

**LSU vs. Auburn**  
**October 14, 2017**

**AUBURN HEAD COACH GUS MALZAHN**

***Opening Statement...***

“Obviously this is a tough loss. We started out quick and we were real pleased with the tempo offensively and real pleased with our defense. Really at halftime we felt good. Coming out in the second half, third downs were the key. We only had one third-down conversion in the second half. The biggest play of the game was the punt return and we’ve been very good covering punts up to that point. Kid (DJ Chark) got to the sideline and they got a couple of blocks. Obviously that was the key to the game. Tough loss, I told our team. Obviously we’re disappointed, but this is only one loss in the SEC. We still control our own destiny; it’s not going to be the end of the world. We’re going to rebound, I truly believe we will.”

***On the play calling and management of first and third downs...***

“First of all, I think most of those third downs were third and five or a little less. To consistently run the ball, you want it to be third and two or less. I think the one time we did we didn’t convert. I think that’s the first time that happened all season. Then we ran a reverse on third and two so those were the two runs. The other third downs were four plus. Anytime you don’t convert on third down, especially on the road it’s going to hurt. They had some momentum and that was tough.”

***On this being a tough loss...***

“This is an extremely tough loss. From the standpoint that we got off to a good start and really that’s the first time that’s happened since I’ve been the head coach. We couldn’t hang on and the punt return really broke our back. We were in pretty good shape up until that point.”