

South Carolina Football Coach Will Muschamp

Opening Statement

I thought it was a great day, starting with the alumni game. Those guys had a fantastic time, and it was great for our crowd. We had a wonderful crowd. I was excited about that, and we came out of this thing pretty much injury free. I was really pleased with our effort, and it's a critical time now until August 1. By NCAA rules, we can't be on the field with them at all. Our guys need to take ownership, and they can make a tremendous amount of improvement offensively and defensively during this time. I think we have the leadership and the maturity to handle that. A lot of competition certainly helps our situation.

On if South Carolina held anything back during the Spring Game

We tried to stay away from some of the gap schemes in the run game because that's when you get guys tangled up. We threw our normal route concepts, and we didn't put anything different on tape that we didn't do at Florida or Auburn on defense or what we didn't do at Florida with (Kurt) Roper on offense. Those are things that we do. For the most part, there wasn't a whole lot of scaling back. We did good on good, and that's the only way to get better. You get a false opinion of yourselves when you go ones vs. twos, threes and fours. I don't understand the rationale behind that.

On his thoughts on the play of freshman quarterback Brandon McIlwain

He had a lot of command and a lot of maturity. Obviously, he's a very good athlete, but he throws the ball extremely well. He made a couple really nice throws today. His decision-making was really good, and he's continued to improve from practice one until now. He'll make some tremendous strides in the offseason.

On his overall thoughts on the play of the quarterbacks on Saturday

I thought Connor (Mitch) made some really nice third-down throws. The decision-making as to where to take the ball was really good. Michael (Scarnecchia) had a great third-quarter drive. We will continue to progress, and competition is our best friend as coaches. You throw Lorenzo (Nunez) and Perry (Orth) into that talk as well as we move forward. Perry will be full-speed June 1, and that's something that excites me moving forward. That's going to help the football team get better.

On why he decided to be on the field behind the quarterbacks during the game

It's good for the gameday operation. I like to see how the quarterbacks handle things. I want to see the communication upfront on offense and to see where defensive players' eyes are. That's been an issue for us this spring, but I want to know what they're seeing and also the body language and how guys are responding to adversity.

On his biggest concerns at the conclusion of the spring

Every team in the country has concerns. Ours are that we need to find a quarterback. We have viable options in play, so I think that position will take care of itself. We have enough playmakers on offense. Deebo Samuel is someone that has distanced himself, and Bryan Edwards has shown some playmaking ability down the field. We need to have more playmakers, we don't have too much depth. On defense, the secondary is a concern just for coverage ability down the field. We need to create more depth in the secondary, and those are the main concerns.

On his assessment of South Carolina's running game today

I thought we got good movement upfront and that the backs ran well and found daylight. We got into some good tempo situations and we ran the ball well. We will run the ball. We've kept a lot of things the same on our offensive line, which is important.

On what he was most pleased with during the spring

From a young player's standpoint, it's always difficult to come in midyear, but in my opinion it's the best thing for the student-athlete. Bryan Edwards really took some steps forward and Keir Thomas has done some nice things. Brandon McIlwain has obviously done well, and those three young players have really done a nice job. Up front, we really played blocks much better from practice one to now. I feel really good about our linebacker situation, but we need to continue to develop depth there.

On how many tailbacks he'd like to have on the roster

It's hard to have five or six guys. David (Williams) and A.J. (Turner) complement each other really well, because they have a little bit of different styles.

On the importance of the Alumni Game

It's really important. Anyone that has been part of an organization wants to feel welcome when they come back. It creates networking for our present players. I want those guys involved as much as possible.

On Jamari Smith's performance today given his switch in positions

He made a smooth transition, and he's a very intelligent man. He's a guy that can get yards after the catch, and he's someone who can do nice things for you in space.

On his thoughts on how his defensive backs are coming along

I think we've made some strides. We've thrown a lot at them, and they've done a good job from a communications standpoint. I thought we were much better on the perimeter today than we were last Saturday.

On incorporating the students in the Spring Game

Our student body is fantastic. I really enjoyed getting on campus on Monday. Being a college coach keeps you young being a part of that vibrant atmosphere. I think it's really important to embrace that.

Javon Charleston, R-Freshman Wide Receiver

On offensive progression and goals for the fall

I think on offense, specifically wide receivers, we worked on tempo. In the beginning of the spring we had a lot of mistakes, but towards the end we picked up the tempo well. Guys were catching the ball well, and quarterbacks were going along with their reads. We just have to continue to get better individually and when we come together if everyone has done their assignments we will be good as a team.

On Coach Muschamp's use of term 'command' in reference to Brandon McIlwain

You can tell it's a great word to use from him, because one thing I notice from him is coming from baseball practice to football practice, he is very focused on what he is doing and where he is at. When he gets on the football field he knows what he expects from guys and he makes sure he does his part as a quarterback to make his reads and he is quick in his decision-making. We have trust in him that 'ok all I have to do is do my assignment, get my route right and he will get the ball to us'. As far as command, he is a great leader and overall

quarterback.

On depth of key positions such as wide receiver

I think it is just a 'next man up' mentality. A lot of people have transferred, and while they are worried about getting on the field, we are worried about trying to improve as a unit and as individuals. I see people going down as my chance to step up. We are in the SEC for a reason; we all need to be playing at a high level, every day.

On Jamari Smith in the slot position

He is a great athlete; that is why Coach Muschamp moves him around all the time. He has been taking it really well. He didn't fuss or complain; he just got into the slot position and is doing his best to master it and make plays.

Deebo Samuel, Sophomore Wide Receiver

On the offensive progression and goals for fall

In receiving we improved on catching balls and running better routes, mostly, getting defensive back's hands off me while I'm running routes. Coming in to spring practice, day one you could tell we were still out there learning, in a couple weeks we've gotten better.

On depth of key positions such as wide receiver

We have had a couple guys go down as receivers. In the fall we will have more receivers coming in; they will help us as well.

On Jamari Smith in the slot position

Jamari came from DB to running back to receiver. You can tell he is an athlete with a ball in his hand. He is just a perfect athlete, so he will help us out anywhere.

Chris Moody, Senior Safety

On the secondary's performance

I think we did pretty well. The second scrimmage, they beat our butt pretty good. We just have to be consistent and find a couple guys that can play and keep our spirits up. It's going to take a long time, but we have time.

On Coach Muschamp's criticism of the secondary

Anytime anybody says anything about the secondary, you take it personally. We just have to go out every day, get better and compete hard, because we know they're going to come for us.

T.J. Holloman, Senior Linebacker

On the play of the linebackers

We just have to bring that experience that we all have out there every day and try to encourage the guys when we get down or when somebody's not picking it up. We just have to bring that leadership into it and just say 'Hey, this is our last go-around, you need to do it for us and we're going to give you all we have'.

On the defense's progress

We all came out and we were all gassed getting adjusted to the tempo, but the D-line made great strides. They got better every day. Nobody took any steps backwards, and that was our goal. If we just continue to move forward, get better and buy into the scheme and everything that the coaches instill into us, we should be a good defense.

On the presence of alumni at the Spring Game

It just shows that coach Muschamp is welcoming everyone in, trying to get everyone to buy back into the program and bringing the older alumni in just shows how this program is about to turn around. We have everyone around us, all the support, now it's on us to come out and do our jobs.