

SOUTH CAROLINA (2-2, 1-1) vs. MISSISSIPPI STATE (2-2, 0-2)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2022 • WILLIAMS-BRICE STADIUM | COLUMBIA, S.C.

POSTGAME QUOTES

>>> SOUTH CAROLINA HEAD COACH SHANE BEAMER

On Mario Anderson establishing himself as top running back

"We felt like going into [this game] that we knew Mario was gonna play no matter who went out there first. [Dakereon Joyner] did some decent things tonight. I know nobody's more upset about that fumble than he is, but, you know, DK does some good things. In the running game, certainly it takes all 11; so, maybe some runs that DK had that weren't blocked well and things like that. He's got to continue to get better. Mario's got to continue to get better. We just gave Mario a game ball in there for the way that he ran the football, so we're proud of him. And like all of our running backs as well. We feel like we got four really good ones in Mario, DK, Juju [McDowell] and Djay [Braswell]. All those guys gotta keep coming along. But, certainly Mario showed what he can do tonight."

On offensive confidence after play of offensive line and establishing the run game tonight

"It was good to see our offensive line do that because that's a good defense. The two linebackers [Nathaniel Watson] and [Jett Johnson] are arguably the best linebacker tandem in this conference and just make plays all over the field. And the way [Mississippi State] plays defense, very few teams are able to run the ball against these guys consistently. So, really proud of our guys for doing a good job of running the football. We have to continue to get better, but certainly when you're able to run the ball like we were able to tonight it opens up things in the passing game and it eats up clock. We're thin on defense. We've got some young guys out there playing and we need to be able to help them. I think in the third quarter, we played, like, five plays offensively in the third quarter if I'm not mistaken. We scored on the first play, and then we had not much after that and some stuff. But, to be able to help our defense out by running the ball is key."

On impression of defensive line, especially late in the game

"We gave up way too many passing yards without a doubt, but did a better job I guess with controlling [Lideatrick Griffin] in the second half. He only had 50 yards it looks like after he had 200 in the first half. But, our defensive line was a big part of that without a doubt. We can't call pressure every single time, call pressures to get pressure on the quarterback. We've got to be able to rush for and get pressure on the quarterback and help our defensive backs out too. When we do that, we got to win; and we did a better job of winning those one-on-one battles in the second half, I felt like."

On Xavier Legette consistently making big plays

"He works that way in practice and it shows on Saturday nights. He's a fantastic player. What a way to start the second half, throwing that touchdown pass. Proud of him the way that he continues to work, and, like I said last week, we've got to continue to bring some of these other receivers along. Trey Knox did a nice job tonight – four catches that was big. All those other receivers, while Juice [Wells] is out it's not just Legette that we can count on. These other guys have to continue to make strides."

On Spencer Rattler's ability to scramble, run the football

"I think he's doing a really good job of just keeping his eyes downfield. It starts with the offensive line where they're able to create a pocket where he feels comfortable stepping up and keeping his eyes downfield and not feeling the rush and things like that. So credit the offensive line and then Spencer doing a great job keeping his eyes downfield when it's not there. He's got a just a knack for being able to run the ball and that's a weapon for us, and getting the run game going certainly helps the explosiveness that we have in the passing game. How well he's playing certainly helps. If teams want to play coverage all the time, and we're able to protect a quarterback that opens up lanes for him to run the ball as well."

On deciding to focus on the running game tonight given Mississippi State's defense (8:46)

"We knew that we were going to have a chance to make some plays in the passing game with without a doubt. But we also knew that we needed to get the run game going this week, which is easier said than done against their defense because of the style they play. So we were very narrow in what we did from a run game standpoint this week. When you play them, it's just a blitz of on every play. They bring in linebackers, safeties, deep corners, you name it; moving the guys up front. So our whole thinking offensively was let's just narrow down what we're doing in the run game, and then just rep those plays against every pressure known to man because that's what we're gonna get from these guys and let's just generate some positive runs and stay ahead of the chains and not get ourselves in second-and-longs. But, also they're going to bring pressure; that's their MO and we didn't want Spencer [Rattler] sitting back there all day either."