



**Florida State vs. ULM**  
**Saturday, December 2, 2017**  
**FSU Head Coach Quotes**

**Florida State Interim Head Coach Odell Haggins**

**Opening Statement:**

"All of the credit goes to our football players. It is not about me being named the interim head coach. It is about those kid's resilience, how they fought. They didn't quit. Florida State, if you look at the south end zone of the stadium, Unconquered, remember that. We haven't gone anywhere and we are not going anywhere at Florida State University. I am so proud of our kids; Alec Eberle, Derwin James, Derrick Nnadi and I could keep going. They stayed in their words. Sometimes we base things on wins and losses, but this year our kids got a lot of life lessons. Those kids will remember this. Everyone said we went through turmoil. No. God puts us through certain things for a reason. You learn from them and they make you strong as a man and they make you stronger as a woman. I am not going to say Florida State is 6-6, they had a subpar season. I am going to say our kids learned a lot this year about life. I am so happy for them, happy for the organization, Stan Wilcox, President Thrasher, the coaches, the old man Rick Trickett for advising me. It is not just me, it is about everybody – Lawrence Dawsey, Dameyune Craig, Randy Sanders, Charles Kelly, Brad Lawing, Bill Miller, Tim Brewster and Jay Graham. We all had a job to finish. I am so happy for our kids that is the main thing. It is not about Odell; I am going to say that again. I am honored to be named Interim, I am just happy for our kids."

**On the emotions the players showed to you:**

"I want to say this, me and Coach Fisher are close. We share some of the same values for the young men, so it wasn't tough. I was trained well by a man named Mickey Andrews. That is my mentor through life. As soon as Mr. Wilcox called me for this I said let's go. I was trained well. I had a great leader in Mickey Andrews. Never quit, never flinch, and the kids responded well because they know when they see Odell Haggins, my heart goes out to them and I am going to put everything in for them and not Odell. That's what it's about, and that is why I think they responded well to me. They know I love them. Derrick Nnadi thought I was crazy when he first got here. Look now that young man is getting his degree and Lord willing going to the next level."

**On what it meant to be the interim head coach:**

"I am very honored. I am very honored that they came to me. Being her 24 years, I never thought I would be in this situation. I never thought that. Like I told you my training and growing up around a great man like Mickey Andrews, a father figure. My mother raised me. I was able to adjust to it quickly."

**On the level of fan support behind you:**

"It meant the world to me because people will always say things about themselves, but I want to show action about myself. If you talk about yourself, I'm this, I'm that."

To me I want to see action. I live it. How much I care about these kids, I live it, I'll go to war for them."

**On having a chance to talk to Coach Fisher:**

"He came in and let me know something. He said 'Odell, you are the man for it.' I said, 'Coach you got it, I appreciate you and I love you.'"

**On what the game means for the other assistants:**

"It means a lot. Some of the assistants could have just said whatever. The head coach is gone and people are saying our season is in shambles, but I am going to say it again we have life and life lessons. Sometimes we have a tough season like this, but we just grow. Learning lesson. We are Florida State and we are not going anywhere."



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FSU Defensive Player Quotes**

**Junior Defensive Back Derwin James:**

**On his emotions after the game:**

"I'm just soaking it all in. We've been through a lot as a team this whole season and just to get a win and keep the streak alive is exciting."

**On his future at Florida State and whether he's made a decision to turn professional:**

"Not yet, I am still talking it over with my family and some of my teammates. I still have not gotten to a conclusion yet but it's coming soon."

**On what Coach Odell Haggins means to this team:**

"He means a lot to this team. When people say he really bleeds Garnet and Gold, he really does bleed Garnet and Gold. He is always about the team and never about himself. It was great just coming out here and getting a win for him. Ever since recruiting me, he recruited me in the ninth grade, he is from my area and I am very familiar with him and he has always been there."

**On the atmosphere:**

"It was great. Ever since we first walked out for the coin toss they were loud and screaming and it's Nole Nation."

**On what it meant to have the crowd supporting Odell:**

"I can't explain that feeling. On the field, in the moment, it's just a feeling that you can't even put into words."

**On how you tried to keep your focus during a distracting week:**

"Just stay focused on the main thing. There were a lot of distractions, there will always be a lot of distractions, but as a team we made a commitment to each other. We knew we had to go finish this thing, no matter how it started or how it ended up, whatever it took to get to a bowl game, we were going to do it."

**On looking back on this season 10-20 years from now and what they learned:**

"It's bigger than just football. The things we go through as a team, the things we go through as a program are life lessons. We learned a lot from each other just being there for each other when times are hard and just get through it and being able to overcome certain things makes you stronger as a person."

**On what Odell said to the team before the game:**

"Let's do it for ourselves. Come out here and do what we need to do and play for each other."

**On how the season went for the team:**

"It was just a rollercoaster. We went through a lot of adversity this year with injuries, hurricanes and different stuff. That's no reason for excuses, no reason to point a finger at anyone. Being able to get through it and get this last home win to get to a bowl game was just a great feeling."

**On what his lasting memory will be of this team and fan base:**

"I can't even explain the feeling. Just going out there hearing them scream every game through the good and the bad, it's a very exciting feeling that I get every time out here."



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FSU Offensive Player Quotes**

**Junior Center Alec Eberle**

**On his emotions after this week:**

"It'd be hard to recap this week but at the end of the day, I'm proud of the guys. I'm proud of this team. I'm proud of them winning and putting everything behind them and focusing and I'm proud to keep the bowl streak alive."

**On the growth of the team from the start of the season:**

"We had a true freshman quarterback back there coming off an Alabama loss and losing our returning quarterback. Each practice and game he got better and better through the wins and losses. The offense started clicking more. The defense stepped up huge. I'm so proud of this defense for stepping up and playing like one of the best defenses in the country like we know they are capable of being. To end like this, I'm extremely proud to be a part of this team and this program and to keep the bowl streak alive."

**On playing for Coach Haggins:**

"There's no better person in this program to step up and coach this team. You can pay that guy minimum wage and he would still be here and coach football. He loves this program so much and everybody on this team. He knows everything about Florida State and Florida State football so it's an honor to play for a guy like that."

**On what Coach Haggins said to the team before the game:**

"Play for each other. Play for that bowl streak, but really play for each other. Play for the guys in this room and the people on this staff. Go out there and give it your all."

**On what today was like as a player:**

"It was awesome. I couldn't ask for a better environment. To have the fans, the coaches, and everyone that was there was special. To get that win was extremely special. It meant a lot to the team, to Coach Odell, all of the coaches, and everyone."

**On how good it felt to go out there and have fun today:**

"At the end of the day, when you're out there playing for each other and things are going the right way and things are going the way you want them to, and you're finishing out something strong, it's fun to do. And that was a big thing for us was to go out there and have fun and to play for each other and win this game, and get to a bowl game and finish this season the way it needs to be finished."

**On Odell's job today:**

"I think he did awesome. He did a great job."

**On what it meant to carry Coach Trickett off the field:**

"That was special. Coach Trickett brought me in and took a chance on me. He took a chance on a lot of us. He puts so much work in us, so to get the chance to carry him off the field at the last home game to show our gratitude towards him was an honor."



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FSU Defensive Player Quotes**

**Senior defensive tackle Derrick Nnadi:**

**On winning his final game as a Florida State Seminole:**

"A lot of feelings came in. One part of me thought 'We are going to a bowl game,' another one was happy for Odell [Haggins] winning his first game as a coach. He was my position coach so that made me twice as happy for him and knowing how he is and what he stands for made me just as proud to be his athlete and his student."

**On the team response upon hearing that Odell Haggins was named interim head coach:**

"Some people were still upset with Jimbo leaving, but when they announced that Haggins was named the interim head coach, for me, I wasn't really surprised or worried knowing the type of person he is. I figured that he could lead us very well and I feel like a lot of the team felt the same way."

**On how he felt about Jimbo Fisher's departure:**

"I wasn't mad at him for leaving. With him, he always thinks about the team and the players first and with him leaving I wasn't upset because at the end of the day he has to do what is best for his family and his career. It's just that when you have been with someone for so long, for me I have been here four years, you create a bond with that person, and when out of nowhere, he leaves, you are going to be hurt a little bit knowing you fought through adversity and ups and downs with each other. At the same time, I am happy for him and his career and I will always be happy for him no matter what."

**On his relationship with Odell Haggins:**

"There are some days I feel like he is crazy but at the end of the day he deeply cares about his players and this university. He wants his guys to better themselves every day. The way he acts can be a little crazy but it is always toward the right direction. He is just trying to make sure you are doing what you are supposed to do on and off the field. He cares about his players that much. With me and him, it is kind of a love and hate relationship. If we are in an argument, there is no winning, Odell wins every single time. I've grown to respect the man after knowing him and listening to what he has to say. When I first got here, I thought 'This man doesn't make any sense,' but as I kept listening to what he has to say, everything seems to make more sense. At the end of the day, he is always looking out for me no matter what. I respect him so much. He is a great man to look up to, a great role model, and I have nothing but respect and nothing but love for him."

**On the atmosphere of today's game:**

"It was the last home game of the season. Odell was very amped up before we went out there and fueling up the fire and had everyone ready to run down a wall. Before

the game, he told us to fight for each other. He told us that we had to do our jobs. Every time he talked, you could feel his passion in every single word and everybody bought into it."

**On Jimbo Fisher missing the last game of the season:**

"In a sense, I wasn't too bothered by it but when you build a bond with somebody and then they leave, you are going to be affected. At the time, I feel like, in my opinion, he was rushed to make a decision. I feel like he wanted to finish out the season because one of the main lessons he always taught us was no matter what, you always finish. So for him having to come to a decision so early, I feel like that hurt him as well as a lot of us players as well because I feel like we wanted him to be able to coach this final game and see it as a farewell, but at the end of the day, life happens. Coach Odell stepped in and he showed the perfect example of how to lead a team."





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**ULM Head Coach Matt Viator**

**What were your thoughts in the first half?**

"My thoughts were – we need to convert some of those – we got the ball down to the 40 and to the 35 and I didn't try the field goal when we got it down to the 25. Give Florida State credit; they've had some big stops on third down and had that big fourth down stop. It's going to be tough anyway. Maybe if we could have converted a couple of those and maybe out a little more pressure on them, I think, then who knows. But we didn't. I think that was the biggest difference. We actually moved it a little bit in the first half, couldn't run the ball, but we moved it a little bit and had a couple of chances. They did a good job of holding us."

**Talk about their run game in the second half**

"Really nice job. I thought a really good adjustment for them. They're big; they've got those big guys up front. They go foot-to-foot and just wore us down, really. The running backs are good and gave them some space. I thought it was a great game plan just to get in there. That's been our Achilles' heel all year, especially playing against these guys. They're physical."

**Talk about your senior class**

"Absolutely. I appreciate what they did because they didn't have to stay. They did and it helped us, no doubt. Look at what Brian Williams did. His first time to ever start, and we converted him to quarterback, and he wasn't really happy about it. He spent a year not being about it. He came out and had a fantastic year and as a chance to play at the next level. He, Frank Sutton – go down the list. Look what Roland Jenkins did this year. I'm really happy for them (the senior class) and we'll see what happens next year."

**Talk about wide receiver Marcus Green**

"He did a tremendous job. He's had a great year. I was telling Marcus a while ago that Coach (Jimbo) Fisher really singled him out in the press conference. When a big time coach at a big time program spends time talking about you – and I know Coach Fisher – everything he says is sincere. He complimented Marcus and really had a lot of compliments for our wide outs. We can put some guys out on the field, that are good players."

**On saying good-bye to defensive line coach Manny Michel**

"I have mixed feelings. I'm happy one way if that's what Manny wants to do. You spend 35 years, 36 years in this profession – that's tough. I think more than coaching, he's become a great friend. He's somebody you want your kids to play for because he does it the right way. I'll miss him. I'm an early-bird, so is Manny. We're there 5-5:30 every morning so for 10 years we have visited every morning, when I get there because he's always the first one I'll see. I'll miss him."