

OUTBACK BOWL HEAD COACHES NEWS CONFERENCE

Wednesday, January 1, 2014

LSU COACH LES MILES

Opening statement:

“First of all I want to congratulate Iowa’s Coach Ferentz in a gutsy performance by an Iowa football team. We had great respect for them coming in. They did everything to show that the respect was well earned. Our football team came here to accomplish certain goals. One, our team wanted to be part of a legacy. It’s the first time in school history that they’ve won 10 games four years in a row and they wanted to be part of a bowl championship. They really saw this opportunity to finish the season and win a championship and they recognized this team will be configured uniquely one last time, that some of the seniors, some of the juniors would leave and they would commit to playing for everybody in that room. They played as a team. I think they did all the things they needed to do to ensure victory. Practiced hard, prepared and then played a gutsy performance from start to finish. The young quarterback, the first time out, he did some things that he’d like to have back, but managed the game and comes away with victory. I’m really proud of the defense. The defense played spectacularly. If you have to look at the turnovers, the kick-off return, there’s a chance that defense could have played perfectly in the game. On the offensive side we rushed the football well. Jeremy Hill, if you give Jeremy Hill an opportunity to close out a victory, he knows what that means. He really put the finishing touches on an Iowa team and this game on the back end. We’re awful proud of him.”

On stopping the Iowa running game as a key to victory:

“I think that’s a pretty standard rule. Iowa is a tremendously talented rushing team, real strong offensive line, they’re committed there. We had to step into that and stop it.”

On starting the game with 12 straight running plays:

“We probably would have gone with 13 or 14 straight running plays, but I think we scored at 12. I think we realized there were some advantages right there and we didn’t want to go away from them. We would eventually throw the football and we came out with a quality plan that way. It just turned out that we had advantages and we were going to stay with those calls.”

On Anthony Jennings’ performance in the Outback Bowl:

“It’s his first start and he was tight as heck. It’s his first interception of note. He came to the sideline just sick. He’s got to drop it. We’re in the middle of the game. There are some lessons that he learned that will benefit him as he looks forward. Again, he was not perfect by any stretch, but he did the things that he needed to do. First outing, he learned a lot.”

On the emotion of the players making their final collegiate start in the Outback Bowl:

“It really means that this team is committed to each other. We had a meeting last night in the hotel where we really give the team the opportunity to speak to each other. You could tell that there was a bond between the guys in that room. They cared for each other and they were going to play for each other. That, to me, was as telling as anything including a great practice week that they were coming to play and they did. Honestly, I’m really thrilled Jeremy Hill had the day that

he did, but I kind of wish that (Jarvis) Landry, and (Odell) Beckham and (Alfred) Blue and some of these other guys had big games too.”

On the effectiveness of the LSU running game:

“Again, we hit a couple of things that we knew were going to be good early on in the game and pressed them, stayed with them. J. Hill made some nice cuts early on and we take a very significant lead. Late in the game it’s cover zero and if you make a guy miss it’s a big gain. If you can put two defenders behind one blocker it’s a huge game. J. Hill knew that. He’s one of those backs that, if you give him the opportunity to close out a game, he knows what to do. He made some nice cuts. When you give him that spot, that opportunity at extending the play, he can score, and he did.”

On underclassmen that may leave early for the NFL:

“I’m sure I’m going to be excited. I can tell you this; there is a point in time where the decision is a personal one and one that you take a mom or dad, a family, you sit down and kind of map it out. You find out what goals you have and what benefits you best, and it’s not the coach’s decision. I have to be honest with you, I give them everything I’ve got and I generally give an opinion. I am very fortunate to represent quality men who give me everything I ask them for. I promise you this, I looked on the field and every guy just gave 100 percent effort and contact at risk of injury. For me, if they decide it’s their last one, I’m going to support them and love them and go to recruiting.”

OUTBACK BOWL POST GAME NEWS CONFERENCE

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OUTBACK BOWL MVP JEREMY HILL

On the importance of the running game in today's contest:

“We knew with the weather, similar to the Auburn game and the Texas A&M game, that we would have to get the running game going. With Anthony (Jennings) making his first start, we knew we would have to be successful running the football to win this football game. All of the backs did a great job tonight just taking what they could get, just getting those tough yards. We knew their defensive line was going to two-gap our offensive line and try to make plays on us in the backfield, so we just took what we could get and not try to do too much. When our offensive line did block them successfully we gashed them and I got some big plays.”

On whether it crossed his mind to fall down and run the clock instead of scoring late:

“Yeah, it actually did, but if you watch the play I lost the ball. I didn't want to risk it fumbling. I just wanted to regain control of the ball and then by the time that happened I was in the end zone. But that definitely crossed my mind just to get down but the ball popped out so I had to score.”

On what the win means to the team:

“I think it's well received. Throughout this season we've had ups and downs. We didn't really reach our expectations but we still had a lot to play for, especially our seniors and some of the guys that are eligible to leave. We knew we had to go out with a bang and that's just the mentality that we took on back in Baton Rouge practicing and when we got here in Tampa practicing. We just had fun. We had fun all week in practice. We did what we were supposed to do and it just really showed up in that first quarter, just the emotions and the energy we played with. I think moving forward to next season, I think the guys coming back, we're going to be pretty tough to beat.”

On the possibility of entering the NFL draft:

“I haven't thought about that at all. I'm still enjoying this win. I'm just anxious to get back with my guys and celebrate and have a good time with those boys. I really haven't put too much thought into it. Once I get back home I'll talk to my family and coaches and things of that nature. But it hasn't crossed my mind yet. When that time comes you guys will be the first to know.”

On his perseverance this season and winning the Outback Bowl MVP:

“Like Coach Miles said earlier, we talked as a team. A lot of guys stepped up, especially the leaders of the team. I got a chance to step up and talk to the guys and just really thank them for everything, just supporting me through everything that I've been through and just having my back through everything. I think that's just the bond of our football team, no matter what we're going to stand up and support our guys.”

2014 LSU Outback Bowl Postgame Quotes

CB Jalen Mills

On the defense having to hold things together for LSU:

At the end of the game, even if it said on the scoreboard 7-0, we would have been happy with a 7-0 win; if that had been the score at the end with no time left than it would have been ok. But the offense started clicking and scoring big time plays.

LB Lamin Barrow

On the defense forcing Iowa into three-and-outs and giving the offense time to go get going:

He's a freshman quarterback but I think that he really responds well to pressure. He had a pretty decent game for this being his first game starting completely.

On P Jamie Keehn putting the Iowa offense inside the 10 yard line and whether that makes things easier for the defense:

He was in a zone today. Not only kicks, he went down and knocked somebody's head off on the sidelines today. He just had a great game today pinning them deep and putting us in a great position all day.

On getting a win in his last game:

It meant everything in the world having your whole career coming down to one game. It's a real somber moment and a game where I cried a waterfall. It's going to be on to better things for this team and myself personally as I try to play at the next level.

RB Jeremy Hill

On his role with the team:

I knew that I would play but I didn't know how significant my role would be; but no matter what the role was, I would accept it and do it to the best of my ability. But as the season when on I was successful and took it and ran with it like I did during my freshman year.

On their confidence after LSU's first drive of the game:

We knew it was going to be a long football game and teams make adjustments, and we knew that they (Iowa) would make adjustments. And that's kind of how the rest of the game went. They make adjustments to us. They are pretty stout on defense so you can't get too hyped up on the first drive; you just have to keep fighting. They did a great job adjusting to what we do; that's a tough football team.

On his 216 yards rushing today:

I definitely didn't have 216 yards rushing on my mind (this morning when I woke up). The only thing I had on my mind was taking what I could get. Just watching film on them, they are pretty tough up front. You just take what you can get; and you have to take the ugly three or four yards on occasion. I definitely didn't plan to get that much, but as the game wore on we had some big plays.

On what will factor in on his decision to turn professional and if it will be a tough decision:

I think it will be very tough, especially depending on what some of the other guys will do and who I will be surrounding myself with next year. But like I said earlier, I haven't put too much thought into it; I'm still trying to enjoy this win. When we get back to Baton Rouge we can put some thought into it and figure all this stuff out.

FB Connor Neighbors**On success running the ball today:**

We run the ball, that's what we do best. We have a new quarterback in and we trust him in some situations but we wanted to fall back on our game plan and our plan was to just hit them in the mouth, keep the drives going as long as possible and get in the end zone."

On watching Jeremy Hill's performance today:

It's awesome. Every time he scores I feel that I score. I love that dude to death, I'll block for him any day.

On QB Anthony Jennings:

It's hard for someone like that to step in and lead a team, but every time we were in a huddle he'd tell us to shut up because we'd be jawing, but he'd take control of the team and lead us to victory and that is all that matters.

On four Iowa sacks:

After every sack we'd come off the field and he'd come by and say "We've got this" and keeping us in the game more that we were keeping him in the game and that's what you look for in a leader. That kept me in the game.

WR Odell Beckham Jr.**On Jeremy Hill's performance:**

We put the ball in one of the best play-makers on the team hands and it's just something we expect him to do and at the end of the day he proved it once again. Personally I think he's one of the best running backs in the nation.

On getting a bowl win after the last two seasons:

It's great. To have four seasons in a row with ten wins and to come here and play a quality team like Iowa. It was smash-mouth football and we came up with the victory.

On his future:

Honestly right now I've got to go talk with my family, my coaches and just see what the best decision to make.

Will winning today have effect on your decision?

Not as much, kind of before the game too it's going to be whatever is best for my family. If the decision is to go then I'll wish this team the best of luck and I'll look forward to another year if that's the decision.

On Anthony Jennings' performance:

With Anthony you have a young quarterback and sometimes you get in these games and things aren't what they seem like. I feel like it's a great learning experience for him. Coming into next year I'm looking forward to seeing him develop throughout the spring and over the summer. Iowa is a good team, you can't keep anything away from them. We cut the playbook down a little bit so Anthony could make all the right decisions and make the plays and I thought he did a great job of managing the clock and getting the offense going.

WR Jarvis Landry**On Jeremy Hill:**

Coach was telling us to just run downhill. We noticed the grass was a little slick and he said just run straight ahead, run through arm tackles and that's all Jeremy did he did a great job tonight.

On what a bowl win can do for a program:

It's definitely a positive note and I think it's a motivational thing whether you win or lose going into the off season you have something to build off of and something to learn from, and for us I think we just want to get our legs back and get healthy and go into spring.

P Jamie King:

On his performance today

I've been this punter all year. I've been good and practice it's just been one punt on game day so after the Arkansas game coach Miles and coach McGahee and I had a chat and figured we'd just go back to basics. We noticed on film that I was getting very long, like two stepping it, so I thought I've got a strong leg, let's one step it and see how it goes and we saw the result today.