

Lake City Reporter

SPORTS

Story ideas?

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Section B

FSU FOOTBALL

Florida State used to having short weeks

Seminoles face Boston College this Friday.

By JOE REEDY
Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE — Florida State has a short week to prepare for Boston College for the second straight season, and Seminoles coach Jimbo Fisher isn't all that pleased about it.

"I feel like right now I'm a day behind and trying to get everything in," Fisher said. "Also making sure you get enough rest and still get enough practice time."

Last year, playing the Eagles on short week resulted in a hard-fought, ugly Florida State win.

Fisher is hoping to have an easier time on Friday. The Seminoles won 14-0 but needed a late defensive touchdown to get some breathing room.

Boston College, which got lit up by No. 5 Louisville 52-7 last weekend, still comes into the game ranked 15th in the Football Bowl Subdivision in total defense and eighth against the run. Last season it held Dalvin Cook to 54 yards, which was his lowest total against an ACC team last season.

Fisher has had to manage a quick turn earlier in the season. The 20th-ranked Seminoles (6-3, 3-3 ACC, No. 22 CFP) defeated Mississippi on Sept. 5 and had only five days to prepare for their home opener against Charleston Southern.

This also marks only the second Friday night home game in Florida State history; the other was in 1957.

Fisher used Monday to go through two-minute and short-yardage situations and will devote Tuesday

and Wednesday to install the game plan for the Eagles (4-5, 1-4).

Cook, who needs 127 yards to break Warrick Dunn's school career-mark of 3,833 yards, was held to 65 yards in last Saturday's 24-20 win at North Carolina State. Cook though has nine straight 100-yard games against FBS opponents at home.

"You can't let him run wild on you," Boston college coach Steve Addazio said of Cook. "Dalvin is a guy that you've got to get an extra hat around the ball. You've got to be careful trying to give him too many unloaded boxes, but then again, they have the speed out in the perimeter with their receivers."

One thing Fisher is hoping to correct is the Seminoles' slow starts in conference games. They have trailed at halftime in all but one ACC game and at some point in those games have trailed by double digits. The win over the Wolfpack marked FSU's third come-from-behind victory this season where it has trailed by 10 or more points and second in conference.

The secondary, which has been beset by injuries, continues to struggle. The Seminoles have allowed 41 passing plays of 20-plus yards this season, which is third-worst among Power 5 schools and allowed four last Saturday.

Safety Tre Marshall, who missed last week's game due to concussion-like symptoms, remains questionable for Friday. If Marshall remains out, Ermon Lane, a converted receiver, would get the start.

Fellow safety Derwin James, who had surgery for a torn meniscus on Sept. 12, did some running before the North Carolina State game but Fisher said

'NOLES continued on 6B

CHS FOOTBALL



Photos by KAYLA LOKEINSKY/Lake City Reporter

Columbia nose tackle Robbie Moon performs a defensive drill during Wednesday's practice. The Tigers have prepared this week for their regional quarterfinal matchup with Lincoln Friday night in Tallahassee.

Preparing for Playoffs

The Tigers put in work at practice before facing Lincoln on Friday.



Columbia quarterback Davin Schuck (left) tosses the ball during practice on Wednesday. Columbia running back Kamario Bell takes a handoff at practice. The Tigers have won five straight games entering this week.

SEC FOOTBALL

Muschamp not fazed by UF return

S.C. coach back in The Swamp this Saturday.

By PETE IACOBELLI
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — South Carolina coach Will Muschamp is returning to Florida with his focus solely on beating the Gators and keeping his Gamecocks in the Southeastern Conference divisional race.

Muschamp is not wrapped up in emotions over his return to The Swamp or dissecting his four-year tenure at Florida.

Muschamp understands he'll shoulder much of the attention when South Carolina (5-4, 3-4 SEC) arrives at No. 22 Florida (6-2,

4-2) on Saturday. After all, the last time these teams met there in 2014, it proved to be Muschamp's last game with the Gators following South Carolina's 23-20 overtime win. He was let go two days later, spent last year leading Auburn's defense before getting a rare second chance to coach in the SEC with the Gamecocks.

He's not sure how he'll handle the atmosphere.

"I won't know until game day," Muschamp said Tuesday. "I stayed at the office about the same as I stay at the office. I got to the office the same time. Nothing changes as far as the work week, whether we're playing Florida or anyone else on our schedule."

"We'll cross that

bridge when we get to Gainesville," he said.

Muschamp hopes to leave Florida still with a shot for the SEC East. The Gamecocks started 2-4 and had the lowest scoring offense in the Football Bowl Subdivision through mid-October. But a switch to strong-armed freshman Jake Bentley has seemingly revived the sluggish team with three straight victories, including a 24-21 win over then-18th-ranked Tennessee two weeks ago.

A win over the Gators — and the right bounces among the other SEC East teams — could leave the Gamecocks on top of a pile of 4-4 teams.

Muschamp told his players the only way to make that happen is control what they can

control.

"How do we do that?" he asked. "Beating Florida."

It's a cry that's resonated before in odd circumstances at South Carolina.

Linebacker Bryson Allen-Williams, who had 2 1-2 tackles for loss in the Gamecocks win over the Gators, brought it up to a chagrined Muschamp on Tuesday.

"Hey," the coach said with a smile, "I needed to do a better job at the end."

Steve Spurrier, Florida's Heisman Trophy winner and national championship coach, led the Gamecocks for 10 and a half seasons and often tore apart fan emotions on his visits back to Florida.

GATORS continued on 6B



COURTESY

Swimming to States

Columbia swimmer Skyler Covert competed in the FHSAA State Swimming and Diving State Championships on Nov. 4. Covert placed 9th in the 200 meter IM and 5th in the 100 meter butterfly.

GATORS

Continued From 1B

The Gators needed a blocked field goal try at the end in 2006 to escape with a 17-16 win — en route to a national title season — the first time Spurrier brought the Gamecocks in. Spurrier's crew clinched its only SEC East title in 2010 at The Swamp with a dominating 36-14 victory.

Now, Spurrier is back in his beloved orange and blue as an ambassador and consultant for Florida's athletic department, a position he held at South Carolina for a time after resigning as Gamecocks football coach in the midst of last season.

Linebacker Jonathan Walton, a starter in the 2014 Florida game, said the team expects to see Spurrier on the trip.

"And we're expecting to beat him," he laughed.

Muschamp was hired in 2011 to follow the ultra-successful tenure of Urban Meyer, who won two national titles with the Gators. Muschamp won 11 games and reached a BCS bowl his second season. But Florida faltered the next two years, going 10-13 before Muschamp was let go prior to the end of season.

He's got friends, including Spurrier, he'll be glad to see and accepts why he was fired. But "we did some good things at Florida, too, so let's don't lose sight of that."

Some of Muschamp's best work is on Florida's defense, third nationally in yards allowed behind Michigan and Alabama.

"It's definitely going to be something special for us who played for Muschamp to play against him," Florida senior defensive lineman Joey Ivie said. "I know he's going to want to come in here especially leaving Florida and try to get a win."

The Gamecocks understand what this win would mean to their coach.

"I'm sure I guess it's a redemption card for him," left guard Zack Bailey said. "As a group, we're trying to continue our streak and play the best we can play."

CHS FOOTBALL

Tigers get ready for Lincoln



Columbia backup quarterback Dylan Blair gets set to hike the ball during Wednesday's practice. The Tigers face Lincoln at Gene Cox Stadium in the regional quarterfinal round Friday night. Columbia defeated Lincoln twice last year including in the playoffs.

Photos by KAYLA LOKEINSKY/Lake City Reporter



Columbia linebacker Jaylen Brown and other players speak with head coach Brian Allen during Wednesday's practice.



Members of Columbia's defense perform drills during practice (above). Columbia's offensive line prepares to engage against the defense (below) on Wednesday.



'NOLES

Continued From 1B

there is no timetable on his return.

Florida State will also be without wide receiver Jesus "Bobo" Wilson, who had season-ending surgery on his right foot on Monday. Wilson suffered the injury during the first half of the Oct. 17 game against Wake Forest. He tried to rehab the past three weeks but the swelling in the foot did not go down.

Wilson was second

on the team in receiving with 30 receptions for 390 yards when he was injured. His 89-yard punt return for a touchdown against Charleston Southern on Sept. 10 is the longest in the nation this season.

In Wilson's absence, Nyqwan Murray has played well. The sophomore has 15 receptions for 249 yards and a touchdown over the past two games, including nine catches for 153 yards against North Carolina State.

Murray is the fourth FSU receiver to have a 100-yard game this year,

making it one of seven schools in the Football Bowl Subdivision to have four or more players do that this season.

Even though this is the second straight season Florida State is playing on a Friday, Fisher is hoping that it isn't a yearly tradition, even if he understands why it is happening.

"It's the networks. That's who has your contracts," he said. "I don't think any coach likes it, really. But that's just what we're in and that's the world we're in. So everybody's got the same boat to deal with."

NASCAR

Denny Hamlin ready for the playoff pressure at Phoenix

By JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — It has not been an easy march through NASCAR's playoffs for Denny Hamlin, who once again must race his way into the next round.

Hamlin was on his own at Talladega Superspeedway, a track that requires help from other drivers to be successful. Hamlin's teammates at Joe Gibbs Racing had too much to lose that day and rode around in the back of the pack. He needed a strong finish, and had to figure it out alone.

Now he again goes into an elimination race with the pressure on to pull off a big finish. Carl Edwards is the only JGR driver who already has earned a berth in the championship race, and Hamlin is competing with teammates Matt Kenseth and Kyle Busch for a spot in the final four.

All three of the JGR drivers are within two points of each other in Chase standings. Busch is tied

with Team Penske's Joey Logano for the lead, with Kenseth one point behind them and Hamlin two behind. Hamlin finished third at Phoenix earlier this year.

"Phoenix was a good track for us in the spring," Hamlin said. "I look to go back there and have another great run and go out there and try to win. That's what we're going to do. Any time I've been below (the cut line) in an elimination race, I've found a way to get in (to the next round)."

"I like our chances. It's a pressure race and I like pressure."

CREW CHIEF FINED
Team Penske crew chief Todd Gordon has been fined \$10,000 because a lug nut was not properly installed on Joey Logano's car at Texas.

The penalty was the only monetary fine issued by NASCAR on Wednesday. But, five drivers were docked 15 minutes of practice time for inspection issues at Texas.

Kevin Harvick, Tony

Stewart, Carl Edwards and Martin Truex Jr. all failed the pre-qualifying template inspection three times. AJ Allmendinger failed the laser inspection three times before qualifying.

All will miss practice time Friday at Phoenix.

DIBENEDDETTO CLEARED

Matt DiBenedetto was cleared to race at Phoenix International Raceway after NASCAR held him out of one event because of a possible concussion.

DiBenedetto missed last Sunday's race at Texas Motor Speedway, where he was involved in a crash during the Xfinity Series race one day earlier. Jeffrey Earnhardt replaced DiBenedetto for BK Racing and finished 34th.

It was the first Cup race DiBenedetto had not started since early in the 2015 season.

DiBenedetto had said Sunday morning at Texas he felt fine and able to race, but said he had to respect the decision by NASCAR's doctors.



COURTESY

Darius Wade of Boston College is sacked by Derrick Nnadi (91) of Florida State during last year's game. FSU defeated Boston College 14-0.