



21

# ARKANSAS

VS TEXAS A&M



23

SEPTEMBER 24, 2022

AT&T STADIUM

## GAME NOTES

- » Of QB KJ Jefferson's 19 career starts under center, eight have come against top-25 teams in the AP Poll: #1 LSU (2019), #2 Alabama (2021), #2 Georgia (2021), #7 Texas A&M (2021), #15 Texas (2021), #17 Ole Miss (2021), #23 Cincinnati (2022), #23 Texas A&M (2022).
- » Under head coach Sam Pittman, Arkansas has gained 400+ total yards of offense in 19 of 27 games as well as in seven consecutive games dating back to last season
- » QB KJ Jefferson filed his 10th career game with multiple TD passes after throwing for two.
- » WR Jadon Haselwood finished with five catches for 56 yards. Haselwood has caught three or more passes in each of his first four games as a Razorback. He has at least one reception in 16 consecutive games dating back to the start of the 2021 season.
- » WR Ketron Jackson Jr.'s 32-yard touchdown reception in the first quarter was the second scoring grab of his career.
- » WR Warren Thompson tallied a season high 57 receiving yards.
- » QB KJ Jefferson became the first Arkansas QB to pass and run for 100+ yards since Matt Jones did against Ole Miss in 2004.
- » QB KJ Jefferson's 70 rushing yards in the first half are the the most he's run for in a half.
- » QB KJ Jefferson registered his fifth consecutive game with at least one rushing touchdown.
- » QB KJ Jefferson recorded his seventh game with at least a rushing touchdown and passing touchdown.
- » QB KJ Jefferson eclipsed the 100-yard mark on the ground for the second time in his career. Jefferson is the 12th player in Arkansas history to rush for 100+ yards against Texas A&M.
- » LB Bumper Pool is now in sole possession of second on Arkansas' all-time tackles list. Pool finished with a team-leading seven total tackles and now has 385 for his career.
- » Arkansas recorded 3 or more sacks in all four games this season. Eight Razorback defenders have recorded at least one sack this year.

## WEATHER



INDOOR

## GAME INFO

### CAPTAINS

Simeon Blair, KJ Jefferson, Bumper Pool, Dalton Wagner

### COIN TOSS

TAMU won the toss and deferred to the second half.

### UNIFORMS

ARK - White Helmet, White Jersey, White Pants  
TAMU - Maroon Helmet, Maroon Jersey, White Pants

### ATTENDANCE

63,580

## ARK SCORING

**TOUCHDOWN | 1Q | 9:44**

KJ Jefferson pass complete to Ketron Jackson Jr. for 32 yards.

**TOUCHDOWN | 1Q | 5:25**

KJ Jefferson pass complete to Warren Thompson for 56 yards.

**TOUCHDOWN | 4Q | 10:05**

KJ Jefferson rush of 6 yards.

## STARTERS

### ARKANSAS

QB KJ JEFFERSON  
 RB RAHEIM SANDERS  
 WR MATT LANDERS  
 WR JADON HASELWOOD  
 WR WARREN THOMPSON  
 TE TREY KNOX  
 LT LUKE JONES  
 LG BRADY LATHAM  
 C RICKY STROMBERG  
 RG BEAUX LIMMER  
 RT DALTON WAGNER

### TEXAS A&M

DE ZACH WILLIAMS  
 DT ISAIAH NICHOLS  
 DT ERIC GREGORY  
 DE LANDON JACKSON  
 WILL BUMPER POOL  
 MIKE DREW SANDERS  
 CB DWIGHT MCGLOTHERN  
 CB MALIK CHAVIS  
 S SIMEON BLAIR  
 S JAYDEN JOHNSON  
 NB MYLES SLUSHER

QB MAX JOHNSON  
 RB DEVON ACHANE  
 WR AINIAS SMITH  
 WR EVAN STEWART  
 WR MOOSE MUHAMMAD III  
 TE MAX WRIGHT  
 LT TREY ZUHN III  
 LG BRYCE FOSTER  
 C LAYDEN ROBINSON  
 RG AKI OGUNBIYI  
 RT REUBEN FATHEREE II

DL SHEMAR STEWART  
 DL SHEMART TURNER  
 DL FADIL DIGGS  
 DB MYLES JONES  
 LB CHRIS RUSSELL JR.  
 LB EDGERRIN COOPER  
 DB JAYLON JONES  
 DB T. CHAPPELL  
 DB JARDIN GILBERT  
 DB DEMANI RICHARDSON  
 DB ANTONIO JOHNSON



## Arkansas Quotes Coach Sam Pittman



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**COACH SAM PITTMAN:** Well, that was a tough one. Give A&M all the credit in the world. You know, they fought back from 14 down. And, you know, had a couple big plays in there, a big run, and then certainly a big fumble and the recovery.

But I was proud of our kids. I thought we fought back in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. And you, know, we had a chance to win there at the end. Just, unfortunately, we didn't. But give A&M credit. They came in. They were physical. They were well coached. Max Johnson made enough plays. And their offensive line blocked well in the run.

And our team's hurting right now; but, you know, Alabama's going to be a big game whether we won tonight or whether we didn't. It's still going to be a big game. So we've got to get back. I told them how proud I was of them. I thought they played extremely hard. And we got to get back because we have a really good Alabama team coming in next week.

So, with that, I'll answer your questions.

***Q. It looks like you guys were getting ready to go ahead and take a 21-7 lead. What did you see on that play? K.J. [Jefferson] tried to jump from pretty far out. I know you guys still had the lead at halftime. Just how big a play was that in terms of changing the game?***

**COACH SAM PITTMAN:** You know, I mean, it was a huge play, obviously. It went from 21-7 to 14-13. It was first down too. You know, we had a list of things -- no, never mind. It was a huge play in the game. And, unfortunately, it happened to us. But, you know, we can't -- you know, we can't do that on first down, you know. If it was fourth down, that's a different story. Unfortunately, it just got popped out.

***Q. On that play, I know during the week, one of the points of emphasis was ball security after last week. How frustrating was it that that happened considering the emphasis throughout the week?***

**COACH SAM PITTMAN:** Well, I'll say this: If kids did everything you coached them, you'd be 15-0 and undefeated. It's human. They're human. I mean, certainly that was one of our emphasis. We had six of them and -- from the week before. And he wanted to score, and that happened.

***Q. You guys go up 14-0, looking pretty good on offense. And I think there was a six-series stretch where there were five punts and a fumble. What do you think kind of happened to the offense of that quick start?***



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**COACH SAM PITTMAN:** They started tackling just a little bit better. You know, we missed a few passes in that time. We weren't winning first down during that stretch. And I'm -- you know, A&M made some plays that they didn't -- the second touchdown was, I mean, the guy was a busted coverage. You know, the guy was wide open. Offensive line gave him forever to throw the ball. We were rolling pretty good at that point, but I just think we lost first down during those times and made it hard. And we overthrew some guys, dropped a pass here or there, overthrew here and there, and came off of blocks and didn't win the first down of those series.

***Q.** It felt like, you know, there were a couple plays there where you guys got pressure on Max Johnson but he just barely got it off.*

**COACH SAM PITTMAN:** Yeah.

***Q.** How did you feel? Did you think that eventually something was going to happen, you guys were going to make that big play?*

**COACH SAM PITTMAN:** He was getting a release, but they were kind of fluttering. And I thought, man, we'll pick one those off, you know. And they seemed to catch every one of them. One of them was a touchdown down there, a third down play.

But I thought he was very competitive. I thought we put a lot of pressure on him. You know, we still had to continue to improve our tackling because our open-field tackling, they made us look bad at times. But I thought [Max] Johnson did a really good job.

***Q.** Obviously, Cam [Little]'s a really reliable kicker, and he's going to hit that one more often than not. What did you see on that? And did you say something to him after the game, kind of try to keep his spirits up?*

**COACH SAM PITTMAN:** He just pushed it a little bit. Didn't hit it real well, it didn't look to me like, just pushed it a little bit and hit, obviously, the top of the goal posts. After the game, I told him that he's won a lot of games for us and he'll win a lot more.

But, I mean, you know, he's distraught. But he didn't mean to miss it. You know? It just didn't go through. And we had a lot more opportunities than just that, you know. But it came down to that -- you know, that play. And just we were unfortunate. But he'll win a lot of ballgames for us before his career is over, and he already has.



## Arkansas Quotes Coach Sam Pittman



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*Q. In hindsight, it's easy to look back on play calling, but you guys were moving pretty good and then tried to get Malik [Chavis] involved. That didn't turn out too well. And then it looked like [Jadon] Haselwood was going to try to do the double pass. What did you think of those play calls?*

**COACH SAM PITTMAN:** I didn't like the ones when we tried to run stretch and we lost a yard or two. I didn't like the passes that we overthrew. I didn't like those. I didn't like whenever we ran inside zone and we got a yard. I didn't like them either. We got an offensive coordinator, a damn good one. Whatever we decide that we're going to do, we decide as a staff. I wished they would have worked, but they worked in practice. And I'm not questioning his calls.

*Q. Your defense forced four three-and-outs to start the game. What was working there and were there any adjustments made?*

**COACH SAM PITTMAN:** Pressure. Pressure. They couldn't handle 42 (Max Wright), you know, there early in the game. And pressure. We were flying to the ball which meant, if somebody missed a tackle, somebody else tackled him, you know. And we weren't letting him get into open spaces. AJ [Green]'s a really good player. And when he gets in open space, he's hard -- that's why he's returning kick-offs, you know.

So I just, I think our game plan was really good. They adjusted. You know, for the most part, I thought our secondary was better. We've still got to figure out how to play the ball. And we'll get better at that, which I think we did. But we got to continue to prove that in a lot of areas. But that's what I saw.

*Q. That first drive that Dominique Johnson got in, he had three straight runs that were pretty successful, but then it felt like you guys went away from him. What do you think of him, his first game back?*

**COACH SAM PITTMAN:** I thought he played well. I haven't seen really what all he did, five carries for 32 yards. Yeah, I thought he played well. It looked like he was going north and south pretty good, looks to me. I don't know, was I supposed -- we were supposed to run him more? Or I don't know the question.

Yeah, Rocket (Raheim Sanders) is leading in rushing.



## Arkansas Quotes Coach Sam Pittman



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***Q. [Myles] Slusher came back today. Seemed like he made an impact pretty early. What did you think about his return to the field?***

**COACH SAM PITTMAN:** He's a good player. I think he was all over the place, you know, made a lot of tackles. He's a good player now, I mean, a really good player. And we need him to stay healthy.

I thought our defense played a lot better game, you know. It's just, there was some -- they got the momentum. And then we had it back. And then they got the momentum. And then we had it back there at the end. You know, the only question I had there at the end was, you know, I let the time run down to call a time-out.

And there was no question in my mind we were going to make it. And I was just trying to get all the time off. But, in hindsight, if we'd had 2, maybe they'd have had to punt. And maybe we'd have had opportunity. But that one there, now that we didn't make it, I certainly question it.

***Q. You mentioned Alabama. Obviously, that's a big game regardless of what happened tonight. How do you think you guys will bounce back for that?***

**COACH SAM PITTMAN:** I think we'll bounce back. I really do. I love our kids. They're tough and resilient. And they know Alabama's got a really good team. And the place will be sold out and rocking in there next Saturday night. A lot of people spent their hard-earned money to come to watch us play. And we'll be ready to play. They'll be fine. They're hurting right now, but they'll be fine.

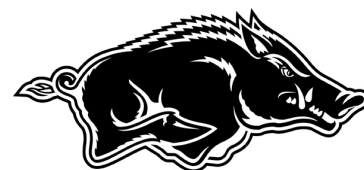
***Q. Max Johnson, he didn't set the world on fire statistically, but he didn't turn the ball over. He scrambled better maybe than what people give him credit for. What did you think of him?***

**COACH SAM PITTMAN:** I thought he did a heck of a job because he had some snaps on the ground and completed passes off them. I mean, he did. He must have the greatest hands ever because there were some things on the ground, he picked them up, threw it, completed it. He's a competitive guy. And I've known him since, you know, he was in high school. But he's a competitive guy. And I thought he competed really hard and, obviously, made enough plays for them to win.





## Arkansas Quotes Student-Athletes



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*Q. I know it's a real tough play, but if you could go over the fumble, the decision to leap and what happened on that and how that impacted the game.*

**QB KJ JEFFERSON:** They just made a great play on the ball. I needed to be more aggressive and go down to the goal line and just finish the play.

*Q. Tough break at the top of the upright. Did you guys say anything to him, and, if so, what would you say to Cam [Little]? What was your feeling? Because he's been so good, so clutch.*

**WR JADON HASELWOOD:** I told him -- well, first of all, he came in with his head down, and I lift his head up. There was a lot of stuff that led up to the game; it wasn't all him. We left plays on the field. I left plays on the field. So it's not his fault. I mean, the game shouldn't been in his hands anyway because we're supposed to handle business.

**QB KJ JEFFERSON:** Just positivity. It happens. That's college football. I mean, things happen. Just being able to bounce back and just have positive energy around him and uplift him.

*Q. I couldn't tell on the -- a couple plays before the field goal, there was the bobbled snap. What happened? Was it a low snap or can you kind of walk us through what happened on that play?*

**QB KJ JEFFERSON:** The snap didn't really reach me. It hit the top of Ricky [Stromberg]'s butt, and then it just kind of bobbled on the way back to where we were. Luckily, we got on it.

*Q. Curious what you saw in terms of adjustments from A&M's past defense. KJ, I think you threw for 171. 88 of those yards came on those two early TDs. What did you guys see in terms of adjustments from them?*

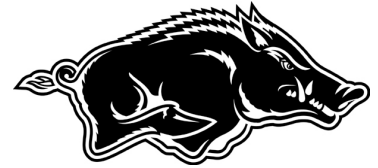
**QB KJ JEFFERSON:** They got great coverage on their staff. So we made adjustments. We knew they were going to make adjustments as well. They came out in a different type of front formation-wise. So we knew we were going to have to run the ball on them. So we just wanted to establish the run game more and then try to open up the passing game. They made great adjustments, and we just got to bounce back.

**WR JADON HASELWOOD:** Yeah, I say they ran a lot more zone after that. After we got the pass game going a little bit, they kind of opened up the run a little bit.



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***Q. KJ, what did Coach [Sam] Pittman say to you guys after the game in the locker room? And then you being a captain, what do you need to do with this team to get ready for next week?***

**QB KJ JEFFERSON:** Just keep encouraging everybody. I mean, it happens. It's college football. I mean, you're not going to be able to win them all. So just make sure the team keeps their eye on the ball, make sure we come together, encourage each other, just keep uplifting each other and make sure the locker room stay positive, nobody's pointing the finger or blaming anyone. So just being able to Stay together, keep the bond that we have, and just bounce back next Monday and get back to work.

***Q. I guess, Alabama, that was going to be a big game regardless of what happened tonight. KJ [Jefferson], maybe to expand on what you said. And Jadon [Haselwood], if you could take it. How do you think you guys will bounce back and how anxious are you to take on Alabama?***

**QB KJ JEFFERSON:** Just being able to fix the small details, learn from our mistakes in this game, and just try to protect the small details and come down and be more aggressive and just handle business.

**WR JADON HASELWOOD:** Yeah, I'd say this probably put a little chip on our shoulder. You know, all we can do is work. It's not going to stop. College football is going to keep going. We got to get better weekly. We can't go down just because we lost. We got to keep rising up.

***Q. For both of you, the offense kind of stalled out after the hot start, but y'all got it going there in the 4th quarter. What was the key to getting the offense going again?***

**WR JADON HASELWOOD:** Just creating explosives, a lot of routine plays. Some we made; some we didn't make. And they all matter. And it's college football. you got to respond. At the end of the day, you can't just lay down. That's not the name of the game.

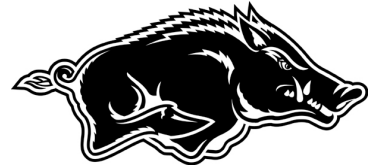
***Q. Obviously, you look back and a play here, a play there, and you guys win this game. How tough is it going to be to put this one behind you with Alabama coming in, you know you got to flush it and get ready for those guys?***

**QB KJ JEFFERSON:** Right now, for me, I'm focusing on Alabama right now. No need to focus on Texas A&M. The game is over. We can't go back and play the last play. We can't go back and wish on which drive or 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter or anything. We're focusing on Alabama right now. Everybody



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turn their focus on Alabama. We nip this in the bud. And we're looking forward. No need looking in the past.

***Q. Jadon [Haselwood], do you mind giving your thoughts on that too?***

**WR JADON HASELWOOD:** What KJ [Jefferson] said. We can't dwell on it. We dwell on it, we're living in the past, and we can't worry about our next opponent. Like I said, we can't go backwards. We got to keep thriving and striving.

***Q. For both of you guys, after that 14-0 start, there was a six-series stretch with punts and the fumble in there too. What kind of prevented the offense from being able to kind of punch through with that score that might have been kind of a knock-out?***

**QB KJ JEFFERSON:** Just slow start on drives. I mean, not getting the first first down. It's like we preach about getting the first first down and get rolling. We wasn't able to tempo. So it kind of put our offense in a blind spot right there. So just being able to just come out and try to get that first first down each and every time we step on the field and finish drives.

***Q. A lot of chances, obviously. Cam [Little]'s been so reliable. How convinced were you guys he was going to hit that? And did you guys say something to him, especially, Bumper [Pool], being a captain, did you say something to him after to kind of lift him up after that?***

**LB BUMPER POOL:** We all committed plays that forced that situation. Cam [Little]'s won a lot of games for us. So just part of the game. I've never seen that kind of bounce. But yeah, we're going to love him up, move on. Cam's a great kid, and he'll bounce back.

**DB SIMEON BLAIR:** Yeah, like Bump (Bumper Pool) said, Cam's won a lot of games for us. And things happen in football; so we're not worried about that. We know he's going to make the next kick. That's all we're really focused about. And, really, the focus shifts to Alabama now.

***Q. Y'all started off the game with four straight three-and-outs. What was the key that hot start? And what was Texas A&M able to do to start moving the ball?***

**DB SIMEON BLAIR:** A&M is a very good team, has a lot of good skill players. Max Johnson had a great game. AJ [Sanders] had a great game. He started to get them rolling a little bit. And the momentum started to shift a little bit in there. But I feel like we were just playing our game,





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focusing on our keys, making sure our eyes were in the right spot. But they have great players on their side too, and they started to make plays well.

**LB BUMPER POOL:** Like Simeon [Blair] said, we had a great week of preparation. Coming out of the gate, we were locked on our keys. And as the game went on, they went to things that worked for them. I thought we did a good job finally correcting some things late in the game. You got to adapt quicker. You got to make the plays. You got to wrap up and tackle. Credit to A&M, they're a great team.

***Q. Max Johnson didn't have awesome numbers, but he didn't turn the ball over. He seemed to scramble pretty good, made some passes you didn't expect. What did you think of his play and his impact on the game?***

**LB BUMPER POOL:** I thought he did enough to win the game. He's a good player. He never panicked. He never -- third down or something, he made a big throw. And they just kind of kept those plays going all game. But credit to him, he did a really good job.

**DB SIMEON BLAIR:** Yeah, like Bumper [Pool] said, he did a great job scrambling, getting outside the pocket. Like [Jaedon] Wilson would have him, then he'll make a circus throw at the last second and complete it. He's definitely a great player. He has some great players around him. And I feel like he just made plays to help them win the game this week.

***Q. Obviously, a really tough loss tonight. You got Alabama coming in this week. You need to flush this pretty fast. How do you guys do that, and how do you think you'll bounce back against Alabama?***

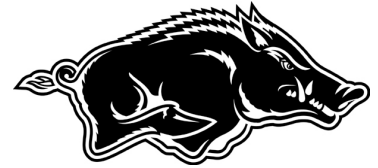
**LB BUMPER POOL:** We're already on Alabama mentally. We'll obviously need to clean up things from the tape. But I thought the team, we fought hard. We needed to make stops; we made stops. We got the offense tracking on the field to give us a shot to win. There's a lot of positives, I think, with the resilience of the team. But just too many errors. And when you play in the SEC, one play, two plays, they're the difference between a win and loss.

**DB SIMEON BLAIR:** Yeah, like Bumper [Pool] said, when you're in these SEC games and conference games, you can't play perfect, but you have to play close to perfect as perfect can get. I feel like we're definitely worried about -- we're not worried about this game anymore. We're going to correct the errors that we had. And our focus is strictly on Alabama right now.



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*Q. Devon Achane, I guess he had 159 yards. What did you think of him? He's obviously a really good player.*

**LB BUMPER POOL:** He's a great player. He's a great center of gravity. Thought he ran hard. They have a lot of talent. And whenever you're in there, you make mistakes, and talent like that can beat you. And they beat us today. And they were well warranted.

**DB SIMEON BLAIR:** Yeah, I feel like he's a great running back. He looks small, but he's actually bigger. He runs behind his pass very good. He's very fast. He has a quick first step. He gets out on you, and then you have to catch him. Guys like that, you got to keep bottled up and don't let them use their speed.

*Q. Heading into this next week, what's high up on the priority list in terms of mistakes, things that you guys want to clean up?*

**LB BUMPER POOL:** Every week, continue to work on, you know, making sure we're not missing tackles, working on our angles. But a lot of that comes with good eyes, making sure we're communicating. It's all tied together. One play can -- you got to flush one play and go on to the next. I thought we did well at times with that; but overall as a defense, we just need to lock in our eyes and our keys and make sure we're all on the ball.

**DB SIMEON BLAIR:** Like Bump (Bumper Pool) said, making sure we tackle better. And also just staying focused enough to be able to play four quarters of good football. Not having a quarter where we slip mentally or a quarter there where we slip mentally, but actually playing four quarters of good football.



## Texas A&M Quotes Coach Jimbo Fisher

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**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** You know, hard-fought game. Proud of our kids for battling. Started off about as slow and as poorly as you could have. Self-inflicted wounds on offense. Had the emotion. And made plays, we're moving the football -- I mean, had plays made, get them called back, just silly penalties. Knowing what we're going to do and got to get that fixed.

Defensively, didn't get stops coming out. They got the running game going, made plays. We busted the coverage. Took a guy out on center field, jumped down on an over route, and they got a post. About everything you could humanly do to get them a jump start. They're up 14-0, but our kids kept our composure.

What I liked about for a young team, could have folded. Like I say, a very, very young football team that kept its poise, kept its composure. Come back and made a heck of a drive coming off the goal line. Got down 14-7. And unfortunately, they made a heck of a drive. We needed to get a stop.

We got them down there, but then they jumped and tried to dive. And we got that fumble and make a heck of a play to get back. Of course, we have to drop the snap, so it can't be 14-14. So it has to be 14-13.

Thought that was going to catch us at the end, but that was one of the most reliable guys on our team. A battle at halftime to get there.

Come out second half. Offense had a great drive, come right down and scored. Defense got a stop. Come back the next drive, had a heck of a drive. Probably had 200 yards of offense on that drive and kept moving back. We had a block in the back on a big run. We had a hold on a run. Takes it down to 9. We end up getting a dadgum field goal out of it and could have gotten a touchdown and got 23.

Then we come back, defense held. Then we get another drive, and we get 8 or 9, and we miss a -- had a read on a first down, read on a throw that we hit. It's another touchdown. We could have hit the flag and scored. But, hey, we've got to get that fixed out.

And then missed half an inch on the third one, a yard and a half. Then they got some momentum, got a drive back. Then we drove down to the 35 again and had a shot, and we ran into the safety on the shot play. I didn't get it there, and then missed a field goal. They come down and missed a field goal, and we had it out.



## Texas A&M Quotes Coach Jimbo Fisher

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It was a heck of a game. They got a good team. We by far, not close to where we need to be. Have to fix the self-inflicted wounds. Got to clean things up, got to get better. But we've beaten two good football teams not playing very well, at the top of our game. But playing well at times and still competing and making plays when we had to. That's very encouraging. Now we just got to get things fixed and grind on it.

We're a work in progress in what we have to do, and we have to keep grinding, but very proud of the guys we have.

***Q. Jimbo, in your opinion, did the -- the fumble return for the touchdown, did that save the game for y'all?***

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** I don't know if it saved it, but it made it a lot easier to win. I think we came back and then played well. We had a good drive on offense. We gave up a drive on defense. We got that play, and it was back. That was a big play in the game.

That's what big games are. Whether it's a pass, whether it's a run, whether it's a fumble, those are the kind of things you got to have. We were making plays that we had to make to win the game, and they made a great one on defense.

***Q. Did you think that last field goal was going to go through?***

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** No. When he kicked it, I thought it was going to be wide right. The angle I had -- I couldn't see. When he kicked it, I thought it was going wide right completely. I really did. Thought ours was going to go through.

[Randy] Bond hit his really good. He was right there. When he kicked it, I thought it looked good from my angle. My angles were bad both sides, weren't they?

***Q. First half you have 51 yards passing. The second half, that first drive, maybe your most efficient drive of the year. How did that set the tone for the game?***



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**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** We hit things. In the first half, we had the penalties. We had a wide-open post route. We just missed. We just didn't make the play on it. We had that one for another 60, 70 yards. We had a rail route. We had a couple things there. We'll get better on it and just keep grinding.

*Q. I was just hoping you could comment on Devon's [Achane] game tonight and the play of the offensive line, especially in run blocking.*

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** We're getting better in the run blocking. We're getting better at reading. Max [Johnson] did a good job of seeing the right plays, checking. A lot of those plays were checked, and he got it there.

Devon is Devon. That's who he is. How did he play? That's Devon. That's all you've got to say.

*Q. You mentioned the penalties early in the game, a lot of those presnap. You had to burn a time-out right after kickoff. Is there a common thread on maybe why it's taken a little time to get those plays.*

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** No. Same play, 15 plays. Knew what we were going to be in, just lined up. Guy not in the urgency to go get set. When you bring a motion, you got to get set. Didn't have it. Didn't get lined up on the right side. Knew exactly how we were going to run it.

Just maturity. Just keep drilling and drilling and relaxing in the game. That's not discipline. As much as anything, it's anxiety and nerves, I mean it, from those young guys. They've got to just relax at the beginning of the game and get their poise and go play. They are wanting to do things so fast, they've just got to let things slow down. Be quick but don't worry. It will happen.

*Q. Any idea of the extent of [Ainias] Smith's injury?*

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** No, I don't.

*Q. What changed in the third quarter? You guys came out and really took over the game. Went down and scored and then got a three-and-out.*





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**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** Then drove again, then drove again. It was this thing called execution. Relaxing, not having the nerves. And the same calls, the same plays. We just executed them. You know what I mean?

I know that sounds crazy. Well, that's what it is. It's relaxing and doing your job. It's that simple. There is no magic formula why you do it why you don't do it. You just got to relax and do it at the beginning and all the way through. It's that simple.

***Q. Mentioned it a little bit earlier in the press conference, but Max [Johnson] specifically. What impresses you about how he's able to lead this offense?***

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** Well, he's getting better and better at it. He's scambly. He's tough. He made some great runs and scrambled. His heart is big. He plays hard, plays tough. And he's still learning it, and there's still a lot of things -- I mean, he can even do better. I'm not trying to criticize him in anyway. There's some throws and some plays we had there. And he knows it And some reads we've got to keep going over and over and over. He'll get used to the guys and the players and those guys in them game.

And those guys around him have to run them just like they are supposed to run them. He did a great job managing the game, the run checks. A lot of those big runs, he checked and got us out of one play and got us into another and what we were trying to do. He just gets better and better. He's a real competitor. He's a very high-quality young man.

***Q. Could you speak to the game Evan Stewart had.***

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** Evan is getting better and better. He's growing as a freshman. Let me see what he had. He had 36. We had a touchdown. There's some other plays in there we tried to get it to him. I think he was sliding in there. Had one he could have got.

But he's just getting better. Evan is going to be a really good player. He's very dynamic guy and can make plays. You saw that one we had called back, he can catch and run with it. He can get deep. He can do a lot of things. He's getting better and better.

***Q. Could you walk through -- before that field-goal decision to either not take a time-out or let the clock go down. Seemed like either way you could make an argument for.***



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**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** I want two time-outs. The time-outs in college football, two time-outs and first downs is an eternity. 1:30, we work on that all the time. We're going to have the ball and we need a field goal, I wanted that 100% a time-out.

If it had been under 1:00 or 1:20 or 1:15, I might have taken it and would have kept it up there. But I did not want to let that -- I wanted that two time-outs. I wanted that time-out. 1:30, that's an eternity in college football.

As a matter of fact, that's one of the exact drills we work , 1:30, two time-outs, got to go get a touchdown. Except we didn't need a touchdown there, we just needed a field goal. We decided that way before that. I was talking that through.

***Q. Coach, can you talk about how much easier it is to work on your game plan and fix things coming off the win and going into Mississippi State.***

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** You must have heard my locker room talk. I'm happy and all that, but I said we got to take a deep second here to reflect. We had a win. We got through things. Now let's take a reflection of why we could have got this thing eased out and played a lot better and had to score a different separation there.

It does -- now, they're going to -- we got to clean these things up. I'll be in a bad mood all week, I promise.

***Q. I'm sure you've seen a lot -- want to go back to the fumble. I'm sure you've seen a lot in your coaching career. But have you seen a fumble recovery like that, where the guy pretty much takes it from another guy to score?***

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** Yes, I have. You see it like that and flips and options. I know that sounds crazy, but I've had those things happen lots of times.

***Q. What did you say to Demani [Richardson] after he got back on the sideline?***

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** Really, the fumble recovery, it came down and it bounced and we got it. The ball went flying back. We got it and pitched it back. But, yeah, I know that sounds crazy, but I'm glad it was on our side.



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***Q.** When you look back at Max Johnson and especially because his dad played in this stadium before and he played for the (Dallas) Cowboys, how important is it -- or how monumental of a moment is this for him to celebrate and be able to pick up a win as well?*

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** It's another great win when you're a quarterback and to be able to lead your team, that's what it's about. No matter where it's at, no matter if it's in a parking lot. When your team wins and you have a big part of it and you made plays that changed the game and did the things you had to do -- He has continued to grow. Love Max and he's going to get better and better.

***Q.** Not to bring up adversity, but back-to-back top 15 wins, do you think maybe losing to a team like Appalachian State puts a little bit more fire underneath your team's butt.*

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** Well, I don't know if it puts any more fire. It wakes you up. I told them, Thank God we had those two teams. Thank God we have Mississippi State next week. It's going to be the same way.

Going over there and playing them, their defense, what they do on defense is a pain in the tail. Offensively, they're a pain in a tail. No-huddle, throwing that ball around 40, 50 times. I think [Will] Rogers threw five or six touchdowns today. They'll be ready to play. They're a tough place to play.

Listen, you jump in this schedule we have in this league, you'll get humble real quick. We have great opponents. You just step up and play.

***Q.** Was just wondering, you mentioned this in your opening statement being down 14 and having a young team that comes out a little bit nervous or whatever. When you look at the way you guys responded to that when it could have gone a different direction, can you --*

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** There's heart and character in these guys and there's want-to and there's competitiveness and there's talent and they can make plays. We just have to learn to be consistent and learn to take a deep breath and let one play come at a time and just do our job and go to the next one and next one, and not get outcome-oriented and not want to do too much too early. You know what I'm saying? And just play the play in front of us.



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When they do their job, their ability comes out and they really play well and you can see what kind of football team they have a can to be. That's just an educational thing we've got to continue to harp on and get better on.

The practice starts fast that we get the execution early in practice and we get execution late in practice. We've got to harp on that. And when they don't, I've got to stop it and say Hey, this is what we're talking about. This is what's happening, this is what's here, and educate these young kids as much as I can.

***Q. Not to be overly philosophical, is this the type of moment or the type of response that a team needs?***

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** Yes, there's no doubt. You can learn some valuable lessons. This week, last week, all the things that happened. There's one three weeks ago, we didn't make those plays. We had plays to make, had a kick to make, could have made it. We could have been sitting here undefeated and be top five in the country and still be the same football team. You know what I'm saying? We learn to gut it out.

Now, I'd rather been that way. But at the same time, from your standpoint, it wouldn't have made us a better football team. We're finding out about ourselves a lot right now and what we're trying to do. These kids have fight and grit.

We've got to eliminate those things in the beginning. That's the challenge they have to have right now.

***Q. Jimbo, can you talk about the emergence of Donovan Green. Three huge catches for him today.***

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** He's just growing and growing, more and more, and you can see him evolving and getting comfortable.

Some of these young freshmen, you want to play them but you've got to make sure you don't ask them to do too much too early. We're trying to feed him in there, and he's getting better and better. That catch he made on third down, the one that got out there, and then the one the first drive, he made a catch and run. You can see what he's capable of.



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We have some other good young tight ends, too, but he's starting to play really well. And Max Wright did a great job.

***Q.** I wanted to ask you, there at the end of the half, you looked like you were contemplating maybe trying a 60-yard field goal. Why did you change your mind?*

**COACH JIMBO FISHER:** Because they didn't -- I noticed they didn't have the return team on, so I didn't mind it. Then with a 60-yarder right there, we have what we call a cover field goal team. In other words, when you kick a long one, knowing that there's a possibility of it being run back, we have a more athletic group of guys that can cover the kick.

And I sat there and said, You know what? We're 14-13. We're lucky to be here. We don't need to do something stupid right here. And the odds of making that kick aren't great. You know what I'm saying? 59 yards. And the odds of maybe them catching one and running it back, change the momentum of the game. Said, you know what? Let's try. We're getting ready to throw a Hail Mary and they blitz us, I said, Let's get out of here. We're lucky to be 14-13 and live to fight another day.

If they hadn't had got their guys on the field when the time-out come, then I would have, because they didn't have anybody back there. I would have kicked it. I knew they were setting up for a return so I didn't want to do it.

When we talk about -- believe it or not, that's something we learned a long time. You think about those things.





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*Q. Max, your dad (Brad Johnson) played near this field at one point in his career. How special is it for you to be able to kind of follow in his footsteps?*

**QB MAX JOHNSON:** Kind of cool, kind of following in his footsteps and learning from him. Getting to see him do those things when I was a little kid. Going to these stadiums and watching him play. It's kind of cool that we ended up playing in the same spot, and we came out with a win.

*Q. Does it give you a little bit more of a boost of confidence knowing that you have a run game that's emerging with a guy like Devon Achane who can move the ball as quickly as possible?*

**QB MAX JOHNSON:** Yeah, we got a bunch of studs. O-line did a great job of blocking the run game. And [Devon] Achane did a great job of finding the running holes.

*Q. Of course, we don't know the status yet of Ainius Smith. But to lose a player like that, how does it affect your offense and what do you expect from these younger guys?*

**QB MAX JOHNSON:** I think all our guys prepare like they're the guy. Ainius [Smith] is a big part of our offense. But I think the young guys stepped in and did a great job as well.

*Q. Max, my question for you is how do you feel your performance has improved from last week against Miami and today against Arkansas?*

**QB MAX JOHNSON:** I just feel more comfortable, I guess. Coach [Jimbo] Fisher did a great job of calling the game. Put me in great spots. The O-line did a great job of giving me time, and our receivers did a good job of creating separation for me.

*Q. Max, first of all, I wanted to ask you, from your perspective, I know there's still a lot of games left, but what did Demani [Richardson's] touchdown do for y'all?*

**QB MAX JOHNSON:** I mean, that was probably the clutchest part of the game. I think they were down on the 1 yard line. And I'm not sure who knocked it out, but it was kind of cool that Reek (Tyreek Chappell) had the ball and gave it back to Demani, which was kind of cool. It was a great play by them and a heads-up play.



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*Q. If you just talk about offensively, how do you feel about the way y'all played? Because I know that -- I wonder if there's the excitement of winning is tempered with some frustration at some plays that were there that --*

**QB MAX JOHNSON:** Yeah, I totally agree. We're doing a good job of sustaining drives, but I think we need to go and get points. I think we got it across the 50 a couple of times where we didn't get any points. That's just our job of finishing.

*Q. Kind of a similar question. I know Coach [Fisher] said he asked y'all to reflect on this game moving forward. What does it feel like y'all should reflect on moving forward from this game?*

**QB MAX JOHNSON:** I mean, we just beat a top-10 team. Our guys were excited. We celebrated the win. But we know there's a lot left out there. We'll come do work this next week.

*Q. Devon, what was it that was opening up for you today or that you were feeling today that kind of sprung you on this kind of game?*

**RB DEVON ACHANE:** Everybody just came to play today, offense and defense. The line was blocking, making the right calls. It was loud in there, but we still was able to communicate with each other and make sure we were all on the same page. Basically us coming together, working as a team.

*Q. Both of you gentlemen now have pretty significant experience in the SEC and in college football. But have you ever played in a game as crazy as this one?*

**RB DEVON ACHANE:** Yeah, I have. What do you mean, like the fans or the game itself?

*Q. Just the fumble return, the crazy doink at the end of the game. It always seems like there's something in this matchup that makes it bizarre.*

**RB DEVON ACHANE:** Yeah, it was a great game. We all had a few mistakes. Like you said, the hit off the field goal and when he fumbled on the 1-yard line. That's like some backyard football-type stuff where someone says give it to me, you give it to them. That was just a great play, just great IQ by the both of them.



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***Q. Devon, that first big run you broke off for 63 yards and y'all's first drive of the second quarter, what did you see and what kind of change there from the first quarter when y'all kind of moved the ball on offense?***

**RB DEVON ACHANE:** The first quarter, we had a lot of self-inflicted wounds, basically. When we was making big plays they were getting called back for penalties and stuff like that. So basically just fixing little things, fix the little errors Basically, we have to move the ball. Every time we got a big play, it was a flag. So you can't have that playing against a great team like they were. So just going back to practice and fixing those things.

***Q. I had a couple quick ones just for each of you. I want to go back to the fumble. You guys were clearly not on the field on that play, but as you watched it unfold, did you realize it was happening? And when did you realize it was happening?***

**QB MAX JOHNSON:** To be honest, I saw the fumble, but I didn't see where he handed it back to him. I kind of paused and we were getting ready to go out on offense. That's where I thought Reek (Tyreek Chappell) got down, and then ended up running down the field and celebrating with Demani [Richardson], which was a heads-up play by him. Kind of cool.

**RB DEVON ACHANE:** I seen it. Basically, when you got the fumble, he was running, I thought he was going to score. I thought he was going to outrun the dude or whatever. But basically, when he was going to get tackled, I seen Demani [Richardson] put his hands up, saying like "Give me the ball" or whatever. I didn't know he was going to give it to them because he was getting tackled.

That's just something that they did. That was a great play by both of them and it just changed the game.

***Q. You guys weren't on the field for this one, too, but what was going through your mind when they were kicking the last field goal and when it hit off the upright?***

**QB MAX JOHNSON:** We always believe in our special teams. They changed the last game as well. Last week, they ended up blocking the field goal. This week, I think they got pressure and he ended up missing the kick. Shout-out to those guys that worked their butts off and shout-out to the coaches.



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*Q. Devon, after the way the game started, you guys were down 14-0 real quick. And then to see that fumble play happen, what did that do for you at the half? Because you could have been dead and gone, but you're back in the game all of a sudden.*

**RB DEVON ACHANE:** It was a big momentum change. For the offense, that was a great play by the defense. I believe in our defense. They believe in us. For them to go in and put up some points on the board, it helped us a lot. Because we was down 14-0. They score, that's 21-0. That put us even more of a hole than we already was. So that was just a great play by them.

*Q. Devon, just before that big play, I'm sure being the kind of player you are for this offense, wanting to make a big play, make your mark on this game, but kind of having to wait for that opportunity, just what's that process like sort of, wanting to be -- I'm going to be the guy to make the big play to boost this team but also being able to pick your spot?*

**RB DEVON ACHANE:** Like Coach [Fisher] say, don't always expect the big play. I don't come into the game saying "Okay, every time I get the ball, I'm making a big play." Basically, I just take what they give me. The big plays will come sooner or later. Like I said, O-line, they made good blocks. When the play was made, when it was needed to be made, or whenever they block well, they make my job easier. So hats off to the O-line.

*Q. Max, two-fold question. On the pass to Evan [Stewart], I guess first, is that sort of part of the play execution to say he's running that corner route, but potentially I might just float it for you and you come back to get it? And then as kind of an aside to that, can you just speak to sort of the trust you're able to build with this guy playing in your first game with him; just sort of obviously came together pretty well.*

**QB MAX JOHNSON:** Are you talking about the touchdown to Evan? They ended up bringing the zero blitz. We were on empty. They had one more than we can handle. The guy had inside leverage on Evan, and it was a fade route. I was just given a chance. My ball was a little short. I definitely should have put a little more on it. But Evan ended up coming back and making a great play.

*Q. I've got questions for both of you. Max and Devon, same question. What's it like to be able to work off of a win over Miami, a win over Arkansas, as you get ready for Mississippi State? And just being able to have that good feeling, but know that there's a lot of work that needs to be done.*



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**QB MAX JOHNSON:** Yeah, there's definitely a lot of work to be done. But we're all super happy that we came out with this win. Two wins over top-15 teams. I think we came together as a team, offense and defense. We weren't separate. We played together as a family.

**RB DEVON ACHANE:** Basically, we played two top-15 teams back-to-back. Appalachian State just showed us that we've got a lot of heart in this team, that we have a great team. We didn't let that loss take us down. We kept building, kept coming together. And just basically making sure that we all on the same page. We came out today and we played a great team. We knew it was going to be a hard-fought game and we came to play.

*Q. Max, last week after the game, you mentioned there were some shot plays that you could have taken but you didn't. Today, there were a few more of those. Was that something we can expect going forward and what was the difference today versus last week?*

**QB MAX JOHNSON:** I think it's just understanding whatever Coach [Jimbo] Fisher wants. We have to execute that at a higher level. He made some great calls and there's some things that we missed that we're definitely going to work on this next week. But we're going to take what the defense gives us. If the shot plays are there, we'll throw them. If they're not, we'll check them down. If we have to run the ball, we will as well.

*Q. Devon, not to bring up the past, I know you guys like moving forward, but knowing where you are now with two top-15 wins, was losing to a team like Appalachian State the wake-up call that maybe this offense and this team needed as a whole?*

**RB DEVON ACHANE:** Definitely. It showed us -- and like I said in the last interview, you have to decide if you want to play football or not. Obviously, you see that. We were down 14-0. We could have lost it. There, we out of this game. Went to the second half 14-13. We just came out second half, knew it was going to be a hard-fought game today. I love this team and we got a lot in us. Like I said, we got to fix the little mistakes and come back next weekend and be better.

*Q. So getting your season high in rushing yards today in your first SEC matchup of the season, how does that kind of affect your mentality going forward into conference play and how do you think that's going to affect your play overall?*





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**RB DEVON ACHANE:** Just keep getting better every week. Like I said, the O-line, they were working every day in practice. You could see, each week we're getting better and better and better. I'm just getting ready for Mississippi State and see what we bring at practice. Practice determines how we play the game.

Last week, we started off great. Thursday, it was a little slow. So that's how we came out in the game. So basically just fixing things in practice. Practice is the hardest thing anyway. You practice hard, it makes the game easy.

*Q. Max, early in the game, I know there was some penalties taken because of seemed like pre-snap confusion, delay of game and motion penalty because of that. Coach [Jimbo Fisher] had to call time-out. Is there a common thread between some of those and getting the play in and getting the snap off that y'all can fix moving forward?*

**QB MAX JOHNSON:** I think we've just got to start faster, honestly. When we come out on the field from a time-out or defense got off the field, I think we need to focus on the details, get lined up quicker. I think I need to do a better job of just getting everyone lined up and getting the play call in and calling the mic out or snapping the ball as well.

*Q. Demani, can you just take us through the whole fumble recovery from your perspective?*

**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** Yeah. So I just started on Arkansas' sideline, and I seen the quarterback (KJ Jefferson) jump up and try to score the ball. And then I seen Chris [Russell], number 24, hit the ball. And then after that, I seen Reek (Tyreek Chappell) caught it. So I was like bet, I'm going to try to go around and see if he can give me the ball. So he gave me the ball, and I just took it from there.

*Q. Did you ask for the ball from him, or did you just take it?*

**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** I was like, give me the ball, give me the ball, give me the ball. And if he didn't, I was going to take it anyways (laughter).

*Q. Devon [Achane] said it was like a backyard play. Have you ever had a play like that before?*

**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** No, not really. I seen them, but not really something I did in person. Sometimes you have to play backyard football and make plays and win games.



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*Q. And then obviously, Arkansas was knocking on the door, about to go back up two touchdowns. What did that do for you guys to kind of kick-start that comeback?*

**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** I feel like we needed to -- like it was a big stop. I kept saying, we needed that play. We needed that fumble. We needed that momentum swing. So I feel like that was one of the biggest plays of the game.

*Q. Demani, there was -- let's see, a fumble recovery. It's a pitch off. There's the hits on top of the uprights, a bunch of other plays, a bunch of fumbles. You ever played in a backyard football game like this at the college level?*

**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** No. Some games just happen like this. You've got to play, fight hard and stuff just happens in a football game. That's why I love college football and being a part of it.

*Q. And when you look at the offense side, you guys started off strong to be able to get those two big turnovers to get the offense clicking. How important is it for when they're finally clicking and maybe you guys need a breather that you guys are playing balanced, competitive football?*

**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** It's very important. We're working for them, they're letting us rest so we can get back and play our hardest. Feeding off the momentum helps us play even harder, play better. Just allows us to play faster and execute better.

*Q. And then you are one of two seniors that elected to come back last year, the other being Ainius Smith. You were in the same recruiting class. You guys have had a very close relationship. To see a guy like that go down in the way that he did, and now to not know his stats moving forward, how is that for you as a teammate but also as somebody who is a competitor for this team?*

**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** I feel for Ainius [Smith]. He's been working really hard. Leader of this team. He's going to keep leading, though. I have faith in my other backups and I just know they'll do the job and get the job done.

*Q. Demani, a little bit different circumstances, I know, but that fumble recovery touchdown was a little bit retribution from LSU last year when you didn't get a chance to run the ball back?*



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**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** Yeah, yeah, for sure.

**QB MAX JOHNSON:** And then Antonio, a team like this that's physical and runs the ball and is hyped like that, how important was it for you to match that physicality today?

**DB ANTONIO JOHNSON:** It was very important. We knew coming into this game that we was going to have to stop the run. I feel like we did a better job than the previous weeks just stopping the run and executing the plays. They went up early, and we just had to lock in as a unit on both -- like all units on the defensive end, we just came out the second half, we played good ball.

*Q. Demani, do you feel like y'all are lucky tonight?*

**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** Definitely not. I feel like we had to gut that win out. I feel like offense, defense, all sides of the ball had to gut that win out. I feel like nothing that we did was lucky today. I feel like we fought hard. We executed. They made plays, we made plays. But I just feel like we gutted that win out and I feel like we won that game.

*Q. And how good are you y'all?*

**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** We got -- we can -- we was good. We have our ceiling. We haven't reached our ceiling. We can be really good. We just have to keep going out there, keep working, keep practicing and getting better. But we have a lot of ways to go.

*Q. Demani, not to belabor the fumble recovery, but is that something y'all sort of practice or are coached to do? If you have that much space and you're way outnumbering them? I have seen a few teams do that here and there at different levels. I'm just curious.*

**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** Are you talking about the fumble?

*Q. The handoff from Tyreek [Chappell].*

**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** We definitely don't practice that.

**DB ANTONIO JOHNSON:** He's just being a ball player.



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*Q. Antonio, what's it like going through a game like that where it seems like the momentum swings are just so drastic where they're rolling on offense, then y'all have a stretch where it feels like y'all can't do anything wrong. But then it could just switch so quickly back and forth. Just what's the mental, I guess, side of that like?*

**DB ANTONIO JOHNSON:** Honestly, when we get in those hard times when we can't get a stop or the offense is going really well, we just look at each other. We always tell each other, we got each other's back. We just got to do our job. And that's what I feel like we do a good job, even when they get in the red zone, we not going to let them get into the end zone. But tonight, they were able to get into the end zone. But we just rallied back. We knew offense was going to take care of us. And we tried to just give them as much time as they needed to get to go down and score points.

*Q. I want to ask Demani [Richardson] basically the same question afterwards. But what adjustments did you guys make after they went up 14-0, to kind of keep them in check so the offense could get out there and do some things. Then your defense could return a fumble for a touchdown. But what adjustments did you guys make?*

**DB ANTONIO JOHNSON:** Honestly, we didn't really make any adjustments. We just had to go back -- we had a lot of self-inflicted wounds, honestly. So I think the tempo got the best of us early, but we was able to slow them down, get them behind the chains and just control the game. Honestly, there was nothing they could do with it. But once they got going and the tempo picking up, that's where I feel like we had the most problem.

**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** Yeah, like A.J. (Antonio Johnson) said, we just got to execute better, play harder and just be more physical. We didn't make any big adjustments. You have to play harder, execute better and stop having inflicted wounds.

*Q. Antonio, you're on the field during the fumble. Can you just kind of give your perspective on that play?*

**DB ANTONIO JOHNSON:** I didn't know what was going on. I saw the tackle and then I heard the crowd going crazy, so I knew it was either one of two things. Either they scored or something crazy happened, and I looked up and I seen Reek (Tyreek) Chappell running and I'm like oh, we got the ball. And then I seen him get tackled -- well, he almost got tackled. But then out of nowhere, Demani [Richardson] took off running. I'm like this dude here is crazy. I'm like, I love



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him. He's a ballplayer. He just makes plays. I don't know, I don't think I would have thought about doing that.

If you go watch -- we were just laughing about it. If you look at the play, he was right in front of him and went back to get the ball. I love you. That's all I can say. He a ballplayer. Just one of those moments where is it's like, we're going to always remember that moment as a team for years to come. You just got to cherish those moments, honestly.

***Q. Hey, y'all, this question is for both of y'all. What lessons do you think that this game could teach the entire defense as a unit that you guys can take forward into conference play?***

**DB DEMANI RICHARDSON:** I would say, we just have to execute better, stop allowing self-inflicted wounds. We need to tackle better. Like I said, execute. We need to play harder. We just have a lot of big lessons we need to learn. But it just comes with practicing and getting better. But I just feel like we need to stop just allowing the little stuff to hurt us and just execute and tackle and just do all the little things better.

**DB ANTONIO JOHNSON:** Yeah, honestly, what he said, we just can't come out slow. Last year we came out slow as well. But this year, we were able to pull it off.

Just as a unit, we know we have to hold it down. Offense is going to put up points, but defense wins championships. So as long as the other team don't score, we win.

So I feel like just making sure we don't come out slow and giving the other team momentum and letting the offense do their thing. That would be the big part.

And also, we have a lot of young guys playing, so just teaching them how to take care of their bodies during this SEC schedule. So that's another thing. I feel like they feel their body is a little beat up and all that because we're playing SEC ball now. Besides that, everything Demani [Richardson] said.