

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

Monday July 15, 2019

Ed Orgeron

LSU Tigers

COMMISSIONER SANKEY: Good afternoon. Our third coach of today is Ed Orgeron who is entering his third full season as the head football coach at LSU. Ed and I were sharing stories a long time ago, in February, Ed moved from Louisiana to Syracuse, New York, where I grew up in the middle of February. I moved from near Syracuse, Louisiana, to Natchitoches, Louisiana, in the middle of July. So we experienced different climate extremes based on our backgrounds.

He and his wife, Kelly, have three sons at McNeese. Parker -- excuse me, Cody will be the starting quarterback this year, and Parker will become a student-coach after playing wide receiver at McNeese the past two years, and their third son, Tyler, is a member of the football staff at LSU. And you can imagine that Kelly has McNeese games on in the coach's box during LSU games when they conflict.

Also a note about LSU football. Senior long snapper Blake Ferguson is the chair of the SEC Student Athlete Leadership Council and has done well in leading that group. He also has a great bottle cap challenge video met equally well by his brother who is a long snapper for the Buffalo Bills. With that information, LSU head football coach. Ed Orgeron.

ED ORGERON: Thank you, Commissioner. I really appreciate you mentioning my family. It means a lot. Great to be back to SEC Media Days representing Louisiana State University -- we're excited about the three young men that we brought here today. Great examples of LSU student-athletes, what a football player should be: Joe Burrow, Lloyd Cushenberry, and Grant Delpit. I think Grant Delpit is the best defensive player in the country coming back this year.

I'd like to thank Tommy Moffitt and the strength staff for a tremendous job this summer. We couldn't ask for a better strength coach and a better strength staff than we have with Tommy Moffitt.

And our football team, we've had a great summer, our coaches had a great summer. We're ready to go. It won't be long.

Excited about our 2019 class. We feel we have a very good class coming in. Two players already there,



Derek Stingley and Apu Ika, starting on our football team already. Both of those guys are tremendous players.

Kardell Thomas, who was the number one guard in the country stayed committed to us and was the leader of our recruiting class will have a chance to compete the start at left guard.

We have two excellent running backs Tyrion Davis and John Emery. Those guys are elite backs. They are going to play this year and compete. Trey Palmer, one of the fastest guys in the country is going to add to our already deep wide receiver corps. Marcel Brooks will be an excellent player along with the rest of the class.

We're excited to see these guys. First time we could coach most of these guys in camp, and we'll give them a chance to compete and play.

I look forward to fall camp. I will block out the noise. Statement is going to be there again this year. Last year there was negativity. People didn't know what type of football team we were going to have or was talking about this, talking about that. Now this year they say we're going to have a really good football team, and I do believe we're going to have a really good football team, but we have to get back to work. We have to get back to the true grit, the fundamentals it takes at camp and block out the noise. I know our team's going to do that with tremendous leadership.

On offense, we went to the spread. We hired Joe Brady. He came from the Saints, very talented coach. He spent some time at Penn State where he learned the RPOs, the run pass options, and he has been a game changer for our staff. He and Steve Ensminger work together wonderful. Steve Ensminger has done a great job for us as offensive coordinator.

I expect those two to run a very prolific offense led by Joe Burrow. This is Joe's type of offense. Joe is a dual-threat quarterback. We could not run Joe as much as we wanted to last year. We ran him at Texas A&M, ran him towards the end of the year. Myles Brennan was hurt. Now Myles Brennan is healthy. We're going to do a lot more running with Joe this year. I know he will fit in well with this offense.

Myles Brennan is up to 212 pounds. We'll play him in significant times this year. I want him to be ready. I want him to act like he's a starter, and we think he'll be an excellent quarterback. We'll also have Peter Parrish at quarterback.

Offensive line returns four starters. We feel like we're going to be very solid there. We have to improve in our pass protection. I know we will. Probably the strength of our offense is going to be our wide receiver corps led by Justin Jefferson, a fantastic route runner. He and Ja'Marr Chase are two outstanding football players, along with Terrace Marshall, who has come along into his own, was one of the best wide receivers coming out of high school.

We have Stephen Sullivan who is a 6'6" receiver. We can use him on the inside or at tight end. I talked about Tyrion and John at running back along with Clyde Edwards-Helaire along with Lanard Fournette and Chris Curry, so we'll be very solid there.

On defense, I talked about it all day today. I think this is the best group of defensive backs I've ever coached. That's 35 years of coaching. I'm talking about a collective group. Led by Grant Delpit who I believe is the best player in the country coming back on defense. Kristian Fulton is coming back from an injury. He's one of the top quarterbacks in the SEC, if not America. Derek Stingley is going to be a phenomenal player. JaCoby Stevens, who was a great athlete out of Tennessee is coming back. And then we have Kary Vincent who ran a 10.07 100 meters, one of the fastest guys in the country. At linebacker, we have to replace Devin White. I don't know how you replace that guy. We have three great linebackers. Michael Divinity moved from outside linebacker, then Jacob Phillips and Patrick Queen are going to start for the fighting position -- starting position there.

We have four returning starters on the defensive front. It all starts up front. We have K'Lavon Chaisson back. We're excited about him. He's our best pass rusher. Rashard Lawrence returning for the senior year. Breiden Fehoko, Glen Logan, all those guys have started, so we have our rotation. We have our tackle up front, make more plays with the backfield.

On special teams, I'm excited about Greg McMahon. Greg has done a tremendous job as special teams coordinator. We have to replace Cole Tracy. He was a tremendous asset to our football team last year, but we have a young man named Damone Clark who has a very strong leg. He's very accurate. We look forward to seeing him. Avery Atkins kicked 90 percent of his kicks off into the end zone. Zach Van Rosenberg, Josh Growden is coming back at punter, so we're very, very

excited about that. We think we have a very, very strong special teams coming back. Blake Ferguson has been our deep snapper for your years.

They're great young men. Any questions?

Q. Coach, at the spring meetings you said it was going to be a hell of a week when A&M plays LSU. What will be different do you think about y'all's approach this year as in previous years?

ED ORGERON: I think the way last year's game ended added something to the rivalry. I think it's a game that I'm going to be looking forward to, our players are looking forward to. Obviously it's at the end of the year, I think it's going to mean a lot to where we go and where we're going to stand on the season.

Obviously, we felt that we should have won that game three or four times, but that's done. There's some things that we could have done better in that game, but we're going to work very hard to fix that.

Q. I know you're not thrilled a lot of the times with Joe Burrow running the ball and trying to take on a tackler, going over people. How has his physicality affected your offense and the way you approach things?

ED ORGERON: I do believe that Joe, if we let him, would run into a brick wall no matter what it took. He's that tough as a -- he has a linebacker mentality. We are going to use him on quarterback runs, quarterback draws, but we're going to be careful how many times we run him again.

But it does add another element to our offense. We still want to be physical. We have physical backs. LSU is always going to be physical. We want to be 50/50 and run the football.

Q. Tommie Robinson and Peter Parrish are from our neck of the woods, Columbus, Georgia. First of all, Tommie Robinson is your assistance head coach. Will you share with us how much you depend on him, how much you go to him for his opinions? And also Peter Parrish, you mentioned him. I know Joe is your quarterback, but do you expect Peter to get action this year?

ED ORGERON: Peter Parrish won the state championship in Alabama. In fact, we got the state championship quarterback in Alabama, the state championship quarterback in Louisiana, and state championship quarterback in Mississippi. We have a lot of state championship quarterbacks, so we should be good there.

I do believe Peter is going to be a great quarterback for us. He fits into our run pass option offense. Does a

great job. Great family.

Tommie Robinson is an outstanding man. You couldn't find a better man than Tommie Robinson. He's very instrumental to our program.

Q. How important was it for you to get Devonta Lee to commit and come to LSU from Amite and just from an optic standpoint?

ED ORGERON: Well, really it's a battle, obviously, a battle especially from that area. And we feel that we got the best player on that team. Devonta Lee had a great state championship game. He played offense. He played defense. He's a great young man.

Again, he wanted to come to LSU, his family. They wanted to be there. He never wavered. He went and took a couple visits. We felt he's a high-character young man. He's going to have a great career. But it does mean something that we got a player out of Amite to come to LSU. It's a very fertile area, as you know.

Q. How would you assess your two-plus seasons at LSU so far? Do you think this will be your best team, and do you feel like you guys are ready to challenge Alabama in the West?

ED ORGERON: Yeah. First of all, last year I felt we had a good season. We were two players away from being 12-1. We've got to expound on that this year. We cannot make the mistakes we made against Florida. We had opportunities to win the game at Texas A&M. Those are the two things we need to look at.

Now, we had some big wins. Auburn was a big win. Miami was a big win. Georgia was a big win. Those were big wins. We did not play well against Alabama. Now we have to go on the road and play them again. We have a tough schedule this year, but we have a good football team. We should be able to answer the bell.

Q. Coach, I know you had a really good relationship with Pete Jenkins both at USC and LSU. Now you've brought John Robinson in as a consultant. What have both of those guys meant to you as far as helping you develop as a head coach?

ED ORGERON: Yeah, the mentors, you know, always use them. Like when Pete was with me: Hey, Pete, what would y'all do in this situation? How did y'all practice? How did y'all prepare for this? And he was able to come in my office and just talk to me. Like he and I would talk. The same thing with John Robinson.

John Robinson, he's 82 years old. He's healthy. He's in good shape. He's going to be a consultant. He's

going to be around. He's going to be in our meetings. He's going to go to practice. He can't coach the players, but he can talk to the coaches and say this is what we did in this situation.

So those guys are invaluable to have around.

Q. You keep threatening to go to this upbeat spread offense, a lot of schools -- I'm taking you at your word this time. But a lot of schools that do that have trouble maintaining the kind of defense you've gotten used to.

ED ORGERON: Yeah.

Q. How do you guard against that, and do you kind of have to grade your defense on the curve, hence that type offense?

ED ORGERON: First of all, we're going to run the spread offense. It's in. It's in the playbook. So it's not a threat, Scooter, I promise you that. We're going to run it.

But you do bring up a point that there's some physicality that you lose from going two tight ends and two backs and running the power game that your defense has to practice against.

We will still have some 21 personnel, some 12 personnel to where when we have to get physical to run the football in short yardage situations, so our defense can still see that. But you bring up a good point.

Q. Joe Burrow finished the season strong last year against Central Florida. How do you coach him to carry that momentum over into 2019, and how has his progression looked going from year one in the program to year two?

ED ORGERON: First of all, at this time last year we didn't have Joe. He was on the football team. We didn't know who the quarterback was going to be. All I did is see him run sprints.

He won the job. He won the team over. I think the Georgia game was a turnaround game for him that the team started believing, you know, the quarterback could win the big game.

The difference is that we've had Joe all spring. He's been with his teammates. He throws on their own. They practice on their own. He sees them work. He knows them. He knows his teammates in and out. He knows the offensive line. This guy is a tremendous leader.

And I said it before. He reminds me of Bobby Hebert, a quarterback that I played with who was a tremendous

football player that had all of the intangibles of a leader.

Joe's very tough. Joe's going to lead by example. His team believes in him. We expect him to have a great year.

Q. Let me ask you the other Joe, Joe Brady, you touched on when you first started. When did you make the decision to reach out to him, bring him over, and how will he gel with Joe Burrow? Does this spread attack favor Joe Burrow more since he came from Ohio State and is kind of familiar with it?

ED ORGERON: Well, when he came over last summer, we had the Saints come in and talk to us about their red zone package, empty package. And we asked Joe to come on over and talk about the RPOs. He did a tremendous job, a big-time job. And I always wanted the Saints' passing game and running RPOs. So it was a natural fit.

Jerry Sullivan was our wide receiver coach. He came in in November and told me he was retiring, which was very honorable of him. He did a great job for us. I immediately thought of Joe Brady. And Greg McMahon is on my staff. We called Pete Carmichael, called Coach Payton. He asked me not to talk to him until the season was over. But as soon as the season was over, we brought him in and hired him, and he's been phenomenal ever since.

Q. A lot of SEC fans seem to think UCF was getting a little too big for their britches last year. What did it mean to you guys to win that big bowl game, and what sort of the response have you gotten from you SEC brethren?

ED ORGERON: It meant a lot for us to win ten games, to win on New Year's Day Six bowl. We had a lot of respect for Central Florida. They were feisty. They had an attitude about themselves. No wonder they won 25 games. They had some very good football players. They were well coached. I knew they were going to fight till the end. They took an onside kick for us to recover to win the football game.

We had a lot of respect for them. I don't know if they got too big for their britches or not. That's not for me to say. I thought that was a tough, hard-fought ball game.

Q. Obviously a lot of focus on the offensive side of the ball. There's some room for improvement on the defensive side as well, and you have a lot of talent returning, as you said. What are the areas you see defensively that you can see the biggest strides?

ED ORGERON: First of all, we gave up 167 yards rushing the game. That's not championship football.

That's not LSU football. So we have to stop the run. There's no question we need to get better in tackling, gap fits, schemes, tackles force loss, whatever it may take to stop the run.

Next of all, we need to put pressure on the quarterback with a four-man rush. It was not good last year. They had to do a lot of different things that really shouldn't have to do at LSU. We should be able to rush four guys and then one-on-ones. Then we need to do a better job at two minute offense and a better job preventing the deep ball. We didn't do a good enough job of sometimes letting them throw the ball over our head. Those are all things we need to improve. You need to go back to tackling. You need to go back to turnovers. You need to go back to discipline, and that's what it's going to take to get great defense.

Q. You talk a lot about wanting to have a culture of true grit and physical football with your team. What do you do to instill those values in your players and keep it going throughout the entire season?

ED ORGERON: Lead by example. First of all, recruiting character means a lot to us. That weighs in a bunch. Are we going out and recruiting and there's too many red flags, we're not going to take the young man. We feel we've recruited some great talent with great character. That means a lot.

Second of all, the way we practice, the way we act, the things we do on a daily basis, our guys get tested. We call it Ponderosa where we practice. You go out on the Ponderosa, and go ones against ones. You are going to play against a good football player everyday, and you going to find out who you are. It's going to take character, take grit, to go through our practice schedule in the fall to have a create a great atmosphere to have a championship football team. That's my job to do that, and it comes natural.

Q. Going into year three here, how do you think you've evolved as a head coach and how do you think that prepares you to lead the team with so much expectation on it this year?

ED ORGERON: I'm much more comfortable being head coach of LSU. I do believe we have our players in. I believe last year was pivotal year. We've proven we can win. Having a ten win season is good. It is not great. It puts us in position to take the next step at LSU, for what LSU deserves.

I do believe I have a lot better staff today than I've ever had. I have guys that are experts at the position, guys that understand the expectations of myself and LSU. I believe we have returning quarterback means a lot to us. We still have to get better at the line of

scrimmages. I'm not saying get better players. We need to perform better. We need to coach them better. These guys need to play well in order for us to win the championship. I think that's where we need to make the biggest improvement of our team.

Q. Having a great recruiting class like you did in 2019 when Louisiana so thick has been done before, but the 2020 class is getting a lot of production across the whole country. Why is that happening?

ED ORGERON: You know, we have connections obviously. LSU has a national brand. And we've had people from California approach us. As a coach, we're interested in coming to LSU. I said, good, we're going to recruit you. First time I was going up in the Baltimore/D.C. area, I seen a lot of schools recruit in that area. I went up there myself. We have three guys from that area, may get four or five. It's a very fertile area.

I think the biggest thing is LSU has a national brand, but SEC is the hot ticket now, especially SEC West. Players want to come. They want to compete at the best. They see our games. They see our schedule. They see the draft. The people that are developing are the most coming out of our league. They want to be a part of it.

Q. What are your thoughts on the Scott Woodward hire and how has that relationship been so far?

ED ORGERON: Scott's been phenomenal. He's from Louisiana. We met at first. We didn't know each other. I met him once or twice. Then he came in and checked out our recruiting and loved it, loved what we're doing. He's one of the best athletic directors I have been around so far. He's the most knowledgeable I've been around so far forever in recruiting. He's into recruiting. He knew every player on our board. In fact, he gave me a couple players. He had some great evaluation tips. He knows the game. He's given me everything I need as the head football coach to be successful as LSU.

He's going to work his tail off to make sure that we have everything that we need to win championships, and that's all you can ask an athletic director. To me, he's been phenomenal. Our relationship right now is phenomenal.

Q. Can you talk about Peter Parrish, the quarterback you got from Phoenix City, and how he's been able to adjust to LSU's culture?

ED ORGERON: First of all, I will tell you this, real quick, Peter came to camp, and we didn't offer him, and he left. And I couldn't sleep that night, and I woke up at 6:00 that morning. I had a staff meeting. I said

we got to offer this young man. And we text the momma. He gave us a call. He called us back, was about to enter for another camp at another school, and we offered him a scholarship, and he came.

Peter's been great. Obviously, we can't coach him with a ball in his hand right now, so we don't know. I look forward in August of coaching Peter. He's a championship -- state championship quarterback in Alabama. We feel he's going to have a great career for us.

Q. Both coaches earlier today have spoken about the NCAA transfer portal. I mean, from your perspective, how much does that change the game in roster management from both ends? You have Joe Burrow as a transfer before. I know he wasn't in the portal, but just going on what are the challenges on both ends of that? How much does that change the game?

ED ORGERON: First of all, I'm against it. And that doesn't matter if I'm against it or not. I think certain people are going to transfer. I think that both young men ought to try to stick it out. There's 400 some guys that enter the transfer portal and have nowhere to go, and they gave up an education. I don't think that's right.

I think that they should limit the time in which a young man can transfer. It should be after spring ball. It should be after he completed his spring semester. He should be eligible before he entered the transfer portal. It should be about a week and give them a decision and let them go.

So those are things that I think ought to be changed. I don't think there's going to be a change. That's my personal opinion, but you have to be ready. Roster management is important especially with 25 initials. We talk about with SEC coaches to some moves to change some things to enable us to get 85 back. I think that's going to be an ongoing process.

Q. Coach, you've got some great leaders, great people on the defensive line, Fehoko, Lawrence, Logan, is it just a matter of them getting a little more nasty this year to win the bigger game in the trenches?

ED ORGERON: First of all, I'm going to be a lot more loud on the defensive line as coach than I've ever been. That's something I know we can do well. We'll go back and attack defensive line. We are going to be more of a four-man defensive line, starting defensive back, call some tackles in the back field, getting a better quarterback rush. We'll enable these guys -- we are going to make some slight adjustments on how we play with the guys, but it will be more of a freestyle

attack, getting back field making plays. I think you'll see that with those guys.

Q. Obviously, he has big shoes to fill, but what are some attributes that you're seeing from Michael Divinity?

ED ORGERON: Michael is a leader. He's a vocal leader. He's tough. He's able to key and diagnose. He has a great awareness. He can see the play happening before the snap. He studies -- it is his senior year. It means a lot to him. Michael wants to have a great year. He wants to win. He wants to be an NFL football player. He's very motivated, strong, physical, probably one of our tougher players, all of those things. That's what you want in a great linebacker.

Q. Tyler Shelvin is a player that you've been able to develop, work on his weight in particular last year, and you got some playing time. How key will he be this year and how is his development continuing to progress?

ED ORGERON: Tyler is down to a slim 340 now. He came to us at 380 pounds. Tyler's worked hard this summer. He's worked hard on his eligibility and worked hard on the football field. Tommy Moffitt gave some good reviews. Last year, with Apu Ika in, Tyler and Apu had been competing for the starting position. I think that helped Tyler. He had to compete a little bit more. I think you see both of them play. Tyler may be a start. Apu may be a starter. We'll decide after camp, but you guys are going to see him play a lot. He played a lot better towards the end of the year last year when he learned how to play with his weight down.

Q. Ed, following up on the transfer question, I think Joe's going to be one of four, maybe five graduate transfers that will start quarterbacking this league. What do you think about that? Do you think that's a trend that's going to continue and do you understand why so many quarterbacks transfer when obviously you can't play three quarterbacks?

ED ORGERON: I'm for the graduate transfer rule. I think you graduated, if the situation don't fit you, you got one year to go. Go play football. I think Joe's a great example. Cole Tracy is a good example. I think you're going to see it with the quarterbacks. Obviously you can only play one and especially if a quarterback has one year left, but he's not going to play, he should be afforded the opportunity to go play somewhere.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Coach, thank you very much for your time.

ED ORGERON: Thank you, guys. Go Tigers!



2019 SEC Football Media Days LSU Player Quotes Monday, July 15

Senior Quarterback Joe Burrow

On balancing running the ball without getting injured ...

“So, I actually think that if you slide, more people get hurt than when they don’t. If you don’t slide, you will be really sore, but I don’t think you are going to get really hurt. You see when people slide, and someone will dive into their ankle or twist their ankle or twist their knee so that’s part of it. You also want to be smart and get out of bounds if there is a 250-pound linebacker chasing you down who is faster, stronger, and bigger than you, so yeah I will get out of bound in that situation.”

On the offense next year...

“So last year, we had I think nine or 10 new starters on offense, so the main thing is we have everybody back. We only lost two guys that played a lot for us on offense, so the experience coming back is the main thing. There are some new concepts that we have that I am really excited about.”

On if he made any changes in practice due to the new offense...

“No, not really, because this style of offense is the offense I have been doing since I was 14 or 15, no huddle, get the ball out fast. So that is kind of what I was comfortable with, and I had to get comfortable doing the other style of offense last year. Now I am more comfortable with both things, and I think we are doing a very good job of implementing both in this offense.”

On his schedule in the fall ...

“Three classes is full time when you are in grad school, so I take three, but they are all online. I kind of just portion out two or three days a week like an hour that I do all my work, and the rest of the time is really either at the facility, eating or sleeping.”



2019 SEC Football Media Days LSU Player Quotes Monday, July 15

Junior Center Lloyd Cushenberry

On becoming a leader ...

“In the past, I have always led by example and hoped that other guys followed me. Now, I am more of a vocal leader for the team. Having a year under my belt and the confidence has made me a better leader.”

On the strength and conditioning staff ...

“They do a great job. Coach Moffitt challenges us every day and has high expectations for us. He wants us to raise the standard. He is not going to let us settle for anything. They push us every day. Nobody is getting off easy. From starters to walk-ons, they are on each and every one of us trying to make us better players.”

On the mindset coming into the season as an established starter ...

“I try to keep the same mindset. Even last year, I was still competing for the job, and I am keeping the same mindset this season. I still got a lot to prove to myself and my teammates. I feel like I just have so many more things to work on and that I’ve just scratched the surface.”

On improving as an offense ...

“The main thing is just focusing on your job and doing it at the highest level every single play. If we can do that, I think we can have a great season.”



2019 SEC Football Media Days LSU Player Quotes Monday, July 15

Junior Safety Grant Delpit

On if he agrees with Coach Orgeron calling him the best returning defender in college football...

“Yeah, I think that is a great choice. I have all the confidence in Coach O and Coach Aranda, because they put me in the right place to make plays.”

On what playing against Alabama’s elite receiving corps means to LSU’s defensive backs...

“We love playing against good receivers. It shows the best on the best, and I think we have the best defensive backs in the nation. We also have great receivers too that we go up against every day in practice.”

On if last year’s game with Texas A&M stems a rivalry....

“I don’t know about a rivalry, but I think they are coming in as a bigger competitor. They are doing a great job over there. We got them at home, so I am going to be ready for that game.”

On replacing the depth from last year’s defense...

“We just got to reload. Devin (White) was the most vocal person I have ever been around and the best linebacker I ever played with. I just learned from him.”

On what game he is looking forward to the most in 2019...

“Week One. We can’t take any team for granted.”