

Louisiana State University Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 26, 2016

Joe Alleva

Ed Orgeron

JOE ALLEVA: -- Great day for LSU Football. Thank you all for coming. You know, we've had our man here all along. Before I really get into this, I want to thank some people. I want to thank President King Alexander, and the board leadership. Three of the board leaders are here today: The chairman of the board, Scott Ballard; Steve Perry, the chair-elect; Blake Chatelain, the chairman of the athletic committee on the board. They have been my sounding board, they've been technically I guess the search committee. They've been great to work with. I really, really thank them for their support through this whole process.

This thing was never going to come down to a bidding war. It was something that we knew that Coach O is never going to play games with us. We know where Coach O's heart is, we know where his love is, we know where his passion is.

At the end of the day only one candidate got an official offer from us and it was accepted this morning.

I don't have to explain to you what Coach O is about and what he means to LSU football. It's part of his DNA. He grew up wanting this job. This is his dream job.

At the end of the day we're striving for a culture of excellence here at LSU, excellence in everything we do, on the field, off the field, in the classroom, in the community. Coach O gets that.

Earlier I put out a list of criteria of things that I think are important for the head coach. Coach O hits every one of those criteria. There will be some critics that

say, Oh, look at his record at Ole Miss. You know what, that was a long time ago. In this world people learn more from their mistakes and their failures than they do from their successes.

Believe me, Coach O realizes his strengths and he realizes his weaknesses. His strengths are going to be tremendous here at LSU. There's no question in my mind he's going to assemble the finest group of assistant coaches in the country.

His passion is unbelievable. You can just see how the players responded to him. You could see at how in eight short weeks he changed the culture on the team, changed it immensely. He changed it from a culture of individualism to a culture of team, everybody loving and working together. In football, it's all about team, and it's all about working together.

I needed to hear these three words from him: preparation, passion and excellence. I think those three words symbolize Coach O. At the end of the day, there really was no choice, there was absolutely no choice but to hire Coach O.

When you looked at how the team responded after two very tough losses, I think you really get to see what leadership and motivation is all about. Tough loss to Alabama. We come out the next week against Arkansas and play tremendously and beat them badly. A very devastating loss to Florida. We come out the next week, actually three or four days later, and beat A&M soundly on their own field. That's what leadership and motivation is all about. That's what this man symbolizes to me.

There's no question in my mind he's going to be able to recruit the state of Louisiana. He's one of the finest recruiters in the country. When you put together the talent that we can gather here at LSU, with the coaching staff he's going to put together, it's a formula for championships. That's our goal here, is championships, to compete at the highest level.

Yesterday I got a phone call from Pete Carroll. I know y'all know who Pete Carroll is. He said to me, Joe, a leader has got to have a big heart. It's all

about heart. He said, Coach O has the ability to get the most out of people. He has the ability to motivate people to do things they don't think they're capable of doing.

That just stuck with me. I thought about it, thought about it. I don't think there's a person that I've met that has a bigger heart and a bigger desire to succeed than Coach O.

So with that, it's my pleasure to announce to you the next head coach at LSU, permanent head coach, Ed Orgeron.

COACH ORGERON: Thank you, Joe. Welcome, everybody. Good to see everybody today.

Just the last eight weeks, the support that Joe Alleva gave myself every week, every day. We worked hand in hand through Derek Ponamsky and our staff. Joe was right there with us the whole way, gave me the full reins as head coach, his support, his guidance when things were good, and even more when things were not so good.

The phone calls I got from him on Sunday mornings after the loss, Keep going, keep going, keep going. It gave me the motivation to lead this team. I want to thank him.

I also want to thank King Alexander, the Board of Supervisors, for entrusting me with the greatest job in the country. I want to let you know that myself, my football team is going to represent you guys in the best way that we can.

Growing up in the state of Louisiana, watching the Tigers play, we get it. We understand what you gave to us, the accountability we have to the state of Louisiana, to LSU and everybody that's played here before.

I want to thank my wife Kelly, my family, Parker, Cody, Tyler for being there with me. My pastor, Pastor Jacob, those guys have been my support system the whole way.

I tell you, before I went to bed last night, Kelly said, You're going to be the head coach at LSU tomorrow.

I said, Have you been reading the paper (laughter)?

We always believed, Pastor Jacob and I said prayers every day, Pastor Steve from Church of the King down in Mandeville. I want to thank all the people from Louisiana, the prayers and support. Everywhere we go, Coach, we want you to be our coach. We want you to represent us. And we get that.

Most of all I want to thank our players. What a tremendous job our players did through weeks of adversity, pulling together. To see the joy in their faces, to see them come together one team, one heartbeat.

I'd like to thank our coaching staff. What a tremendous job they did coming together, sticking together. The game that Steve Ensminger called at Texas A&M after fighting through adversity, what a great, great Tiger. I want to thank our support staff that's here. Everybody pulling together.

The former players walking through the Tiger Walk, just come and support us. The day I went to Mike Anderson, all the great players were there, just everybody pulling together. Coach, we want this. Coach, thanks for letting us come by. The guys spoke to the team. Patrick Peterson before the game. All the greats. We know what we're representing. We're proud to be a part of Louisiana. We understand LSU, what it means to Louisiana, winning championships.

My goal is to build a championship program fast, very fast. I understand the expectations at LSU and I invite them, because I have the same expectations of myself and my staff.

My plan is to take my time and assemble the best staff in America. We have some great coaches on our staff right now, led by Dave Aranda. He is the best coordinator in football. We plan on him being with us. I spoke with him this morning. We're happy that Dave is an LSU Tiger, I promise you that.

We're going to go through the recruiting process. We're going to be out on the road tomorrow, going out and seeing the best players that we can. We'll evaluate our staff after the bowl, look to get the best staff possible in America. I understand that we have great coaches on our staff. We'll give everybody a legitimate shot to be a Tiger.

I just want to thank the media. You've been great to me the whole time. Been open, come to practice, been very fair in everything that you write. I want to thank you for the positive things that you've written about our staff, about our players.

This is about our players giving back to the state of Louisiana. This is a great day. This is a great day in my life, obviously. But it's not about me, it's about the people of Louisiana, it's about LSU, about all of us pulling together, one team, one heartbeat.

Last of all, I'd like to thank my mom and dad for all they've done (tearing up). They would (indiscernible) today.

We have a team meeting on Monday. Going out recruiting. Call my recruits today. A lot of them are excited that I'm the head coach. Thanks for the opportunity. We have great relationships with all the parents, the families. We're going to get to work. We know how to do this. We understand the expectations and we're ready to go.

I'll take questions.

Q. This whole process, it's been about the team. Today is the only day it gets to be about you. What does this mean to you, now that you're the head guy?

COACH ORGERON: Still it's going to be about the team, the people of Louisiana. It's never going to be about me. I'm never going to make it about me.

I just know this: I'm trained, ready to do this. I've had my chances before. I've learned from my mistakes. I'm ready to build a championship program along

with a great staff. I'm going to need support in all areas. We're going to get the best staff, the best team together for the LSU Tigers.

Q. What does this say for a guy that two years ago was trying to get back into college football, now you're the head coach with the dream job you've always wanted?

COACH ORGERON: Great opportunity. Keep knocking at the door. I want to thank Les Miles for hiring me here, Frank Wilson for helping me get on the staff. This is a place I always wanted to be at.

I feel the time I spent at USC as an interim head coach allowed me to be a better coach at LSU. The day has come where it's time to be the head coach and have a lot of success.

Q. Coach, you mentioned Dave Aranda when you were talking. Go into more detail about what he said after he heard you got the job, your confidence level that he stays here as DC.

COACH ORGERON: He's happy. I'm happy. Dave and I have a great relationship. I totally expect Dave to be with us. We understand he's one of the top guys in the country. People are going to come after him.

Joe and I had a great conversation about Dave. I feel confident he's going to be with us.

Q. Coach, we've heard a lot about this binder that you had, your vision for the future. Can you tell us a little bit about that, what went into that presentation, what it was like presenting that to the board.

COACH ORGERON: You know, just years of coaching, 33 years of coaching, being at Arkansas, learning how to break down film, learning about special teams through them. Learning the weight room, I worked the weight room.

Going to Miami, Jimmy Johnson, Pete Carroll, learning how to recruit, how to evaluate. Going to Syracuse, Paul Pasqualoni, learning how to work Saturdays in the spring and sometimes on Sundays. He was an excellent coach. When I got out of there, I was trained.

The things I learned at USC. Then really Pete Carroll made me a complete coach. I put all those things down, thoughts, all the things we had done at those great programs, it became our program here at LSU, presented it to Joe. Austin Thomas and Derek put that together from me.

It was just things that I learned from great programs, championship programs that I learned that I believe LSU ought to be and will be a championship program.

Q. Since this is about Louisiana, there's four million people in the state, millions want to know what exactly are you going to do with the offense? What is the offensive blueprint that you presented to Joe Alleva?

COACH ORGERON: We're going to look at recruiting the best offensive coordinator in football and bring him to LSU. I do believe that nowadays you have to run the spread offense. You have to have dual-threat quarterbacks that can run the ball and throw it. But you have to have somebody who knows how to run it.

We still want to be a physical football team. We have great backs at LSU. We have one of the best backs in the country coming back next year in Derrius Guice. We're going to recruit some of the best backs in the country. We have some great backs on our team that we haven't played so we have to use those guys. We want to use our skill sets. We want to use our tight ends, throwing the football like we did in our last game.

We have a blueprint. I have a mindset on what we're going to go get, who we're going to go get, we're going to go get it.

Q. How important is it to find an offensive coordinator that cannot only put up points but play a complementary style against so many up-tempo teams?

COACH ORGERON: LSU deserves the best, the best in all coordinator positions. I plan on doing that.

The offensive coordinator that we're going to bring here, we have a couple

guys in mind that's going to be able to do that and more that you ask.

Q. Now that you got the title, anything change from your perspective?

COACH ORGERON: Work harder.

Q. Did you think, after the Florida game, that the chance had passed you by?

COACH ORGERON: No. I thought that we had to do some things to get fixed right away and play very well. But I always felt that I always had a chance to be the head coach here. That was through the leadership of Joe Alleva and the board. We always had a glimmer of hope.

After the Florida game, we knew we had to do some things. But I always thought we had a chance. All we ever wanted was a chance.

Q. Ed, when and how and who told you that you had the job?

COACH ORGERON: Well, Kelly and I went to bed real early last night. Said my prayers. 5:30 this morning I got a call that said Joe Alleva. I missed it, but I called right back (laughter).

He says, How you doing?

I said, Great when I hear your voice this early.

He said, Ed, I'd like to meet with you this morning. Can you be here?

I said, Yes, sir.

So I woke up Kelly. We got it going.

I met with Joe at 7:30 this morning. We had a great discussion at 7:30 this morning. Then we went and met with the board. We had a great morning.

Q. Somebody coming in from the outside has to take stock of the talent. Having an interim role already gave you that. How much of a head start does that give you?

COACH ORGERON: It gives us a great head start. We have identified positions we need to go out and recruit better at, get guys to fill immediate roles. Losing Kendell Beckwith and Duke Riley, two great players for us. We need to go find guys that can fill those roles, although we have guys on the team that can do a good job. But there are some guys out there we have to go get to help us be better at some positions.

Q. You have a personal relationship with Lane Kiffin. Obviously he's somebody that's been identified. Is he somebody that you'd like to pursue? Is that the type of coordinator you're looking for?

COACH ORGERON: All I'm going to say is I'm going to go out and try to get the best coordinator in football.

Q. You've been able to recruit people from the East Coast, the West Coast, lots of different schools, lots of different roles that you had. What will change in terms of being the head coach at LSU permanently in your recruiting message?

COACH ORGERON: Yeah, good question. State of Louisiana first. One star, two star, three star, four star, five star, any star, I don't care. We going to get them. If we think they can be an LSU Tiger and they can perform like we want to, they can perform in the classroom, have a high character, have the skill sets to be a Tiger.

We're starting off with Louisiana first. Then we're going to go outside our borders to get potential first-round draft picks. Mainly going to stay in the South. If there's a person of interest from the Northeast or California, we will go there. We know we're going to stay along the I-10 corridor and get after it as much as we can.

LSU has done a tremendous job of recruiting. We look to do a better job in recruiting at some specific areas. But LSU will always be Louisiana first.

Q. Not only the current team obviously voicing their support for you, but former coaches, players. What has it meant to you to hear those people speak on your behalf and vouch for you?

COACH ORGERON: I love it. One team, one heartbeat, everybody on the

same page. The more people that support us, the better we are. LSU has a great Tiger family out there. It seems to me the Tiger family is united as one. That is one of the things we wanted to do when we first started the job. We got guys to go. We want to become even stronger.

I love that the team has supported me, along with the coaching staff. They like what's going on. They're happy. They feel good. They're winning. We got some things we need to get better, but we have their attention.

I'm just so happy for these players, just to be in the dressing room, see all the hard work they did. Hopefully we get to go to a great bowl and finish this season strong.

Q. Are you going to pursue a recruiting coordinator also like you're going to pursue an offensive coordinator, promote the staff?

COACH ORGERON: Dameyune Craig is our recruiting coordinator now, has done a good job for us. Like I say, we're going to go through this recruiting season, we're going to evaluate everything at the end of the recruiting season at the end of the bowl and get the best staff in America that we can in place for LSU.

Q. Coach, there's an old saying that goes, You can never be a hero in your own hometown. You got emotional talking about your parents. Not to romanticize it too much, do you think getting this job shows that hard work and determination can be an inspiration for anybody who wants to pursue their dreams?

COACH ORGERON: Everybody in the state of Louisiana will have a hope and a dream. It just goes to show that when you work hard, you have integrity, you have a great background of leadership, you're around people that love sports, love football.

All my dad asked me to do was to go to work and give a man a great day's work, do the best you can every day. He told me, he said, Listen, I don't care what you do, just be the best at it. Along with that advice, there's somebody out there today that will get motivation from that.

I love the people of Louisiana. I'm from there. We stopped yesterday at a gas station. Everybody came up to us, Coach, we want you to be the coach. I know Louisiana is happy today. There's a bunch of prayer groups, a bunch of churches have been on our side. North Louisiana, South Louisiana, Lake Charles, to Boutte, everybody is happy, and so am I.

Q. Mr. Alleva referenced Pete Carroll. When he first got to USC, there may have been other people considered for that job. He said he coached originally with a chip on his shoulder. Do you think you will coach with a chip on your shoulder, or what's in the past is in the past?

COACH ORGERON: No, I'm just happy to be at LSU. All my life, whatever it took to get there, it took. I believe everything happens for a reason. It's just the way it ought to be. I'm honored to be the LSU head coach today.

Q. Were you in Mandeville when Joe called you?

COACH ORGERON: I was sleeping in my own bed for the first time in eight weeks.

Q. Can you describe the hour ride here, what you were thinking.

COACH ORGERON: I was going very fast (laughter). I was listening to some of my greatest music. I had the window down, hollering half the way. I'm glad I didn't get stopped.

It was great. I was just thinking about all the things that happened really moving forward. He didn't tell me he was going to offer the job. I called Kelly. I said, I don't think they're bringing me to in to tell me I don't have the job.

But thinking about the things I have to get done this afternoon, the things I have to get done tomorrow. This is going to happen very fast. We have to bring in a great recruiting class, all those things.

Q. Ed, back in your movie career, you said another head coaching job was your dream job.

COACH ORGERON: Yeah.

Q. It was your first job. Did you ever dream this big about this job? You

talk about driving past the stadium when you were working for other schools, seeing the lights on. Did you ever dream this would happen to you?

COACH ORGERON: The movie, I had to read that off of a script, just to let you know that (laughter).

But, yeah, there's no question. This is bigger than life. Driving past the stadium, I just wanted to be an assistant coach here. I just wanted to have my feet on the grass. But I knew once I got here, I could earn my way up to being the head coach. I wanted to take it one step at a time.

Every step I went, I was preparing to come back home to LSU. That was my goal the whole time. Just go out, go to Miami, go to Syracuse, go to USC, be prepared, get better. I wanted to come back to be the best football coach I can possibly be when I took this job. I feel like that happened. I'm prepared to do it.

Q. Coach, I know you've had these conversations already. Now that you have the full-time job, how quickly will you start recruiting some juniors to come back?

COACH ORGERON: Yeah, today, right after I finish this. I've been recruiting, I promise you that. Some are recruitable, some are not so recruitable. You have to understand that. But I'm going to take a shot at all of them.

Q. I asked last week about how close this team was to winning an SEC Championship. Alabama has been the benchmark for the league for a few years now. Any more thoughts about how far away this program is from being able to compete at this level as consistently as that?

COACH ORGERON: I believe that we can compete for it very fast. Now that I've been given full rein in the future, and I have a vision, there's certain pieces of the puzzle that have to come together. I do believe they will come together. Once they come together, off we go.

Q. Can you speak to those, the vision and the puzzle pieces, what those are?

COACH ORGERON: Well, just getting the best staff in America, getting to

implement a program from day one, our program, starting in the off-season, starting to do the things we want to do, starting to implement the type of offense we want to run with the terminology, guys on the same page, have someone run the offense that's an expert at his job. I think that's a big key.

Q. You talked about having a dual-threat quarterback, running spread. The guys you have on the team now, not talking about recruits in the future, how prepared are they to move in that direction? Do you feel you're comfortable they can execute?

COACH ORGERON: I think they're fine. I think there's a lot of stuff we have run in practice that we haven't shown in a game because we're not confident we can do it. Those guys get it.

The two things in coaching is the player believes that you care about him and you have knowledge. Knowledge is power. That's what the coaches that we're going to hire is going to have that about them.

Q. Ohio State is playing Michigan right now. Two coaches are judged basically on what happens in that game. Do you feel you will be judged on what happens on that first Saturday in November? What do you have to do to narrow the gap and win that game?

COACH ORGERON: Yes, you are judged by that game. That's the nature of the beast. I welcome it. I bring it on. I can't wait till the day we beat those guys. That's the benchmark.

Now, we have to recruit better. We have to get players that are very similar to the benchmark of this conference. We have to get coaches that can coach at that level. We have some coaches on the staff that can. We have to have the mindset that we can go out and beat those guys.

I tell you what, for the most part of that last time we played them, we had it. There's a couple of pieces missing. We plan to fix those pieces so we can get that job accomplished. That is the benchmark every day we go to work. We understand the benchmark.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, coach.

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