no, this is a blessed start. 6-0, best start of my football career ever.

So, I mean, I'm just loving every moment of it and thanking God for giving us the opportunity, because we get to play this game.”

Q. Did [Mike] Elko actually mention the Cabo fund in a meeting?

ALBERT REGIS: “I mean, not really. He just says it as a joke. The Cabo fund, it's just a little joke he got. But no, he didn't mention the Cabo fund.”

Q. How much easier from an interior pass rush point of view does Cashius [Howell] constantly getting wins on the outside make your job?

ALBERT REGIS: “I mean, it's easy, man. We take on the double-team, and that leaves him solo one-on-one. We know he's going to cook one-on-one. And then if they want to go out and double him, then that leaves us with a one-on-one. So, I mean, it complements each other. It's incredibly easy.”

Q. And what can you say about new guys on that D-line unit, like TJ [Searcy], Dayon [Hayes], and Tyler [Onyedim]?

ALBERT REGIS: “I love them. They bring energy, they bring juice. They can play ball, and they're great guys to hang out with. TO, always laughing with him. Dayon, 50 shots. Man, Dayon is Dayon. That's the best thing I can say. He one-on-one, everybody got that one friend they know that's just like, ain't nobody like you, and that's Dayon.

And then TJ. I mean TJ, he's just a funny dude, bro. I love them guys, though.”

Q. Marcel, how good did it feel that first deep ball getting right to [Mario] Craver, and what led to y'all's awesome start offensively?

MARCEL REED: “Felt really good. I was actually kind of disappointed that Florida got the ball first, because I knew what the first play was going to be.



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But we've been practicing that all week, and I put it up there and Mario ran right under it and caught it. And then Coach called a QB run the very next play. Offensive line made some great blocks, and I got in there.

It was fun to have a quick start like that. Kind of had to bounce back. Defense gave up a touchdown, so we had to get one to try to keep the game close a little bit. Definitely couldn't let them start faster than us, so that's what it was."

Q. How do you think you guys responded to [Le'Veon] Moss going down and them kind of going back and forth, the offense kind of trading shots?

MARCEL REED: "Yeah. The game of defense started to pick up on both sides a little bit, and when Lev went down, obviously we have other running backs that, you know, when your name is called, you've got to be ready.

Reub (Rueben Owens) had a great game last week, and he was ready to go this week. And then Jamarion Morrow, Amari Daniels and EJ Smith were all ready to go as well. So that's really the name of the game when somebody goes down, we always have people to come in."

Q. Understanding that you guys certainly have a lot higher goals, what does it mean to you to be one of the few remaining undefeated teams at this point in the season?

MARCEL REED: "Yeah. Definitely means a lot. The target on our back is definitely getting bigger. We're just focused on going 1-0 each and every week. So whatever it is next week, we've got to try to prepare for the best type of game on Saturday again.

So, we're not really worried about this win anymore. We're going to celebrate it tonight, but tomorrow we're back to work."

Q. After taking care of business at home, what will be the challenges of playing three straight weeks on the road?

MARCEL REED: "I think just sticking to our character as a football team, not really letting anything change us. Obviously, the environment is going to be different, but when the ball is spotted, we play football. That's what it is, and it doesn't matter where it is.

So like I said, we're just going to go out there and execute what we're going to practice all week and be prepared for any team that comes in front of us."

Q. Marcel, clean football game for you guys. Three penalties for 30 yards. As a leader of this team, what did you see from this group and just how impressed were you with your guys' discipline tonight?



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MARCEL REED: “Yeah, like you said, just discipline. I'm sure a lot of my teammates don't want to lose their money. Three penalties is enough. Obviously, you want that to be zero, but being able to play a cleaner game like that is definitely fun. It doesn't put you back behind the sticks and gives us the opportunities to convert on third downs.”

Q. Marcel, y'all entered this game top-five team. You had a team above y'all lose. Does it feel like the season is starting to shuffle itself out and y'all are separating yourselves from the pack a little bit?

MARCEL REED: “I mean, as a football player of Texas A&M, I think that we're separating ourselves for sure. The people outside of here may not think that and might not talk about us as well as they talk about other teams, but that doesn't matter to us.

We're worried about us and how we control our play each and every Saturday, how we go into practice, our preparation. And that's going to be what it is for the remainder of the season. And we're just excited to keep doing what we're doing, because we're having fun right now.”

Q. And how have you seen the defense grow over the last three games, especially in the second half?

MARCEL REED: “Yeah, I think the defense has started to find their identity a little bit. I feel like they're communicating a lot better, and they're making stops and giving us more opportunities to get on the field and put up points. So we really appreciate them for doing that, because that gives us more opportunities, for sure.”

Q. What have you seen from your offense these last two weeks, in the fourth quarter in particular? You guys have been able to take close games and make them into convincing victories.

MARCEL REED: “Yeah. I think as an offense, we know how to control the game and control the ball when it's in our hands. We do that in practice every week. And we practice just kind of milking the clock and running it down their throats and just playing hard-nosed football.

A win is a win, and sometimes it may be ugly. It's not fancy all the time. But now we're 6-0, so...”

Q. Hey, Marcel. A little over a year ago, you made your first start against Florida, and now here you are again a little over a year later coming full circle. What would you say are the biggest things that you've learned in this a little more than a year?

MARCEL REED: “That game last year was a little bit different because it was week three for sure, and it was an away game in The Swamp.



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I've said this before, I don't really get nervous before games, but that game definitely felt a little bit different from this one, just because, like -- I've talked about it before. I didn't have a full offseason with my offense, and it wasn't a home game.

But this year is just a little bit different. We were prepared for them, and I prepared at the front of this offense a little bit as a starter. And I knew what I was going to get from Florida's defense, and we executed everything that we could tonight."

Q. Marcel, was there any frustration at all to go out and score so quickly on three drives and then kind of stall a little bit? Or do you just look at the end results and say, Hey, we had 34 points and a win and that's good enough? Thoughts on that.

MARCEL REED: "Yeah. Not too much frustration. It happens. It's happened before. As a quarterback, I kind of have to stay calm and keep everybody else calm as well, because it's not always going to be sunshines and rainbows. You're not going to score every possession. You want to score every possession, but it doesn't work like that all the time. We're in the SEC, and it's going to be hard-nosed football.

So, yeah. It gets, I guess, frustrating at times; but you kind of have to erase it and go to the next play. That's been what we've done all year, because not everything has gone our way, and we've found ways to win, like I said."

Q. As a leader of this team, what did this game mean to you in the sense that Coach Elko said this is the best game that y'all have played together as a team and had that cohesion that y'all have been looking for.

MARCEL REED: "Yeah, it means a lot. We've practiced for this. You see it day in and day out. A lot of guys stay late for meetings just to understand the game plan a little bit better.

We're always up here at 7:00, maybe even earlier, getting treatment and meeting and then going to practice.

But after practice, after class, people are coming back up to the facility after hours so that we can be our best selves on Saturdays.

I think that's what it takes. We're preparing the right way, and we're going out there and putting good football on film.

So really proud of this team. And we're playing together offensively and defensively, and it's going to put us a long way."



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Q. Taurean, what was the conversations on the sideline after y'all gave up the second touchdown? And what do you think changed so much for you guys to after that kind of put together such a strong finish?

TAUREAN YORK: "I knew we were going to be good. That first drive they hit us with a little bit of tempo, but that's nothing to worry about. We let them settle in because they only played on first and second down. We knew we got them to third down, we were going to have them in shambles. And pretty much that's what we did."

Q. Taurean, as a leader of this team, three penalties for 30 yards, your cleanest game as a group here. What does that say about your squad and the effort you put forth in discipline?

TAUREAN YORK: "You said we had three penalties today? That's what's up. We're about to get some golf carts back to the UCG. That's good. We made a little deal with Coach Elko."

But honestly, that's great. Strides we've been making, obviously, we've been hitting home on the penalties that have been killing us and setting us behind.

I'm glad to see we only got three. I'm even more happy we get the golf carts to the parking garage."

Q. Now you have to explain. What is the golf carts to the parking garage?

TAUREAN YORK: "Here at A&M, you always have a lot of people coming to the games. They're pretty much using our parking lots. We have the coaches lot and the players lot. That's a little walk. After an SEC game, you have got to go walk to the UCG down the street with their bags. Most people got two, maybe three bags."

So I had asked Coach Elko, Can we get some golf carts? Because Coach Elko listens to his players. He's like, Let's make a deal. If y'all get four or less penalties and we win the game, you'll get some golf carts over there.

So, hopefully, when I get out of there -- I get out of this interview that we have some golf carts waiting for my family."

Q. You have a longtime little rivalry with DJ [Lagway] going back to high school. What's it like to play against him and come out with another win?

TAUREAN YORK: "It's always cool just to compete against somebody who they say is the best. So just to go against him here on my home field -- I caught him on his home field last year. It's always a good feeling."

I like lining up against him. I like testing my might against the people they say are the best in the country."



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Q. And y'all are top-five team, lost ahead of you this week. Does it feel like the place you are in the season that y'all are separating yourself from the pack a little bit?

TAUREAN YORK: "Yeah, we always talk about separating ourselves. In the beginning of the season, there is no separation because everybody has only played two, three games. But if you start getting to game sixes and game sevens, you kind of start to see the records pull apart from each other.

It's good that we're 6-0 at this point. We're looking forward to going to Arkansas to making it 7-0."

Q. After you guys took care of business the way you should have at home, what are going to be the challenges of playing three straight games on the road?

TAUREAN YORK: "It's a big-time challenge when you leave Kyle Field. We know it's a matchup nightmare for opposing quarterbacks. But you know, it's all good, though. We're going to take our talents on the road. We're going to take it one game at a time. Arkansas is a great environment. I went there on a visit before. It's a pretty unique place. I know that they're going to be rowdy, so we're up for the challenge."

Q. What are y'all seeing defensively from a run-fit perspective that's allowed y'all to hold your last three opponents to less than 100 rushing yards?

TAUREAN YORK: "Just hitting our gaps, playing team defense. Everybody just plugging downhill. As soon as that ball is handed off, we're trying to go plug up those gaps.

The quicker you trigger downhill, the quicker the double teams gets off of the D-lineman. So that's always a plus as well."

Q. How hyped were y'all to go out there and get a win in the throwback uniforms?

TAUREAN YORK: "It's a good experience. The uniforms are definitely a testament, so I'm glad we honored the team today. They're good to wear."

Q. Albert was talking about how people see the third down stats but that you guys are having a lot of success on first and second down. What have you seen on those two downs that leads to the success on third down?

TAUREAN YORK: "Just winning those two downs, honestly. If you give up four more yards on any play, it's a loss. We're trying to limit the offense to three or less. We do that, we get them to third and 7, third and 7 to 10, that's when we come out, we're going to go out there and do our thing."



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Q. Kind of bouncing off what Alex was saying, the success you guys have had on third down has just been tremendous since y'all started conference play. What does that momentum mean for you guys as you face this road slate coming up?

TAUREAN YORK: "Knock on wood. Like Coach Elko says, just got to keep playing complementary defense. Everybody is hand signaling. Everybody is on the same page when it comes to communications and checks. So whenever you do that, we're on the same page."

We got the talent; that's never been an issue. Now we're on the same page, so now it's time to turn it up a notch on the road."

Q. Taurean, last week y'all talked about just being able to wear these other teams down in the second half. Albert [Regis] talked about that y'all's practices are really hard. What do you attribute being able to outlast teams, especially late in the game?

TAUREAN YORK: "Man, we're winning these games on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Believe that. When we come out there on Saturday, the game, it's already determined by how you practice in the week. I know that we've been practicing hard. I talk to guys who I feel like are in really tiptop shape. I'm like, "Are you tired? Like, "Yeah, bro, I'm not going to lie, I'm really tired."

And that's at practice. And we're practicing in full pads, banging against the offense the majority of the week.

So when you do that and it gets to Saturday, the game is so much easier, and that's a testament to Coach Elko and his staff and how they plan practice out."

Q. When you have a teammate like Dezz Ricks who maybe struggles a little bit at the beginning of the game, how do you as a leader on this team talk to him to get him back on track for this?

TAUREAN YORK: "Come on, man. Let's do it. There's a lot of game to be played. Two drives don't define you as a player. You've been strapping up people all year long, so don't worry about it."

And you're going against some elite receivers. That's no secret that Florida has elite receivers over there, and we knew that going into the game.

So, you've got to win your one-on-one. He didn't, but that's cool, though, because he bounced back. In the latter part of the game, he started doing what he does best."



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COMMENTS FROM COACH BILLY NAPIER

COACH NAPIER: "First of all, hats off to Texas A&M. They played a heck of a game and they've got a really good football team. Well-rounded team, good in all parts. I think our kids, early, on defense, started a little bit slow. Offensively, we started fast. And then we kind of settled in on defense and then struggled to generate many points from that point forward on offense. I do think, look, 74 rushing yards to 183. Three turnovers to one. And then really, 13 points off of turnovers. Third down was big. We were 1-for-10, think they were 9-for-17. And in general, we didn't sack their guy and obviously, we struggled to protect DJ at times, especially late. The kids played extremely hard in the game. I think once we settled in on defense, I thought the effort was there. But in general, we dug a little bit of a hole. We had trouble getting out of it. And then it became a two-score game late. Think Texas A&M's got a good team. Think that Coach Elko and his staff do a really good job. It was a great atmosphere in there tonight. We've got a lot of respect for how they play the game and our kids battled their ass off tonight. But I think in general, the parts of football that you have to do to win, we did not do and they did."

On the fourth-down call after the interception in the fourth quarter...

COACH NAPIER: "I think that the analytics would say, at that point, you go for it. But in general, yes, that's one you think about. I think we got to execute the third-down play a little bit better. In general, we got to execute better on first and second to stay out of some of these third-and-longs. But yeah, you always look back at those, when they don't work. I think sometimes they do and you're happy with them, but when they don't work, you can second guess yourself."

On how impactful the third and longs were throughout the game...

COACH NAPIER: "I think they can rush. I do think that, in general, we could do better. But yeah, any time you play on third-and-long, those are the downs you want to avoid."

On adjustments the Texas A&M defense made after two early UF touchdowns...

COACH NAPIER: "They showed up playing a little bit more man coverage, man pressure, they played bracket, mixed bracket with that. Obviously, a lot of those throws were runs that were tagged with run-pass options and we were attacking the corners in cover one. Once we proved that we could win outside, I think they settled down and played a little bit more post-safety zone. We were running into light boxes at times; it was muddy in there. We got six-for-six and we're getting three. In general, we got to be cleaner in the run game. We're handing it off and the boxes are light. Now, we threw



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some great RPOs. I thought DJ did a good job in that regard. Our guys made plays outside, but just not enough consistency to move it once we got into the scoring area. We got to finish those possessions."

On whether the pressure threw Lagway out of rhythm...

COACH NAPIER: "We were inefficient on first and second down. We weren't able to run it effectively and then obviously at times, when we did throw it, they were able to get pressure. And then you're playing third-and-long... Mike [Elko] does a great job with his third-down packages. They're really good at what they do in that regard. We had some penalties that I think were pretty costly, in my opinion. But in general, it's all about first and second down efficiency, and then, got to stay out of the third-and-longs."

On specific penalties that stood out to him...

COACH NAPIER:

"The facemask on the punt I thought was a big play. Ended up not creating points, but in general, the field position after that face mask, I thought was a big one. The penalty right before the half where they called illegal formation. There will be a lot of debate about that one. Dallas' penalty. But look, those guys do a great job. They've got a tough job, just like we do. In general, that wasn't why we lost."

On some of the screen plays on third and long...

COACH NAPIER:

"We threw a screen into man-match coverage, which was not great. They played zone, they just pushed through the zone and matched the back. Our lineman was not able to out and get the guy covering the back. And look, sometimes those work. Sometimes they don't work. But that specific play, we felt as if it was zone and it ended up pushing through four-strong low to match the pattern."

On Florida's inability to get to QB Marcell Reed...

COACH NAPIER:

"We were there quite a bit. I think the guy's tough to get on the ground, his ability to escape and extend, and then you could be free and not get him down. And then, he makes some plays with his



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feet. In general, that's the challenge, right? You've got, really, two elite receivers. You got two good backs. The O-line. I think their ability to run it and then the matchups with the two receivers, and then he obviously, you may have him but can't get him down. We didn't sack him all night. And they stayed ahead of schedule. A lot of their third downs were very manageable, and I think ultimately that's why they were successful on third down."

COMMENTS FROM DJ LAGWAY

On The offense slowing up after the first-three series...

DJ LAGWAY:

"Just the execution, you know. I say execution and we just gotta execute better as an offense. Be more consistent. My biggest thing, start fast, stay consistent and finish strong. We started fast, we weren't consistent and we didn't finish strong, so we got a lot of things that we can clean up as an offensive group. We gotta stay on the field on third down. I feel like that's a main focus that's going to be made next weekend and to focus on things like that and just execute."

On the issues converting on third down ...

DJ LAGWAY:

"Third and long is tough to be in. I'd say just all that kind of goes into what we do on first and second down. We gotta have better first-down efficiency, better second-down efficiency and just stay out of the third-and-longs and try to keep third-and-manageables and be like that. Once we get in those third-and-longs, we gotta just be able to execute and be clicking on all cylinders. You can't go 10 for 11, cause if you go 10 for 11, it could be a pick, it could be a big sack. So, I just say we just all gotta click at the same time, and I feel like we weren't clicking, especially on third downs."

On what was working towards the beginning offensively ...

DJ LAGWAY:

"Yeah, I say just RPO game. Getting the ball out quick. When they came up, take it. Getting it over top, taking them deep and stuff like that. That was a great way we started the game, and it felt good."

On missed opportunities to take advantage of the defense's good performance ...



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DJ LAGWAY:

"It was very disappointing. Kudos to the defense, they kept battling and I feel like overall we just gotta play better complimentary football. We started off fast. They had a little bit of a slow start and then they picked it up, and then we started kind of going downhill. But I just feel like we gotta play good ball all at the same time, and that's when the magic happens."

On this being his first start back in his home state ...

DJ LAGWAY:

"Man, this is gut-wrenching, like I can't imagine how I feel right now. This is not how I expected this night to go and definitely we just gotta get back to work, and that's all I can say."

COMMENTS FROM MYLES GRAHAM

On Texas A&M scoring in two plays on the first drive...

MYLES GRAHAM:

"We just weren't ready to play, just the whole game, we got to get off on third down. That was the issue for us today. And we just got to start fast, like you said, that wasn't our brand of football. We felt like that wasn't who we are. We picked it up at the end of the game, so I'm proud of how we fought, but we got to start better. I feel like that game's on us because we did not start out. We did not start out fast. And then we got in a hole that was hard to get out of. So, we have to do better."

On what changed on defense after Texas A&M's first two drives of the game...

MYLES GRAHAM:

"It wasn't a change in scheme; it wasn't a change in anything. We just had to look at ourselves and ask ourselves what we wanted to be. That wasn't us, and we felt like we were letting the offense down and that that was a problem. We had been asking for the offense to play like that, the whole year, and they came through and we let them down. So, that's an issue for us. So, we had to go into halftime and fix that. We just had to adjust."

On the problems that QB Marcel Reed's mobility caused...



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MYLES GRAHAM:

“We did not do a good job containing him. He’s obviously very dangerous with his legs, and we got to stay on our rush lanes and contain him in the pocket. He converted on third down, he got up field on us and that’s a big issue for us. We talked about that during the week and we just didn’t execute. We didn’t execute our plan; we didn’t do our job. Everybody didn’t do their one-eleventh and that’s where it showed.”

On what they tell their teammates as two leaders with half of the season left...

MYLES GRAHAM:

“I feel the exact same way [as DJ Lagway]. I feel like we work too hard for these outcomes. I feel like we came too far for these outcomes. I feel like we’ve led together the whole offseason. We worked together. I told him after the game, I’m backing him no matter what. So, we’re just going to keep fighting.”

On losing three road games to top-five teams...

MYLES GRAHAM:

“Like you said, we’re close, but close ain’t good enough. We’re right there, every single game, but it’s not good enough. We just got to play complimentary football, man, and finish. We got to finish strong, and just because they’re top-five teams don’t mean nothing. We want to play every team the same. We want to come out and play our game of football and we haven’t been doing that, so that’s a big issue that we need to fix.”