

LSU COACH ED ORGERON PRESS CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT - Syracuse week

Opening Statement...

ED ORGERON: After reviewing the film, here's what we came up with. Improvements on defense: Obviously the penalties, again. Four penalties, two targeting. Changed the play of the game, kept drives alive, and we're going to discuss that today, and guys that created penalties are going to run after practice. Our run fits, option responsibility, and our tackling. Eye discipline with play action pass, gave up two little passes, and edge run, we let too many runs get outside of us.

On offense, penalties again, two of them took touchdowns off the board. Execution, we had three critical drops, one was for a possible touchdown. Decision making at the line of scrimmage, missed assignments.

On special teams, our punt coverage, we gave up a 35-yard punt return, which gave them excellent field position, and execution on our kickoff return. Looking back at last week, at our preparation, one thing that I will demand and we will get better, in our teams periods, our team periods on Tuesday and Wednesday wasn't as sharp as they need to be, and obviously affected our play.

We're excited to see our team today. A lot of them were working out at 7:30 (this) morning. A lot of them came in the office yesterday wanting to look at the film, get better and correct their mistakes and press onward to Syracuse.

Onward to Syracuse, first I'd like to say I was very fortunate to work there for three years. Paul Pasqualoni hired me. I learned a lot at Syracuse, a great university, a great educational university. We had a good run there. It's a school that I respect, a football team that I respect a lot, and very grateful to Syracuse.

On offense, they're a spread offense, very up tempo, a lot like Missouri was last year. These guys will run plays at a fast pace, will be very challenging for our defense.

They're averaging almost 500 yards a game, 38 points per game. Top player is a senior wide receiver Steve Ishmael. They like to create a lot of one-on-one with him. He's a tall receiver, can get up there and get it. Eric Dungey is a very efficient quarterback who can also run the ball as a dual-threat guy. Dontae Strickland is a little running back, can hit the hole very well, has four touchdowns this year.

On defense, they're a 4-3. They will show a little odd, but they've got eight returning starters from last year. They're giving up about 300 yards a game, only 84 yards rushing, and almost 220 passing. They allowed 18 points per game, which is 36th in the nation. Their 3rd down defense is ranked sixth in the nation with a 16.3 opponent conversion rate, which is pretty good as we all know.

Syracuse defense has also forced four fumbles and three interceptions on the season. They have seven takeaways. Their top players on defense are senior linebacker Parris Bennett, senior middle linebacker Zaire Franklin, and senior free safety Jordan Martin.

On special teams their best units are the kickoff return, average 11th in the nation, and net punt, 42.8 yards.

Again, we're excited about our meeting today with our players. I know they'll be excited about watching the tape, correcting the stuff that we need to get better. Our coaches have been working hard, diligently. We're ready to get this game behind us and press on to Syracuse.

Q. Does losing the game to Mississippi State change your team goals for the season?

ED ORGERON: Well, we only took them one at a time anyway, so I don't want to put any lofty goals on

our guys. We know the expectations at LSU, but we didn't put any championship goals or win every game. We just wanted to take one game at a time, and obviously win one game at a time.

Q. When there's a coaching transition like there was with you, you obviously want to get the guys fired up to play behind you and everything, and how do you toe the line between them liking you and also the respect factor with, hey, taking advantage of the coaching staff with penalties and some of the things we've seen?

ED ORGERON: Well, I think our team has handled it very well. Any time we've disciplined them, they've been fine. We discipline them for not going to class or for being late. We're on time, we're early now. We discipline for a couple of things. We think we're more disciplined now than we've been in the past, but obviously the penalties are not showing it. It's an area that we need improvement, and I'm sure we're going to do it.

Q. Before the game the other day, perhaps a Mississippi State player kind of instigated it, but there was another one of these pregame things like the Florida game last year. Does that bother you?

ED ORGERON: Yeah, it's something that we want to avoid. From what I heard our players handled it very well. It wasn't instigated by LSU at all. From what I heard, the people that was there, they backed away from it. But it's something that we don't want -- I don't think it was anything like Florida, but that's a distraction that we don't want.

Q. You won't have Donnie for the first half. Who replaces him?

ED ORGERON: We don't know yet. It's the beginning of the week. Obviously we're going to let Tyler Taylor and Jacob Phillips go after it, but we haven't practiced yet, so we'll see.

Q. The status of three guys, Ed Alexander, Rashard, obviously, and Kary Vincent, we saw him kind of go out of the game.

ED ORGERON: Yeah, we're not going to have Ed for this week. We're going to see if Rashard can practice this week, and I don't know yet about Kary.

Q. Derrius Guice didn't play much in the second half or at least late in the game. Is he okay or could you update his status?

ED ORGERON: Yeah, he's not going to practice today. He had a minor injury. So we're just protecting him. I think he's going to be fine, though. But we're not practicing him.

Q. Danny said after the game that he was going to step up and become more of a vocal leader on this team. Have you identified who the leaders are in the locker room to help you maybe spread your message?

ED ORGERON: We have some guys like John Battle, Christian LaCouture, Greg Gilmore, DJ Chark, J.D. Moore, Will Clapp, KJ Malone, Derrius Guice, those guys have been fantastic for us. They're guys that I count on, and probably missed a couple of guys, Rashard Lawrence, believe it or not as a sophomore, is a very vocal leader. So we have a lot of guys that are heading in the right direction on this team.

Q. Are we any closer to seeing Frank Herron play, and I guess why not travel Justin Thomas this weekend?

ED ORGERON: Let me say this to you, okay: I'm not going to talk about that every week, okay. That's it. And with Justin Thomas, it was just because of the travel limits.

Q. Without Ed, you guys were down to just the one nose tackle. I've seen you move Greg around. How much shuffling do you have to do on the defensive line?

ED ORGERON: Well, here's what we're hoping, okay; we're hoping that we can move Greg Gilmore back to nose tackle. Rashard Lawrence may play this week. If he does, we can back up Greg with Glen Logan, who played 56 plays and did pretty good at nose tackle on a -- without much of a notice. And I thought

Pete Jenkins did an excellent job of coaching him, and behind him will be Neil Farrell, but we're very thin there, and it's an area we need to do a better job of recruiting and maybe have to go get a couple junior college guys to help us out there.

Q. Based off of this performance this week, I know you've always talked about competition, are you opening up any spots, offense, defense --

ED ORGERON: We haven't talked about that. We think that the guys that we've got are in pretty good shape. Obviously we want to use the rotation, keep our guys fresh, but I don't think it was a matter of that. We didn't play well as a whole team. That's my responsibility. And I'll take the blame for all of it.

Q. Did you consider playing Myles Brennan on Saturday and might he have a role this week?

ED ORGERON: It never came up that Danny was playing that bad that we need to put Myles in. But I will say this to you, that we're going to give Myles more reps this week and see if he can play in the next couple of games. We'd love him to play, but that all depends on how the game goes.

Q. You still managed to have zero turnovers so far this season. How are you going to keep that up?

ED ORGERON: I love it. I love the attitude. It's led by Matt Canada. He does a great job. Our guys are doing a tremendous job of ball security. We're still plus three in the turnover ratio, was good for us. I think we practice it. Matt starts his practice every day with ball security. We preach it. We still want to get more turnovers on defense, and I think it's going to help us and make a difference in our season.

Q. Offensively especially in the passing game, it seemed like the running game was very effective and the passing game not so much. Where do you think the disconnect was?

ED ORGERON: Well, we dropped some balls. We dropped one that was for a touchdown. We didn't hit some passes. We had a lot of one-on-ones that we didn't catch the ball or the ball was not on the money like they have been the last two games. I think that the pressure was there. We didn't have a lot of pressure the first two weeks. Their defensive line did a pretty good job, only had one sack, but I think there was eight or nine pressures that affected the throws, the crowd noise, us being behind. The two drops really hurt us on some drives. I think it's a combination of all those.

Q. Kind of piggy-backing on that, I know you know to win the game you have to win the line of scrimmage, so what was more disappointing for you, the mental busts, whether it be protection issues or defensive assignments, or getting whipped, I guess, physically?

ED ORGERON: Yeah, I think the tackles for loss, the pressures, getting beat one-on-one, which didn't occur as much as I thought when I watched the game. I went back and watched the film, and our guys did a little bit better than I thought.

On the defensive line, we played pretty good in between the tackles. There was a lot of runs outside the tackles that affected us. We got cut a lot on the perimeter. The one time they were squeezing a block and it bounces out for about 40 yards. It's a technique deal I coach hard, and it was Arden on that play. Option responsibilities created big holes. So I think that we can shore up the things that were broken, and it wasn't as much of a physical thing as it was alignment, assignment and technique deal.

Q. Can you appeal a suspension when a player is ejected? I ask specifically about Farrell because it seemed like he fell forward.

ED ORGERON: Yeah, all these things we send them in. We send them in, and we'll question them, and we'll see where that goes.

Q. I think it was 80 percent of the plays Arden was on the field, they went the other way.

ED ORGERON: Good game plan.

Q. So how do you have to counter that going forward?

ED ORGERON: Yeah, there's different things that we can do. There's things that we can do now that we've got Arden back. We only had him for a week, so obviously we didn't want to put him in three or four different situations, then line-up rules and stuff like that, wanted him to get his cleats in the grass and play. But now that we've got him back, now that we have him at practice, we can do a couple of things that they won't know where he's lining up according to the formation. But it's a good point, though.

Q. You said one of the offensive issues was decision making at the line of scrimmage.

ED ORGERON: Yeah.

Q. Could you elaborate on that?

ED ORGERON: I think it falls on the quarterback, and talking to Matt today, there were some things that we could have done better as far as maybe give the speed sweep, as far as run the ball, counting people in the box, throwing the ball, where to go with the ball. We weren't as sharp as we wanted to be, so we've got to work on those things in practice.

Q. I didn't get to look at it, I saw it on the field, but it was one of the first times I've seen LSU look slower than the defense. Is that Todd's influence, and do you feel that it's an area that your team kind of needs to recognize and improve upon?

ED ORGERON: There's no question. I've been talking about Todd Grantham's influence on this since the spring, and Jeffery Simmons, those guys are good up front. They were good, and they played fast. You're right, they were at home, they were on fire. I think they played about as good as they can and we played about as bad as we can. That was obvious.

Q. You mentioned Tyler and Jacob inside. What have you seen through the first three weeks from them and what do you want to see in practice when you're making this decision?

ED ORGERON: Consistency, focus. The linebackers or the quarterback is about defense. We're getting a lot of formation nowadays, playing option football. There's a lot of different assignments, a lot of different reads that those guys when you go into the game, according to a formation, we may adjust a defensive lineman in front of you. One time you'll have the quarterback, one time you'll have the dive. That was happening too fast. So I think that is experience. The game to slow down, a little bit more studying, more reps, more game-time experience.

Q. The players we spoke to after the game said they were embarrassed by the outcome and everything; do you think that's a positive for them to get angry about what happened and to maybe use this game as look back on this is where we turned around our season?

ED ORGERON: I do believe that. I do believe this is going to be a turning point for us. It better be. I learned a lesson; we did not prepare as well as we should. We did not play well. It's my responsibility. I think it's good that they're angry. I know the coaches are angry. We're angry at ourselves. We could have coached better. I know they felt they could have played better, and we can't underestimate anybody, especially when we're going into their house. Those guys were on fire.

Q. We're used to seeing these defensive backs at LSU obviously play really well, but a couple of coverage busts, or so, big touchdowns. What did you see on film from those?

ED ORGERON: Eye discipline. Like I said, eye discipline. When there's a play action pass -- a lot of times we're counting on our DBs to do a lot. They throw on the run and also play their man man-to-man, but first thing they've got is him man-to-man, and a lot of times they were looking in the backfield. And they had a good scheme; it was difficult, but you've keep your eye on your man until he blocks. A lot of times they were looking in the backfield and the run bust. Not a lot of times, two times.

Q. Is it normal for players to come in on Sunday and watch as much film? Greg Gilmore talked about getting the D-line in there to watch film on Sunday?

ED ORGERON: Usually you don't see it much, okay, and obviously that's voluntary. This is a day off. But there were a lot of guys. Not with the coaches, on their own, doing a lot of things yesterday, which is good. I saw a lot of guys come by, talked to some, and I think that you see leadership coming on. I think those guys are -- they're very focused and detailed on what they want to get accomplished. They were very disappointed in the way we played. The coaches were disappointed. We've got some very good coaches on this staff. We didn't coach our best game since I've been here. It was obvious that it happened, and I think that it's going to motivate us this week and for the rest of the season.

Q. We talk a lot about depth on the defensive line, but what about just across the team? You've been on a lot of football teams as a coach. When you look at the depth across the board on this team, how does it compare to others maybe that you've been a part of?

ED ORGERON: Well, we need to get more linemen on this football team. We need to get bigger, stronger, faster, and we need to have more depth. That's why we're going to have to go into the junior college ranks, get a couple offensive linemen, a couple defensive linemen. I'm glad that we have Breiden Fehoko. I wish Tyler Shelvin was eligible and 40 pounds lighter. I don't know which one would be easier (laughter), but I think that Tyler is going to lose weight and be a good football player for us next year, and I think Breiden Fehoko is going to be a very good football player.