

2005 ACC FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP
ALLTEL STADIUM
Jacksonville, Fl

December 3, 2005
Post-game Interviews

FLORIDA STATE SEMINOLES

THE MODERATOR: Just start with some opening comments.

BOBBY BOWDEN: Well, the thing that surprised me is the way we won. No. 1, you wondered if you even had a chance to win. We haven't been that heavy of an underdog in years. But, anyway, we came back. That gum defense just played great. I didn't think we could stop the run like we did.

We are not as physical, but we did talk all week about being quicker. We felt we might be quicker than him. We felt like Miami was quicker. And if we can get to them before they get to us, our kids must have done that.

The key was the third quarter because that's when, that's Virginia Tech's quarter. That's when they beat people, the third quarter. I think the last game with North Carolina they were ahead 6 to 3 at the half and then just really got on the third quarter. We had to win the third quarter. We did. I should have told them the fourth also. But the third did it. And then time ran out. So that's all I got.

THE MODERATOR: Can you tell us something about this gentlemen on either side of you.

BOBBY BOWDEN: Of course, Willie returned the punt and really set the tone for the game. And then this man, played a real big part in shutting down that running game which to me was very difficult. I thought their quarterback was as good as advertised. He was able to make plays, escaping. Our kids were doing a good job getting after him, but he would still escape enough to make great plays. But I think, the ability to shutdown the run, which you all did. And then your ability to run with a punt was the key to the game.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. With everything this team has been through the last month, how meaningful was is this win, is it one of your most memorable in some ways because of the circumstances?

BOBBY BOWDEN: Yes, that's very well put, because of the circumstances. It makes it more meaningful. I had told, who was I talking to? I was talking to somebody today, I said our team is in a tailspin. We are in a tailspin. We haven't been in one of these in a long time. I said we will pull out of it, but I don't know when. I didn't expect this game. But you say we pulled out of it. Now can we maintain it. We went into

-- when we lost our last 3 ball games I had a hard time figuring out why. Then you can break it down on film, you can see why.

Q. Have you had that film in a long time, struggling to figure out why?

BOBBY BOWDEN: Sometimes when things get to going real bad you are looking for the answer, looking for the answer, you know. It's usually a block. It's usually blocking and tackling to be honest with you. And then injuries, we got 2 penalties tonight with 12 men on the field. We couldn't figure out who was supposed to be in the game. You get a guy hurt, here is a walk-on, hey son, he's supposed to be in there if he gets hurt, or we have two of them that think about it. It caught us tonight, it hurt. It gave them first down two times. I thought our coaches did an excellent job of piecing hat team together. Mark McHale did a great job of piecing our offensive line together.

Q. Coach, how were you and the staff been able to put this team back together in light of what happened last Saturday in Gainesville, and then come out here tonight and take care of business?

BOBBY BOWDEN: Well, a lot of people when they see a game like that at Gainesville, alumnae, boosters and parents and everybody, they say, they think well this is the end of the world. Florida State, they'll never win another ball game. It is just awful.

I've been in this thing long enough to know you get knocked down but you ain't going to stay down. We'll come back. We'll come back. I didn't expect it to be this week.

But anyway, the main thing is the boys never gave up. They never quit. You all asked me last week at practice how were the boys doing? The boys were not the problem. They were very enthusiastic this week; worked very hard and it paid dividends tonight.

Q. Coach, Jacksonville has been pretty good to you the last couple of years with the Gator Bowl and the first ACC Championship. Does it feel like you have a home field advantage when you are coming here, how do you feel about the ACC Championship being here the next few years?

BOBBY BOWDEN: We do feel good about playing in Jacksonville because we have had so much success here. The last time we got beat here there was a quarterback named Brett Favre. At the time we didn't know how to pronounce it or spell it. He beat us out here. I think that's the last time we lost over here in Jacksonville, Florida, so we are very happy about coming to Jacksonville.

Q. Bobby, can you take a quick look down the road at a possible match-up with Joe Paterno?

BOBBY BOWDEN: That old man.

(Laughter). Is that likely to happen? I don't even know yet.

Q. Likely?

BOBBY BOWDEN: Well, dag gammit, about my luck. Well, Joe Paterno, to me, is maybe the greatest coach ever in my opinion. I mean that truly, and I said that 10 years ago. Joe, at one place, 50-something years and won as many games as he has won, and has done it cleanly and tried to do the right thing, that he asks, about his he education and everything. So if we play them, it will be a great match-up, I guess, two old men out there trying to see whose got any life left in them.

(Laughter).

Q. Coach, is the good thing about the win you don't have to here the criticism now for a month?

BOBBY BOWDEN: Oh, we will here some more. Yes, that is good, it helps quiet down some of these faint hearted that think you're going to -- are dead. But that's football.

Q. Coach, did you like what you saw from the offense tonight, Weatherford didn't make too many mistakes, did you like where it was going?

BOBBY BOWDEN: Yes, we surprised me in our ability to protect the passer. We simply couldn't do that against Florida the first half at all. But in the fourth quarter when we could protect him we started moving right up and down the field. That was encouraging. I didn't know if we could protect him against this defense. This is the No. 1 defensive team in the nation. No. 1 against scoring. So that's got to help our confidence for this to happen because lately it hadn't been happening.

- - -