

SOUTH CAROLINA (2-2, 0-2) vs. KENTUCKY (4-0, 2-0)
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2021 | WILLIAMS-BRICE STADIUM |
COLUMBIA, S.C.

>>> SOUTH CAROLINA HEAD COACH SHANE BEAMER

Opening Statement

“Give Coach Stoops and Kentucky credit, that was an SEC fist fight right there. I knew it’d be a four-quarter game and that’s exactly what it was. They made more plays down the stretch than us so give them credit. Certainly disappointed from our standpoint, had plenty of opportunities, got to be a whole lot better on third down...and to go three of 12 on third down and only run 51 total plays on offense, it’s hard to win football games. Saw some good things that we did, a lot to build upon, again, wasn’t good enough tonight. I want to thank our fans - we asked for a rocking atmosphere and it was. From Gamecock Walk and throughout the game, we fed off your energy and we appreciate you and we got to play and coach better for you next week and that’s what our plan is right now.”

Quote 1 on the frustration with zero points earned off of turnovers

“Very. When you win the turnover margin, which I guess we’ve done now two games in a row with Georgia and Kentucky and we’ve lost both of them, that is disappointing for sure. And when our defense is playing like they’re playing and getting turnovers for you and making big stops, and not just getting turnovers but getting turnovers and getting us great field position, you know, we have to capitalize. Jalen Foster got the interception down there when they were going in to score on the one-yard line and that was good. We ended up punting, but we talk about when we’re backed up like that to be able to flip the field position. I felt good about where we were at half time and coming back out there into the second half but it wasn’t good enough in the end.”

Quote 2 on Luke Settling in and the next progression for him

“I thought he did a good job. He was poised and was able to communicate between series well and with him I wouldn’t just say, yeah, the rust, but I’m not making excuses for Luke - but let’s not act like Luke’s a four-year starter either. I think he’s started his third career game ever as a college quarterback tonight, so yes, I know he started some games down the stretch, but it’s his second year as a college football player and it’s his first start of the season and his third start ever as a Gamecock. Does he need to play better? Yes. But Luke gave us a chance to win tonight - 17 to 25 on 158 yards and ran the ball enough to keep teams on us and he has to continue to get healthy. He’s got to get more and more comfortable and knock that rust off and then he’s just got to continue to grow and mature as a quarterback which he will.”

Quote 3 on the decision to kick deep late in the game

“We have clock charts on the sideline based on the time remaining in the game and the timeouts that you have, or how many timeouts you have left, and whether if you kick it deep you’ll be able to get the ball back and if so with how much time. The onside kick is, you know, there’s not great odds of recovering the onside kick. I mean, not to say that we wouldn’t have, but the way our defense was playing - I mean our defense played their rear ends off tonight and the way they were playing tonight I had confidence in being able to, you know, kick the ball deep and use our two timeouts and get the ball back hopefully with field position and some time remaining.”

Quote 4 on going for two fourth downs back-to-back

“The first one - just trying to be aggressive. You know hindsight being 20-20, kick the field goal there and you cut it to three - the way your defense is playing and you have momentum as the drive is going on. I felt, you know, good if we got it to fourth and I think that was 4th and 5 if I’m not mistaken if we got it to fourth and five or less. Feeling

good about our chances of converting...we had the look that we wanted. We felt good about the play we had called, and we have to execute. On the second one, the way our defense is playing and the way they kept bailing us out - you know I never flinched thinking about our defense."

Closing Statement

"There was a lot of ugliness tonight, I'll be the first to admit that, but the way our guys just kept competing and fighting and battling to the end, that's something. I'm very proud of our players effort tonight and I hope our fans recognize that, how hard they played and how much they just battled. And now we've got to continue to help them as coaches and get this offense better quickly and continue to help get better on defense...We've got to continue to clean that up and just get better as a football team. Got a good shot against a good Troy team coming in here next week and got to get better in a hurry."

>>> SOUTH CAROLINA PLAYER QUOTES

Player 1 • Pos. • Class Jaylan Foster DB Redshirt Senior

On ... What's the feeling for the defense after the first drive, then settling in?

"Focused on the small details after the first drive."

What's allowing you to stay in tight games?

"Coaches are putting together good game plans."

What's been the key to your success so far?

"Coaches' game plan and following the keys Coach Gray gives the db's."

What were the areas the defense tightened up?

"The run fits were a struggle but the defense tightened up."

Player 2 • Pos. • Class Jalen Brooks WR Senior

On ... What was the biggest issue for the offense?

"We just have to trust and execute the plan."

What did you see from Luke in the second half?

"What he's been doing in practice translating to games."

What did you see on your touchdown play?

"Saw the DB bite on the run fake, Luke rolled out and I reacted."

On the fourth-down play what was the message from Luke?

"I have to make that play. Luke told me he knows I'll make the next one."

Player 3 • Pos. • Class Brad Johnson LB Redshirt Senior

On ... What was the message from the coaching staff after the first drive?

“Message from the staff was to put the ball down and play the next play. Had a lot of ball left to play.”

What do you think is the cause of the defense forcing so many turnovers?

“The mentality that coach White is instilling in us and the morals he’s trying to implement.”

What’s your role over the course of the next day or two?

“Go in review the film, make corrections, and move forward, get ready for Troy next week. Encourage guys on both sides of the ball.”

How challenging is it with the linebacker depth since the injuries?

“Definitely missing Sherrod Greene, I feel like the guys in are group stepped up and they understood there were shoes to be filled.”

Player 4 • Pos. • Class Luke Doty QB Sophomore

On ... It seemed like you got in a rhythm as the game went on, can you elaborate a little on that?

“We got into a rhythm as the game went on, were able to hit a few big plays, push the ball down the field a little bit, really proud of the ways are guys fought.”

What were you seeing on the double screen play?

“We had worked the play all week going back to Kevin, it’s something we’ll have to look at in film.”

What’d you see on the fourth down attempts?

“Credit to Kentucky’s defense. It was about finding windows and I didn’t hit them. Those are on me, to make sure we convert them.”

Mindset of the guys taking the field given good field position?

“Are mindset out there every time we take the field is to score. It’s on the offense as a whole, we’re going to come back tomorrow and make the needed corrections.”

What’d you see from Kentucky that made the running game difficult?

“They made it tough on us, but we’re going to come back tomorrow and get it figured out.”

What were you seeing on the middle of the field dig routes?

“They were playing deeper coverage, so I was just looking for windows.”

As you move into next week what’s the next step for the offense?

“Getting in a rhythm early, and starting fast in the first half. It’s be a big point of emphasis to start fast and move the ball down the field.”

What was your thoughts on Kentucky’s defense?

“They were tough, forced a lot of pressure, but proud of how we fought.”

Got your first start of the season tonight, how’d you feel?

“Good to be back in front of the home fans, feeding of the crowd energy it was good to be back home, and I’m excited to be able to do it again next week.”

>>> KENTUCKY HEAD COACH MARK STOOPS

On picking up a conference win

Quote: "Anytime you win an SEC game on the road it's a huge credit to our coaches and players"

On the performance of the offense

Quote: "Offensively it was tough sledding, but we were good"

On the team play

Quote: "Love the way our team fought."

On the defensive mentality after two fourth-down stops

Quote... "They were really excited to make those thoughts, they didn't put their head down. They buckled down and fought"

On the turnovers on the night...

Quote: "We got to get it corrected, there's no excuses. We are going to get better. We have to create more turnovers, and we've put an emphasis on this."

On the performance of Matt Ruffalo

Quote: "Every kick was critically important and he did a fantastic job."

On winning on the road in the SEC

Quote "Great credit to our coaches and our team, once again did not make it easy...[We] were dialed in all game."

On the turnovers

Quote "Turnovers are hurting us. Got to give credit to our defense stepping up time and time again. That and 4th down stops. We got to do better."

On Chris Rodriguez's fumbling

Quote "I can't make an excuse for him. It's not acceptable. We rely on him too much. I count on him and once again he iced the game by getting [important] yards [at the end of the game]...We will get it corrected"

On the 4th down stops after turnovers

Quote "Says a lot about the defense...They didn't put their head down and mope...They buckled down and made stops...It says a lot. They are getting in better shape as [the season] goes on...Overall great job."

>>> KENTUCKY PLAYER QUOTES

Will Levis • Quarterback • Junior

On: Turnovers

Quote: "We are 4-0 and we probably have the most turnovers in the country. We need to work on it. If and when we get it fixed, we are going to start playing a lot better ball games."

On ... Running the Ball

Quote: "We knew it apart of the game plan. We wanted to make sure I was making the right reads and getting as many yards."

On... USC environment – younger guys

Quote: "it was great I loved it. It fed us and gave us energy. Thanks to South Carolina and the team we played."

On ... Final 2 drives

Quote “It’s awesome when you can rely on your run game and your big guys can push and get yards for the running backs. We didn’t need to force any passes. I’m proud of our offensive line. We showed how good we are up front.

Deandre Square • Inside Linebacker • Senior

On ... the two fourth-down stops

Quote: “We get to go out there and show our talents and we get excited to do what we do.”

On ... Turnovers

Quote: “We need to get one, attack the ball in the air and strip the ball. Turnovers come with hard work and a little bit of luck.”

On the Secondary play

Quote: “I am proud of the way and I know he will keep it up.”

On how the young guys played in a road environment...

“They handled it pretty well. We try to have the sounds in practice. I feel like everybody was ready for the moment.”

On stops after turnovers

Quote “We always have the mentality that [sudden changes] in games are good. Turnovers aren’t good but the opportunity to go out there and do what we do is good.”

On the next stretch of games

Quote “We have to worry about ourselves. We got to prove to each other as a team that we can go out there and compete... take [every game] one by one”